

A Report on Tour to Iran

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B. L. Malla

**INDIRA GANDHI NATIONAL CENTRE FOR THE ARTS
NEW DELHI – 110 001.**

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PREFACE



he Academy of Arts, Tehran, Iran organized an International Congress on

'Nature in Oriental Art', from 4-8 December 2005, at Tehran & Yazd, Iran. IGNCA had the honour to represent not only the Centre but the country in this international meet. All the three scholars- Dr. (Mrs.) Kapila Vatsyayan, President IGNCA Trust; Prof. Inder Nath Choudhari, Academic Director and Dr. B.L. Malla, Senior Research Officer, who presented their papers were from the IGNCA.

The presence and presentation of Dr. (Mrs.) Kapila Vatsyayan enriched the Congress. Our informal discussion with her were fruitful and enriching. She stressed on the need for the collaboration of the IGNCA with the Academy of Arts, Golestan Library and other Academic institutions of Iran in the area of common interest. It may be recalled that our country has maintained very close cultural relations with Iran from earlier times. Thousands of Iranian Scholars, Poets, Painters, Calligraphers had migrated from Iran to India, some of them permanently and some temporarily. Thousands of dancers, musicians had migrated from India to Iran during ancient period. The intermingling of people has resulted in mutual understanding and respect of our art and culture in India and Iran. Many Sanskrit texts were translated in the Persian language by Iranian scholars in Iran and India. *Brahma Siddhanta, Shakuntala, Meghadutam, Kalia Dimna, Tutinama* and others are among them.

(Detailed suggestions/comments of Dr. Vatsyayan to follow in separate chapter)

Besides participation in the Congress and work out areas of common interest and collaboration between the IGNCA and institutions of Iran, our next goal was to enrich our library. In order to enrich the IGNCA library collection, the following books were either purchased from National Museum of Iran or received as gifts from the Academy of Arts, Tehran:

1. The Never Drawing Fire (English and Persian)*
2. Churches of Iran (English and Persian)*
3. Catalogue of the Selective Exhibition of Golden and Silver Objects in the N.M.I. (Persian)*
4. A New Look at Persepolis (English)*
5. A Glance at Tehran 3,000 Years Age (Persian)*

6. School of Gol-O-Morgh (Flower and Bird) Painting : A Window into Iranian
7. Aesthetics (Persian)*
8. Tchoga Zanbil – Vol-I (Persian)*
9. Shiraz (English, Persian)*
10. Engraving as Narrated by Mahmood Dehnavi (English,Persian)*
11. The Art of South East Asia (Persian)**
12. Transformation of Nature In Art (Persian)**
13. Chinese Porcelain from Ardebil Shrine (Persian)**
14. Buddhist Art & Architecture (Persian)**
15. China and the Arts of Islam (Persian)**
16. Art and the Element of Nature (Water, Earth, Air & Fire) (Persian)**
17. The Tao of Painting: A Study of Ritual Disposition of Chinese Painting (Persian)**
18. Chinese Art (Persian) **
19. Japanese Art (Persian) **
20. Amade Isheq (Poetry) (Persian) **
21. International Congress of Nature In Oriental Art (Persian) **

* Purchased

** Gift

I would like to pay my gratitude to Dr. K.K. Chakravarty, Member Secretary IGNCA, for deputing me to participate in the Congress. He has been a source of inspiration and encouragement for all of us for our academic ventures. I appreciate the work of Mr. Narayan Hari, D.E.O. for efficiently computerizing the data and formatting the report.

(Dr. B. L. Malla)

Chronology Of Iran Cultural Periods

Upper Paleolithic& Mesolithic	40,000 - 12- 10,000 B.C
Neolithic	12,000 –6,000B.C.
Chalcolithic	6,000 – 3,000 B.C.
Proto Historical	3,000 – 1,900 B.C.
Early Bronze Age	3,000 – 2,600B.C.
Late Bronze Age	2,600 – 1,500 B.C.
Iron Age I	1,500 B.C.- 1,250 B.C.
Iron Age II	1,250 – 850 B.C.
Iron Age III	850-B.C. 550 B.C.
Median Period	705-550 B.C.
Achaemenid Period	550-330 B.C.
Seleucid Period	324-248 B.C.
Parthian Period	248-226 A.D.
Sasanian	226-651 A.D.

I International Congress- 'Nature in Oriental Art'

(a) Tehran- Congress Proceedings and Visit
to Historical Places



rof. I.N. Choudhari and myself (Dr. B.L. Malla) participated in an International Congress and visited some of the historical places during our visit of Iran from 2-11 December, 2005. On 2nd of December 2005 afternoon we reached Tehran.

Tehran with an area of 1,200 sq. kms. is the centre of Tehran province, situated at the foot of the Alborz Mountains. Tehran is hot and dry in summer (max. 42^oc) and cold in winter (min. -16^oc). According to the 1992 census the population of Tehran was 6,620,461.

It is believed that Tehran began its development after the invasion by the Mongols in 617 A.H. (1220 A.D.). But the real development and the increase in population has started since two centuries ago. Shah Tahmash ordered, a rampart to be built around Tehran, and it was known as city in 962 A.H. (1554 A.D.). It was selected as the capital city.

3-12-2005

There are many important and interesting places/museums in Tehran. We were fortunate enough to visit at least some of them. On 3rd December, 2005 we visited cultural and historical complex of Sadabad. The complex is situated in the wide and fresh hills of Tochal and grassy valley of Darband.

Sadabad is enclosed from the north by the Alborz mountain, from the east by the Golab Darreh, from the west by the Velenjak, and from the south by the Tajrish. This area was the summer place and principality bungalow of the Gajarian period. The area is full of old trees and remains from the buildings of Gajar period. In the Pahlavis period 18 palaces were built. Each one exhibited elaborate art and Iranian style of architecture. After Islamic revolutions all this

collections developed in the museum. Some are exhibited in the form of palace museums. Some of the important museums developed of the site include: Research and Anthropology Museum, Abkar Miniature Museum, Arts Museum, Nation Palace Museum, Green Palace Museum, Military Museum, Behzad Museum, National Water Museum, Miremad Writing Museum, Farshchian Museum of Art, etc. We visited the galleries of the Farhchian Museum.

Museum of Master Farshchian:

Master Farshchian was born in 1929 in Isfahan. During his youth, he studied under great masters like Haj Mirza-Aqa Emami and Yssa Bahadori. After graduating from the Fine Arts Academy of Isfahan, he went to Europe, where he studied the works of illustrious Western artists. His quest acquainted him with Western art and international artistic trends.

Mahmoud Farshchian was a contemporary master artist trained in the great Persian tradition. Collectors and art connoisseurs have treasured his work for decades. The master's works have a style of their own, which combines the originality of traditional Iranian painting schools with stupendous innovation. Part of the master's works have been exhibited abroad and acclaimed by scientific and cultural institutions across the world.

Farshchian's paintings magically blend the real and imaginary in an utterly unique style. Each brush stroke enchantingly creates a somewhat different way of seeing and feeling people, nature, animals and objects. One hundred thirty five of Farshchian's major works were recently selected by UNESCO for their significance and masterly style.

The museum also offers painting courses, a specialized artistic library and a web site on the internet (www.saadabadpalace.com).

4-12-2005

In order to research and recognise different aspects of eastern artists towards nature, and also to benefit from their viewpoint and judgment, the academy of Art, Tehran (Iran) organized on 'International Congress of Nature in Oriental



Art', at Tehran & Yazd, from 4-8 December, 2005. The scholars from U.K. U.S.A, India, China, Malaysia, Indonesia, Tajikistan and Iran participated in the congress. On the same subject, 2 short films by Daryoosh Mehrjooyu and Hasan Naghashi and a clip

by Dr. Mostafa Goodarri, and an exhibition were organized by the Organisers. The first part of the Congress was held at Tehran on 4-5 December, 2005.

The International Congress was formally inaugurated by Dr. Gholamhossein Ebrahim Dinani on 4th of December, 2005 at 10.00 am, in the Vahdat Hall, Tehran. In the first academic session (in the afternoon) on- Nature of Indian Culture and Art five scholars presented their papers. Dr. Mehrdad Ahmadian Chaired the session. The session started with the brilliant presentation of Dr. Ramin Jahanbanghi (Iran) on the subject 'Nature in the Thought of Tagore'. For Tagore, the essence of Man is the Infinite which is inherent in him. His "Dharma" is to become the Infinite which he already is. His fulfillment is to break the limitations of his narrow selfhood and bringing himself in contact with Nature. Man's deepest joy is in growing greater in terms of a profounder union with Nature. Tagore believed that education must develop the personality of the child in the context of Nature and to allow the child to be in tune with it. He wanted to allow the child to imbibe the beauties of Nature, to allow the

expanse of the sky, the quietness of the evening and the promise of the morning, to permeate the personality of the child. Tagore knew that there are clashes and conflicts in the world, but he also knew that they are finally overcome in a larger harmony. According to him, man experiences reality on multiple levels of life which bring him in an ever-growing relationships with all reality. Man's civilization is built upon his surplus. The surplus in him draws him toward creative life and harmony with Nature.

The next presentation by Prof. Indranath Choudhuri (India) on 'Nature and the Literary Cultures of India was equally brilliant (for details see paper on annexure – i).

Third presentation by Dr. Habibullah Ayatollahi (Iran) gave his impression about the 'Nature in Oriental Art'. According to him, Nature and space have always occupied minds of several artists and also are their best teachers. But artist' conceptions of space and nature are not necessarily the same. Certainly, their conceptions are completely different from the conceptions of ordinary people. For ordinary people, the weather to breath is perceived as space, but for the artist, space is unperceivable and unexplainable. The artist's conception of Space and Nature which is manifested on the painting is not only his internal space, but it's the composition of external space with his internal space, which then is represented as the space within the frame of painting and its external part and it is "this internal and external relation" which is the essence of art for any artist. This conception and its relationship with culture, geography, history, rituals, etc. cause the examination of nature in works of arts, whether in various countries or various schools of a country (e.g. Harat School or Tabriz School).

Dr. B.L. Malla (India) presented his paper on the subject on the 'Nature of Art and Art of Nature'. In his presentation he has tried to highlight that both the

classical and vernacular artistic traditions of India have their roots in Nature and its Cosmic Order. (for details see paper on Annexure – ii & iii).

In the last presentation of the day Prof. Mohammad Reaz Rikhtehgaran spoke about the 'Nature in Indian thought'. According to him, *Prakriti* in Hinduism is quite close in meaning to what is called in European language as Nature. In Sankia tradition, which is one of the cults of Hinduism, *Prakriti* opposes *Purusha*. *Prakriti* has a nominative nature, whereas *Purusha* has a passive one.

Prakriti is created due to the balance among four qualities : (1) *Gunas* (2) *Rajas* (3) *Tamas* and (4) *Sattua*. *Sattua* is a progressive quality and is impressed by light.

Tamas is a decaying quality and goes toward darkness. And *rajas* is the quality that causes other things move toward *tamas* and *sattua*. *Prakriti* creates balance among these qualities in everything.

But in Greek inoculation the closest word to Nature is *fusis*.

Fusis has a similar meaning to "Phainesthai" which means emergence and glittering and also is synonym to "phos" which means light.

As a final analysis, *Prakriti* is observing an object, created due to the balance of *Sattua*, *Tamas*, and *Rajas* in it. This observation according to the terminology of the theosophists appears only in God and if it is emerged in the testimonial world, *fusis* will emerge as well.

5-12-2005

On 5th December, 2005 the morning session started with the presentation of Dr. Gholamreza Avani (Iran) on the subject 'Nature on the Convenient of God'. In the next presentation of the day, on 'Nature in the View of Iranian Painter', Dr. Mahdi Hosseini (Iran) opines that the Nature has been always an interesting to the Iranians and we can find such reverence and respect among our poetry, literature and also paintings : trees, flowers, the moon, the sun, mountains, seas, etc. But such natural elements have not been drawn just as a realistic view towards the Nature, but there main goals have been to note the humanistic thoughts. With the presence of many active, diligent young artists, Iranian contemporary painting will have a very luminous future. As for the Nature the Iranian artists do not have just an image from it, but that has been always a means for expressing their thought, emotions, etc.

Dr. Daneskour Parvar (Iran) in her presentation on 'The Impact of Iranian Culture in China' said that the extended relationship of Iran and China, during the past and the present have made it possible to interact with each other and its effects are seen in several fields like art, religion, polity and culture on both of these ancient countries. The effects of Persian culture on China are remarkable. Mongolian period in China (Yvan) which was simultaneous with Mongolian period in Iran was the peak of these effects. During Ming dynasty, penetration of Persian culture was manifested in form of Persian words and poems on Chinese vessels.

The lecture was followed by a Indian Music presentation (*sitar*) by the Dr. Lovely Sharma (India).



It was followed by a brilliant and thought provoking illustrated presentation on 'Nature in Eastern Art' by our preceptor Respected Dr. (Mrs.) Kapila Vatsyayan (India). She was of the opinion that the 'Nature in Eastern Art' sounds a simple subject, but in fact it is a vast and complex subject, which can be comprehended on many levels, the purely literal to the metaphorical to the philosophic and metaphysical, and of course cosmological.



Also, primary is the question of understanding the notion of 'Nature' in the English language and its many interpretations through history, and the many cognates of the word in the diverse languages of the Eastern world, ranging from Persian to Sanskrit to Chinese, Korean and Japanese, to name only a few. The moment we address ourselves to this linguistic spectrum, it will be clear that each of these languages and the word used for 'Nature' embody a world view and perspective about the universe and more specifically life on 'earth'.

The first introductory part of her presentation addressed some 'issues' which emerge from the diversity of interpretations on the notion of 'Nature' in Eastern culture. Focussing specially on Sanskrit, the word *Prakriti*, for example, cannot be equated to the English word 'Nature' or for the matter other word in Persian, Chinese or Japanese. After her lecture Dr. Luo Shiping (China) presented his paper on 'Nature in Reality and Nature in the Inner Image'.

In the afternoon session, on the subject 'Nature in Iranian Thought and Art', the first presentation on the 'Nature in the Thought of Zoroaster' was by Dr. Nazhat Safaye Esfahani (Iran). In her presentation, she spoke about various aspects of ancient Iranian philosophy and poetry. She explained the Creature

and Nature in the thought of Zoroaster, who considered Ormazd as the only God. She also discussed about the representation of Ormazd and his physical equivalents on the earth, and finally his prophetic mission and its relationship with Nature.

The next interesting presentation on 'Why Islamic Art does not believe in Naturalism (Relationship of Nature and Art in Islamic Theosophy)?' was by Dr. Shahram Pazuki. She said that some of the critics believe that in the Islamic art and studies there is no place for Naturalism. Some of them believe in the Islamic art to be abstract. Islamic art does not represent things and it deals with concepts and ideas.

Naturalism is a specific inoculation of Art and Nature. This inoculation not only does not exist in Islamic art but also has no place in Eastern art in medieval period. The Traditional Greeks, Islamic theosophists and Christians who did not believe in medieval ideas focused on a special meaning of art and is different with what has caused immersion of Naturalism in the modern world. In the first part of her presentation, she discussed about the meaning of Naturalism and the reasons of its emersion. In the second part, the definition of Nature in Islamic theosophy and its relation with Islamic art was described. It was followed by presentations by Dr. Zahra Rahnavard (Iran) and Dr. Eleanor Sims (U.S.A.) on the 'Tradition and Nature in Oriental Art', and 'The Silver Stream in the Foreground', respectively.

Last presentation of the day by Dr. Abdulmajid Kiyani (Iran) and his son on 'Nature and Modal Music (Dastghah)' was excellent and thought- provoking. According to Dr. Kiyani, Undoubtedly, one of the major characteristics of Oriental art is its relationship with Nature. Oriental arts are inspired by Nature. Particularly Iranian music, specifically modal music, is representations of Nature and also Iranian culture and traditions.

The most tangible motif which represents vital Nature in modal music are notes of birds. Of course, birds of abloom plains of Kashan, Yazd and Shiraz.

Moreover, the representation of stars of the desert sky in sounds of Iranian instrument is considerable.

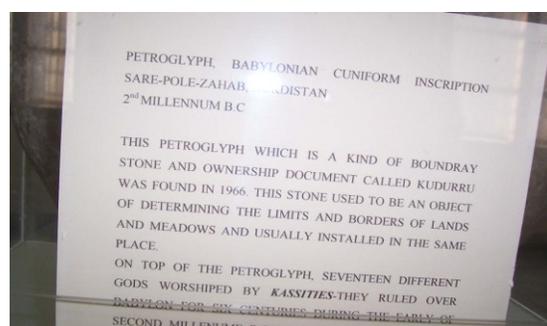
In his presentation, the author tries to signify the inspirations of Nature in modal music in order to achieve a better perception of them while listening.

1. The nature of sky and stars in sounds of instruments and relationship of distance of chants with distance of stars, also their systematic movements in music and its manifestation by magnifying the sounds. (in association of : Mehrdad Kiyani)
2. The effects of landscapes and gardens on the Iranian music.
3. The notes of birds, specifically nightingale, as a symbolic language in Iranian music.
4. The lecture was accompanied by live performance of related samples of music.

The days proceedings ended with the musical performance by Mr. Souroush Ensemble, and composed by Dr. Abdulmajid Kiyani.

6-12-2005

On 6th December 2005 morning, the delegates visited the National Museum of Iran. In 1375, Museum of Islamic period was separated from Iran Bastan Museum to be established as an independent Museum in its new building. The artifacts preserved in museum are on exhibit in the chronological order. Examples of the first stone tools made by man in Iran about half a million to one million years ago, up to the historic period of late Sassanid period (651 A.D.) are on display here. The old artifacts conserved in Iran Bastan



Museum are Stone Age tools unearthed at Gang par (Rostam Abad, Gilan) and Kashaf Road, in the northeastern Iran. They are a testimony to human presence in Iran from the earliest times. Since settlement on Iranian plateau has went on without disruption, numerous different civilisation have taken shape in prehistoric and historic periods of Iran, whose monuments/monumental remains are visible in various archaeological sites: Sarab (Kirmanshah); Ismail Abad (Karaj); Cheshmeh Ali (Shahr-e Rey); Shahbad (Kirman); Shahr-e soukhteh (Sistan); Marv Dasht(Fars); Susa and Tehogha Zambil (Khuzistan); Sialk(Kashan); Marlik (Gilan); Hasanlou (West Azerbaidjan); Ziwiye(Kurdistan); etc.

In the afternoon, the delegates were taken to the inauguration of the exhibition in 'Nature in Art', organized by the Academy of Arts, Tehran. In the exhibition the paintings of many artists from Iran on different aspects of nature were displayed. The attendance of the visitors in the exhibition especially youth was quite encouraging for the artists.





I International Congress- 'Nature in Oriental Art'

(b) Yazd- Congress Proceedings and Visit
to Historical Places





The second part of the Congress was held at Yazd on 7-8 December 2005.

Yazd is one of the oldest and a typical city in Iran. Some of the Islamic historians attribute its construction to Alexander the Great, who built a prison there for great men and at the



A View of Yazd Museum

beginning of the Islamic era Yazd was known as Alexander's prison. The city is hot in summer, cold in winter and moderate in spring and autumn. The city is located at a distance of 677 kms. from Tehran and 316 kms. from Isfahan, with a population of our 282,751 in 1992.

Yazd is famous for its architecture and is one of the most beautiful cities among the desert cities. Yazd province has most important gathering centres of Zoroastrians, who are living in those area from ancient times. About 72 kms. from the city there is sacred place called Pir-e-Sabz-e-Check Check, where some Zoroastrians from different parts of the world gather for religious ceremony every summer.

Yazd is also famous for *Jame* Mosque. Its portal and dome is a masterpiece of Islamic architecture. One of the architectural and artistic distinctions of this mosque is the construction and the tile work of its high portal. It also has tile work on its porticoes, outside and inside appearance along with an inscription.

At Yazd, the first presentation of the morning session on 7th December 2005 was by Dr. Bahram Ahmadi (Iran) on 'Studying and Analysing Materials and Components being used in the Iranian Painting'. Materials used in Iranian painting are refined and enriched by following the experiments of other nations. Besides the utilization of experiments of related scientists, Iranian

painters prepared and provided their materials by their own. They learned some remarkable knowledge of recognition and utilization of materials and their integration. They learned to use them in the appropriate way in order to satisfy their needs. In fact, they were not just honorable artists, but also sophisticated artisans.

The Iranian artists and artisans who were involved in painting and related activities, enormously tried to provide their materials by their own and they rarely acquired them from other countries. In fact, it became possible by rich and various nature of Iran. Undoubtedly, one of the major sources of formation of Iranian painting was the geography and climate of Iran. A glance at materials used by Iranian painters and a little knowledge of geography of Iran approve this idea. Still, after centuries, one is astonished, seeing these colourful paintings of Iranian artist, even in a page of a book. They are still admirable.

Admiration of Iranian painting is not only restricted to utilization of materials. But, this is also tangible in selecting of tools. In Iranian painting, specifically in traditional Iranian painting, tools were provided by Nature and Environment.

A complete list of materials, with necessary explanations, used by Iranian artist is provided. Some of them are: Pomegranate, Cochineal, Glue, Paste, Saffron, Oil, Honey, Face powder, Albumen, Marble, Mulberry, Milk, Sugar, Syrup, Vinegar, Gum, Gold, Silver, Wood, Wax, Patina, Rust, Henna, Smut (soot). Next presentation by Dr. Mohammad Reza Oliva (Iran) was on 'Nature and Beyond – Nature'.

In the afternoon, Dr. John F. Quinn (U.S.A.) presented his paper on 'Chinese Landscape Painting: Beyond Aesthetics to Philosophy'. In his presentation he reviewed the Chinese tradition of landscape painting (familiar mountains and rivers) from the perspective of four philosophical ways to capture Nature as a

whole. These ways are Taoism, Buddhism, Confucianism, and Neo-Confucianism. His argument cuts across the usual Northern and Southern schools and gives reasons to show that the Chinese go beyond the aesthetics of landscapes to show how the philosophical meaning of the landscape becomes the primary objective in the painting of Nature. Such principles as *Chi, li, yin* and *yang, jen* are cultivated in the different cultures of Chinese landscape paintings. Each of the four philosophies shapes the aesthetics used to convey an attitude about Nature. Buddhism, for example, places emphasis on the impermanence, *annica*, of Nature. "In this mental cosmos, phenomenal matter has no fixed form or reality, no permanence, and all existence is in a constant state of flex." Dong Yuan of the Suang Dynasty adopts this philosophy which was also current in the Tang Dynasty. Taoism emphasizes the *Tao* of Nature where *chi*, the balancing of *yin* and *yang*, by *li*, the arrangement of things as they are, becomes the goal. He has been considered Neo-Confucian because he transcends not only aesthetics but the limits of the other three philosophies by "seeing as a mountain". Other examples are chosen to illustrate the four philosophical attitudes towards the painting of Nature in Chinese landscapes.

Dr. Zhuo Lou (China) in his presentation on 'From a Parable of Painting to Study Chuangtzu's Nature view and the Relationship between Human being and Nature' said that the original idea is not to talk about the painting, but through it to illustrate the nature view of the philosopher Chuangtse and the relationship between Human and Nature. The drawing painted for SongyuanJun is "a pattern of the mountain and field in the country" and yet the Nature in Chuangtse's sight. Nature is called "sky" in Chuangtse's philosophy. He suggested the "Sky" and the "Human" as a couple of concept. In (Chuangtse, Sky and Earth), it was said "to do it by do nothing is called sky", Guoxiang expounded it, and said "let it be Nature, it's the Sky; do it by intention, it's the Human". Using their painting brushes, all painters working for SongyuanJun wanted to standardise and display the country's landscape they faced. It's just "do it by intention". While, the late painter did nothing. He

had a disrobing-sitting, exposed his natural body, replied the Nature by doing nothing, just let it be Nature. So SongyuanJun said that he is the real painter. Whether or not he would start his painting is not important. Maybe, he would not touch his painting brush up to end, to do it really by nothing, to comply perfectly with the Tao. Maybe, the thinking, which the story brings to people, is more close to Chuangtse's philosophy.

Dr. Zhaug Shian (China) gave his impression about the representation of multi-dimensional space from reality to painting. According to him, both Chinese and European have their own way to translate space and time into two dimensional and motionless painting.

In middle ages, European watching the world by the way of "Standstill Observation", which means to stand at a certain point in a specific time, and have a view. They think a painting is suite to express static. They have a system which help them to study volume and space in painting that have only two dimension, to show what they see by the means of "Standstill Observation", and get ride of the restrict of two dimensional media.

While Chinese take the way of "Active Observation". The sight flowing while the observer moving his body around. Chinese treat the whole world as a unification of the infinite space and time. A painting should, and also could, express the static or active substance in the real world. They have their own system to organize their instantaneous collection: a system called "Graphic Translation Display". By those system, Chinese stressed the characteristic of two dimensional media. Based on their own theory and way of observation, Europe oil painting and mural, in order to express the passing by time, create a

“Brief and concentrate” system : show people a important fragment, to hint the past and the future.

Based on another theory, Chinese mural and folk painting used the system of “Display over all” show scenes continuously, and display all kind of details directly.

8-12-2005

On 8th December 2005, the morning session started with the presentation of Dr. Mohammad Reza Riazi (Iran) on ‘Naturalism in Sassanid Art’. Naturalism in this presentation was defined as the representation of concrete world by Sassanid artists. But those who are familiar with the Iranian art unanimously believe that the Iranian art works are involve with an abstract and subjective world and they are rarely representations of realistic and naturalistic objects. But it should be said that, definitely this idea is true about pre-Islamic periods. Of course this is a reasonable fact, because the Iranian art before Islam was always religious and artist were fed by religion and religious matters. But realism and naturalism are the products of worldly mind. If any society in periods of its history achieves developed civilisations, undoubtedly realism will find an opportunity as a result of such urban civilisation.

Dr. Masond Golestan Habibi (Iran) in his presentation on ‘Art and Nature in Islamic Mysticism’ said that in the eyes of Islamic mystics and masters, learned man of the earth and nature though is in the lower grades of the orders of existence and at the end of the curve of descent is glorified by the mystics and therefore artists.

Nature is the manifestation of God's beauty. The essence of God, in account of beauty is shining in all the things and of course there is majesty for this beauty which is god's revengefulness and veil in glory and greatness of Majesty. In other words, the essence of God is suited by various mutual epithets, the Catholic of which are epithets of Beauty and Majesty. In the nature of a Beauty epithet is laying Majesty and a Majesty epithet, Beauty.

Epithets of Beauty are analogous with presence and obviousness and epithets of Majesty with concealment and secrecy and therefore in the Persian literature face of beauteous in presence corresponds with representation of beauty and in secrecy with that of Majesty.

In his presentation on 'The Mythological position of Nature from the Viewpoint of Oriental art' Dr. Mohammad Reza Rour Jasar (Iran) said that the Nature and its related mythologies, constantly in art history, have been the teacher and the guide of human being. Appearance of natural elements and a special attitude towards this subject have been seen in ancient civilizations, which own rich old cultures. Indian folk paintings as the part of Oriental art, are manifested in more than twenty genres; Nature in each of these genres is paralleled to the work of art and depicted the mythologies and belief of India.

Dr. M. Ashrafi (Tajik) in his paper on 'Nature in Miniature Painting' explains that in the art of miniature, Iranian artist was permanently interested in Nature and Environment, specifically for colouring. The colouring of miniature was almost inspired by real landscapes of Nature. In the primary samples of miniature (belonging to 12th century A.D.) Nature was one of the major components. With conquest of Mongolians, like the other fields of science and art, the art of miniature was influenced by some changes. Mongolians enhanced Chinese style and manner in Baghdad and Tabriz where were the

cultural centers (e.g. Khaje Rashiddodin). In the miniatures of this period, natural landscapes of mountains, rivers and plains are visible. In the 14th century A.D. Chinese and Roman style accompanied with vernacular styles and traditions are tangible in the art of miniature.

Last presentation, of the congress on ‘Flowers in Mughal Art’ was by Dr. Susan Stronage (England). She said that the most characteristic motifs of Mughal decoration are almost certainly flowering plants. Set in semi-precious stones into the white marble of the Taj Mahal, carved in red sandstone in the structures of the royal cities, or outlines in rubies, diamonds and emeralds on enameled gold vessels, the asymmetrically blossoming plants arranged in symmetrical rows are the dominant motif in the arts of the reign of Shah Jahan (1628-58 A.D.). Similar designs continued to be used by later emperors and provincial rulers until the 19th century in order to make a conscious link to the reign of the most splendid Mughal emperor.

The floral motifs played an essential part of the presentation of the court as described in an architectural inscription in the *Diwan-e- Khas* (Hall of Private Audience) of Shah Jahan’s new city, Shahjahanabad in Delhi : “If there be Paradise on earth, it is this, it is this, it is this” (*Agar ferdows bar ruy-ezamin ast hamin ast-o hamin ast-o hamin ast*).

On 8th December 2005 afternoon, delegates were taken to Abarkooh on an invitation of Mayor of Abarkooh to see the historical mosque, ice-house, and the mythological old cypress tree. Abarkooh is located on the main road of Yazd – Shiraz, 140 km., to the west of Yazd, with the area of 5752 sq. km. Abarkooh is a historical town in the sand desert. All of the historical buildings of this town are very beautiful, especially the ancient cedar of five thousand years old.

The **Abarkooh Jamme Mosque** belongs to *Sejjik* period, traces of Pre-Islamic period (Zoroastrian) are found in its south-west side. The mosque has been constructed by mud and mud-brick.



Ice Tower (*Vakhchal Kheshty*)

Ice Tower (*Vakhchal Kheshty*) with the height of about 20 meters is made of raw-earth. In this house people kept ice for the summer.

Old Cypress of Abarkooh (about 4000 years old) is about 25 meters high and



its thickness is 11.5 meters. As for Cypress of Abarkooh, the researchers believe that it is the oldest tree in the world. After thousands of years, this old cypress is still green and alive in the vastness of Yazd dessert in Abarkooh town. Recently, some Japanese and Russian researchers have surveyed the tree and estimated its age up to 8 thousands years. Some researchers believe that it has been planted by Yafes, the son of Noah, the prophet.

In ancient texts, Cypress is the symbols of immortality and eternal life. And that is why Cypress remind Ormuzd, the ancient God among ancient Persians that is immortal. Achaemenians had also used Cypress in many of their artistic works. This shows their attention towards it.

On 9th December 2005, we returned back to Tehran and on 10th December 2005 visited Academy of Arts to collect some documents and books. We were back to Delhi on 11th December 2005 evening.

**Indo-Iranian Collaboration:
Suggestions by
President, IGNCA Trust**



We had a very fruitful discussion with Dr. (Mrs.) Kapila Vatsyayan, Founder IGNCA, and presently, President of the IGNCA Trust, during our visit to Iran. As ever, she showed her great concern for the betterment and development of the academic activities of the IGNCA. She made some **suggestions** in this regard:

- (a) IGNCA should publish the parallel volume of the papers presented in the International Congress on 'Nature in Oriental Art' (with English translation of Persian papers).
- (b) IGNCA should explore the possibility of translating the published Persians books/ manuscripts of the Academy of Arts, Tehran, and their publication in English.
- (c) We may collect addresses of all the scholars who presented their papers in the International Congress.
- (d) We may consider to invite renowned Musicologist Dr. Abdolmajid Kiyani, who presented his latest research, along with his son, in the Congress.
- (e) IGNCA in collaboration with the Iranian Academy of Art may explore the possibility of publishing a joint volume on Musical Instruments, with articles by both Iranian and Indian scholars.
- (f) IGNCA may explore the possibility of Institutional collaboration with Golestan library for our micro-film project.

- (g) We may procure a list of rare/important Persian manuscripts, books from Dr. Eleanor Sims (U.S.A.), who is an authority on Persian texts/paintings.

Follow-up/Action Taken

- (a) Regarding parallel volume/translation of the Congress papers the matter was discussed with Dr. N. Motlagh, Secretary Academy of Arts, Tehran (Iran). He has agreed to our proposal in principle. A formal proposal letter from our Member Secretary is to be sent to the Secretary in this regard.
- (b) Regarding the translation of the selected Persian publications of the Academy into English, Dr. Motlagh has agreed in principle. We may include this point in our proposal letter and request him to sent a list of their publications.
- (c) We had requested the organizers to send the complete address, alongwith Fax No's, Telephone No's, and E-mail of all the participants of the Congress to us. In Tehran, they were able to give us e-mail/Telephone No's of some foreign delegates only.
- (d) We may invite Dr. Adolmajid Kiyani at appropriate time. We are perusing with the Academy to get his complete address.
- (e) We may explore the possibility of a joint volume on Musical Instruments/Music in collaboration with the Academy of Art, Iran and Dr. Adolomajid Kiyani.

- (f) We were not able to visit Golestan library. But we can approach the library directly or through Iran-cultural House, New Delhi or Academy of Arts (Tehran) for the institutional collaboration.

- (g) Dr. Eleanor Sims has been requested to provide us with the list of important Persian publication to be acquired for our library. She has agreed to do so.

Annexure (i)

Presentation of Prof. I. N. Choudhari

Nature, Indian Art, Literary Culture and Culture of Development

Prof. Indra Nath Choudhuri

“Aesthetics determines cultural ecology”



The man-nature relationship is at the core of India's complete holistic perspective of the universe but in this fast changing world with tremendous technological advancement one feels at a loss to find the severance of the relation resulting in environmental crisis. It has taken



today, quite a serious proportion but in India people are not showing much concern about it. The situation today reminds one sometimes of the last few hours of the Titanic when people were playing music while the ship was sinking.

It is not that people are absolutely unconcerned about it. But in the third world the environmental consciousness becomes insignificant because of deplorable economic condition of the people which forces people to misuse the resources and create an ecological crisis.

The whole issue of ecology sprung up because of the obsession of the West for progress, which they thought, could be achieved with the help of science and by controlling nature. The West in the 19th Century and also in the beginning of the 20th Century influenced by scienticism went all out for progress but very

soon realised that nature could not be controlled by science rather on the contrary it gave rise to a global rat race for progress, dehumanized people with added stress and strain in their lives and also greed and covetousness which resulted in turning of human beings into pathological entities and giving way to civilizational conflicts. Greed leads one to produce more and to consume more and to self-indulgence. To produce more one exploits the resources and destroys nature and creates a monolithic structure of oneness which breeds dominance. The Indian ethos of plurality, on the contrary, is to care for both nature and human beings and to go for cooperation and also a sense of togetherness (*sarvodaya*).

The west then gave a new slogan of development.

This new god of development very soon divided the one world into three worlds and introduced western paradigm of development for the sake of modernization which created more problems rather solve them.

It introduced a strong idea that the continuation and obstructive persistence of tradition would block substantial modernization as traditional values and institutions are incompatible with modernity.

The assumption is erroneous and has created many problems particularly the ecological crisis. The latest slogan of the west is cooperation and ecology. Now the west has understood that the poverty of the south is depleting the ozone layers. South's poverty is affecting the ecology and it is dangerous for the north. In the name of cooperation west has introduced multi-culturalism and also a rationalist environmental ethics based on agnosticism. But one must realise and I quote Seyyed Hossein Nasr that the environmental crisis cannot be solved by good engineering or better engineering, cannot be solved by economic planning, cannot even be solved by cosmetic changes in our conception of development and change. It also can't be solved by a rationalist

environmental ethics based on scientific knowledge. It requires a very radical transformation in our consciousness and this means not discovering a completely new state of consciousness, but returning to the state of consciousness which traditional humanity always had. It means to rediscover the traditional way of looking at the world of nature as sacred presence¹.

In the tradition of India when a person started his speech on a formal occasion he addressed the congregation as follows :

Namah sadase, namah sadasah, namah sadasapatye, namah sakhinam, namah purogamam, namah dive, namah prithirvey, namah aushidhvaya sprabha sama me gopayah

I bow to the assembly, I bow to the members of the assembly, I bow to the chief of assembly, I bow to the leaders of the assembly, I bow to heaven and the earth, to herbs and plants. May this assembly be protected.

This only indicates the man-nature relationship is at the core of India's complete holistic perspective of the universe. West looks at things in fragmentation – western mind has learnt to accept 'fragmentation' as an analytic method. The western view is to reduce all problems into binary oppositions but Indian mind believes in holistic view of life. A view of the close relationship of nature and man is very much found in the Islamic tradition and at the same time it says that nature is beautiful because it is infused with the light of the Almighty. In other words Man, nature and the Divine almighty are all intertwined with each other. The great poet Rumi says :

As you drift towards soullessness, how many you become intimate with the soul of the inanimate?

Enter from the intimate (state) into the world of the soul.
Only then, may you hear the whisper of the parts of this world.

Tradition or heritage includes all the qualities, or features of life of a country that have continued over many years and have been passed on from one

generation to another. Heritage or tradition of a country creates its ethos and perspectives. In Indian situation tradition is not static, it absorbs in it new ideas which become parts of the tradition and makes it ever vibrant.

One can understand it with the help of two terms, *Kula* and *Shila* nicely explained by Niharranjan Ray. *Kula* is heredity, inheritance, and tradition. *Shila* is the making of man, his demeanour and personality, which are conditioned by *Kula*. *Shila* in its own given time and space goes on discarding elements of *Kula* which have lost their potency and in the process generates new modes of thought and action and thereby ensures the continuity of a culture.

In the Indian context, there is no such divide as great tradition and little tradition representing the *margi (shastra)* and *desi (loka)* tradition. They are two different expressions of the same tradition or two poles of the same continuum. What these two forms of the same tradition think about nature and environment. Infact, air, water, soil, plants, animal lives, man are all component of the environment. Thus, nature and society or *prakriti* and *samaj* (the aggregate of social and cultural conditions that influence the life of an individual or community) constitute environment.

Man's life depends upon and is conditioned by all that surrounds him and sustains him. Man's duty is to constantly remind him – in individual and collective life – of the environment and the ecology. Such veneration is no animistic primitive fear; it is wisdom contained in the writings of the golden age of which human beings have dreamt. It is a way of thinking and being in nature – a serious way to practice deep ecology as written in a haiku of the 18th century:

Buddha – Dharma
Shining
In leaf dew²

Tagore by referring to the plays of Shakespeare says that the extreme tragic intensity of 'Hamlet' and 'Othello' is unrelieved by any touch of nature's eternity. Excepting in a passing glimpse of a moonlight night in the love scene in the 'Merchant of Venice' nature has not been allowed in other dramas of this series including 'Romeo and Juliet' and 'Antony and Cleopatra' to contribute her own music to the music of man's love. In 'The Winter's Tale' the suspicious cruelty of a king's love stands bare in its relentlessness, and nature cowers before it offering no consolation. Tagore says that Shakespeare's great power as a dramatic poet cannot be challenged but his main purpose is to show in his works the gulf between nature and human nature and the interpenetration of the human life and the cosmic life of the world³. On the contrary, one can see the harmony between nature and man, between the life of the individual and life in all-round the cosmos in the play 'Shakuntala' or 'Kumara-Sambhava' by Kalidasa. Tagore finds in nature the presence of the Infinite and man's abiding happiness is to give himself up to what is greater than himself and be one with it and hence nature and man are always in close relationship with each other⁴. To cite just one example from his book of poetry 'The Fugitive';

"You give yourself to me, like a flower that blossoms at night, whose presence is known by the dew that drips from it, by the fragrance shed through the darkness, as the first steps of spring are by the buds that thicken the twigs.

You break upon my thought like waves at the high tide, and my heart is drowned under surging songs.

My heart knew of your coming, as the night feels the approach of dawn. The clouds are aflame and my sky fills with a great revealing flood."

Indian literature portrays nature comprehensively in all its aspects: the beauty and splendour of nature; nature as a medium for expressing poet's emotions and feelings, nature as being alive and rational capable of sentience, often acting and behaving as human beings and thus interacting with the human

world; nature as a repository of ethical and spiritual truths and nature as a manifestation of the Universal Divine spirit⁵.

Our basic ethos have taught us to live in harmony with nature in a relationship of mutual dependence and express a deep reverence towards the earth on which we dwell, the air we breathe, the water which purifies and gives life, the fire that transforms and space which gives us the vastness to live. The Indian tradition has produced a unique contribution to thought that characteristically look inward upon the universe. A splendid example of this is that man is made of five elements of the material world, which at death disintegrate and dissolve into nature. There is no doubt that, at least in the Indian context, the creativity of the arts has grown out of a re-enactment of the cosmos, of human life and of the divine, and therefore, the environment is not limited to nature, but a part of the complete scheme which includes the cosmos, man and the divine⁶.

The Indian worldview does not allow for a dichotomy between matter and spirit, man and nature. Whatever one sees on this earth is the manifestation of that supreme one. The first three decades of the 20th century Indian literature is known as the 'romantic' period of Indian literature. Its primary objective was to search for all – pervasive presence of the Divine in all entities. All existence – earth, heaven, plants, nature, living and non-living objects – is conceived here as the parts of one great person (*purusa*) who pervades the world, but also remains beyond it. Man and nature are parts of the Universal Divine spirit and they remain inseparable (*abheda*) from it. Nature is perceived as a manifestation of the same Divine spirit, which manifests itself as man. These 'romantic' poets see an essential unity between man and nature. They do not treat nature as dead and insentient inorganic matter, but treats it as alive and rational and also sees it as interacting with the human world⁷. The Indian view is that with man and nature together the multifariousness (*Vaichitrya*) of the universe is established. Tagore says that man as one is without meaning

because there is no unity in one. The one with many is real one, or entity. This unity gives you the message of truth.

Any worldview of a culture is based on certain image models of the fundamental forms of reality known as radical metaphors. Radical metaphors are elements connected with nature e.g. tree, mediates between sacred and profane between sky and earth and enigmatizes the achievement of transcending knowledge. Similarly, any worldview is based on certain archetypes, which are basic ideas of a culture known as starting points, or underlying impression e.g. vedic archetype *satya*, is the eternal truth or the Truth of Being. With *satya* there is *rta*, the cosmic order, the realities of the physical world, the self regulative law of harmony, the Truth of Becoming.

Satya is *Prama*, the idea and *rta* is *pratima*, the realization of the original idea, what Plato will say imitation of the original. *Satya* is the archetype and *rta* is the ectype.

Whatever one sees on this earth is the manifestation of that Supreme One and this leads to the famous Upanishadic statement that there is only one and that is all pervading and this creates the Indian world view that the whole earth is one family *vasudhaiva kutumbukam*. In this holistic view all life is one and inner and external realities are mutually dependent. Hence a tree is not a utilitarian object but a member of the family. This does not allow any upsetting of the balance of the earth and destruction of the fabric of nature. In nature nothing is created nothing is destroyed but everything is transformed. From the fallen leaves of the tree new plants emerge. This is also known as conservation of matter. Biotic community is one structure with two parts. One part consists of natural environment, soil, air, water, fire and ether and the other part consists of animal specie and human beings. There exists an intricate and extensive network of links between these two parts.

If a single unit of these links is damaged, it would destroy and weaken the whole structure. Traditional India looks upon man and nature as ‘waves of the same river’⁸. The traditional Indian attitude to progress is harmony with nature’s rhythm. Even today when a tribal of Santhal Bengal is asked by an agriculture expert to plant mahogany trees in a row for a long-term profit he will not do it because that disturbs the ecological rhythm. A mahogany tree has to be planted with a *kusum* and a *sidha* tree on both sides, because at night they talk and make love with each other.

In the classical *margi* tradition the trees are believed to have their own deep-rooted longing to enjoy in one form or another the touch of a beautiful damsel. If the Asoka tree would not blossom then the slender-waisted damsel’s lotus soft foot jingling with its anklet touches it and at that very instant it starts flowering. The Sanskrit literature is abound with this kind of description. A Kushana sculpture from Mathura now in the National Museum is an ideal example of the damsel kicking the Asoka tree for causing untimely blossoming of flowers for decking herself.

This is the folk and classical belief, which knows well that nature is a sacrosanct living organism capable of experiencing pain and pleasure. Tribals know that there is only one path to survival and that path is the ecological one of harmony between man and nature. To give an example from *margi* (classical) tradition that nature is also a living being, one can refer to the mantra chanted during the worship of Lord Shiva with *bel* leaves :

“I pluck the leaves from the bel tree – please excuse me, I am hurting you for the sake of Shiva, your leaves are very dear to Siva”.

Kalidasa describes the holistic perspective of the universe beautifully in the play *Shakuntala*. When foster father Kanva seeks the permission from the

trees, flora and fauna of the Ashram to allow *Shakuntala* to go to her husband's house he says:

“Ye trees that surround the hermitage give your blessings to Shakuntala who never thought of raising water to her lips till your thirst was quenched, who loves adornment of her body with flowers yet would not pluck a single tender spring, whose greatest joy was to see you put forth your first blossoms, give her your kind leave to go to her husband's house”⁹.

The essence of this dual tradition is to live in partnership rather than the exploitation of nature. Life consists essentially of a process of inter change between the life substance and the environment. The process is explained by a term *yantra rudha* (18.61) from the Gita which means a wheel provided with buckets for the irrigation of fields. The direct association of man's constant effort to preserve the environment and consequently to be preserved by it is a cyclic process seeking unity between environment and man¹⁰. The Indian literature and art are full of examples of this unity between man and nature. In the famous epic Ramayana when Rama shed tears in great grief for Sita, the mountain *Risyamuka*, though hard rock, proverbially hard-hearted, would loudly lament in sheer agony at that sight as Bhavabhuti, the great Sanskrit playwright would put it. The tears of Sita could not be shed without the entire forest with all its denizens reciprocating her grief, as the peacocks halt their mirthful dance, the deer drop the luscious green grass nibbled with relish, even the trees and plants shed their flowers like hot tear drops, conjuring up a rare vision of great grief expressed by even the wooden wood¹¹. The modern Gujrati poet Jayant Pathak goes a step further to prove that nature & Man are one and the same. In his poem he says, “I am forest, when face to face, embrace each other in the pervading stillness as if we have been known to each other for ages”.

The Vedic vision of geopietty considers man to be a guardian of natural resources. He replenishes the bounties of the earth rather than plunders it.

Conservation thus means a state of harmony (*rtm*) with land, forest, water and natural environment.

In margi tradition in the vedas it is said:
what ever I dig of you, O Earth
May that grow quickly upon you
O Pure One, may my thrust never
Pierce thy vital points, thy heart¹².

Vedic literary code says that we live in a participatory universe and with genuine caring and sharing comes beauty and bounty and eco balance.

This is where environmental conservation and protection is based on natural law of mutual dependence and reciprocity.

All the world religions view the universe as God's artifact. God is the supreme Artist. God's work is the natural world, visible to the human eye. The Upanisadic sages described it as the cosmic tree. On the symbolic level, "This tree is the great world mother, the Goddess of Nature who nourishes all life with the milk of her breast."

The metaphor of cosmic tree shows that the sacred is the proper context of both art and nature.

Man is inseparable from nature. Man as a part of nature imitates God's primordial works of art. What he does, as an artist, is "cosmography", a kairological art on which all the arts are hung. Ontologically speaking, there are five kairological moments in human consciousness, namely revelation, expression, reflection, identification and tradition. They are mutually interdependent and interrelated and yet each is self-organizing and self-sustaining¹³.

Indian art is infused by an extra ordinary feat of traditional thought – currents which are both simple and complex. At one level, simple words are used so that everybody can understand the nature of art and art of nature. But at a higher level it becomes ‘cosmology’ instead of simple explanation.

At the level of experience, Indian specimens of art are held together by an integral vision in which life functions and creative art are inseparable from myths, rituals, festivals and ceremonies. No dichotomy between the art and nature and also between the sacred and profane is found. The human and the divine are in continuum, in a constant movement of interpretation and transformation. One of the examples is a VCEkCEtaka sculpture from the Ramesvara cave illustrating the personified figures of MenCE and Himavan (mountain Himalaya), welcoming Brahma (creator : one of the Trinity) and the sages who have come to arrange the betrothal of their daughter, Uma with Siva (Destroyer, one of the trinity), where the queen MenCE stands respectfully behind her lord (Himavan) conversing with the holy personages who have come on behalf of Siva¹⁴.

Man’s urge to participate in the cosmic drama is expressed daily through gestures: by offering water with folded hands to the sun god; by kindling the sacred fire; by attrition of the two *aranis* or lighting the home fire; by pouring ghee on the fire by fumigating the home; by pouring water at the foot of trees; by ritual bathing in rivers; by the conservation of sacred groves; by garlanding of domestic animals, infact, by all acts of daily life that become rituals in that they associate man with nature.

Motifs of lotus, swan, fire and water – find vivid expression in Indian literature and art. The lotus symbolises purity and generation and the sun, the symbol of knowledge and truth. Himalayas are the symbol of the upward surge of the human spirit and of the axis around which the entire cosmos revolves. Traditional Indian attitude to progress is brought into accord with natural

rhythm. Things in nature move in their own rhythm and put to use in such a way as to take maximum advantage of that rhythm.

The parables and mystical songs of the Sufis show that the idea of rhythmic universe in which man and nature are seen in a comradely relationship are shared both by the Hindu and the Islamic traditions in India. In the Islamic tradition, nature is a creation of Allah and the Quran devotes chapters pledging an oath to nature. It says, “A single leaf of a green tree is in itself a complete book of the wisdom of creator”.

Despite the traditional holistic view articulated through sacred texts and secular Indian literature as a constant reminder of the need to sustain and foster the ecological balances of nature, we stand today at the threshold of disaster in a manner never before faced by man¹⁵. The present day social environment and its impact on our living are making us lose our association with nature resulting in a new slant in our creativity.

For some it is a life of despair and they are condemned to live in a desolate environment. There are other writers who are trying to catch up again with the golden age where a tree was not only a botanical object but also a mythical incantation and some others are in a quandary. They do not know where to plant their little roses¹⁶. Now they feel that man as a social animal or man as a cog in a machine has lost his connection with nature.

The Hindi poet Agyeya reveals man’s severance from nature when he says

Bird/there is no bird since then, I also do not exist, I¹⁷

It tallies with a revealing mini conversation from Beckett’s Endgame:

Hamm	:	Nature has forgotten us
Clov	:	There is no more nature ¹⁸

As Ian Mectarg has shown the whole of the western world is riddled with a basic fallacy. Man has forgotten that he must work with nature, not against her. Eager and able to use nature, we have successfully 'neutralized' (I.A. Richards) her or as others have said, 'disenchanted' (Paul Tillich) her. Nature is no longer she but it, a faithful distinction (Sisir Kumar Ghosh).

One may ask, how can the field of literature provide a dialogic plane where issues that concern humanity can be articulated forcefully, and a vision for the future formulated?

In modern times, in the pre-independence India writers as individual and groups have had an active guidance role. One can refer to Bankim Chandra Chatterjee, Tagore, Iqbal, Premchand, Subramaniam Bharati, Vallatol and others.

But in the post-independence era it is generally said that because of the modernization process, mainly in economic / industrialization terms little scope has been left for individual writers to guide the society as a result they are now apathetic, frustrated, torn in value-conflict, neo-conservative and security – oriented.

It is further said that they are uncommitted, powerless and politically irrelevant. They, of course, prefer a strong democratic government to run the administration efficiently. Their emphasis on a strong government is to fulfill their dream of living in a country of great magnitude. They write about it by dramatizing anti-establishment feelings but without much effect. They have failed to re-commit them to a cause mobilization for collective action.

Even if writers are not the best mobilizers they at least influence the political activists like Bahugunas of Chipko movement, Medha Patkars of Sardar

Sorovar and Bhanwari Devis of sathin and many others to start their 'Save the Environment movement', and campaign against girl-child marriages and sexual violence, and also to initiate an alternative lifestyle which is environment – friendly. Ananthmurty, a writer of international popularity started an agitation against excessive quarrying of the Westerns Ghat of Karnataka.

Our tragedy is that we are a poor country and have accepted the western model of development which provides us the means to destroy our resources rapidly and tragically our under development furnishes us the reasons, the excuses, and the compulsion to do so and in the process we face unmitigated disaster from both directions poverty from below and development from above and therefore our urgency is greater to change the direction of our

- 1) development, and
- 2) to think of alternative means of development,
- 3) to accept the concept 'Technology with a human face'¹⁹
- 4) and to link development with culture and tradition.

Otherwise, we remain surrounded with an alien and deadly nature as says Muktibodh. "The stars wink like decimal points while the moon bandages the blood-red wounds wrought by Western Sun / In whitened lifeless sheets". And in this situation for Srikant Varma :

"The clouds have gone astray".

Now nature can't stay here among the civilized man who have by pulling the earth and himself out of equilibrium have made our environment desolate and meaningless. Now 'in this city' as Muktibodh says, "there is no sun or moon / in this mist of conspiracy there are shadows of ghosts / under the slipper of Gandhi army boots are reverberating / the selfish baboon are sitting on the turret of the fort / The roads are dark / And one can only listen to the poisonous whispers." Today we have forgotten the directions of our tradition and heritage and polluting the water which is a purifier. Turning mother earth

into arid lands and polluting air and sky which are the place of the gods and polluting sound which is the primeval Nada through the chaos of our life²⁰.

There are two ways of transforming and maintaining a harmonious relationship with our physical and social environment:

- 1) To think or act with ecofeminism that nature is at the centre of our experience and that the destruction of nature is linked with the oppression of women;
- 2) to expose the Western mode of development with totalizing tendencies and go also for an alternative model of development which will allow for the rhythm and movements of human life to be in accordance with nature²¹.

Efforts to be made to safeguard and cherish the environment by rediscovering the key position of women for an alternative model of development especially in the rural areas. These women know well that nature is *Prakriti*, the living force that supports life²². This worldview inspires the building of partnership societies with need-based, sustainable economy rather than greed-based growth economy.

Environmental consciousness along with a basic concern for improving the quality of life aims at liberating nature and women from ceaseless *exploitation* and *marginalisation* respectively. Mahasweta Devi in her story *The Hunt* describes vividly how an illegitimate tribal woman Mary Oraon kills a mafia wood contractor who wanted to rape her and thereby saved the destruction of nature and the honour of women who are tended to be marginalised as sex commodities only.

She resurrects the real meaning of the annual hunting festival day by dealing out justice for a crime committed against the entire tribal society, against forestation, against nature against women and exposes the ills of *patriarchy*,

colonialism and development. The road, the big road symbolising development is the enemy. It will take away whatever crop a tribal grows, and in times of famine and natural disorders like flood the development zealots will come in lorries and trucks and take away their children to be sold in other places as bonded labour and women to be used for sex and then sold for prostitution.

Mary Oraon kills the oppressor of woman, which is justified in our myths where goddess kills male demon to establish the feminine power. The story constructs a sense of sacred nature, which can help mobilize people for ecological justice and for survival of man and woman as part of *Prakriti* to create a vision of an undivided world. It also captures and reconstructs those insights and visions that Indian women provide in their struggles for survival. Western feminism seeks enemies and expresses itself through anger and confrontation which is based on a notion of a totalised oppression of women across cultures and nationalities unleashed by unequal gender, patriarchy and to certain extent, capitalism²³.

Unlike West here in India writers like Ashapura Devi, Shiv Sankari, Sugatha Kumari, Mridula Garg, Padma Sachdev etc. accept feminine construct as a valid construct and uses the inequality to expose the marriage and widowhood, unfair work practices, sexual servitude, the problems of bearing and rearing children in poverty, gender discrimination and other forms of exploitation. Here feminism means total upliftment of the entire society and therefore Ashapura Devi dreams of an ideal domestic scene where women would enjoy the same rights as men in an affirmation of human values. In the writings of Anees Jung also you find these women oppressed as they are, yet they talk of fulfilling relationship, the joys of marriage and children, the exhilaration of breaking free from the bonds of rituals and exploitive social practices and singing with joy and praying in the name of God²⁴.

Feminity, by definition, for these women writers is not a limiting value as says Rajani Kothari but an expanding one – holistic, eclectic, trans-specific and encompassing of diverse stirrings.

Feminity is a struggle for a certain basic principle of perceiving life, a philosophy of Being²⁵. It is a principle and a philosophy that can serve not just women but all human beings.

The second way of transforming and maintaining a harmonious relationship between man and nature, is to expose the notion of progress and development mostly borrowed from the West and to castigate the male-oriented reductionist economics, which refuses to accept non-productive work done by women only because it is not based on money and price. Environmental consciousness along with a basic concern for improving the quality of life should be the model of our development.

Medical Surgeon Leonard Schalain in his book “Alphabet versus the Goddess” says that problem has arisen because of an imbalance between the right and the left hemisphere of the brain between the holistic, nurturing, creative and feminine or the right hemisphere and the dualistic, linear, analytical and masculine or the left hemisphere of the brain.

With the restoration of balance between these two parts of the brain and also by following the feminine principles practically of all the cultures of the world the ecological crisis could be tackled to a greater extent.

Woman has a greater sense of concern for nature, environment and the world and is key to the alternative model of development. In this respect may I relate a story as heard from Anees Jung :

Centuries ago, a king, while travelling through his domain came across people living in dark caves. He was horrified at the gloom and ordered every family to be given lamps and oil to fuel them. Some years later, he visited the area again and found the caves in darkness. The lamps had been forgotten or were broken. The oil had run out. The king ordered more oil, new lamps. But when he returned to the area the following year the caves were dark once more. The king summoned his minister, a wise old man, and asked for an explanation, 'Ah', said the minister, 'you gave the lamps to the men, you should have given them to the women.'

The king followed his minister's advice and the lamps have kept burning even since.

The contemporary Indian thinkers as well as others in different parts of the world are collectively developing an ecological world view based on Indian traditional world view that all life is one and inner and external reality are mutually dependent. Indian view helps to see nature as sacred and hence in India one talks of holy mountain, holy tree, holy river. It develops a sense of reverence for all life, not just for human life but all life. India expresses in its tradition a gratitude to nature because it sustains us and we, one our part sustain it and hence both are mutually interdependent, interwoven and interrelated.

The crisis of nature and environment comes out of a utilitarian, materialist, non-spiritual world view – "The Earth is there for us to use, for our comfort, for our convenience. Mahatma Gandhi says that there is enough for everybody's need in this world, but not enough for anybody's greed. Just the technocrats cannot save the world, or by the shallow ecologists who say, we can manage the environment, we are clever people. But everyone knows that nature cannot be managed tsunamis and katrinas and earthquakes are the glaring examples.

We can only serve nature, we can only respect nature and we can only see nature as a part of us and us part of nature.

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Annexure (ii)

Presentation of Dr. B. L. Malla

Nature of Art and Art of Nature

Dr. B. L. Malla

A) Backdrop



The artistic tradition of India is one of the oldest and richest in the world. Beginning with the prehistoric rock art, and finding expression in a vigorous school of modern art, the tradition spans over thousands of years. It has two



parallel streams of expressions from the earliest historical period i.e. classical and the vernacular. Many great schools of hereditary craftsmen flourished under the patronage of the royal courts within the classical or monumental tradition. But the arts and skills of village societies operated through the vernacular form of artisan guilds. Mainly, the ceremonies and festivals are associated with this tradition, which re-evoked the perennial interrelationship of the five primal elements of water, earth, air, fire and ether. In each festival, there is a rhythm of creation, consecration, worship and either throwing away, or burning, or immersion. Indian art comprises of masterpieces in all major artistic media such as pictographs, petroglyphs, architecture, sculpture, terracotta, metal work, textiles and ceramics.

The prehistoric rock art has been interpreted with different theoretical orientations - generally based on vague and misguided notions of "primitive mentality". Primitive man is denied of having "deeper aesthetic feelings" and "highest moral and intellectual speculations". Following the evolutionary approach - addressing the propositions about human cognitive development and the process of evolutioning emergence of language - "scientific" claims are made for the "origin of art". But we should not ignore the fact that in the old world the cosmocentric view dominated the lifestyle. Even the authors of rock art and sages of the *Upanisadic* philosophy reveal the same experience of the cosmos and man's place in it. Both look at the universes sacred artifacts. Interestingly, the text of the classical Indian theory of art is consistent with the context of what is known today as aboriginal art. The fundamental intuition, motifs and styles of rock art persist in their art.

The significance of prehistoric rock art forms, designs, colours and concepts perhaps reinforces and continues to emphasize the vitality of the traditional way. These elements, most probably, basic to all arts, allow the artists to visualize their concepts and traditions. Traditional philosophy expresses the vitality of the emerging contemporary art. Drawing analogy from the theme of tribal art, we can safely state that people in the prehistoric period might have conceptualised the nature into art form and worshipped the presiding deities and spirits for better living. The basic urge, which had compelled and prompted the people to manifest art, was utilitarian purpose, invoking sympathetic magic to ensure a constant food supply. The principal food of the shelter dwellers was games hunted so regularly. By portraying animals the shelter - dwellers perhaps believed, it would give them success in hunting, and there would be a plentiful supply of wild animals who made them fell prey to their weapons, when they went on hunting. Thus, the prehistoric rock art acquires status of magico - religious nature. Some scholars suggest that rock shelter paintings of antelopes pierced with spears may also have served as magic invocations of

success, because several tribal groups still make images personifying evil and ceremonially decapitate them.

Meaning of word 'Art' (?)

Many traditional societies have no formal term for art, no separate word for artist. Majority of them can paint and carve. It is an integral part of their lifestyle. The priest may have the privilege for producing paintings and songs in ceremonies. Or members of a clan may hold such a status. The Saora icon is the drawing on the walls and is locally called *ITTALAN* (*ID* = to write; *KITALAN* = a wall). The term varies from one area to the other. The Saoras living around Chandragiri refer to it as *ANITAL* (*KINTAL* = wall, the drawings on the walls are called *ANITAL*). Similarly, the Pithora painters of western India call painting, "writing" *LIKHANA* and painter, "writer" *LAKHERA*.

Indian aesthetics or the science of art appreciation uses the word 'art' in a wide and all-inclusive sense in classical (textual) tradition. Bharata's *Natyashastra* deals with the performing arts and of these dance and drama have a pronounced visual aspect also. The *Shilpashastras* include generally architecture, painting and sculpture. But in the *Puranas* such as *Agni Purana* and *Vishnudharmottara Purana*, the continuity of these art forms with the performing and literary arts is recognized. In ancient tradition the word *kela* (Art) has been used in an even more inclusive sense so as to include minor arts and crafts also. The essential hallmark of art is to make, create or fashion a form or *rupa*, sensible or intelligible. Thus, art would include not only the visual arts but also the performing literary also. In *Natyashastra* dramatic forms are *rupa*. The authenticating form impressed in the coin is also *rupa*. The diverse forms, which the same word acquires in different grammatical formations, are also *rupa*. *Rupa* has a sense of form, which manifests

something more than itself. It is a significant form though the significance may be implicit and contextual.

Indian aesthetics has three main streams: (i) literature and poetics (ii) drama and dramaturgy (iii) fine arts and sculpture. But its scope circumscribe almost all the branches and sub-branches of Indian - Arts, Crafts, Sciences, Literature, etc., which entertain our sense organs, satisfy our mind and convey Happiness to our soul. All sorts of literature - Prose, Poetry, Criticism, Drama, Dramaturgy, Dance, Music, both vocal and instrumental, Painting and also allied faculties of arts, which convey joy to an aesthete. It can also be anything, which is sweet, bright, beautiful and true in the phenomenal world, even in dream and imagination, because in ecstasy paramount of good and absolute Happiness 'Supreme' reigns.

Indian logic postulates the perception of (i) the mundane (*laukika*), or perceptible by sense organs, and (ii) super sensuous (*yaugika*) or realisable introspectively. It assures super sensuous taste in relishing aesthetic Beauty and bliss. It is not only concerned with the problem of Beauty but also with the question of art and the enjoyment in art. The classification of arts in Indian tradition is based on different aesthetic senses. Amongst the senses that lead to aesthetic experience are vision (*drshya*) and hearing (*shravya*). Architecture, sculpture and painting originate from vision, and music and poetry originate from hearing, and theatre from the two together. Hence, Indian aesthetics is a well-experimented psychoanalytical process of judgment. It is understood today as a science and theory of Beauty and fine arts.

B) God -‘The Supreme Artist’

Most of the world religions have found expression in some way or the other in visual imagery, and view the universe as God's artefact. God is the ‘Supreme

Artist' for them. The God's work is the natural world, visible to the human eye. The Upanisadic sages described it as the Cosmic tree. On the symbolic level, "This tree is the great world mother, the Goddess of Nature who nourishes all life with the milk of her breast". The metaphor of Cosmic tree shows that the sacred is the proper context of both art and nature. Man is inseparable from nature. Man as a part of nature imitates god's primordial works of art. What he does, as an artist, is "cosmography", a *kairological* art on which all the arts are hung. Ontologically speaking, there are five *Kairological* moments in human consciousness, namely revelation, expression, reflection, identification, and tradition. They are mutually interdependent and interrelated and yet each is self-organising and self sustaining.

In Hinduism, God is the originator of every kind of art. Lord Vishnu and Shiva have thousands of names, which refer to the works of art. Vishnu is regarded as a 'Divine Architect' and 'Bestower of Forms'. He is the giver of Happiness. While God's epithet as the 'Supreme Artist' found the greatest emotional stimulus among the saint poets of India. One of the Great poets of India, Kabir used conventional similes to describe God as the Weaver, the Potter, the Painter, the Originator of music, etc.

The reverence of nature was not confined to Eastern thought only, but the ancient Greeks too deified the forces of nature. The Greeks also worshiped Mitra, the Vedic god. The pre- Islamic Persian religious text *Avesta* mentions about the same god and is named - 'Mithr', later changing into 'Mehr'. As per Islamic tradition the nature is the creation of *Allah* and the Holy *Quran* devotes chapters pledging on oath to nature. Even some of its chapters are named after natural forces like the Sun (*Al-Shams*), the Moon (*Al-Qamar*), the Thunder (*Al—Ra'd*), etc. Interestingly, one of the names of *Allah* almighty is '*Al- Musawwer*' or 'The Artist'.

C) Indian Aesthetics

Indian theory of aesthetics is deeply rooted in the triple - principle of *satyam* (Truth), *shivam* (Goodness/auspiciousness) and *sundaram* (Beauty). *Satyam* (Truth) is paired with *rtam* (Cosmic Order) in the famous passage of *Rgveda* (X.90.1), which says that both of these were born of kindled *tapas*. *Tapas* is the basic effort and form of the manifestation of existence, creation and bliss from the basic cause. This relates to primary analysis of creation where Reality is seen in two forms viz. *rtam*, the kinetic aspect of order and *satyam*, the potential aspect of Truth. *Rtam* for Hindus in the blue print for Cosmic harmony (*Dharma*); for the Buddhists the law of righteousness (*Dhamma*); for the Muslims the inflexible yet all the merciful decrees of divine (*Haqq*). And for the Chinese *rtam* is the mystical path (*Tao*). Thus *rtam* is the framework in which the process of creation, sustenance and dissolution operates. Its most important meanings include Cosmic Order, Truth, Nature (*Dharma*), Beauty and Continuous Flow. It regulates the cosmos into a systematic whole.

Truth, Goodness, Beauty, and Happiness are the ends of the human life. Almost all the systems of Indian philosophy - theist, the atheist and the secular carry out the 'divine message' of Truth, Bliss, Beauty and Happiness to the suffering multitude. The 'supreme good' is realised to be the eternal reservoir of the heavenly 'honey', irrespective of faiths, concepts and continents. In the theory of aesthetics, Tagore operates with four concepts, Truth, Beauty, Goodness and Joy. Along with these there are two further terms, 'expression' (*prakasha*) and 'art' (*shilpa*). The last two are notions of a different order from the first four, for it is an expression in art that leads us to Truth, Beauty, and Goodness, experienced through joy or delight. There cannot be a consideration of Beauty without the consideration of art. To Sri Aurobindo, the Art and Beauty are part of the process of the human ascent towards an intense clarity of consciousness. In art lie the deepest life principles. Coomaraswamy reminds

us that Beauty is scholasticism, it has to do with cognition, intellection and intelligibility. Beauty consists in harmony, illumination and shapeliness. There is an indivisible relation in between Beauty and the beautiful, like light and luminosity. Apart from making objects visible, a light brings us something more (glory or Beauty or luminosity). In the same way, a piece of art suggests something more than what is represented by curves of lines, brushes and checkered colours. A man of refined taste (*sahrdaya*) may enjoy, realise and relish but can have little express in words. Indian aesthetics attempts to give a verbal shape to that nectarous flow of the aesthetic bliss - that waves all over the world.

The true aim of the artist is not to extract Beauty from nature, but to reveal the life within life, the Noumenon within phenomenon, the Reality within unreality and Soul within matter. When that is revealed, Beauty reveals itself. So all the nature is beautiful for us if only we can realise the divine ideas within it. To express the Truth is the virtue of the artist. In it he is not bound either by subjective inclinations or by objects or facts - in - themselves; he is free, what is true is beautiful. What is beautiful is delighting. The freedom of man lies in thus delight. To live this life of Truth is, for Tagore, the way of man's being. The works of art thus enables a man to move from quantity to quality, fact to Truth and utility to Beauty.

Beauty is not embodied in form of matter but it belongs to the spirit and can only be apprehended by spiritual vision. It is subjective and not objective. There is no Beauty in natural phenomena; every object is properly fitted to fulfill its parts in cosmos, yet the Beauty does not lie in the fitness itself but in the divine idea, which is impressed upon those human minds, which are turned to receive it. Indian artist always insisted upon spiritual Beauty.

D) Metaphysics in Indian Art

In Indian thought and art, both vernacular and classical traditions, one finds variously images of an apparently metaphysical world. Indian art is struck by an extraordinary feat of traditional thought - currents which are both simple and complex. At one level, simple words are used so that everybody can understand the nature of art and art of nature. But at higher level it becomes 'cosmology' instead of simple explanation.

Belief system plays an important role in Indian art. Perhaps nowhere else has there been a richer and more varied spiritual heritage than in India. The icons play an important part in religious worship in India. It is only with the help of images that the gods and goddesses can be visualized. Although little is known about the religious beliefs of prehistoric India and the Indus Civilization, it can safely be assumed that this art too served religious purposes. The art for purely aesthetic purposes came into being in the modern times under European influences and was alien to traditional Indian society. The classic Indian architecture and sculpture are inescapable from Indian religion. Similarly, traditional Indian paintings (vernacular form of art) are dedicated to the belief system. The purpose was to create a bridge between the human and the divine.

Vernacular Tradition

In all ancient cultures belief and ritual occupy an important place. Often they are unable to discern the proximate or remote cause of natural calamities by reasoning and therefore, attributed to the wrath of the malevolent spirits who are supposed to be annoyed or angered for one reason or another. An attempt

is then made to appease the malevolent spirits or god. It is not only for the negative purpose of warding off diseases and disaster but also to invoke their blessings for peace, prosperity, abundant crops, health, cattle and numerous happy children. Different cultures have different patterns for this. For instance, in the Saora (tribe) invocation, the chanting words are less important as compared to the Santal (tribe) invocation. It is the production of icons, which are in focus. For the Saoras the icon becomes the 'symbol of will and realization of dream or goal, both negatively and positively'.

The worship of gods and spirits takes many forms and a vast complex of ritual - religious ceremonies may be associated with it. It is worth mention here that the tradition of invocation (*avahani*) and bidding farewell (*visarjan*) to the paintings are intrinsic to the ritual art. The worship is usually combination of:

- ❖ Ritual chanting, invocations or incantations;
- ❖ Certain purificatory rites involving the person or persons offering the worship and the physical space where it is being sanctified;
- ❖ Physical objects such as food or drinks, flowers, incense, etc.;
- ❖ Accompanying plastic or performing arts such as specially designed paintings, icons, or murals and songs and dance numbers.

The entire group of functions has a ritualistic significance. The performer could either be a priest or the head of the household.

Most tribal communities (including the Saoras and Santals) believe that health and continuity of life are natural whereas disease, sickness and death are

unnatural. Further, that these natural phenomena are the handwork of malevolent spirits who need to be won over by offerings and worships. The icons thus follow the first act of ritual divination. Before drawing the icon the priest (*kudan*) worships the village gods and other important deities including the ancestors installed within the village boundary. The major icon is drawn on the wall close to the entrance of the house or on the wall facing front door of the house. For drawing these icons there is a prescribed season, but no specific dates. The icons are generally drawn in September/October (*Ashwina*).

The making of *Osakothi* (*osa* = penance *kothi* = sacred space) ritual paintings in Orissa is continuity of tradition. The *Osakothi* ritual complex is one of India's finest living traditions centering around annually - produced folk - murals of goddesses and gods. Its close parallel is seen in the ritual relating to the Rathwa mural paintings in Gujarat. There is transformation and re-enlivenment of the visual image in both the cases. The pictorial act is associated with possession by divine spirits, singing, dancing and invocation. The Pithora painters of western India execute the creation story, said to be originally "written" by the God Pithora. The priest identifies the painted figures. He goes into trance and, taking up the sword moves from one end of the painting to the other. He accounts for each form, and identify them one by one. Animal sacrifice follows the painting ceremony. Once the ritual is completed, it is believed, god Pithora stays on the walls of the house where he has been installed, and its inhabitants live with him forever.

The drawings on the mud walls of the Saora, Warli and the Rathwa houses are a part of the worldwide phenomenon in traditional cultures finding its expression in mural paintings of mud walls.

Power of Traditional Art

The power of India's traditional art could be observed by the remarks of some western scholars also. One of such scholars, Mr. E. V. Havell had even advised the modern Indian artists that 'they must use traditional themes, express traditional sentiments, employ traditional styles. They must in other words, understand Indian art and more especially its spiritual and ethical purpose'. Abindranath Tagore, alongwith his pupils, was able to take a dispassionate view of art. They drew inspiration from village scenes, besides from classical themes, characters from history and mythology. Another noted artist Jamini Roy, inspired by folk and tribal art, started a new movement, inspired by the village artists. He created in his own style a 'Santal Girl', 'Drummers', 'Mother and Child', etc. Roy rediscovered the village style of Indian paintings and gave it the status of fine art. It is worth mention here that one of the greatest artists of the world, Pablo Picasso, has his roots in tribal tradition also.

Classical Tradition

Manifested World

The word "Parameshvara", in the textual tradition (Like *Sharada-tilaka*), is the indicator of the Supreme Divine, the originator of the 'manifested world'. In Him, the infinite power – Shakti (Energy) or Kala (Time) lies in eternal union. The emergence of Shakti in the beginning of 'Creation' is like the appearance of oil out of oil-seeds. It is a spontaneous act, initiated by the divine will [*Shiva Purana (Vayaviya samhita)*]. It is through the divine will that the supreme power which is synonymous with it and remains concealed in the divine essence reveals itself. The textual tradition of *Agamas* (especially the *Vatulasuddhagama*) records Shiva as formless (*nishkala*), the all-pervading and the incomprehensible entity who on self will releases a microfraction of His Self

which activates into five successive Shaktis (i.e. parashakti, adishakti, icchashakti, jnanashakti and kriyashakti). From these Shaktis emerges five Sadashiva – *tattvas* (Elements). These are known as Sadyojata (represents *prithvi*, i.e. Earth), Vamadeva (represent *jala*, i.e. Water), Aghora (represents *agni*, i.e. Fire), Tatpuruasha (represents *vayu*, i.e. Air), and Ishana (represents *akasha*, i.e. Sky). Since Isana is supposed to possess in itself all the Sadashiva - *tattvas* preceding him, he is represented in iconography as a five - headed deity each of which represents different Sadashiva - *tattvas*. These faces are individually called as *Nandivaktra* (western face), *Umavaktra* (northern face), *Bhairava* (southern face), *Mahadeva* (eastern face) and *Sadashiva* (face upwards). Infact, the five faces of Sadashiva represent five elements, which gets further divided into five parts each. Hence, in his Maha-Sadashiva aspect he is depicted as twenty-five headed. It is from the microfractional part of Sadashiva that Mahesha (Shiva) is formalised who initiates the process of creation (*srsthi*), preservation (*sthiti*) and reabsorption (*laya*). He should be depicted having ten arms and four heads, each with three eyes. The fifth head is invisible and is not shown in iconography.

It is believed that the 'Creativity' is the very essence of divinity. *Parama Shiva* has two aspects, viz., transcendental (*visvottirna*) and creative. The creative aspect of *Parama Shiva* is known as *Shiva tattva*. Since *Shakti tattva* is the energy of Shiva, she is nothing separate from Shiva. Shiva in His creative aspect is known as *Shakti*. The power is undoubtedly characterised by will (*iccha*). *Maya* stands at the beginning of subsequent creation. It is the desire for a vision, again of the lost world, which is associated with a sense of void (*sunya*). According to Shaiva-Shakta thought, the supreme reality (*samvit*) includes self-consciousness (*cit*), self delight (*ananda*) and will (*iccha*).

As per belief, the appearance of *Shakti* after the great cosmic night is like the revival of memory in a re-awakened person, after the unconsciousness of

sleep. The first self-expression of the supreme will (*iccha*) is the origination of void (*sunya*) and of the sound and light filling this void. Another step is represented by the concentration of this diffuse light-sound into a focus called *bindu* (centre of universe/axis mundi). The *bindu* sets the entire cosmic process in operation. The power of action (*kriya-shakti*) distinctly unfolds itself in this stage. Out of this supreme *bindu* the creative principles (*tattva*) are evolved. It subsequently breaks itself into three parts - *bindu*, *bija* and *nada*. In *bindu* the Shiva-aspect is predominant, while in *bija* (Seed) Shakti prevails. But in *nada* (Sound) the elements of Shiva and Shakti prevails in equal strength. Only *kala* (Time) breaks the equilibrium of *bindu*. Since *kala* is an eternal aspect of the eternal *purusha* (Cosmic Man), has intimate knowledge of supreme *prakrti* (Nature). Besides, *prakrti*, knows itself and is self-luminous.

Interestingly, the Great God Shiva has eight forms (*Astamurti*) both in his cosmic manifestations and on the individual level. In Shaiva tradition, the cosmos too comprises of eight components namely the five-elements (space, air, water, fire and earth) and also the sun and the moon, which are the measures of time. The eighth is the Brahmin, that is, man in his consciousness. Shiva *Astamurti* dwells everywhere and over and above it dwells in the human body (in his consciousness also). In addition to Nataraja (Dancing Shiva) form the other forms depicted in iconography are: Tripurantaka, Ardhanarishvara, Kalasimurti, Gajasursamharamurti, Bhikshatana, Virabhadra, Bhairava and Vinadhara. Images of Nataraja represent the most exalted aspect of Shiva - a metaphor for the cosmic cycle of creation and destruction and the individual cycle of birth and re-birth.

Vishnu when represented in *sheshasyayi* Vishnu (Vishnu in sleeping posture on a snake) form rests on the serpent coils, sheltered by his hood of nine (or even a thousand) heads symbolising the endless revolutions of nature. When Vishnu sleeps creation is withdrawn in the 'night of Brahma'; but the

serpent is a remainder (*shesha*) of creation ready to begin again and he provides a couch on the ocean of the universe. This is regarded as a fundamental cosmic image among the Vaishnavites and equivalent of the *linga* (Phallic emblem) of Shiva, which is an expression of cosmic creative power in its potential form, and the iconographic equivalent of the creative sound syllable *Om*. The divine sound *Om* has the power to create, sustain and destroy, giving life and movement to all that exist. *Om* is recognized as the omniscient, omnipresent and the primordial sound. *AUM* as pronounced is the pulse of the universe and the essence of our very being.

Explanatory World

Corresponding to this, a man developed temples, which are symbols of the world-mountain, or, analogically, of the universal man (*Purusha*) whose body comprehends the universe. The names of the various limbs of the human body from the feet to the crown of the head are applied in Indian architectural texts to the different parts of the temple structure. But the *Vastu Purusha* (architecture as symbol for Cosmic Man) is lifeless unless the soul resides in it. His real soul being the central image installed on its sanctum being the *garbha griha* (sanctum sanctorum) or the house of the womb, built in the universe-form of womb. This experience is traditionally justified by the analogy between the dark cave of the heart and the dark space of the shrine where the image appears. Above it raises the high tower, a microcosm of Mount Meru with its vertical thrust leading eye and heart to union with the divine. In the classical Hindu architecture, two kinds of movements are invariably present. One is from the exterior to the inner centre of *garbha griha* (Sanctum Sanctorum). The second is the upward movement of aspiration, assent, and exultation. This is usually suggested by the '*shikhara*' (finale). In spatial order the architecture is fundamental to us as nature and language. The ornamental forms and sculptures on the temple surfaces and columns on the walls represent the

cosmos as a mythical design. The Cosmos, the Cosmic person and the *vastu purusha*, are all projections and emanations of the *purusha* in the heart, the light and the heart. The *vastu* (architecture) is something with which the spectator identifies himself. It represents his abode and location. The mind is the abode of the spirit, the body of the mind, the house of the body. Where the spirit is universal, the house is the cosmos. The temple is a representation of the essential form linking the individual to the cosmic person.

In the traditional Hindu cosmology the gods are related to the earth by dwelling in the upper reaches of Mount Meru (*Sumeru*), the central peak and axis of the world. They live in one cosmos with mankind and descend to the foothills when needed. In some parts of India the temple courts and precincts were vastly expanded to constitute temple cities, replicas of the heavenly that included all the activities of religion and daily life. All the temples were laid in accordance with the well-defined plan. Building, a temple was a ritual in itself. The temple and the temple worship were thus intended to help take beyond the world of illusion, 'to the still point of the turning the wheel'.

Some religions like Hinduism, Christianity and Buddhism have an abundance of symbolism, where as Islam has little. For the Mahayana Buddhism the elusive 'void' or 'emptiness' serves a master symbol. For Islam it is the God-given gift of the Holy *Quran*. In the sense of overt representations of something, images are more definite than symbols. The images share the basic character of symbols and often have subordinate symbols associated with them. In the case of a Hindu image with many hands each holding an attribute with symbolic meaning. These are given a human interpretation through another symbol system, that of language.

Hindu gods are involved in the living world of man, though they stand for cosmic laws at a higher level of that world. The deities who are the basic

energies of the universe can be approached through the perception of created forms. This necessity has led to the representation of the deity in a thousand variety of thought - forms, magic designs, and *mantras* (*Hymns*), symbols and images. Human ability to construct the images represents the things, which may be regarded as an aspect of his ability to symbolize both at higher (master symbols) and lower (natural symbols) levels.

In the empirical world visual imagery symbolizes - what is ultimate, and lead human beings into a relationship with what is beyond. These forms and symbols are the inevitable intermediaries in a process in which the mental mechanism is discarded and supernatural states of being are realised. Hence, we approach unmanifested through manifested. According to the Holy text (of Hindus) *Bhagwat Gita*, "Those who feel attracted to the contemplation of the unmanifest are faced with a problem, because a being imprisoned in a body cannot grasp the ways of the unmanifest." Thus the spiritual guide, "the *guru* (Enlightened One) understanding the nature and qualifications of the seeker tells him the particular form of divinity he should worship." All human beings infact, have not all the same capacities, nor are they all at the same stage of development. They worship the god suitable for them at their particular level. Hinduism accepts polytheism as a reality of human experience.

Each god of the pantheon has an affinity with some particular form, colour, body or energy in the visible universe. The deities represent three levels of abstraction - the level of the spiritual body; the subtle body (where emotions and the senses holds sway); and the gross or physical body in the phenomenal world. These include the thought - forms, symbolic sounds of the *mantras*, and the diagrammatic *yantras*. They are held to be more accurate than an image being abstract.

Power of Mantras

Chanting of the hymns (*mantras*) is a way of life in the Vedic Indus or the Saraswati traditions; and also in different other cultures/religions. Sanskrit word *man* means 'mind' and *tra* means 'to deliver'. Thus, *mantra* is a transcendental sound vibrations with potency to liberate the mind from material conditioning. Chanting is a profound way to bring in perceptible change in our consciousness because the sound vibrations directly affects the nervous system. It facilitates balancing our subtle energy system and gives us direct access to the spiritual world thus enabling us for deeper meditation and silent communion with the inner self. Chanting help us to recognize the small sound of the soul and remind us of our true divine nature.

Types of Deities

Hindus worship had three types of deities: (i) *Grama devata* (the god of the village or town); (ii) *Kuladevata* (the tutelary deity of a family); (iii) *Ishtadevata* (personal deity). Besides, a Hindu worships many other deities on special occasions (like Goddess Durga during Durga *puja* (worship), Lord Krshna on his birthday (*Janamashtami*), Goddess Laksmi on *Dipawali* (festival of lights) and so on). In almost all the religious ceremonies/ festivals nature is propagated in one way or the other. A pious Hindu does not fail to perform the *Sandhyas*, morning and evening prayers, said by the side of a tank or river, the principal deity of worship being the sun, the essence of the world.

The Hindu images are, thus, meant to convey the living quality of nature, which mediates life, by the breath (*prana*) and the sap (*rasa*) pulsating through the organism. The images of goddess exemplify the sap-filled body with emphasis on the breasts and hips to make them symbols of motherhood. The male gods are characterized more by the discipline yoga (Indian way of

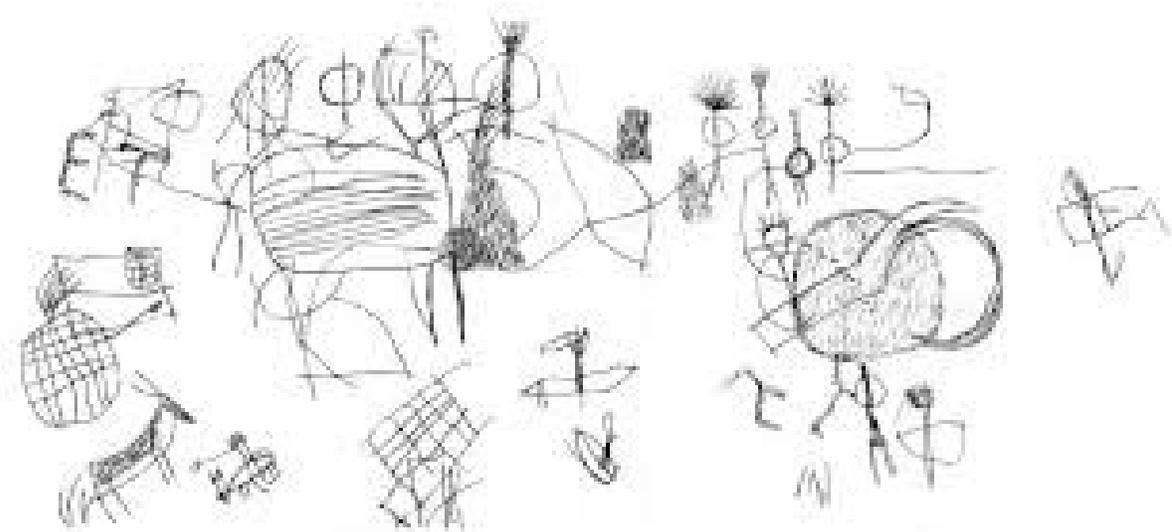
meditation for achieving physical and mental strength, and finally spiritual attainment), which is intended to perfect the body especially by controlling the rhythm of breathing. For this reason, deities seem to be effortlessly self-supporting as they rest on their lotus - base. The yoga body of the gods provides a pattern for man to copy by will and discipline. Although Hindu gods are involved in the living world of man yet they stand for cosmic laws at a higher level of that world.

The composite forms of deities were fundamentally created to emphasize the conjugal unity or inseparability of the divine couple. At a higher level it is asserted that Shiva and Shakti, or *Purusha* and *Prakrti*, are simply two halves of the same absolute principle. In order to stress this concept the Shaivas and Vaishnavas respectively created the Ardhanarishvara (composite image of Shiva and Parvati, his consort) and Vasudeva-Lakshmi (composite image of Vishnu and Lakshmi) images conjointly.

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Annexure (iii)

PowerPoint Presentation of Dr. B. L. Malla