

SELECTED EXAMPLES
OF INDIAN ART ❁ ❁ ❁

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DESCRIPTION OF THE PLATES.

PLATE I. Śiva Rātri (Śiva's Night) or Śiva Pūjā (Adoration of Śiva).

Śiva's Night is a fast day falling on the fourteenth day of Māgā (February). For twenty-four hours the Śaivite should abstain from food, drink and sleep. Pūjā (offerings of flowers, fruit and water) is offered to Śiva every three hours of the day and night.

If the picture does not actually stand for 'Śiva Rātri,' it is properly described, in any case, as Śiva Pūjā, Adoration of Śiva.

The picture represents a Princess with two attendants making offerings at a mountain shrine at night. The *linga*, Śiva's symbol, is seen on the right at the mouth of a little cave within which a light is burning. On to the *linga* falls a splashing stream of water from the rock, to form a rivulet that finally passes across the front of the picture, where its bank is lined with flowers and nodding sedges. This stream is the Ganges, that falls from heaven on to Śiva's head, and thence to earth.

Perhaps there is a further meaning in the picture. Just as the yogi in some Indian pictures stands for Śiva himself, so here, the Princess adoring Śiva may be Umā. There is a conscious air about the mountain and the forest. Umā is daughter of the mountain, she is Pārvatī. The half-hidden moon, even though full, suggests the crescent moon on Śiva's brow; perhaps this reveals to us more than any other detail the picture's mysterious charm—the whole landscape is the living garment of Śiva himself. The *linga* is only a symbol, but He is everywhere.

The date of the work is probably late seventeenth century. Its subject is purely Hindū, and I have therefore classed it as Rājput: it belongs really to that fully developed Indian style which owes much to both Rājput and Mughal sources.

Size of original. Collection of Bābu Sitaram Lal.



PLATE II. Śiva's Dance.

This remarkable picture, a typical example of the Kāngra Valley School, is a veritable synthesis of Purānic theology and imagery. It breathes the very spirit of the Indian love of the Himālayas, the Land of Gods, the Broceliande of Indian imagination.

To begin with names: Śiva Himself is dancing in the centre, a white figure clothed in leopard skin, a serpent wreathed about His neck. Before Him Gandharvas and Kinnaras, the essence of whose being is music, are playing on drums and trumpets, led by Śiva's servant Nandi. Behind these stands Agni, Lord of Fire. To the left are the assembled gods, with saints and kings below and behind them. Proceeding from the lower part of the picture upwards, we find first three saints or rishis, and between them a feminine figure in blue, an Apsarā, perhaps Urvāsi or Rāmbhā. Above her is the white figure of Sarasvatī, goddess of speech and music, with her *vina*. She is Śakti of Brahmā, who stands next to her, four-headed, holding the Vedas in one hand, and beating a drum. To the left of Sarasvatī is the Rishi Nārada; above him, the six-headed Kārttikeya, and above him again the blue figure of Viṣṇu, chank and discus in his hands, beating a green-striped drum. (I do not understand the absence of Lakshmi). Left of Viṣṇu are Sūrya (the Sun, red) and Chandra (the Moon, white), and beyond these are kings and saints. Nearest to Śiva is Gaṇeśha, the elephant-headed, playing on cymbals. All these, like a chorus, take part in the divine dance.

To the right is Śakti, seated (as *Raj Rajesvari*) on a throne, surrounded by attendant Apsarās, holding a goad and noose, and gazing in a mirror at Her own loveliness. A great tree spreads

its branches above Her throne. All are standing on the golden floor of heaven, Kailās, the paradise of Śiva, girt round with snowy white Himalayan peaks. Rolling clouds drift along their summits; devas or angels appearing in these throw down a rain of star-like flowers. Far below are the forest-covered mountain slopes, and the green plains of Hindustān.

The Dance of Śiva has two explanations, the one belonging to Purānic myth, the other mystic. The latter alone concerns us here. "Our Lord," says a Tamil text, "is the Dancer Who, like the heat latent in firewood, diffuses His power in Mind and Matter and makes them dance in their turn."* He is the life in all things conscious, from gods and men down to the smallest particle of dust. Śiva's Dance, His 'play,' is His activity within the cosmos,— His 'Five Acts,' Creation, Preservation, Destruction, Embodiment and Release.

How significant is the unity of action that sways the gods with every movement of the Dancer, and how dramatic the contrast of Rāj Rajeśvari's indifference.† She is here Mula Prakṛiti, Mayā, illusion, the desire of things phenomenal, gazing at Her own beauty in a glass, holding the noose that snares and the goad that drives, within the fiery circle of rebirth and death. Yet She is the co-equal of Śiva, enthroned and glorified.

Another representation of Śiva's Dance is found in the Southern Saivite bronze, the Naṭarāja or Dancing Lord, of Plate XXIX.

In spite of extreme care, the picture loses much in reproduction. The original is the work of one having a life long training in the traditions of his school, and no one, not so practised, and not saturated with Indian religious feeling, could quite perfectly reflect the original work. In saying this, I am far from implying that the reproduction is anything but good, only that it must not be accepted as a real substitute for the original.

Size of Original. Collection of Mr. Gogonendronath Tagore.

PLATE III. Chand Bibī.

This picture, so full of life and movement, is the traditional representation of Chand Bibī, also called Chand Sulṭān, who, sword in hand, successfully defended Ahmednagar and ultimately compelled Akbar's son, Prince Murād, to raise the siege. Five years later Chand Bibī was murdered, and Ahmednagar was taken. Chand Bibī is one of the heroines of Rājputāna, where men and women alike took part in the chase, in outdoor sports (such as polo), and sometimes in war. In the picture she is riding unattended, hawk on wrist, across an open plain, with cultivated land and buildings in the distance. Let her stand, with the sculptures of woman forms here reproduced, as a symbol of the Oriental view of woman.

Probably late seventeenth century.

Size of original 8 × 5 inches. Collection of Mrs. Herringham.

PLATE IV. Rāgini Torī.

Blake has somewhere said that "Everything is a man"; i.e. everything may be apprehended or symbolised in human form. Elsewhere he lays down as a first principle, *That the poetic Genius (?-Self or Ātman) is the true Man, and that the body or outward form of Man is derived from the Poetic Genius*: likewise that the forms of all things are derived from their Genius, which by Ancients was called an Angel, Spirit or Demon.

* *Tiruvātavāraṅ Purāṇam, Puttarāvātil venracarukkam, stanza 75.*

† *A curious reversal of the Sankhyān symbolism, where it is Prakṛiti that dances.*

The conception of devas—angels, spirits, or demons—is indeed common to the whole of humanity. But it is perhaps to some extent a peculiarity of the Indian imagination that verbal formulæ, words of power (*mantrams*), or ‘prayers,’ as well as musical modes, have been conceived as actual beings of a more or less human or divine character. In other words, ideas themselves are regarded as centres of consciousness. On this theory the efficacy of prayer depends upon securing the control or co-operation of the angel or *devata* whose ‘body’ is a particular mantram. In the same way the musical modes are regarded as the manifestations or perceptible forms of certain musical beings. To succeed in using a particular mode to advantage would thus involve an intimate spiritual relation with the Genius of the mode. The actual modes and their angels are called Rāgas (masculine) and Rāginīs (feminine). The modes are held to express and awaken certain particular emotions, and to have definite effects upon external nature. Each has particular hours of the day or night when it may be appropriately used. The visualised Rāgas and Rāginīs have characteristics expressing the same qualities; definite colours, costumes and actions are associated with each. Thus the Rāginī Malar, a mode which belongs to and is supposed to cause rain and cloudy weather, is represented by a woman fowler seated under a tree by a lake-side, under a cloudy sky. The Rāga Bhairava is a form of Śiva. But some pictures seem rather to illustrate a subject appropriate to the mode, than to portray the mode itself in one particular human form; possibly this may have been the original intention in all.

There are many collections of pictures of Rāgas and Rāginīs, with corresponding descriptive verses. These collections are called Rāga Mala, ‘Garland of Rāgs.’ Artistically they are of very various merit; the best are rare, but even inferior examples have a high seriousness and great charm. They constitute with the Kṛishṇa subjects, the lyrical phase of Rājput painting.

The example here reproduced is from a Rāga Mala belonging to Mr. Gogonendronāth Tagore. The Rāginī Torī is thus described

“Having a shining snow-white form, white as the *kunda*-flower, scented with Kashmiri camphor, Torī, embowered in the woods, charmeth the deer with the honeyed sweetness of her *vina*’s sound.”

The introduction of animals attracted by the music is a motif found also in other Rāginī pictures. This orphic motif occurs also in the Lailā-Majnūn pictures, where the animals come to hear the songs of Majnūn, and in Kṛishṇa pictures, where the cows are represented as rapt by the sound of Kṛishṇa’s flute.

The picture reproduced has especial charm. It has all the sweet purity and tenderness which, in Europe, we find in the work of the early Italians, and has yet so much character that is its own. It dates probably from the seventeenth century, and belongs to the Rājput school—perhaps Jaipur—practically unaffected by Persian or other foreign influence.

Size of original. Collection of Mr. Gogonendronāth Tagore.



PLATE V. Baz Bahādur and Rūpmatī.

This picture, of which many copies and versions exist in different collections, is one of those studies in night effects, of which Indian painters were so fond.* The torch of a guide lights up the faces of the riders and gilds the sandy valley through which they pass. The rocky

* See ‘*The Studio*,’ September, 1910. A version of the present picture is reproduced in colours in *Havell’s Indian Sculpture and Painting*, Plate LXIV.

hills beyond are seen clear in the moonlight, with a little sleeping wood between them. Far up on the hillside there is a white palace visible, and Rūpmatī points towards it. The horses are half-dyed red, after Rājput custom.†

It is said that Bāz Bahādur (Sūr Bayazid) a Musulmān king of Mālwa, after a severe defeat at the hands of Dūrgavati, the Hindū queen of Mandalgarh, gave up the ambition of conquest, and turned to love and song. Rūpmatī was a Hindū musician famous throughout India for her beauty and her skill. For long these two lived only for each other; by day and night they were together. At last (1564 A.D.) Akbar's General Adham Khan conquered Mālwa and captured Rūpmatī. Then to avoid his importunity, Rūpmatī took poison. Such was the tragic end, that made of their lives a story never to be forgotten in the annals of the Land of Princes. Their love is the theme of many songs: surely, too, it finds expression in this 'painted song' of pure romance.

The *Ain-i-Akbarī* adds "Bāz-Bahādur and his Rūpmatī lie buried together. Their tomb stands in the middle of a tank in Ujjain."

Size of original 7 × 10 inches. One of two almost identical copies in the collection of Mr. C. H. Read.

PLATE VI. Kabīr.

Kabīr (1380-1420 A.D.) was the most famous of Rāmanuja's twelve disciples. His teaching, in which the beliefs of Hinduism and Islām are closely linked, laid the foundation for the subsequent development of Sikhism. A weaver by caste, he taught the spiritual equality of all men: differences in caste, rank, or religion, and the vicissitudes of life, were all equally *maya*, illusion. The way to emancipation and to peace was not by ritual or sacrifice, but through loving faith (*bhakti*) in God; it mattered not if God were called Rāma or 'Alī. Kabīr is well known as a writer, as well as a religious reformer: his sayings are constantly quoted both by Hindūs and Musalmāns, and bulk largely in the Sikh scriptures.

☞ The picture reproduced is a late copy of the traditional picture of Kabīr, of which very many examples occur. He is represented as weaving: two disciples are seated by him, one in a coat of many pieces, the other playing a sort of viola. The whole scene is significant of the conditions of life under which Indian religious thought of the devotional type has generally developed: these conditions are complementary to the monastic environment of the more purely philosophical schools. The half closed dreamy eyes of Kabīr, the crossed hands of one disciple, and the lyrical simplicity of the surroundings give to the whole a wonderful sense of peace and sweet gentleness.

Although the actual composition is traditional, the technique of this painting shows clear traces of European influence, which is seen in the treatment of light and shade, the rounded modelling of the tree, and general appearance of relief: the picture is only quite Indian in subject and design.

British Museum MS. ADD. 21928, fol. 20a. Width of original picture 5½ inches. Late copy of the traditional representation of Kabīr, of the Rājput Schools.

† Cf. Chand Bibī's horse on Plate III., dyed partly black.

INTRODUCTION.

THE forty-two plates which are included in this portfolio of 'Selected Examples of Indian Art' are intended to provide for schools and colleges in India, Museums, Libraries and private individuals, a convenient series of more adequate reproductions of Indian sculpture and painting, than those at present available elsewhere. M. Gustave le Bon has very pertinently remarked

"It is not from the cuts or bad lithographs which appear in certain works on Hindu Mythology that one can form any idea of the sculpture. It really seems as if the authors of these works had made a point of selecting the most wretched examples. It is owing to these unfortunate reproductions that there has been formed the opinion now prevalent in Europe, that Hindu sculpture is a quite inferior art."

Indian art, still 'the least known and least accessible,' of Asiatic art, has suffered too long from archæological rather than artistic treatment. The most carefully investigated periods have been the Early Buddhist, B.C. 250-A.D. 50, and the Greeco-Buddhist (A.D. 50-350) or Gandhāra. Neither of these periods covers the time of great achievement in Indian sculpture or painting.

The twenty-seven plates of sculpture here reproduced range from about the fourth to the sixteenth century. One only is somewhat earlier, the 'Elevation of the Bowl Relic' from Amarāvati. This may be of the second or perhaps the third century A.D. I have chosen an example rather illustrating the development of Indian feeling, than one in which traces of Greeco-Roman influence are obvious.

The next sculpture in point of age is the fine Buddha of the Gupta period, from Sarnāth, shown on Plate XXII, and after this come the sculptures of the 'classic' period of Indian art, when its ideals were most perfectly and most beautifully realised. The Avalokiteśvara (Plate XXI) and the Kapila (Plate XXVI) from Ceylon best illustrate its characteristics. These may be provisionally assigned to the seventh century. Probably somewhat later is the beautiful standing Maitreya (Plate XX) from Ceylon.

Of about the same date (eighth century) is the reclining figure of Vishṇu from Māmallapuram (Plate XXXVII) and the 'Death of Hiraṇyakaśipu' from Elurā (Plate XXXVI).

The Mahāyāna Buddhist sculptures from Java form a group by themselves, all probably later than the tenth century, and some—certainly the beautiful Prajñāpāramitā and Mañjuśrī (Plates XVI and XVII)—as late as the fourteenth. From Java there are also examples of Hindū work, the magnificent Gaṇeśha of Plate XXXIV and the Durgā of Plate XXXV. Probably somewhat later—11th or 12th century—is the Sarnāth Tārā (Plate XVIII) and the Ceylon Buddha of Plate XXIII.

From these we return to the Saivite bronzes of Southern India and Ceylon,—the three figures of Śiva (Plates XXVII-XXIX), a Saivite saint (Plate XXXI) and the probably contemporary colossal stone sage and the bronze Pattini of Plates XXXII and XXXIII. These range from about the tenth or eleventh to the sixteenth century in date. The figure of Umā, Plate XXX, is distinctly late, and lacks the finest qualities of the earlier work.

Finally there is the group of Mediæval Mahāyāna Buddhist figures from Nepal. The best of these are probably older than the fifteenth century.

These selected examples are merely illustrative of the general character of Indian sculpture. They are not intended to provide a consecutive history, but to form a series of typical examples,—so far as available material allows—illustrating rather Indian art than Indian archæology.

The reproductions of paintings, though far more costly, are less satisfactory than those of sculpture. No known process perfectly reproduces the extreme delicacy of Indian miniatures.

No attempt has been made to illustrate the wonderful cave paintings of Ajanta, the best of which date from the fifth and sixth centuries. It is expected that Mrs. Herringham's important study of these will be published next year by the India Society.

The fifteen paintings reproduced* are miniatures of the Rājput, Mughal, and modern schools of Indian painting. The first five are Hindū in subject, and their technique for the most part belongs to the purely indigenous, or Rājput, tradition. Only the first shows perhaps some trace of Mughal or even of European influence. The work of the Kāngra Valley school appears to be absolutely unaffected by any foreign influence.

The next six pictures (Plates VII-XII) are properly described as Mughal. The exquisite Laila-Majnūn (Plate XII) is the earliest of these, and would be rightly described as Indo-Persian. The developed Mughal style, which owes much to Central Asian and Persian, and most of all to indigenous, as well as something to European and Chinese tradition, is of the seventeenth and early eighteenth century. To this period the remaining Pictures (Plates VII-XI) belong. The last three paintings (Plates XIII-XV) illustrate the work of the modern school of Indian painting.

I have to thank especially Dr. Willey, lately Director of the Colombo Museum, Mr. Edgar Thurstan, lately Director of the Madras Museum, Mr. E. B. Havell, Mr. K. Naṭarājan of Tanjore, and Mr. Abanindronath Tagore, Vice-Principal of the Calcutta School of Art, and Bābu Sitaram Lal of Benares, also Professor Grünwedel, Professor E. G. Browne, Mr. Vincent A. Smith, and Mr. H. Beveridge for very kind assistance in lending, photographing or identifying various sculptures and paintings.

I have also to thank my kind friends Narottam Morarjee Goculdass and Dharamsey Morarjee Goculdass of Bombay for a subscription of ₹100 towards the expense of producing the present work. I need hardly say that the work of describing and illustrating Indian art which I have undertaken, has always involved me in considerable loss.

My best reward for the labour of collecting and publishing the examples contained in this portfolio, would be to know that it obtains a wide distribution in schools and colleges throughout India. I hope at a later date to publish works in book form dealing more systematically with special periods, or with the whole history of art in India. Here I propose only to append brief descriptions of the paintings and sculptures illustrated, leaving the reproductions to speak for themselves.

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* Plates I, II, VII, and XII have been very carefully reproduced for me by Messrs. Griggs of Peckham. As many as forty-five printings were made in the case of Plate II. Plate VIII is a six colour print by the Medici Society. Plate XV is a Chromoxylograph by the Kokka Co. of Japan.

LIST OF PLATES.

RAJPÛT PAINTING.

1. Śiva Rātri. 2. Śiva's Dance. 3. Chand Bibi. 4. Ragini Tori. 5. Baz Bahādur and Rūpmati. 6. Kabir.



MUGHAL PAINTING.

7. Pacisi Players. 8. Ibrahim b. Adham. 9. Portrait of a Writer. 10. The Persian Embassy. 11. Aurangzib returning from the Chase. 12. Lailā and Majnūn.



MODERN PAINTING.

13. Banished Yaksha, by Abanindronāth Tagore. 14. Dancing Apsarā, by Asit Kumār Haldar. 15. Sati, by Nanda Lal Bose.



BUDDHIST SCULPTURE.

16. Prajñāpāramitā, Java. 17. Mañjuśrī, Java. 18. Tārā, Sārnāth. 19. Bodhisattva, Java. 20. Maitreya, Ceylon. 21. Avalokiteśvara, Ceylon. 22. Gautama Buddha, Sārnāth. 23. Gautama Buddha, Ceylon. 24. Dhyāni Buddha (Amogha Siddha), Java. 25. Elevation of the Bowl Relic, Amarāvati.



HINDÛ SCULPTURE.

26. Kapila, Ceylon. 27. Gangādhara (Śiva), Tanjore. 28. Śiva, Ceylon. 29. Natarāja, South India. 30. Umā, South India. 31. Sundarā Mūrti Swāmi, Ceylon. 32. A Tamil Saint, Ceylon. 33. Pattini, Ceylon. 34. Gaṇeśha, Java. 35. Durgā, Java. 36. Death of Hiranyakaśipu, Māmallapuram. 37. Viṣṇu, Māmallapuram.



NAPALESE BUDDHIST SCULPTURE.

38. Maitreya. 39. Mahāyāna Buddhist figure. 40. Mahāyāna Buddhist figure (? Sparśa).