

ETERNAL BEAUTY WANDERING ON ITS WAY

An unbroken history of the unusual people of this land, has continued since several centuries before Christ. It has left its imprint in the shape of numerous monuments and every passing day, excavation brings to light more and more of such sites from almost all parts of the state. They reveal the existence of a flourishing civilization, striking by any standard. Few other cultures in all the senses of the term are as rich and as varied. In the sphere of religion and philosophy, tribal and Aryan religions, Buddhism and Jainism, Islam and Christianity — all have existed in history and they continue side by side even now as a testimony to the religious tolerance of the people of this land. In art and architecture, centuries of history survive in the shape of temples and even today they survive in replicas which provide livelihood to the descendants of the ancient practitioners of these arts.

Through centuries Orissa has retained its cultural identity within the mainstream of pan-Indian culture. Its social customs and mores are expressed in the long list of festivals connected with an agrarian calendar. Its gods are human and whether they reside in big temples like Jagannath or Lingaraj or small village shrines, they come out to visit their votaries on festival days. Its unusually large number of temples reflect the religious attitude of the people who even today never tire of building tiny temples through spontaneous popular efforts in every new locality. Artisans are engaged in making articles of decoration required for festival days in temples and households, which has not only provided them their living but also opportunities for artistic expression. Whether the articles be tie-and-dye textile or applique work, terracota, lacquer or brassware, filigree ornaments or patta painting of gods, all these have made the daily life of Orissan people artistic and offer them avenues for trade and commerce in other parts of the country and even abroad. The once-flourishing state of maritime trade and commerce of this land bears testimony to this fact.

Varieties of entertainment in the shape of music, dance, drama and literature recorded in palm-leaf manuscripts and in stone carvings in temples, reflects a high degree of excellence. Initially there was folk art in songs, music, dance and drama but these were later refined into classical music, dance, drama and literature and these too have survived the onslaughts of time and have been resuscitated and promoted since our Independence. It is no exaggeration to say that no aspect of the life of this people was untouched by its very exceptionally high degree of artistic sensibility.

A land of rich and diverse artistic achievements, Orissa's art and culture are the products of a long historical process in which the spiritual, philosophical and the humane dimensions have merged to yield the finest effects of cultured and civilised life. The cultural heritage of Orissa is reflected in its vibrant art forms. Culture imparts flavour and life to the social and religious activities of the people. It flows as an under-current of inspiration below the surface of daily life and acts as a powerful link in the chain of human fellowship and universal concord.

Orissa has a distinct tradition of painting, architecture, sculpture, handicrafts, music and dance.

The Orissan school of painting has three streams which in their totality project its distinguishing aspects. These are the tribal, the folk and the classical. There is a constant interchange of ideas and motifs among the three streams, and these interchanges have helped to enrich the repertoire of Orissan Art.

JHOTI, CHITA, MURUJA

The folk art of Orissa is bound up with the social and religious activities. In the month of Margasira, women folk worship the goddess Lakshmi. It is the harvest season when grain is thrashed and stored. During this auspicious occasion, the mud walls and floors are decorated with murals in white rice paste or pithau. They are called jhoti or chita and are drawn not merely with the intention of decorating the house, but to establish a relationship, between the mystical and the material, thus being highly symbolical and meaningful. Folk painting in this tradition survives till today in all its pristine freshness. Throughout the year, the village women perform several rituals for the fulfillment of their desires. For each occasion a specific motif is drawn on the floor or on the wall. For instance, in Lakshmipuja a stack of paddy or rice sheaves is drawn on the walls structured like a pyramid. During Durga Puja, white dots superimposed with red are painted on the walls. This combination of red and white signifies the worship of Shiva and Shakti. To draw a jhoti or chita, the fingers are dipped into the rice paste and made to trace out intricate patterns on the floor or walls. Sometimes a kind of brush is prepared from a twig to one end of which a small piece of cloth is attached. This is dipped into the white rice paste to draw patterns on the wall. At times, the paste is sprinkled on the walls with delicate swishes of the wrist, and a pattern resembling bunches of paddy emerges on the wall. The chitas are also drawn on grain bins, on small pavilions for household deities, on the threshold of homes and on earthen pots used during marriage and on other auspicious occasions.

Muruja is drawn on the floor with powders of different hues. White powder is obtained from the grinding of stones, green powder is obtained from dry leaves, black from burnt coconut shells, yellow from the petals of marigold flowers or turmeric, and red from red clay or bricks. Muruja is generally drawn during rituals in the form of mandalas. In the holy month of Kartik (November) women observe penance and draw muruja designs near the tulsi plant. Drawing of muruja designs needs a lot of skill and practice. The powder is held between the tips of the thumb and the forefinger, and allowed to fall delicately through them to form lines and patterns which are a delight to the eye testifying to the innate skill of the practitioners who are generally women.

The rustic people of Orissa used to cover their bodies with tattoo marks. Tattooing is also referred to as Kutei Chita and carried out by pricking the skin and applying black soot. A tattoo mark on a woman is believed to symbolise chastity. Some believe that it is a shield against the torture of Yama, the God of Death, or a means whereby one's soul attains salvation.

Tribal Paintings

Orissa has a rich tribal culture. The Sauras, the Kondhs and the Santals decorate their houses with motifs of flowers, birds and geometrical designs. The Saura paintings are intimately related to religious beliefs and drawn in order to appease demigods and spirits. On the occasion of animal sacrifices, the Sauras draw itals on their walls. The themes of these paintings are usually dream sequences. A medley of objects such as a comb or even a bicycle may figure in modern Saura paintings. The Kondh wall paintings are generally in the form of geometrical designs. The Santals also paint their houses with figurative patterns.

Rock Paintings

Painted rock shelters are situated in the densely wooded tracts of western Orissa. The rock shelters at Ulapgarh and Vikram-Khol in Sambalpur district, Manikmada and Ushakothi in Sundargarh district, Gudahandi and Yogimatha in Kalahandi district, offer the joy of discovering a primitive culture, rare in the whole of Eastern India. There are natural rocks in these areas covered with prehistoric paintings. The Ravana Chhata Rock in Sitabinjhee of Keonjhar district contains a painting of a very high order. It depicts the procession scene of a King riding a caparisoned elephant. There are horse-riders and soldiers on the march holding shafts and banners, followed by a female attendant. This painting carries reminiscence of Ajanta murals. The rock paintings in these natural caves are coloured

with the help of a twig of a palm tree, turned, into a brush by hammering its fibrous end. The paintings differ from place to place. For example, in most rock shelters the paintings are mostly linear. But in Manikamada, the paintings have a more pictorial quality and are of a greater variety and range in their depiction of figures and nature. Here the paintings have received several coats of paint and are thick in texture, while there are some others which have been very roughly sketched. In Yogimath the paintings are clear and rendered in red-ochre lines. Usually the rear walls and ceilings are covered with paintings. While the painting on the walls follow a sequential, horizontal pattern, those on the ceilings have no definite scheme of composition. It is interesting to note that the paintings range from small geometrical and floral patterns to big animal motifs like deer, cattle, stag and sambar. Where human figures are present, they are shown as hunting, domesticating animals, fighting and dancing.

The pigments used by the rock painters are oxides of iron which give the colours red and brown; white is derived from lime and green from copper compounds. These colours are mostly available near the rock shelters. Obviously these paintings have been done by primitive men, the ancestors of the tribals of Central India and Western Orissa. This rock tradition of pictorial painting is carried unto the present day in the mural paintings of tribals. The paintings of the Saura tribals in Koraput and Ganjam districts still retain the freshness and vigour of rock paintings.

Temple Paintings

The more important Orissan style of painting is to be found in the temples. They mostly depict religious subjects. Allegorical, mythological and historical subjects also form part of the themes of these paintings. These paintings are used for recording historical events, for narrating mythological stories and to spread religious ideas. The paintings inside the Jagannath Temple, Puri, follow the mural tradition. The two most important paintings are the 'Kanchivijaya' painting in the Jagamohana of the Jagannath Temple and the 'Buddha Vijaya' painting in the Jagamohana of the Lakshmi Temple inside the same temple complex. The pillared hall of the Jagannath Temple has mural paintings on the walls and ceiling. The ten incarnations of Vishnu cited in Jayadeva's 'Dashavatara' form another mural. The activities of Krishna are also depicted on these walls. The creation of the world where Vishnu is shown lying on the snake Ananta in the Khirodasagara, and Brahma sitting on a lotus emanating from Vishnu's navel is also a famous painting and is to be seen in the premises of the Jagannath Temple. Another popular painting is Vishnu in the form of a child, resting on a floating banyan leaf and sucking his toe. 'Kanchi Vijaya' is also a famous painting in the Jagannath Temple and it shows Lord Jagannath and Balabhadra on horse back, stopping on their way to the battlefield, to take curd from the milkmaid, Manika.

These are roughly the paintings belonging to the Puri tradition. Besides, there are two other painting traditions of Orissa, the Ganjam or Dakshini School, and the Champamala school. The Puri style is found in Puri and the adjacent areas like Pratappur, Balapur and Raghurajpur. The Champamala school prevails in Sonapur and Sambalpur. The Dakshini tradition prevails in places like Ghumusar, Khalikot, Dharkote, Khemundi, Parala, Icchapur, Trikkali and Manjusa. The physiognomy in Puri and Ganjam schools is similar, whereas that in the Champamala school is different. It bears the characteristics of Indonesian paintings.

The paintings on the temple walls of Vasudeva at Jayantagada and Viranchinarayana at Buguda in Ganjam district belong to the eighteenth century. The paintings of Viranchinarayana Temple are a landmark in the history of mural paintings. These are mostly depictions of stories from the Ramayana; scenes from the Krishna Leela and Dashavatara are also to be found. But the most important are the Ramayana motifs depicting Lakshmana and Jambavana, Ravana, Rama and Sita in Chitrakuta, and Rama-Ravana Yuddha. In these paintings the dramatic element is more obvious and the human figures are painted in a more elegant style. For example, Rama in the Chitrakuta painting is shown as putting a vermilion-mark on the forehead of Sita and his delicate hand gestures are artistically rendered. There is also a painting of the Puri Temple of Jagannath in the Viranchinarayana Temple.

The Jagannath Temple of Buguda contains Krishnalila paintings. There are only a few which have come down to us and these can be compared with the Viranchinarayana Temple paintings. They belong to the nineteenth century as is evident from their colour scheme.

The interior walls of the Jagannath Temple at Dharakote are also full of paintings. The gateway of Vrindavana Chandra Temple and the palace shrine of Goddess Khambeswari also contain very interesting paintings. The themes of the paintings are Ramayana, Dashavatara and Dashamahavidya. The colour schemes show a marked preference for ultra-marine blue and bright chrome yellow; and hence they appear to have been executed during the latter part of the nineteenth century or the earlier part of the twentieth.

Most of the paintings in the temples and maths of Orissa can be placed in the nineteenth century. There are the murals of Emar Math, Bada Odia Math at Puri and Raghunath Temple at Odagaon. The paintings on the walls of Gangamata Math and Gundicha Mandir at Puri, Chaitanya Math at Chikitagada, Srikalika Mandir at Jeypur, Lakshmi Nrushima Temple at Belaguntha, Hatakeswara Shiva Temple at Baghamari, Radhakanta Math at Digapahandi, and Radha Krishna Math at Parlakhemidi— all belong to the twentieth century and assiduously carry on the mural tradition of the past.

Besides these temple paintings, there are other old paintings preserved in museums. The Ashutosh Museum in Calcutta University has a painting depicting an Orissan King receiving a Muslim ambassador. This painting bears resemblance to the Buguda school in the way the figures are depicted. There is another painting in this museum illustrating the Gitagovinda of Jayadava. The Gopins are shown standing on the moonlit bank of the Yamuna, engaged in conversation. Its poetic effect is heightened by the presence of trees, deer and peacocks. The lines are fluid and graceful and the animals and birds in the painting are more natural and forceful than in the mural paintings.

Seen as a whole, the composition of Orissan paintings is very simple. It follows a one-plane composition, i.e. the figures are arranged on one plane like all old schools of painting in India. The paintings are flat and bereft of the light and shade effects that create the illusion of the third dimension. They are for the most part a very stylised form of art. Fidelity to nature is not the prime concern of old Orissan paintings, it is the expression of the simple feelings and emotions of the artist that is caught in them.

ARCHITECTURE AND SCULPTURE

Orissa is full of archaeological treasures dating from the pre-historic times upto the end of the Muslim rule in the middle of the sixteenth century. The excavations at Sisupalgarh and Jaugada testify to the presence of a highly developed pre-historic civilisation in Orissa.

The caves of Khandagiri and Udayagiri represent Orissan cave architecture dating back to the first century BC. The caves were cut out in the solid rock on the orders of King Kharavela for the use of Jaina ascetics. There are altogether eighteen caves in Udayagiri and fifteen caves in Khandagiri. The caves are decorated with sculptural motifs. The Ranigumpha cave in Udayagiri is a two-storeyed structure and bears highly artistic sculpture. The caves consist of one or more cells and a few of them are fronted by pillared verandahs. The sculptures of Khandagiri and Udayagiri form a landmark in the history of Indian art. They present a vivid picture of the contemporary society and occupy an important place in the rock-cut architecture of India.

Like Jainism, Buddhism also provided inspiration for the development of art and architecture. It was Emperor Asoka who directed the entire state machinery for the dissemination of Buddhism. We find two versions of his major rock edicts in Orissa, one at Dhauli and the other at Jaugada. The archaeological excavations at Ratnagiri have brought to light the remains of a main stupa, two viharas and eight temples containing Buddhist images. A large number of images of the Buddha and Bodhisattvas of great artistic merit have been collected from the hills of Lalitgiri, Olashuni, Landa and

Parabhadi hills. A colossal image of Bodhisattva Padmapani has been found at Jajpur. It measures 15'8". Buddhist remains have also been discovered in Boudh, Kiching and Solampur. It is seen that the Lalitgiri sculptures contain the living influence of Gupta art tradition.

The Temple Architecture

Architecture in Orissa found its supreme expression in the form of temples, some of which are among the finest in the country. Of these, three are most famous: the Lingaraja temple at Bhubaneswar (11th century), the Jagannath Temple at Puri (12th century), and the great Sun Temple at Konark (13th century). These mark the culmination of a distinct style of architecture called the Kalinga style, remarkable in its plan, elevation and details of decoration. In the simplest form, a temple of this style consists of a structural duo, the main temple or shrine and the frontal porch. While the main temple, called Vimana or Deul is the sanctum enshrining the deity, the porch or assembly hall called Jagamohana is the place for the congregation of devotees. The former, constructed on a square base, has a soaring curvilinear tower (sikhara) and is known as rekha deul. The latter built on a rectangular base is a pidha temple, i.e. its roof consists of pidhas which are horizontal platforms arranged successively in a receding formation so as to constitute a pyramidal superstructure. Although the two temples are architecturally different, they are constructed in axial alignment and interconnected so as to form an integral pattern.

This two-part structure in the earliest form of temple construction is noticeable in the Parsurameswar temple of Bhubaneswar (7th century). A modest specimen of the Bharateswar-Lakshmaneswar group of early temples, it has a squattish type of curvilinear sikhara and an oblong pillared jagamohana. The sculptures on the temple walls are also notable for their simplicity and beauty. The Kalinga style reached its perfection during the Ganga period when two more structures were added to the front of the two-part temple in order to meet the needs of the elaborate rituals; these are the natamandira (dancing hall) and the bhogamandapa (hall of offerings). The four halls of structure, as at Lingaraja and Jagannatha, stand in one line with emphasis on the towering sikhara of the main shrine. However, the devotees have to enter through the side doors of the jagamohana leaving the natamandira and bhogamandapa behind.

Temple building activities in Orissa continued uninterrupted between the 7th and 16th centuries. As different religious sects had their successive sway over the land during this period, they provided the necessary fillip for modifications in the architectural designs and sculptural details. The Vaital temple at Bhubaneswar and the Varahi temple at Chaurasi in the Prachi Valley with their semicylindrical roofs are examples of a different order of temples described as Khakhara type in the shilpasastras. The former with its tower resembling a topsy-turved boat and the latter with its barrel-vaulted top are dedicated to the goddesses Chamunda and Varahi respectively. The silhouetted interior of the sanctum and the sculptural motifs in the niches of the temples bear the influence of Shakti cult.

There is yet another class of temples which are almost unique in their conception and execution in the whole country; these are the circular shaped, hypaethral or roofless structures dedicated to the sixty-four yoginis belonging to the Tantric order. Out of all the five shrines of yogini worship existing in the whole country, two are situated in Orissa, the Chausathi Yogini Temples one at Hirapur near Bhubaneswar and the other at Ranipur-Jhari in Titlagarh subdivision of Balangir district. At the centre of these temples is pedestalled the image of Bhairava around which are located the Yoginis, each in a niche. The artistic figures of the yoginis, their hair style varying totally in case of each at Hirapur, are superb in execution.

However, the Kalinga style of architecture which was the most common order throughout progressed well under the patronage of the Somavamsi Kings of Orissa during the 10th and 11th centuries. The Mukteswar temple (10th century) of Bhubaneswar is considered a "gem of Orissan architecture" and is accepted as one of the most beautiful temples of India. Elegantly decorated from top to bottom, it stands within a gracefully laid out compound with an exquisite makara torana in front.

The rekha sikhara, light and rhythmic in treatment, is unrivalled in beauty. The jagamohana is a harmonious pidha deul crowned with a kalasa at the top. The Rajarani temple (11th century) owing its name to a type of stone known as 'rajarania' is an architectural specimen of the later Somavamsi period. Picturesquely set amidst a wide expanse of green fields, this temple in its execution combines grace and elegance, beauty of form and sculptural embellishments. The deul, adorned with a cluster of miniature temples is reminiscent of Khajuraho. The Brahmeswar temple (11th century) is a characteristic continuation of the Orissan style. The great temple of Lingaraja (11th century) at Bhubaneswar is the quintessence of Orissan architecture. With all the features of temple architecture fully developed and perfectly executed, it is undoubtedly one of the most finished temples in India. The elaborate temple complex consisting of the towering sikhara (45m. in height), jagamohana, natamandira and bhogamandapa, all in perfect harmony along with the lesser shrines around has a unique grandeur and majesty. There are a very large number of temples of different order in Bhubaneswar which may be called a veritable museum of temples.

The temple of Jagannatha at Puri is the earliest Ganga monument of Orissa. The massive edifice standing on a high platform connected with the ground level by a flight of 22 steps is the product of accumulated experience of the past in temple architecture. The whole of the main temple was covered by a thick coat of plaster which earned for it the name 'White Pagoda'. The plaster has since been removed by the Archaeological Survey of India to reveal the stone carvings.

The finest specimen of Ganga art and the greatest monument of Hindu architecture in India is the famous Sun Temple of Konark which is conceived as a chariot driven by horses. The chariot had twenty-four wheels and seven horses. The wheels of the chariot are masterpieces of art. The temple is perfectly proportioned in spite of its stupendous size. It is one of the wonders of workmanship in the world. In the words of Rabindranath Tagore, "Here the language of man is defeated by the language of stone".

Temple Sculptures

The temple sculptures are of two broad categories, namely the cult images and the decorative motifs. The first category includes such images as Ganesha, Kartikeya and Durga on the external walls of a Siva temple; Varaha, Trivikrama, Nrusimha and the ten avatars on the outer walls on a Vishnu temple; the ten dikpalas, each in its specified corner, the digacharinis and vetalas in the prescribed places, the eight or nine planets (astagrahas or navagrahas) in a panel on the front lintel with gajalakshmi above the panel in case of all temples. There are also the gods and goddesses, and depiction of religious episodes to create a religious atmosphere. Although the cult images in a temple are the largest in number, they need not all be confined to the cult alone. Religious synthesis is reflected through the images of Ardhanarisvara, and Hari-Hara (as at Gandharadi). The sculptors were highly imaginative for instance, all forms of Bhairavas and Durga images of all conceivable types are to be seen in the temples.

The decorative motifs consist of the male and female figures, erotic sculptures, semi-divine beings as Gandharvas, Nagas, Yakshas, Kinnaras, griffins, enigmatic figures, scenes from military and courtly life, secular pictures, fables and stories, scrolls and arabesques, chaitya arches and lotus medallions, flora and fauna and decorative designs.

Some of the finest temple sculptures of Orissa are found at Muktesvara, Rajarani and Lingaraja temples. The temple walls adorned with youthful figures, delicately modelled. Their chiselled smiles defy the passage of time and the onslaughts of decay. A significant feature of temple art is the presence of erotic sculpture on the outer walls to signify the fact that religion cannot be separated from real life. It also means that life is full of illusions and that desires bind us to the wheel of life and death. There are also figures of female musicians and dancers and their sculptural qualities are superb. Massive elephants, horses and lions dominate the Konark temple premises.

Other Sculptures

Besides, there are numerous sculptural treasures strewn all over Orissa. There is a sculpture of an elephant, half hewn from a huge stone near which Asoka wrote his edicts. The nine-feet colossal figure of Lord Nrusimha in black granite is enshrined in the Jagannath Temple premises at Puri. It is really an imposing figure depicting the fearful mood of the god with great artistic skill. The lion-gates are an important feature of Orissan art and architecture. Lions are installed at the entrance of temples. That is why the temple door is called Simhadwara. The lions are not sculpted naturalistically. They have big sharp noses and thick moustaches. Elsewhere the lion is shown atop an elephant and this is symbolic of the triumph of the spirit over matter. Thus, it is evident that the main temples of Orissa possess a soaring grandeur unequalled by any other temple in India. Orissan sculpture too has majesty, grace and beauty rarely to be found elsewhere.

HANDICRAFTS

Orissa is famous for her handicrafts which exhibit the skill and creativity of her artisans. Her brass work, silverwork, terracota art objects, and applique work are unique examples of artistic excellence.

Brass and Bell Metal Ware

The fine engravings on brass and bellmetal utensils, bronze bangles and pots are important aspects of Orissan art. Artefacts made of metal, particularly brass, find pride of place in the homes of Orissa. Beautiful lamps and lamp-stands are used during the worship of deities. Rice-measuring bowls made of brass are used in many homes. The artisans also make elephants and horses from brass and decorate them with intricate designs. Containers of brass for betel-chewers are designed both to be useful and ornamental. There are household articles and utensils made out of brass and bell metal and they are of different shapes and sizes. The brassware of Orissa reveals the high workmanship of the artisans and their flair for innovation.

Silverware and Filigree Works

Silverware of Orissa is very widely known. Her filigree works particularly are unique examples of artistic excellence rarely to be seen in any other part of India. Silver wire, extremely delicate, are shaped into intricate designs. Forms of animals and birds, articles of daily use like vermilion receptacles are also made out of silver wires. Filigree ornaments, especially brooches and ear-rings are very popular among Indian women. Cuttack is famous for filigree work. Scenes from the Mahabharat are sometimes depicted in silver. Of particular interest is the chariot of Arjuna driven by Lord Krishna done in silver. One feels amazed to see the skill with which minute details of the chariot wheels have been worked. The beauty of the chariot, the proud stance of the horses and the true-to-life figures, all contribute to the over-all majesty of the silver artefact.

Terracota and Pottery

Potters of Orissa still make earthen pots to be used in various religious and social functions. They are made in various shapes and sizes and are adorned with fish and flower motifs and geometrical designs. Horses and elephants in terracota are made to meet local demands during religious occasions. These are offered to the village-goddess (grama devati) to ward off disease and danger. In size they range from six inches to three feet. The potter also makes clay toys and simple and appealing figures of human beings. They catch the essential characteristics of real-life creatures. Terracota toys are made in every part of Orissa. The toys are simple in design and bear the traits of the locality in which they are produced.

Golden Grass and Cane Work

Baskets, handfans and tablemats are woven from golden grass by the female folk. Floormats are also woven out of golden grass which is a local product. Today the demand for these goods has increased and this testifies to their beauty, utility and lasting quality. Cane is used for weaving baskets and several items of furniture.

Applique Works

Tailors in Pipli execute applique works which are in great demand. Giant-sized umbrellas of applique work are produced for use on festive occasions. Also used as garden umbrellas in sprawling lawns, they lend grace and colour to any gathering. Heart-shaped fans, big and small canopies and wallhangings are also prepared out of applique work. The tailors cut out figures of animals, birds, flowers as well as geometrical shapes out of richly coloured cloth and these are arranged symmetrically on another piece of cloth and sewn in place to produce an eye-catching design. The rich splashes of yellow, white, green, blue, red and black colours dazzle the eyes of the onlookers and set the festive mood. Bags of various shapes and sizes are also made with applique motifs. Applique Chhatis (umbrellas) and "tarasas" (heart-shaped wooden structures covered with applique work and supported on pikes) are used to lend colour to religious processions. Large applique canopies are an integral part of marriage celebrations. In temples, canopies are hung over the deities to protect them from falling dirt.

Horn Works

There are artisans in Orissa who are dexterous in providing articles of daily use like combs, flower vases and pen-stands out of the horn of cattle. The horn is polished smooth, and then shaped into various forms. Cranes, lobsters, scorpions and birds made of horn are finished to a nicety. Their surface throws off a dark sombre sheen and they catch the attention of all art-lovers.

Saris and Other Fabrics

Perhaps the most popular item in Orissan handicrafts is the handloom sari. The saris come in a variety of designs and colours to suit every taste and pocket. Generally the villagers in Sambalpur district weave the saris on looms in the private or corporate sectors. Sambalpuri cotton saris have a smooth finish and have a distinctly original border and pallau. Fish, conch shell and flower motifs are woven into the fabric. Sometimes animal motifs are also used to decorate the borders and pallau. Silk saris are also produced by village craftsmen from local raw materials. Khandua Pata saris have elaborate designs and a gloss which is attractive. Bapta saris have cotton and silk threads in warp and woof, Berhampuri Pata saris are worn by orthodox and modern women alike. The saris are named after the places where they are produced, the quality of skeins used and the nature of the designs woven into them. Hand woven bed sheets, bed covers, table cloths, curtains and dress materials of Orissa are equally popular throughout the country.

Pattachitra

The folk painting pattachitra (canvas-picture) is practised by skilled traditional Chittrakars of Puri, Raghurajpur and Dandasahi region of Orissa. The word Pattachitra is derived from the Sanskrit word Patta, which means a painted piece of cloth, or a plate. Chitra means painting or picture. The Chittrakars or folk painters of Puri, Raghurajpur and Dandasahi in Puri district belong to an indigenous school of painting, which had started long ago. The age-old tradition is still practised by the Chittrakars and their women folk. Elements of folk and sophisticated art and craft characterize each finely executed Pattachitra.

Pattachitra owes its origin to the annual festival of Rath Yatra. It is one of the most colourful festivals of Orissa. Anyone, irrespective of caste, creed and religion, can pay obeisance to Lord Jagannath during the festival, as the Lord steps out of the temple, alongwith brother Balabhadra and sister Subhadra, to meet and mingle with the masses. But before the festival, the Divine Trinity remain under cover, from the time of Snana Purnima. During this Anavasar i.e. retirement in seclusion, three paintings on specially treated cloths (Pattas) are prepared by the temple artists and hung inside the sanctum sanctorum, for the Darshan of devotees. Originating from this ritual, pattachitra has developed over the years as a distinct school of painting. Due to constant efforts of artists like Late Jagannath Mohapatra, Shri Ananta Moharana and others, this art form has gained immense popularity.

Sand Art

Sand art is a temporary form of art using only sands with a view to creating awareness and enthusiasm among of the people. Sand art is a very popular form of professional art in several countries. Various occasions / human interest stories, natural calamities etc. are depicted through the form of sand art to create public awareness. Now a days various sand art competition and festivals are being held in domestic and international levels. Sri Sudarsan Pattnaik of Puri is one of the eminent sand artists of our state. He has been recognised by several national as well as international bodies.

Stone and Wood Carving

Stone carving is an age-old craft of Orissa. The descendants of the artisans who once scaled the dizzy heights of excellence in temple building have kept the sculptural tradition alive through their hereditary craft of stone carving. The carved products include replicas of temples, images of gods and goddesses, the Konark wheel and horse, and decorative figurines like alasa kanya (the indolent damsel), salabhanjika (lady leaning against a sal branch), surasundari (heavenly beauty), alekhika (lady writing a letter), etc. which are popular items of household decoration. Wood carvings of Orissa are almost equally popular. They differ from the artefacts of other states in so far as they are plain and shining with smooth polish and without any paint or coating of lacquer work on them.

Apart from these, Orissa has many other hems of handicraft such as papier mache, shola pith work, lacquer work, zari work, glass beads, cloth garlands, camphor garlands, jute carpets, rush mats, and above all the sea shell works undertaken in Puri and Gopalpur.

ODISSI MUSIC

Orissa has a glorious tradition of music. The figures of dancers and musicians carved on ancient temple walls speak of Orissa's rich musical heritage. There were saint-poets of Orissa who composed lyrical poems to be sung. Bards usually went from place to place singing these songs which were meant to propagate religious ideas in various regions. Instructions were usually given by the poet himself as to how the lyric was to be sung, i.e. the ragas or tune to be employed and the tala or beat scheme to be followed.

By the 11th century AD folk music of Orissa existing in the form of Triswari, Chatuhswari, and Panchaswari was modified into the classical style.

Odissi Music is a classical form consisting of all the necessary ingredients common to Hindustani and Karnatic Music, such as raga and tala. Jayadeva was the first Oriya poet who composed lyrics meant to be sung and thus the words of those lyrics were musical to start with. In addition he indicated the classical ragas prevailing at the time in which these were to be sung. Prior to this there was the tradition of chhandas which were simple in musical outline. From the 16th century onwards treatises on music were written or compiled in Orissa. They were Sangitarava Chandrika, Gita Prakasha, Sangita Kalpalata and Natya Manorama. Two treatises namely, Sangita Sarani and Sangita Narayana were also written in early 19th century.

Odissi sangita is a synthesis of four classes of music, i.e. dhruvapada, chitrapada, chitrakala and panchal, described in the above-mentioned texts. The dhruvapada is the first line or lines to be sung repeatedly. The use of art in music is called chitrakala. Kavisurya Baladeva Rath, the renowned Oriya poet wrote lyrics which are the best examples of chitrakala. Chitrapada means the arrangement of words in an alliterative style. All these were combined to form the style peculiar to Odissi music. Chhanda (rhetoric section) contains the essence of Odissi music. The chhandas were composed combining bhava (theme), kala (time), and swara (tune.) The chautisha represents the originality of Odissi style. All the thirty-four letters of the Oriya alphabet from 'Ka' to 'Ksha' are used chronologically at the beginning of each line. A special feature of Odissi music is the padi which consists of words to be sung in druta tala (fast beat). Odissi music can be sung to different talas: navatala (nine beats), dashatala (ten beats) or egar tala (eleven beats).

Odissi ragas are different from the ragas of Hindustani and Karnataki music. The chief Odissi ragas are Kalyana, Nata, Shree Gowda, Baradi, Panchama, Dhanashri, Karnata, Bhairavee and Shokabaradi.

Thus we see, that classical Odissi music lacks nothing in grammar, rhetoric or composition to compare with Hindustani or Karnataki styles. It owes much to Jayadeva, the saint-poet, the great composer and illustrious master of classical music.

The greatest exponents of Odissi music in modern times are the late Singhari Shyamasundar Kar, Markandeya Mahapatra, Kashinath Pujapanda and Balakrushna Das. Those who have achieved eminence in classical music include among others Sunanda Patnaik.

ORISSAN DANCES

Orissa has contributed two distinct schools of classical dance-the Chhau and the Odissi to the rich and colourful dance forms of India.

Chhau Dance

Chhau is an ancient dance form. It originated in the mock fights of the Oriya paikas (warriors) who fought rhythmically to the accompaniment of indigenous musical instruments. The highly stylised Chhau dance of today follows the basic principles of the Natya Shastra of Bharat Muni and the Abhinaya Darpana of Nandikeswara. This dance form became closely associated with religion. The Chhau dancers worship Lord Shiva and Goddess Parvati, the two presiding deities of the Tandava and the Lasya styles respectively. The typical Chhau dance pose when the dancer is at rest is the bent knee so that the legs form a square, the raising of the right hand upward with the left hand hanging downward both forming right angles at the elbow. The Chhau dancers have to practise difficult modes of walking, striking difficult postures and moving in a way peculiar to this style. It is a virile dance form and was in the past undertaken by male dancers who performed in female roles, as and when required. Today there are also female dancers who have mastered this art. The face is generally covered with the mask of the character who is being depicted by the dancer in the Saraikala school of Chhau dance, But in the Mayurbhanj school, the face is left uncovered. Emotions and passions are not depicted by facial expression but by intricate footwork, whirls and jumps. Hence, the waist, the feet and the legs are used to depict bhavas.

The dance is usually performed in the open air on a raised platform. The musicians stand on one side of the platform and play on big kettle drums and other musical instruments. In villages, Chhau dance is usually performed during the Chaitra parva festival in the days concluding the month of Chaitra. Popular stories from the Ramayana and Mahabharata are staged. The costumes, the headgear and other ornamental requisites are carefully selected. The dance programme consists of

solo, duet or group performances. Today, the subject matter of Chhau dance is borrowed from the whole gamut of animate and inanimate nature. The famous peacock, swan and deer dances depict the wild beauty and grace of the forest and are excellently choreographed. The hilly region of north-eastern Orissa with a rich folk and tribal culture has influenced Chhau dance.

Odissi Dance

Odissi dance is the typical classical dance form of Orissa and has its origin in the temples. The rhythm, the bhangis and mudras used in Odissi dance have a distinctive quality of their own. Odissi dance deals largely with the love theme of Radha and Krishna.

This dance tradition was kept alive by the devadasis. Those who were attached to the Jagannath Temple were all Vaishnavites and those at Bhubaneswar were attached to Shaivite temples. Before the introduction of the Gitagovinda in temples, the devadasi used to dance to the recitation of hymns and bols of talas. But after Gitagovinda became part and parcel of the rituals, the devadasis performed abhinaya with different bhavas and rasas.

The Gotipua system of dance was performed by young boys dressed as girls. In this tradition one can detect jerking movements in place of smooth transitions from one posture to another. Ray Ramananda, the Governor of Rajamahendri was a musician dancer and dramatist who taught dancing to a group of boys selected to enact his dance drama, Jagannath Vallabha Nataka. It was performed in the Gotipua style.

The different items of the Odissi dance style are Mangalacharana, Batu Nrutya or Sthayi Nata, Pallavi, Abhinaya and Moksha. In mangalacharana the dancer dedicates herself to the Lord and begs forgiveness of the Mother Earth for stamping her feet upon her; she apologises to her audience for any shortcomings and offers salutations to the Guru. Balu Nrutya is pure dance. It begins with a series of sculpturesque poses symbolising the playing of the Veena, drum, flute or cymbals. Pallavi is extremely graceful and lyrical. The tune is in some raga and is sung to the accompaniment of Sargam and Bols. Through facial expressions abhinaya depicts rasa and bhava to bring out the meaning and mood of songs. Generally the songs written by poets, Banamali, Upendra Bhanja, Baladeva Rath, Gopala Krushna and Jayadeva are sung. Moksha Nrutya is the last item, performed to the accompaniment of rhythmic syllables. It has a fast tempo. The soul of the dancer is supposed to merge with the Divine as the dancer becomes ecstatic. Odissi dance is thus an effort to come near God and experience true happiness.

Commendable efforts were made in recent times by many enthusiasts to promote Odissi, among whom stands out the name of late Kavichandra Kalicharan Patnaik. The gurus who raised the dance form to the level of international eminence are Padmabhusan Kelu Charan Mahapatra, winner of Kalidas Samman, Padmashree Pankaj Charan Das and Deba Prasad Das. Renowned veterans of Odissi Dance include Priyambada Hejmadi, Padmashree Sanjukta Panigrahi, Minati Mishra, Kumkum Mohanty, Oopalie Oparajita, Sangeeta Das, etc.

Jatra

Jatra corresponds to folk theatre. It is the enactment of a play with a full cast and comprises music, dance, acting, singing and dramatic conflict. Earlier, religious values were communicated to the masses through the powerful medium of Jatra. Today, the style of writing plays for Jatras has undergone changes. Jatra plays are now no longer limited to the mythological, historical or fantastical subjects; they include social themes to suit modern taste.

Jatra is performed on a simple stage with the spectators surrounding it on all sides. The chorus and the musicians take their position off stage. There are no stage properties except a single seat meant to serve various functions, such as a throne, a bed or a way-side bench.

The actors move in a very theatrical manner. They deliver the speeches in high-sounding words and have to be loud enough to catch the attention of the spectators seated on all sides. Consequently they adopt an exaggerated style and are heavily made up. Their costumes glitter, then swords flash and their words thunder to the accompaniment of the crashing cymbals. Sometimes the actors are able to depict subtle emotional moods like, love, sorrow, pathos, but the element of exaggeration is always present as they have to project themselves as larger than life figures. Jatra becomes a great source of entertainment because of its tuneful traditional music with simple melodic lines, dance sequences, songs, drama and humour. Taken as a whole, the Jatra of Orissa has always remained essentially an institution of learning for the people in general.

Pala

The Pala is a long musical narrative punctuated with explanations, rendered by a singer (gayaka) accompanied by a band of four to five persons, one of whom plays on a drum (mridanga) and the others playing musical instruments like cymbals. The pala singer describes episodes from the Mahabharata, Ramayana or other Pauranic texts. The musicians who accompany him join at appropriate moments in a chorus or semblance of rudimentary dialogue. The tale is interspersed with loud music of drums and cymbals. The singer and his accompanists dance using very simple rhythmic steppings as they sing.

The Pala singer begins by invoking the blessings of a deity, usually Sarala, the muse of poetry, and briefly states the theme of his song. As he continues his performance another singer asks him questions or requests him to elucidate a point. This, the pala singer does with great elan. Generally, the pala songs are taken from the rich repertoire of Oriya poetry and literature with appropriate references to relevant Sanskrit poetry. The pala singer not only sings out the narrative song but has to be highly innovative to establish rapport with his listeners. He is dressed in glittering robes and wears an ornate headgear. He holds a chamara in his hand, which he wields with extreme flourish, now as a weapon, now as a fan, and now as a pen according to the needs of his song and waves it as a symbol of divine blessing. Thus he has, to combine drama, song and dance and also act as a narrator, detached from the main events of his dramatic song.

The Pala resembles a Jatra but is not as elaborate. For instance, the Pala does not have a full-fledged cast nor does it have scene-wise divisions. The Pala is interspersed with lines, repeated again and again, propitiating a deity and giving the performance an air of sanctity. The singer also uses prose now and then to elucidate lines of verse in order to make the narrative simpler. It is generally a one-man show.

The Daskathia

The Daskathia is also a very interesting folk art form in Orissa. It is performed usually by two men, the singer and his assistant and is simpler than a Pala. The Daskathia singer gives an exposition of a lyric poem of mythological or religious intent. The performance owes its name to Daskathia (a musical instrument which is made of two small pieces of thick wood). The singers hold these instruments in their left hand with the index finger in between the pieces of wood. With his right hand he plays upon the two ends of this instrument to produce a rhythmic sound. Like the Pala singer he begins with an introduction in which he seeks the blessings of a deity. The entire narrative is interspersed with lines dedicated to the deity. The Daskathia performance is of a shorter duration than the Pala. The singers are dressed simply and appear as ascetics.

Thus the Jatra, Pala and Daskathia represent important aspects of Orissan folk culture. They form an integral part of the lives of the rural folk. Today television also broadcasts these programmes, thus making the city people conversant with these folk art forms.

Chaiti Ghoda Dance

Chaiti-Ghoda is one of the many colourful folk dances of Orissa which is formed especially by the fisherman community during the full moon day of Chaitra month (March-April). It is said that Lord Rama rewarded the boatman with a horse who had helped him to cross the river Saraju during his Vanavasa. Since then the fisherman community worship the horse.

The dance is usually performed by three types of characters – the Horseman, the Rauta and the Female character – Rautani, besides the musical accompanist of Dhol (Drum) and Mohuri (Trumpet).

A hollow frame of a horse is improvised out of bamboo frame dressed with colourful cloth complete with a head, body and tail but without legs. The horse dancer enters in to the cockpit of the hollow horse body and hangs it at his waistline which gives an illusion of a man riding the horse.

The Rauta who is the main singer-commentator, delivers discourses mainly from mythology while the Rautani in the role of his wife plays the role of co-singer and dancer. The dance is made lively with improvised dialogues and humorous episodes. The tempo of the dance of the Rautani and the horse-dancer increases to the tune of the Dhol and Mohuri.

The Gadbas and Their Dances (Folk Dance)

The Gadbas are a primitive tribe classified as Mundari or Kolarian on linguistic ground. They are primarily a tribe of agriculturists, labourers and hunters. It is said that the tribe owes its origin to Godavari basin who settled down in Koraput.

The dress of the Gadba women is marked by the picturesque 'Kerang' sarees with broad stripes of red, green and yellow. A 'Kerang' saree lasts almost a lifetime.

Dance

One of the most important dances of the Gadbas is known as Dhemsas. This is a ritual dance and is generally performed during communal festival like Dussehra, Pausa Purnima and Chaitra Parba. Both men and women participate in dancing.

The Gadba women stand in a semi-circle first holding each other with arms at each others waist on the back side. They put the left leg forward and the right leg backward and begin their dancing with simple stepplings of one and two. They sometimes divide themselves into two groups and dance and then join together, when again the dancers move faster and run moving backward and forward bending at the knees with stepplings of eight and four.

The Gadba men and women like other tribes dance throughout the year for self-amusement. The dances are also performed on the occasion of social functions.

The Gadba dances make most charming and enjoyable spectacle. The orchestra of the Gadba comprise Dhol (Two sided drum), Tamak (One sided deep drum, played on with two sticks in both the hands) and Mahuri (wind instrument). The music is of pristine form and simple in style. The songs are in three to four notes with simple *ta/s*.

Ghumura Dance

Ghumura is a traditional folk dance of Kalahandi. The thundering effect of the music and the conquering spirit of the players while in action, make others believe it to be a war dance. About 15 to 20 male members take part in this dance and instruments like Ghumura, Nishan, Taal, Turi and Madal etc. are used for this purpose.

Gotipua

Gotipua dance spread as a part of the temple culture of Lord Jagannath, Puri, one of the major Tirtha Dharmas of India, has got international acclaim. In the present form it has become more precise and systematic for the modern stage worthiness. It is now performed as a group dance of six to ten boys, choreographed in the traditional style.

Dressing up in girls' attire, Gotipuas, the young boys of tender age perform dance while singing devotional songs of Radhakrishna, symbolizing the ultimate eternal love. Musical accompaniment is provided with Mardala, Pakhawaj (like a drum with two faces), Gini, Harmonium, Violin and Flute.

Sambalpuri (Bajasal)

Internationally acclaimed Sambalpuri dance has many dance forms like Dalkhai, Rasarkeli, Maelajada, Chutkuchuta and Bajasal. Especially this Bajasal Dance form of Sambalpuri has been popularized by the artists of the different organisations of Kalahandi district.

Bajasal is the open space outside a house, having wooden poles, rafters and a roof covered by small tree branches and leaves, where the youngsters play traditional drums (Dhol) and a musical instruments called "Singhabadya" and Mahuri etc. throughout the night during any marriage ceremony or festive gatherings in the rural area of Kalahandi district.

The young maidens sing songs and dance to the tune of the drummers while exchanging words of love and humour with young boys who gather there to enjoy the dance.

This dance programme is generally arranged because, in the rural area the villagers can not provide space for the accommodation of their relatives, who gather in large number during the marriage ceremonies. Therefore, they spend their time during the night hours by singing, dancing and merry-making in the Bajasal.

Danda Nrutya

Danda Nrutya is an acrobatic dance form of Orissa which is performed throughout the day during festive time. The participants of the dance are devotees of God Hara and Goddess Parvati. The performance begins in the month of Chaitra and Vaishakha. This dance consists of a series of dances which are performed one after another by the male members belonging to backward castes. Most of the dancers in Danda Nrutya appear in pairs and indulge in song dialogues. Though deeply religious in intent, the dance accompanied with characteristic folk songs presents a vivid picture of the rural society. Throughout all the rites of Danda Nrutya the rhythm is provided by Dhol and music by Mahuri. The songs are mainly devotional and mostly based on the stories from the epics. Danda Nrutya is still prevalent in Dhenkanal, Angul, Nayagarh, Ganjam districts and some interior pockets of the State.