

INDIAN ART

FROM INDUS VALLEY TO INDIA TODAY

Invitation to Indian Art



G Chandrasekaran
S Swaminathan



Indian art has
aspects that are uniquely
native Indian,
but had absorbed
a number of external traits



Characters and expression

Posture, gait, rhythm, repose,
contorted, but floating bodies,
graceful plasticity,
dynamic unity of the human figure



Composition:

balance and movement, dynamism;
narrative technique



Ornamental friezes

vyalas, elephants, swans
ganas, dancers,
floral and creepers,
Simhalatam, Makratorana
geometrical shapes



Historical



Continuity from Asoka

Unity in diversity

originality of the regions

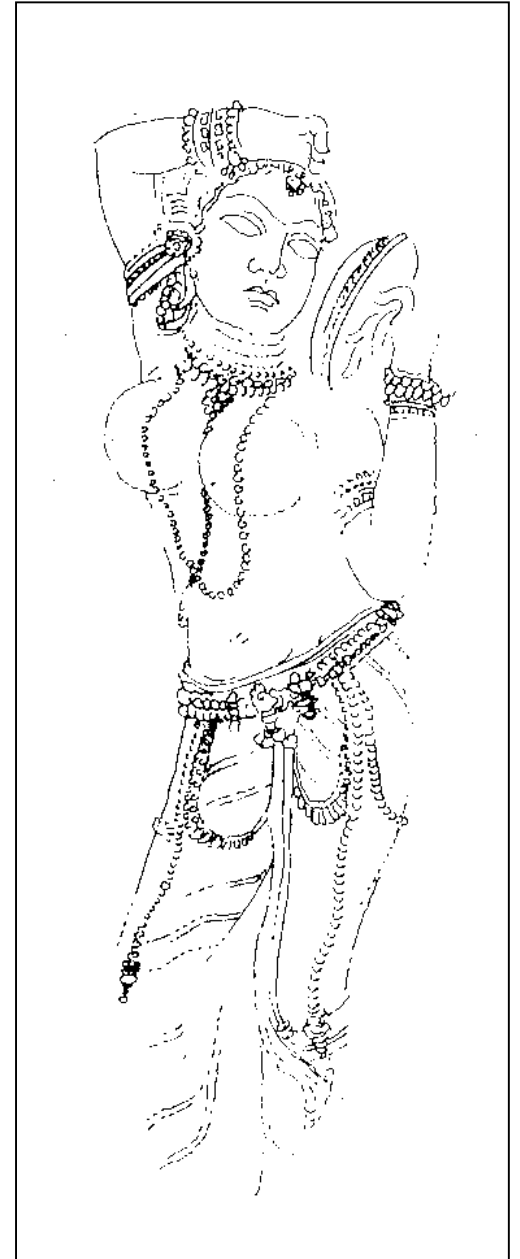
within the fabric that is Indian

Set the stage for religious art

to the whole of North-West India,

Central Asia and South-East Asia

Towards rediscovering



The attempt is
obtaining a direct insight
into Indian ethos
without relying on
the modern methods



What are Indian ethos?

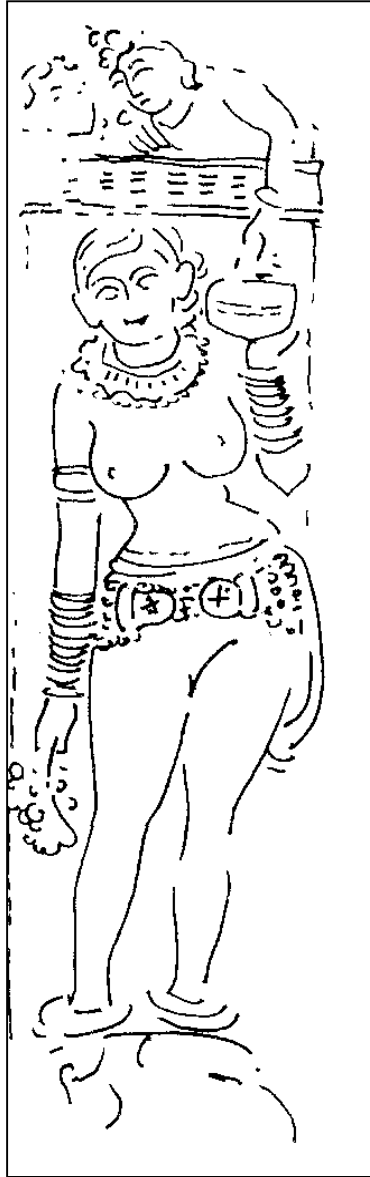
Ideals of Indian beauty: canonical
Non-anatomical
Symbolism, mudras
Metaphoric
Reflecting Vedic philosophical insight
and Yogic philosophy



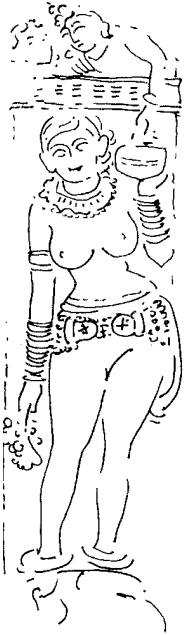
It is not 'art for art sake'
Beauty is not consciously sought
But, beauty becomes a habit

'Neither beauty nor happiness
is easily attainable
if sought for as a primary end' (AKC)

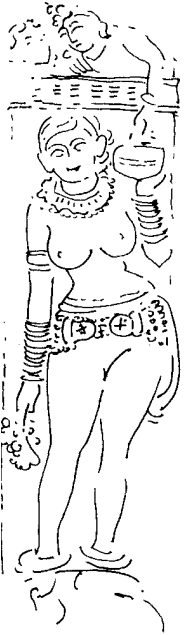




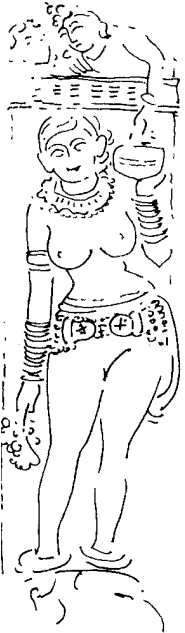
Religious art



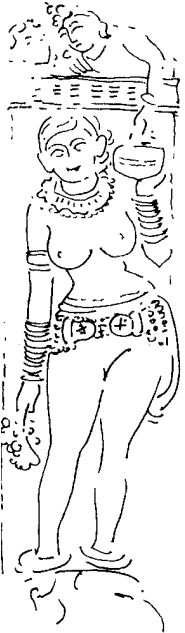
Strict religious upbringing and orality
Unique intuition-based education
and tradition



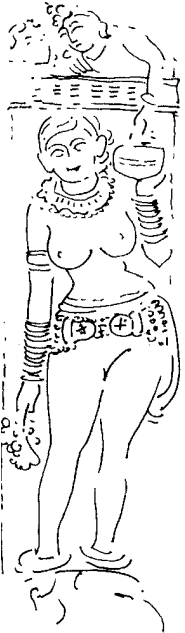
We may ask
'wouldn't such
iconographic and iconometric regulations
deny personal freedom?'



We should accept that
'Freedom has other than
democratic meanings, and
that art has little to do with
personal self-expression' (AKC)
'These limitations and this discipline are
the source of its power.' (AKC)

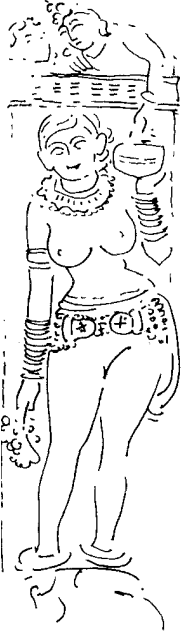


Can something be called original
that depends on
'the expression of personal and transient
emotion'
in place of
'a great tradition imposed on
generations of craftsmen of
diverse rank'? (AKC)



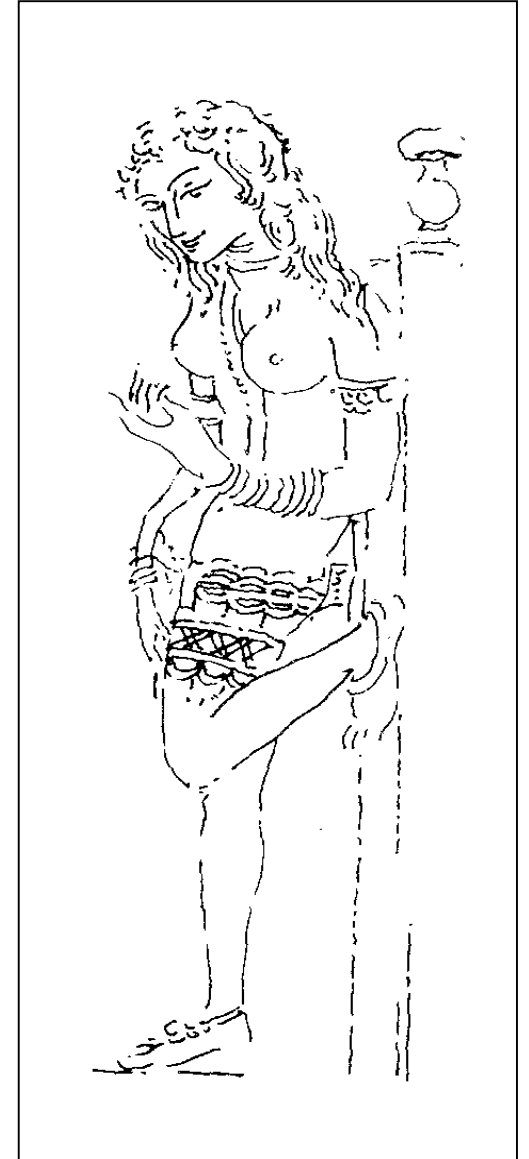
‘Certainly not
when tradition had become a mere habit.

‘But images such as
the dancing Siva or the seated Buddha
are the work of a school,
not of any one artist.’ (AKC)



‘And a communal thought is
not only popular thought,
but that of
the greatest and wisest minds
of successive generations
seeking to impress their vision
on a whole race.’ (AKC)

'It is beautiful by habit rather than intention, so that a single generation under changed conditions is sufficient to destroy it.' (AKC)



I am not certain how many would agree
with Ananda Coomaraswamy.
But aren't these worth contemplated on?



INDIAN ART

FROM INDUS VALLEY TO INDIA TODAY

The chronology



G Chandrasekaran
S Swaminathan

Our humble homage to those
unknown,
unseen,
unrecognised
artists
who made beautiful things
by habit
and made India proud

Indus Valley Civilisation
(3300 to 1300 BCE)
Earliest identity of India

*Female figurine of
terra-cotta,
with an elaborate hairdress,
with enormous bust and
rounded hips,
adheres to the requirements
of a very old canon
of feminine beauty,*



Harappa, Second millennium B.C.

Plate with border and painted decoration



Harappa, third millennium BCE

Humped bull

Bull with crescent horns and thick, heavy dewlap is one of the most striking artistic creations

The figure is treated with thorough knowledge of anatomy and of the effects that can be obtained from bas-relief and are at the root of that animal art in which India has excelled at all times.



Mohenjo-daro, third millennium B.C.

Dancing girl



Mohenjo-daro, Second millennium BCE

The 5 in. tall bronze statuette of a girl dancer, at rest, dressed only in her jewels, which, despite marked stylization, shows perfect knowledge of the human body in its attitude of rest.

The attitude of the left arm and shoulder is proof of the distance separating Indus Valley art from the conventional figurative schemes of all other archaic art.

THE MAURYAN BOLD OVERTURE



Dhuli, near Bhubaneshwar, Odisha, 3rd century BCE

*This Asokan rock-cut has a fine sense of form and movement.
Close to this is an Asokan Edict
expressing his concern for the welfare of the whole world.*

*Ajivaka
cave*



Lomas Rishi, Barabar Hills, Bihar, 3rd century BCE

This earliest cave shrine of India is by Asoka and has at the entrance a lattice-work panel and a row of elephants. Below the circular arch is a six-line Asokan inscription.

Asokan pillar



Rampurva, Bihar,
3rd century BCE

A 9-foot high pillar was topped by this great bull standing majestically with all the four legs planted firmly, the bulge of the belly, the soft swelling of the shoulders and hump all show careful attention paid to realistic proportions and anatomy.

THE EARLY STEPS

Dream of Maya:

Buddha entering her womb as an elephant



Bharhut , Sunga, Second century BCE

Suggestions played an important role in Indian painting.

Here the lamp signifies night, and thereby the dream Maya experiences.

The depiction lacks depth as this belongs to the archaic school.

Chulakoka Yakshi



An elegant tree-goddess stands gracefully with her arms and one leg entwined around a flowering tree.

The ear ring and necklace of alternating plaques and beads and the plaited hair dressed with gold ornaments reflect the contemporary fashion



Bharhut. Sunga,
Second century BCE

Sanchi Torana



Satavahana, 2nd-1st century BCE.

Scenes from the life of the Buddha, the adoration of the Tree, the Wheel and the Stupa, Lakshmi bathed by elephants, Salabhanjika etc.



Yakshi

*The elegant yakshi holds up
a jar full of wine and
the other hand holds
a bunch of green mangoes.*

*These carry suggestions which are
extremely poetic and charming.*

*The wine jar suggests a moonlit' night
when the drink is enjoyed,
offered by the lover on the terrace.*

*The fruit symbolizes spring,
the season when mangoes blossom and set.*



Kushana 2nd century CE



Princesses at an entrance

In the extensive Kushana empire different traditions intermingled.

*The ivory work shows
The style of workmanship*

Ivory Carving, Kushana, second century CE

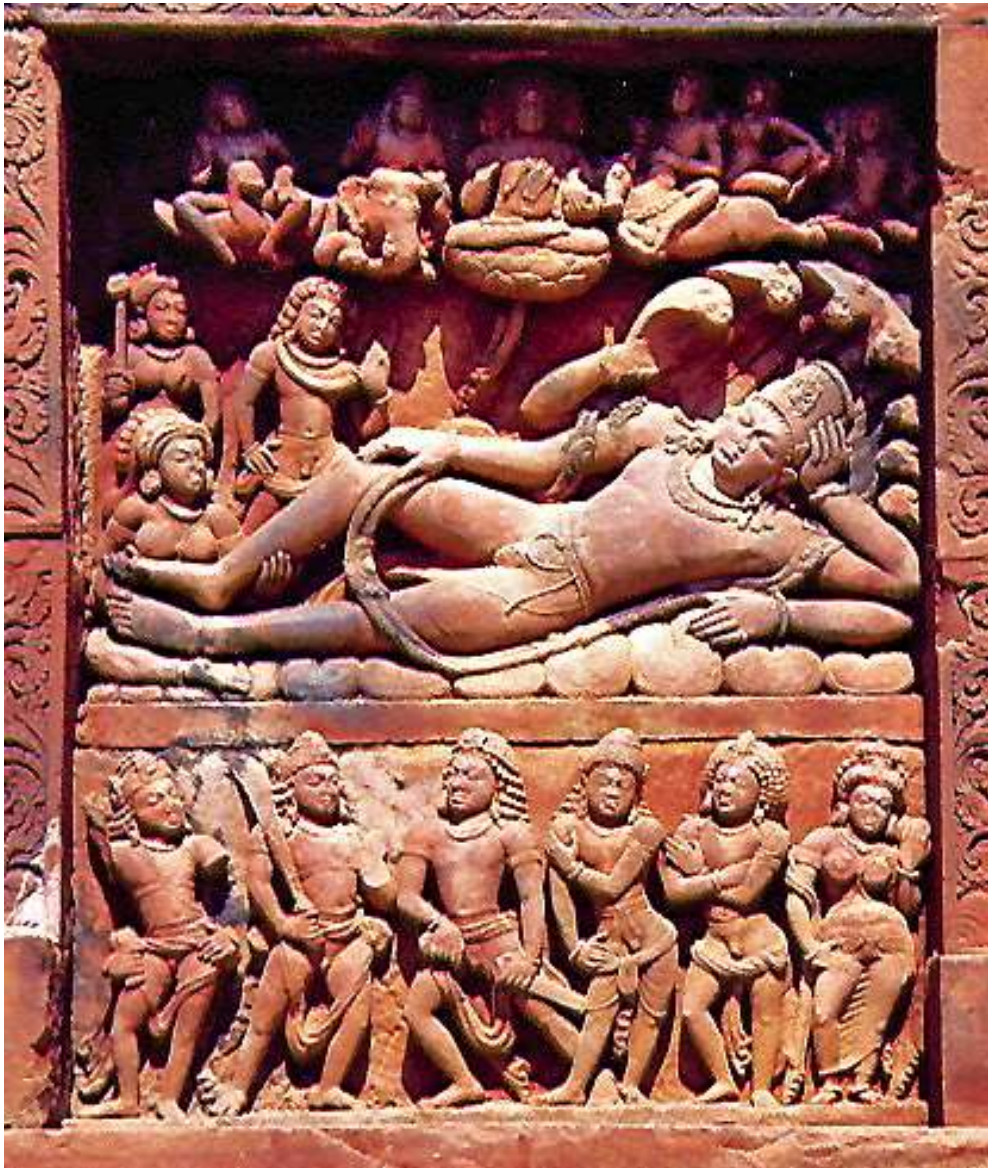
THE CLASSIC INDIA
AMARAVATI TO GUPTA

Subjugation of Nalagiri

The Buddha subdues a mad elephant let loose by his cousin. Depicting two scenes, of the mad elephant causing commotion on the street and on people on the balconies and of his falling at the feet of the Master, is a masterly narration.



Satavahana, second century CE



Gupta, Deogarh, 5th century CE

Anantasayana Vishnu

The Lord is reclining on Adishesha attended by Lakshmi at the feet. Celestials watching the spectacle are Kartikeya on peacock, Indra on elephant, Brahma on lotus and Siva-Parvati on bull. The attacking demons, Madhu and Kaitabha, shown below, are countered by four weapons personified.

The Buddha

*The Buddha
is unsurpassed for
the serenity of its countenance.
The simple robe draping the figure
and the elaborately decorated,
large circular halo,
all make this
a great work of art.*

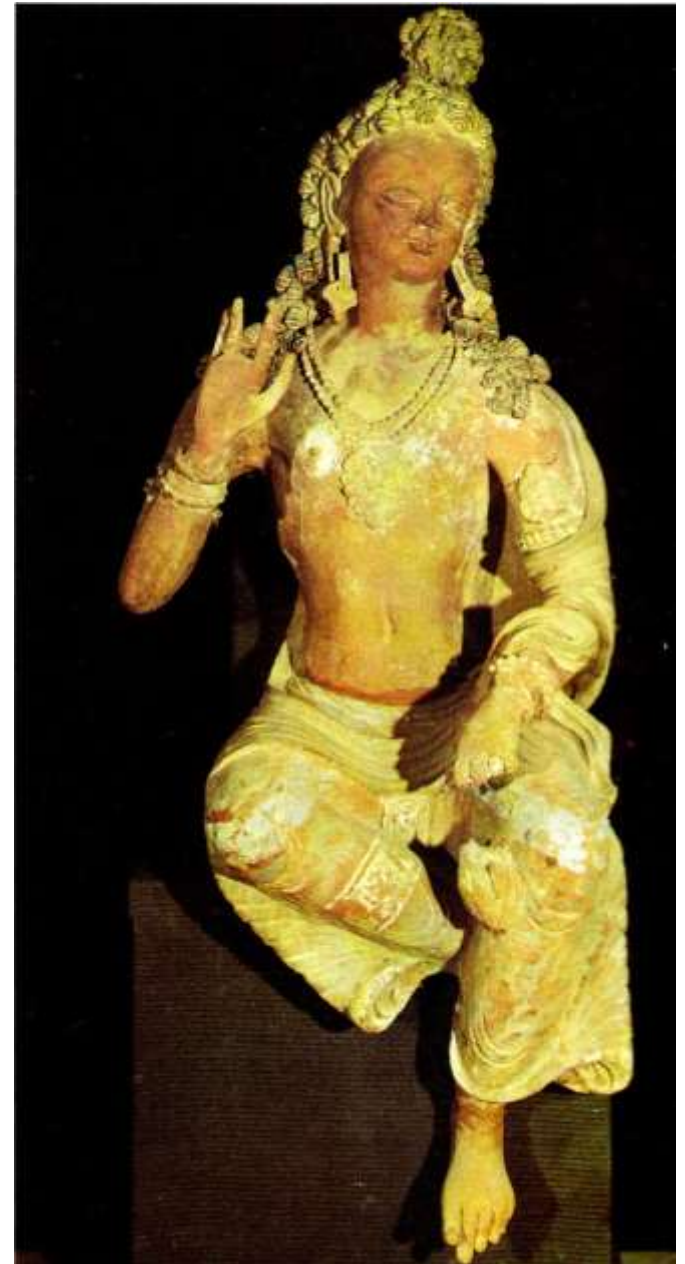


Sarnath Gupta, fifth century CE

INDIAN FRAGRANCE
BLOWS
WEST, NORTH, EAST AND SOUTH

Bodhisattva Maitreya

*Expressive and elegant Maitreya
with elaborate hair-do
is sitting in ease and
is an example of local schools
adapting the teachings of the Master*



Afganistan, seventh century CE



Female figure

*Large staring eyes,
tilt of head and hair-style
bespeak of
strong Indian influence
reminiscent of
the Gandharan period,
and is
an excellent composition*

Miran, China, third century CE

An army on the march



Angkor Thom, Cambodia, twelfth century CE

*The crowded images,
the rhythm of the dance,
the excited
but elegant movements
of the figures,
make this a work
of considerable
artistic value.*

Apsaras with her maidservant



Sigiriya, Srilanka, fifth century CE

Though strongly influenced by Ajanta, depicted in the local idiom the two figures, one in profile and the other in three-quarter profile have features purely local.

FLOWERING OF REGIONAL STYLES

A quick round of the north

Marriage of Siva and Parvati

*This is an excellent portrayal
of the celestial event,
being watched by the gods
Varuna, Yama,
Indra, Vayu, Ganesa etc
on their respective mounts.*



Gurjara Pratihara, eighth century CE

Musicians, danseuses, and warriors



Sikar (Rajasthan), Gurjara Pratihara, tenth century CE

An exquisite example of the delicacy and charm of this period.

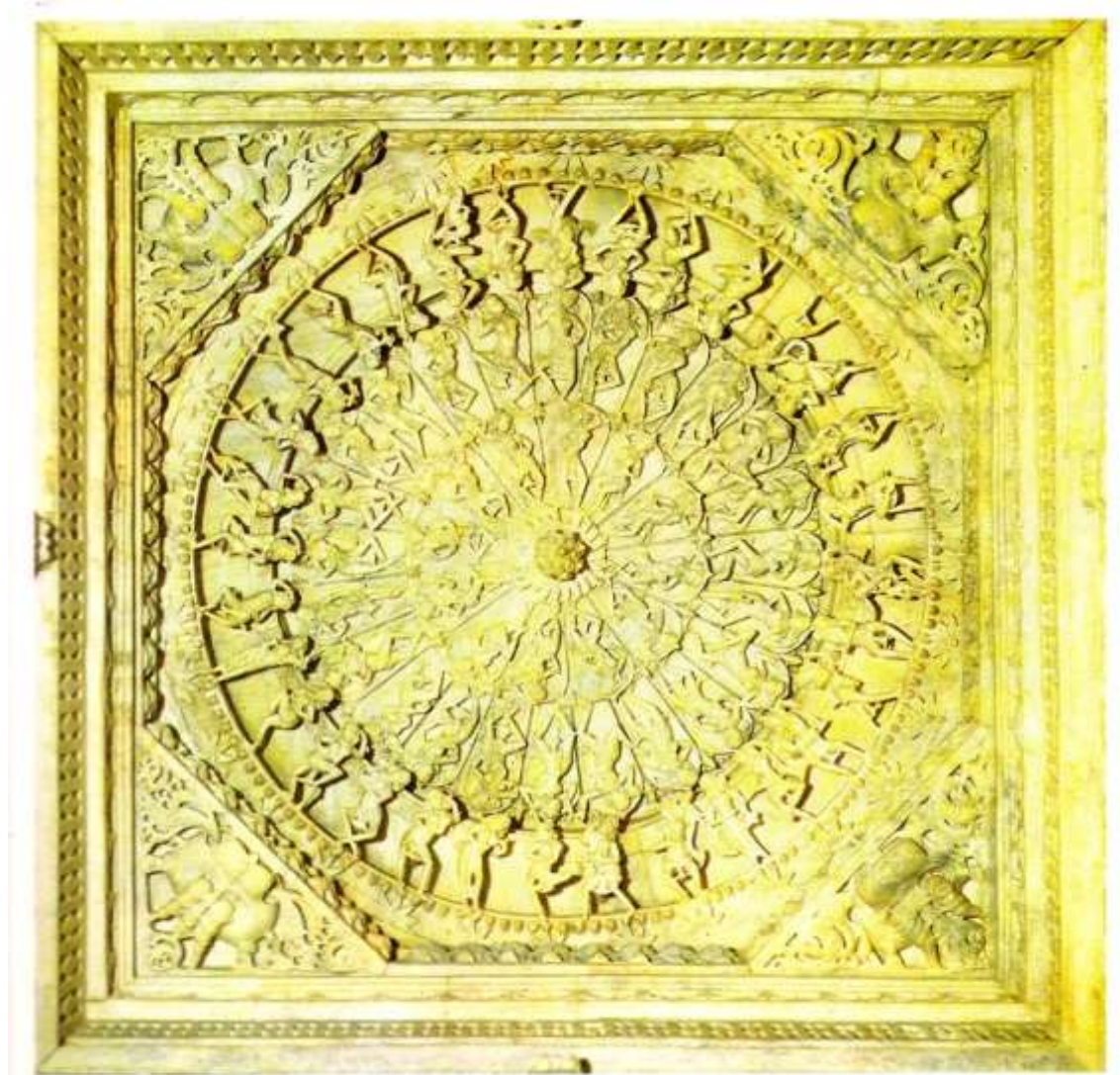


Damsel playing with a ball

Chandella, tenth century CE

Ceiling of a Jain temple

*An elaborate pattern
of concentric circles
composed of
dancers and musicians
forms the decoration.*



Mount Abu , Chalukya, eleventh Century CE



Kumarabhuta Avalokitesvara

*An example of delicacy of treatment
that was the hallmark of the Palas .*

*The image, retaining features of
the Guptas, is most graceful and
highly dignified*

Nalanda (Bihar), Pala,
ninth century CE



Damsel

*Damsel slipping
a jingling anklet on her foot.*

Bhubanesvar, Eastern Ganga
tenth century CE

Our neighbours



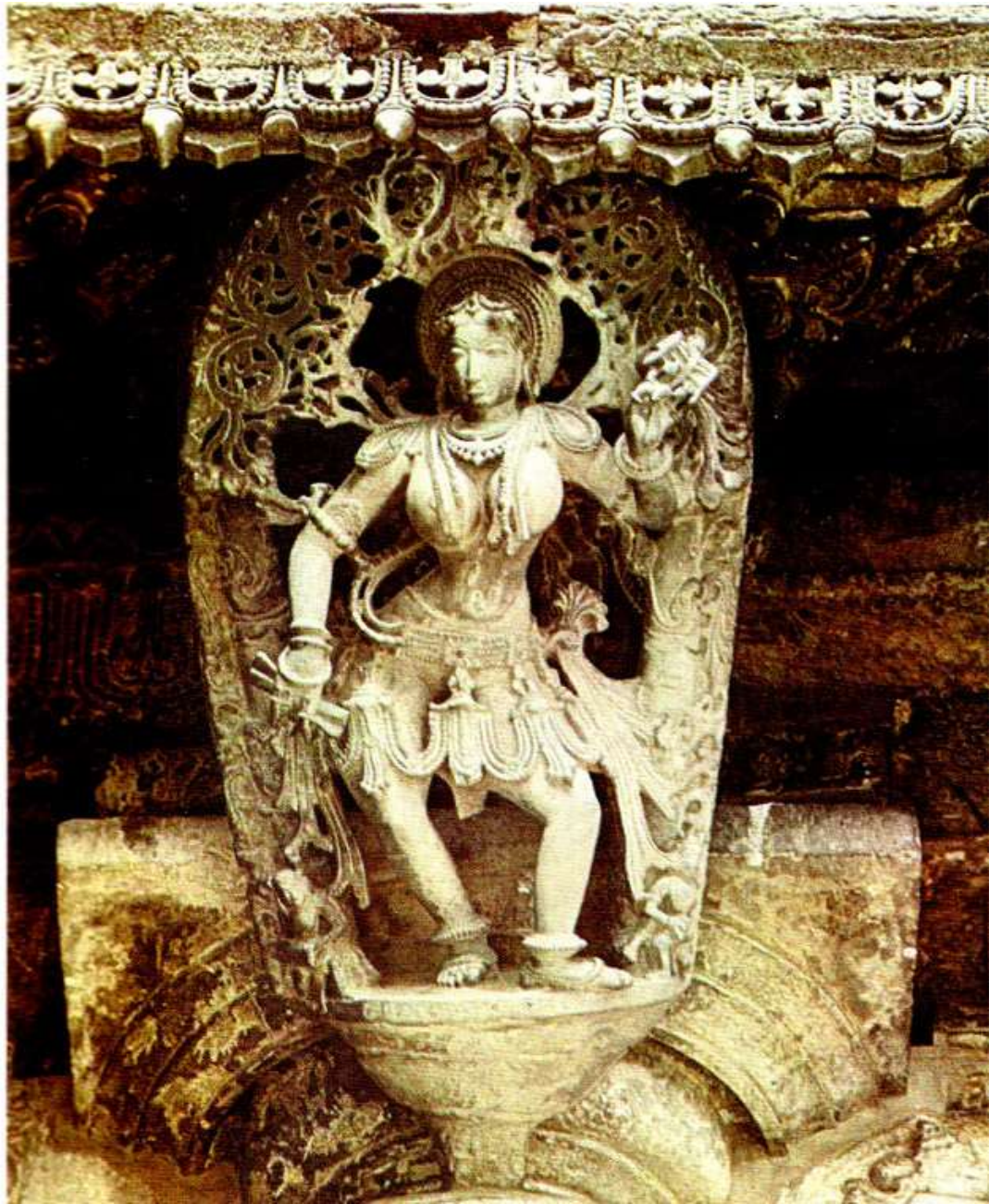
Brahma

Aihole, Western Chalukya, sixth Century CE

*Brahma worshipped by sages, terrestrial as well as heavenly.
Even his mount, swan, is in veneration*

Dancer

*A delicately carved
bracket figure,
typical of
the Hoysalas*



Belur, twelfth century CE

On our turf



Great Penance

Pallavas, seventh century CE

Siva as Vrishabhantika, Arjuna ratha



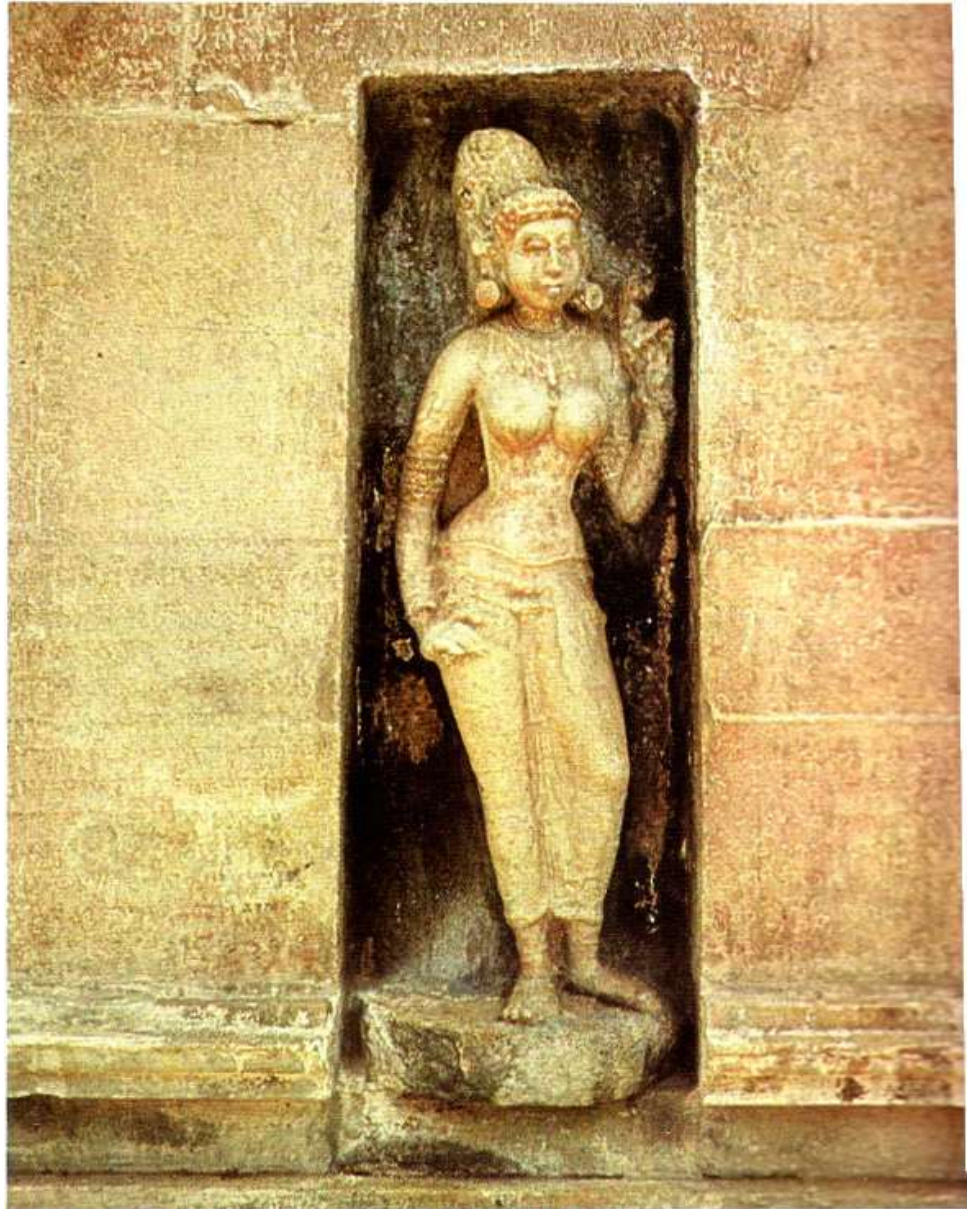
Mahabalipuram. Pallava, seventh century CE

Umamahesvara



Kazhugumalai, Early Pandya, eighth century CE

Graceful Princess



Kumbakonam. Early Chola, ninth century CE



Somaskanda

Tiruvaralangadu, Early Chola, tenth century CE

Nataraja



Tiruvarangulam,
Chola, 10th Century CE

*Tirumala Nayak
and his queen*



Nayak, seventeenth century CE

SYNTHESIS OF TWO CIVILISATIONS

Baburnama



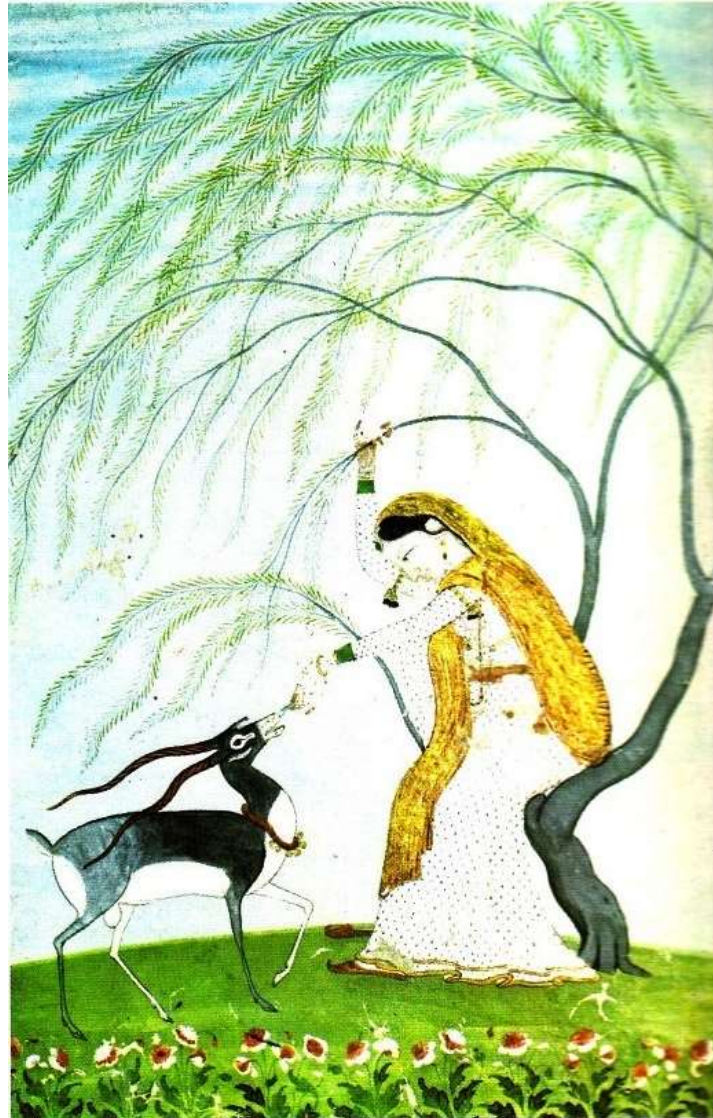
Moghul, Sixteenth century

Akburnama



Moghul, Sixteenth century

Ragamala

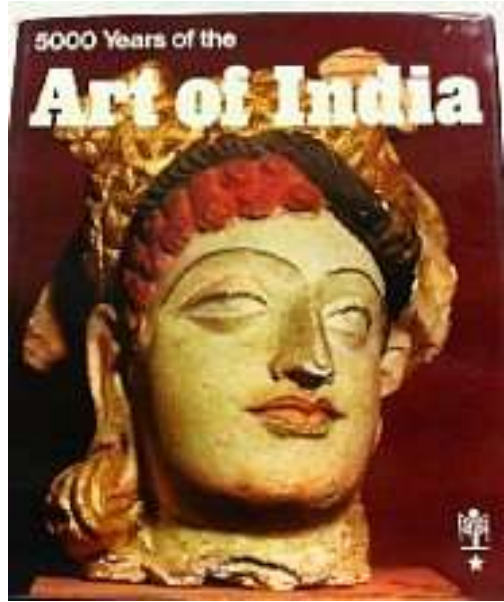


Pahari, Eighteenth century CE

Radha and Krishna



Guler, Eighteenth century CE



5000 Years of Art of India

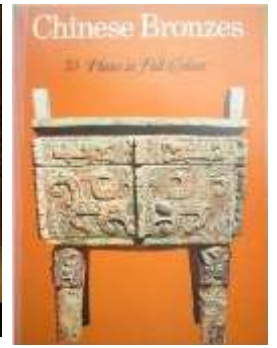
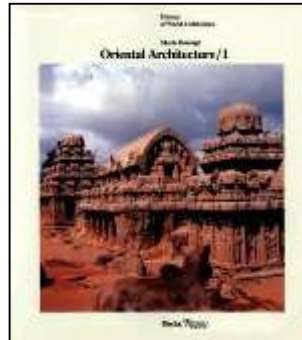
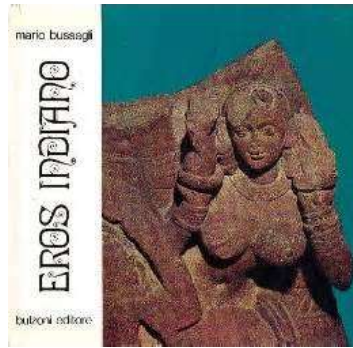
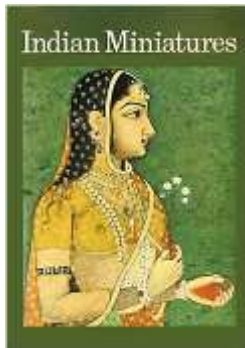
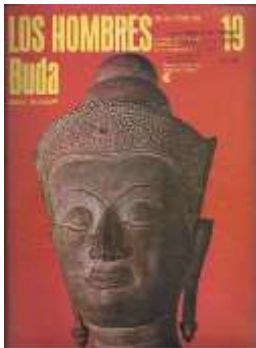
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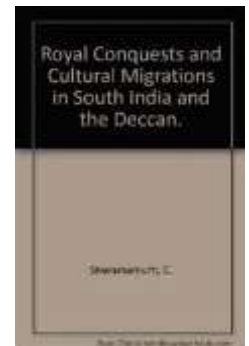
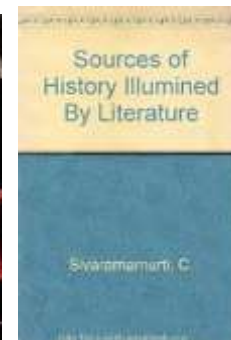
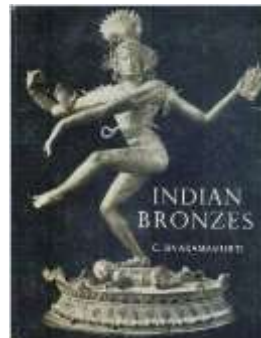
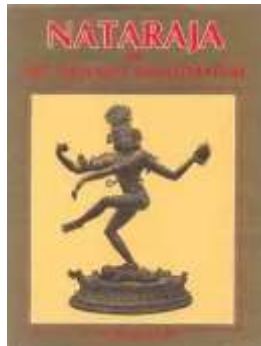




C Sivaramamurti

(1909-1983)

Director
National Museum
New Delhi



Thank you