

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 Odisha 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, terracotta, lacquer or brassware, filigree ornaments or Patta painting of gods, all these have made the daily life of Odishan 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, Odisha'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 Odisha 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.

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

The Odishan 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 Odishan Art.

JHOTI, CHITA, MURUJA

The folk art of Odisha 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 Lakshmi puja 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 Odisha 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

Odisha 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 *ittals* 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 Odisha. 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 Odisha. 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 most important Odishan 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.

Besides, there are two other painting traditions of Odisha, 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 Odisha 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 Odishan 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 Odishan paintings is very simple. It follows 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 Odishan paintings, it is the expression of the simple feelings and emotions of the artist that is caught in them.

ARCHITECTURE AND SCULPTURE

Odisha 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 Odisha.

The caves of Khandagiri and Udayagiri represent Odishan 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 Odisha, 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, Khiching and Solampur. It is seen that the Lalitgiri sculptures contain the living influence of Gupta art tradition.

The Temple Architecture

Architecture in Odisha 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 Odisha 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-turvy 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 Odisha, the Chausathi Yogini Temples one at Hirapur near Bhubaneswar and the other at Ranipur-Jharial 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 Odisha during the 10th and 11th centuries. The Mukteswar temple (10th century) of Bhubaneswar is considered a “gem of Odishan 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 Odishan style. The great temple of Lingaraja (11th century) at Bhubaneswar is the quintessence of Odishan 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 Odisha. 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 Odisha 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 Odisha. 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 Odishan 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 Odisha possess a soaring grandeur unequalled by any other temple in India. Odishan sculpture too has majesty, grace and beauty rarely to be found elsewhere.

HANDICRAFTS

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

Brass and Bell Metalware

The fine engravings on brass and bellmetal utensils, bronze bangles and pots are important aspects of Odishan art. Artefacts made of metal, particularly brass, find pride of place in the homes of Odisha. 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 Odisha reveals the high workmanship of the artisans and their flair for innovation.

Silverware and Filigree Works

Silverware of Odisha 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.

Terracotta and Pottery

Potters of Odisha 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 terracotta 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. Terracotta toys are

made in every part of Odisha. 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 Odisha 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 Odishan 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 Odisha are equally popular throughout the country.

Pattachitra

The folk painting pattachitra (canvas-picture) is practised by skilled traditional Chitrakars of Puri, Raghurajpur and Dandasahi region of Odisha. 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 Chitrakars 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 Chitrakars 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 Odisha. 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 Odisha. 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 Odisha 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, Odisha 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

Odisha has a glorious tradition of music. The figures of dancers and musicians carved on ancient temple walls speak of Odisha's rich musical heritage. There were saint-poets of Odisha 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 Odisha 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 Odia 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 Odisha. They were Sangitamava 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 Odia 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 Odia 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.

ODISHAN DANCES

Odisha 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 Odia 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 Odisha with a rich folk and tribal culture has influenced Chhau dance.

Paika Nrutya

The Paika Dance is a martial art form of ancient Orissa. The dance form practised among the Paikas, the main warrior class of the old Odia army showcases fiery battle spirit of the army. Interestingly the word owes its origin to the Sanskrit word *Padatika* meaning 'the infantry'.

This folk dance of Odisha is performed in many Paika villages of Khurda and Puri. People gather at a common pulpit after a hard day's work. The Paika Akhada is a place where they practice physical exercises along with other activities like fighting with sword and shields. They dance a fiery battle dance while the drums play on. It is more like a clarion call urging the dancers to get ready for a fiery battle ahead. The vigour and physical excitement of the dancers are worthy of notice. Paika Nrutya is practised with great enthusiasm by different groups in the villages of Odisha during Dussehra.

Martial Dance

Dance and music in the age old Odia tradition have been accepted as a medium for not only search for absolute happiness but also elimination of vices as well as acquisition of virtues. In the typical folk tradition, be it success in a war or hunting, invocation to nature deities, production and protection of crops or marriage and other social festivities and rituals, nothing is complete without music and dance. In fact, folk culture in way represents the surrender of man before God Almighty, the creator. Odisha has a vast repository of war dances. The dances have distinctive character and range of movements are wide and impressive. The dances have unique features of masculine vitality of masculine vitality. Martial dances of Odisha have imbibed freely from tribal and folk dances creating a harmonious blending.

Odissi Dance

Odissi dance is a unique classical dance form of Odisha 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*. 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 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. Batu 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.

Chaiti Ghoda Dance

Chaiti-Ghoda is one of the many colourful folk dances of Odisha which is performed 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 humourous episodes. The tempo of the dance of the Rautani and the horse-dancer increases to the tune of the Dhol and Mohuri.

Ghumura Dance

Ghumura is a traditional folk dance of Kalahandi district and has become popular in western parts of Odisha. It is primarily a male dance performed predominantly by the tribals. It was a war dance to provoke the warriors during the War. 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. The content of Ghumura is based on religious texts and medieval Odia literature. This dance unites the village youths to reaffirm the group identity of the village and is performed in many social and religious functions.

Gotipua Dance

Gotipua is a traditional dance form of Odisha embodying Odisha's rich cultural heritage. The classical and most famous dance of Odissi owes its origin to Gotipua dance. In Odia language 'Goti' means single and 'Pua' means boy. The Gotipuas are young boys who dress as females, required by the ballet, perform the dance with high degree of sophistication and at ease like female dancers. The Gotipua dance is in Odissi style but its technique, costumes and presentation differ from Odissi. The

singing is done by the dancers themselves. Around the 16th century, with the decline of Mahari dancers, the class of these boy dancers came into existence, to carry out the tradition; during the time of the Bhoi King Ramachandra Dev. The most intricate part of Gotipua is BandhaNrutya, a dance with acrobatic figures, poses and movements which enthrall the audience.

Gotipua dance is being performed by Dasa Bhuja Gotipua Odissi Nrutya Parisad – the cultural Gurukul founded by renowned Guru Padmashree Late Maguni Das in heritage village Raghurajpur in Puri district.

Sambalpuri Folk Dance

Sambalpuridance, a typical dance form of Western Odisha continues to cast a perennial effect in the minds of the beholders. The songs and dances have typical tribal and rural touch with enchanting music and rhythm.

Melodious songs and lilting music characterize the 'Dalkhai' dance. The songs describe the everyday life of the villagers and celebrate the beauty of the young girls. It is known as 'Dalkhai' because in the beginning and end of every stanza the word is used as an address to a girl friend. Young girls sing the Dalkhai song in the DalkhaiKuthi, the abode of Goddess Dalkhai and later perform the dance outside. The traditional costumes and ornaments worn by the dancers add aesthetic appeal to the dance. The DalkhaiGeet (song), Nacha (dance) and Baja (music) create an atmosphere of gaiety and merrymaking. The accompanying musical instruments include the Dhol, Nishan, Tasha, Mahuri and Jhanj. "Dalkhai-re" is the often repeated word in the song.

Dalkhai is being presented by 'Lahari' and Padmini Dora & Group along with a Sambalpuri duet dance based on world famous song ' Rangabatire' tuned to the rhythmic pattern of Rasarkeli.

Sambalpuri (Bajasal) Dance

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 Odisha 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.

Jodi Sankha and Ranapa Dance

Jodi Sankha (Double Conch) is a unique presentation of rural music having Badya and Nrutya in a combined form. While blowing the conch the artists display, the harmony between the modulation of the conch and the physical movements. The art is martial, spirit is rustic and costumes are colourful. Other accompanying instruments are "Changu-Baja" and "Mahuri", combined together which produces melodious rhythm of various emotions.

Ranapa, literally means a stilt. So the dance on the stilts is known as 'RanapaNrutya'. This dance was prevalent among cowherd communities of Ganjam, a southern district of Odisha. Young boys used to perform this dance during festivals of Dola Yatra and Giri Gobardhan Pooja. There was no percussion or any other accompanying instrument. They simply sing songs relating to Krishna Leela and dance to the rhythm of 'Bajeni', an ankle made of iron which produces a jingling sound. It has been revived and reoriented. The dance has many acrobatic feats which earn immediate applause from the audience.

Jodi Sankha and Ranapa dance are being performed by Gangeswar Jugal Sankha Badya Lokanrutya Kala Anusthan, Narendrapur, Ganjam- a renowned institute of the State.

The Gadabas and Their Dances (Folk Dance)

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

One of the most important dances of the Gadabas is known as Dhemsa. 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 Gadaba 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 steppings 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 steppings of eight and four.

The Gadaba 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 Gadaba dances make most charming and enjoyable spectacle. The orchestra of the Gadaba 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*.

Kharia Dance (Mayurbhanj)

The Kharia youths of both the sex dance together. Sometimes they separate and dance in different rows and in some cases old men and women take part in dance. There is also accompaniment of musical instruments and songs. Broadly, the Kharia dances are divided into five classes, namely, (a) Hariaro, (b) Kinbhar, (c) Halka, (d) Kudbing and (e) Jadura. Rhythmic movement and swaying of the body are attractive features in the Kharia dance. They dance with alternate forward and backward movements, soft and heavy steps and sometimes in marking or wheeling columns.

Koya Dance (Koraput)

The Koyas have an interesting dance in which the men tie buffalo or bison horns to their heads and engage in mimic fight. Their women also dance prettily in a ring with their hands on each others' shoulders.

Paraja Dance (Koraput)

At a Paraja dance all girls and the younger married women of the village form themselves into a chain, each maiden passing her right hand behind the next girl's back and grasping the left elbow of the third. The girls arrange themselves carefully according to size, the youngest, who are generally nine and ten years old, at one end and at other the leader of the corps de ballet who carries a baton of peacock feathers in her right hand to mark the time. Three or four youngmen take their stand in the middle of the dancing floor and strike up song which they accompany on their mandolins while the long chain of girls linked together and moving in perfect time follow the leader with her, swaying baton, through an intricate series of sensuous lines curvest spirals, figures of eight and then unravel themselves back into line again. They wind in and out like some brightly coloured snakes, never halting for a moment, now backwards, now forwards first slowly and decorously then faster and with more and more abandon until suddenly someone gets out of step and the chain snaps amid peals of breath-less laughter. All the while the young men in the centre continue to sing improvising the words as they go along and frequently sending the dancers in to bursts of merriment by their personal allusions, subtle and poetic. The leader of the troupe varies the steps in half a dozen different ways and the dancers now sway to the music with their bodies now clink their heavy German silver bangles together in time. The chain of combs young maiden dressed in their neatly oiled and decked with flowers and all in the height of good humour is a picturesque and pleasing sight.

Oraon Dance (Sundargarh)

The dance always takes place in open air in front of the Mandapa (a village club home) which is in close proximity to the village headman's house. Whenever the young men go to the mandapa (literally means pinda) and beat drums the girls come out of their houses to join them. They have the characteristic round dance. The youngmen begin the dance by holding each other's hand and make several rounds being headed by an expert dancer. Then the rhythm of the drum changes giving an indication to the beginning of the real dance. Then the girls who so long waited patiently for the dance to begin go and join. They make circles bending forward and backward placing left leg in the front and

the right leg at the back. The hands are placed on the neighbour's waist band and are crossed. The steps of the dance vary with the change in the rhythm of the drum beats.

Waving of the body from the waist and up, bending of the knees, slamping of the right foot backward and lifting the left foot forward and hip movements are some of the peculiar characteristics of the dance.

The dance continues to the late hours of the night to the accompaniment of songs and music. Sometimes fun-makers appear in the scene. They are usually elderly persons in funny dresses and drunk. They provide much amusement to women and children.

Kisan Dance (Sundargarh)

The Kisans perform Phaguna, Jadur, Karama, Jhumar and Bina dance on different occasions. Each dance has its own peculiar steps and movements. Their dance is also of round type in which both men and women take part. In Biha or marriage dance they sing marriage songs in their own dialect. Madal is the only musical instrument used in all their dances.

Changu Dance (Sundargarh)

The Changu dance is still prevalent among the hill Bhuiyans living in the wild highlands of the inaccessible hill ranges of Bonai. The Bhuiyan boys and girls of the same village or of the neighbouring villages are free to dance together at their sweet will and during the dance a youngman is at liberty to seize the hand of a girl he intends to marry and escape with her to the jungle. Such marriages are not infrequent and have customary social sanction.

The Changu dance of the Bhuiyans possesses some peculiar characteristics though it is not as lively as the dances of some other tribes. The men having a Changu (a crude kind of taur bourine nearly two feet in diameter) each march round hopping in a circle, beating these. They sing Chhandas, Chaupadi and other amorous songs mostly composed by the village composers. The girls while dancing are usually veiled and dance opposite to the boys. When they move forward the boys move backward and vice versa. Hip movements predominate in the dance.

Jhoomar Dance (Sundargarh)

Jhoomar dance is prevalent among the Mundas of Bonai area. As it is danced in accompaniment to the Jhoomar songs, it has been so named. It is a group dance and even men and women both participate in it. Mahantos also do the Jhoomar dance but only men take part. Chaitra Parva, Kumara and Kali Puja are some of the festivals on the occasion of which this dance takes place. Movements of hips, wristy and wavy movements of the body are some of the peculiar characteristics of this dance. The dance looks very beautiful for its symmetrical movements and is marked for its harmonious blending of rhythm and movement.

Bandi Butal (Sundargarh)

Bandi Butal means a broken bottle. It is not known why it has been named so. This dance is performed in fairs, festivals and on some auspicious occasions. Two or three boys dress themselves as girls and dance with amorous movements. Another person dances with them with loose movements not pertaining to any style. All of them sing and dance, love songs being common. The songs are repeated by a band of chorus singers. Sometimes story songs from the mythologies are also sung. Dholak and brass cymbals are played in accompaniment to the dance. Sometimes the movements and the songs are vulgar. It provides light type of entertainment.

Karama Dance (Sambalpur)

Karama is the most colourful dance of the Binjhal, Kharia, Oraon, Kisan and Kol tribes of Sambalpur. It is a ritual dance performed in honour of 'Karamsane' or 'Karamarani' the deity who grants children and is responsible for good and bad fortune. On the 11th day of the full-moon of Bhadra, young boys and girls go to the jungle singing and beating drums. A branch of "Karam" or sal tree is brought to the village. The village priest worships the branch by pouring liquor over it and making offerings of rice and sweets. A fowl is also sacrificed and the blood is offered to the branch.

In the beginning of the performance, the dancers enter dancing arena in two rows. The drummers, cymbal players and singers accompany them with rhythmic steps. This dance of Binjhal dancers is one of light hearted freshness combined with a youthful energy which makes it very charming and enjoyable. In course of dancing, the dancers only shout "Hai" according to rhythm of the drums. Each member of the party wears a red turban. Peacock feathers are used as head dresses and everybody holds a mirror either in right or left hands while dancing. Young maidens watch the dance with interest while they appreciate the performance of individual dancers in order to select their life partners from amongst them. The girls start dancing after the dance of the males have stopped and they dance in various postures. They bend their bodies forward and backward, right and left, bend their knees, crossing the hands of each other and clap hands. While dancing the girls sing in different tunes a long song praying for rain. After the dance of girls is over both boys and girls dance in separate lines till the next morning. Early in morning the branch is taken in procession and thrown either in a tank or stream.

Dalkhai Dance (Sambalpur)

The young girls of Binjhal Soura, Kunda and Mirdha tribes perform the dance during "Dashara" "Bhai Jiuntia", "Phagun Punai" and other festive days. In the beginning of the dance the young girls stand in a line or in a semi-circular pattern and sing songs which are popularly known as "Dalkhai songs".

Various types of drums like Dhol, Nisan and Tamki and wind instruments are played during the course of the dance. The Dhol player dances with the party whereas other musicians sit in their respective places and play their instruments.

Koisabadi Dance (Sambalpur)

This dance is prevalent among the Gond and Bhuiyan tribes and the Ganda caste. Only the male dancers take part holding a two feet long stick each. They dance in various poses and postures striking the sticks according to the rhythm of the songs they sing. Local musical instruments are also played. The songs are mainly on immortal love story of Radha and Krishna in local dialect.

Humo and Bauli Dance (Sambalpur)

These are two playful dances performed by young and unmarried girls on auspicious occasions. They sing and dance in groups. No musical instrument is played during the performance and the stepplings and movements of the dance are very slow.

Birli Dance of Dharua Tribe

Dharua tribe is numerically a small tribal group of Odisha mainly concentrated in the undivided Koraput district. Their principal occupation is agriculture. They perform their dances wearing their traditional costumes during different festivals, rituals and ceremonies. 'Birli' is the principal dance of Dharua

tribe generally performed during the post harvest period in the month of January - February. Participated by men and women and mostly by the youths, this colourful and melodious dance is named after "Bamboo" which provides livelihood to them. While the artists create enchanting rhythm by crossing and hitting bamboo sticks, their musicians play instruments like drum, flute and horn trumpet during the dance.

Nuakhai Dance of Kisan Tribe

Kisan is numerically one of the major tribes of Odisha. They are largely concentrated in Sambalpur and Sundargarh districts. Agriculture is their mainstay. Their main festivals include Fagun, Sarhul, Karama, and Nuakhai. Nuakhai is an agricultural festival mainly observed by people of western Odisha. It is observed on *panchami tithi* of the lunar fortnight on the month of Bhadrav. On the occasion of first eating of fruits and other agricultural crops, both male and female wearing new costumes perform dances with the rhythm of various musical instruments. Nuakhai is celebrated both at community and domestic level. After offering the Nua to the presiding deity, the eldest member of the family distributes Nua to other members of the family. After taking the Nua, all the junior members of the family offer regards to their elders and the elders bless their juniors and wish them long life, happiness and prosperity.

Dhemsas Dance of Bhattada Tribe

The Bhattada tribe mainly live in Nabarangpur and Kalahandi districts of Odisha. They are considered to be a section of the Gond tribe. Their livelihood depend on agriculture. The Bhattada possess rich oral tradition and their aesthetic life is very colourful as they are naturally talented as evident in the skill of their folk dance, songs and music. Dhemsas is their popular dance form which is performed during different festive occasions. Both boys and girls are skilled in composing their folk songs instantly, in relation to the circumstance of that very moment depicting vivid imagination and describing humours, jokes, romance, criticism and satires etc., while dancing with cheerful contentment. During performance of the dance, the musicians provide the concert with the tune of indigenous musical instruments like *dhol* (double membrane drum), *ghumura*, *tamak*, *tudubudi*, *bainsi* (flute), *tal* (cymbal), *mairi* (*mohuri*), *dhapa* (circular drum) and *jhumka*, etc.

Salai Dance of Santal Tribe

Santal is a major tribal community of Odisha. They are concentrated in Mayurbhanj, Keonjhar and Balasore districts. They have developed their own language 'Olchiki'. Agriculture is their mainstay. They observe 'Erahasim, Nuakhia, Mahamare, Saharai and Karama festivals to appease their principal deities like Sing Bonga, Marangburu, Maneka, Majhi Bonga etc. Salai dance is performed during saharai festival in the month of March and April when the Sal flower blossoms. They worship the Sal trees as they consider it as their source of livelihood and pray to nature to ensure bumper harvest. The dance loving Santals perform dance to the tune of the musical instruments, like drum, bell, flute etc. played by the male folk.

Pushpuneis Dance of Dangaria Kandha

Kandha is the major tribe of Odisha. Dangaria Kandha, a section of the Kandha tribe found in Kalyansinghpur Block of Rayagada District. They are famous horticulturist. Besides, they also collect minor forest produce and adopt shifting cultivation for their livelihood. Dongria Kandha lives in hilly areas of Niyamagiri hills. Due to their low demographic profile, low literacy and use of pre-agricultural

technology for earning their livelihood, they are considered as one of the PVTGs of Odisha. Both male and female decorate themselves in varieties of ornaments. Different festive occasions are observed with pomp and grandeur and both male and female dance to celebrate the occasions. Pushpunei is observed after harvesting of the crop. In this festival, the young boys and the girls of different villages sing and dance together to the tune of the harp, circular drum(Dhap) and Single Membrane drum.

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. The chorus and the musicians take their position off stage. There is a single seat meant to serve various functions, such as a throne, a bed or a way-side bench on the stage.

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. 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 Odisha 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 them plays on a drum (mridanga) and the others playing musical instruments like cymbals. The pala singer describes episodes from the Mahabharata, Ramayana or other Puranic 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, 'Maa', 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. Generally, the pala songs are taken from the rich repertoire of Odia 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.

Daskathia

The Daskathia is also a very interesting folk art form in Odisha. 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 Odishan 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.