



Editorial

In today's modern world, we are caught up by the illusion that the external world is the only source of happiness contrary to the fact that real happiness or bliss lies within ourselves. So how are we as Indians and citizens of the modern world going to establish this truth? This is when we should go back and draw upon the treasure trove of wisdom we have inherited from our ancestors and see how they lived, our ancestors were not mere people they were rishis, kings, people with wisdom who had accomplished and truly laid down and practiced a systematic way of life. But most importantly they taught us to love and it can be done practicing non attachment and nonviolence. Education was an intertwined essence of both worldly and spiritual knowledge, which resulted in good leaders and quality citizens. So as the process of man's evolution continues we need a permanent fix for our woes which we can get by following the guidelines given to us in SANATANA DHARMA, our way of life. It will lead us to the state of imperishable happiness. Let our lives be governed by Dharma, God bless us all.



“The curse upon our society is ignorance about our traditions and the basic spiritual principles. This needs to change. Amma has visited so many countries around the world and personally met so many people there. All of them, including the indigenous people of Australia, Africa and America, take pride in their heritage and traditions. But here in India, many among us neither have understanding nor pride. In fact some of us even ridicule our culture. Only if we first lay a strong foundation can we hope to erect a tall building. Similarly only if we have knowledge and pride in our forefathers and heritage, can we create a radiant present and future”



Sanskrit Language of Enlightenment

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Sanskrit is a purely Indian language. It is the primary liturgical and philosophical language of Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism and a scholarly literary language. Sanskrit, as we know it now, evolved from Vedic Sanskrit more than 5000 years. It is listed as one of the 22 scheduled languages of India and is an official language of the state of Uttarakhand.

Sanskrit is the core of our Bharatiya (Indian) culture and knowledge. It has played a major role in everything we have today as our knowledge, culture, and values. All our major works like Vedas, Ramayana, Mahabharata, Shrimad Bhagvad Gita, etc., are composed and written in Sanskrit. Indian Literature in Sanskrit is one of the oldest, richest and best collection in the world. Devnagari Script is the script that we use in Sanskrit language to represent the language in writing. Sanskrit Scriptures from ancient India are an important source of knowledge and information in different fields. They give an insight into the invaluable heritage that we have inherited through these scriptures and texts. This also gives an insight into how advanced our ancestors were in comparison to us. In the Republic of India Sanskrit is included in the 14 original languages of the Eighth Schedule to the Constitution. The state of Uttarakhand in India has ruled Sanskrit as its second official language. Sudharma, a daily newspaper in Sanskrit has been published out of Mysore in India since the year 1970, while Sanskrit Vartman Patram and Vishwasya Vrittantam were started in Gujarat over the last five years. Since 1974, there has been a short daily news broadcast on state-run All India Radio.



The term “Sanskrit” was not thought of as a specific language set apart from other languages, but rather as a particularly refined or perfected manner of speaking. Knowledge of Sanskrit was a marker of social class and educational attainment in ancient India. The language was taught mainly to members of the higher castes, through close analysis of Sanskrit grammarians such as Pāṇini and Patanjali, who exhorted that one should speak proper Sanskrit at all times, and at least during ritual. Sanskrit, as the learned language of Ancient India, thus existed alongside the Prakrits (vernaculars), also called Middle Indic dialects, and eventually into the contemporary modern Indo-Aryan languages. Mahmud the Gazanavi used Sanskrit on his coins, and Sanskrit was in use as an official language during early Muslim rule in Kashmir.

Attempts at reviving the Sanskrit language have been undertaken in the Republic of India since its foundation in 1947 (it was included in the 14 original languages of the Eighth Schedule to the Constitution). Organisations like the Samskrta Bharati are conducting Speak Sanskrit workshops to popularise the language. The “All-India Sanskrit Festival” (since 2002) holds composition contests. The 1991 Indian census reported 49,736 fluent speakers of Sanskrit. All India Radio transmits news bulletins in Sanskrit twice a day across the nation. Besides, Sanskrit learning programmes also feature on the list of most of the AIR broadcasting centres. The Mattur village in central Karnataka claims to have native speakers of Sanskrit among its population. There have been suggestions to use Sanskrit as a metalanguage for knowledge representation in e.g. machine translation, and other areas of natural language processing

because of its relatively high regular structure. This is due to Classical Sanskrit being a regularised, prescriptivist form abstracted from the much more complex and richer Vedic Sanskrit.

Interesting facts about Sanskrit language :

- There is a numbering system in Sanskrit called the Katapayadi system. This system ascribes a number to every letter or alphabet in the script, something similar to the ASCII system in computer science. When the letter in the following shloka is replaced with their corresponding number from the Katapayadi Sankhya, we get the value of pi accurate to 31 digits.

गोपीभाग्य मधुव्रत-शुद्धशुद्धिदधिसन्धिगि ।

खलजीवित्खाताव गलहालारसधर ॥

OR

Gopibhagya madhuvrata srngisodadhisandhiga|

Khalajivitakhatava galahalarasandhara||

- Sanskrit is a highly regularized language. In fact, NASA declared it to be the “only unambiguous spoken language on the planet” – and very suitable for computer comprehension. Research has shown that the phonetics of this language has roots in various energy points of the body. Reading, speaking or reciting Sanskrit stimulates these points and raises the energy levels. Thereby resisting illnesses, bringing relaxation to mind and reducing stress.

- Sanskrit is the only language, which uses all the nerves of the tongue. By speaking it, energy points in the body are activated resulting the blood circulation in the body to improve. This, coupled with the enhanced brain functioning and higher energy levels, ensures better health. Blood Pressure, diabetes, cholesterol etc. are controlled.

- Unverified reports say that the Russians, Germans, Japanese, Americans are actively doing research on our sacred books and are recreating these text with their name on it. 17 countries in the world have a university or more to study about Sanskrit and gain new technology but there is not a single

university dedicated to Sanskrit for its real study in India. It is the Mother of all languages of the world. All the languages (97%) have been directly or indirectly influenced by this language.

- There is a report by a NASA scientist that America is creating a 6th and 7th generation super computers based on the Sanskrit language for the use of super computers to their maximum extent. Project deadline is 2025(6th generation) 2034(7th generation) after this there will be a language revolution all over the world to learn Sanskrit. It is the best language available in the world for translation purpose. Learning of Sanskrit improves brain functioning. Students start getting better marks in other subjects like Mathematics, Science etc., which some people find difficult. It enhances the memory power. James Junior School, London, has made Sanskrit compulsory.

Sanskrit language has been with us for over 10,000 years. It has been our spoken language for thousands of years. This itself tells us how important is Sanskrit to our values and how important it is for us to keep Sanskrit as one of our main-stream language. Without the knowledge of Sanskrit, as a language, we will not be able to truly appreciate and understand the literature we have.

Let us bring Sanskrit back to our daily life.

It is possible only when we start speaking Sanskrit the way we speak any other languages.

Glimpses Of Indian Architecture-Early Period

By Aswathy R Vijay
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Indian architecture has always had a place of its own in the world. India has always been a dream destination for several people who wish for a break from their fast life. Monuments, temple, art crafts etc. are some of the factors that bring them to our country. But if we have a close look at these factors, what they have in common, is the rich culture and tradition of India. Apart from them, even geographical isolation shares a hand in developing the distinct architectural style of Indian sub-continent. These features may be studied under different phases of evolution.

Phase-1 : Ancient Period

While tracing the beginning of Indian Architecture, we can see that the roots were rising from cities which flourished in Indus Valley from 3000 B.C. The excavation from Mohan-jo-daro and Harappa was the source of information. Mohan-jo-daro was a carefully planned city in the grid system. There the whole city was divided into rectangular blocks where the houses were conceived as self contained units. Here the style of construction was bare and utilitarian. This kind of architecture was traced over north-western India. Another kind of architecture which had a significant contribution was Vedic architecture, where most of the people were pastoral and agricultural class. Vedic books were the source of information for this kind of architecture. While Indus valley architecture basically followed a grid system, here the early huts were circular which later got elongated to rectangular or apsidal palans. The concept of 'grama' was introduced in this phase by forming a cluster of huts which had fences for protection, entrances which inspired and influenced Buddhist architecture later. One great example of this period was the Mauryan Capital, Pataliputra.



Phase 2 : Buddhist Period

With the invasion of Alexander, the Vedic period was gradually influenced by the Greco-Persian features. The acceptance of Buddhism as a religion during Asoka's period and great efforts of the emperor to propagate the religion gave rise to a new class of structures:

- (1) Stupa: Circular monuments of bricks, crowned by elements of 'harmika' and 'chatrayasti' surrounded by a palisade. eg: Asokan stupa at Sanchi.
- (2) Stambha: the symbolic stone pillar which generally consists of a plain unadorned shaft and contained at its top a bell capital and an abacus supporting figures of animals symbolising four quarters of univers: horse for south; lion for north; bull for west; and elephant for east. eg: Sarnath Pillar.
- (3) Rock-cut chambers: A few of such chambers are situated near Gaya and Nagarjuna Hills which are more or less imitation of timber forms in rock.

During Kaniska's time Buddhism was divided into two sects: Mahayana and Hinayana. The main structure of Hinayana school was 'cetiysala', the prayer halls of Buddhist monks, which had a miniature stupa as its central theme. The important structures of Mahayana school are Viharas(monasteries) which consisted of stupas and quarters for the

monks. These stupas have inspired the Chines, Japanese, and Burmese to erect their multi-storeyed pagodas. eg: Monastries at Taksasila and Nalanda.

Phase 3 : Hindu Period

By fifth century, all over India, Hinduism had become widespread replacing Buddhism. The main feature of all the cities flourished during this time was, each had a palace and a temple. Authorities define two chief styles: the Arya (or northern) style and the Dravidian (or southern) style.

The northern style is best illustrated by three schools, those of Orissa, Central India and Gujarat. This style is characterized by a tower with a rounded top and curvilinear outline. The finest Orissa temple is Lingaraja at Bhubhaneswar. It is built as a series of four halls: a hall of offering, a dancing hall, an assembly hall and a sanctuary crowned by a great tower (sikhara) curving inwards terminated by an amalaka disc and a finial (kalasa). Here lavish exterior decorations and unadorned interiors are found. Another great eg: Sun temple of Konark.

Khajurao, near Jhansi, is a supreme example for central Indian work. It consists of a sanctuary, an assembly hall and an entrance portico. It displays both inside and outside sculptural ornamentation.

The most important schools of the Gujarat school are the Jaina shrines of Mount Abu. It is similar to khajurao in terms of sikhara but has ceilings made in the form of corbelled dome through the influence of Persians and Arabs. The shrines are mostly of marble, are covered with delicate and ornate carvings especially in the interior.

While coming to South the Dravidian style of tower is like a rectangular truncated pyramid. Earliest temples of Dravidian style are those belonging to Pallava School which carries traces of Buddhist architecture. There towers are like truncated pyramids surmounted by a solid cupola. eg: Kailasanath temple at Kanchi. The comparatively modest tower of Pallavas was replaced by a great pyramid rising from a tall base and crowned by a domed finial by Cholas. This

set the style of Dravidian sikhara. They also contain pillared halls and beautiful decorations. eg: Siva temple at Tanjavur. The Pandyan School is characterised by the shifting of the emphasis from the tower above the main shrine to the entrance gateways of the surrounding wall. They also introduced more elaborate ornamentation and use of animal forms in pilasters and columns. eg: Minakshi temple at Madhurai.

By 11th century, in Deccan, Chalukyans and Hoysalas had developed an elaborate style of temple construction. They were built on a polygonal on stellar plan raised on tall solid platforms of the same shape as the building. Their characteristic features include:

- * profuse carvings of animals and legendary motifs,
- * use of Kirtimukha as a decorative feature,
- * turned columns, and
- * flat dome-like sikhara.

eg: Temples of Halibed and Belur.

The culmination of the stylistic development of Dravidian temple architecture is seen in the Vijayanagara School. New elements like, a shrine for the goddess, often as large as the main shrine, pillared halls, marriage halls and shrines for other deities are added to the temple complex. Eg: Vittala temple at Hampi.

Jewels Of Ancient India

Vaishnavi V
S4-ECE

Ancient India was known to the Western World as 'the Golden Bird' for its vast treasures of precious jewels and gems. India was well known as a source for precious stones. For the past several centuries, our country is renowned as one of the greatest trading centers for gems. Gemology, the study of gems was very prominent in ancient India. Ancient literary works contain many references to precious stones indicating that an in depth knowledge of precious stones was widespread even in those times. In course of time the entire knowledge was systemized and given the status of a 'sastra' or science which became popular by the name of 'Ratnasatsra'. This sastra has clearly dealt with different aspects of gems like their origin i.e. source spots and mines, colour, density, weight, flaws, evaluation, good and bad effects, and their diversities.



Ancient gems were broadly classified as Maharatna and Uparatna meaning precious and semi-precious stones. The nine well-known gems were: vajra (diamond), mukta (pearl), manikya (ruby), indranila (sapphire), marakata (emerald), vidruma (coral), gomeda (jacinth), pusparaga (topaz) and vaidurya (lapis lazuli). The first five are maharatnas and the last four are uparatnas.

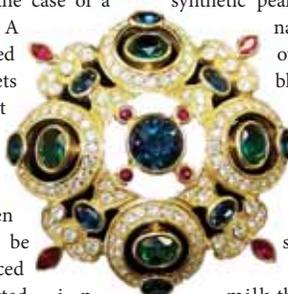
The diamond or the vajra always tops the list of the known precious gems. It is the hardest stone ever known to man. In latin it is called 'adamas' or the invulnerable. Its hardness and its sparkling brilliance makes the diamond reign supreme over all other gems. The characteristics of an ideal diamond as described in ancient treatises are: six-pointedness, purity (without stain), being well formed octahedron with pronounced sharp edges and lightness. Moreover lightness is an interesting trait of the vajra, on account of which it floats in water.

The Ruby or the manikya is also a very important gem found in India. Sometimes it is also known as padmaraga. The good quality of ruby is its weight. It was a well known fact and method during the ancient times that if a ruby is placed in a bronze vessel containing orange juice, the colour of the ruby will be brightened. A similar method using indigo is prescribed to intensify the blue colour of indanila (sapphire).

Gemologists of ancient India have enumerated 5 qualities and 5 defects which are generally in all gems. Weight, purity, brightness and hardness are the general quality of all gems. Lightness is a quality peculiar to diamond and is of no value in other gems. Paleness, being broken or chipped, dots, lines and bubbles are the most common defects found in all gems.

Being able to distinguish a pure gem from a defective one is an important skill, which was well practiced during the ancient times. In our ancient

literary works numerous tips and techniques to differentiate a real stone from an artificial one were recounted. For example, in order to distinguish between a natural diamond and a synthetic one it should be pounded by another. If genuine, it will remain unbroken, while artificial one breaks. In the case of a synthetic pearl, it gets destroyed in saline water. A natural pure pearl will remain unaffected over flame, whereas a synthetic pearl gets blackened. Genuine rubies are radiant with luster, while artificial rubies are non-lustrous. Rubies must retain their lustre when boiled or rubbed. If any gem when rubbed softens it can be said to be synthetic. When sapphire is placed in milk and if its blue tinge is reflected in milk then the stone is valued as an excellent one.



Gems were and still continue to be a vital part of jewellery. Different designs of ornaments adorned with beautiful lustrous jewels never ceased to mesmerize man. The kings and the nobles of ancient times used to have a vast collection of precious stones, jewels and jewellery. It was this unaccountable wealth and treasure that attracted the British to India. They claimed to 'civilize' India during their stay, but their main intention was to plunder its fabulous wealth and resources. The account of Hazrat Amir Khusrau, the famed poet who accompanied Malik Naib, Alauddin Khalji's army general in AD 1310-1312 military expedition to south India, describes the colossal treasure of gold, emerald and other gems which had been collected during the earlier periods of ancient India. Khusrau, after the capture of the fort of Warangal says,

'The boxes carried by the elephants were full of valuables and gems, the excellence of which drove the onlookers mad. Every emerald (zabarzad) sparkled in the light of the sun. . . . The corundum/sapphire (yaqat) dazzled the eye in the sun. The cat's eye (ainul hirrat) and the cock's eye (ainul dzk) were so brilliant. The lustre of the rubies illuminated the darkness of the night. The emeralds had a

fineness of water that could eclipse the lawn of paradise. The diamonds (ilmas) would have penetrated into an iron heart like an arrow of steel. The other stones were such that the sun

blushed to look at them. As for the pearls, you would not find the like of them, even if you kept diving into the sea through all eternity. The gold was like the full moon of the twelfth night; it seemed that in order to ripen it, the alchemist sun, had lighted its fire, and the morning had blown its breath, for years. . . . The Ariz-Mumalik (gemmologist) divided the jewels into 'genus' and 'species', 'class' after 'class', and had everything written down. . . . Among them was a jewel (Koh-i-Nur?), unparalleled in the whole world.'

Gems were also associated with planetary actions. Our ancient astrologers attributed each gem with a particular day of the week. Based on these strong beliefs some of the laws of present day astrology were made. It is thus advised to test rubies on Sundays, pearls on Mondays, corals on Tuesdays, and emeralds on Wednesdays and so on. Even today India's trade in gems and jewelry is quite lucrative. Surat is the center of the diamond cutting industry; however most of the precious stones are imported.



Netra Chikitsa with its traditional majesty

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Amrita School of Ayurveda



Ayurveda has flown as an eternal tradition from time immemorial for the benefit of mankind and established itself as a main stream life saving system. The ancient scholars, according to the social need and mode of practice, have classified the entire wisdom of Ayurveda into eight major branches known as Ashtanga. The domain of different branches is demarcated categorically. The Shalakya Tantra one of the important branches of the said eight branches deals mainly with the treatment of eye diseases and diseases of head, ear, nose, throat etc. In short the Shalakya Tantra deals with the diseases that occur in the organs situated above the neck. Among them diseases of the eye exercise esteem position.

In ancient times the practices of eye diseases was quite popular and the name of various scholars and practitioners in this field are abundantly found in the classical texts and Acharya Nimi, Videha, Bhoja, Satyaki etc. are among such examples. It was popularly practiced along with the other branches in the intensity. This flow continues to medieval periods till the end of 17th century AD. But in the due course of time the practice in this regard lost that intensity.

Nimi Maharaja is revered as the father of eye care in India. The 12th King of Ikshvaku dynasty, Nimi was a past-master in ophthalmic therapy and research. A detailed description on the structure of the eye is provided in the Uttara tantra of the renowned ancient Indian medical text 'Sushruta Samhita'. It is a matter of pride for us that the first surgery for Cataract was performed in India on the primary advice provided by Nimi Maharaja. The text describes this surgery which has earned a claim from all Ancient Schools of Medicine. The size, shape, length, and sharpness of the instrument and the metal used to make it are all specified in the book. It is also stated that noncompliance of these specifications for the instrument and making the incision at a point different from the specified one, could lead to surgical risk. The fact that at a time when anaesthesia was non-existent, painless surgery was possible deserves special mention.

The prognostic assessment of the disease justifies their regular practices and the awareness of outcome. On account of unavailability of the traditional practice of Netra Chikitsa in all corners of India, only some of the practices are prevail. Nowadays Netra chikitsa is mostly confined to Palliative treatment. As a result a major part of surgical treatment and para- surgical procedures are mostly not been in practice and are in the verge of extinction.

Our eyes are an important factor of our lives; yet, sometimes we just take it for granted and we do not care much about it. Taking care of our eyes can mean the difference between a dark and solitude world and a life of being able to see and appreciate the beauties of nature and everything else around us. The choice between the two depends merely on how we value eye care. Being aware of the importance of protecting one's vision, can help to avoid problems in future. Keeping in view the basic aim i.e. eye care and vision strengthening, a combined treatment regime for any eye diseases has to be adopted to obtain good results.

The medicines and therapeutic processes include Oushadha dhara (pouring of medicated liquids on closed eyes) administering eye drops, Anjanam (application of medicated collyrium), Vidalakam (application of medicated paste around the eyes), Tarpanam (keeping the medicated ghee

in eyes for a stipulated time). Along with treatment, the practice of Yoga, exercises, and special eye exercises helps in reducing the mental tension which enhances the effect of treatment. A strategy of healthy food habits and living on good life styles with periodical medical check-ups in aged persons are effective remedial measures to protect and prevent against any eye diseases.



Sekam



Aschyotanam



Vidalakam



Pindi



Anjanam



Tarpanam



Leech Therapy

Preventive aspects

Don't touch or rub the eye(s) frequently. Wash your hands often with soap and warm water. Wash any discharge from your eyes twice a day using a fresh cotton ball or paper towel. Afterwards, discard the cotton ball and wash your hands with soap and warm water. Wash your bed linens, pillowcases, and towels in hot water and detergent. Avoid wearing eye makeup. Don't share eye makeup with anyone else. Never wear another person's contact lens. Wear glasses instead of contact lenses. Throw away disposable lenses or be sure to clean extended wear lenses and all eyewear cases. Avoid sharing common articles such as unwashed towels, cups, and glasses. Wash your hands after applying the eye drops or ointment to your eye or your child's eye. Do not use eye drops in a non-infected eye that were used for an infected one. If your child has bacterial or viral conjunctivitis, keep him or her home from school or day care until he or she is no longer contagious. Practice healthy habits of reading, always read and write in good light source. Reading in moving vehicle is not good for eyes.

Let me dedicate with due reverence the modern equipments and other aids with which we treat and cure the patients, to our great ancient, but evergreen forefathers who had nourished and enriched the caring arm of Ayurveda. Here just reminding the readers that the most modern equipments and all other sophisticated aids that we have today, were seen and understood by our great Acharyas with their divine eyes. So the adage, 'Sarvendriyanam Nayanam Pradhanam' (the eye is foremost among all the sense organs) was true, is true, and will remain so ever.

Rajasthani Folk Dances

Akansha Kumari

Rajasthan is one of the exotic Indian States that has a rich history and vibrant culture. The hostile desert terrain was home to many nomadic tribes who have more or less settled down to an agrarian life style but have retained their tribal culture. The Rajputs have earned a name for themselves as fierce warriors and were considered as one of the martial classes in India. The many ancient forts, palaces and marvelous havelies speak volumes for their rich culture which is evident even today. The Bhils and Minas are the largest tribes; but there are many smaller tribes too. The Rajasthan tribes constitute about 12% of its total population and they have preserved their unique culture which is expressed in their costumes, jewelry, fairs and festivals and above all in their folk music and dance. Some of the dances are described in subsequent paragraphs.

Ghoomar Dance

This is basically a community dance for women and performed solely by Rajput women on auspicious occasions. The dance gets its name from the word 'ghoomna', the graceful gyrating, which displays the spectacular colours of the flowing 'ghaghra', the long skirt of the Rajasthani women. The performers cover their faces with a veil and dance to the music and rhythm of their traditional folk songs and perform circular movements gracefully and charmingly.

Kalbelia Dance

This ancient dance form is performed by women of the Kalbelia community who, by profession, are snake charmers and trade in snake venom. This ancient dance form has dance movements similar to the movements of the serpents and hence, even the costumes are black colored. Interestingly, women dance to the music produced by the 'Been', an instrument used by snake charmers. This is an extremely sensuous dance form which completely entralls the onlookers. The dance of the kalbelia women is vigorous and graceful.

Chari Dance

This traditional dance form requires lots of skill and practice as it is performed with pots on the head and lamps in the hand of the dancers. In such a state, the dancers perform several flexible and graceful movements of the body.

Kacchi-Ghodi Dance

Kacchi-Ghodi, or the dummy horse dance, originated from the bandit regions of Shekhawati. The dancers are elaborately dressed, and so are the dummy horses, which perform sword fighting sequences with utmost vigor. A ballad singer usually sings the tales of chivalrous men. This dance form is generally performed on festive occasions.

Fire Dance

This is an extremely difficult dance to perform which is carried out by the Banjara community. The dance involves breathtaking fire stunts wherein the dancers perform by holding fire rods in their hands and filling up their mouths with kerosene. The fire rods are also moved on their heads and legs by the dancers. The stirring fire dance is performed by the 'jasnathis' of Bikaner and Churu districts. This dance is an example of Jasnathis' life style. These devotional dances are performed only late at night.

TeraTaal (Thirteen Beat) Dance

The TerahTaal dance is a beautiful musical dance in which the dancers place manjeeras (small brass cymbals) on their waist, legs, hands and forehead, at least thirteen places on their body. This dance is performed as a kind of ritual to please Baba Ramdeo, a local deity of Rajasthan.

Gowari Dance

The most famous art form of the Bhil tribe is the 'Gowari', which is a kind of dancedrama. The performers travel from village to village as a troupe for a month, during which the nine functionaries follow a strict regimen. The entire troupe dances around a central spot consecrated to a deity. A 'madal' and a 'thali' accompany the performance.

There are as many dances as there are communities; but the Rajasthani stamp is evident in their colorful costumes, their musical instruments and racy rhythm. For the dancers of Rajasthan, the Thar Desert is the center

stage which enhances the beauty of the dances with the backdrop of sand dunes and the setting sun.

It would be nice if we could get some pictures. The deleted portions are in the later pages. They may be cleared after your review.

Drum Dance

It is a professional dance-form of Jalore region of Rajasthan, where only the men participants can perform. In this dance, five men beat huge drums that are tied around their necks; a dancer, which holds huge cymbals in their hands, also accompanies them. For an additional effect, some member holds naked sword in his mouth.

Bhavi Dance

In this dance form the veiled women dance while balancing seven to eight pitchers on their head while delicately balancing their feet on small glass tumblers.

Costumes of Rajasthani folk dances

The female dancers wear colourful, embroidered and mirror worked skirts called 'ghagra' in most of the performances. They wear 'kurti' or 'choli' and 'odhna.'

The apparel for Rajasthani men are somewhat more restrained than the women's clothes and are still quite varied in form and texture. Traditionally, the lower garment of Rajasthani men is the unstitched 'dhoti' or a stitched garment such as the 'pyjama', some garments related to the pyjama include the suthan, izar, shalwar or salwar, survala or sural and ghutanna. The upper garment is 'bandi' and a 'kurta' or tunic that is commonly worn. During some performances they wear 'achkan' or 'shervani'.

Musical Instruments for Rajasthani folk dances

The Rajasthani folk musicians use sarangi, ghunroos and ektara to bring out sweetest melody. Dhol is the most popular percussion instrument. Nagara is also very popular. Thali and kartal are Rajasthaniautophonic instruments. Shahenai and flute are also used for added quotient.

In Rajasthan, folk dances are the outbursts of any celebration and festivity. The Rajasthani people both men and women enjoy dancing. The dance styles reflect their emotion and celebration.

Other Dances

Several other folk dances performed by the local tribesmen of Rajasthan include Drum dance, Jhoria, Matka-bhawai, Kathputli (puppet dance), Raika etc. which are executed on particular occasions and are associated with a particular tribe.

The Thar Desert of Rajasthan comes alive when its dancers take the center stage. Rajasthan has great variety of dances, which are simple expressions of celebration and festivity. The dancers, the dances and costumes have made Thar the most colorful desert in the world.

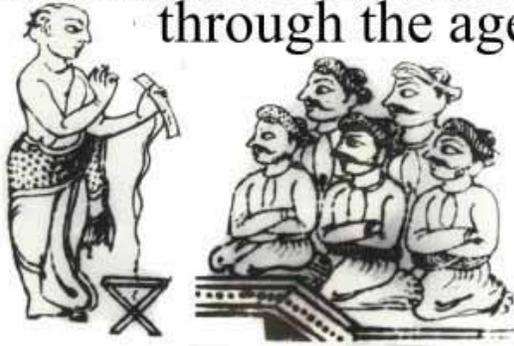
Each region adding its own form of dance styles and performers. There are dances that follows a lineage of age old traditions, adhere to religious significance, display their daring attitude as well as complimenting various fairs and festivals. Ghoomar, a community dance for women performed on auspicious occasions. Gair Ghoomar, Raika, Jhoria and Gauri are particularly of Bhil tribe. Gair is performed on Holi but only by the men folk.

Chari dance, with pots on the head and a lighted lamp, is popularly performed on marriage occasions or on the birth of a male child. Kalbelia dance is of the kalbelia tribe, the snake charmers. With numerous pots on the head, women excel the balancing act in the Matka-bhawai. Terahtaali, is a ritual for Baba Ramdev, a dance with thirteen manjiras.

Other dances are Kachhi-Ghodi, Kathputli (the puppet dance), Fire dance, drum dance and various others pertaining to the particular tribes. Kathhak, a popular dance form being imported from Uttar Pradesh have been revived by the rajputana courts, with a style and theme of its own.

Highly cultivated classical music and dance with its own distinct style is part of the cultural tradition of Rajasthan. The music is uncomplicated

Education in Karnataka through the ages



Parvathy, CIR

During the Vedic Age, there was no gender discrimination in imparting education. Boys and girls alike had their initiation (upanayana) ceremony before they started their studies in a gurukula or a hermitage. But it turns out to be that only few girls have taken in depth study of Vedic lore. Many of them preferred to be good housewives or sadyovadhuh.

The girls who took to serious study of God realization, especially disputations regarding Brahman, were known as brahmavadinis, and were remembered as visionaries and composers of mantra. Twenty seven brahmavadinis are mentioned in Vedic literature. Female ascetics of various religious sects; Buddhist, Jaina, Shakta, Vaishnava, Shiva, Ganapatya and Vairashaiva, are mentioned in inscriptions and classics of later times.

In the 10th century AD memorial of Savainirmadi (a commoner, seems to have been a unique scholar), one can find that in the left hand, she is holding a palm leaf book with Kannada letters, "Shri Hari (ra) Siddhi" with one finger carved as concealing the letters "ra" or "ri".

During the 1st century AD, Vatsyayana listed many duties that a household women should perform, like administering medicines, physical exercise, painting etc. He suggests that a musician, a princess or daughters of nobles could control the household by cultivating various arts and subjects.

Young girls were also taught various forms of art. Also, there are inscriptions available, where it describes girls being taught arithmetic and literature. In the higher strata of the society, girls were taught state crafts, horse and elephant riding and wielding of various weapons.

There were halls for instructing dance and music, called kannemada in palaces and mansions. Music, dance, drama and painting were taught by male members. The female teachers carefully watched the tala and the footwork of the students.

Jaina basadis and mathas provided spiritual training to nuns. Wandering monks and nuns imparted instructions through discourses to shravakas or lay-listeners. Reading puranas were arranged in temples, which were attended by good number of women.

There was some system to train women all the strata of the society. The talented among them outshone when they received proper encouragement. Many women shone as administrators of cities, towns, agraharas, divisions and provinces. Enlightened men like Rajashekhar declared that refinement pertains to the soul and not to the gender.



Continuation of Rajasthani Folk dances

and songs depict day-to-day relationships and chores, more often focused around fetching water from wells or ponds.

The Ghoomar dance from Udaipur and Kalbeliya dance of Jaisalmer have gained international recognition. Folk music is a vital part of Rajasthani culture. Kathputali, Bhopa, Chang[disambiguation needed], Teratali, Ghindar, Kachchhighori, Tejaji, parth dance etc. are the examples of the traditional Rajasthani culture. Folk songs are commonly ballads which relate heroic deeds and love stories; and religious or devotional songs known as bhajans and banis (often accompanied by musical instruments like dholak, sitar, sarangi etc.) are also sung. The colorful and vibrant culture of Rajasthan is a highly impressive and remarkable testimony to the glorious past of the state when the monarchs lived large. The most fascinating facet of Rajasthani culture is its energetic and graceful dance forms. The Rajasthan calendar is marked with numerous fairs and festivals celebrated with great enthusiasm. But no celebration in this land of Raja- Maharajas is complete without the joyous dance performances. The liveliness of Rajasthanis beautifully reflect in their dance forms. The erstwhile Raja-Maharajas of Rajasthan were fond of dance and music. In fact treating their senses to dance and music performances used to be one of their greatest passions. When one talks about the culture of Rajasthan, the mention of the various communities of entertainers is a must. With their mesmerizing dance performances, they would please the kings and earn big rewards. Even today the tradition of calling these entertainers during festive occasions continues in Rajasthan. They beautifully depict the stories of romance and chivalry through their dance performances. So, even the arid land has chimes and grooves that have taken the popularity of Rajasthan to the international arenas. As the International Dance Day reaches its beautiful eve, people of Rajasthan will always take pride in their ostentatious and lovely culture where the nakharaliGhoomar and chaabliKachhiGhodi will jazz up the feet automatically!!

Ghoomar and Jhumar are the main dances of Rajasthan. These dances are performed on important occasions and festivals. On the festival of Holi, Deepawali and Gangaur the atmosphere reverberates with Ghoomar dance. In the Ghoomardance, performing women wear 'Lahanga' and 'Odhni' and carry large plates full of lighted earthen lamps while moving their feet. In this dance, women move in a circle and because of this movement it is called Ghumar. Like Ghumar in Rajasthan, 'Bhawai' dance is also practised widely. 'Bhawai' is a dance of a sub-caste of Rajasthan. This is a dance of the men folk and is based upon a narrative. The narrative is accompanied with song and dance. The entire dance is organized on the basis of local folklores and the performers of the dance keep on moving from place to place. Apart from Ghumar and Jhumar, 'Dandia' 'Rasiya', 'Dhol' 'Dance of Matkas (pitchers)', 'Dance of swords', 'Dance of Snake Charmers' and 'Dances of Kalbelias' are also important dances of Rajasthan.

The people of Rajasthan know the real art of living life to the full, with total enjoyment, in spite of harsh weather conditions and rough terrains. The fascinating dances of Rajasthan reflect culture, geography, customs and nature of the people of Rajasthan in a very apt and colorful manner, blending perfectly with the locale. Interestingly, each region of Rajasthan has its own unique folk dance forms. These dances are vibrant and dynamic with graceful body movements. The best part is when the myriad hues of colors, transform the barren land into a happy zone, with the colorful costumes, combining the lively folk music.

The dances of Rajasthan are so inviting and engaging that they are bound to induce you to tap a foot or two along with the dancers. Rajasthani dances are essentially folk dances tracing their origin to rural customs and traditions. What is more interesting is that keeping alive the numerous dance forms are not the professional dancers but the ordinary rural men and women of Rajasthan. The dancers practicing these dance forms are, till date, religiously following the age old traditions and that's where, the beauty of these dances lies. Apart from the simple expressions and daring movements that add beauty to the dances, there are the vibrant and colorful costumes adorned by the dancers.

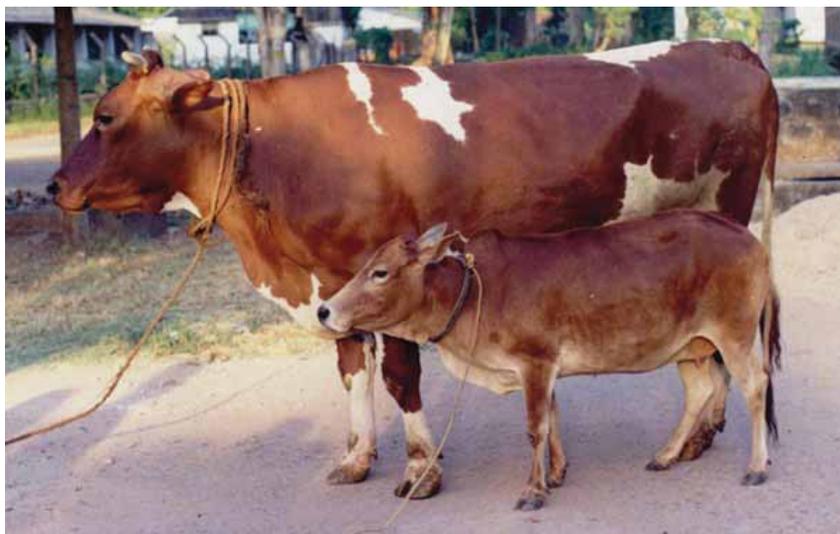
Pashu Ayurveda

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Ayurveda, science of life was brought to earth by Maharshi Bharadhwaja after seeing the sufferings of all living beings. So Ayurveda is not limited to treatment of human beings alone. It believes in protecting all living beings in the nature. So there are branches like Vruksha ayurveda (for plant kingdom), Pasu ayurveda for animal/ veterinary medicine which includes Hast ayurveda for elephants, Ashva ayurveda for horses and so on.

Vedic practices in veterinary science

The greatest physician recognised in vedas is the God. The Aswini kumaras considered to be the physicians of God, were highly skilled in the surgical and therapeutic aspects related to human and animals. Their skills



are evident through the miraculous replacement of the head of man with that of horse. There are evidences on existence of literature of veterinary sciences in rigveda (2000- 4000 BC) where the physicians attended humans and animals indiscriminately. And the medical and surgical skills of these doctors were primitive. But clear cut reference exhibiting the clinical skills is found nowhere. In Atharva veda 114 hymns are devoted to medical subjects related to both human and veterinary science (Adharva veda VI kanta 59) . In that era cows and elephants (2000 BC) were the mines of property revealing their importance. Sage Palakapya, the famous veterinary expert had works on Hastya ayurved and gajasastra (elephantology) to his credit among which Hasti ayurveda is a work in prose and verses, while gajasastra is completely in verse form. Remains of these books are still preserved by Gujarat Ayurveda University library.

In the post vedic literature other than asva ayurveda and gaja ayurveda, gau ayurveda about cows, shyenk ayurveda about hawks are also prevalent. Early reference of dairying was mentioned in gau ayurveda stating the importance of cattles being grazed freely so that they achieved successful mating, which enhances better milk production along with good immune calves. Garuda purana mentions a number of ayurvedic medicines used against ailments of animals. Chapters that discuss animal husbandry practise appear in Skanda purana also.

First Veterinarian and veterinary hospital

Shalihotra(2350 BC)who was specialised in treatment of horses and elephants was the first to describe in writing detailed account of surgical and medical therapies for animals.He compiled an Indian materia medica provided step by step description of methods of administering herbs including instruction on preparing medicine for injection.

Shalihotra is reported to have written 1st book on Veterinary treatment in Sanskrit, called The Shalihotra and is considered to be the 1st book ever written to describe specific techniques in veterinary medicine, including

the use of indigenous herbs in treating working animals. Another text attributed to Shalihotra is Ashva-ayurveda which describe the treatment of horses

Shalihotra is considered to be the historically first true veterinarian because of his contribution to the science of veterinary medicine

The 1st Veterinary hospital was built by King Ashoka (300BC). He also developed operational protocols for veterinary hospitals regarding the use of botanical medicine. Veterinary doctors were assigned free endowment. There are also pictures of hygienic and well ventilated animal houses attached with these veterinary hospitals. He promoted cultivation of medicinal herbs in his and adjoining kingdoms.

Alexander the great, when invaded India, acquired some of the indigenous skills used by Indians to cure diseases particularly snake bite. He appreciated the skill of traditional healers and eventually many herbs were taken away.

Charaka devotes a complete chapter (Mashparna Britiya) describing the qualities of cow's milk, which is fed upon either of leaves of Arjuna (Oterminalia arjuna, Masha (Phaseolus mungo). The milk of red or black cow, which is fed upon either of these substances, is considered as rejuvenator and aphrodisiac.

Etho veterinary medicine

Although modern veterinary medicine is well developed, large section of the population in rural area still relay on traditional practioners and herbal medicine for primary health care and their livestock. For conditions like

wound, mastitis, enteritis and pest control some of the very successful recipes and practices in herbal medicines are mentioned.

1. Wound: - 500gms of fresh Moringo oleifera leaves are made paste and applied on the wound.
 - 2-3 hand full of Neem and Thulasi leaves are made in to paste and applied for 3 to 4 days.
 - Sap of aloevera is applied topically
 - Turmeric powder is made in to paste by adding some water and
2. Mastitis (inflammation of the udder):- Aloevera leafs 250 gms, Turmeric power 50 gm, Calcium Oxide (chunnamb) 5 gms grind and made Choorna which appears red in colour is mixed with water and applied after squeezing effected teat as much as possible. This should be applied repeatedly 10 times cure mastitis in 48 hrs.
3. Enteritis :- 250 gms of fresh Ginger and 250 gms of Ajwain (Trachyspermum ammi) made paste along with 100gms of tea leaf added. This mixture is boiled for 10 mts in 1 ltr of water and given to the cattle cure all types of enteritis.
4. Pest control : Neem oil just applied over the cattle removes all types of pest. Turmeric paste is applied to heal the wounds produced by the pest.

Summary

Animals received good medical care in ancient india. Physicians treating human beings were also trained in the care of animals. Indian medical treatises like charaka, shushrutha and haritasamhita contain chapters or references about the care of animals. The greatest and most rewarred teacher of veterinary science was Salihotra which dealt with the surgical and medical aspects concerning the diseases of all animals.

Poetic Marvel in Stone

Sruthi B
CIR

The exquisite temple architecture forms the back bone of the rich cultural heritage of our country. It would be difficult to trace the origins of these store houses of brilliant artistry but evidences point out first temples as simple structures, often with funerary connections. Stones with inscriptions, raised in honour of the dead and platforms raised around trees were the first forms of temple structures. Some of these structures were roofed and pillared halls which later grew into something more complex. Slowly sophisticated arrangements were added to these structures which led to the setting up of “garbha graham” (niche for deity) and “ardha mandapam” (hall for devotees to congregate). These early structures were mostly made out of perishable materials like timber and brick. Stones, which would have helped the structures to survive, were avoided due to its funerary associations. The earliest surviving temples are attributed to Ashoka though the history of Hindu temple architecture starts with Guptas of 4th and 5th centuries. Unfortunately, most of these are lost as they were built out of perishable materials. Muslim iconoclasm also led to the disappearance of many.

A major share of the existing temples is concentrated in Tamil Nadu. Here the temples of great sophistication were built during the Sangam period and later. But most of these temples disappeared as they were made out of perishable materials. The earliest of the temples were the ones excavated by the Pallavas, the Muttaraiyars and the Adiyamans in the Tamil country and the Chalukyas in the Karnataka region. The Pallava cave shrine caused by Mahendra Varman is considered to be the earliest of the lot.

Starting with the one at Mandagappattu, Mahendra caused a number of cave shrines around the capital of Kanchipuram. The choice of locations for the temples reveal Mahendra's taste and his creative energy can be seen in the layout, sculptural decorations and rock-cut architecture of these temples. Except for Mandagappattu – Lakshityana which is located in Villupuram district, a location far away from Kanchi, all the cave temples caused by Mahendra Varman were built in and around Kanchi. All these temples, located near water bodies, are dedicated to Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva. Dvaraplakas, sculptured on stones form another major feature of these temples. The major structures that came up under the supervision of Mahendra Varman include ,Mamandur cave shrines, Kuranganilmttam-Kal- mandakam, Mahendravadi-Mahendra-vishnu –griham, Dalavanur-Satrumallesvaralaya, Tiruchirappalli-Lalitankura-pallava-griham and Siyamangalam-Avanibhajana-pallava-griham.

Mahendra's contribution to Indian culture does not stop with his own, but also in inspiring his descendants to make their mark in temple architecture. Mahendra's son Narasimha Pallava shifted his location for his creative efforts to his port town, Mamallapuram, now famous as Mahabalipuram. The Pallava sculptor had perfected human physiognomy on stone in the Mammalapuram sculptures. These sculptures exhibit naturalism in pose, undistracted by anatomical details.

The sculptural compositions, basically religious, also include human devotees and animals. The structural panels like the Great Penance and Mahishasuramardini panel in the Mahishasuramardini cave temple are self- contained narrations, of portrayal of a moment of action and not a continuous story-telling. All the characters represented in the structures carved out on stone are elegant, young, tall and slender, breathing vitality. Women are presented in appropriate stature.

Even the dress and ornaments show elegance and reflect “Pallava grace”. Dress consists of an unstitched piece of cloth draped over the body, mostly only the lower garment. The icons spotted with two types of garments: kachcha skirt like garment and kaupina, a tight garment. Goddesses, like Durga, are seen with a breast- band (Kucha-bandha). The sculptures of Gajalakshmi, Durga, Trivikrama, Varaha, Subrahmanya, Mahishasuramardini and Ananthashayana are the cynosure of Mamallapuram. Each one is a harmonious, rhythmic composition pregnant with inner spiritual meaning. Along with these there are depictions of Pallava kings and queens.

The Rathas made out of single living rocks is yet another attraction of Mamallapuram. There are nine rathas in total and among them the Panchapandava Rathas secures the highest appreciation. There is another important one in the main complex, called Ganesha Ratha. The two Pidari Rathas and the Valaiyankuttai Ratha are found in the outskirts. These rathas revel in variety. There are three different forms of rathas: square like the dharmaraja Ratha; oblong, like that of Bhima Ratha; and apsidal, like the Sahadeva Ratha. There is some variety in the superstructure as well: pyramidal with octagonal crown as seen in Dhramaraja Ratha, pyramidal with square crown as in Pidari Ratha, wagon roofed like Bhima Ratha and hut-roofed like the Draupadi Ratha.

Yet another marvel of Mamallapuram consist the Open- air bas-reliefs. These structures mark an honourable position in the art history of the world. Relief sculptures were done earlier in Ajanta and Amaravathi. But the uniqueness of the Pallava structure is remarkable, for rocks, which rise perpendicularly on one side of the wall has been used as the canvas. Here the tradition of depicting scenes from mythology is broken. The great Penance panel and the Govardhana panel not just depict stories, but portray microcosm of life and belief. It is controlled artistry borne out of observation. The bas-reliefs blend literature and sculpture with aesthetic sensibility of the sculptors taking precedence over the texts. The Pallavas have sculpted their gravy puns and puzzles along with the figures.

The royal splendour at Mamallapuram resonates the immense efforts of the great sculptors whose names we don't know. The sculptor working in situ cannot afford to make a mistake the work would be abandoned if a slight mistake happens in the sculpting of the nose or posture of the sculpture.

The depiction of artistic excellence of the sculptors does not end with the Pallavas. The Post-Pallava scene was covered by the Cholas and later by the Vijayanagar Empire. In the Chola period, poses and draperies became more conventionalised the torsos became more detailed and the emblems, decorated with flames were held on two upraised fingers. The noses also became prominent. During the Vijayanagar period the sculptures became stylised with elaborate draperies and ornaments along with poses stiff and expressionless.

The aesthetic beauty of the Temple architecture is remarkable. But a major aspect that we have to remember while visiting these sites is that they are not mere objects of aesthetic beauty but are objects for contemplation, meditation and philosophical significance. We should be able to understand and appreciate the metaphysical, spiritual and philosophical significance of these historical wonders.



India has to be rebuilt on her own foundations

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India has a long and unique history of superior performance, highest achievements and evolved systems. As a result she remained a pioneer and leader in the world. In the course of time, the nation had to face frequent invasions and attacks from outside. Subsequently different parts of India came under the domination of the alien forces for nearly one thousand years. The nation had to endure untold sufferings.

Maharishi Aurobindo notes : “This great and ancient nation was once the fountain of human life, the apex of human civilization, the exemplar of courage and humanity, the perfection of good government and settled society, the mother of all religions, the teacher of all wisdom and philosophy. It has suffered much at the hands of inferior civilizations and more savage peoples; it has gone down into the shadow of night and tasted often of the bitterness of death. Its pride has been trampled into the dust and its glory has departed. Hunger and misery and despair have become the masters of this fair soil, these noble hills, these ancient rivers, these cities whose life story goes back into pre-historic night.”

The time tested native systems were subject to contempt and destruction during the alien rule. Foreign ideas and systems were thrust from above. With the result, the alien thoughts and practices began to occupy the central place in Indian life. Ultimately India had to lose much of her original approaches.

Great souls were aware of the consequences and advocated the need for a shift towards Indian approaches, long before independence. Swami Vivekananda underlined: “We must grow according to our nature. Vain is it to attempt the lines of action that foreign societies have engrafted upon us; ... I do not condemn the institutions of other races; they are good for them, but not for us. This is the first lesson to learn. With other sciences, other institutions, and other traditions behind them, they have got their present system. We, with our traditions, with thousands years of Karma behind us, naturally can only follow our own bent, run in our grooves; and that we shall have to.”

Aurobindo echoed similarly in 1909: “We have sought to regain life by following the law of another being than our own. We must return and seek the sources of life and strengthen within ourselves.” But in spite of these sane warnings, changes in the required direction were not initiated after India became independent. The ruling classes continued to make India depend on the alien ideas and approaches.

This attitude pained the concerned citizens and prompted them to voice their opinions. The noted Gandhian Dharampal wrote: “Today, we feel encircled by hostility—much of it in fact generated by our own ineptitude and actions. From around 1947, we have treated ourselves as cousins of the West. Dominated by the West, it may be necessary at the moment to rely on Western knowledge and products. But this can be only be a short term proposal.”

But unfortunately the reliance on western ideas still continues even after sixty five years of independence. We remain unaware of our past as well as the present, and fail to pose the fundamental questions that are critical to us. To quote Dharampal : “Since Independence in 1947, it is this question of reconstruction of self and society on the foundation of our priorities, values, tradition and culture that seems to have completely eluded us, particularly our scholars, administrators and politicians. We appear to have forgotten that we can look back and learn from our own past, and based on that experience, construct our own unique identity within the context of our own affairs as well as that of the rest of the world. What do we as a nation—without leaning on others’ ideological and material crutches—want? Do we have ingenuity or not? Can we make our own

points—as against aligning with one sort or another? Do we have a point to make as Indians?”

Times are changing fast. India is fast emerging as a powerful nation at the international level. The Indian thoughts, approaches and systems are getting increasingly recognized. Meanwhile, the west is facing serious difficulties at the economic, social and personal levels. The world is beginning to realize the unsuitability of the western models for other countries. No nation can make real progress on imported ideas.

It is time for us to understand that a strong India can be built only on the Indian foundations. The contemporary events reaffirm that India is fully capable of achieving a lot, provided serious efforts are made in the required direction. For this purpose, it is necessary to understand India – her past and present - from true perspectives. Misconceptions about the country have to be removed and correct opinions have to be formed. Vivekananda says: “We all hear so much about degradation of India. There was a time when I also believed in it. But today standing on the vantage-

ground of experience, with eyes cleared of obstructive predispositions and above all, of the highly-coloured pictures of other countries tone down to their proper shade and light by actual contact, I confess, in all humility, that I was wrong. Thou blessed land of Aryas, thou wast never degraded. Sceptres have been broken and thrown away, the ball of power has passed from hand to hand, but in India, courts and kings have always touched only a few; the vast mass of people, from the highest to the lowest, has been left to pursue its own its inevitable course, the current of national life flowing at times slow and half-conscious, at others, strong and awakened. I stand in awe before the unbroken procession of scores of shining centuries, with here and there a dim



link in the chain, only to flare up with added brilliance in the next, and there she is walking with her own majestic steps – my motherland – to fulfill her glorious destiny, which no power on earth or in heaven can check – the regeneration of man the brute into man the God.”

India can be rebuilt, as she has the fundamentals and the potential. She has the background and capacity to reach higher levels and guide the destiny of the other nations. It is the external thoughts and approaches that are hindering her from realizing the full potential. She has many problems and difficulties. But they can be solved if we decide to tackle them from the correct perspectives. For this purpose, let us recall the words of Swami Vivekananda: “This national ship, my countrymen, my friends, my children- this national ship has been ferrying millions and millions of souls across the waters of life.... But today, perhaps through your own fault, this boat has become a little damaged, has sprung a leak; Is it fit that you stand up and pronounce malediction upon it, one that has done more work than any other thing in the world? If there are holes in this national ship, this society of ours, we are its children. Let us go and stop the holes.”

Rhythm Of The Jewelled City

Jayashree
S8 EEE

Little do we know about the seven sister states of our nation. Lying in the secluded corner of Eastern India, their art forms, literature, culture and beliefs are confined to themselves. It is seldom that they are included in our mundane conversations of socio-political events. Still an average Indian would have heard about Manipuri dance, one of the India's classical dance forms. As the name refers to, Manipur the land of Meities is the cradle of Manipuri dance. As art forms always speak about culture, heritage and legacy of a region, it is advantageous to learn more about Manipur too. So let's turn on the time machine.

According to some authoritative researchers, Lord Shiva is believed to be the pre-Vedic deity, worshipped in India. As the story goes, when Shiva was seeking a secluded spot to dance with his consort Parvati, he found a beautiful lake surrounded by mountains. He drained the lake and a picturesque valley surfaced; where they danced to the rhythm of celestial music. The serpent -god, Nagadeva, lit up the whole place for his lord, day and night, using the Mani or jewel he carried at the center of his hood. This beautiful valley transformed into the Manipur of today.

Meities, the natives of Manipur, are basically a tantric cult who worshipped Lord Shiva and Mother Goddess. Hence they find eternal peace in dance and music. It is believed that Usha, the Goddess of dawn taught the dance of Parvati to the women in India. Geographical proof for this story is that peak Somara on the eastern border of Manipur lies directly above the tropic of cancer, where the sun starts the southward movement. Legends convey that, on this peak Goddess Usha appeared along with Sun, Lord Surya.

The tender love story of Taibi and Kamba, which dates back to 11th and 12th centuries, is another context for Manipuri dance. The fable tells that both of them lived in a village by the name Moirang, just south of the present day Imphal. While Taibi was a wealthy princess, Kamba was a humble villager. Even though they married overcoming the restrictions from society, happiness did not last for long. One day Kamba in a teasing mood drove a lance in to Taibi's tent to frighten her. She took the lance and hurled it back which accidentally pierced Kamba. Overcome with grief, she took the lance, hurled it on herself and fell dead beside her husband. Their dance together was so special and fine, that they were referred to as Shiva and Parvati.

The advent of Vaishnavism in Manipur led to the decline of Manipuri/Jagoi for a particular period. Later King Baghyachandra, after a long while, started composing the Ras lilas which very clearly portrayed the



divinity of Lord Krishna. May be this revolutionary change gave the subtle nature to Manipuri dance. He has also composed the Maha Ras, the Kunj Ras and the Vasanth Ras. The Achouba Bangi Pareng, a series of dance poses composed by Baghyachandra is the fundamental of Manipuri dance. Kumil, the costume of Manipuri dance was also designed by him. Profusely worn ornaments which encompass a wide variety of necklaces, ear rings, anklets, bangles, rings and bracelets add an extra grace to the performer.

The slow, graceful, and elegant movement of this dance form catalyzes a perfect rhythm for depicting love. Hence it formed the perfect platform to showcase the divine love of Lord Krishna towards his worshippers.

The true tradition of Manipuri dance was able to survive only in a very few temples like the Govindji temple in Imphal, in the later years. The revival of Manipuri dance occurred when the legendary poet Rabindranath Tagore, understanding the potential of the art included it in his study program in Santiniketan. Naba Kumar, a celebrated teacher from Manipur joined Santiniketan to teach Ras lila to women students. Later other leading gurus like Senarik Singh, Rajkumar and Nileswar Mukerji came to shantiniketan. Slowly Manipuri dance was acclaimed nation-wide and was viewed with great respect. The most famous performers of today's Manipuri dance are the Jhaveri sisters, Ritha Devi, Savita Mehta and her sister Nirmala and Thambal Yaima. This ancient art has received a lot of recognition in the recent years. Let the journey to glory continue.



Insights of the great Mithila university

Sudha Nair
S4 ECE-B

We have read in depth about the ancient and wonderful universities; few of them being the Vikramasila University, the Nalanda University and the Takshasila University. Let us now understand the greatness of yet another university that existed in the ancient India, the Mithila University.

There is no denying of the fact that the contribution of ancient Mithila (modern Darbhanga in North Bihar) to Indian civilization is considerably more remarkable than that of other parts of the country. It has a glorious past of which any civilised nation may justly be proud. The relics of its glorious past can be seen in its ancient cities. It was the scene of the work of two most venerated names in the religious history of the world – Gautama Buddha and Vardhamana Mahavira – and one of the world's great rulers, Emperor Asoka, the great. This was the place where we can now find the remains of once splendid cities, monasteries, temples, shrines and places hallowed by the great thinkers and preachers who lived during those times. It was the earliest Aryan settlement in the Eastern India, which later on spread to other parts of the country. The Ramayana immortalizes the name of Mithila.

The greatness of Mithila lies in the fact that it was an important ancient seat of learning in India which attracted students from different parts of the country. This ancient seat of learning flourished until the 15th century. Mithila was a stronghold of Brahminical culture at its best in the time of the Upanishads. From the great epic Ramayana, king Janaka is described as an eminent philosopher. Under him India at that time was competing with North-Western India in holding the palm of learning. The ideal which has inspired the men of Bihar from age to age is that of Janak.

King Nanyadeva of the Karnataka dynasty after being defeated by king Vijaya who was later on defeated by his son Gangadeva ruled Mithila from A.D. 115-1395. It was later on ruled by the kamesvara Dynasty, the original rulers of Darbhanga during the period A.D. 1350-1515. However they were succeeded by another dynasty of rulers founded by Maheshvara Thakkura in the time of Akbar and this dynasty has continued up to the present time.

Mithila as a seat of learning flourished remarkably under these later kings. The kameswar period was made famous in the literary world by the erudite and versatile pandits (scholars), Jagaddhara, Govinda, Malati-Madhava etc. Poet Vidyapati the author of Maithili songs also shed lustre on Mithila. He inspired for generations the later Vaishava writers of Bengal.

Mithila was a principal seat of Hindu learning. A large number of students flocked there from all parts of Bharat to study especially the Nyaya Philosophy (logic). It is interesting to note that, corresponding to the system at Nalanda and Vikramasila by difficult examination by Dvara-Panditas (who were considered the most learned and revered of the scholars at that time), Mithila instituted a peculiar examination for graduation or completion of study. It was called Sakala-pariksha, by which the candidate for graduation had to explain that page of a textbook which was pierced last by a needle run through it. This was a test of the capacity of the candidate to explain unprepared any part of the texts he had studied so as to demonstrate his mastery of the subject in all its parts. The diploma of the Mithila University was then conferred on the successful student.

Students studying at Mithila however possessed a major drawback. The institution did not allow any of its students to take away from its schools any books or even notes of the lessons or lectures delivered there. Graduates were only allowed to leave with their diplomas. This peculiar rule confined the learning of Mithila within its own limits and prevented its extension beyond them. This problem was however demolished by Raghunatha Siromani the founder of the Nadia University.

The glory of the University of Mithila was extinguished by the energy of the rising scholars of Nadia; thus bringing an end to the university.

Aurobindo wrote in his book Karmayogin:

“Hinduism, which is the most skeptical and the most believing of all, the most skeptical because it has questioned and experimented the most, the most believing because it has the deepest experience and the most varied and positive spiritual knowledge, that wider Hinduism which is not a dogma or combination of dogmas but a law of life, which is not a social frame work but the spirit of a past and future social evolution, which rejects nothing but insists on testing and experiencing everything and when tested and experienced, turning in to the soul's uses, in this Hinduism, we find the basis of future world religion. This Sanatana Dharma has many scriptures: The Veda, the Vedanta, the Gita, the Upanishads, the Darshanas, the Puranas, the Tantras:.....but its real, the most authoritative scripture is in the heart in which the Eternal has his dwelling.”

He wrote this regarding Indian culture:

“More high-reaching, subtle, many-sided, curious and profound than the Greek, more noble and humane than the Roman, more large and spiritual than the old Egyptian, more vast and original than any other Asiatic civilization, more intellectual than the European prior to the 18th century, possessing all that these had and more, it was the most powerful, self-possessed, stimulating and wide in influence of all past human cultures.”

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