VIII

THE ARTS: ARCHITECTURE, SCULPTURE, PAINTING, MUSIC AND THE DANCE

THE SPIRIT OF INDIAN ART

Nearly all the artistic remains of ancient India are of a religious nature, or were at least made for religious purposes. Secular art certainly existed, for literature shows that kings dwelt in sumptuous palaces, decorated with lovely wall-paintings and sculpture, though all these have vanished. Much has been said and written about Indian art since, some sixty years ago, European taste began to doubt the established canons of the 19th century and looked to Asia and Africa for fresh æsthetic experience. From that time to this most authorities on the subject, Indian and European alike, have stressed the religious and mystical aspect of Indian art. While admitting the realism and earthiness of the earliest sculpture, they have read the truths of Vedânta or Buddhism into the artistic remains of our period, and have interpreted them as expressions of deep religious experience, sermons in stone on the oneness of all things in the Universal Spirit.¹

One student at least disagrees with this interpretation. There are indeed a few remains which seem imbued with an intensity of religious feeling rare in the art of the world, but it is the full and active life of the times which is chiefly reflected in the art of ancient India, at first directly, as at Bhârhat, Sâncî and Amârâvatî, then with a gentle idealism, as at Ajântâ, and finally in the multitude of figures, divine and human, carved on the many temples of the Middle Ages. In all these phases there is a horror vacui and an intense vitality which remind us rather of this world than the next, and suggest to us the warm bustle of the Indian city and the turbulent pullulation of the Indian forest.

Gothic architecture and sculpture are vertical. Spire and arch point upwards, and as the style develops the spire becomes taller and the arch more pointed. The Christ, saints and angels of the Middle Ages in Europe are often disproportionately tall, and their tallness is accentuated by long garments reaching to the ankles. Their poses are generally restful, and they rarely smile. Medieval European art was truly religious; its conventions seem to have been
deliberately designed to lead the worshipper's thoughts away from the world of flesh to the things of the spirit. Much of it was the work of pious monks, or of men with deep religious vocations.

The tendency of Indian art is diametrically opposite to that of medieval Europe. The temple towers, though tall, are solidly based on earth. The ideal type is not abnormally tall, but rather short and stocky. Gods and demigods alike are young and handsome; their bodies are rounded and well-nourished, often by European standards rather effeminate. Occasionally they are depicted as grim or wrathful; but generally they smile, and sorrow is rarely portrayed. With the exception of the type of the dancing Śiva the sacred icon is firmly grounded, either seated or with both feet flat on the ground. We need hardly mention that all Indian temple sculpture, Hindu, Buddhist and Jaina alike, made full use of the female form as a decorative motif, always scantily dressed, and nearly always in accordance with Indian standards of beauty.

Asceticism and self-denial in various forms are praised in much Indian religious literature, but the ascetics who appear in sculpture are usually well fed and cheerful. As an example we may cite the colossal rock-cut medieval image of the Jaina saint Gommateśvara at Śravanā Belgālā in Mysore. He stands bolt upright in the posture of meditation known as kāyotsarga, with feet firm on the earth and arms held downwards but not touching the body, and he smiles faintly. The artist must have tried to express the soul almost set free from the trammels of matter, and about to leave for its final resting place of everlasting bliss at the top of the universe. Whatever the intentions of the artist, however, Gommateśvara is still an ordinary young man of his time, full of calm vitality. The saint is said to have stood for so long in meditation that creepers twined round his motionless legs, and these are shown in the sculpture; but, though intended to portray his sanctity, they do but emphasize that he is a creature of the earth whom the earth pulls back.

Ancient India's religious art differs strikingly from her religious literature. The latter is the work of men with vocations, brāhmaṇs, monks and ascetics. The former came chiefly from the hands of secular craftsmen, who, though they worked according to priestly instructions and increasingly rigid iconographical rules, loved the world they knew with an intensity which is usually to be seen behind the religious forms in which they expressed themselves. In our opinion the usual inspiration of Indian art is not so much a ceaseless quest for the Absolute as a delight in the world as the artist found it, a sensual vitality, and a feeling of growth and movement as regular and organic as the growth of living things upon earth.
THE EARLIEST ARCHITECTURE

Of the visual arts of ancient and medieval India much architecture and sculpture and a little painting have survived. As most of the existing sculpture was intended to be ancillary to architecture we deal with the latter first.

The utilitarian brick buildings of the Harappā Culture, strong and competent though they were, had apparently little æsthetic merit, and will not be mentioned here. With the exception of the walls of Rājagṛha (p. 200), which also have no artistic value, we have no significant architectural remains between the Harappā period and that of the Mauryas. This is due to the fact that few buildings were made of stone during this time.

Megasthenes mentions that the palace of Candragupta Maurya, though very large and luxurious, was built of carved and gilded wood, and the earliest stone buildings to have survived were evidently modelled on wooden originals. We must not assume from the almost complete lack of significant material remains that Indian building in the Mauryan period, or even before, was mean or primitive. The Mauryan monolithic columns prove that the craftsmen of those days had a thorough mastery of working in stone, and if the great cities of Mauryan times were mainly built of wood we must attribute this chiefly to the comparative scarceness of stone in the Gangetic Plain and to the abundance of timber where it is now scarce. There is no evidence of a cultural advance in the Middle Ages, when building in stone became common, but rather of a decline. The increasing adoption of stone as a building medium was due partly to foreign contacts, but also to the gradual disappearance of timber forests from the more populous and civilized regions of India.

The wonderful Mauryan columns with their finely carved capitals fall rather under the head of sculpture than of architecture, for most of those which survive had no architectural purpose. Fragments of similar columns, found at Patnā, supported the roof of a palace, which has been reasonably identified as that of Asoka. The remains of the Patnā pillared hall are so fragmentary that the plan of the building cannot be accurately reconstructed, but it was evidently a large one. At this time, however, stone buildings must still have been quite rare. All the Mauryan pillars and other products of Mauryan stonemasons come from the same quarry, at Chunār, not far from Vārānasi, and all bear the stamp of the same school. They are the work of craftsmen who had learnt much from Persia, and perhaps a little from Greece, but had given their output distinctive Indian characteristics. Their
workshops were probably maintained by the Mauryan kings, and vanished soon after the dynasty fell.

THE STŪPA

The stūpa began as an earthen burial mound, which was revered by the local population, and we have seen that the cult of stūpas was taken up by Buddhism, and that Aśoka raised stūpas in the Buddha's honour all over India (p. 265). Only one stūpa, in Nepāl, survives in the form in which the great emperor left it, but excavations of existing stūpas have shown the character of the earlier ones. They were large hemispherical domes, containing a small central chamber, in which the relics of the Buddha were placed in a casket, often beautifully carved in crystal. The core of the stūpa was of unburnt brick, and the outer face of burnt brick, covered with a thick layer of plaster. The stūpa was crowned by an umbrella of wood or stone, and was surrounded by a wooden fence enclosing a path for the ceremonial clockwise circumambulation (pradakṣinā), which was the chief form of reverence paid to the relics within it.*

In the period between the Mauryas and the Guptas much wealth and energy were spent on Buddhist architecture, and the older stūpas were greatly enlarged and beautified. Of these three are specially noteworthy—those at Bhārhut and Sāncī in Madhya Pradesh, and at Amarāvati in the lower Kistmā Valley. The Bhārhut stūpa, perhaps in its present form dating from the middle of the 2nd century B.C., is important chiefly for its sculpture, and the stūpa itself has now vanished. That at Sāncī, on the other hand, is one of the most striking architectural remains of ancient India (pl. VIb).

In the 2nd century B.C. the old Sāncī stūpa was enlarged to twice its original size, becoming a hemisphere of about 120 feet in diameter. It was then faced with well-cut masonry laid in regular courses, and, besides the lower path on ground level, an upper terraced path some 16 feet from the ground was added. The old wooden railings were replaced by stone ones 9 feet high, tenoned and mortised in imitation of carpentry. Finally, towards the end of the 1st century B.C., four glorious gateways (torana) were added at the four cardinal points. Lesser stūpas and monastic buildings surrounded the great stūpa (fig. xviii).

The Sāncī gateways (pl. XVIII) are perhaps more noteworthy

* It has been suggested that the stūpa, like the later Hindu temple, was thought of as a microcosm of the universe. There are Mesopotamian precedents for this belief, and the passion for cosmic symbolism, evident in India from Vedic times, certainly led to the making of the analogy at least in respect of the temple. But, though many authorities would disagree with us, we do not believe that cosmic symbolism played any great part in the thought of the ancient Indian architect. Stūpas and temples were planned without thought of such symbolism, which was the work of pandits and not of architects.
for their carved ornamentation than their architecture. Each consists of two square columns, above which are three curved architraves supported by animals or dwarfs, the whole reaching some 34 feet above ground-level. The construction of these gateways, from the technical point of view, is primitive, and it has been suggested that their design is based on the log or bamboo portcullis of the ancient Indian village. The finish, on the other hand, is remarkably good, and the carvings are among the most fresh and vigorous products of the Indian sculptor (pl. XIX).

In respect of size few Indian stūpas greatly exceeded that of Sānchī, but in Ceylon the stūpa reached tremendous proportions. The Abhayagiri Dāgāba at Anurādhapura, the capital of the early kings of Ceylon, was 927 feet in diameter, and larger than some of the pyramids of Egypt. It reached its present size, after a succession of enlargements, in the 2nd century A.D.

In India stūpa architecture became more and more ornate. The Stūpa of Amarāvatī (fig. xix), which in its final form was completed c. A.D. 200, was larger than that of Sānchī, and it was adorned with carved panels (some of which can be seen in the British Museum) telling the story of the life of the Buddha. Meanwhile in Northern India stūpas grew taller in proportion to their bases. They were often set on square platforms, which in Burma and Indonesia were developed into stepped pyramids, the largest of which
is the enormous stūpa of Borobudur, in Java, built in the 8th century A.D. Pinnacles became higher, and developed towards the spiring forms of the present-day temples of Burma and Siam.

Of later Indian stūpas the two most famous are those of Sārnāth and Nālandā. Of the tall stūpa of Sārnāth (pl. VIIa) near Vārānasī, the scene of the Buddha’s first sermon, now little more than the inner core remains. It was once a most imposing structure of beautifully patterned brickwork with a high cylindrical upper dome rising from a lower hemispherical one, and with large images of the Buddha set in gable ends at the cardinal points. In its final form it dates from the Gupta period. The stūpa at Nālandā (pl. VIIb), seven times successively enlarged, in its present ruined state gives the impression of a brick pyramid with steps leading up to its terraces. It was originally a tall stūpa raised on a high base, with a smaller stūpa at each corner, but the monument underwent so many alterations in Gupta and Pāla times that it is now difficult for the untrained eye to recognize its original form at any one stage of its development.

Around the great stūpas were lesser ones, often containing the ashes of monks famous for their piety and learning, and a whole complex of buildings—monasteries, shrine-rooms, preaching halls and resthouses for pilgrims (fig. xviii). At the greater Buddhist
sites such as Nālandā the groups of monastic buildings were usually surrounded by fortress-like walls.

In their present partial dilapidation the heavy domes of the great stūpas sometimes seem a little forbidding. Originally the lime-washed or plastered stūpa shone brilliantly white in the tropical sunlight, its pinnacle, now generally broken, rising like a golden spear from the ceremonial stone umbrella on top of the dome. Then it must have given a different impression. The great Ruvanvīlī Dāgāba at Anuradhāpura in Ceylon, which in recent years has been restored and is once more used in Buddhist worship, rising white in the distance out of the plain, shows the stūpa at its best, as a worthy emblem of a great religion.

CAVE TEMPLES

Of the centuries before the Gupta period the chief architectural remains, other than stūpas and their surrounding gateways and railings, are artificial caves, excavated for religious purposes. Early specimens show a slavish imitation of carpentry which proves conclusively that the art of building in stone was still not fully developed. Thus two of the caves of Barābar Hill near Gayā, dedicated by Aśoka to Ājīvika monks, are in the form of a plain rectangular outer hall, at one end of which is an inner chamber with a curved wall and overhanging eaves. The caves were evidently substituted for a standardized religious meeting place consisting of a round thatched hut standing in a courtyard, and their designer could not transcend the pattern to which he had been used. Similar dependence on wooden models is evident in many other features of design until the Gupta period.

The caves of the Barābar and Nāgarjunī Hills are quite unadorned, with the exception of one at Nāgarjunī, near Barābar, which has a comparatively simple carved entrance, added during or soon after the Mauryan period. The inner walls of all the caves are finely polished, no doubt by workmen of the school which was responsible for the polish of the Aśokan columns.

Later cave temples and monasteries are to be found in many parts of India, but it was in the Western Deccan, under the Sātavāhana Empire and its successors, that the largest and most famous artificial caves were excavated. The oldest Deccan cave, at Bhājā near Poona, consists of a deep apsidal hall cut in solid rock, with a row of plain octagonal pillars near the walls, which support curved ribs carved to represent the barrel vaulting of a wooden building. At the further end of the hall is a small stūpa, also cut from solid rock, and the outside of the cave has a façade carved like a gable, with smaller
ornamental gables on either side. Beside this cave, which was a meeting hall for Buddhist monks and lay worshippers, is a second cave consisting of a broad cutting into the rock, leading to five cells, which were the dwellings of the monks.

From these beginnings the cave temples developed in size and splendour. The finest single example is the great caitya hall at Kārlī, probably made about the beginning of the Christian era. This is cut 124 feet deep into the rock, and is of the same general pattern as that at Bhājā and many other caves of the Western Deccan, but much developed in size and splendour. The columns are no longer plain and austere, but, by a process which can be traced through earlier stages, they have become heavy and ornate. Each is set on a square stepped plinth, and rises from a bulbous base, which is carved to represent a large pot with base and rim;
this is another survival of wooden construction, for the octagonal
wooden pillars of earlier days were bedded in large earthenware pots
to protect them from ants and other insects. Each pillar carries a
complicated group of horses and elephants with riders to support
the roof, which is carved in imitation of the timber rafters of barrel
vaulting. The caitya or shrine at the end of the hall is much enlarged
in comparison with those of other caves.

The simple façades of the earlier caves were developed into elabo-
rately carved verandas, each usually with a large window, the full
size of the gable-end, which let light into the hall (pl. VIIIa). The
Kārli cave has three entrances, and splendid relief panels ofAMPATi
couples, with small carved gable-ends above.

With the caitya halls the associated rock-cut monasteries or
saṅghārāmas also developed in size and splendour. As a cave mon-
astery became too small for its inhabitants a new cave was cut nearby
and so the complex of caves grew over the centuries. The most
famous of these cave groups is that of Ajantā, in Mahārāshtra. Here no less than twenty-seven caves, some going 100 feet deep
into the rock, were excavated in the horseshoe curve of a hillside,
not far from the great trade route leading from the North to the
Deccan (pl. VIIIb). The earliest caves date from the 2nd century
B.C., while others are as late as the 7th century A.D. The splendid
sculpture and lovely paintings with which they are adorned make
them one of the most glorious monuments of India's past (p. 379f).

Perhaps even more impressive are the later cave temples of Ellorā,
near Aurangābād, some thirty miles from Ajantā. Here are no less
than thirty-four caves, constructed from the 5th to the 8th centuries
A.D., most of them Hindu but some Buddhist and Jaina. The
crowning achievement of Ellorā is the great Kailāsanātha Temple,
excavated on the instructions of the Rāstrakūta emperor Kṛṣṇa I
(c. A.D. 756–773). With this the concept of the cave temple
was transcended, for the king was not satisfied with a mere hollow
in the rock. The entire rock face was cut away and a splendid temple
was carved like a statue from the hillside, complete with shrine-
room, hall, gateway, votive pillars, lesser shrines and cloisters, the
whole adorned with divine figures and scenes large and small of a
grace and strength rarely seen again in Indian art (pl. IXa). The
ground plan of Kailāsanātha is of about the same size as the Parthenon,
and it is half as high again. The labour necessary to construct it,
however, was less than that which would be required to build a
comparable temple of masonry, for transport created no problem,
and the process of construction, beginning at the top of the cliff
and working down to the base, avoided the need of scaffolding.
But no considerations of this kind can disparage the glory of Kailāsanātha, "the most stupendous single work of art executed in India".4

Kailāsanātha is not the earliest temple hewn from solid rock. Others are to be found at Māmallapuram, on the sea-coast some fifty miles south of Madras, where seventeen temples, none very large in size, were carved from outcropping hillocks of granite under the patronage of 7th century Pallava kings. The most famous of these, the "Seven Pagodas", still show the influence of wood construction, and are of a distinctive style, possibly looking back to Dravidian prototypes.

The latest cave-temples of importance are those of Elephanta, a beautiful little island off Bombay. These, in the same style as those of Ellorā, are famous for their sculpture, especially for the great Trimūrti figure of Śiva (p. 374). After these no important caves were excavated. Indians had long known the art of building in stone. The Kailāsanātha Temple, carved in exact imitation of masonry, showed the dissatisfaction with the older cave form. The great period of medieval temple building had begun.

TEMPLES

The earliest free-standing religious building of which traces remain is a small round hall, probably originally containing a Buddhist stūpa, at Bairāt near Jaipur; this dates from the 3rd century B.C., and was made of brick and wood; little but the foundations now exist, and the form had no future.

The next landmark in temple architecture is the temple generally known, from the modern name of the site, as that of Jandiāl, excavated from one of the mounds which covered the city of Takṣaśilā. This, one of the important buildings of the Greek city, contained a square inner sanctuary, a meeting hall and a courtyard, and its outer and inner entrances were each flanked by two large pillars of orthodox Ionian pattern. The Jandiāl temple was probably Zoroastrian, and it had no direct successors, but the influence of Western architecture is clearly to be seen in Kashmir, where columns of Hellenic type were used throughout the medieval period, in conjunction with distinctive pyramidal roofs and arches surmounted by pointed gables, which give the Kashmir style an almost Gothic appearance. Most famous of Kashmir's early temples is the Temple of the Sun at Mārtand, dating from the 8th century. There are no remains of free-standing Hindu temples erected before the Gupta period, though by this time they must long have been built in wood, clay and brick. From the
Gupta period, however, several examples survive, chiefly in Western India, all showing the same general pattern. Pillars were usually ornamented with heavy bell-shaped capitals surmounted by animal motifs, and the entrances were often carved with mythological scenes and figures. All the Gupta temples were small, and most had flat roofs. Their masonry was held together without mortar, and was far larger and thicker than was necessary for the comparatively small buildings. Evidently the builders had not yet fully mastered their technique, and were still thinking in terms of the cave. The finest Gupta temple, that of Deogarh near Jhansi, probably of the 6th century, marks a great advance. Here iron dowels were used to hold the masonry together, and a small tower rose above the sanctum. The portal veranda was continued all round the building, making a covered walk.

The standard type of the Hindu temple, which has persisted from the 6th century to the present day, was not fundamentally different from that of the ancient Greeks. The heart of the temple was a small dark shrine-room (garbhagrha), containing the chief icon. This opened on a hall for worshippers (maṇḍapa), originally a separate building, but usually joined to the shrine-room by a vestibule (antarāla). The hall was approached by a porch (ardhamaṇḍapa). The shrine-room was generally surmounted by a tower, while smaller towers rose from other parts of the building. The whole was set in a rectangular courtyard, which might contain lesser shrines and was often placed on a raised platform.

The medieval period in India was, like the Middle Ages in Europe, an age of faith. With better techniques of stone construction new temples sprang up everywhere to replace earlier wooden or brick buildings, and kings and chiefs vied with one another in their foundation. Strict canons of design in both architecture and sculpture were laid down in textbooks (śilpaśāstra), some of which survive. The technique of architecture was not far advanced, despite the great achievements of the period. Though arches occur in the cave temples and in Kashmir, the art of making a true arch, dome or vault, seems to have been ignored, although corbelling—the building up of an arch or dome by overlapping courses of brick or masonry—was widely practised, and produced work of great beauty. Mortar was known but rarely used, for the style of archless and domeless architecture employed made it virtually unnecessary.

The temple was ornately decorated, often even to the dark shrine-rooms lighted only by flickering oil-lamps. Despite this ornamentation the apprenticeship of his tradition in rock architecture gave the architect a strong sense of mass. Heavy cornices, strong pillars,
wide in proportion to their height, and the broad base of the sikhra, or tower, give to Indian temple architecture a feeling of strength and solidity, only in part counteracted by the delicately ornate friezes, and the many figures in high or low relief which often fill the whole surface of the temple wall.

Considering the size of the land, Indian temple architecture is remarkably uniform, but authorities distinguish two chief styles and numerous schools. The Northern or Indo-Āryan style prefers a tower with rounded top and curvilinear outline, while the tower of the Southern or Dravidian style is usually in the shape of a rectangular truncated pyramid. The stages of stylistic development are clearer in the South than in the North, where many ancient temples were destroyed by the Muslim invaders. We therefore consider the styles of the Peninsula first.

Temple building gained much from the patronage of the Pallava and Cālukya kings in the 6th–8th centuries. Important early temples of the former dynasty are to be found at Māmallapuram, already referred to (p. 357), and Kāñcī, while the Cālukyas left temple remains at their capital Bādāmi and at the nearby site of Aihołe, both in Mysore. These styles show the gradual emancipation of the architect from the techniques of carpentry and cave architecture. The apogee of the Pallava style was reached in the Shore Temple at Māmallapuram (pl. Xa) and the Kailāsanātha Temple of Kāñcī, built early in the 8th century. The latter has a pyramidal tower formed of two courses of small barrel vaults, surmounted by a solid cupola suggesting a Buddhist stūpa.

The style of the Pallavas was developed further under the Cōla dynasty (10–12th centuries); their finest products are the temple of Śiva at Tānjuvūr (Tanjore), built by Rājarāja the Great (985–1014), and the temple built by his successor, Rājendra I, at his new capital of Gaṅgaikōṇḍacōlapuram, near Kumbakonam. The former was probably the largest temple built in India up to that time; the comparatively modest tower of the Pallava style was replaced by a great pyramid, rising from a tall upright base and crowned with a domed finial, the whole being nearly 200 feet high. This set the style of the Dravidian sikhra, which has continued with some variation down to the present day. Both these temples contain elaborate pillared halls and beautiful decoration.

In the next phase of Dravidian architecture the emphasis shifted from the tower above the chief shrine to the entrance gateway of the surrounding wall. Though there are a few records of desecration by hostile sectarians or invaders, it is difficult to find a practical reason for the growing custom of protecting South Indian temples
with strong and high walls, unless this was done in imitation of the palaces of kings, with which the temples had much in common. From the 12th century onwards it became usual to fortify the temple, often with three square concentric walls, with gates on the four sides. The gates were surmounted by watch-towers or gatehouses, and these developed into soaring towers (gopuram), generally much taller than the modest sikhara over the central shrine. The entrance tower was usually in the form of an oblong pyramid, with its broadest side parallel to the wall (pl. XIIIa). The new style is often called Pāṇḍyan, from the name of the dynasty which supplanted the Cōḷas in the Tamil country, the kings of which were responsible for building walls and gateway towers round many existing shrines. This style introduced more elaborate ornamentation, and the use of animal forms in pilasters and columns, including the rampant horses and leoglyphs which give a distinctive character to late Dravidian architecture.

The culmination of the Pāṇḍyan style is to be seen in the mighty temple complexes of Madurai, Śrīraṅgam, and elsewhere, which are strictly outside our period, belonging in their present form to the 17th century. The great temple of Madurai is the most famous and beautiful of these (pl. XII), but the largest is the Vaiṣṇavite temple of Śrīraṅgam (fig. xv, p. 203), which is contained in an outer wall measuring 2,475 by 2,880 feet (754 x 878 m.), and has six inner walls, all with gopurams, surrounding a shrine of comparatively modest proportions. These later towers were covered with sculptured figures.

While these developments were taking place in the Tamil country, other styles developed in the Deccan, under the Cāḷukyas, Rāṣṭra-kūṭas and Hoysalas. The earliest Cāḷukyan temples closely resemble the Guptan. By the 8th century they had developed individual features, including the wide overhanging eaves which became characteristic of the medieval temples of the Central Deccan. The later Cāḷukyas and Hoysalas (11th–14th centuries) developed a more elaborate style. Their temples were no longer constructed on a rectangular plan, but were polygonal or stellate, raised on tall solid platforms of the same shape as the buildings. These temples give a strong feeling of flatness, for platforms and walls alike are covered with rather narrow carved friezes of elephants, horsemen, geese, monsters (yāli), and scenes of mythology and legend. The grotesque mask (kirtimukha) * became very common as a decorative

* The kirtimukha is found in other South Indian schools as a decorative motif, especially in the makara-torana, a gateway with above the lintel a large kirtimukha mask connected by foliate designs to two makaras or sea-monsters at the base of the doorposts. These motifs were exported to South-East Asia and became regular features of Indonesian and Cambodian architecture.
feature, and turned columns, often ornately carved, were widely used. The largest and most famous temples of this style, at Halebid (Dōrasamudra, the Hoysaḷa capital) and Bēḷūr, have no towers, and it is thought that they were not completed. Some smaller buildings of the same period have towers, notably the charming temple of Somnāṭhpur (pl. Xb), which has three low dome-like šikharaś, their breadth emphasized by parallel mouldings. Its profusion of pillars and its abhorrence not only of blank spaces but even of plane surfaces and straight lines tend to give this style an impression of wedding-cake prettiness, despite the solid proportions of its masonry and the brilliance of its sculptured decoration.

The school which flourished under the Vijayanagara empire and reached its apogee in the 16th century shows both Pāṇḍya and Hoysaḷa features. The florid carving of the Hoysaḷas was developed with even greater exuberance, and new elements appeared in the temple complex. As well as the main shrine, in every important temple in South India the amman, the god’s chief wife, was provided with a shrine which was often nearly as large as the main shrine itself, and a marriage-hall (kalvānamandapam), wherein the icons of god and goddess were ceremonially united on festival days. Another feature of the Vijayanagara style is the profusion of strong yet delicate carving which adorns the pillared halls, the many columns of which are so decorated that they become sculptures in their own right. Prancing horses, vigorous and energetic, leap from the stone (pl. XIc), with leogryphs and other fantastic monsters. For brilliance of decorative imagination the Vijayanagara style of architecture was never surpassed in Hindu India. Its finest production is undoubtedly the Vīṭṭhala Temple at Hampi, the old Vijayanagara.

In the chief cities of Northern India almost all traces of the architecture of the Hindu period have vanished. Even in holy Vārānasī all the great and famous temples are comparatively recent. One important exception, however, is the Buddhist temple at Gayā (pl. XIIIb) the main tower of which is probably as early as the 6th century. This is a large pyramid of brickwork, set on a high plinth; it is adorned with parallel courses of “caitya window” pattern and is surmounted by a lofty pinnacle which was originally a small stūpa. Similar towers existed in other Buddhist monastic establishments, but have long since vanished. The Gayā tower suggests rather the Southern than the Northern style, but other temples of the period either have no towers or have small curvilinear ones which are evidently the prototypes of the later Northern šikhara.

Medieval North Indian architecture is best illustrated by three
schools—those of Orissa, Bundelkhand, and Gujarat and South Rajasthan. There were other local developments, as well as the distinctive style of Kashmir which we have already noted, but these three are certainly the most important, and their products are the best preserved.

The Orissan school flourished from the 8th to the 13th centuries, and its chief monuments lie in and around the towns of Bhubaneswar and Puri. The finest Orissan temple is the Lingaraja at Bhubaneswar (fig. xxi), which shows the North Indian sikhara in its final form—a tower which begins to curve inwards at about one third of its height, with rounded top crowned by a flat stone disc (āmalaka) and a finial (kalaśa). The upward sweep of this graceful curving tower is emphasized by deep vertical inlets, but its solidity and firm basis on earth are very evident. The Lingaraja, like most Orissan temples, is built as a series of four halls—a hall of offerings, a dancing hall, an assembly hall and a sanctuary.* The sanctuary is crowned by the great tower, but the other three elements of the temple, leading one by one to the shrine, are also roofed with characteristic towers of smaller size, carrying the eye to the main sikhara. The whole temple enclosure of the Lingaraja is filled with smaller shrines, built on the pattern of the great one.

* Often referred to by the modern Hindi names, bhāg maṇḍir, nāt maṇḍir, jagmohan, and dēwāl respectively.
The Orissan architects were lavish with their exterior decoration, and their sculptors produced works of great merit, but the interiors of their temples are unadorned. In the larger temples the corbelled roofs of the halls rested on four large pilasters, but pillars were not generally used, and roofs were often partly supported by iron girders, a striking technical innovation.

Among the most important Orissan temples are the Temple of Viṣṇu-Jagannātha at Puri, still one of the most famous shrines of India, and the "Black Pagoda" of Konārak, built in the 13th century. The latter, a temple of Sūrya, the sun-god, was formerly one of the largest and most splendid temples of India, much larger than those of Bhubanesar (fig. xxii). The tower, over 200 feet high, has long since fallen, but the great assembly-hall remains. Unlike the other temples of this region that of Konārak had the two smaller outer halls completely separate from the main structure, and the assembly-hall and tower were built on an imposing platform, round which were carved twelve decorated wheels, 10 feet in diameter. The entrance is reached by a broad flight of steps, flanked on either side by prancing horses, the whole representing the chariot in which the Sun-god rides across the heavens. The court of the temple was decorated with free-standing sculptures of great strength and beauty. The exceptionally frank eroticism of many of the
Konārak sculptures has given the “Black Pagoda” a rather infamous reputation. Maithuna figures, of couples closely embracing or actually in coitus, are common enough as decorative features of many Indian temples, but those of Konārak are exceptionally vivid. Many suggestions have been made as to the true significance of these figures; it has been suggested that they merely served the mundane purpose of advertising the charms of the devadāsis, or temple prostitutes, or that they were intended to represent the world of the flesh, in contrast to the bare and austere interior, which symbolized the things of the spirit; possibly they were connected, in the minds of their designers, with the sexual mysticism which played so great a part in medieval Indian religious thought, or it may be that they represent the delights of heaven, on its lower planes. Possibly the temple of Konārak was a centre of a tantric cult though the erotic sculpture does not suggest the solemn ritual of the Śāktas, but something much less inhibited.

Under the Candella kings of Bundelkhand a great school of architecture flourished in the 10th and 11th centuries, the chief work of which is a beautiful group of temples at Khajurāho, about 100 miles south-east of Jhānsī. These temples are built on a rather different plan from those of Orissā, and are not very large; the finest, a Śāivite temple known as Kandāriya-Mahādeo, was built about A.D. 1000, and is not more than 100 feet high. The standard type of Khajurāho temple contains a shrine-room or sanctuary, an assembly-hall, and an entrance portico. Whereas in the Orissan temple these elements were conceived rather as separate entities joined together by vestibules, the Khajurāho architects treated them as a whole, and though each part has its own roof they are not structurally separate. The Khajurāho śikharas, like those of most Northern temples, is curvilinear but differs from the type of Orissā. It is curved for its whole length, and its upward thrust is accentuated by miniature śikharas emerging from the central tower. The crowning discs of these projections break the upward movement, and remind the observer that the divine is to be found on earth as well as in heaven. The effect of the whole, despite its symmetry, is one of organic and natural growth. The tower, and indeed the whole temple, seems intimately at one with the earth, suggesting an enormous ant-hill, or a high peak surrounded by lesser mountains. Though expressed in the most baroque of styles, the Kandāriya-Mahādeo is a striking instance of a feature common in much Indian art, a feeling of unity with nature.

The halls and porticoes of the Khajurāho temples are also crowned with smaller towers, which rise progressively to lead the eye up
to the main tower, and thus intensify the impression of a mountain range. While the Orissan roof is pyramidal in pattern, the Khajurāho builders employed corbelling to produce the effect of a flattish dome. The mass of the buildings is broken by pillared window openings, which relieve the monotony of the ornately carved stone. A further distinctive feature of the style was the introduction of small transepts to the assembly hall, giving the whole a ground-plan not unlike that of a Gothic cathedral.

Like all other schools of architecture, that of Khajurāho made much use of carving. Here, in contrast to Orissā, the temples were adorned with sculpture both outside and in, and the halls have beautifully carved domed ceilings. The style of Khajurāho sculpture lacks the solidity and vigour of the best of Orissā, but the wonderful friezes of statuary contain figures of a graceful vitality, warmer and more immediately attractive than those of the Orissan temples (pls. XXXI-II).

In Rājasthān and Gujarāt are many medieval temples, some of much architectural merit. Here we can only mention the greatest of these Western schools, that which rose under the patronage of the Caulukya or Solanki kings of Gujarāt, and flourished from the 11th to the 13th centuries. This kingdom was wealthy from the seaborne trade with the Arabs and Persians, and much of the treasure of kings, ministers and merchants alike was expended on beautiful Jaina and Hindu temples.

The most famous buildings of this school are the lovely Jaina shrines of Mount Ābū, the style of which is fundamentally not very different from that of Khajurāho. The temples were built on high platforms and usually consisted of a shrine and hall only, without an entrance portico. The śikhara over the shrine, like those of Khajurāho, was adorned with a large number of miniature towers, and the ceilings were in the form of corbelled domes. Perhaps through the influence of Muslim architectural styles, these ceilings were carved so as to give the impression of a true dome, the steps of the corbelling being skillfully concealed by the sculptor, and the flat crossbeams, supported on pillars, often being adorned with large brackets meeting at the centre, which gave an arch-like 'effect, though the true arch was never employed. The most outstanding feature of this style is its minute and lovely decorativeness (pl. XIVa). The shrines of Mount Ābū, made of cool white marble, are covered with the most delicate and ornate carving, especially in the interiors: it is, however, rather flaccid and repetitive. In comparison with Bhubanēsar, Konārak and Khajurāho the rich decoration of Mount Ābū has a flavour of cold lifelessness.
Remains of pre-Muslim secular buildings are few. In the Middle Ages kings and chiefs certainly built stone palaces, but of these only the base of the Vijayanagara throne-room, and some remains in Ceylon, have survived. Several cities of Rājasthān and Gujarāt have finely carved gateways from the medieval period. But, though secular architecture was no doubt highly developed, it is clear that India's architects and masons devoted their greatest energies to temple building. Working according to strict traditions, but showing much ingenuity and originality within the main standardized pattern, they erected monuments of fantastic beauty with the simplest technical equipment. Many patient hands reared the sikhāras above the plain, and capped them with great slabs of stone, raised on enormous ramps of earth, like the higher courses of the pyramids of Egypt. Whether or not the architects and craftsmen were conscious of the symbolism, the temple was looked on by some as a microcosm of the world, as the open air sacrifice had been in earlier days. In sculpture, and often in painting also, all the gods were depicted on its walls, every aspect of divine and human existence symbolized. Like Hindu civilization itself, the temple was at once voluptuous and austere, rooted in earth, but aspiring to heaven.

SCULPTURE

In architecture there is no real trace of relationship between the brick houses of Harappā and the stone temples of Hindu India. The earliest sculpture of historical times, on the other hand, shows a generic likeness to that of Harappā, which we have already described (p. 20f). From the end of the Indus cities to the rise of the Mauryas over a millennium elapsed, with no surviving work of art to fill it. Somewhere in North India the art of sculpture, no doubt in perishable materials, was certainly kept alive. The patronage of the Mauryan emperors, the influx of western influence, and growing material prosperity led to its revival, and to the making of stone figures and reliefs which are preserved to this day.

The capitals of Aśoka's columns, some of which were perhaps made before his reign, are the earliest important sculptures after those of the Indus cities. They are not characteristic of Indian sculpture, though they contain many native features. The famous lions of the Sarnāth column and the less famous but more beautiful bull of the column of Rāmpūrvā (pl. XVb) are the work of realistic sculptors, owing something to Iranian and Hellenist tradition. Yet, if we did not know that the possibility of Western influence existed, we might suggest that the animal sculptures of the columns were those of a school directly descended from the engravers of the Indus seals,
which also show a realistic treatment very unusual for so early a civilization. The abaci of the capitals perhaps show native influence more clearly than the crowning figures, and bear animals in lively postures, wheels, representing both the Buddha and the Mauryan World-emperor, and floral and foliate designs in which typical Indian motifs appear side by side with some borrowed from the West. Other than the pillars there are few remains of the Mauryan school, with its high polish and fine finish. One beautiful figure, the "Dīdārganj Yakṣī" (pl. XVIIa), bears the distinctive brilliant polish of the school, but the treatment suggests that it is post-Mauryan. The yakṣī bears a caurī, or ceremonial yak's tail fly-whisk with which kings and gods were fanned; this shows that she was made as the attendant on another figure or a sacred object, which has now vanished.

A number of images of yakṣas, somewhat larger than life-size, are the only other important free sculptures of the centuries immediately before Christ. They are strong, bull-necked and heavy, and, though not technically perfect, have an elemental solidarity rarely found in later sculpture. The treatment of the ample abdomens of these figures has been compared with that of the abdomen of the Harappā torso and gives further evidence of the survival of tradition over the long intervening period.

The most important sculptural remains of the post-Mauryan period are the carvings on the rails and gateways of the great Buddhist sites at Bhārhut, Gaya and Sāncchī. There is no absolute certainty about the dating of these remains, but the sculpture of Bhārhut is in a less highly developed style than that of Gayā and Sāncchī and is probably the earliest, while the gateways of Sāncchī, carved with great sureness and skill, are probably the latest of the three. The series Bhārhut-Gayā-Sāncchī is to some extent confirmed by epigraphic evidence, and we may date Bhārhut c. 150 B.C. and Sāncchī about the end of the 1st century B.C., with Gayā somewhere between the two. The criteria are not, however, absolutely certain, and it is possible that the backward and advanced schools were approximately contemporary.

At Bhārhut (pl. XVI) the upright posts of the stūpa railings are carved with yakṣas and yakṣīs, beautifully finished and very decorative, like all the best Indian sculpture, but archaic and uncertain in treatment. Their flatness suggests that the artists were trained in the working of ivory, and were laboriously learning to translate their skill into a different medium. The medallions of the crosspieces (pl. XIVb and XVc-d), mostly depicting scenes from Jataka stories, have a similar archaic flavour.
The Gayā railing, enclosing not a stūpa but the sacred path where the Buddha was believed to have walked in meditation after he had obtained enlightenment, shows an advance on Bhārhut. The figures are deeper, more vital, and more rounded, and the sculptors had by this time evidently gained greater mastery of their technique. Figures are no longer always carved flat on the stone, but begin to appear in three-quarter poses. Notable at Gayā are the medallions containing human heads, which have such realism that they may well be portraits.

The crowning achievement of early North Indian sculpture is undoubtedly Sānchī. Here a smaller stūpa (Stūpa II) is adorned with carvings of very archaic character, according to some authorities older than those of Bhārhut. The railings of the main stūpa are quite undorned, but, in sharp contrast, the great gateways are carved with a multitude of figures and reliefs. From top to bottom and on all sides the massive square uprights and triple architraves are alive with the life of the times. Yakṣīs smile as they lean in easy graceful poses,* or serve as brackets to the architraves (pl. XVIIIb), which are supported by massive elephants or cheerfully grinning dwarfs. The flat surfaces of the uprights and architraves are covered with panels depicting scenes from the life of the Buddha or from Jātaka stories (pl. XIX). Cities are besieged, riders on elephants and horses pass in procession, men and women worship sacred shrines, elephants roam the jungle; lions, peacocks, yakṣīs, nāgas, mythical animals and ornate floral designs fill the whole. Some of the motifs are evidently of Mesopotamian or Persian inspiration, but the overall impression is typically Indian in its complexity of pattern, its cheerful busy realism, and its exuberance.

The carvings of the Sānchī gateways were not carried out according to any preconceived scheme. The sculptors were not commissioned by the monastery, but by private patrons, who wished to gain merit by beautifying the stūpa, and they carved what their patrons told them in the way they thought best. Superficially the result is lacking in formal unity, but is endowed with a unity transcending rule and pattern, the unity of a prosperous culture, pious in devotion to its shrines, and delighting in the world it lived in and knew. The visitor, standing on the hill of Sānchī on a sunny winter day, when the wild peacocks walk among the ruins and the great plain shimmers in the hazy distance, gets the overriding impression that this is the work of a contented people at one with itself.

* The trikānta, a pose in dancing and dramatics with one leg bent and the body slightly turned at the hips, was a favourite with the sculptor from the earliest times. It contrasts sharply with the rather rigid poses of most ancient art other than that of the Greeks, and gives an impression of life and vitality.
Technically the carvings are of high excellence. The sculptors have now fully mastered their material. Their treatment, while not, of course, realistic in the nineteenth-century sense, has transcended the rather stiff formalism of Bhārhut, and is free and alive. The sculpture of Sāncī everywhere gives a sense of certainty; the artists knew what they had to depict, and clearly saw in their mind’s eye how to do so.

At Bhārhut, Gayā and Sāncī, and indeed in all the Buddhist sculpture of this period, the Buddha himself is never shown, but symbolized by such emblems as a wheel, an empty throne, a pair of footprints or a pīpal tree (pl. XIX). The obvious reason for this iconographical peculiarity is that he was so venerated that it seemed sacrilegious to portray him, but we have no literary or other evidence to confirm this. The aversion to depicting the Buddha may have been due to the fact that, since he had passed quite out of the universe, it was thought misleading to show him in human form. In any case the familiar Buddha image of later times is not to be found at these three early Buddhist sites. The schools of Gandhāra (the lower Kābul Valley and the upper Indus, around Peshāwar) and Mathurā, both of which flourished under the Kuśāṇa kings, vie for the honour of having produced the first images of the Buddha. Most Indian authorities now believe that the Buddha image originated at Mathurā; most earlier Europeans supported Gandhāra, but some recent experts are less certain.

The school of Mathurā probably began at the end of the 1st century B.C., though some authorities would date it later. Working for centuries in the white-spotted red sandstone of the locality, it produced works which were carried far and wide, and had much influence on later sculpture. Some of the school’s inspiration was Jaina, and at an early period the Mathurā craftsmen were making votive plaques depicting the cross-legged naked figure of a Tīrthaṅkara in meditation, which may have inspired the Buddhists to depict their own teacher. Perhaps the most striking remains of the Mathurā school are the yakṣīs from the railings of a stūpa, which was probably Jaina. (pl. XXa). These richly jewelled ladies, their figures exaggeratedly broad of hip and slender of waist, stand in pert attituđes reminiscent of the Indus dancing-girl (pl. Va), and their gay and frank sensuality in a context of piety and renunciation gives another example of the remarkable antinomy of the ancient Indian outlook on life, which found nothing incongruous in such a juxtaposition.

Rather outside the main range of Mathurā art are the Kuśāṇa royal statues, most of which were found at the nearby village of Māt, where the kings no doubt had a winter residence, with a chapel in
which the memory of former monarchs and princes was revered. The figures have nearly all been broken by succeeding rulers, and that of the great Kaniṣka, the most striking of the statues, unfortunately lacks its head (pl. XXIa). Wearing the dress of Central Asia, a long coat and quilted boots, and grasping in one hand a sword and in the other its sheath, the king stands with legs apart, in an attitude of authority. This statue may be criticized technically as showing no sense of depth, being virtually in two dimensions. The sculptor was evidently working on a theme to which he was not used, but he succeeded in producing a work of much power, suggesting the hieratic royal statues of Egypt.

The early Buddhas and Bodhisattvas of the Mathurā school are happy fleshy figures with little spirituality about them, but later they developed in grace and religious feeling (pl. XXVb). Though the Mathurā school owed much to earlier Indian tradition, it also borrowed from the North-West, and adopted more than one Greco-Roman motif. Through Mathurā the style generally known as Gupta developed, and produced some of the greatest Indian religious sculpture.

The school of Gandhāra was evidently influenced by the art of the Roman Empire, and some of its craftsmen may have been Westerners. Though often called Greco-Buddhist, the Greek kingdoms of Bactria and N.-W. India had vanished when this school emerged. It is not to the Greco-Bactrian heirs of Alexander, but to the trade with the West, encouraged by the rising prosperity of Rome and the eastward march of her legions, that we must attribute this syncretistic school. The Greeks left only a few lovely silver articles, beautiful coins, and one or two other objects, perhaps imported from the West. It was Kaniṣka and his successors and their wealthy subjects who gave to the school of Gandhāra the encouragement and support through which it flourished. The new devotional Buddhism demanded images for worship, and figures of the Buddha and Bodhisattvas were produced in large numbers, as well as small votive plaques depicting scenes from the Buddha’s life or Jātaka stories (pl. XXII).

The Mathurā sculptors drew inspiration for their Buddha-images from the burly yakṣa figures of the earlier centuries on the one hand and from the meditating Jaina Tīrthankaras on the other. The Gandhāra sculptors had other models in the gods of the Greco-Roman World. Often their inspiration seems almost wholly Western (pl. XXIbcd), and it is hard not to believe that some of the Gandhāra masters were foreigners from Syria or Alexandria. The school has depreciated in recent years. When all art was judged by classical norms it was thought to be the finest school of Indian art, which once and once
only produced work of grace and realism. Now the sculpture of Gandhāra is sometimes described as a mere imitation of an imitation, the weak copy of a great art in decline. Neither judgement is fair. In an Indian context the style of Gandhāra has a rather insipid flavour, but it is not without originality. The Buddhas of Gandhāra, though perhaps lacking in the spirituality of those of the Gupta period, are gentle, graceful and compassionate, while some of the plaques are vivid and energetic. The school continued after the great Kuśāṇas, though with less prosperous times it produced few works in stone, but many in plaster or stucco. Its influence was felt far beyond the bounds of India, and can be traced even in China.

While these schools were developing in the North others appeared in the Peninsula. Here, in the Bhājā cave (p. 354f) and at Udaiyagiri in Orissā, very ancient sculpture is to be found, possibly no later than that of Bhārhut. The great Buddhist cave temples of the Western Deccān contain much sculpture of great merit, perhaps the finest of which are the numerous figures of donors, often carved in high relief on the cave walls. These are frequently in couples, their arms on one another's shoulders, and seem to be idealized portraits of the wealthy patrons of the Buddhist caves (pl. XXIII). Such couples are also to be found in early terracottas (pl. XXXVIIb), and no doubt their originals believed that by placing their effigies in shrines they would obtain both material and spiritual benefits. It may be that these are the forerunners of the maithuna couples of the medieval temples (p. 364), but the spirit behind the early dāmpati pairs seems very different, for these figures have no overt sexual significance. The man usually looks not at his wife but outwards into the hall, while the woman glances downwards, and, quite unlike the bold yakṣis of the North, holds her body diffidently, almost timidly, as if rather embarrassed at being stared at in public. We believe that these figures represent the ideals of ancient Indian married life, and are no more esoteric than the family memorial brasses in many English churches.

The region between the lower valleys of the Kistnā and Godāvarī became an important centre of Buddhism at least as early as the 2nd century B.C., and some very ancient sculpture in low relief, intended to adorn the sides of stūpas, is to be found there. This already shows the characteristic elongation of the mature style of Amārāvatī. In the late Sātavāhana period (2nd–3rd century A.D.) the great stūpa of Amārāvatī was adorned with limestone reliefs depicting scenes of the Buddha's life and surrounded with free-standing Buddha figures. The relief medallions are certainly among the greatest works of Indian art (pl. XXIV). Beautifully balanced in composition to fit the circular frames, they convey an intense vitality and sense of rapid
movement, quite unexpected in the context of the grave and calm
religion they illustrate. The slender, long-legged figures are por-
trayed in vigorous action, often rising almost to frenzy, as in the
famous medallion showing a host of ecstatic demigods carrying the
Buddha’s begging-bowl to heaven. The Amarāvatī school had great
influence. Its products were carried to Ceylon and South-East Asia
and had a marked effect on local styles, while its influence on later
South Indian sculpture is also very evident.

Meanwhile in the North the Śaka and Kuśāṇa invaders had in part
retreated and in part merged with the indigenous population, to make
way for the great Gupta empire. From the point of view of art the
Gupta Period is generally taken to include at least the 4th–6th centuries
and the first half of the 7th. The plastic remains of this age are com-
paratively few, but enough survive to show the achievement of the
time. If the schools of Bhārhut, Sāncī and Mathurā are marked by
a sensual earthiness, and that of Amarāvatī by vital, excited move-
ment, the Guptan sculpture suggests serenity, security and certainty.
It was at this time that India produced some of her most truly religi-
ous art, especially in the lovely Buddhas of Sārnāth. Most famous
of these is the icon of the Buddha “turning the Wheel of the Law”,
or preaching his first sermon (pl. XXVa), which, more than any
other Indian sculpture, seems to convey the true message of Buddhism.
Surrounded by a large and ornate halo, flanked by two small demi-
gods, the Master sits majestically, his body slender and rounded,
plastically so simplified that no trace of muscular contour can be
seen, his delicate fingers forming the dharmacakra mudrā, which indi-
cates that he is preaching. His face is, as usual, that of a young man,
with full, smoothly modelled lips; his half-closed eyes and slight
smile tell more graphically and vividly than any of the rather dry
Buddhist scriptures his fundamental message, and emphasize not its
first part, that the world is full of sorrow, death and decay, but that
it is possible to transcend these evils, and reach a state where age and
grief no longer affect the mind, and where earthly pleasure is trans-
muted into serene inner joy.

This great masterpiece, however, illustrates only one aspect of
Gupta art. In the region of Gwālior and Jhānsī an excellent school
of Hindu sculptors existed, and the carvings of the temple of Deo-
garh, depicting Hindu gods and mythological scenes, show the
 beginnings of the early medieval style. The splendid figure of the
sun-god Sūrya from Gwālior (pl. XXVIa) illustrates another
aspect of the outlook of the times. Broad and sturdy, cheerfully
smiling, the god looks straight ahead at his worshippers, his right
hand raised in blessing—the god of a good-natured, happy people.
Equally significant of the spirit of the Gupta Period, if less perfect in execution, is the charming relief of a dancer accompanied by girl-musicians, found at Pāwayā, near Gwālior (pl. XXVc). Probably of the 9th century, but continuing the Gupta tradition, is the "Sāncī Torso",* the delicately but vigorously modelled body of a Bodhisattva, its smooth contours emphasized by the minutely carved jewelled collar and belt and the scarf of antelope skin hanging over the left shoulder (pl. XXVIIb).

Perhaps the most immediately impressive of all Guptan sculpture is the Great Boar, carved in relief near the entrance of a cave at Udayagiri, near Bhīlsā (pl. XXVd). The body of the god Viṣṇu, who became a mighty boar to rescue the earth from the cosmic ocean (p. 305), conveys the impression of a great primeval power working for good against the forces of chaos and destruction, and bears a message of hope, strength and assurance. The greatness of the god in comparison with his creation is brought out by the tiny female figure of the personified earth, clinging to his tusk. The deep feeling which inspired the carving of this figure makes it perhaps the only theriomorphic image in the world's art which conveys a truly religious message to modern man.

Sculptures of the medieval period are so numerous that they cannot be discussed here in detail. By this time iconographical canons were fixed. Every god had his special attributes, which were regularly portrayed in his image; the proportions of body, limbs and features were laid down, and were adhered to with increasing rigidity; but the Indian sculptor succeeded in producing remarkable variety in his now almost hieratic art.

Under the Pāla and Sena kings of Bihār and Bengal (8th–12th centuries) both Buddhists and Hindus made fine icons, many in the local black basalt. The special characteristic of Pāla art is its fine finish; its figures are much decorated and well polished, and often seem rather made of metal than of stone (pl. XXX).

The sculpture of Orissā was greater than that of the Pālas. The carvings of the temples of Bhubanesar and Konārak (pl. XXXIV) show a deep sensuous appreciation of the human form and an expressiveness which gives them a characteristic beauty of their own. The finest Orissan sculptures are those in the courtyard of the Temple of the Sun at Konārak, where the forceful horses and the mighty elephant crushing a malefactor in his trunk show a strength of treatment and a feeling for animal form rare in the world's art, and reminiscent of the animal sculpture and ceramics of the T'ang dynasty of China.

* Said by some to be an exceptional Pāla production.
The Khajurāho temples are covered with figures of divinities and pairs of lovers of wonderful delicacy and grace (pls. XXXI-II), and in many other parts of North India works of beauty survive, although few can vie with those of Orissā.

In the Deccan individual schools of sculpture appeared. The temples of Aihoḷe and Bāḍāmi contain fine work of the 6th century onwards (pl. XXVIIa), which shows the influence of the Guptan style, with a tendency to elongation perhaps inherited from AmaraAVED. More important are the sculptures of Māmallapuram, adorning the wonderful complex of rock-temples made by the Pallava kings of Kānci. Most striking of these is the relief of the descent of the Ganga (pl. XXVIIIb), covering a rock face over 80 feet long and nearly 50 feet high (24.4 × 9.1 m.). A natural cleft in the rock has been utilized to represent the Sacred River, who is watched on either side by gods, demigods, ascetics and elephants as she descends from the head of Śiva, and who has sinuous snake-spirits (nāgas) swimming in her waters. The artists who designed this splendid relief had a sardonic sense of humour, for among the worshipping ascetics they carved the crafty cat, who performed penance in order to lure the mice to their doom. Māmallapuram contains other fine relief sculpture, including an idealized portrait of the versatile king Mahendravikramavarman and his queens and a number of free-standing animal figures, which are remarkable for their simple strength.

The influence of the Pallava school of sculpture was felt in Ceylon (pl. XXVIIb), and also in the Western Deccan. Here the Buddhist carvings of the Ajantā caves, though important, are dwarfed in significance by the wonderful mural paintings. The carvings of the later Ellorā caves, on the other hand, especially those of the Kailāsanātha Temple (p. 356), are among the finest sculptures of India. They are chiefly in the form of deep reliefs giving the effect of free-standing sculpture, and illustrate scenes of mythology (pl. XXVIIc). The whole series of carvings is characterized by balanced design and a graceful energy akin to that of AmaraAVED. Of the same school, but about a century later, are the cave sculptures of Elephanta. The rock temple of Śiva contains a fine series of deep reliefs, all of which are dwarfed in significance by the colossal Trimūrti, which is perhaps the best known of all Ancient Indian sculptures. The three-headed bust of Śiva, calm with the calmness of eternity, is so impressive and so religiously inspired that it needs little comment. The serene god is perhaps the highest plastic expression of the Hindu concept of divinity.

After Māmallapuram, Ellorā and Elephanta much stone sculpture
was produced in the Peninsula, but though often of great merit it lacked the depth and beauty of the work of the earlier schools. The splendid bronzes of the Cójas and their successors are the most outstanding products of the Dravidian artists of the later Middle Ages.

**TERRACOTTAS**

While the rich delighted in figures of stone, metal or ivory, poorer people contented themselves with small images and plaques of baked clay, no doubt originally painted in bright colours. They were evidently mass-produced, and most of the finer specimens were made in moulds.

Nearly every archaeological site, from Harappā onwards, has produced many of these terracotta objects. Most are religious. Crude clay figures of goddesses—apparently early forms of Durgā, worshipped by the lower classes before her inclusion in the orthodox pantheon—are common, and recall the similar but even cruder mother-goddess figurines of Harappā (fig. ii, p. 19). Other objects have little if any religious significance, though they may have been charms or votive offerings; figures of mother and child, a type rare in sculpture, suggest offerings made by childless women, while the numerous figures of a man and a woman (pl. XXXVIa), standing in modest poses reminiscent of the donors of the cave temple sculpture, may have been charms for a happy marriage. While many terracottas are crude, others are of fine workmanship and real beauty. Some faces are well characterized and divine heads are sometimes beautifully modelled (pl. XXXVIc–d). The terracotta plaques often have much charm.

Most of the terracottas so far found date from the Mauryan to the Gupta period, but the art of modelling in terracotta must have existed earlier, and certainly continued later, for the Buddhist sites of Bihār have yielded many medieval votive plaques of no great artistic interest.

**METAL SCULPTURE AND ENGRAVING**

Several works of art in metal, very Hellenistic in style, have been found in the North-West, dating from the early centuries of the Christian era. Some of these are quite un-Indian, and may have been imported, or produced by foreign craftsmen, for instance the lovely little golden and jewelled reliquary casket from Bimārāṇ (pl. XLVa). Further afield, in Soviet Central Asia and Northern Afghānistān, have been found beautiful silver cups and other objects, ornamented with motifs usually Hellenistic in inspiration and technique, but showing clear evidence of Indian contacts (pl. XLVII). Soviet archaeologists
believe that these are the products of the Greek kingdom of Bactria, and date from the 3rd and 2nd centuries B.C. Thus they are in no way connected with the Gandhāra sculpture of the early centuries of the Christian era. Wholly Indian in style, and dating from pre-Gupta times, is the copper vase from Kulū, on the borders of Kashmir, engraved with a gay procession (fig. xxiii).

From the Gupta period a number of bronze and copper figures have survived, mostly Buddhist. The most impressive of these is the "Sultānānj Buddha", some 7½ feet high, now in Birmingham Museum—a graceful figure, dressed in a diaphanous cloak. Like most of the work of the period it conveys a feeling of aliveness, not by attention to realistic detail and proportion, but by the sense of movement in the slightly tilted body, the delicate fingers, lightly clasping the corners of the robe, and the face, impassively symmetrical yet with a vitality imparted by the delicate moulding of its features.* The Sultānānj Buddha was found in Bihār, the most important centre of Buddhism, where one of the two great medieval schools of metal sculpture arose, under the patronage of the Pāla kings. Pāla bronzes are so numerous that there is no doubt that they were mass-produced. They were exported to South-East Asia, where they are still found, and to Nepal and Tibet, where they provided prototypes for indigenous schools. These images are

* Very recently doubts have been cast on the date generally attributed to the Sultānānj Buddha. It may be a work of the 9th century.
characterized chiefly by delicacy of design and ornamental detail, and deep religious inspiration is usually lacking. The earliest Nepāl bronzes, which go back to our period, are less ornate in design, but are gilded and set with semi-precious stones, and give an impression of great brilliance and smoothness.

Other parts of India also produced metal icons, but many of those which have survived have no great artistic value. The Tamils still prefer metal to stone for the images used in temple and domestic worship, and it was in South India, especially in the kingdom of the Cōjas, that the greatest Indian works of art in metal were made, by a school of bronze-casters which has not been excelled in the world. South Indian bronzes vary in size, but many of the finest specimens are very large and heavy, their pedestals fitted with lugs for carrying in processions. The best specimens of South Indian metal work are of great grace and simplicity, for though the statues have much ornamentation this, as in most of the best Indian sculpture, is relieved by areas of bare smooth flesh. Physical features and the contours of face and limb are simplified and idealized, the proportions are rigidly fixed by canons laid down in iconographical textbooks, and every attribute of the deity portrayed is determined by convention. It is surprising that, bound as they were by these rigid rules, the Tamil craftsmen succeeded in producing works of such great beauty and often of considerable individuality. As well as images of the gods and goddesses the Tamil school produced many figures representing the saints of devotional theism, and portrait figures of kings and queens, who, in theory, were themselves divine, and whose images were often placed in temples among the lesser divinities surrounding the chief god.

Of the latter class the finest figures are the life-size 16th century statues of King Kṛṣṇa Deva Rāya and two of his chief queens (pl. XXXIX), which still stand in a temple at Tirumalai. The faces of the queens seem quite conventional, though very beautiful, but that of the great king himself is almost certainly intended to give some idea of his actual appearance. Their hands pressed together in the gesture called añjali, to mark their homage and respect to the gods, their large eyes half closed, these three dignified figures seem to represent all that was good and noble in the old Hindu ideals of kingship, and, looking at them, we can understand why the king made so deep an impression on the Portuguese envoys (p. 78).

The greatest and most triumphant achievements of Tamil bronze casting are undoubtedly the dancing Śivas, of which there are many examples dating from the 11th century onwards (pl. XXXVIII). It was as “Lord of the Dance” (Naṭarāja, p. 310) that the Tamil masters
specially delighted in portraying the god—a graceful young man, his four arms delicately posed, often with a flame in the open palm of one hand and a halo of flames encircling him, one foot firm on the back of a demon, and the other raised in a posture well known in the Indian dance. Thus the god appears as the very essence of vital, ordered movement, eternal youth, and ethereal light. This is not the Western conception of the highest godhead, but, once the religious background is understood, even the Westerner can recognize in the finest specimens of the dancing Śiva a genuine religious inspiration, a wholly successful effort at depicting in plastic terms divine truth, beauty and joy.

An important school of bronze casting existed in Ceylon, and produced works similar in style to those of South India. The finest metal product of Ceylon is undoubtedly the lovely large figure of a goddess, generally believed to be that of a Buddhist Tārā, but perhaps Pārvatī, the wife of Śiva (pl. XXXVIIa)*. This lovely and delicate casting, now in the British Museum, can hold its own with the greatest products of the South Indian bronzesmith.

Nearly all Indian bronzes were made by the "cire perdue" process. The figure was first designed over a core in wax, which was covered with a coating of clay. The whole was then heated, so that the wax melted away, leaving a mould to be filled with molten metal. Larger standing figures, such as the Sultānganj Buddha which weighs nearly a ton, were often made in parts which were welded together.

PAINTING

Literary references alone would prove that painting was a very highly developed art in ancient India. Palaces and the homes of the rich were adorned with beautiful murals, and smaller paintings were made on prepared boards. Not only were there professional artists, but also many men and women of the educated classes could ably handle a brush.

Though now all in very bad condition, the surviving remains of ancient Indian painting are sufficient to show its achievement. They consist almost entirely of murals in certain of the cave temples. No doubt most temples were painted in some way, and the statuary was brightly coloured, as it often is in Hindu temples today, and here and there more elaborate schemes of mural decoration were carried out. A few caves in outlying places contain rough painted sketches of no special merit, mostly primitive in style, and believed by many authori-

* In Ceylon this figure was worshipped as the goddess Pāṭīṇī, the divinized form of the faithful Kannagī of Tamil legend (pp. 472–77), the ideal of wifely devotion.
ties to be prehistoric. Some of the artificial caves dedicated to religious purposes, however, give us samples of the work of highly developed schools, and few would dispute that these are among the greatest surviving paintings of any ancient civilization.

The cave paintings of Ajantā (pls. XL-XLIV) are often referred to as frescos, but this term is incorrect, for a true fresco is painted while the plaster is still damp, and the murals of Ajantā were made after it had set. The walls were first covered with a coating of clay or cowdung bound together with straw or hair, and then finished with white gypsum. Considering the climate the surface has stood well, but in many places it has flaked away, and even since they were first copied in the last century the condition of the paintings has deteriorated. The tempera pigments, on the other hand, are still remarkably fresh; in their original state the paintings must have been of great brilliance, and their colours are even now clear and well contrasted. The artists probably worked in the dim caves by light reflected from outside by metal mirrors.

The paintings in Cave X have been shown with fair certainty to date from before the beginning of the Christian era, while those of Caves I and XVI are from perhaps as much as six centuries later. The earlier paintings are more sharply outlined and the later show more careful modelling, but there is no clear evidence of a progressively developing style, as in contemporary sculpture, and the differences may be accounted for by the personal tastes of the craftsmen who supervised the work in the respective caves. The murals chiefly depict scenes from the life of the Buddha and from the Jātakas. No frame divides a scene from the next, but one blends into the other, the minor figures and the pattern skilfully leading the eye to the central figures of each scene. There is no perspective, but an illusion of depth is given by placing the background figures somewhat above those in the foreground. The effect of this convention is rather like that of a photograph taken with a telescopic camera, and makes the figures stand out from the flat wall as though coming to meet the observer.

Though painted for religious purposes the murals of Ajantā bear rather a secular than a religious message. Here, even more vividly than at Sānc, we see the whole life of ancient India in panorama. Here are princes in their palaces, ladies in their harems, coolies with loads slung over their shoulders, beggars, peasants and ascetics, together with all the many beasts and birds and flowers of India, in fact the whole life of the times, perpetuated on the dim walls of the caves by the loving hands of many craftsmen. Everything is gracefully and masterfully drawn and delicately modelled.
Among the many masterpieces of Ajantā we must mention the figure of a handsome young man, his body bent slightly in the pose called trikhaiga (p. 368. n.), loved by Indian sculptors and artists, with jewelled crown on his head and a white lotus in his right hand. His smooth features betray gentle sorrow, and his eyes look downward compassionately, as if at something far below him (pl. XLIV). Around him are apsarasas, or heavenly damsels, and divine minstrels, all much smaller than the central figure, who is the Bodhisattva Avalokiteśvara Padmapāṇi, the Lord who Looks Down in Compassion (p. 278). Here, once more, a work of deep religious feeling appears among the cheerfully sensuous scenes of everyday life. The Bodhisattva, for all his jewels and his smooth youthfulness, has shared the sorrows of the world; his gentle eyes have seen countless ages of pain, and his delicately formed lips have spoken words of consolation to countless sufferers. The artist of the Bodhisattva has well conveyed his message—the universe is not indifferent to the sorrows and strivings of its creatures.

Religious feeling of a different type is found in the painting of the glorified Buddha, begging his daily bread from a woman and child believed to represent his wife Yaśodharā and his son Rāhula. The lovely portrayal of the two minor figures is scarcely noticed against the majesty of the Master, whose calm features and robed body convey, like the Sārnāth Buddha, the serenity of self-transcendence.

A few other paintings are to be found elsewhere. Those on the walls of the veranda of a cave at Bāgh, some hundred miles to the North of Ajantā, depict a procession of elephants, perhaps more impressive in composition than anything Ajantā has to offer and a lovely scene of a dancer and women musicians. Traces of paintings in the Ajantā style are to be found in other Deccan caves, notably at Bādāmi and Ellorā. Further south, in the Tamil country, a Jaina cave at a place called Sitannavalasal has yielded fine, though much decayed, murals, and recently some splendid paintings of the Cola period have been revealed under layers of plaster in the Rājarājeśvara Temple at Tānjuvūr.

Some of the best preserved paintings of these schools are to be found in Ceylon. In the centre of the island a great rock, Sigiriya, the “Lion Mountain”, rises sharply for 600 feet above the surrounding plain. Here, at the end of the 5th century, the parricide king Kāśyapa I built a palace and a fortress. Kāśyapa, evidently a megalomaniac, was so convinced of his own divinity that he tried to identify his rock-fortress with heaven, and had demigods and heavenly beings painted on the bare walls of the rock, to show his subjects that he
transcended them all. Nearly all these paintings have vanished under
the hot sun and driving monsoon rain, but half way up the rock
face, preserved by an overhanging ledge, are the figures of twenty-
one apsarasas immersed from their hips downwards in banks of
cloud.* These charming ladies, toying with flowers in languid
poses are so freshly preserved that one can hardly believe that they
were painted 1,600 years ago.

Most of the surviving traces of medieval Hindu painting, at
Vijayanagara, Polonnaruva in Ceylon, and elsewhere, indicate that
there was some technical decline after the 8th century. Outlines
become sharper, and the delicate modelling of the earlier period is
lacking, but the achievement is still considerable, and the tradition
of mural painting continued down to the Muslim invasion.

After the spread of Islamic influence the Indian painter turned his
attention mainly to miniatures and book illustration, deriving much
inspiration from Persian models. Literary evidence shows that
miniature painting existed long before the coming of the Muslims,
however, and a few examples have survived from the 11th and 12th
centuries from Bihār, Bengal and Nepāl (pl. XLb). These little
pictures show great delicacy and skill, but they lack the comparative
realism of Ajantā, and the figures are almost unmodelled. They are
the products of a formalized Buddhism, the religious inspiration of
which was languishing, and which was largely detached from contact
with everyday life. Unlike the Ajantā murals, they are probably the
work of monks, and not of secular craftsmen.

The dry sands of Central Asia have preserved paintings which,
though not strictly Indian, owe much to Indian inspiration. The
earliest of these surround a colossal rock-cut Buddha at Bāmiyān
in Afghānistān and are older than most of the paintings
at Ajantā. The many murals and paintings on boards found at
sites in Chinese Turkistān and other parts of Central Asia are mostly
somewhat later, and show greater deviation from Indian models,
though their debt to India is still quite evident. They date from a
period when the trade route to China was wide open, and give proof
of the debt which Chinese art, despite its very individual character,
owes to India.

**MINOR ARTS**

The excavations at Takṣaśilā and other sites of the North-West
have revealed fine jewellery (pl. XLVIIIa), with semi-precious

*At one time these figures were thought to be portraits of Kāyapa’s queens and
concubines, and some of the faces seem to show individual character. A few authorities
might still support the older theory, but the context of the paintings leaves little doubt
that this interpretation, first put forward by Dr. S. Paranavitāna, is correct.
stones set in gold filigree, much in the manner of the Indian jewellery of the present day. The Bimarān Casket (pl. XLVα), and a few other objects in gold and silver, are delicately worked, as are the crystal relic caskets found in Buddhist sites in many parts of India. Engraved intaglio gems from the North-Western sites are usually of no great artistic merit, and nearly all these small objects of art show the influence of western models, while some may well have been imported.

Though little survives, much beautiful work was done in ivory. Guilds of ivory carvers are mentioned in inscriptions and their profession was evidently a well-patronized and honourable one. Of surviving ivory work the most interesting if not the most beautiful specimen is a small statuette of a goddess, found at Herculaneum (pl. XLVIβ) and no doubt imported with spices and fine textiles via Egypt. More beautiful are the ivory plaques, originally fastened to the lids and sides of furniture and boxes, found at the Kuśāna site of Begrām, some fifty miles west of Kābul. Though discovered in the region most open to Western influence, the designs of these plaques are purely Indian in inspiration and they were either imported from India proper or made by craftsmen who had learnt their trade from Indian masters (pl. XLVζ). The figures are outlined with deep-cut lines, and, although only lightly modelled, give a wonderful impression of depth. Their delicacy and grace are unexcelled in any work of art of ancient India. The art of ivory carving has continued down to the present day both in India and Ceylon, but it has never again produced works as lovely as these.

Since they delighted in minute detail and gave great care to the finish of their productions it is surprising that the Indians did not develop their coinage artistically. Ancient Indian coins are generally crude and ugly. Only under the Gupta emperors did they approach the status of works of art, and even the Gupta gold coins are but works of art of the second order. They have originality and charm, however. Thus Candra Gupta I joyingly gazes at his chief queen, Kumāradevī; Samudra Gupta, enthroned, performs on the harp; Candra Gupta II slays a rhinoceros; and Kumārā Gupta I rides on a splendid elephant (fig. xxiv). After this, however, the standard of coin production deteriorated rapidly, and medieval kings who patronized great artists and craftsmen were satisfied with coins of the crudest type.

Exceptional are the large silver coins minted by the Greek kings of Bactria, which bear some of the finest numismatic portraits in the world (pl. XLVΙα–c); but the inspiration of these coins is purely Hellenistic, and they were no doubt designed by Greek
craftsmen. It is unlikely that they circulated widely in India, where the Greek kings issued cruder bilingual coins (pl. Ld), in a style followed by the later Sakas and Kuśāṇas (pl. Le).

Fig. xxiv.—Gupta Gold Coins.


MUSIC

There is some evidence to show that the Āryans knew a heptatonic scale, and the instructions for intoning the hymns of the Sāma
Veda show that the style of liturgical singing in Vedic times was rather like that of medieval plain chant, and has been preserved fairly accurately by the brāhmaṇs down to the present day. Between this and the early centuries of the Christian era we have little knowledge of the progress of Indian music, but in the latter period an anonymous writer composed a textbook on drama, music and dancing, which, in accordance with the custom of the time, he attributed to the ancient sage Bharata, and which has survived to this day. This Bhārata Natyaśāstra is our earliest Indian authority on these three arts, and shows that by this time India had a fully developed system of music, out of which later Indian "classical" music developed. Because of the highly technical nature of the subject, which for its full understanding demands special training, we treat ancient Indian music briefly.

The basic scale of modern North Indian music is heptatonic and its seven notes (called saṭja, ṭṣabha, gāndhāra, madhyama, paṇcama, dhaivata and nisāda, abbreviated to sa, ri, ga, ma, pa, dha and ni) correspond approximately to those of the European major scale. They may be elaborated with half-tones of varying intervals classified according to the number of śrūtis they contain. The śruti is a theoretical interval of which the scale contains 22. According to modern Indian theory the 22 śrūtis are divided as follows:

\[
\begin{array}{cccccccc}
Sa & ri & ga & ma & pa & dha & ni & sa \\
\hline
\cdot & \cdot & \cdot & \cdot & \cdot & \cdot & \cdot & \cdot
\end{array}
\]

But from the time of Bharata down to the 18th century a scale corresponding to the Ecclesiastical Dorian mode (approximately equivalent to the white notes of the piano from D to D) was looked on as fundamental:

\[
\begin{array}{cccccccc}
Sa & ri & ga & ma & pa & dha & ni & sa \\
\hline
\cdot & \cdot & \cdot & \cdot & \cdot & \cdot & \cdot & \cdot
\end{array}
\]

This strange alteration in the terminology of the Indian scale has led to considerable confusion in interpreting earlier Indian musical texts. As well as the above scale, known as sa-grāma, Bharata recognized another as of special importance, the ma-grāma which approximately corresponds to the white notes of the piano from G to G. Besides these any other of the seven notes might be used as the home-note of a scale, and the system thus corresponded to the modes of medieval Western ecclesiastical music.

From the diagrams it will be seen that some notes may have as many as three degrees of sharpness. The quarter-tones of Indian music are chiefly noticeable in ornamentation, but they also occur to some extent in melody.
Besides the grāma, which we have translated "scale", there are other basic classifications of tune-types, chief of which is the rāga. A rāga is a series of five or more notes, upon which a melody is based. Rāga as a technical term only appears in musical texts later than that of Bharata, but by the 10th century the rāgas were firmly established. According to orthodox medieval theory there are six basic rāgas, the others being rāginiś, personified as the wives of the masculine rāgas. The six original rāgas are variously given, and the following is one of the oldest classifications, with the notes according to modern theory:

Bhairava: C, D♭ E, F, G, A♭, B, C.
Kauśika: C, E♭, F, A♭, B♭, C.
Hindola: C, E, F♯, A, B, C.
Dīpaka: C, D♭, E, F♯, A, B, C.
Śrīrāga: C, D♭, E, F♯, G, A♭, B, C.
Megha: C, D, F, G, A, C.

The rāgas are classified according to the time of day or night for which they are most appropriate. Thus, of the examples above, Bhairava is suitable for performance at dawn, Megha in the morning, Dīpaka and Śrīrāga in the afternoon, and Kauśika and Hindola at night. Bhairava is associated with awe and fear, Kauśika with joy and laughter, Hindola, Dīpaka and Śrīrāga with love, and Megha with peace and calm. It is interesting that the rāga most closely corresponding to the European major scale, Paścama, is associated with the night and love in the Indian system.

There is no developed harmony in Indian music and the melody, which usually proceeds by conjunct intervals (i.e. adjacent notes on the keyboard), never suggests a harmonic basis, as do many European melodies. The tune is sustained by one or more drone notes and by drumming. The melodic line and the subtle and complex cross rhythms of Indian music take the place of harmony and counterpoint in the ear of the trained listener. Like the ancient Greeks the Indians delighted and still delight in unusual times, such as 4 and 7. The tāla or system of musical time is, after the rāga, the most important element of Indian music. Bharata recognized tālas, and since his day many more have been introduced. Tālas range in complexity from simple 2 time (āditāla) * and 3 (rāpaka, * stressed as 1/8 3/8 1/8 3/8 1/8 3/8) to such remarkable rhythms as jhampa, * a 1/6 rhythm stressed: 1/8 3/8 1/8 3/8, or āṭā, * which has fourteen units, thus: 1/8 3/8 1/8 3/8 1/8 3/8 1/8 3/8 1/8 3/8 1/8 3/8 1/8 3/8. These complex

* These definitions are according to the South Indian system. In the theory of North Indian Classical music there is no systematic enumeration of rhythms.
rhythms, ornamented with grace notes and varied by syncopation, result often in a rhythmic texture nearly as difficult for a Westerner to disentangle as a four-part fugue would be to an Indian.

The Indian musician was, and still is, an improviser. While a simple melody could be recorded in alphabetic notation India never devised a finished system of writing music and the music of her ancient masters has vanished for ever. As at the present day, every performance was virtually a new work. The musician would choose his rāga and tāla and, often starting from a well-known melody, would elaborate his theme in the form of free variations, working up to a climax of complex and rapid ornamentation.

The chief musical instrument was the vīnā, usually loosely translated "lute". The term was originally applied to the bow-harp, often with ten strings, of a type very similar to the small harp used in ancient Egypt and the early civilizations of the Middle East (pl. XXVc). By the end of the Gupta period this instrument had begun to go out of fashion, and its place was largely taken by a lute with a pear-shaped body, played either with the fingers or with a plectrum. Archaeological evidence shows that this instrument had been played long before, and it is not clear why it ousted the older harp-type vīnā. This is still played in South-East Asia, but in later Indian music it has no place. The pear-shaped lute was in turn superseded in the 8th century by the early form of the modern vīnā, with long finger-board and small round body, often made of a dried gourd. Bowed instruments may have been known, but seem to have been little used in polite circles until the coming of the Muslims. Flutes and reed-instruments of various kinds were widely played, but instruments of the trumpet type were rarely used except as signals. Of these the most mentioned was the conch, the shell of a large mollusc, blown through its sawn-off point before battle, as an invocation to a deity, and on important occasions generally; its sound was very auspicious. Percussion instruments were numerous and varied. The smaller drums, played with the fingers as at present, were looked on as almost essential for any musical performance. Larger drums were used for state occasions, and there was a wide range of cymbals, gongs and bells.

The evidence of Bharata shows that, as at the present day, the Indian of two thousand years ago preferred the throaty type of singing, which comes more naturally than that which the West has learnt to appreciate. The singing voice was often treated as a musical instrument, the vocalist performing long impromptu variations on a simple melody, sung to a single phrase, often an invocation to a deity.

In the late medieval period music became largely the preserve of
professionals, who, though much in demand by the well-to-do people who employed them, were mostly either Muslims or of low caste. This was not the case in India’s greatest days, when a knowledge of music was looked on as an essential attribute of a gentleman. “The man who knows nothing of literature, music or art,” runs an ancient Indian proverb, “is nothing but a beast without the beast’s tail and horns”.

**THE DANCE**

Like music, Indian dancing has changed little with the centuries, and the best modern Indian dancers, such as Uday Shankar and Rām Gopāl, still dance according to the rules of the Bhārata Nātya-śāstra. Dancing (nṛtya) was closely connected with acting (nātya); in fact both are forms of the same word, the latter being a Prākritism, and both are aspects of a single art, abhinaya, the portrayal of the eight emotions (p. 419). The drama employed chiefly word and gesture, the dance chiefly music and gesture. As in most other civilizations there is little doubt that in India the drama, which we consider in the following chapter, developed from ritual miming, song and dance.

Indian dancing is not a thing of legs and arms alone, but of the whole body. Every movement of the little finger or the eyebrow is significant, and must be fully controlled. The poses and gestures are classified in detail, even as early as the Bhārata Nātya-śāstra, which mentions thirteen postures of the head, thirty-six of the eyes, nine of the neck, thirty-seven of the hand, and ten of the body. Later texts classify many more poses and gestures, every one of which depicts a specific emotion or object. With so many possible combinations the dancer can tell a whole story, easily comprehensible to the observer who knows the convention.

The most striking feature of the Indian dance is undoubtedly the hand-gesture (mudrā). By a beautiful and complicated code, the hand alone is capable of portraying not only a wide range of emotions, but gods, animals, men, natural scenery, actions and so on. Some hundreds of mudrās are classified in later textbooks, and they are used not only in the dance, but, as we have seen, in religious worship and iconography.

This highly developed dance style demanded years of training, and was probably always chiefly performed by professionals, though there are references in literature to princes and their ladies dancing in their palaces. Ancient India was rich in folk-dances, which were performed at festivals. In later years only low caste people would think of dancing in public, but there seems to have been no social taboo on the art in ancient times, except perhaps for practising brāhmaṇs.