THE BUDDHIST JATAKA STORIES
and the Russian Novel

By MARTIN WICKRAMASINGHE

The Buddhist
JATAKA STORIES
and the Russian Novel

BY THE SAME AUTHOR

In English

Sinhalese Literature
Aspects of Sinhalese Culture
Mysticism of Lawrence

In Sinhalese

Novels

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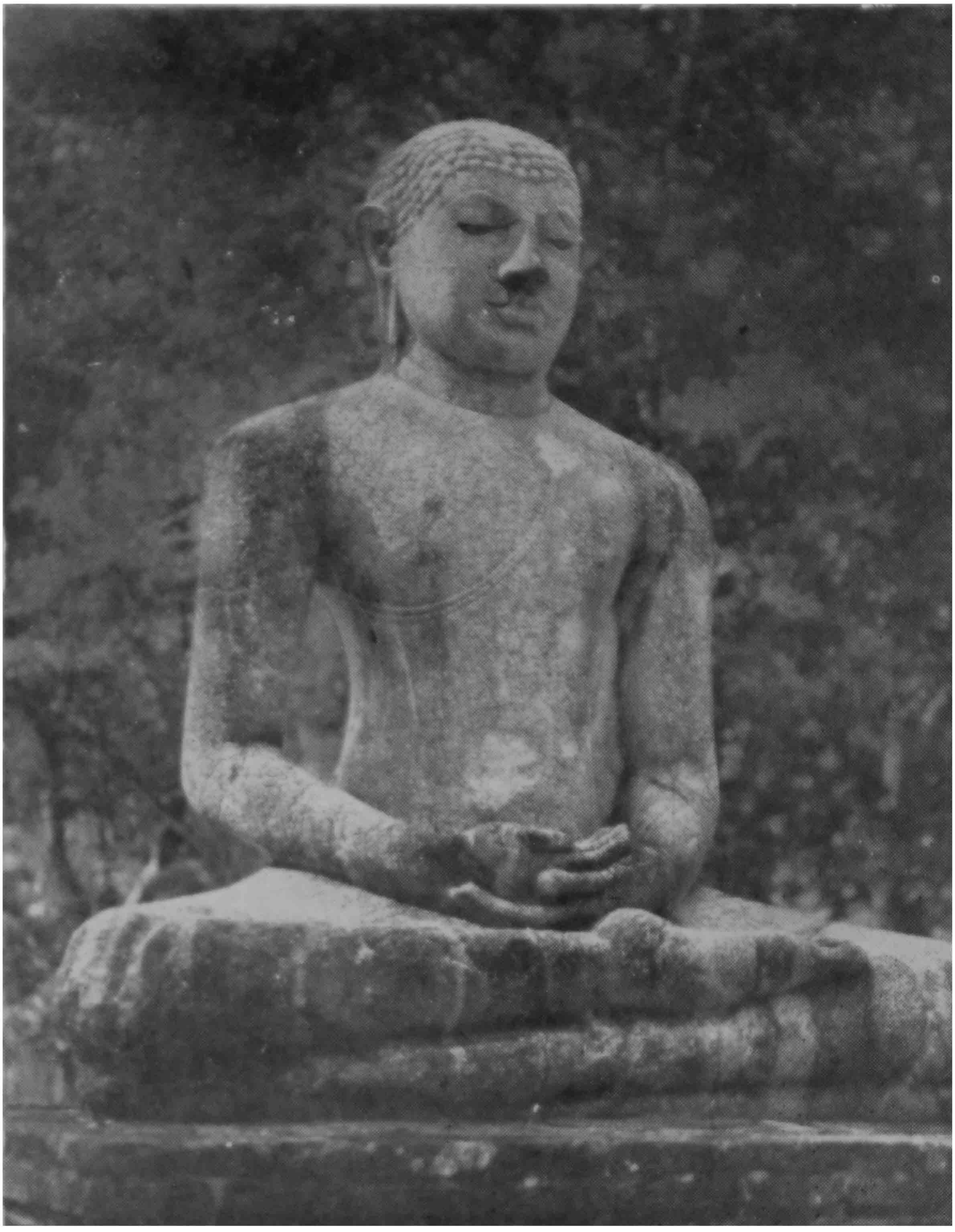


Dr. H. C. P. Gunewardene A.I

THE SEDENTARY BUDDHA

The Buddhist

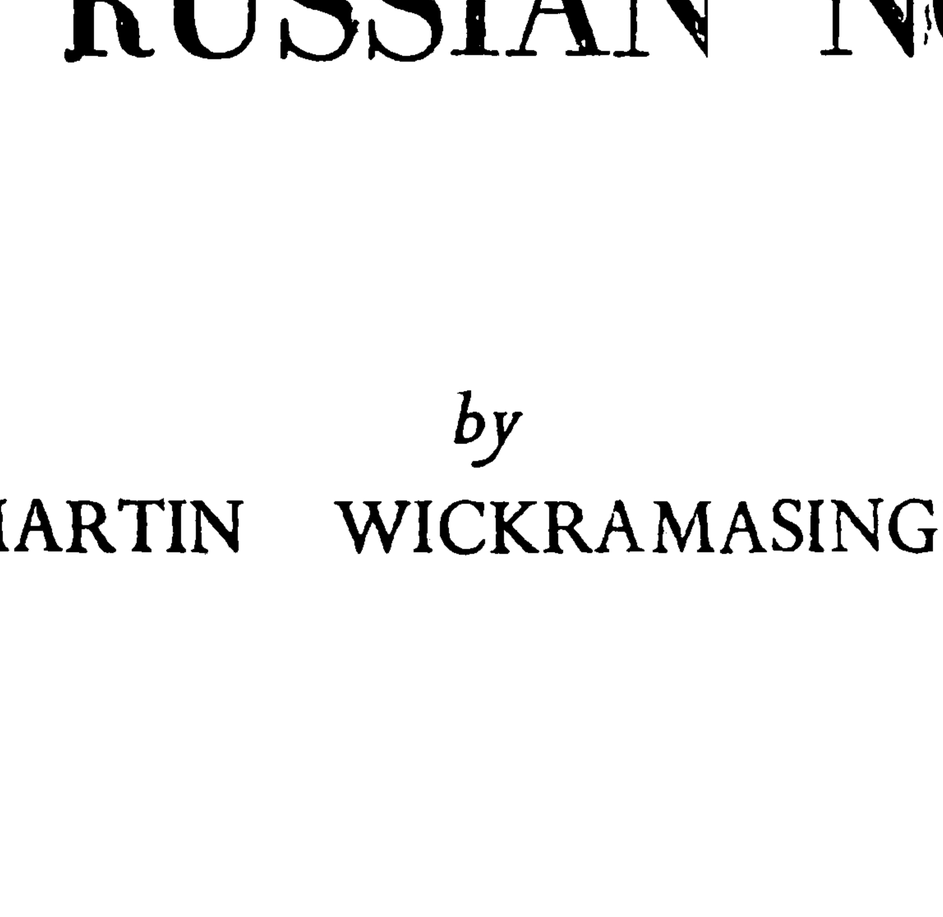
JATAKA STORIES

and

THE RUSSIAN NOVEL

by

MARTIN WICKRAMASINGHE



THE ASSOCIATED NEWSPAPERS OF CEYLON LTD
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PREFACE

THE linguistic, religious and sociological aspects of the Jataka Stories have attracted the attention of Western Orientalists. A few Indian scholars, and occasionally a Western folklorist, have shown interest in the folk-lore of the oldest Buddhist stories. But even a scholarly and keen student of Indian literature, Professor Winternitz, seems to have failed to appreciate the literary aspects of certain Jataka Stories when he dismissed the introductory tales known as *Stories of the Present* as "very silly inventions of the commentators."[1] Most, if not all, of the introductory tales seem to have been developed on the basis of real incidents in the life of men and women of every stratum of society and sometimes of the life of the Buddha himself. In realism, brevity, and the absence of pedantry and sentimental romanticism, some of these introductory anecdotes are closer to the European novel than to the old-world romances or the folk-tale.

In the first of the two major essays of this book I have made an attempt to introduce the reader to the literary aspect of a few selected Jataka Stories. In the second, I have attempted to compare certain recurring types of characters in the Jataka Stories, and the philosophy of life implied by these, with the characters of Dostoevsky's major novels. Dostoevsky's characters are quite different from the heroes of Western novels.

"Father Zossima," says André Gide, "is not of the great as the world reckons him. He is a saint—no hero. And he has reached saintliness by surrender of will and abdication of intellect . . .

---

1. Hastings. *Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics* p. 492.

"Dostoevsky's heroes inherit the kingdom of God only by the denial of mind and will and the surrender of personality.

"Balzac's *Comedie Humaine* sprang from the contact between the Gospels and the Latin mind: Dostoevsky's from the contact between the Gospels and Buddhism, the Asiatic mind."[1]

Almost all the major characters (including the evil and the destructive) depicted in the Jataka Stories become saints by abdication of intellect and surrender of personality.

Western writers have been puzzled by Dostoevsky's characters. A recent writer, C. M. Woodhouse, says of Dostoevsky : "... . his novels, if they can be called novels, are like nothing on earth . . . His climate of thought is entirely foreign to the average novel reader of Western Europe."[2]

This alien climate of thought attributed to Dostoevsky has an affinity to the philosophy of life and mysticism implied in the Jataka Stories. To understand the affinity between the mental and spiritual make-up of Dostoevsky's characters and the characters of the Jataka Stories, an unprejudiced insight into the philosophy of life implied by Buddhism and Indian mysticism is necessary. It is not possible to gain this insight by merely studying Indian philosophy. It would come to one who studies the emotional literature of India and Ceylon, together with Buddhism and Vedanta philosophy.

In development and psychological detail there is nothing in the characters of the Jataka Stories that can be compared with those of Dostoevsky. But the basic psychological and spiritual elements, the conflict between reason and intuition, pride and humility, that combine to make the puzzling characters of Dostoevsky, can be detected in the characters suggested by the Jataka Stories.

---

1. *Dostoevsky*, pp. 89, 90.
2. C. M Woodhouse *Dostoievsky*, Preface pp. 5, 6.

I have based my studies on the Sinhalese version of the Jataka Stories, and not on the Pali, for certain reasons. There was a continuous and independent development of the Jataka Stories in Ceylon. The existing Pali version is a translation based on a very old Sinhalese version which was written in Ceylon and was subsequently lost. The present Sinhalese version is a re-translation of the Pali version. The translation was done in the fourteenth century in a simple and unvarnished realistic diction modelled on colloquial Sinhalese. A modern writer could not have developed a better prose for the novel.

Until the fourteenth century, Sinhalese prose, to borrow a phrase from Richard Church, "had been a solid stuff that plodded along on flat pedantic feet, weighed down by Sanskrit sandals frequently too large for those feet."[1]

The translators of the Jataka Stories broke away from this pseudo-classical tradition by adopting a simple and realistic prose which was intimately related to the life of the Sinhalese. But unfortunately later writers, instead of exploiting the possibilities of the new prose for creative writing, reverted to the earlier pseudo-classical prose with its artificiality and foppery. Here are two passages from the Sinhalese Jataka Stories :

"එතෙම ලජ්ජාවට පැමිණ එතැන් පටන් තමන්ගේ ගෙදරට යාචක කෙනෙකුන් නොවදිනා නියායෙන් රැකවල් සැලැස්විය. එතැන් පටන් සියලුම යාචකයෝ කිසියම් දෙයක් නොලැබ ඔහුගේ ගෙය ඇස දල්වාත් නොබලන්නාහුය. එතෙම එතැන් පටන් ධනය රැස්කරමින් තෙමේත් අනුභව නොකරන්නේය; පුත්‍රදාරාදීන්ටත් නොදෙන්නේය. කාඩි දෙවන කොට ඇති නිවුඩු සාලේ බත් අනුභව කරන්නේය.තුඹවැල් සා හුයින් වියන ලද වක්කාරි කඩම අඳනේය. පත් කුඩයක් ඉසට කරවාගෙන ජරාගොන් යොදන ලද දිරා ගිය රථයකට නැඟි ගමන් කරන්නේය. .....අසත් පුරුෂයා විසින් ලබන ලද ධනය බල්ලන්ට පොල් නොපළා ලූ කලක් පරිද්දෙන් නිෂ්ප්‍රයෝජන විය. ඒ මසුරු සිටාණෝ එක් දවසක් රාජ

1. *The Growth of the English Novel* III, p. 22.

සේවයට යන්නෝ, 'අත වැසි සිටාණන් කැඳවාගෙන යෙමි' සිතා ඔහුගේ ගෙට ගියෝය.

එකල අත වැසි සිටාණෝ තමන් ගේ අඹුදරුවන් හා සමඟ ගිතෙල් ශර්කරායෙන් සකස් කරන ලද පැන්නුමුසු කිරිබත් අනුභව කරමින් උන්නාහ. සිටාණෝ, මසුරු කෝසිය සිටාණන් දැක උනස්නෙන් නැඟී, සිටාණන් වහන්ස, මෙසේ වැඩිය මැනව,මේ අස්නේ ඉඳ කිරිබත් අනුභව කළ මැනවැ'යි කීයේය. එසඳ මසුරු කෝසිය සිටාණෝ ද කිරිබත් දැක මුඛ පිරුණු කෙළ ඇතිව කනු කැමැතිවත් 'අද දවස් මේ බත් කෑයෙන් නම් මොහු මාගේ ගෙට ගිය වේලෙහි ප්‍රත්‍යුපකාර කළ මැනව'යි සිතා 'එහෙයින් නොකම්' යි සිතා නැවත නැවත යාච්ඤාකරන ලදුවත් 'දන් බත් කාලා ආ හෙයින් සාය මදය' යනාදීන් කියා ප්‍රතික්ෂෙප කොට ඔහු බත් අනුභව කරන තෙක් බඩ පුරා කෙළ උරා බොමින් බලා හිඳ....."[1]

"The rich merchant placed guards at the entrances to prevent any beggars coming to his house. The beggars, receiving nothing from him, never opened their eyes to have a look at his house.

"He amassed wealth, stinting himself of food and giving very little to his wife and children. He ate unpolished coarse rice scarcely better than rice-dust gruel. He wore coarse hempen clothes woven with threads as thick as *tumba* creepers. Holding a leaf umbrella over his head, he would travel in a dilapidated vehicle drawn by a decrepit old bull. His wealth became as useless as unsplit coconuts thrown before dogs.

"One day this miser, while on his way to the king's palace, entered the house of another merchant who, with his wife and children, was enjoying a meal of rice cooked with undiluted milk and flavoured and sweetened with ghee and jaggery.

"He at once rose from his seat and said, 'Sir, please come in, sit down on this seat and have some milk rice.'

"The aroma of the relished milk rice made his mouth water, begetting in him a greedy desire to taste the meal.

1. Jataka Story 526.

But he thought, 'If I eat his milk rice, I shall have to offer him in return the same expensive food when he eventually visits me. Therefore I will not taste his milk rice.'

"The junior merchant repeatedly asked and then begged of his superior to taste his milk rice.

" 'No, thank you. I have had my meal, and I have hardly any appetite,' said the miser. But his greediness was so great that he kept on swallowing his own saliva until his stomach was full."

The following passage from another Jataka Story describes a drought :

"ඒ රට වැසි නොවටුයේය. මනුෂ්‍යයන්ගේ ගොයම් මිය ගියේය. වැව් ආදිය සිදී ගියේය. මස් කැස්බෝ කලල් යට .....වැද ඒ ඒ තැන සැඟවුණාහුය. කපුටු ආදිහුත් තුඩින් ඇන මැත්කොට කන්නාහුය."[1]

"No rain fell. The fields cultivated by the farmers became scorched and dead. Tanks went dry. Fishes and tortoises crept under the mud. The crows and other birds began to peck at the mud and drag out the fish and eat them up."

Every classical Sinhalese writer rewrote some of the Jataka Stories in his own style, changing their literary aspect. One writer, Dharmasena Thero, who developed an independent and intimate conversational style based on the rhythm of colloquial Sinhalese, rewrote some of the Jataka Stories. His intimate knowledge of the life of the villager permeates every story he has touched, giving it local colour and atmosphere, and a peculiar flavour of his own.

The European Orientalists and Indian scholars are unaware of this independent development of the Jataka Stories in Ceylon. But Dr. Malalasekera seems to have noticed this development when he wrote thus in his *Pali Literature of Ceylon :*

---

1. Jataka Story 75.

"*Paccuppanna-vatthu* (Story of the Present) contains genuine fragments of the life of the Buddha, and another considerable portion, if not distinctly Buddhistic, is Indian and local . . .

"We may, however, I think, be quite certain that the *Jatakaṭṭha-katha*, as we have it now, is the work of a Ceylonese author."[1]

The development of the Jataka Stories in Ceylon intensified their verisimilitude to Sinhalese life and has changed their literary aspect.

MARTIN WICKRAMASINGHE

Bindunuvewa
Bandarawela

1. *Pali Literature of Ceylon*, vi. pp. 121, 126.

LIST OF ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

For the passages and references in this book I gratefully acknowledge my indebtedness to the authors and publishers of the following books:

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COVER: Sama Jatakaya: Fresco painting from Raja Maha Vihare, Kotte.

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I am indebted to Mr. A. C. Seneviratna of the *Ceylon Observer* for the care and interest with which he read and revised the script of this book. And I have to thank Mr. Jayanta Padmanabha of the *Ceylon Daily News* for lending me the two volumes of Dostoevsky's *Diary of a Writer* and for encouraging me in other ways.

I thank the Publishing Department of The Associated Newspapers of Ceylon Ltd. for the interest and care taken in the publication and production of this book.

M. W.

OLDEST SHORT STORIES OF INDIA

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I

WESTERN Orientalists who translated the Jataka Stories (Birth Stories of the Buddha) and wrote about them treated them as folk-tales. Professor Rhys Davids said that they were the oldest collection of folk-lore in the world.

All of the Jataka Stories are not folk-tales, though the folk elements pervade most of them. There are two kinds of narratives in the Jataka Book. One is the introductory narrative which is called "the present story." It is usually narrated in brief, and sometimes in detail. These introductory stories are not folk-tales at all. Most of them are narratives of real incidents in the lives of men, women, courtesans, monks and brahmins, and sometimes of the Buddha himself. They are narratives and anecdotes mostly written without any conscious art. But in realism, brevity, sincerity, and in revealing traits of human character, some of them approach the modern story.

Professor Winternitz does not treat the Jataka Stories as a collection of mere folk-tales. He says, "The Jataka Book is a very old and highly important collection not only of folk-tales, but also of literary productions of the most varied kinds.

"As regards the 'stories of the present,' they are of little value, being either very silly inventions of the commentator or borrowings from the texts . . . But in the 'stories of the past' with canonical *gathas* all kinds of literary productions are presented."[1]

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1. Hastings *Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics* p. 492.

The art of the folk-tale is absent in most of the introductory anecdotes or the "Stories of the Present," as they are called. They are tales about people but not stories written or told for the people. The stories told for the people are the Jataka Stories proper or the "stories of the past," and in them the art of the folk-tale and fable or that of the sophisticated story can be seen.

Professor Kropotkin in his *Russian Literature* treated a certain class of Russian novelists including Chekov and Maxim Gorky as 'Folk-Novelists.' "It is under this name that we know them chiefly in Russia. By 'Folk-Novelists' we mean, of course, not those who write *for* the people but those who write *about* the people."[1]

The term 'folk-novel' can be applied with justification to most of the Jataka Stories to distinguish them from the genuine folk-tale and the highly-developed modern short story.

The real *Birth Story* is related after the introductory tale which runs through the collection like a thread that connects them into a single composition, as in the *Decameron* or the *Arabian Nights*. Among the *Birth Stories* proper there are folk-tales and animal fables recreated and adapted to emphasise the Buddhist view of life. The others are stories, anecdotes and satires handled and written by Buddhist writers, sometimes with conscious art. Some of the stories, I believe, are based on anecdotes of real life as experienced by men and women. Therefore the basis of them is the real raw material of life though they differ from the modern story in the artistic treatment. But the selection of raw material and the treatment show the sincerity and experience of life of the writers who handled them. The trivialities of life, the inventions, and their sentimental exaggeration that combine to make the popular romantic story, are rare in the Jataka Book. There are exaggerations in many of them, but not for the sake of

1. Kropotkin *Russian Literature* Ideals and Realities, VII, 39.

romanticism and sentimentalism. These exaggerations sometimes reveal the devastating aspect of human passions and occasionally the working of the subconscious mind. Some European writers regard Dostoevsky as the earliest great novelist who anticipated the exploitation of the subconscious and parapsychic phenomena before Freud and modern psychologists.[1]

When I say that there are Jataka Stories in which attempts, of course unintentional, have been made to reveal the working of the subconscious mind, many people will, I am aware, treat it as a preposterous claim. But I hope to give later the gist of two or three Jataka Stories to show that Buddhist writers have made attempts, however crude, to reveal the working of the subconscious mind of the characters in some of their stories.

II

A superficial comparison of three Buddhist stories will, I believe, convince the reader that all of them are not mere folk-tales. One of the three is the story of Patachara and another is the story of Kundalakesi and the third is called the story of Chulla-setthi. Two of the stories are narrated as introductions or 'stories of the present' before the Jataka Stories proper, told subsequently by the Buddha. The incidents on which these three stories have been based are the same. But the characters and the view of life implied by them, even if they are treated as mere anecdotes, are diametrically opposed to each other. The heroines of the three stories are the daughters of rich merchants brought up in wealth and luxury. The girl in the first story, Patachara, falls in love with a slave and elopes with him. The girl in the second story defies her parents and falls in love with a robber who was being led away by the executioners. And the girl in the third also falls in love with a slave and elopes with him.

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1. C. M. Woodhouse *Dostoievsky* pp. 92, 93.

The first is a romantic story of situations which are the outcome of the working of fate. The other two are stories or anecdotes based on certain aspects of human character and hence their development depends not on accidental situations but on causally connected incidents which combine to make the plot as in good novels.

Edward Hutton in his introduction to the English translation of the *Decameron* observes : "In Latin art we have as a rule an affair of situation, that is to say, the narrative or drama rises out of the situations rather than out of the characters of the persons, while even in the most worthless English works there is an attempt to realise character, to make it the fundamental thing in the book, from which the narrative proceeds and by which it lives and is governed."[1]

In most of the Jataka Stories the character or an aspect of life is the fundamental thing, and therefore they are different from the old-world romances.

I give first, the gist of the story of Patachara :

Patachara, the daughter of a wealthy merchant, falls in love with a slave who is a servant in her own home. She elopes with him and they live happily, though as rustics, until the woman gives birth to two children. When she is expecting the second child, she persuades her husband to go with her to her parents. When they are passing through a forest, like the woman in the story *A Man is Born* by Maxim Gorky,[2] she suddenly develops birth pains. The husband goes to cut branches to make a shelter to protect her from wind and rain. He is stung by a cobra and dies. The poor woman, standing like an animal

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1. *The Decameron* Introduction XII.

2. There is a short story *A Man is Born* by Maxim Gorky in which a woman gives birth to a child in the jungle. The whole story is devoted to a description of the development of this incident. The narrator of the story performs the task of the midwife in spite of the anger and the curses of the woman. Gorky's story suggests, I believe, certain similarities in the economic life and environment of pre-revolutionary Russia and ancient India.

on all fours, protects the new-born babe from the violence of a storm. The following morning, on her way to her parents, she crosses a stream. One child is carried away by the stream, and the other by an eagle. Thus, having lost her two children, she reaches the city where her parents were living, only to see the flames of the burning pyre in which they were being cremated.

Patachara goes mad, and to this point the story develops like a real tragedy. But, through the intervention of the Buddha, she is rescued and the tragic end avoided.

In her madness she throws away the rags that covered her nudity. People jeer at her and drive her away, throwing stones, and cow-dung and mud at her. She finally goes to the place where the Buddha was preaching to a congregation. The pious listeners try to drive her away with abuse and insults but the Buddha restrains them, calls her to him and consoles her. One of the old Sinhalese writers who re-wrote this beautiful story says in describing the last incident : "The Buddha received her like a mother who embraces her own daughter when she comes running in hunger to suck the mother's breasts."

It will be noticed that the above story is a story of situations brought about by fate ; but the second story of which I give the essence, is one based on real life and character: The heroine of the story, Kundalakesi, a rational-minded, strong willed girl, is the daughter of a very wealthy merchant. She rejects the proposal of her parents and falls in love with a daring robber, a well-built man, who is led away to be executed. She defies her parents and forces them to rescue the robber by bribing the executioners. She marries him. Under the pretext of offering a token to his tutelary god, the robber takes her to a sacred rock with the intention of robbing her of her jewellery. He attempts to kill her but her courage and her wit come to her rescue. By a ruse she pushes the robber over the precipitous rock and escapes. She gives

over her jewellery to her maid, who was at the foot of the rock, and flees to another country. She meets ascetics and religious teachers, whom she refutes and routs in philosophical controversy. At last she meets a disciple of the Buddha, with whom she starts a philosophical duel. Eventually she was converted by the Buddha and becomes a nun.[1]

The girl in the third story is also the daughter of a wealthy merchant. She elopes with a slave and lives happily with him giving birth to two sons. When they had grown to boyhood, they pester their mother with questions about their grandparents. She suggests taking the children to her parents, but her husband is afraid to go to them.

"My parents are not monsters who will eat us up when they meet us," thinks the wife. One day, when her husband is away, she locks up the furniture and other belongings in a room and leaves home with her two children. Stopping at a resting-place meant for beggars and destitute travellers, she sends a messenger to tell her parents of her arrival in the city with her two sons. The parents refuse to invite her to their home as she had disgraced the family by eloping with a slave. However, they send a messenger with money to be handed over to her and to bring only the two boys. She lets the boys go to her parents, while she takes the money and goes back to her husband.[2]

There is a short story called *Happiness* related as an anecdote by Maupassant. The basis and the theme of his story are the same as in these Jataka Stories : A colonel in the French army who belonged to a noble family had a daughter. She was well educated and moved in the highest society. She fell in love with a young village lad

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1. As narrated in *Saddharma Ratnavaliya* (13th century Sinhalese prose work edited by Sir D. B. Jayatilaka).
2. Jataka Story 4.

who was a soldier in her father's regiment. She eloped with him and both of them lived happily as rustics, eating coarse food and sleeping on a coarse mattress in the island of Corsica. This is the plot of Maupassant's story, which he develops in his own inimitable way.

It will be seen that the first of the three Jataka Stories related above develops like an old-world romance. The other two are based on similar incidents and develop like modern stories. In the second story the character of the heroine develops into that of an obstinate and violent girl possessed of courage and reason. In the third story the character of the girl is only suggested. The conservative, callous and cruel aspects of the characters of her parents and the suffering they inflict on an unhappy girl are well suggested, without any commentary, by the story.

These three stories, based on one and the same incident but developed to suggest characters diametrically opposed to each other, cannot be treated as mere folk-tales. And they are quite different from the sentimental romance.

III

I give a few more introductory anecdotes from the book of Jataka Stories to show their affinity to the modern story rather than to the primitive folk-tale and romance.

The introductory anecdote to the story called the *Nachcha Jataka*[1] is as follows :

A rich villager after the death of his wife became a monk. Before he entered the order of mendicants, he built a house, a kitchen and a store room in which he stored ghee and gingelly oil. After entering the order, he called his former domestic servants and got them to prepare dainty dishes for him.

He collected a large number of robes and other material comforts. Each night he wore a different robe, but the

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1. Jataka Story 32.

next morning he discarded it and put on a new one. He had hoarded enough robes to be able to change them night and day.

One day he put out his robes to give them a sunning and airing. The other monks who went out on their begging rounds were amazed by the number and variety of robes he had. Some of them questioned and teased him.

"Do all these robes belong to you ?"

"Yes."

"A monk can possess only three robes. That is a rule of the Buddha for those who enter the order."

The monks forcibly took him to the Buddha.

"Is it true that you have become a possessor and hoarder of robes and other material comforts ?"

"Yes," replied the offending monk.

"How and why did you come to possess so many robes?"

The monk removed his robe and threw it away. Then he slowly released his loin cloth, let it fall down in a heap at his feet, and stood stark naked in front of the Buddha.

"Is this the way you wish me to behave?" asked the impudent monk.

This is no folk-tale but a humorous anecdote based on an incident revealing certain aspects of the character of an impudent and greedy monk.

The following is an abridged version of the introductory narrative to the Birth Story called the *Babbu Jataka*:[1]

When the Buddha was dwelling in the Jetavanarama monastery, there was a devotee known as "the mother of Kana" because she had a daughter named Kana. Although the daughter was named Kana, she was not blind in either eye ; she was a girl of beauty and charm. If a man saw her, he fell madly in love with her and refused even to look

1. Jataka Story 133.

at another girl. She was known as Kana because the man who set his eyes on her became blind with a headstrong passion for her.

She was given in marriage to a workman of another village. After spending many days with her husband, she paid a visit to her mother and stayed with her for a few days. As she failed to go back to her husband, who yearned to have her with him, he sent a message asking her to return immediately.

Her mother advised her not to go back home empty-handed, after being away for so many days. She told her daughter to take some oil cakes to her husband.

She prepared the dough and began to fry the oil cakes. A monk who was going round with his begging bowl came and stood before the woman. Offering him a few oil cakes with great pleasure, she placed them in his begging bowl, prostrated herself and worshipped him.

On his way back to his hut he met another monk. He told him that Kana the faithful was cooking oil cakes. This monk also visited her, and on his way back he met yet another monk. He also went to her and received his share of oil cakes. All the oil cakes she cooked were offered to the monks who visited her one after the other.

A few days later, she began again to cook oil cakes with the intention of going back to her husband. But the monks visited her again, and she was again deprived of her oil cakes.

Her husband, who had been very anxiously awaiting her return, was sadly disappointed. He brought home another girl and made her his wife. Hearing of this, Kana was overwhelmed with grief and began to wail in utter despair.

There are tears behind the humour and laughter of this little story. The lurking tragedy behind its laughter is sure to rouse in the heart of the reader a feeling of pain and

sympathy for the unhappy woman and a feeling of futile indignation at the unfeeling behaviour of the monks.

IV

The old Buddhist monks were stern realists, and some of them were undoubtedly rationalists in practice. The following introductory anecdote to the story called the *Guthapani Jataka*[1] reveals that aspect of the character of a Buddhist monk :

A few miles away from Sravasti there was a village. The men and women of this village, being devotees of the Buddha and his disciples, treated them with food and drink. Amongst these villagers there was a cynical controversialist who asked annoying questions from the monks when they visited the villagers at their invitation.

He raised futile questions and engaged them in argument only to humiliate and ridicule them in the presence of the devotees. Because of the humiliations they had to endure, the monks refused to go to this village for alms.

One day a monk from a rural area came to Jetavana-rama. The monks who were residing there dissuaded him from going to that particular village for alms.

"No, I will go there today," said the village monk, "and will try to tackle the controversialist in such a way that he will not dare to meddle with you again."

As soon as the monk entered the village the cynic came running to him like 'a ram rushing to butt and batter.'

"Oh, you have come here to be fed by the devotees. Well, what will be the effect of eating the victuals offered to you by them? Answer," said the formidable contro-versialist.

"Very well, I will answer your questions after I have partaken of the food," replied the monk calmly.

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1. Jataka Story 219.

When the food offered had been eaten, the controversialist triumphantly approached the monk to engage him in argument.

"Look here!" said the monk, "this is not the place to argue. Come, let us go out of the village."

Both of them walked away from the village. The monk calmly set his begging-bowl on the ground, took off his robe and placed it behind the bowl. Then he fell upon the controversialist and they engaged in a bout of fisticuffs. He pommelled the cynic, nearly breaking his bones.

"Look here!" said the monk, "I put to you this counter-question : What is the effect of my pommelling you ? Answer me please?"

The cynic was silent.

"Look here," repeated the monk. "Don't you dare again to ask questions from the monks. Do you hear?"

An animal fable called the *Javana-Sakuna Jataka*[1] reveals the same cynical and practical attitude to life of the monks or laymen who were responsible for the present version of the Jataka Stories.

A starving lion, suffering excruciating pain because of a bone stuck in his throat, lay prostrate in a forest. A woodpecker who was in hiding in a thicket saw the suffering lion whose neck was swollen.

"Sir, are you suffering?" inquired the woodpecker.

"Yes, terribly," said the lion and explained the cause of his pain.

"I can remove the bone which gives you so much pain. But I am afraid to step into your mouth."

"I swear I will not eat you up. Please save me from this lingering death."

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1. Jataka Story 309.

The woodpecker told the lion to stretch himself on the ground. "I am not sure," thought the woodpecker, "whether the lion will crunch me or set me free when I step into his mouth and remove the bone." The woodpecker picked up a piece of stick and put it in position between the open jaws of the lion. Then he entered the lion's mouth and pulled out the bone. Rushing out, he snatched the stick and flew away at once.

The woodpecker was moved by the suffering of the lion. But in spite of the swearing of the habitual flesh-eater who was starving, the woodpecker did not forget to take all precautions to protect himself in an emergency !

The *Takkari Jataka*[1] consists of four stories merged into one. At the end of the main story the astute Brahmin student who saved the life of his teacher related three stories. One of them is as follows :

There was a courtesan named Kali in Benares. She had a brother, Tundila, who was addicted to gambling and drinking. She tried her utmost to save him from a life of dissipation, and urged him to give up gambling and drinking. But Tundila persisted in the two vices.

One day the courtesan said to her maids : "The next time my brother Tundila comes home after drinking and gambling, give him nothing. Take him by the neck and throw him out of the house."

One day Tundila, having lost heavily at dice, had to pawn his clothes. He came home wearing a mat to cover his nakedness. The maids took him by the neck, threw him out of the house, and shut the door. Tundila sat on the doorstep and began to weep, thinking of his fate.

A rich merchant's son, a frequent visitor of the courtesan, came on this particular day to spend the night with her. On seeing the weeping man at the doorstep he asked him :

"Why do you weep?"

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1. Jataka Story 444.

"My lord," replied Tundila, "I came to my sister after losing heavily at dice, but she got her maids to throw me out of the house."

"Wait a while. I will speak to your sister."

The young man entered the apartment of the courtesan. "Your brother," he said, "wearing a mat, is weeping at your doorstep. Why don't you give him a cloth to cover himself?"

"No, I am not going to give him anything," said the courtesan. "If you sympathise with him, I have no objection to your giving him clothes."

A man who spent the night with the courtesan Kali had to pay her one thousand gold coins. Half of this fee was to defray the cost of supplying clean soft clothes, flowers, unguents, scents and other luxuries to him who enjoyed her company. The next morning he had to wear his own clothes and hand over to the maids the clean apparel provided him by the courtesan.

The young man, as soon as he put on the clean apparel, sent his own clothes to the man who was weeping at the doorstep. The gambler, discarding the mat and putting on the fine clothes, ran singing merrily to the tavern.

"Look here," said the courtesan to her maids, "before the young man steps out of the house tomorrow morning, don't you forget to take back the clothes given him."

Decking himself with flowers, using unguents and scents, and chewing scented betel leaves, the young man spent the night with the courtesan. When he was ready to leave the house, the maids rushed at him from every nook and corner and snatched the clothes, stripping him naked.

"Now you can go!" laughed all of them.

The young man, having nothing to cover his nakedness, stepped on to the road and walked home amidst the jeers and insults of the people in the street.

The experience treated in this story, I believe, is more complicated than that of any one of the preceding three stories. But the sensibility behind the story is not that of the religious tale. The reaction of the inexperienced young man when he met the gambler at the doorstep of the courtesan was dictated by a feeling of humanity. But the reaction of the experienced courtesan was cynical. There is nothing religious in the story. The young man, when he slipped out of the house naked, was jeered at by the people who were in the street. The climax of the story reveals an unexpected trait in his character. In spite of his youth and inexperience, he had the courage to face the jeers of the mob and walk home naked.

V

The *Andha-Bhuta Jataka*[1] is one of the most popular stories amongst the Sinhalese. Perhaps its popularity is due to an old folk-poet who versified it, sharpening its satire on women and turning its subtle humour into burlesque.

The main episode of the story treats sadism artistically in the objective manner of a novelist. The conception and treatment of sadism in this Jataka Story and in an episode in a novel of Marcel Proust are similar. The episode in the Jataka Story is as follows :

A king's minister, a Brahmin, suddenly developed a great interest and concern in womanly chastity and brought up a girl from her birth. He confined her in his house, where no males were allowed to enter. She grew up without having seen even a boy, and after attaining puberty became the minister's devoted wife.

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1. Jataka Story 62.

However a daring libertine, by bribing a woman who was attending on the minister's wife, smuggled himself into the house. She fell in love with him. One day the man, after clandestine love-making, refused to leave the house.

"I wish to give your husband a knock on the head," he said, and hid himself in the house.

The woman greeted her husband when he returned from the palace, and treated him as usual.

"I wish to dance and be merry today," said the wife.

"Why not, my dear?" replied her husband.

"I am very shy and modest. I can't dance when you are looking at me. So I will blindfold you and then dance. You play the *vina*."

"Yes, my dear, I am ready."

The wife took a strip of thick cloth, blindfolded her husband, and began to dance to the tune he was playing.

She approached him and said coquettishly, "My lord, I wish to give you a knock on your head."

"Yes, hit me, my dear," said the minister, who was very fond of his wife.

The woman beckoned to her paramour. He came stealthily and with the point of his elbow, dealt a very hard knock on the minister's head. So severe was the blow that his eyes nearly jumped out of their sockets. A bulb-like swelling rose on his head.

The Brahmin got hold of his wife's arm and began tenderly to touch and feel it.

"Your arm," said he, "is soft and delicate, but the knock on my head was very severe and heavy."

Meanwhile her paramour left the house. The woman uncovered her husband's eyes and brought a phial of medicinal balm. She applied it on the swelling and rubbed it gently and soothingly.

The handling of the incident by the writer of the Jataka Story can be better appreciated by comparing it with the handling and treatment of a similar incident by Marcel Proust.

Robert Liddell in *A Treatise on the Novel* relates thus the incident which was the origin of Proust's tale :

"The Duchess de Clermont-Tonnerre has told us, in her recollections of Marcel Proust, the innocent little story which was the origin of his tale of terror.

"A man, though devoted to his wife and child, had a mistress. Such was his devotion to his wife and child that he never stopped talking about them when he visited her. She got tired of this, and said she never wanted to hear again about 'my wife' and 'my child.'

" 'What am I to call them, then ?' asked her lover. She answered pettishly : 'The monster' and 'the little monster.'

"In Proust's memory this story became deformed into one where a man perversely delighted to call his wife and child, whom he loved, by abusive names, when he was making love to his mistress. By easy transitions from this state, and rendered into terms of Lesbianism, it ended up in the horrible incident *du côtè de Montjouvain*."

Marcel Proust's sadistic tale appears as an episode in the first part, *Swann's Way*, of his great novel *Remembrance of Things Past* and continues in the second volume, *The Captive*. In Proust's novel the narrator opens the story with the following observation :

"And it is perhaps from another impression which I received at Montjouvain, some years later, an impression which at that time was without meaning, that there arose, long afterwards, my idea of that cruel side of human passion called 'sadism.' "[1]

The plot of the story as summarised by Robert Liddell is as follows :

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1. *Swann's Way* part 1, p. 218.

"Montjouvain was situated *du côtè de chez Swann;* to reach it, one turned off the road somewhere between Combray and Méséglise. It had been the residence of M. Vinteuil, the music teacher, and after his death it belonged to his daughter. One evening the narrator, hidden in the shrubbery, witnessed the loves of Mademoiselle Vinteuil and her friend. Mademoiselle Vinteuil, as a preliminary preparation, had put her father's photograph in a prominent position ; then by repeated remarks such as "What would he say if he could see us now?" she incited her friend to insult him, and to spit upon his photograph. This was apparently part of the ritual of their love-making.

"She and her friend later, in penitence for what they had made Vinteuil suffer in his lifetime, gave him an immortality after death by the most devoted puzzling out from scraps of manuscript, and the most careful editing of his great septet."

Commenting on the incident the narrator of Proust's tale says : "It was true that in all Mlle. Vinteuil's actions the appearance of evil was so strong and so consistent that it would have been hard to find it exhibited in such completeness, save in what is nowadays called a 'sadist;' it is behind the footlights of a Paris theatre, and not under the homely lamp of an actual country-house, that one expects to see a girl leading her friend on to spit upon the portrait of a father who has lived and died for nothing and no one but herself ; and when we find in real life a desire for melodramatic effect, it is generally the 'sadic' instinct that is responsible for it."[1]

Like the woman in Proust's story the woman in the Jataka Story repents and atones for deceiving and inflicting cruelty on her husband. The woman's blindfolding of her husband and her subsequent devotion to him enhance the irony of the Jataka Story.

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1. *Swann's Way* part 1, p. 224.

VI

The opinions of European Orientalists, especially of Professors Rhys Davids and Macdonell, on the migration of the Jataka Stories and their subsequent history in the West, are well known to students of Indian culture. The observations which follow are mainly based on the studies of Rhys Davids and Macdonell.

There is evidence that a collection of stories called the Jatakas existed about 380 B.C. These stories assumed their present shape, as given in the Pali version, in the fifth century A.D. The Sanskrit work called *Panchatantra* seems to have been derived from the Jataka Stories; or both collections may be from a single source. In the sixth century the stories of the Sanskrit work the *Panchatantra* were translated into Pehlevi by a Persian physician. An Arabic version based on Pehlevi became the source of Syriac, Greek and Latin versions. From the Latin they were translated into German. The English version was from the Italian translation. It will be seen that the Indian stories were the original source of all the above translations and adaptations.[1]

Scholars have argued that all the stories of the Jataka collection could not have originated in India. Albert J. Edmunds in an article written to the *Monist* (I am writing from memory) tried to trace the well-known fable *Siha-Chamma Jataka* (The Lion Skin Story), which appears in *Aesop's Fables* under the title *Ass in the Lion's Skin* to Egypt.

Students who are acquainted with anthropology know the futility of all attempts to trace a folk-tale to its origin. Andrew Lang in his essay 'A Far-Travelled Tale' traced a well-known Scottish folk-tale *Nicht Nought Nothing* to

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1. Macdonell *Sanskrit Literature* Ch. XIV.
Rhys Davids *Jataka Stories* Introduction.
E. J. Thomas, Introduction to the *Jataka Tales*.

Greece, India, Russia, Finland, Japan, Samoa and some other countries.[1]

Wherever may have been the origin of some of the fables of the Jataka Book, no scholar has disputed their claim to be one of the oldest collections of tales in the world. Therefore it is not unsafe to treat the Jataka Stories as the indirect source of many Western versions of Eastern fables.

The *Maha Pingala Jataka*[2] resembles one of the fables of Krylov named *A Funeral*.[3]

King Pingala was a tyrant who oppressed all citizens, including his own kith and kin and ministers. The people hated him and thought of him as a dart that stuck in their bodies. When he died they betrayed their relief and joy by carrying cart-loads of firewood for the burning of his body.

Ministers and citizens, after cremating the king's body, returned to the palace and offered the crown to his son. The new king, seeing one of the palace guards wailing with suffocating grief, asked in surprise :

"My father, like a sugar-cane crusher who throws away the pulp after squeezing out the juice, oppressed the people. All of them rejoiced at his death and said, 'It is good that the king with tawny eyes is dead.' But you are breathless in your grief. What has he done for you?"

"I am not wailing because of any benefit he has bestowed on me," replied the guard. "When he ascended to the upper storey of the palace, he gave me eight sledge-hammer knocks on my head with his knuckles. And when descending, he gave me another eight. If he repeats his habitual practice in hell by giving knocks on the heads of his tormentors, and if they, because of the torture they have to endure, send the king back to this palace, I shall

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1. Andrew Lang *The Origins of Religion* (R.P.A. publication), pp. 24, 25.
2. Jataka Story 232.
3. Krylov *Russian Fables*.

have to endure his sledge-hammer knocks again. Therefore do I wail breathlessly.''

As in the above, there is a keen sense of humour and irony behind the following Jataka Story :[1]

A householder, pleased with an ascetic who was doing penance in the village, built a hut for him and served him regularly with food and drink. Fearing danger from thieves, the householder took his hoarded treasure of one hundred gold coins to the hut and buried them in a nook.

''Sir,'' he appealed to the ascetic, ''please take care of these coins. I leave them in your care.''

''My faithful devotee,'' replied the ascetic, ''hoarding of goods is against the ethics of asceticism. We ascetics do not covet another's wealth.''

The householder, pleased at the indifference of the ascetic to material things, thanked him and went away.

The ascetic coveted the gold coins. ''If I possess this wealth, I can live happily,'' he thought. After a few days he removed the gold coins and buried them at a spot on the road. He came back to the hut and began to practise asceticism as before.

On the second day the ascetic had his meals as usual at the house of the devotee, and said :

''My faithful devotee, because of you I have lived here for a long time. It is not becoming for an ascetic to live long in one place because he will develop friendly intercourse with laymen. Such intercourse is defiling to ascetics. Therefore. I will go somewhere else and practise my asceticism.''

The devotee appealed to the ascetic not to leave him.

''If you need anything, or if you have any suggestions to make, please tell me,'' said the devotee.

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1. Jataka Story 232.

The ascetic, refusing to listen to him, walked away. But the devotee followed him with humility and appealed to him to stay in the village.

"Sir," the devotee pleaded at last, "as you are determined to leave our village, I beseech you to come back as soon as possible." The householder returned home.

Later the ascetic took a blade of grass, put it between his matted hair, and went back to the devotee.

"My faithful devotee," said the ascetic, "when I was going out of your house, a blade of grass which belongs to you seems to have stuck in my matted hair. It is unbecoming for an ascetic to have with him even a trivial thing that belongs to another. Therefore I came to put back in your house this blade of grass which belongs to you."

"Oh ! sir, you have done no wrong ; it is only a blade of grass ! Please throw it away. I beseech you to proceed on your way."

"Oh ! what a conscientious ascetic," thought the villager, "he thinks, it a sin to take even a blade of grass that belongs to another."

He fell down and worshipped the ascetic.

The Bodhisatva, whilst visiting the village as a pedlar, stayed at the house of the devotee, who began to relate the great qualities of the ascetic with enthusiasm. On hearing of the unusual scrupulousness of the ascetic, the Bodhisatva suspected that an impostor, with an ulterior motive, must have played the villager a trick.

"Have you deposited your wealth somewhere here for safety?" asked the Bodhisatva.

"Yes, I buried a hundred gold coins inside the hut where the ascetic was living."

Both of them went at once to the hut only to find that the gold coins were not where the devotee had buried them.

"The impostor seems to have taken away your gold coins," said the Bodhisatva. "Run and catch him and search him."

The devotee ran and caught the ascetic. He found his one hundred coins hidden in the ascetic's matted hair. He took his coins and belaboured the impostor.

The above Jataka Story, I believe, will recall to the mind of a student of Western literature the character of Tartuffe in Moliere's drama *Tartuffe or the Impostor*. The title of the Buddhist story *Kuhaka Jataka* literally means the Impostor-Jataka. Anatole France in his essay *An Apology for Plagiarism*[1] traces the plot of Moliere's drama to a story *Les Hypocrites* by an earlier popular French writer, Scarron, who himself had borrowed it from a Spanish writer.

VII

Here is a Jataka Story that may help to establish a claim made by me earlier (page 3) to the effect that Buddhist writers attempted to reveal the working of the sub-conscious mind of some characters in their stories. The layman or the monk who handled the *Nanda Jataka*[2] seems to have made an attempt to reveal the working of the subconscious mind of a domestic slave. The story is as follows :

There was a rich householder in Benares. Though old, he married a very young girl, and she gave birth to a son.

"My wife is young," thought the rich householder. "After my death, she will have another husband, and with him she will squander this wealth of mine. She will never hand over my wealth to my son."

With his domestic slave, Nanda, he left home and entered a forest. He dug a pit and buried his wealth.

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1. *On Life and Letters* Fourth Series.
2. Jataka Story 39.

"My faithful slave Nanda," he addressed the slave, "on my death, please tell my son of the treasure buried here. Don't squander it yourself."

The rich man died, and his son gradually attained manhood. His mother one day called him and said, "My son, your father took the slave Nanda with him to the forest, and buried his wealth there. You had better seek that treasure, marry a girl, and support her with the wealth your father has left."

"Brother Nanda," the young man addressed the slave one day, "has my father buried his wealth somewhere?"

"Yes my lord," said the slave.

"Where?"

"In the forest."

"Then let us go in search of it."

The young man took a hoe and basket and entered the forest followed by the slave.

"Which is the place where my father buried his wealth?" asked the young man.

The slave Nanda, who was standing on the spot where the buried treasure lay hidden, suddenly became arrogant.

"You son of a slave woman!" retorted Nanda. "Do you dare to aspire to possess wealth, forgetting that you are the son of a slave woman?"

The slave continued to abuse the young man, but he pretended not to hear the abuse hurled at him by the slave.

"If it is so, let us go back," said the young man.

Three days later he again entered the forest with the slave. The slave stood on the same spot as on the first day and began to abuse the young man. Again he went back home with the slave.

"This slave," thought he, "promised me to point out the spot where the treasure was buried. But as soon

as he enters the forest he begins to abuse me. Here is some mystery which I cannot understand. There is a rich wise householder who was my father's intimate friend. I will go to him and seek his advice on the matter."

He described the behaviour of the slave to the Bodhisatva, who was his father's friend, and asked him: "Sire, please tell me why the slave Nanda behaves towards me in this way."

"Son," said the Bodhisatva, "the spot on which the slave Nanda stands and abuses you is, most likely, the spot where the buried treasure is hidden. Next time when he gets to the spot, he will begin to abuse you as usual. You threaten him and say, 'Hey, you slave, come.' Then seize him by the neck and push him away. Take your hoe, dig the spot and remove the treasure buried by your father. Command your slave to carry it home. Your slave Nanda was born of a slave woman who had blue blood in her veins. The spot in the forest where he stood and abused you is, I am sure, the place where the treasure of gold, silver, gems and pearls lie buried."

The young man followed the instructions of the Bodhisatva, and found the treasure.

The beauty of this simple story, I believe, lies in its attempt to probe the subconscious mind of the slave and to reveal the cause of his strange behaviour. It will be seen that in this story the Bodhisatva has been given the role of a psycho-analyst. The Jataka Story itself says that the young man went to consult him because the behaviour of the slave was a mystery he could not solve. It is not the solution of the mystery, but the instructions and the remarks of the Bodhisatva that deserve consideration. These were the instructions given by the Bodhisatva to the young man :

"Say, 'Hey! you slave, come.' Then seize him by the neck and push him away."

After giving him these instructions the Bodhisatva said that Nanda was born of a slave woman who had blue blood in her veins. The attempted psycho-analysis of this story cannot be considered unintentional. It appears to be a story written to reveal the working of the subconscious mind of the slave.

VIII

The Buddhist monks always attempted to explain the strange feelings, perversions and urges of the human mind in terms of the Buddhist doctrine of *Karma*. It can be explained as a theory of spiritual heredity. Man's feelings and instincts are considered the accumulated inheritance from his previous lives. When a man is reborn, there is a complete break between his present body and the physical organism of his previous birth; but not so with his mental make-up. The mental make-up of a man reborn is the accumulated inheritance of the results of his thoughts and actions, good or evil, committed in his innumerable past lives. The doctrine of *Karma*, apart from its philosophical aspect, is a working hypothesis intended to explain the difficulties of the presence of good and evil in man. Influenced by the *Karma* theory, Buddhist story-writers seem to have become instinctive psycho-analysts. It is immaterial whether they attributed the instincts and subconscious phenomena of the human mind to past lives or to an animal inheritance from an evolutionary past.

There are other stories of this type in the Jataka Book. The *Kuddala Jataka* is one :[1]

Once upon a time the Bodhisatva was born as a cultivator and was known as Pandit Kuddala, who was very dexterous in wielding the hoe. He cultivated his plot of land with fruit-trees, pumpkin, cucumber and water-melon. His only wealth was his hoe, and life for him was very hard.

1. Jataka Story 70.

"This domestic life has no meaning for me," he thought one day, "I must give up this householder's life and become a mendicant."

He hid his old hoe, and became a mendicant. But his attachment to his old hoe was such that he could not suppress his yearning to handle it. So he discarded the robe and reverted to his former occupation. In this way he hid his hoe six times and tried each time to live the life of a mendicant, but each time he yearned for his hoe and discarded the robe. Finally he determined to overcome his attachment to his hoe. "On account of this hoe," he thought, "I have again and again gone back to the cultivator's life. Now I must throw this hoe into the river and become a mendicant."

He went to the bank of the river. "If I see," thought he, "the spot on which this hoe falls into the river, it will be a temptation for me to come back and dive and find it out." Shutting his eyes tightly and holding the hoe firmly by the handle, he whirled it thrice over his head, threw it into the river and triumphantly cried, "Victory is for me, victory is for me, victory is for me !"

The king of Benares, decked in regal splendour, was riding an elephant. He heard the cultivator's cry of victory. "This man," thought the king, "triumphantly cries that victory is for him. Over whom has he gained this victory? I must question him."

The king ordered his men to bring the cultivator to him.

"My dear man," said the king to the cultivator, "I am coming after a victorious battle over enemies who started a rebellion on the frontiers of my state. Over whom have you fought a victorious battle?"

"Your majesty," the cultivator replied, "you may have been victorious in one thousand—nay, one hundred thousand—battles. But as you have failed to overcome lust and other passions, you are not a real victor. I have condemned my craving inner self and gained victory over lust."

The attempt made in the above story to convey the inner thoughts of the character to the reader should be compared with the technical device called 'interior monologue' found in modorn novels.

The following Jataka Story,[1] probably a distorted folk-tale, is of the same type :

After the death of their mother, the Bodhisatva and his brother left home and entered a forest. On the bank of the river they built two huts and lived there. In the Naga world, not far away from the hut of the Bodhisatva's brother, there lived a cobra king. Assuming human form, it began to walk in front of his hut.

Gradually the cobra king developed an attachment for the ascetic. So fond of the ascetic did the cobra become that it acquired a habit of coiling itself round the man's trunk and placing its hood on the man's head as if in a loving embrace. After enjoying the pleasurable sensation for a little while, the cobra would uncoil itself and slowly glide away. This became a part of the daily routine of the cobra. As a result of this reptilian contact, the ascetic gradually became emaciated, and then very weak and anaemic.

One day the Bodhisatva came to see his brother. Astonished at the changed body of his brother, he asked : "How did you become so weak and emaciated?"

"A cobra king visits me daily and embraces me. As a result of his embrace I have become emaciated."

"Do you wish that the cobra should not come and embrace you?"

"Yes."

"With what jewellery does it deck itself when it comes to you?"

"Only a necklace with a gem."

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1. Jataka Story 245.

"When it comes to you tomorrow, you ask for this gem. It will flee. Ask again for this gem the following day. If you go on asking for this gem, it will keep away from you."

The next day when the cobra came, the Bodhisatva's brother asked for the gem. The cobra slowly glided away. On the following day when the ascetic saw the cobra, he asked again for the gem. Again the cobra disappeared. After the third day, the ascetic never saw the cobra again. But he became more depressed and was a pitiable sight.

When the Bodhisatva paid a second visit to his brother, he was surprised to see that his brother's condition had become worse, instead of better.

"You are more emaciated and weaker than before. Why?" he asked.

"Because I miss seeing the cobra," replied the brother ascetic.

"My brother," thought the Bodhisatva, "is in love with the cobra. If he dies, it will be a calamity. I must try and console him."

He then advised his brother and persuaded him to get rid of his attachment for the cobra.

This seems to be a folk-tale distorted by Buddhist story-tellers. But the distortion turns it into an uncanny study of ascetic psychology. Probably the cobra was only a symbol that represented human passion or the ascetic's attachment to his former domestic life. He became emaciated and weak because he could not get rid of his craving for the kind of life which he had renounced. In his mental conflict the cobra represented the lust from which his mind struggled to escape. There is a discourse of the Buddha in which he compared lust and other passions to cobras.

Another little story of this type is called the *Sujata Jataka* :[1]

There was a man who earned his living as a fruitseller.

One day his daughter, a young woman of maidenly beauty, passing the king's palace and carrying on her head a basket filled with *debara* fruits, cried : "Debara fruits ! debara fruits !"

Hearing her voice, the king who was in the upper storey of his palace, desired her. On ascertaining that she was not married, he called her into the palace and made her his queen. He supplied her with all the luxuries of the palace and a retinue of maids to make her a real queen.

One day the king filled a golden bowl with *debara* fruits and was eating them with relish. "My lord," said the new queen, "what luscious fruits are these? In the golden bowl they appear to be of blood-red colour. Please tell me without reserve what they are."

"You hussy !" retorted the king in anger, "the daughter of a man who sold *debara* fruits professes not to know these fruits. Selling them was your birthright. You flattened your head by carrying daily, a basket of these fruits. You went to the forest and stretched yourself bending the branches of *debara* trees to pick the fruits. And, wearing rags you collected them with both your hands and filled the corner of your cloth with them to be taken for sale. The fruits I enjoy are the things most familiar to you."

He then turned to his men and thundered : "This miserable woman, living in this palace, tries to pretend that she is living in hell. Take her away and leave her in the place where she used to live by selling *debara* fruits."

The title given to this story literally means "The story of the well-born." The monkish editors seem to have thought of sharpening the sarcasm of the tale by deliberately giving it an ironical title.

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1. Jataka Story 261.

IX

Prince Asanagha of the *Chullapalobhana Jataka* was born as a misogynist. Being extremely shy of females, he was fed and brought up by male nurses. When he attained puberty he lived alone in a palace served only by men servants. One day he overheard the voice of a female singer, and became enamoured of her. On his orders the woman was brought up to his inner apartment by one of his male attendants. He at once fell in love with her and made her his wife. Intoxicated with a desire for erotic pleasure he rushed out of the palace sword in hand and began to attack every man he met.

F. L. Lucas, in his *Literature and Psychology* relates the case of a doctor recorded by a psycho-analyst : "Brill records the somewhat different case of a doctor who was bewitched by hearing a woman sing the 'Spring Song' from *Samson and Delilah*. Timid though he was, he did actually meet and marry her. Soon afterwards she died ; but he was just as happy with records of her voice as he had been with the living woman."[1]

According to the psycho-analyst the doctor who became enamoured of the singer was a timid man. The Jataka Story suggests the timidity and shyness of the young prince by saying that he lived alone in a palace with men servants.

There is a strange episode in the *Kunala Jataka* of a king who fell madly in love with a very ugly girl : Baka, the king of Benares was walking in disguise through the streets of his city. When he came to a certain corner in a by-way he saw a group of poor girls playing and making merry. When he approached them one of the girls, who was very ugly, not knowing that he was the king, dared to catch one of his hands. The king was thrilled, as by the delicious touch of a goddess. When night fell he went with the girl to her parents' house and spent the night with her and left

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1. p. 92.

her before day-break. He visited her every night subsequently, and left her before day-break; so that they never had an opportunity to see each other.

He became very fond of her, but was afraid to take her to his palace because of her ugliness. One day he sent his guards to arrest her and charge her with the theft of a jewel that belonged to the king.

She confessed that she had found the jewel in a packet of cooked rice sent to her by a man who visited her at dead of night. But as she never had an opportunity to see him, she would be unable to identify the man even if she were to see him.

She was ordered to stand behind a curtain and stretch her hand out through a hole in the curtain. The king ordered his ministers to hold her hand, so that she would be able to identify the man who visited her at night. The ministers, who had seen her before, loathed her. However, one by one they approached her and held her hand. Every one of them was thrilled and was enamoured of her because of the delicious contact they had with her flesh. All of them stood near to her outstretched hand reluctant to move away. Then the king advanced and took her hand. She at once said, "Here is the hand of the man who visited me at dead of night."

The king made her his queen.

People falling in love with ugly women is not a rare occurrence. Doctor Stekel mentions the case of a 'Witwensammler'—a collector of widows. "The intensity of his passion was in proportion to the recency of the bereavement. Young or old, pretty or ugly, he did not care, provided they were widows. His real pride was in widows he had won on the very day of the funeral."[1]

The Buddhist story called *Chunda the Wild Boar Hunter* contains a vivid description of a psychological malady

1. *Literature and Psychology* p. 91.

from which he suffered for seven days before he died. The hunter, in anticipation of unsuccessful hunting trips, goes to the villages with a cart-load of paddy and rice and barters them for pigs. He returns home with a cart-load of young pigs and fattens them in his back-yard. One by one he kills them and sells the meat, keeping the best for himself.

He takes one of the pigs, ties it to a post, and belabours it with an iron club with a square head. Then he pours boiling water over its body and burns the bristles with a leafy torch. At last he kills the tortured animal by cutting its neck with a sharp iron.

This hunter, when he was fifty-five years old fell ill. He rushes on his knees squealing and grunting from one end of the house to the other. The inmates of the house try to close his wide-opened mouth, but without success. He continues his squeals and grunts and rushes hither and thither. The neighbours have no sleep throughout the night. He becomes as violent as a mad dog. People close the entrances to his house and watch him from outside. He continues to squeal and rush inside the house for seven days, before he dies.

Many readers, I believe, would treat this story as a childish invention of Buddhist monks, who tried to din into the ears of pious believers the truth of the *Karma* theory. But modern psycho-analysis proves that behind this story there is a psychological truth. I give below the two mental cases quoted by F. L. Lucas in his *Literature and Psychology* :

"A husband had an affair with his sister-in-law. His wife caught pneumonia. While administering oxygen, he 'accidentally' let the oxygen escape ; and during the delay in bringing another cylinder, his wife died. On the exact anniversary (as I have said, the Unconscious seems a great stickler for anniversaries) he was attacked by asthma

which made him gasp for breath as his dying wife had gasped.

"Another patient was tormented with asthma and a choking cough. As a child, it turned out, he had once amused himself by feeding a cat with meat tied on a string so that the animal choked to death. He had become in adult life, by a useful over-compensation of his childish sadism, a member of a society for preventing cruelty to animals. But his unconscious conscience had somehow been provoked to demand its eye for an eye, its tooth for a tooth. He must choke as the poor beast had choked."[1]

To the modern psychologist these are pathological and abnormal cases; but to the Buddhist who believes in the *Karma*, they are hidden effects brought out to the conscious level by the environmental factors. These hidden effects are the accumulated results of the thoughts and deeds of a man's past lives and of his present life.

X

The theme and the plot of the following Jataka Story[2] have, I believe, become hackneyed elements in many stories and dramas written by modern novelists. But the Jataka Story has a poignant and pathetic ironical ending in its naive attempt to reveal an aspect of love and sex psychology :

On the day of the *Kartika* festival a poor man washed and carefully folded his two garments, and left them in their place in the house.

His wife, approaching him, said : "I love to wear a cloth of the colour of the *vanuk* flower and kiss you and sport with you in the street on the festival day."

"I am poor," said her husband, "how can I get clothes of the colour of the *vanuk* flower ? There is a clean white cloth. Wear that and join in the festival."

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1. p. 82.
2. Jataka Story 143.

"No," she said, "I will take part in the sports only if I get a cloth of the colour of the *vanuk* flower. If you wish to join the erotic sports, dressed in white, you had better look for another woman,—not me."

He appealed to her to give up the idea of having a cloth of that particular colour. But she persisted in her decision to have the coloured cloth.

"A man, if he has the determination, can do anything," said the wife. "If it is not possible to have a cloth of the colour of the *vanuk* flower, please secure for me the flowers themselves. The king has a garden full of *vanuk* flowers. Go and pick them for me."

"I am afraid," the husband answered, "even to peep over the fence of the king's flower-garden. How can I enter, and pick the flowers? Neither can I enter it in the night and steal flowers."

But the woman persisted in her whim. The man agreed and gained access to the garden by jumping over the fence. The king's gardeners caught and bound him, and took him the following morning to the king.

"Why do you bring him here?" said the king. "If you caught him trespassing in the garden during the night, you have the right to put him to death on the iron pike."

They took him, accompanied by drummers and the executioner, and put him on the iron pike. In spite of the excruciating pain he was suffering, the man thought of his wife. "I grieve for my wife. It is painful for me to think of my wife's disappointment and consequent pain," he said to himself.

"My friend," he addressed a crow who was hovering over his head, "my wife, perhaps thinking of me, is agitated, not knowing the fate that has overtaken me. Please go and tell her of my fate. Tell her that there is my jacket of the colour of the blue lotus and a gold ring

weighing fifteen *kalandas*. Tell her to take them and not to grieve for me on seeing them."

He died on the iron pike.

There are two versions of this story in the *Book of Birth Stories*. The version I have given is based on the *Pushpa-Ratna Jataka*, but I have added to it the last paragraph from the other version.

Love and sex can be seen treated in the same manner in a fable called the *Matsya Jataka*:[1]

Some fishermen of Benares were fishing with throw-nets. A big fish was gambolling in sex play with its mate. The female fish, who was gambolling ahead of the male, smelt the net and avoided it. The male, while pursuing the female with intense desire, rushed into the pocket of the net.

The fishermen hauled the net, disentangled the fish and threw it on the sand. "We will eat it, grilling it on the hot cinders," said the fishermen. Some of them prepared the fire, others were making wooden prongs. The fish did not think of the pain of being pricked with prongs and grilled because it was thinking of its mate. "Will she," thought the fish, "go with another male and become his mate?" It felt a pang of pain when it thought of its mate joining another fish.

The *Ubhaya Brashta Jataka*[2] is a heartless satire on fishermen.

A fisherman, taking his rod, accompanied by his son, went to a lake in the midst of a forest. The fisherman threw his line into the lake which was teeming with fish. A little later he jerked and pulled the rod. He felt there was something very heavy hanging at the end of the line. Thinking that he had caught a very big fish, he told his

1. Jataka Story 34.
2. Jataka Story 135.

son to run home and tell his mother to pick a quarrel with her neighbour.

As he was unable to haul in the line, he feared it would snap. He put away his loin cloth, jumped into the lake, and with outstretched hands was trying to get at the imaginary fish. Two sticks jutting out of the water pierced his eyes and blinded him. A thief who was passing the spot carried away his loin cloth.

His wife, following the instructions of her husband, rubbed soot on her face and body. Then, taking a puppy and caressing it as if it was her son, she began to behave like a mad woman. When the other women told her she was mad, she began to quarrel and argue with them. "No, I am not mad," she screamed, "but you are."

When their argument developed into a quarrel, people took them to the headman. He fined the fisherman's wife and drove them all away.

The fisherman came out of the water with one hand pressed over his eyes, and began to feel with the other for his loin-cloth. But it was not there.

The introductory narrative of the *Wattaka Jataka*[1] is a complicated tale based on the life of a celibate who lived in a society where sex was worshipped :

Sons of rich merchants of Sravasti and their wives were participating in an erotic festival which was to continue for seven days. There was a young man named Uttara who usually kept away from these festivals. The young men, anxious to have Uttara with them, ran to his house and appealed to him to join them. Uttara refused.

They then ran to a prostitute of the city, and got her to wear silk and deck herself with jewellery. Next they took her to Uttara and pushed her into his room.

1. Jataka Story 114.

Uttara was indifferent to her, and did not even look at her. She became coquettish and began to display her charms, but the young man was unresponsive, as if her body was merely a piece of bone to him.

When she was about to go, Uttara thought, "Why should she go empty-handed?" and gave her gifts in money and kind.

When she was on her way home, a rich minister desired her and took her to his house.

At the conclusion of the festival the prostitute did not return home. Her mother, in alarm, hastened to the young men who had taken her daughter away.

"You took away my daughter, where is she? Please give her back to me," entreated the woman.

"We gave her over to Uttara. Go to him."

The woman went to see Uttara. "Please give me back my daughter," she appealed.

"I sent her back the same day. I do not know her whereabouts," replied the young man.

She accused him of foul play and insisted that he should go with her to the king. As the young man was unable to explain what had happened to the prostitute, the king had to punish him. He was taken away by the executioners to be beheaded.

People who knew Uttara and his celibate life began to wail and sob. The prostitute, hearing of the calamity that had befallen Uttara, rushed down from the upper storey of the minister's palace.

The executioners, in releasing the young man, gave him over to the prostitute. Uttara bathed in the lake and went to his home. Having eaten his food, he went over to the monastery and became a monk.

The following Jataka Story,[1] which reveals certain aspects of feminine psychology, is neither a real folk-tale nor a romance :

The Bodhisatva, son of a rich merchant, became a daring robber and thief. He was chivalrous and as strong as an elephant calf.

One day he broke into the house of a wealthy merchant and robbed him of all his valuables. The following morning the alarmed citizens went to the palace and beseeched the king to order his guards to catch the thief who was terrorising the people. On the order of the king, the captain of the guards posted his men at all strategic places in the city. The robber was caught and brought before the king, who ordered him to be beheaded.

The robber, decked with garlands of red flowers, his hair dusted with powdered tiles, was marched away to the accompaniment of funeral drums to the place of execution. At every crossing he was whipped.

The famous courtesan, Sama, who was patronised by the king and the ministers, was the head of an establishment where there were five hundred women. She opened the window of the upper storey of her palace and saw the robber, whose towering figure was the incarnation of fascinating virility.

She fell in love with him and began to think of a way of rescuing him and making him her husband. She called one of her women and gave her a thousand coins.

"Tell the captain of the guards," said the courtesan, "that the robber is my only brother. He has none to help him other than me his sister. Tell him to release him and send him on to me."

The captain refused.

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1. Jataka Story 321.

"This man," said he, "is a notorious robber; therefore it is impossible for me to release him. If Sama will send me another man to be executed in his place, then I will send the robber to her in a curtained palanquin."

The son of a rich man visited Sama in the evening to spend the night with her. Sama took the purse of a thousand coins offered to her by the young man, and placing it on her lap began to sob.

"Why are you crying?" asked the young man.

"Oh my lord, the robber who was taken away for execution is my brother. Being ashamed of his evil life he kept away from me. I sent a messenger to beg of the captain to release him. He refused and told her that he would release him if I sent a bribe of a thousand coins. I have nobody to send the bribe to him."

"Don't worry. I will take the bribe to him," said the young man, who was eager to spend the night with her.

"Then please take these coins you yourself brought," she told him.

The young man went to the captain's house and was confined in a room, while the robber was released and sent over to Sama in a closed palanquin.

"Look here," the captain told his guards, "this robber is a notorious and daring fellow. We will take him to the execution ground after midnight."

After midnight the young man who brought the bribe was taken to the place of execution and was beheaded; the trunk was put on an iron pike.

The courtesan Sama, refusing to admit any visitor, became the faithful and devoted wife of the robber.

"I must escape from her," thought the robber. "But why should I go empty-handed when I can steal her jewellery?"

One day he suggested to Sama : "Both of us are living like fowls confined within a pen. Let us go out on a picnic."

Sama prepared victuals and other requisites for the picnic. She put on her best clothes and decked herself in expensive jewellery. Both of them got into a curtained palanquin and went to the pleasure garden. They ate, drank, sported and enjoyed themselves.

The robber, pretending that he wished to have intercourse with her, took her into a bower. Embracing her with fervour, he tried to kill her by squeezing her with all his strength. She fell swooning, and became unconscious.

Thinking she was dead, the robber removed her jewellery, bundled it in his upper garment, and went away.

Sama regained consciousness and went to her women companions. "Where is my husband?" she asked.

"We don't know," the women replied in chorus.

"Perhaps," thought Sama, "my husband became frightened, thinking that I was dead. I cannot console myself until I see my husband."

She went home, discarded her fine clothes and put on coarse and dirty ones. She lived on one meal a day, shunned her comfortable bed, and slept on the floor.

She called the minstrels and dancers and paid them well. Then she ordered them to visit every city, suburb and village, and entertain the people. She composed a song and told them to sing it at every performance.

"If my husband hears it he is sure to come to you," said Sama. "When he comes, tell him that I am in perfect health. If you can't bring him to me, send me a message."

The minstrels travelled all over the country. At last they came to a village, began their performance, and sang the song Sama had composed.

The robber, who was in the crowd, came to the minstrels.

"Look here, you fellows, you say that Sama is living, but I refuse to believe you. If I believe you, then I must believe that the wind has uprooted and blown away huge rocks. The dead never speak," said the robber.

"Lord," said one of the minstrels, "Sama is not dead —she is alive. She shuns all other men. Since you left her, she wears soiled garments, she refuses to touch flowers, unguents and scents ; she takes one meal a day and sleeps on the floor. She is anxiously awaiting your return."

"Whether she is alive or not does not concern me," said the robber, "I would rather escape to a country where I shall hear no news of her."

Tightening his loin cloth, the robber went away in a hurry, and the minstrels observed his behaviour.

XI

There is a crude but strange story called the *Asatamanta Jataka*,[1] in which a glimpse of the mind of a very old woman who attempted to kill her son is convincingly revealed :

The Bodhisatva was the head of the great seat of learning at Taxila. His mother was very old. The Bodhisatva fed her, bathed her and attended on her. But the neighbours loathed the old woman and laughed at the Bodhisatva. He thought, "I must take my mother away and live with her in a lonely place." He built a hut in the jungle, took her there and lived with her.

1. Jataka Story 61.

A former student of the Bodhisatva came to Taxila, and on hearing that he was living in the forest, he went there.

"Sir, you didn't teach me the *asatamanta*," he said on meeting the teacher.

"Who told you to learn the *asatamanta?*" asked the teacher.

"My mother, Sir."

"There is no such thing as *asatamanta*," thought the teacher. "Perhaps, the young man's mother wishes him to learn something about women and their wiles."

"All right son," answered the teacher, "I will teach you the *asatamanta*. From today you must take my place, feed and bathe my mother and attend on her. You will have to massage her hands, feet, and back and gently comb her hair. When you thus attend on her, you must tell her that, though she is old, traces of her former beauty are still visible on her body. What a beautiful body she must have had when she was young. And when you touch and massage her hands and feet, you should not forget to admire and praise her limbs. If my mother says or suggests to you anything, tell me frankly all about it. Otherwise you will not get any instruction on the matter from me."

The student followed his instructions to the letter. He admired her body and praised her beauty in the course of massaging her limbs. "Perhaps he likes me," thought the old woman. The student was successful in rousing her dormant desires.

One day, when the student was massaging her and was admiring her body, she asked, "Do you wish to enjoy me?"

"Yes, I do wish to, but your son is my revered teacher," he answered.

"If you wish to have me, then kill my son," said the old woman.

"I have been learning at his feet all this time. How can I kill him to satisfy a sensual desire?"

"If you promise not to desert me, I myself will kill him."

The student told his teacher everything. The teacher knew that his mother would not live a day longer.

The Bodhisatva made a wooden statue of his own size, and placed it on the bed where he slept. He covered the statue from head to foot with a cloth, fastened a rope to the bed, and placed an axe close by.

The student went to the old woman and said : "My teacher is now sleeping in his bed, to which I have fastened a rope. Take the axe, reach his bed with the help of the rope, and kill him."

"Will you promise not to desert me?" asked the old woman.

"Why should I desert you?" replied the student.

The old woman took the axe in her hand, and with the help of the rope approached the bed. She pulled down the corner of the cloth which covered the face of the statue, and with the intention of killing her son at one stroke, she brought down the axe. By the sound which the wooden statue emitted, she felt it was not her son but a statue on which her murderous blow had fallen.

The teacher, who was watching the attack, asked : "Dear mother, what are you doing?"

The old woman fell dead on the spot.

The story called the *Chulla Dharmapala Jataka*[1] consists only of a report of a trivial incident and a gruesome description of the strange and murderous behaviour of a tyrant who reacted to it :

1. Jataka Story 537.

Queen Chandra bathed her first-born son, whose age was only seven months. She applied unguents, dressed him and began to feed him. With a feeling of ecstasy, she was intensely absorbed in the prattle and pranks of her infant son.

King Mahapratapa entered the queen's apartment. Fascinated by her darling son, the queen ignored the king, and did not attempt even to rise from her seat at his approach.

"Her son is only seven months old," thought the enraged king, "but because of him the queen, even after seeing me, refused to get up from her seat. When her son grows up and attains manhood, she will completely ignore me."

The king went back in anger and sat on the throne. He called the executioner and ordered him to bring his infant son. The executioner entered the queen's apartment and gave her a smack on her back. Then he gripped the infant by the legs and carried him away.

"Torture the baby to death," ordered the king; "sever his arms first."

"Oh ! king, it is I who am guilty. Please sever my hands. What wrong has he done?" cried the queen.

"Don't hesitate, sever his arms," thundered the king.

The queen, hugging the severed limbs of her son, began to wail.

"Sever his legs," the king ordered the executioner.

"King, my son has done no wrong. I am the guilty one. Please sever my legs," shrieked the grief-stricken queen.

The king thundered again. The executioner severed the lower limbs of the infant.

"Sever his head," the king ordered.

"O king, you have severed the limbs of my son. Now he is unable to usurp your throne; therefore please spare him."

At one stroke the executioner severed the head from the limbless trunk. Then he took up the trunk, threw it up, and dexterously cut it into pieces. The queen, collecting and hugging the severed limbs of her son, went round the palace crying and wailing in despair. She died of grief.

This gruesome story, I believe, exaggerates but does not falsify the psychology of a fearfully jealous and suspicious tyrant. By ignoring him the queen seemed to have roused his sex jealousy, which was dormant in his subconscious mind. He felt that the queen had transferred her love to her son. In the olden days, not only rivals but brothers and sons in their lust for power and kingship plotted even the death of their brothers and fathers. There are Jataka Stories in which sons murder their fathers and usurp the throne. So, fear and suspicion of rivals, in addition to sex jealousy, seem to have maddened the king. This is not mere conjecture, it is apparent from the words spoken by the queen when the king ordered the executioner to cut off the head of her son: "You have severed the limbs of my son. Now he is unable to usurp your throne—please spare him."

It is clear from these words that the king's murderous behaviour was not the outcome only of sex jealousy and of injured vanity caused by the queen's behaviour. The fear and suspicion of rivals—common in those times when kings often became tyrants—seem to have combined with his jealousy to make him a monster.

XII

In the Jataka Book there are many stories which mercilessly satirize kings and their conduct. The Buddhist monks who handle these stories seem to have become

fearless and bitter critics of the kings and the aristocracy of ancient India. Their independent spirit can be better appreciated by comparing some of the Jataka Stories with those of the *Panchatantra* and the *Hitopadesa*. A certain type of story in these and other Sanskrit prose works seems to have been written by court Brahmins, with the professed purpose of imparting a knowledge of statecraft to aristocratic youth, but with the deliberate intention of defending and justifying even the immoral conduct of kings and princes. Professor Berriedale Keith, referring to this particular type of story says :

"The conception of the composition was developed for the service of the Court, that the minds of princes should be imbued in the most pleasant way with the principles of statecraft, policy and practical life generally; all the topics, in fact, which are summed up in the term *Arthasastra* or *Nitisastra*, for the two are closely connected. This fact is important, for it accounts at first sight, for the curious fact that the tales often illustrate rather dubious morals, and cannot by any effort of the imagination be said to present a creditable set of ideals. This difficulty disappears when we realise that the aim was not to illustrate the Brahminical moral code, but to give useful advice for political and practical life."[1]

The Buddhist monks who handled the Jataka Stories were not only critics of tyrants but were unconscious psycho-analysts. Their knowledge of Buddhist psychology and of the *Karma* theory seems to have made them instinctive psycho-analysts. There are many cruel and inhuman sadistic tales in the book of Jataka Stories. The inclusion of such tales in a book which is regarded as canonical cannot be explained by treating them as a collection of folk-tales inherited from a barbarous past.

Here is the story *Kshanti Vadi Jataka*,[2] which means 'the

1. Berriedale Keith *Classical Sanskrit Literature* p. 103.
2. Jataka Story 314.

story of the Bodhisatva who practised forbearance'. Unsympathetic readers will treat the unbelievable sadism of this story as an invention of the monks for the purpose of propaganda.

When king Kalabu was reigning in Kasi, the Bodhisatva was born in a Brahmin family, and was named Kurundaka. After the death of his parents, Kurundaka distributed all his inherited wealth amongst the poor and retired to the Himalayan forest. During the rainy season he entered the royal pleasure garden. One day, on his begging rounds through the streets, he halted in front of the palace of the commander-in-chief. The commander-in-chief pleased at his conduct and humility, offered him food and continued to do so regularly.

King Kalabu with the women of his harem was celebrating a seven-day erotic festival in his pleasure garden. After an orgy of sensual pleasures, the drunken king, resting his head on the lap of one of the women, fell asleep. The other women, who had been entertaining the king with dancing and singing, laid down their drums and other musical instruments and went over to the ascetic, who was seated at the foot of a tree a little way off. The ascetic began to preach them a sermon.

The woman who was alone with the king shook herself.

Awakened, the king asked, "Where is the pack of low-caste lasses who were here?"

"They are listening to a sermon preached by the ascetic," was the answer.

"I will silence him," muttered the king, and brandishing his sword, ran towards the ascetic; but the woman ran and snatched the sword from his hand.

"What particular asceticism do you practise?" asked the king.

"The asceticism, O king, of forbearance and forgiveness."

"What is that?"

"My response to both love and hate is mercy."

"I would like to test his forbearance and forgiveness," thought the king. He called the executioner and ordered him : "Take this hypocritical ascetic and give him five hundred strokes each on his back and belly, and two hundred on each of his sides."

After the punishment had been inflicted, the king asked the ascetic : "Have your forbearance and forgiveness left you now?"

"No, king," said the ascetic, "they are in my feet."

On the order of the king, the executioner cut off the ascetic's feet.

"Are you still an ascetic who practises forbearance and forgiveness?" asked the king.

"My forbearance and forgiveness reside in my heart," was the answer.

On the order of the king, the executioner cut off the ascetic's ears and nose. Bathed in blood, the ascetic lay prostrate, muttering, "O king, my forbearance and forgiveness lie hidden deep in my heart. Whatever torture you may cause to be inflicted on me, there they will remain."

Then the king raised his foot and brought it down crushing the man's chest, and went away.

The commander-in-chief, who befriended the ascetic, ran up and began to nurse him. He worshipped the ascetic and entreated him not to curse the people, as the king only was responsible for torturing him.

"If you wish to curse, then curse only the king," said the commander.

"It is true," said the ascetic, "that the king has tortured me by cutting off my feet, ears and nose. But I do not hate him for it. May the king live long and be well."

To us the sadism of the above story is not only impossible but silly. But these stories or inventions seem to have been suggested to Buddhist monks by their society and environment in the days of terrible tyrants who lived in a mental atmosphere of suspicion, fear and anxiety created by themselves. To a sex-mad tyrant who goes to one extreme, the ascetic who goes to the other extreme in shunning sensual pleasures and renouncing all material wealth, must have been a source of extreme provocation. When king Kalabu heard that his women were listening to a sermon preached by an ascetic whose ideal of life was the opposite of his own, he acted like a madman. These considerations lessen to a great extent the extravagance of the sadism in the story, and of the pleasure the king derived from inflicting it.

When Kalabu was awakened he asked, "Where is the pack of low-caste lasses ?" These words of the king do not betray any anger, or jealousy, or injured vanity. Probably, the king was still in a jovial or playful mood, and he desired their company further. As soon as he learned that they were listening to a sermon preached by the ascetic, he betrayed anger, jealousy and the vindictiveness of a tyrant whose vanity had been injured.

The behaviour of his women and the knowledge of the presence of the ascetic in his pleasure garden when he was indulging in sensuality seem to have opened the floodgates of his subconscious mind, where lurked his hate and fear of the ascetics and the ascetic way of life.

XIII

There is a strange aspect of sadism described in Volume 12 of Marcel Proust's novel *Remembrances of Things Past*.[1]

1. *Time Regained* p. 144.

It is a reference to the aberration of a man named Baron Charlus of the highest French society, who derived intense pleasure in undergoing physical torture inflicted on him at his own request.

"Soon I was shown up to No. 43," says the narrator of Marcel Proust's novel, "but the atmosphere was so unpleasant and my curiosity so great that, having drunk my *cassis*, I descended the stairs, then, seized with another idea, I went up again and, without stopping at the floor where my room was, I went right up to the top. All of a sudden, from a room which was isolated at the end of the corridor, I seemed to hear stifled groans. I went rapidly towards them and applied my ear to the door.

" 'I implore you, pity, pity, unloose me, unchain me, do not strike me so hard,' said a voice.

" 'I kiss your feet, I humiliate myself, I won't do it again, have pity.'

"'I won't, you blackguard,' replied another voice, 'and as you are screaming and dragging yourself about on your knees like that, I'll tie you to the bed. No mercy !'

"And I heard the crack of a cat-o'-nine-tails, probably loaded with nails, for it was followed by cries of pain. Then I perceived that there was a lateral peep-hole in the room, the curtain of which they had forgotten to draw. Creeping softly in that direction, I glided up to the peep-hole, and there on the bed, like Prometheus bound to his rock, squirming under the strokes of a cat-o'-nine-tails, which was, as a fact, loaded with nails, wielded by Maurice, already bleeding and covered with bruises which proved he was not submitting to the torture for the first time, I saw before me M. de Charlus. All of a sudden the door opened and someone entered, who, happily, did not see me. It was Jupien. He approached the Baron with an air of respect and an intelligent smile. 'Well, do you need me?' The Baron requested Jupien to send Maurice

out for a moment. Jupien put him out with the greatest heartiness."

Ivan Karamazov, in Dostoevsky's *Brothers Karamazov*, relates to his brother Alyosha a number of sadistic tales :

"A well-educated, cultured gentleman and his wife beat their own child with a birch-rod, a girl of seven. I have an exact account of it. The papa was glad that the birch was covered with twigs. 'It stings more,' said he, and so he began stinging his daughter. I know for a fact there are people who at every blow are worked up to sensuality, to literal sensuality, which increases progressively at every blow they inflict."

After relating unbelievable stories of cruelty to children, Ivan Karamazov says :

"There was in those days a general of aristocratic connections, the owner of great estates, one of those men—somewhat exceptional, I believe, even then—who, retiring from the service into a life of leisure, are convinced that they have earned absolute power over the lives of their subjects. There were such men then. So our general, settled on his property of two thousand souls, lives in pomp, and domineers over his poor neighbours as though they were dependents and buffoons. He has kennels of hundreds of hounds and nearly a hundred dog-boys—all mounted, and in uniform. One day a serf boy, a little child of eight, threw a stone in play and hurt the paw of the general's favourite hound. 'Why is my favourite dog lame?' He is told that the boy threw a stone that hurt the dog's paw. 'So you did it?' The general looked the child up and down. 'Take him.' He was taken—taken from his mother and kept shut up all night. Early that morning the general comes out on horseback, with the hounds, his dependants, dog-boys, and huntsmen, all mounted around him in full hunting parade. The servants are summoned for their edification, and in front of them all stands the mother of the child. The child is brought

from the lock-up. It is a gloomy, cold, foggy autumn day, a capital day for hunting. The general orders the child to be undressed ; the child is stripped naked. He shivers numb with terror, not daring to cry. 'Make him run,' commands the general. 'Run ! run !' shout the dog-boys. The boy runs. 'At him !' yells the general, and he sets the whole pack of hounds on the child. The hounds catch him, and tear him to pieces before his mother's eyes!"

The authors of these tales are two great modern novelists who have explored in their novels the subconscious phenomena and the secrets of the human mind, and the spirit which lies beyond its bounds.

The life and society that supplied the materials for the Jataka Stories are very remote in time and space to the life and society from which the two modern novelists derived material and inspiration for their sadistic tales. But in spite of this remoteness there is an essential similarity between certain Jataka Stories and the tales of Proust and Dostoevsky in the exploration of some hidden aspects of the human mind.

THE

JATAKA STORIES

AND

THE RUSSIAN NOVEL

THE JATAKA STORIES AND THE RUSSIAN NOVEL

I

THE spiritual, psychological, and sometimes the environmental elements that combine to make some peculiar characters in the novels of certain Russian writers, have affinities to those elements of the characters of some of the Jataka Stories. These affinities may be mainly due to similarities of experience and the philosophy of life of the Russian novelists and the Buddhist writers who handled the Jataka Stories. Ancient India was, like pre-revolutionary Russia, a vast country, with more or less similar economic conditions, and a heterogeneous population oppressed by rigid social and religious conventions.

European writers treated the Russians as a semi-Asiatic race. The mental attitude of the peasant of pre-revolutionary Russia suggested that he was akin to the Asiatics. Russian as well as European writers agree that one of the prominent features of Russian literature is a striking note of sadness.

The great Russian novelists in their later writings manifest this sadness and a dissatisfaction with life, the characteristics attributed to the people of ancient India and other Eastern races by European writers.

In discussing the origin of Russian epic songs (*byliny*), Professor Kropotkin says that they are not fragments of Slavonic mythology but represent borrowings from Eastern tales. Iliya is the Rustum of the Iranian legends, placed in Russian surroundings. Dobrynya is the Krishna of Indian

folk-lore; Sadko is the merchant of the Eastern tales. The Russian epic heroes have an Eastern origin.[1]

"The Russian," says Dostoevsky, " is not only a European but also an Asiatic. Moreover, Asia, perhaps, holds out greater promises to us than Europe. In our future destinies Asia is, perhaps, our main outlet !

"We must banish the slavish fear that Europe will call us Asiatic barbarians, and that it will be said that we are more Asiatics than Europeans. This fear that Europe might regard us as Asiatics has been haunting us for almost two centuries . . . This erroneous fright of ours, this mistaken view of ourselves solely as Europeans, and not Asiatics—which we have never ceased to be—this shame and this faulty opinion have cost us a good deal in the course of the last two centuries, and the price we have had to pay has consisted of the loss of our spiritual independence, of our unsuccessful policies in Europe, and finally of money—God only knows how much money—which we spent in order to prove to Europe that we were Europeans and not Asiatics."[2]

According to Dostoevsky, the main and most fundamental spiritual quest of the Russian people is their craving for suffering—perpetual and unquenchable suffering —everywhere and in everything. It seems that they have been affected by this thirst for martyrdom from time immemorial. The suffering stream flows through their whole history—not merely because of external calamities and misfortunes : it gushes from the people's very heart.[3]

It will be seen that Dostoevsky does not attribute this Russian attitude to life to external causes : the Mongolian and Tartar invasions which devastated Russia. Perhaps it was inculcated in them by the mode of their life and physical environment, their folk literature and Eastern Christianity.

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1. Kropotkin, *Russian Literature*: *Realities and Ideals* 1. pp. 6, 8.
2. Dostoevsky, *Diary of a Writer* Vol. II, pp. 1044—45.
3. *Diary of a Writer* Vol. I, p. 36.

The most striking note that runs through all the Jataka Stories is that of sadness and suffering. Suffering flows from the hearts of almost all of the characters depicted or suggested in this extraordinary collection of stories.

Suffering is possible only by an abasement of self, surrender of the will and humiliation of the intellect. This is the religion or the religious philosophy that is implied by the Jataka Stories and also by the novels of some great Russian writers, especially of Dostoevsky.

II

Even the lives of some of the Russian novelists betrayed traits which were not unrelated to certain ideals of life of the ancient Indians. Nicholai Gogol, the father of the Russian novel, after writing his masterpiece *Dead Souls* became tired of or discontented with life. He wrote another novel as a sequel to his *Dead Souls*, but he burnt it. He left Russia, wandered like a tramp on the Continent, and settled down in Rome. But he preferred the life of the tramp and went back to Moscow, where he died. One of Gogol's biographers says : "Like most inwardly homeless people, Gogol was fond of roaming and travelling. The distance, the vague infinity, attracted him with a magical force, which became all the stronger the more dissatisfied he was with himself, with actual life, and actual things."[1]

This phase of Gogol's life was known in ancient India as that of the *sannyasi* (homeless wanderer), which was one of the four stages of life as enumerated in such works as the *Laws of Manu*. The four stages are : the student-bachelor life, the householder's life, forest life and the life of the homeless wanderer or mendicant. These four stages can be clearly seen in the life of Tolstoy. The first two, of course, are common to all people, irrespective of geographical and religious differences.

1. Janko Larvin, *Gogol* VI. p. 158.

The other two which were peculiar to ancient India can be seen in Tolstoy's life. Tolstoy became dissatisfied with his domestic and social life, and after renouncing his property preferred to live like a recluse. He dressed like a peasant, chopped firewood, cooked his own food and mended his own boots. He condemned his own artistic creations and wrote simple stories for peasants and children. Finally he left this "forest" life to become a wanderer.[1]

Even in the life of Turgenev, who was greatly influenced by French life and literature, can be seen these elements of discontent and his struggle to break away from Western influences. Edward Garnett, quoting from a fragment of Turgenev, says : "After recording many exquisite memories of nature and of love, Turgenev, then, compares human activities to those of gnats on the forest edge on a frosty day when the sun gleams for a moment : 'At once the gnats swarm up on all sides ; they sport in the warm rays, bustle, flutter up and down, circle round one another . . . The sun is hidden—the gnats fall in a feeble shower, and there is the end of their momentary life. And men are ever the same ... What is terrible is that there is nothing terrible, that the very essence of life is petty, uninteresting and degradingly inane.' "[2]

Turgenev in his last years left Russia and lived and died in France. Maxim Gorky tramped all over Russia. His life was that of the homeless *sannyasi*, without the religious ideal of the latter.

Even Anton Chekov was not free from a tinge of pessimism, which is attributed by Western writers to almost all the great Russian novelists. Janko Larvin in comparing the art of Chekov with that of Maupassant says : "If Maupassant regards man as a civilised human beast who is stupid with all his cunning, depraved and sexually greedy, Chekov prefers to see in men puppets of some irrational

1. Aylmer Maude, *Life of Tolstoy* Vol. II, XVI—XVII.
2. Edward Garnett, *Turgenev* XI, 190—91.

force behind life rather than hold them responsible for all the wickedness of which they are capable. Besides, does not man often become wicked because he resents that evil of existence which he himself has to endure ? There are no guilty ones, because in essence we are all victims. To understand this means to forgive, and as he himself puts it, 'it would be strange not to forgive.' "[1]

Chekov's knowledge of science and Western literature and his commonsense philosophy made him a thorough sceptic. But his knowledge and scepticism failed to eradicate the deep-rooted tinge of pessimism which coloured his view of life.

The dissatisfaction with life, which was a malady of the spirit manifested by the Russian novelists themselves in their later life, can be seen in some of the characters created by many of them.

Of the characters created by Dostoevsky representing this type, Father Zossima and Alyosha Karamazov in the *Brothers Karamazov* and Prince Myshkin in *The Idiot* approach the character of the Bodhisatva as depicted in the Jataka Book.

Father Zossima is one of the noblest figures Dostoevsky has drawn. His character and that of Myshkin come closer to, I believe, the character of the Bodhisatva than that of any Christian monk or saint of the West.

In his childhood, Father Zossima gained his first conception of universal love from one of his elder brothers who died of tuberculosis. When his brother contracted the disease the patient's attitude to life was changed completely. He loved everybody and everything. He asked even the birds forgiveness for his sin, and died in full consciousness, joyful to the end.

It is strange that the Bodhisatva as a boy, in his last rebirth, gained his first impression of compassion for living

1. Janko Larvin, *Studies in European Literature* IX, pp. 176—77.

things because of his cousin, who was of a different temperament. The Bodhisatva's cousin shot a bird in flight with his bow. The bird fell with a scream, in great pain from a bleeding wound. The Bodhisatva, moved by the suffering of the afflicted bird, extracted the arrow and nursed the wounded creature back to health with loving kindness. His cousin remonstrated with him for his timidity : "Shame ! How can a boy born in the warrior caste become sentimental and timid?"

Like Father Zossima, the Bodhisatva in his youth forgets his boyhood impressions of compassion, and lives in luxury, taking pride in military exercises. He wins his bride after a great military tournament. But he renounces wife, son and home and lives the life of a mendicant.

Of the impression his brother made on him, Father Zossima says : "I was impressed by all this at the time, but not too much so, though I cried a great deal at his funeral. I was young then, a child, but a lasting impression, a hidden feeling of it all, remained in my heart, ready to rise up and respond when the time came."

In his youth Father Zossima forgot all these impressions and lived like any other aristocratic young man. He joined the military cadet school, and was transformed into a "cruel, absurd, almost savage creature."

"Drunkenness, debauchery and devilry were what we prided ourselves in," confessed Father Zossima. The Buddha confessed to his early frivolous life. Tolstoy in his writings exaggerated the frivolity and immorality of his youth.

When he was at the military school, Zossima fell in love with a rich young girl of lofty character. He proposed to her, only to learn that she was betrothed to a rich landowner. He was disappointed and became jealous of her lover. He insulted the

lover in the presence of a large company and behaved rudely towards him, challenging him to a duel.

Next day when young Zossima returned home in a savage and brutal mood, he flew into a rage with his orderly and gave him two severe blows on his face, which began to bleed. Zossima went to bed and slept three hours. He woke up with changed feelings, walked to the window and opened it. He saw the rising sun, and heard the singing of birds in the garden.

What he saw in the garden seems to have revived in his memory the episode of his brother's death. He fell on his bed and broke into a storm of tears. He went to his orderly, apologized to him, then knelt at his feet and bowed his head to the ground. "Forgive me," young Zossima told his orderly.

He went to fight the duel. His rival shot at him, but he refused to shoot. He threw away his pistol and asked his rival to forgive him.

After this incident Zossima's life began to change gradually. Later he entered a monastery and became a monk. His life there resembles the active life of the old Indian ascetic who, moved with compassion for all living things, devoted his life to the service of humanity.

The characters of Levin in Tolstoy's *Anna Karenina* and of Nekhluyudov in *Resurrection* are of the same type. More than any other character created by Tolstoy, Nekhluyudov betrays a spiritual awakening and a complete dissatisfaction with life and society.

Nekhluyudov is the aristocratic youth who seduced Maslova, the heroine of *Resurrection*. He sees the evils of army service, the civil service, of court life, society, the church, and the law. Then he reads the Sermon on the Mount, and decides on a new life. But, unlike the heroes of Dostoevsky's novels, Nekhluyudov does not surrender his will and subordinate his intellect. His

inability to decide on such a way of life is due, perhaps, to his lingering rationalism and aristocratic training.

Tolstoy wrote and finished *Resurrection* by the end of 1899. Before he wrote it, he was living like a peasant ; only ten years later, in 1910, Tolstoy renounced his family and left home to live the life of a *sannyasi*.

Even the young women in Dostoevsky's novels betray this dissatisfaction with life. Aglaia, the daughter of an aristocratic general, confesses to Myshkin : "I want to run away from home, and I have chosen you to help me."

"Run away from home !" cried Myshkin.

"Yes, yes, yes ! Run away from home," she cried, at once flaring up with extraordinary anger. "I can't bear, I can't bear their continually making me blush there. I don't want to blush before them, or before Prince S. or before Yevgeny Pavlovitch, or before any one, and so I have chosen you. To you I want to tell everything, everything, even the most important thing, when I want to, and you must hide nothing from me on your side . . . I want to be bold, and not to be afraid of anything. I don't want to go to their balls. I want to be of use. I've been wanting to get away for a long time. For twenty years I've been bottled up at home, and they keep trying to marry me. I've been thinking of running away since I was fourteen, though I was silly. Now I've worked it all out, and was waiting for you to ask you all about foreign countries. I have never seen a Gothic cathedral. I want to go to Rome . . ."

It was not sentimental romanticism that induced Aglaia to utter these words. It was a sort of dissatisfaction or discontent with life, home and society that prompted her to make those declarations.

III

Professor F. S. C. Northrop, in *The Meeting of East and West* points out two fundamental differences in the cultures

of East and West : the basis of Eastern culture is the intuitive method, and that of Western culture the scientific method of knowing reality.

The Eastern or the intuitive method of knowing reality was aesthetic : to the Indians, the knowing of reality was the experiencing of it. In the Vedantic philosophy, knowing of the God meant the tasting of the God (Brahmasvada). Even in popular Buddhism, the knowing of Nirvana meant the tasting of Nirvana. According to Buddhist metaphysics, Nirvana is a state which should be experienced : "The man who sheds all doubt and is free from rankling barbs, Nirvana bliss enjoys," said the Buddha in the *Chunda Sutta*.[1] The appreciation of a work of art does not mean acquiring knowledge of a particular work of art. It is an emotional experience. And to the man who accepts the intuitive method, the knowing of reality means experiencing it. But it differs slightly from the aesthetic method of experiencing and appreciating a work of art.

To know reality by intuition there is a discipline, which is quite different from the discipline of art. This discipline is fundamentally the same in the three major Indian religions. The intuitive method is useless in the exploration of the external world, and it is superstition to the man who relies on the scientific method. These two methods are complementary to each other, and are of great value when they are applied with discrimination to explore and to know the two different aspects of nature : the emotional or spiritual and the physical.

It is meaningless to ask whether truth can be known by the intuitive method. Science does not seek an ultimate truth. It explains and describes phenomena. Intuition is a method of experiencing religion or the aspect of phenomena which belongs, not to the intellectual and rational world, but to the emotional world. It makes

1. *Sutta-Nipata* (Lord Chalmers' translation).

no difference even if a rationalist or a scientist treats religious experience as illusion. It is only a word. The experience is there. The Buddhist mystic argues that the experience of art is illusion because it is transitory. But the experience of the mystic who purges his mind and heart of lust, desire and attachment to self is real, because as long as he lives it brings him a joy which will not greatly differ in quality from the transitory aesthetic experience he derives from a work of art.

The German philosopher Hermann Keyserling, in his *Travel Diary of a Philosopher* made a significant observation on the difference between Western and Indian Art.

The Western production of form is based in principle upon concentration of reason. "But this method," says Keyserling, "enables us to take hold only of that portion of life which involves groping from the outside to the inside. For this reason our plastic arts have never expressed what our music and poetry have been able to convey. It is the function of both to give a body to feelings; poetry is a match for articulate feeling, music alone for the inarticulate, the most vital, the profoundest of all. Why is it that these subjectivities cannot be rendered objective in a picture ? Because the greatest possible concentration of reason does not lead to the Holy of Holies of the soul. As we have always been rationalists, as painters we have never been able to give direct expression to the 'soul' in painting, no matter how marvellously we succeeded in doing so in music . . . In order to be able to express soul directly, the visible form will have to be a direct expression of the soul, and would therefore have to be based upon a different concentration from that of reason. To concentrate themselves in this sense is a thing which the artists of the West have never known how to do.

"That is just what the East succeeded in doing, thanks to which they have produced works by the side of which we have nothing to offer. From the point of reason, of

course, no work of the East is a match for the art of Greece, but they cannot be judged from the point of view of reason. They spring from the same depth of life only as poetry and music do in our case, and thus every means of gauging appears to be altered."[1]

IV

Dostoevsky seems to have made an attempt at a synthesis of the two methods, intuitive and scientific, by creating characters some of whom are half mystic and half rational. The contradictory nature of his characters is the result of this attempt. No novelist has approached Dostoevsky in depicting the conflict between man's two natures—the rational and the intuitive. Most of the characters, including that of Prince Myshkin in *The Idiot*, vividly represent this conflict. Strakhov, a Russian biographer of Dostoevsky, says in a letter to Tolstoy : "In a word, all these novels (of Dostoevsky) endeavour to exculpate their author ; they show that the most hideous villainies can exist in a man side by side with the noblest sentiments."[2]

Prince Myshkin, the hero of *The Idiot*, relates the following story of murder to his friend Roghozhin : "Two peasants, middle-aged men, friends who had known each other for a long time and were not drunk, had had tea and were meaning to go to bed in the same room. But one had noticed during those last two days that the other was wearing a silver watch on a yellow bead chain, which he seemed not to have seen on him before. The man was not a thief; he was an honest man, in fact and by a peasant's standards by no means poor. But he was so taken with that watch and so fascinated by it that at last he could not restrain himself. He took a knife, and when his friend had turned away, he approached him cautiously from behind, took aim, turned his eyes heavenwards, crossed

1. *The Travel Diary of a Philosopher* pp. 277—78.
2. Aylmer Maude, *Life of Tolstoy* Vol. II, p. 145.

himself, and praying fervently, 'God forgive me for Christ's sake,' he cut his friend's throat at one stroke like a sheep's and took his watch.

"'I do like that ! Yes, that beats everything !' cried Roghozhin convulsively, gasping for breath. 'One man does not believe in God at all, while the other believes in Him so thoroughly that he prays as he murders men ! You could never have invented that, brother ! Ha—ha—ha! That beats everything.' "

After relating another story, Myshkin says: "You asked me a question just now ; here is my answer : the essence of religious feeling does not come under any sort of reasoning or atheism, and has nothing to do with crimes or misdemeanours. There is something else here, and there will always be something else—something the atheists will for ever slur over; they will always be talking of something else. But the chief thing is that you will notice it more clearly and quickly in the Russian heart than anywhere else. And this is my conclusion. It's one of the chief convictions which I have gathered from our Russia."

The characters of most Western novels are persons of intellect and will. By perseverance, intelligence and determination they make their personalities. But the personalities of the heroes of Dostoevsky's novels are different. Most, if not all of them, are disturbed by an inner urge or restlessness. They lack will. Humility and pride are natural to them. Their idea of honour, like that of the characters of the Jataka Stories, is humility or compassion. Myshkin and Father Zossima become saints by surrendering their will and intellect. In most of the Jataka Stories the Bodhisatva becomes a homeless wanderer or saint by completely surrendering his will and intellect.

Dostoevsky himself, it is evident from his novels, was tortured by the conflict between reason and intuition.

Some Western critics treat it as a form of morbidity caused by his Siberian experience and epileptic fits, and his characters as pathological. But to the Indian or Buddhist reader, the conflict in Dostoevsky is not an aberration, and his saintly characters are not pathological, but normal human beings who are psychologically and spiritually nearer to the mystics of ancient India. Therefore it is not surprising that Dostoevsky's characters should have affinities to those of the Jataka Stories. I do not think anyone would suggest that the Jataka Stories are the creations of a morbid mind. They are the creations of the normal Indian mind influenced by his environment and the intuitive view of life.

Not only rationalists but many others believe that the ancient Indian mystic was a man who accepted a negative philosophy of life, and ran away from life to save himself or his soul. The acceptance of this distorted view, even by students of Indian religion and philosophy, is probably due to the influence of Western criticism of Indian mysticism and Buddhism.

Asceticism does not mean running away from life. It means retirement from active domestic life for a life of contemplation. Contemplation is a way of life not different in quality to the life of the artist, or the philosopher or even the scientist. The Indian mystics made their contribution to philosophy, art and aesthetics by keeping to the intuitive method, the discipline for which was contemplation. They developed an aesthetic philosophy and a discipline based on it.

Some of the Upanishadic mystics retired from active domestic life and lived with their wives in the forest. The Buddha is one of the greatest mystics and social reformers India has produced. In his mission of religion and service he tramped through cities and villages. He not only preached pity and compassion but practised them.

He became a refuge for the sinner, the downtrodden, the outcast and even for the murderer.

"There is no inconsistency," says Sir S. Radhakrishnan, "between mysticism and the most exalted ethics. It is a one-sided view of contemplation that makes it exclusive of moral activity. Inner perfection and outer conduct are two sides of one life. Contemplation and action, the *yoga* of Krishna and the *dhanus* of Arjuna, are two movements merged in one act. Love is organic to spiritual life. While the eyes are lifted to the Eternal, the arms are stretched out to embrace the whole creation. Some of the greatest contemplatives were those who were most intensely active in the service of others. There are extremists among mystics—and they are not confined to one religion—who are intent on becoming one with God and are indifferent to suffering bodies and broken hearts, but the normal mystic has a burning passion for social righteousness. In spite of our strong dislike of monasticism, it is well to remember that the Christian monks took the leading part in rebuilding European civilisation after the barbarian hordes had almost destroyed it.

"India, however, is full of mendicant ascetics who wander from one part of that vast continent to the other, leaving the world around to its fate. But these are not true representatives of the genius of India, who, with a perception of the unity of things, move at ease in the world of spirit and the world of sense."[1]

In modern India mystics like Vivekananda, Ramakrishna, Gandhi and many others continued the tradition of great Indian mystics. But many others of India and Ceylon, who yearn to practise the ancient ideal have, of course, to run away from life because they lack the genius of the real mystics to adapt themselves to social conditions revolutionized by science and industry. Who are better fitted to serve humanity, art, philosophy and even science

1. S. Radhakrishnan, *Eastern Religion and Western Thought* pp. 108,.109.

than the men who by the discipline of contemplation suppress their egotism, lust and other passions?

Arthur Koestler, a writer who values science as a great achievement of the human mind, says : "Contemplation survives only in the East, and to learn it we have to turn to the East; but, we need qualified interpreters and above all a re-interpretation in the terms and symbols of Western thought."[1]

I have digressed ; but to understand the affinity between some of Dostoevsky's characters and those of ancient Indian stories, prejudices like the above need to be removed. C. M. Woodhouse, in his recent book *Dostoievsky* sums up the attitude of early Western readers to the novels of Dostoevsky when he says : "For Tolstoy can be read with comfort by those who have been brought up to prefer the Western European style of novel, among them perhaps many Russians. So can Turgenev, whose country gentlemen would have been perfectly at home at Blandings ; and even Gogol and Goncharov describe Russians as we English expect them to be, however unlike ourselves. But Dostoievsky . . . is quite another matter : his novels, if they can be called novels, are like nothing on earth.

". . . His climate of thought is entirely foreign to the average novel-reader of Western Europe. At first sight he is almost unintelligible even in translation. It is hardly surprising that many English readers, and some Russians whose national pride was sensitive to Western criticism, felt inclined to spit them of Dostoievsky when they first became aware of his work . . . My disqualifications for writing about Dostoievsky are too formidable to be enumerated. My single qualification is that Dostoievsky is the one novelist in the world whom I have found it worth an intellectual struggle to understand."[2]

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1. Arthur Koestler, *The Yogi and the Commissar* p. 255.
2. C. M. Woodhouse, *Dostoievsky*: Preface pp. 5, 6.

V

Long ago, when I read *The Idiot* by Dostoevsky for the first time, I thought that by creating the character of Prince Myshkin he had anticipated Gandhi. Many years later, when I re-read it and read his other major novels for the first time, I was haunted by a vague idea of an affinity in the psychological and spiritual implications of the characters of Dostoevsky's novels with those of certain well-known Jataka Stories. I treated it as a figment of my imagination until I read the English translation of André Gide's *Dostoevsky*. I realised that the affinity I saw between these Jataka Stories and the novels of Dostoevsky was not conjured by my imagination. After analysing the spiritual and psychological implications of Dostoevsky's characters, André Gide observes : "Or, to offend none, let me express myself thus : Balzac's *Comêdie Humaine* sprang from the contact between the Gospels and the Latin mind : Dostoevsky's from the contact between the Gospels and Buddhism, the Asiatic mind . . . These are merely preliminary considerations which will help us at our next meeting to probe deeper into the souls of these strange creations."[1]

And later, after 'probing into the souls' of some of Dostoevsky's creations Gide remarks : "Dostoevsky leads us, we may take it, if not to anarchy, to a sort of Buddhism, or at least quietism, and we shall see that in the judgement of the orthodox, this is not his only heresy.

" 'But look here, Prince, are you a man of honour?' cries one of his characters to Prince Myshkin, the hero who best embodied his philosophy until the day when he wrote *The Karamazovs* and presented to us these angelic creatures, Alyosha and Father Zossima. What then does Dostoevsky exalt as his ideal? The life contemplative? A

1. Andrè Gide, *Dostoevsky* p. 90.

life wherein man, renouncing reason and will, shall know love alone?''[1]

These observations of André Gide betray the insight with which he grasps the implications of the Buddhist view and ideal of life.

Brahmin logicians of a later age, forgetting that the original Buddhism was a continuation of Upanishadic mysticism, treated it as a form of revolutionary nihilism. There is an aspect—a superficial, rational aspect—of Buddhism which induces a student to take such a view. Buddhism denied the individual soul and criticised rituals and ceremonies of the old Brahmanical religion. So the man who exaggerates these aspects of Buddhism has some justification to treat Buddhism as a form of revolutionary philosophy. There is in Dostoevsky's novels such a superficial aspect to influence a reader to treat his philosophy as a form of revolutionary nihilism. But André Gide, with a sure insight, grasps the real significance of Dostoevsky's view of life and its affinity to that of genuine Buddhism.

The view and the philosophy of life of Buddhism are implied in many Jataka Stories. "It is true," says Mrs. Rhys Davids, "as I am about to contend, that a very vital truth of original Buddhism runs like a leit-motif through the *Jatakam* to which the frame work attaching to each story bears witness."[2] Therefore it is not strange that there should be spiritual and psychological affinities between the characters of Dostoevsky's novels and those of many Jataka Stories.

"Taking then the motley Jataka-mass," says Mrs. Rhys Davids, "with this introduction, it is scarcely an overstatement to say that, for all the much foolishness we find in them, the oddities, the inconsistencies, the many distortions in ideals and in the quest of them, they are col-

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1. Andè Gide, *Dostoevsky* pp. 132, 133.
2. Mrs. Rhys Davids, *Wayfarer's Words* Vol. III p. 808.

lectively the greatest epic in literature of the Ascent of Man, the greatest ballad-book on the theme, that man, willing the better, becomes the better."[1]

VI

Some Western writers have tried to compare the character of Myshkin with that of Christ. But the attempt to identify the character of Myshkin with that of Christ or Buddha, I believe, is wrong. Christ represented the moral and spiritual perfection in man, according to Western religious conceptions. The Buddha represented the same perfection in man, according to Eastern conceptions. But the "divine possibilities of the character of Myshkin were subject to human limitations. And he had a spirit that was exalted and degraded." How can such a character be identified with Christ?

The character of Myshkin can justifiably be identified with that of the Bodhisatva as depicted in the Jataka Stories. The Bodhisatva represents the Buddhist conception of the character of an imperfect human being striving to attain moral and spiritual perfection. Such a person is called the budding Buddha (*Buddhankura*). Sanskrit works on poetics, enumerating different types of heroes, mention *Kshanti Vira* or the hero of universal compassion. The character of the Bodhisatva, as depicted in many Jataka Stories, is of this type, and Prince Myshkin is also of the same type, though Western critics refuse to call him a hero.

There are several Jataka Stories depicting the Bodhisatva as a young man incapable of having any physical love for a woman. In one of them, the *Ananusochiya Jataka*,[2] the Bodhisatva was born in a Brahmin family. His parents proposed a marriage for him, but he refused saying that he was incapable of loving a girl. But his parents insisted

1. Mrs. Rhys Davids, *Wayfarer's Words* Vol. III p. 812.
2. Jataka Story 331.

that he should have a wife. The Bodhisatva thought his continued refusal to consider his parents' proposal might lead them to suspect it as an attempt to evade his duty to them. He made a golden image of a beautiful girl and told his parents that he would marry only a girl whose beauty would match that of the image he had made. The parents sent men in search of a Brahmin girl who resembled the image in beauty.

At last they found the ideal, but in like manner she pleaded to her parents that she was incapable of having physical love for a man, and therefore preferred to live with her parents and serve them. But her parents insisted that she should marry. The Bodhisatva and the girl were brought together and were married and compelled to live in one room. They lived together thus, without consummating their marriage. After the death of his parents, the Bodhisatva cremated their remains and then told his wife to take all the wealth left by his parents and to go and live happily with her own parents. "I will retire to the forest and live the life of an ascetic," said the Bodhisatva.

She refused, wishing to retire with him to the forest and practice asceticism. Both of them retired into the forest and lived there in a hut.

One day the Bodhisatva went to the city in search of salt and other ingredients which were not available in the forest. Weakened by the hard life and the coarse food, his wife Sammillavahini fell ill with an attack of dysentery and died. The villagers who assembled at the hut were amazed at her beauty and began to weep.

The Bodhisatva came back. He did not weep. As he was hungry, he sat by the side of the dead body of his wife and ate his food.

"What was she to you when you were a layman?" asked the villagers.

"Friends! she was my maidservant (wife)," said the ascetic.

"Reverend Sir, we all began to weep on seeing her beauty. But how is it that you do not shed tears at her death?" asked the villagers.

"Friends, when Sammillavahini was a lay woman, she was dearly attached to me. Now she has joined the dead; therefore it is of no use weeping for her."

This story is not a superficial romance. It reveals depths of the human mind and soul that are beyond the light of reason and realism.

There is another Jataka Story of the same type[1] with a different ending: the Bodhisatva and his wife, after living together in Platonic love, retired to the forest to do penance. After ten years of forest life, they went back to the city and were living in the royal pleasure-garden. One day the king, bent on pleasure, entered the garden. And on seeing the woman ascetic, he desired her.

Approaching the ascetic, he asked: "What is she to you?"

"O king, she joined me in practising asceticism. But when she was a lay woman and I a layman, she was my wife," replied the ascetic.

"Will you be angry if anybody forcibly takes her away from you?"

"Your Majesty, if anger is generated in me, I will suppress it like a man who extinguishes a fire by pouring pots of water over it. I will never manifest anger in my life."

On the king's order, one of the ministers carried away the female ascetic, though she was crying and lamenting her fate.

The ascetic stretched his neck and looked at her, but spoke not a word. The king went back to the palace and

1. Jataka Story 441.

said to the female ascetic : "I will make you the chief queen of my harem. Why should you practise this meaningless asceticism?"

"Your majesty, your wealth and the luxuries of the palace are nothing to me. Asceticism is nobler," replied the woman.

As she refused the offer, the king ordered her to be confined within a room, and went back and entered the garden stealthily. The ascetic was darning one of his bark garments, and was unaware of the king's presence.

"You told me," said the king, "that you would never harbour anger in your heart. But you avoided speaking to me, though I was standing here for some time."

"O king," said the ascetic, "the anger that arose in me I instantaneously suppressed in the way that rain beats down a cloud of dust."

"How can anger be generated in you?"

"O king, when two sticks are rubbed together, heat is sure to be generated, and that heat will continue and burn the sticks."

Pleased at the sincerity of the ascetic, the king ordered his minister to release the woman ascetic.

VII

These Jataka Stories and the dialogues with which they are concluded, I believe, will recall to the mind of the reader who is acquainted with *The Idiot* by Dostoevsky, the character of Prince Myshkin and his attitude to Nastasya Philipovna and Aglaia, two beautiful and enigmatic women.

Roghozhin for the first time meets Prince Myshkin in the train. After chatting a little, he asks him: "And women, prince, are you very keen on them? Let me know to start with."

"I ? N — no! You see . . . perhaps you don't know that, owing to my illness, I know nothing of women."

"Well, if that's how it is," cried Roghozhin, "you are a regular blessed innocent, and God loves such as you."

In Moscow Myshkin accidentally sees a photograph of Nastasya Philipovna, one of the enigmatic women depicted in *The Idiot*. Myshkin's reaction is described thus by Dostoevsky: "He seemed trying to decipher something that had struck him before, hidden in that face. The impression it had made had scarcely left him, and now he was in a hurry to verify it again. He was now even more struck by the face, which was extraordinary from its beauty and from something else in it. There was a look of unbounded pride and contempt, almost hatred, in that face, and at the same time something confiding, something wonderfully simple-hearted. The contrast of these two elements roused a feeling almost of compassion. Her dazzling beauty was positively unbearable—the beauty of a pale face, almost sunken cheeks and glowing eyes—a strange beauty! Myshkin gazed at it for a minute, then started suddenly, looked round him, hurriedly raised the portrait to his lips and kissed it. When he walked into the drawing room a minute later, his face was perfectly calm."

Roghozhin, who loves Nastasya Philipovna and is prepared to murder her if she refuses to marry him, one day asks Myshkin: ". . . By the way — ha, ha, ha — I forgot to ask you, was I right in fancying that you were rather too much taken with Nastasya Philipovna?"

"Yes . . . I like her."

"In love with her?"

"N—no."

Later Nastasya Philipovna runs away from Roghozhin on the wedding day and goes to Prince Myshkin for protection. After a month she goes again to Roghozhin

with the intention of marrying him. Roghozhin, in a bitter and suspicious mood, chats with Myshkin. Myshkin in explanation says to him: "The first time she rushed to me of herself, almost on the wedding day, begging me to save her from you. It is her own words I am repeating to you. Afterwards she ran away from me too . . .

"Don't suspect me. You know yourself whether I was ever really your rival, even when she ran away to me. Now you are laughing. I know what you are laughing at. Yes, we lived apart in different rooms, and you know all that for a fact. I explained to you before that I don't love her with love but with pity. I believe I define it exactly."

In this passage Dostoevsky tries to explain Myshkin's feelings and attitude towards a beautiful and suffering woman. Perhaps the English language lacks a precise word with which to define Myshkin's feeling towards her. There is a Pali word *metta* in Buddhism which, I believe, would correctly define his feeling towards that woman. The meaning of the word *metta* is neither pity nor love. It is a sort of feeling of compassion towards all sentient and suffering things that is generated in a man who overcomes lust, jealousy and hate, and sublimates his intellect and surrenders his will.

Prince Myshkin relates, in the form of a beautiful story, one of his experiences in Switzerland to Aglaia, the other enigmatic woman depicted in *The Idiot*.

"At first the children did not take to me. I was so big, I am always so clumsy; I know I am ugly too . . . The children used to laugh at me at first, and they began throwing stones at me after they saw me kiss Marie. And I only kissed her once . . . No, don't laugh." Myshkin made haste to check the smiles on the faces of his listeners. "It was not a question of love. If only you knew what an unhappy being she was, you would be very sorry for her, as

I was. She lived in our village. Her mother was an old woman. One of the two windows of their tumble-down little house was set apart, by permission of the village authorities, and from it the old woman was allowed to sell laces, thread, tobacco and soap. She was an invalid; her legs were all swollen so that she could not move from her seat. Marie was her daughter, a girl of twenty, weak and thin. She had been consumptive for a long time, but she went from house to house doing hard work—scrubbing floors, washing, sweeping out yards and minding cattle. A French commercial traveller seduced and took her away, and a week later deserted her and went off on the sly. She made her way home begging, all mud-stained and in rags, with her shoes coming to pieces. She was walking back, spent the night in the fields and caught a fearful cold. She wasn't pretty before, though; only her eyes were gentle, kind and innocent.

"People were still kind to her in those days, but when she came back broken down and ill, no one had any sympathy for her. Her mother, to begin with, received her with anger and contempt: 'You have disgraced me.' She was the first to abandon her to shame. As soon as they heard in the village that Marie had come home, everyone went to have a look at her, and almost all the village assembled in the old woman's cottage.

"The mother was very ill at the time and almost dying: two months later she did die. She knew she was dying, but up to the time of her death she didn't dream of being reconciled to her daughter. She didn't speak one word to her, turned her out to sleep in the entry, scarcely gave her anything to eat. She had to be constantly bathing her bad legs in hot water. Marie bathed her legs every day and waited on her. She accepted all her services in silence and never said a kind word to her.

"Marie put up with everything and afterwards, when I

made her acquaintance, I noticed that she thought it all right and looked on herself as the lowest of the low.

"Then the children, the whole troop of them—there were about forty—began jeering, and even throwing dirt at her. She asked the cowherd to let her look after the cows, but he drove her away. Then she began going off for the whole day with the flock of her own accord, without permission. As she was of great use to the cowherd, and he noticed it, he no longer drove her away, and sometimes even gave her bread and cheese, what was left from his dinner . . . When her mother died, the pastor did not scruple to heap shame on Marie in church before all the people. Marie stood crying by the coffin, as she was, in her rags.

"Then the pastor—he was a young man, and his whole ambition was to become a great preacher—pointed to Marie and addressing them all, said: 'Here you see the cause of this worthy woman's death' (and it was not true, for the woman had been ill for two years) . . . The children took a line of their own, for by then they were all on my side, and had begun to love Marie.

"This was how it happened . . . I wanted to do something for Marie. She was badly in want of money, but I never had a farthing at that time. I had a little diamond pin, and I sold it to a pedlar who went from village to village buying and selling old clothes. He gave me eight francs, and it was certainly worth forty. I was a long time trying to meet Marie alone. At last we met by a hedge outside the village, on a bypath to the mountain, behind a tree. Then I gave her the eight francs and told her to take care of it, because I should have no more. Then I kissed her and said that she musn't think I had any evil intent, and that I kissed her not because I was in love with her, but because I was very sorry for her, and that I had never, from the very beginning, thought of her as guilty but only as unhappy.

I wanted very much to comfort her at once and persuade her that she shouldn't consider herself below everyone . . . When I had finished, she kissed my hands, and at once I took her hand and would have kissed it, but she pulled it away. It was then the children saw us, the whole lot of them. They began whistling, clapping their hands and laughing, and Marie ran away. I tried to speak to them, but they began throwing stones at me. The same day every one knew of it, the whole village. The whole brunt of it fell on Marie again; they began to dislike her more than ever . . . they teased her more than ever and threw dirt at her; they chased her, she ran away from them.

"Then I began talking to them. I talked to them every day as much as I could. They sometimes stopped and listened, though they still abused me. I told them how unhappy Marie was; soon they left off abusing me and walked away in silence. Little by little we began talking together. I concealed nothing from them. I told them the whole story. They listened with great interest and soon began to be sorry for Marie. Some of them greeted her in a friendly way when they met . . . soon all of them began to love her, and at the same time they began to love me too.

"I at once told them of the pastor's action and explained it to them. They were all angry with him, and some of them were so enraged that they threw stones and broke his windows. I stopped them for that was wrong; but every one in the village heard of it at once and they began to accuse me of corrupting the children. Then they all realized that the children loved Marie, and were dreadfully horrified; but Marie was happy. The children were forbidden to meet her, but they ran out to where she kept the herds, nearly half a mile from the village. They carried her dainties, and some simply ran out to hug and kiss her, say 'Je vous aime, Marie,' and ran back as fast as their legs would carry them. What the children liked most,

especially the girls, was running to tell her that I loved her and had talked to them a great deal about her."

This beautiful story explains the attitude of Myshkin to a suffering and downtrodden woman, however morally bad she may have been.

The children, when they began to love Marie, the unhappy woman, believed that Myshkin was in love with her. "I think," says Myshkin, "they got immense enjoyment out of my love for Marie, and that was the only point in which I deceived them. I didn't tell then that they were mistaken, that I was not in love with Marie, but simply very sorry for her."

The Pali word *metta* would aptly define Myshkin's feeling for that terribly unhappy girl.

The story of Marie would recail to the mind of the Buddhist reader the story of Patachara, the daughter of a very wealthy merchant, who eloped with a slave. Her parents treated her cruelly in discarding her. When she returned to her parents in great agony after losing her husband and two children, she saw only the funeral pyre in which her parents had been cremated. She went mad. Throwing away the rags that covered her nakedness, she ran all over the place, insensible to the jeers and the stones and mud thrown at her by the crowd. When she walked to the place where the Buddha was preaching, the pious people who were listening to the sermon tried to drive her away with jeers and abuse. But the Buddha called her to him. In the words of an old Sinhalese writer who rewrote this beautiful story, "the Buddha received her like a mother who embraces her own daughter when she comes running in hunger to suck her breasts."

Myshkin, like the Bodhisatva of the Jataka Stories, was a Don Quixote of the spiritual world who wielded the weapons of selflessness and *metta* for moral perfection. That Myshkin's attitude to women is that of the ascetic is

suggested by one of the female characters in *The Idiot*. At a family gathering where Prince Myshkin was present, Aglaia narrated a story entitled *The Poor Knight* to tease Myshkin. After relating the story she says: "It is clear that the poor knight did not care what his lady was, or what she did. It was enough for him that he had chosen her and put faith in her 'pure beauty' and then did homage to her for ever . . . If she became a thief afterwards, he would still be bound to believe in her and be ready to break a spear for her pure beauty. The poet seems to have meant to unite in one striking figure the grand conception of the Platonic love of medieval chivalry . . . Of course all that is an ideal. In the 'poor knight' that feeling reaches its utmost limit in asceticism . . . The poor knight is the same Don Quixote, only serious and not comic. I didn't understand him at first, and laughed, but now I love the 'poor knight,' and what is more, respect his exploits."

This is an interesting passage. The reader will remember the two Jataka Stories I have given earlier. In each of them the husband was an ascetic who lived with a beautiful and enigmatic woman in a sort of spiritual attachment. Myshkin's attachment to Nastasya and Aglaia was of the same type, and his character approaches the character of the Bodhisatva as depicted in the Jataka Stories.

André Gide seems to have grasped intuitively the Indian Buddhist aspect of Dostoevsky's characters when he wrote the words I have already quoted: "Balzac's *Comedie Humaine* sprang from the contact between the Gospels and the Latin mind: Dostoevsky's from the contact between the Gospels and Buddhism, the Asiatic mind."[1]

At the end of *The Idiot* Dostoevsky further clarifies the attitude of Myshkin to Nastasya and Aglaia:

Bewildered by Myshkin's reply to his questions about Nastasya and Aglaia, Prince Pavlovitch, who was engaged

1. Andre Gide, *Dostoevsky* p. 90.

to Aglaia's sister, says: "What are you doing, prince? So you're marrying her (Nastasya) from a sort of fear? There is no understanding it! Without even loving her, perhaps?"

"Oh, no," replied Myshkin. "I love her with my whole heart. Why, she's . . . a child! Now she is a child, quite a child!"

"And at the same time you have declared your love to Aglaia Ivanovna?"

"Oh yes, yes!"

"How so? Then you want to love both of them?"

"Oh yes, yes!"

"Upon my word, prince, think what you're saying!"

After listening to Myshkin's lengthy explanation Pavlovitch says: "No, prince, she won't understand. Aglaia Ivanovna loved you like a woman, like a human being, not like an abstract spirit. Do you know what, my poor prince? The most likely thing is that you've never loved either of them!"

"I don't know, perhaps so . . . perhaps. You're right in a great deal . . .," says Myshkin.

Myshkin's attitude to women was that of the Bodhisatva as depicted in the Jataka Stories.

Alyosha, another beautiful character created by Dostoevsky in his *Brothers Karamazov*, accidentally meets a group of schoolboys between the ages of nine and twelve. All of them had stones in their hands. Another boy was standing on the other side of a ditch.

Alyosha began to chat with the group of boys who were closer to him. A stone flew into the group, but only grazed one of the boys.

"Give it him, hit him back, Smurov," the boys shouted. Smurov threw a stone at the boy who was standing on the

other side of the ditch. But it missed the boy and hit the ground. He threw another stone which hit Alyosha painfully on the shoulder. The other boys began to retaliate. Alyosha persuaded them not to attack the boy who was fighting with them single-handed.

Alyosha approached the boy who was standing in a defiant attitude on the other side of the ditch.

"I don't know you. Do you know me?" asked Alyosha. "They told me that you threw a stone at me on purpose."

"Let me alone," the boy cried irritably.

Alyosha turned back. "Monk in silk trousers!" cried the boy, and threw a big stone, which hit Alyosha painfully on the back. He turned. The boy threw another stone savagely at Alyosha's face, but the stone struck him on the elbow.

"Aren't you ashamed? What have I done to you?" cried Alyosha.

The boy flew at Alyosha himself, and before Alyosha had time to move, the spiteful child had seized his left hand with both of his and bitten his middle finger. Alyosha cried out with pain and pulled his finger with all his might. Alyosha's finger had been badly bitten to the bone.

Alyosha later went to see the boy and his father, who were living in poverty.

This incident and Alyosha's attitude to the mischievous urchin reminds me of the incident in the story of Lomahamsa narrated in the *Jatakattha Katha*:

One day when the Bodhisatva was absorbed in contemplation, several village urchins stealthily approached him and began to tease him. Some of them pelted stones and the others began to thrust reeds in his ears and nose. In spite of the pain and bleeding, the ascetic treated the urchins with compassion.

Dostoevsky turns the incident into a psychological study, but the Buddhist story merely narrates the incident objectively to show the compassion of the ascetic. But when we consider all the characters in whom the dual nature—intellectual, and intuitive or spiritual—were in conflict, as depicted in a certain class of Jataka Stories, then we get a glimpse of a strange and fantastic world of murderers, robbers, tyrants, sexual perverts and courtesans who are dissatisfied with life and society. Some of them end their lives in violence and death, and others become saints or man-gods, either through suffering or indulging in sensual pleasures or violent living. This world of fictional characters in such Jataka Stories has by implication a psychological and spiritual affinity to the world created by Dostoevsky.

VIII

Ivan Roe, in interpreting Dostoevsky, observes: "Duality remained a mystery of character for Dostoievsky from the time when he endured the ordeal of sentence to death, reprieve, and imprisonment in Siberia to the very end of his life: the period in which he read the New Testament constantly. He was intrigued as a psychologist—or it would be more just to say, as a man with rare powers of introspection—by the proximity in man's mind of the noblest thoughts and the basest urges. It was an idea that had barely penetrated realistic literature—though it had appeared in the mediaeval miracle play, in which the vices were personified non-realistically, almost as anatomical specimens—but belonging to one common anatomy of man. It was not the current literary conception of evil characters and good characters, nor the current psychological heresy that Lombroso demonstrated, that the sources of criminality and genius were nearly akin. It was, at its simplest, the admission that a good and kind man could have thoughts,

perhaps unspoken and unrealised, of baseness, if not violent evil.''[1]

The Buddhist theory of Karma explains how a man can have the possibilities of a saint with baseness and evil hidden in his mind. The psychology and philosophy behind the Jataka Stories is this belief in the duality of human character by the old Buddhist writers who distorted or rewrote Indian folk-tales. Belief in Karma was a part of their religion. Because of their belief in Karma, they had a glimpse of unplumbed depths of human character. The hero Angulimala of the well-known Buddhist story[2] was a prince who studied under a famous teacher. His real name was Ahimsaka, which literally means "the Innocent." In intellect, learning, character and birth he surpassed all other students at the famous seat of learning at Taxila. Some students, who were jealous of him, approached the teacher and said: "The young student Ahimsaka is conspiring to oust you."

The teacher refused to listen to them. Another batch of students approached the teacher with the same accusation against Ahimsaka, but he refused to believe them also.

Later the teacher, suspecting Ahimsaka to be on terms of undue intimacy with his wife, determined to get rid of him. One day he called Ahimsaka and told him: "My son, you have completed your studies eminently. Now you must kill a thousand men as a service and offering to art and learning."

"I was born in a family whose tradition is not to hurt anybody. Therefore I cannot obey you," Ahimsaka answered.

"One who does not serve art and science will never become successful."

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1. *Breath of Corruption* p. 78.
2. Story of Angulimala (from the version in the *Amavatura*).

Ahimsaka prostrated himself before the teacher and went away. Entering a jungle and living there, he began to kill everybody he happened to see. He never touched their belongings, but he cut a finger from the hand of every victim. As the fingers began to disappear from the place where he left them, he pierced each finger and put a thread through them, making a necklace of them.

Since then he was known as the man who carried a string of fingers—Angulimala. Abandoning his jungle home, he began to terrorize and kill the people of the city. The panic-stricken citizens assembled in the palace garden and begged the king to protect them from Angulimala the killer.

Angulimala's father, who was the king's minister, ran home and told his wife: "Angulimala the killer is none other than our son Ahimsaka. The king will send his men to kill him or bring him alive."

The mother determined to go and rescue her son. The Buddha, hearing the news, thought: "If the mother goes to rescue her son, he will kill her. Therefore I must go."

By this time Angulimala had nine hundred and ninety nine human fingers in the string which he was wearing round his neck. He had only to kill one more to complete the thousand. He thought: "I am tired of pursuing and running after my victims. My body is dirty. I have only to add one human finger to complete the thousand. If today I see even my father or mother, I will cut one of them into two and complete the thousand, which will be my offering to my teacher."

When Angulimala saw the Buddha coming towards him, he rushed at the Buddha intending to kill him, but he was unable to reach the Buddha. Angulimala was amazed at the Buddha's personality and his fearless courage. Angulimala began to argue angrily with the Buddha, but at the end of the discussion he became a convert, and later a saint.

The *Jayaddisa Jataka*[1] is the story of a man who acquired a taste for human flesh. It is probably a primitive folk-tale altered by Buddhist monks to illustrate the duality of human character.

The queen of the king of Panchala gave birth to a son, but a she-devil stole the infant and ate him. On the day of the birth of a third son to the queen, soldiers guarded her apartment and the palace. Nevertheless the she-devil stealthily entered the queen's apartment the following day, when the guards were withdrawn, and stole away the infant. The alarm being given by the queen, the guards pursued the she-devil, but she evaded them by taking shelter in a sewer. The infant, imagining himself to be in the arms of his mother, began to suck the breast of the she-devil. Immediately her maternal instinct was aroused. She took the infant to her cave and brought him up with loving care. From the she-devil the boy acquired a taste for human flesh. But his foster mother gave him a charmed packet of medicine which endowed him with the miraculous power to become invisible. So the people in the city never saw him eating human flesh. However, after his foster mother's death, he lost the charmed packet and with it the power to become invisible. From that time he became notorious as a cannibal and was known by the name "Porisada", which means "the man-eater."

The king sent his guards to catch or kill the terrible cannibal, but Porisada escaped by terrorizing the guards. He entered a forest and began to waylay and kill the people who ventured to take the road through the forest.

One day the king went on a hunting expedition and entered this forest. He had to pursue a deer who escaped from the trap he himself had set. After chasing the escaped animal, the king at last succeeded in killing it and was resting under a huge tree. Porisada, who had been

1. Jataka Story 506.

starving for seven days having found no human flesh, caught the king. The king, however, succeeded in persuading Porisada to release him only for a few days to go back to the palace. The king's son, who was no other than the Bodhisatva, hearing of his father's plight, volunteered to sacrifice himself to Porisada on behalf of his father.

On seeing the Bodhisatva, Porisada thought: "This man is a hero; therefore I must send him back by some stratagem and get the king himself."

"Look here," said Porisada, "I will kill you and roast you on live cinders. Go and fetch firewood and make a fire."

The Bodhisatva went far into the forest, brought firewood and made a fire.

Porisada looked with admiration into the face of the Bodhisatva who stood before him. "This man," thought Porisada, "is really a man-lion. He does not fear death. I have never before seen so fearless a man."

Porisada refrained from killing him.

"Then why did you order me to make a fire?" asked the Bodhisatva.

"Because I wanted to test your courage by giving you a chance to run away," answered Porisada.

Then the Bodhisatva took Porisada to an ascetic who was a very famous seer. The ascetic at once recognized both of them as uncle and nephew. When the ascetic told him the story of his birth and relationship to the Bodhisatva, Porisada determined not to go back to the palace.

"Son," he addressed the Bodhisatva, "you had better return to the palace. In this life I was born as a dual character. I should prefer to become an ascetic."

There are many stories of this type in the Jataka Book. Even the she-devil in the story referred to was not purely

devilish. She became a compassionate mother as soon as the infant touched her breast with its lips. And the man turned devil confesses that he was born with a dual character.

IX

The basic psychological element of the characters of many of the heroes in Dostoevsky's novels is a combination of intellectual fanaticism and spirituality. A cold logical intellectual fanaticism induced Raskolnikov to murder a money-lender, and the spiritual or religious element in him made him kneel before Sonia, a prostitute, kiss her feet, and utter these profound words: "I do not bow down to you, I bow down to all suffering humanity."

Characters with a combination of intellectual fanaticism and spirituality are abundant in the Jataka Stories. The character of Kundalakesi as depicted in the Jataka Story is made up of these dual elements: logical and obstinate intellect and will, and spirituality. Kundalakesi defies her parents and forces them to bribe the executioner and release a robber whom she marries. When the robber took her to the rock abode of his titular god for a pretended offering, she realised that he had brought her there to kill her and rob her of her jewellery. She was alone on the rock but her keenly logical mind rescued her from the dangerous predicament.

She asks his permission to worship him as her husband in the traditional way. She goes twice round the robber worshipping him, but on the third round, pretending to worship him, she pushes him over the precipice, to be shattered to pieces.

She gives over her jewellery to her maid and, disguised as a female wanderer, flees from her home. She refutes monks and ascetics in controversy and becomes famous as an aggressive sceptic. The Buddha's personality and

persuasion combine to convert her to Buddhism. She later enters the order.

The *Chullapalobhana Jataka* is the story of a prince who was born a misogynist, but later became a sensualist and found ecstacy in woman. But later he was dissatisfied with his sensual and violent living and became an ascetic.

In brief the story[1] is as follows:

The Bodhisatva was born as son of the king of Benares and was named Asanagha, which means "Lightning". On the day of his birth he was bathed and handed over to the royal wet-nurse. But the infant became restless and began to cry as if he did not like to be in her lap. He was given over to another wet-nurse, but still he cried. Others in turn took the infant over and tried to soothe him, without success. At last, when he was given over to a male attendant, he ceased to cry. His mother had to stand behind a screen and give him her nipple through a hole in it. Thus he was brought up by the male nurses. When he grew to manhood, he preferred to live alone, without the company of any woman. The king had to build a separate palace for him, in which he lived alone with men servants.

The king was alarmed at his attitude to women, as he was his only son and heir. One day a beautiful woman singer approached the king and asked his permission to try to win the young prince over. The king consented.

The girl stood near his palace and began to sing. Prince Asanagha, hearing her sweet voice, became interested and asked his servant whose voice it was. The servant said that it was the voice of a beautiful girl. The prince invited her to the palace. She entered the palace, approached the prince coquettishly displaying her charms, and began to sing. Asanagha became enamoured of her

1. Jataka Story 54.

and lived with her. He felt in the woman's company an ecstacy undreamt of, and thought that no other than himself should experience this ecstacy. In this newly discovered ecstacy he became a fanatic and, sword in hand, he rushed out of the palace and began to attack every man he met.

He became so violent and fanatical that the king had reluctantly to banish him from the city.

He lived in the forest with the woman singer, supporting her with fruits and other food. One day, when he was away, an ascetic came to the hut. The woman tempted the ascetic and misbehaved with him. Asanagha, on returning home, detected the woman's infidelity, and in a murderous rage chased the ascetic with the intention of killing him. The ascetic, thinking that he still had his miraculous power, tried to move through the air, only to fall into the river. Asanagha, seeing the plight of the ascetic, rescued him from a watery grave.

He went back to the hut. Pitying the woman, he walked with her to the city and leaving her there, returned to his hut. He lived the life of an ascetic, suppressing lust and all other desires.

The character of Prince Asanagha in this Jataka Story is, of course, merely suggested by unconscious portrayal. But the basic psychological elements in the character of the prince are just those which Dostoevsky handled in such a manner as to develop subtle and tragic characters and to create an atmosphere which made them real and unforgettable.

The Buddhist writers seem to have given a twist to a folk tale, or to a story of their own invention, in order to make the principal character of it a saint. Without the twist, it was not possible to identify the character with the Bodhisatva. The character thus twisted became real in the eyes of the Buddhist writers because of their belief in

the Karma theory, which sometimes was a *deus ex machina* for them. However, the twist sometimes reveals an unexpected development in the principal characters, and at the same time gives a new form to the story.

The name given to the misogynist suggests that the monk who wrote the story was conscious of its irony. In his infancy the prince loathed the female of his species. Therefore his name should have been one appropriate to a saint, but not to a violent and destructive man. The name "Asanagha" literally means "Lightning." As soon as the woman-hater tasted the pleasures of sex, he became destructive and frightful as lightning. A Buddhist monk with insight into life and a natural psychologist, but cynically disposed towards men, seems to have given the boy this ironical name with an inward chuckle.

X

Of all the characters created by Dostoevsky, the character of Kirilov in *The Possessed* is, to a Buddhist or an Indian reader, the most remarkable. In intellectual mysticism Kirilov comes nearer to the Buddhist or Upanishadic mystic. Even if Dostoevsky derived inspiration to create the character of Kirilov from his own epileptic experience or from the philosophy of Schopenhauer, the affinity of his mysticism to Buddhism still remains.

Western writers treat some of Dostoevsky's mystical characters as pathological, perhaps because of the strong streak of Eastern mysticism in them. The rejection of belief in a personal God, humiliation of intellect and the surrender of the will, and the consequent selflessness and unbounded love of Dostoevsky's mystics, are the result of their mysticism. Their indifference to and contempt for conventional morals is not the attitude of sceptics but of mystics.

Dostoevsky seems to have made Myshkin an epileptic in

anticipation of the hostility and the scepticism that might have been roused, in the mind of the Western reader, had he made Myshkin physically and mentally perfect. The title of the book, *The Idiot*, suggests that Dostoevsky anticipated the refusal of the Western reader to treat Myshkin as an idealised normal human character.

In a passage written with emotional intensity in *The Idiot*, Dostoevsky describes the conditions which preceded one of Myshkin's epileptic seizures. This passage reads like a description of the mystic experience and ecstacy of the *yogi* who attains the highest state of contemplation.

Dostoevsky seems to have made Myshkin's epileptic fit an occasion for putting into artistic language the emotional experience of mystic communion, partly based, no doubt, on his own experience. The passage is as follows:

"He (Myshkin) remembered among other things that he always had one minute just before the epileptic fit (if it came on while he was awake), when suddenly in the midst of sadness, spiritual darkness and oppression, there seems at moments a flash of light in his brain, and with extraordinary impetus all his vital forces suddenly began working at their highest tension. The sense of life, the consciousness of self, were multiplied ten times at these moments which passed like a flash of lightning. His mind and his heart were flooded with extraordinary light; all his uneasiness, all his doubts, all his anxieties, were relieved at once; they were all merged in a lofty calm, full of serene harmonious joy and hope. But these moments, these flashes, were only the prelude of that final second (it was never more than a second) with which the fit began. That second was, of course, unendurable. Thinking of that moment later, when he was all right again, he often said to himself that all these gleams and flashes of the highest sensation of life and self-consciousness, and therefore also of the highest form of existence, were nothing but disease,

the interruption of the normal condition; and if so, it was not at all the highest form of being, but on the contrary must be reckoned the lowest. And yet he came at last to an extremely paradoxical conclusion: 'What if it is disease?' He decided at last: 'What does it matter that it is an abnormal intensity, if the result, if the minute of sensation, remembered and analysed afterwards in health, turns out to be the acme of harmony and beauty, and gives a feeling, unknown and undivined till then, of completeness, of proportion, or reconciliation, and of ecstatic, of devotional merging in the highest synthesis of life?' These vague expressions seemed to him very comprehensible, though too weak. That it really was 'beauty and worship,' that it really was the 'highest synthesis of life,' he could not doubt, and could not admit the possibility of doubt. It was not as though he saw abnormal and unreal visions of some sort at that moment, as from hashish, opium, or wine, destroying the reason and distorting the soul. He was quite capable of judging of that when the attack was over. These moments were only an extraordinary quickening of self-consciousness—if the condition was to be expressed in one word—and at the same time of the direct sensation of existence in the most intense degree. Since at that second, that is, at the very last conscious moment before the fit, he had time to say to himself clearly and consciously: 'Yes, for this moment one might give one's whole life!' Then, without doubt, that moment was really worth the whole of life. He did not insist on the dialectical part of his argument, however. Stupefaction, spiritual darkness, idiocy stood before him conspicuously as the consequence of these 'higher moments'; seriously, of course, he could not have disputed it. There was undoubtedly a mistake in his conclusion—that is, in his estimate of that minute, but the reality of the sensation somewhat perplexed him. What was he to make of that reality? For the very thing had happened; he actually had said to himself at that second, that, for the infinite

happiness he had felt in it, that second really might well be worth the whole of life.''

There is a similar passage in *The Possessed*. It is put into the mouth of Kirilov, who propounds a mysticism which is closer to Buddhism:

''Kirilov came out of his dream and, strange to say, spoke more coherently than he usually did. It was evident that he had formulated it all in his head long ago and had, perhaps, written it down too.

'' 'There are seconds—they come five or six at a time—when you suddenly feel the presence of eternal harmony in all its fulness. It is nothing earthly. I don't mean that it is heavenly, but a man in his earthly semblance can't endure it. He has to undergo a physical change or die. This feeling is clear and unmistakable. It is as though you suddenly apprehended all nature and suddenly said: 'Yes, it is true—it is good!'

''God, when he created the world, said at the end of each day of creation: 'Yes, it is true, it is good.' It is not rapture but just gladness. You forgive nothing because there is nothing to forgive. Nor do you really love anything—oh, it is much higher than love. What is more terrifying about it is that it is so terribly clear and such gladness. If it went on for more than five seconds, the soul could not endure it and must perish.''

'' 'Kirilov, does this often happen? ' asked Shatov.

'' 'Once in three days, once a week.'

'' 'You're not an epileptic?'

'' 'No.'

'' 'You will be one. Take care, Kirilov. I have heard that's just how an epileptic fit begins. An epileptic described to me exactly that preliminary sensation before a fit, exactly as you have done. He, too, said it lasted five

seconds and that it was impossible to endure it longer than that.''

This experience is treated in a different form in one of Dostoevsky's short stories, *The Dream of a Ridiculous Man*.

XI

In a conversation with the narrator of *The Possessed*—referred to as ''I''—Kirilov expounds his philosophy.

'' 'Everyone must judge from himself,' Kirilov said, reddening. 'Full freedom will come only when it makes no difference whether to live or not to live. That is the goal for everybody.'

'' 'The goal? But perhaps no one will want to live then,' I said.

'' 'No one,' he said emphatically.

'' 'Man's afraid of death because he loves life,' I remarked. 'That's how I see it, and that's how nature has ordered it.'

'' 'That's despicable, and that's where the whole deception lies.' His eyes flashed. 'Life is pain, life is fear, and man is unhappy. Now all is pain and fear. Now man loves life. And that's how they have done it. You're given life now for pain and fear, and that's where the whole deception lies. Now man is not yet what he will be. A new man will come, happy and proud. To whom it won't matter whether he lives or not. He'll be the new man! He who conquers pain and fear will himself be a god. And that other God will not be.'

'' 'So according to you, the other God does exist, after all?'

'' 'He doesn't exist, but He is. There's no pain in a stone, but there's pain in the fear of a stone. He who conquers pain and fear will himself become a god. Then there will be a new life, a new man, everything will be new. Then history will be divided into two parts: from

the gorilla to the annihilation of God, and from the annihilation of God to . . .'

" 'To the gorilla?'

" ' . . . To the physical transformation of the earth and man. Man will be god. He'll be physically transformed. And, the world, too, will be transformed, and things will be transformed, and thoughts and all feelings. What do you think? Will man be physically transformed then?'

" 'If it is all the same whether to live or not to live, everyone will kill himself and that's perhaps the only change that will come about.'

" 'It makes no difference. Deception will be killed. Everyone who desires supreme freedom must dare to kill himself. He who dares to kill himself has learnt the secret of the deception. Beyond that there's no freedom; that's all, and beyond it there is nothing. He who dares to kill himself is a god. Now every one can make it so that there shall be no God and there shall be nothing. But no one has done so yet.' "

In this conversation Kirilov expounds a philosophy which is closer to Buddhism than to any form of Eastern mysticism. "Life is pain, life is fear," says Kirilov. This is a fundamental tenet in Buddhism as well as in Schopenhauer's philosophy. When Kirilov says "he who conquers pain and fear will himself be a god, and that other God will not be," he consciously or unconsciously expounds, I believe, Buddhist metaphysics in aphorisms.

The four highest states to which a Buddhist *yogi* should aspire in contemplation are love, pity, sympathy and equanimity. After contemplation on the four highest states, the Buddhist mystic should aspire to ten forms of knowledge. Knowledge of calm and insight, insight into what is to be feared, and insight into evil are three of them.

The insight into fear is explained thus in the *Yogachara's Manual:* "Insight into what is to be feared is so called because, to him who gives himself to meditation, seeing the fearfulness of all conditioned things, all aggregates in every world, every sort of existence, every seat of consciousness, and every abode of beings, seem a source of fear, just like lions, tigers and devils to a coward who desires a happy life."[1]

Kirilov says the man who conquers pain and fear becomes a god and a new man. Then history will be divided into two parts: from the gorilla to annihilation of God, and from the annihilation of God to—

It is curious that Kirilov does not complete the sentence. The incomplete sentence can be completed by the word "Nirvana". But Kirilov later completes the sentence, not by a word but by an explanation: from the annihilation of God to the transformation of earth, man and his thoughts and feelings. This explanation can be treated as a definition of an aspect of Buddhist Nirvana. "He who dares to kill himself has learnt the secret of the deception," says Kirilov. Here he uses the word "deception", I believe, in the same sense as the Pali word *moha* is used in Buddhist metaphysics. The word *moha* is translated into English as "delusion." *Moha* is one of the three cardinal effects of the mind that makes a man incapable of grasping higher truths.

Ivan Roe seems to have grasped the significance of Kirilov's mysticism when he wrote: "This reference to the stopping of the clock shows us at once where Kirilov's poetic afflatus comes from, we cry triumphantly. He is a seeker after Nirvana, paradise here and now; we have pigeon-holed him very neatly . . . But Kirilov is not really so shallow as that; he is quite original; and his Nirvana idea is rather pathological than intellectual and borrowed."[2]

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1. *Manual of a Mystic* (Pali Text Society) p. 131.
2. Ivan Roe, *Breadth of Corruption* pp. 32, 33.

Kirilov is called a madman because of his idea of killing himself to become a man-god. Kirilov's idea of killing himself violently to become a man-god may be a new one suggested by Schopenhauer's philosophy. But the idea of attaining godhead through the door of death was not new to the old Indian mystics.

"Now the Upanishads teach," says Professor Paul Deussen, "a threefold return to Brahman,—(1) in sleep, (2) in death, and (3) in yoga."[1]

The following passages from two of the oldest original Upanishads support Deussen's view.

The *Chandogya Upanishad* says: "When a person here is deceasing, my dear, his speech merges into his mind; his mind merges into life; his life into heat; the heat, into the supreme divinity.

"All this universe has the (supreme) Deity for its life. That deity is truth. He is the universal soul. Thou art He, O Svetaketu."[2]

The other passage is from the *Brhadaranyaka Upanishad:*

"He thus conquers the second death. Death does not obtain him. Death becomes his soul. He becomes one of those deities."

I have detached the above lines from a lengthy passage written in cryptic and symbolic language. Even in its entirety the passage cannot be understood by a student of Eastern philosophy without the help of the long explanation given by the commentator.

It is a passage that attempts to give a mystical explanation to Vedic sacrifice. The supreme deity had been represented under the symbol of a sacrificial animal. The killing of the animal means liberating the Divinity whose symbol was the body of the sacrificial animal.

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1. Paul Deussen, *The Philosophy of the Upanishads p.* 248.
2. *Chandogya Upanishad* 6.6.8.

The Buddhist mystic who abandons wealth and family and gets rid of all desires becomes an Arahat, and conventional morality has only a relative meaning to him. He is liberated and becomes a man-god. After his death he attains Nirvana, from where there is no return. Schopenhauer's definition of immortality as "indestructibility without continued existence" is equally suitable as a definition of Nirvana too. The idea of suicide has no meaning to the Buddhist mystic who attains the highest stage. But theoretically and logically getting rid of his mortal body means to him the attaining of Nirvana or joining the Infinite.

Kirilov in his mysticism approaches the Indian yogi, in spite of his early association with revolutionaries. And his cynical attitude towards orthodox religion and his blasphemies are, perhaps, a protective armour for his bleeding heart, wounded by the sight of the greed, selfishness and intellectual arrogance that oppress humanity. His suicide is symbolic. How can a sane man who approaches the saint in forgiveness and compassion shoot himself? In spite of his Buddhist or Indian mysticism, Kirilov was an intellectual who could not get rid of his scepticism. Intellectually he was a sceptic, but emotionally a mystic.

Dostoevsky himself was a sceptic in spite of his intensely religious feeling. He loathed his scepticism and intellect, but he could not get rid of them. Father Zossima and Alyosha represent only the intensely religious aspect of Dostoevsky's mind. Myshkin, Kirilov, Shatov and Ivan Karamazov represent the conflict of the religious intuition and the acquired intellectual scepticism of Dostoevsky. Raskolnikov kills a money-lender because of his intellectual arrogance, and Kirilov kills himself because of intellectual arrogance combined with religious mysticism.

"You are a scoundrel and a false intellect. But I am just the same as you, and I will shoot myself while you

remain living,'' says Kirilov to Peter Stepanovitch. Kirilov hated and loathed his intellect, but he could not get rid of the arrogance which is inseparable from it.

The Possessed was completed by Dostoevsky about three years before *Brothers Karamazov* his last great novel. There is a contrast between *The Possessed* and *Brothers Karamazov* in regard to certain characters that represent Dostoevsky's ideas. Father Zossima, Alyosha and Ivan Karamazov in *Brothers Karamazov* betray a change in Dostoevsky's attitude to religion and life. Father Zossima and Alyosha are Christian mystics. But the mysticism of Father Zossima is much nearer to Indian than to Christian mysticism.

"Love a man even in his sin," says Father Zossima, "for that is the semblance of Divine Love and is the highest love on earth. Love all God's creation, the whole and every grain of sand in it. Love every leaf, every ray of God's light. Love the animals, love the plants, love everything. If you love everything, you will perceive the divine mystery in things. Once you perceive it, you will begin to comprehend it better every day. And you will come at last to love the whole world with an all-embracing love. Love the animals: God has given them the rudiments of thought and joy untroubled. Do not trouble them, don't harass them, don't deprive them of their happiness . . .

"My brother asked the birds to forgive him; that sounds senseless, but it is right; for all is like an ocean, all is flowing and blending; a touch in one place sets up movement at the other end of the earth . . . It is all like an ocean, I tell you. Then you would pray to the birds too, consumed by an all-embracing love, in a sort of transport, and pray that they too will forgive you your sin. Treasure this ecstasy, however senseless it may seem to men."

Either because of the reaction of Western Russians to his earlier novel *The Possessed*, or because of a change in

his own attitude to religion and life, Dostoevsky seems to have abandoned his scepticism when he wrote *Brothers Karamazov*. And an indication of the change in his attitude can be seen by contrasting the character of Father Zossima with that of Shatov in *The Possessed*. Shatov is a slavophile and a Christian. In his love and compassion he approaches Myshkin. He not only forgives but loves his wife, who comes to him after three years of separation to give birth to a child whose father was another man.

Shatov in an argument with Stavrogin attacks reason and science thus: "Reason has never had the power to define good and evil, or even to distinguish between good and evil, even approximately; on the contrary, it has always mixed them up in a disgraceful and pitiful way; science has even given the solution by the fist. This is particularly characteristic of the half-truths of science, the most terrible scourge of humanity, unknown till this century, and worse than plague, famine or war. A half-truth is a despot such as has never been in the world before. A despot that has its priests and its slaves, a despot to whom all do homage with love and superstition hitherto inconceivable, before which science itself trembles and cringes in a shameful way."[1]

Myshkin, Alyosha, Zossima, Kirilov and Shatov are only idealised characters or personifications of abstract ideas to the Western reader. But to the Eastern reader they recall the names of real persons who lived and died in India, giving birth to myths, legends and religious stories as recorded in the Jataka Book. Characters similar to the emperor Asoka, the fratricide and conqueror who later became a saint, abound in the Jataka Stories.

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1. *The Possessed.*

HUNTING
FOR
DWARFS

HUNTING FOR DWARFS

UNTIL a few years ago, my sole hobby was reading. I became tired of reading, and cynical about books good or bad, serious or light. I had no other hobby, and it seemed too late in life for me to acquire a taste for a new one. I disliked the cinema because of its preponderant sentimentality, which a man mature in age could hardly have appreciated.

I watched football and cricket matches as a release from ennui. Watching sports of every sort was exciting; I enjoyed them immensely. But the physical strain and the excitement were too much for a man who had lived a sedentary life from boyhood. So I resorted to sojourning in rural areas and our ruined cities. The sad and pensive atmosphere that surrounded them appealed to me. Since then I have visited the ruined cities ten or twelve times. The study of sculpture became for me a new hobby and an escape from life.

In studying sculpture I became interested in the figures of dwarfs carved with care and infinite patience by ancient sculptors mainly on pillar capitals and stone steps. The dwarfs sculptured on pillar capitals are not larger than three or four inches. All of them are in bas-relief, and are treated as minor sculpture by archaeologists and artists.

With the delight of a child who collects stamps, I learned to enjoy thoroughly these figures of pigmies in their infinitely varying attitudes and boisterous humour. Though small and insignificant as sculpture in comparison with the colossal statues of the Buddha and the life-size figures of gods and goddesses, they represent a part of the human comedy of ancient Ceylon. Most, perhaps all of these figurines indirectly give one an idea of the labour

and toil spent by unknown and insignificant folk ārtists for the delectation of feudal lords. The figurines represent musicians, drummers, acrobats, comedians, dancers, wrestlers and contortionists.

On a recent visit to Anuradhapura I hunted like a curio-collector for new dwarf figures. With two friends who are very good and modest students of our past, I walked about three miles under a scorching sun to Tantrimale in the secret hope of finding new dwarf figures. But there were only two stone sculptures, one the weathered remains of a colossal sleeping Buddha and the other a sedent Buddha. They were probably carved by sculptors who had forgotten the classical tradition which disappeared from India after the sixth century A.D.

Fig. 2

Fig. 3

But at Anuradhapura, in two places which I had explored earlier, I discovered, to my childish delight, five or six new dwarf figures. Figures 2 and 3 represent two of them. The new dwarf in figure 2 represents a drummer in the act of beating a drum of the shape of a pitcher or a bottle-gourd. The curiously humorous and exaggerated posture of the head of the dwarf and its two hands in the act of drumming suggest, I believe, the posture and contortions

of the head and hands of a modern *tabla* player. The *tabla* is a dual drum, but the dwarf has a single drum.

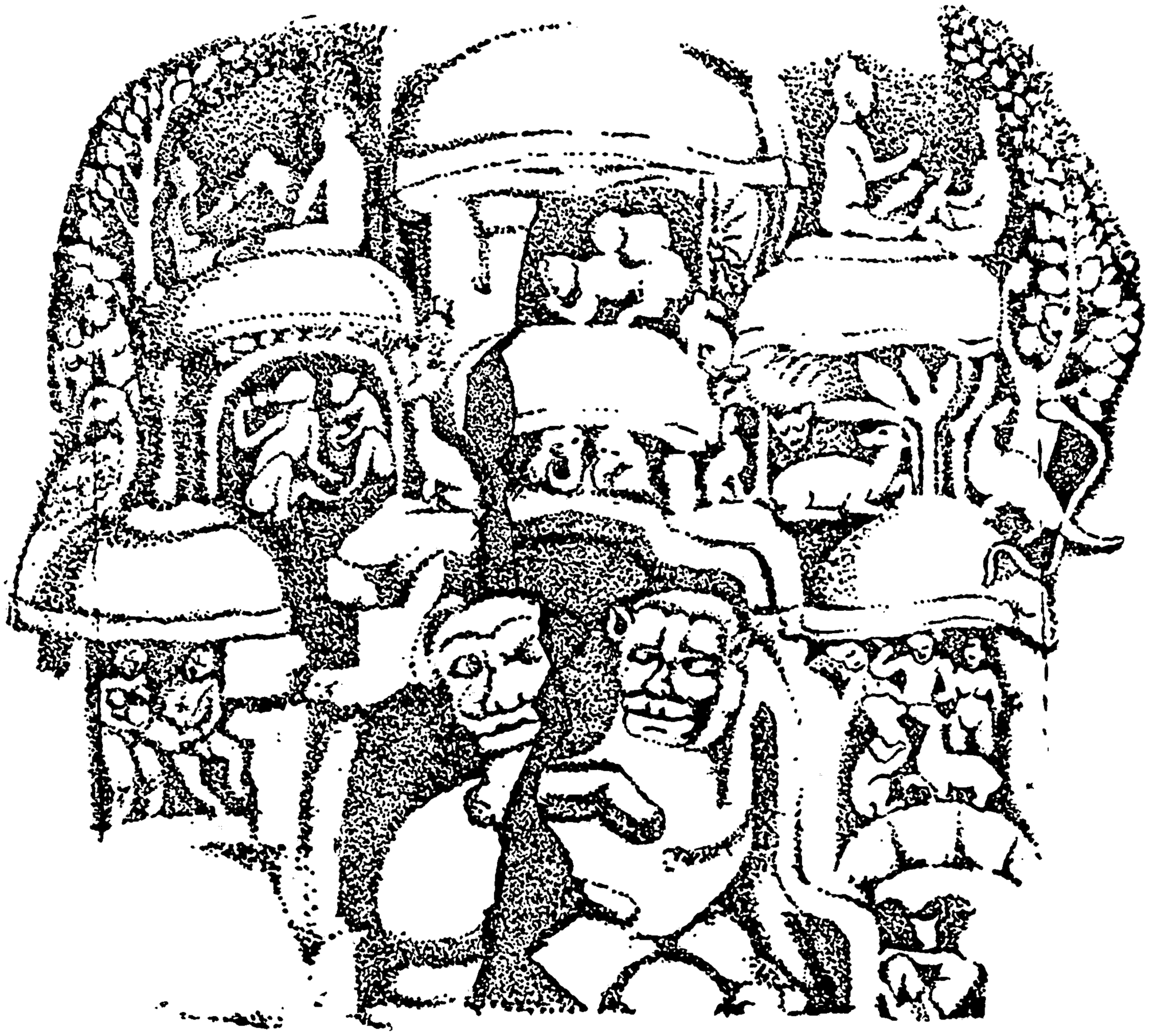
In the Indian epic *Ramayana* there is a reference to a drum called *kalasi*, which means a pitcher or jar. In the old Sinhalese literature there are references to various kinds of drums. A word meaning "five kinds of musical instruments" is found in almost every Sinhalese poem or prose work. A drum with one leather eye is one of them.

Figure 3 represents a dwarf on a pillar capital in a ruined monastery near the Thuparama dagoba. The dwarf is holding a huge writhing cobra with its head raised, ready to strike. The dwarf is humorously simulating a snake-charmer, with dilated eyes and lips contracted and contorted as in puffing or whistling, suggesting not fright but daring.

The sculpture of Ceylon has been explored, mostly, by archaeologists. Art critics, not excluding Coomaraswamy and Havell, as they concentrated on the sculpture of India and Indonesia, where there was a vast field for exploration, had to be satisfied with passing references to Ceylon sculpture.

A merely descriptive account of Ceylon sculpture with very good illustrations, will give some fulness to the history of Eastern sculpture. The study of dwarf figures, apart from its artistic appeal, is a hobby as interesting and exciting as collecting curios or stamps. These figures, because of their varying contortions, are sure to engage one in hunting for new specimens. The boisterous and humorous attitude to life of these jolly pigmies of ancient art will keep one always in a jovial mood.

THE BUDDHIST HUMANITARIAN IDEAL



THE BUDDHIST HUMANITARIAN IDEAL

THERE is a badly-weathered remnant of a piece of sculpture in bas-relief (Fig. 4) on one of the stone parapets that stand by the side of the entrance to a ruined monastery near the Thuparama in Anuradhapura. This sculpture suggests the humanitarian ideal of the ancient Buddhists and Hindus who practised their religion.

The feeling of sympathy for living things and nature was inculcated even in the minds of the illiterate by the Book of Birth Stories. Every story in this great book reminds the reader of the unity of life by stressing the Buddhist theory of rebirth. The Buddha rationalised the Hindu

theory of reincarnation, which may have had an animistic origin. Apart from its merits and demerits as a philosophical theory, it seems to have inspired even the uneducated Buddhist and the Hindu to feel life and nature as an all-embracing unity.

The Buddhists, if not the Jains, were, I believe, the first to express in sculpture and painting this unity of nature and the ideal of sympathy for all living things.

In a recent book edited by Sir Richard Winstedt, there is an essay on Indian sculpture by John Irving. He says:

"While Buddhism, in proclaiming the equality of man, expressed a new humanism and a strong faith in the brotherhood of man, at the same time its gospel of reincarnation stressed the unity of all life and the identification of man with nature. From this arose the intense feeling for nature and animal life, which we find displayed in the Bharut and Sanchi reliefs, where animals as well as human beings bring flowers and other offerings in homage to the symbol of the Buddha; in the procession headed by gaily-caparisoned elephants and horses; in the ponds teeming with lotuses, water-fowl, and fish, with here and there a buffalo cooling itself in the water."

The German philosopher Count Hermann Keyserling with an uncanny insight seems to have felt the spiritual significance of the Buddhist attitude to life and nature. A superficial observer would have treated this attitude as a remnant of primitive animism. In writing of Anuradhapura in *The Travel Diary of a Philosopher*, Keyserling says: "We Europeans will never create a paradise in spite of all the charity which we wear on our sleeves, because our animal instincts are too strong. The Indian Buddhist world in many ways gives an impression of paradise, because their faith forbids them to harm an animal, and they thus have no antagonistic relation to man. They tolerate man's existence, like one genus tolerating another, re-

membering that there is room for all. In India people are less afraid of a tiger, and justifiably so, than they are in Europe of a stag at rutting time. Here we are also at the root of the truth, which as such goes back to Plato, with which all Christian mystics are familiar, but whose theory has been most perfected by the Persians, the truth that divine love lives within every one, and that it depends upon externals whether it manifests itself or not."

The piece of sculpture referred to is perhaps the only one surviving in which the ancient artists of Ceylon attempted to express the humanitarian ideal of the Buddhists. It is crowded with figures of men and women, and various animals, loving each other in friendship and sympathy. In one of the carvings (bottom left), a man and a woman are nursing a wounded monkey or a child. A little above it are two monkeys together, like friends. One of them is biting a fruit and the other, perhaps, is depicted in the attitude of feeding his companion.

At the top of the sculptural piece, two ascetics are depicted in the attitude of accepting offerings from two men. Between these two, two animals are represented—a she-bear and its cub. Below this carving are the heads of two friendly elephants. Underneath the elephants are two lions, or perhaps a lion and a lioness. The figures of two proverbial enemies, the cobra and the mongoose, can be easily identified in another carving (extreme right), united in friendship. Adjacent to this can be seen a deer and a tiger, or perhaps a lion, like friends. Another carving below this depicts with intense feeling the figures of two animals, one in the attitude of licking the head of the other, probably a fox, who is enjoying the attention and friendship bestowed on him by the other. A man and a woman who stand behind them look on with approval. At the bottom of the right side of this crowded piece of sculpture, a man, probably a farmer, is seen reclining in his hut or bower. The head of the animal behind him

can be identified as that of a bull who is licking the hand of his master.

Love and harmony pervade all the scenes depicted in this piece of sculpture. The practice of this humanitarian ideal seems forgotten by the sophisticated Buddhists of today. It perhaps lingers in their minds as an abstraction. To the ancient Buddhist it was not an abstraction, but a concrete reality, because they practised it.

ASSESSING SINHALESE LITERATURE

ASSESSING SINHALESE LITERATURE

GOOD art has no boundaries or limitations to be defined by the words 'Eastern' or 'Western.' Such terms serve to indicate cultural and geographical differences, the consideration of which is not very important for the subjective evaluation of works of art and literature. In historical criticism, however, the geographical and cultural differences have to be considered as essential.

The critical standards of art and literature of different geographical groups of people have a fundamental unity in spite of their cultural differences. This unity or similarity is the basis for subjective criticism and the differences are the basis for objective and historical criticism. Both of these forms or standards are legitimate, and serve different purposes. If we examine the history of Indian literature and criticism, we find evidence to justify both these methods.

Anandawardhana was a Sanskrit critic of the ninth century who wrote an abstruse treatise on poetics. Professor S. Kuppaswamy Sastri in his *Highways and By-ways of Literary Criticism in Sanskrit*, after analysing Anandawardhana's main theory of poetry—the suggestive function of language in poetry—refers thus to his criticism of Kalidasa: "In the course of his exposition of principles of *dhvani* at a certain stage, he does not hesitate to condemn Kalidasa in very strong terms for what he considers improper . . . For instance, he condemns Kalidasa in unmistakable terms for the somewhat frank and open way in which he has described the carnal enjoyment of the Mother and Father of the world, Parvati and Siva, in the eighth canto of *Kumarasambhava* . . . The consummation of

love between Parvati and Siva should have been simply indicated, it should not have been described in detail. He considers that the poet forgot himself and committed an outrage.''

If a modern critic independently subjected the erotic descriptions of Kalidasa to a similar criticism, he would have been condemned as an unscholarly and ill-informed man who tries to apply Western standards to assess Indian poetry.

Anandawardhana recognized only three poets: Valmiki, Vyasa and Kalidasa. This judgment of one of the most original of Sanskrit critics, who seems to have ignored Sanskrit poetry produced after the sixth century, is very interesting. Valmiki was the author of the Indian epic *Ramayana*, and Vyasa the author of the other great epic *Mahabharata*. Kalidasa's mature works have stood the test of Eastern and Western criticism.

Is it by a strange coincidence that the works of these three Sanskrit poets have been selected by modern European critics as the best poetry of India? Or is it because a Sanskrit critic of the ninth century and some European critics of today have been influenced by tastes and critical principles which are fundamentally similar?

Anandawardhana and a few other Sanskrit writers on poetics severely criticised the imitative court poetry produced after Kalidasa, for its figurative language and stock descriptions. They characterised the poets who produced such imitative poems as an ''unending flock of sheep.'' Under the influence of the learned circles of the court and their sophisticated taste, Sanskrit poetry gradually became very artificial and stereotyped.

The tradition of court poetry seems to have degenerated into a semi-political institution, and consequently its office was coveted by scholars who vied with each other to be learned panegyrists of the king and an effete aristocracy. A later Sanskirt writer on poetics says that those who

aspire to become poets should seek the patronage and the rewards of the king and his ministers.

This aspect of the history of Sanskrit poetics seems to have inspired Tagore to write an ironical and poignant short story entitled *The Victory*, in which an arrogant court poet of analytical intellect vanquishes in debate a genuine and simple poet at the court of King Narayana.

Eroticism pervaded court poetry, in place of the religious mystical and heroic elements of earlier epic poetry. This new trend would in itself have infused vitality and variety to a poetry which was religious, provided it encouraged creative artists. But it encouraged only a class of scholars whose patrons were the king and the aristocracy.

Some of the oldest of extant poems of the Sinhalese belong to the twelfth or thirteenth century. The authors of these poems have been influenced by the type of court poetry which has been criticised by Sanskrit critics. Their criticisms have been ignored by scholars who perpetuated the conventions of this tradition.

It is a difficult, perhaps an impossible task to ascertain the critical standard according to which the ancient Sinhalese scholars and intelligentsia assessed their poetry. A fifteenth-century Sinhalese poet, Vidagama Maha Thero, who attacked popular Hinduism for its influence on Buddhist culture, condemned court poetry, dancing and music. Another poet of the same period, in enumerating the virtues and the scholarly attainments of the Sangha Raja (the head of the Buddhist monks of Ceylon) of the time, mentions with approval his rejection of Sanskrit poetics after an examination of its principles. In one of his works, *Anagata Vansaya*, a famous preacher and a writer, naively observes: "People lacking in wisdom are bent on sensual pleasures. Such men eulogise the disgusting and stinking bodies and limbs of the female species, comparing them

with lotuses, blue lotuses and the moon. Such indiscreet fellows, eulogising the beauty of women, fall in love with them, and are reborn as worms in the wombs of women-folk.'' This is a veiled attack on poets who wrote erotic court poetry.

Except for stray allusions such as these, we have no record of criticisms of ancient Sinhalese poetry. Therefore it is difficult to find out the standard by which the ancient Sinhalese assessed their poetry.

The only standard that can be pointed out is that of Sanskrit poetics. Sanskrit poetics developed over a period of a thousand years. More independent and able writers introduced new theories, which are still being interpreted in different ways. Recent interpreters, many of whom are teachers in Indian universities, attempt to compare the important principles of Sanskrit poetics with those of the West, showing their similarities.

An eighteenth-century English scholar, H. Blair, seems to have had in mind the ornate style of Sanskrit court poetry when he wrote thus on style: ''The Asiatics, gay and loose in their manners, affected a style florid and diffused.''

There are English scholars in Ceylon who still believe that all ancient writers of India and Ceylon preferred a florid and bombastic style, and that the critics approved of it. In brevity and unvarnished diction, the oldest Sinhalese prose approaches English prose. Early Sinhalese prose was modelled on the style of Pali prose.

Professor Winternitz, referring to the style of some of the dialogues of the Buddha, says: ''There are some brief and terse dialogues in which an idea is presented with the utmost nicety and lucidity, and developed without a single superfluous word.'' Winternitz considers the Pali *Milindapañha* the greatest masterpiece of Indian prose.

If we wish to evolve a standard of judgment for our poetry, we should examine the prose and the poetry of

India from the Upanishadic period to the end of the Gupta period: the philosophical poetry of the *Upanishads*, the *Dialogues*, the *Therigatha*, the *Dhammapada*, of the Buddha, the *Ramayana*, the *Mahabharata*, and the mature works of Kalidasa. If we apply a standard of judgment formed on the basis of the art and style of these works to examine the so-called classical Sinhalese poems and prose works, most of them, will, I believe, suffer under the process.

In Buddhism, as in the Upanishadic philosophy, there are daring philosophical speculations combined with an un-emotional mysticism to which a superficial rationalism has been added. Many Sinhalese writers after the tenth century seem to have been under the influence of this superficial rationalism and the glamour and the polished brilliance of Sanskrit court poetry. There is no other cause which can account for their failure to draw inspiration from their own genuine and intensely emotional poetry—the *Therigatha* and the religious poetry of the *Sutta-Nipata* and the *Dhammapada*—if their religious scruples prevented them from seeking inspiration from the poetry of the *Upanishads*, the *Mahabharata*, the *Ramayana*, and the works of Kalidasa.

MATERIALISM
IN
INDIAN CULTURE

MATERIALISM IN INDIAN CULTURE

ANANDA COOMARASWAMY in his earlier writings always contrasted the spiritual aspect of Indian culture with the material aspect of European culture. His attitude was an inevitable reaction at a time when the material elements and behaviour patterns of Western culture were threatening to destroy Indian culture, and the Westernised Indians and Ceylonese were indiscriminately discarding their own heritage.

Coomaraswamy's attitude changed later, but his emphasis on the spiritual aspect of Indian culture persisted. In his later writings, with greater erudition and an intellectual mysticism, he began to explore Eastern and Western cultures to emphasise the fundamental unity of both in their spiritual aspect. This was my impression on reading some of the essays in his two later books, *Figures of Speech and Figures of Thought* and *The Bugbear of Literacy*. In the essay 'Paths that lead to the same Summit,' which appears in the latter book, Coomaraswamy treats all spiritual culture as a unitary whole, and its separate cultures as dialects of one and the same language of the spirit.

At the conclusion of the essay he observes that there are many paths that lead to the summit of one and the same mountain; their differences will be the more apparent the lower down we are, but they vanish at the peak; each will naturally take the one that starts from the point at which he finds himself; he who goes round about the mountain looking for another is not climbing. Never let us approach another believer to ask him to become "one of us," but approach him with respect as one who is already "one of His" who is, and from whose invariable beauty all contingent being depends.

In his earlier writings Coomaraswamy seems to have been influenced by the idea of an irreconcilable difference in the cultures of East and West. Before the development of science in the West, the spiritual and religious aspects were predominant in Eastern and Western cultures. Nevertheless materialistic aspects were present in both of them.

The materialistic aspect of Indian culture became predominant at an early age of Indian history, before the emergence of Upanishadic philosophy and Buddhism, and persisted till the tenth or twelfth century. The Charvakas, a sect of Indian materialists, who influenced the life and thought of Indian aristocracy, attacked Vedic religion and condemned the spiritual ideal in the bitterest invective.

Sir Sarvapalli Radhakrishnan, writing on Indian materialism in his *Indian Philosophy*, says: "With the intellectual fervour and moral seriousness were also found united a lack of mental balance and restraint of passion. It was the era of Charvakas . . . Sorcery and science, scepticism and faith, licence and asceticism were found commingled. When the surging energies of life assert their rights, it is not unnatural that many yield to unbridled imagination. Despite all this, the very complexity of thought and tendency helped to enlarge life. By its emphasis on the right of free inquiry, the intellectual stir of the age weakened the power of traditional authority."

The evidence for the persistence of the influence of this materialistic philosophy, at least amongst the aristocracy, can be seen in some of the Buddhist Suttas and also in elaborate treatises on erotics and Sanskrit poetry written much later. The Buddha vividly depicts the moral decadence and deterioration of spiritual values amongst the Brahmins themselves in the *Brahmana Dhammika Sutta* and others in the collection of utterances called the *Sutta-Nipata*.

An orthodox Sanskrit scholar, Dakshinaranjan Shastri,

in a booklet *A Short History of Indian Materialism and Hedonism* adduces evidence to show the great influence of materialism on the court poetry, arts, and life of India. Eroticism prevailed all over the country. The Brahmin and the Chandala, the king and the beggar took part with equal enthusiasm in erotic festivals in which Kama was worshipped.

He says: "This prosperity and success of the Lokayata system (materialistic philosophy) ended in corruption and misunderstanding. Extreme forms of freedom gave birth to licentiousness. Supreme bliss was transformed into sensual pleasure . . . Licentiousness became predominant in the country."

Coomaraswamy sees the fundamental unity of Eastern and Western cultures only in their spiritual aspect, because he ignores the materialistic aspect, at any rate of Eastern culture. An anthropologist sees the same unity of all cultures in both aspects, spiritual and material. The anthropologist who studies the divergences and differences of cultures emphasises their fundamental unity. Divergent and independent cultures of civilized and barbarous nations have been developed by borrowing and the readaptation of the borrowed elements. The purity of an autochthonous national culture is only a figment of the imagination of some sophisticated nationalists who ignore modern anthropology. The anthropologist sees the bond of kinship and the brotherhood of man in the essential unity of culture. Dr Kluckhohn, an American anthropologist, says in a recent book, *Mirror for Man*: "When we see the whole panorama of inventions and borrowings on the vast scale of space and time which archaeology can provide, we realise the tremendous interdependence of cultures and the essential cultural brotherhood of man."

Most of us in Ceylon have an attachment to our past, which manifests itself in our partiality for traditional morality, religion, art, literature and language. This partiality

for the past and its traditions make us unduly pessimistic and critical of the present and the future. But the frank criticism of present tendencies serves as a corrective and a check to avoid the disintegration of our culture under the stress of powerful but superficial and glamorous Western influences and the consequent demoralisation of our society. Instead of allowing our vision to be blurred by dogmatism, it is better to subject our habits, customs, art and literature and our opinions of them to frank and sincere discussion, as there is much cant and humbug amongst us about art, literature, and language.

RELIGION AND INDIAN ART

RELIGION AND INDIAN ART

BY emphasising the spiritual and religious aspect of art in order to make people appreciate the works of the ancient artists of India and Ceylon, some harm has been done. It has encouraged people to concentrate on an aspect which has little to do with the study of art.

This emphasis was first utilised by the early critics to defend Indian sculpture and painting from the attacks and criticisms of European critics and their followers. Most of them based their criticisms of Indian art on the naturalism of Greek art, and the theories elaborated on the basis of that art as developed in Europe. The naturalism of Greek art has been severely criticised by modern artists and art critics. Indian art, especially sculpture, suffered because of the emphasis placed on its religious theme.

The Indian artist—as did the great artists of all other countries—used line, colour and form as media for expressing his vision and imagination. There was very little religion in that language of the artist. His language did not denote any particular religious cult or spiritual dogma.

"Artistic expression," says Dr Stella Kramrisch in her *Indian Sculpture*, "is more earthbound than are words. Before experience of life and the outlook that it conditions become worded, they are filtered through the mechanism of language and intangible sound. But the artist works in the material that earth itself supplies, and his hands form it, warm with the blood that pulses through them. Where words fail, vision subsists."

The Indian artist made use of the human form, especially the female figure, in its innumerable variations and movements to express his artistic vision.

A comprehensive study of Indian sculpture from a purely artistic point of view has been attempted by Dr Stella Kramrisch in her *Indian Sculpture*. Its philosophical jargon makes it rather difficult reading, but it is one of the best books on Indian sculpture I have read.

Unlike many other art critics, she does not resort to Indian spiritualism or religion in assessing the greatness of Indian sculpture and the vitality of the tradition which persisted in inspiring artists for centuries.

It is, I believe, a mistake to resort to a religious cult in order to justify the art of India or ancient Ceylon. It is true that the source of inspiration and vision of Indian artists was their religious perception. By religious perception I do not mean belief in any religious cult or dogma. An artist who rejects all religious cults may still have a religious perception.

"Religion, as I understand it," says Clive Bell in *Art*, "is an expression of the individual's sense of the emotional significance of the universe; I should not be surprised to find that art was an expression of the same thing. Anyway both seem to express emotions different from and transcending the emotions of life . . . Art and religion belong to the same world . . . Therefore do we regard art and religion as twin manifestations of the spirit; wrongly do some speak of art as a manifestation of religion."

Indian artists derived their inspiration from the real and genuine source of great art, religious perception. In serving their patrons and society, they expressed their vision and genius in creations whose subject-matter were themes from religious cults. But this fact does not make their art religious or purely spiritual.

Their art, therefore, does not, in spite of ethnic and stylistic differences, differ from the creations of great artists of other countries.

When we label Indian art as religious, we automatically

ignore certain achievements of Indian artists: their knowledge of the human form and their sheer delight in its study. Some critics who label the ancient art of India and Ceylon as religious, object to emphasis on the purely aesthetic aspect of a piece of sculpture with the remark that ancient artists never thought of those details stressed by modern art critics. Theories of art, as elaborated by modern critics, are new. But their theories are based on the study of ancient masterpieces. Modern critical terms are like new bottles, but the wine is old.

Fig. 5

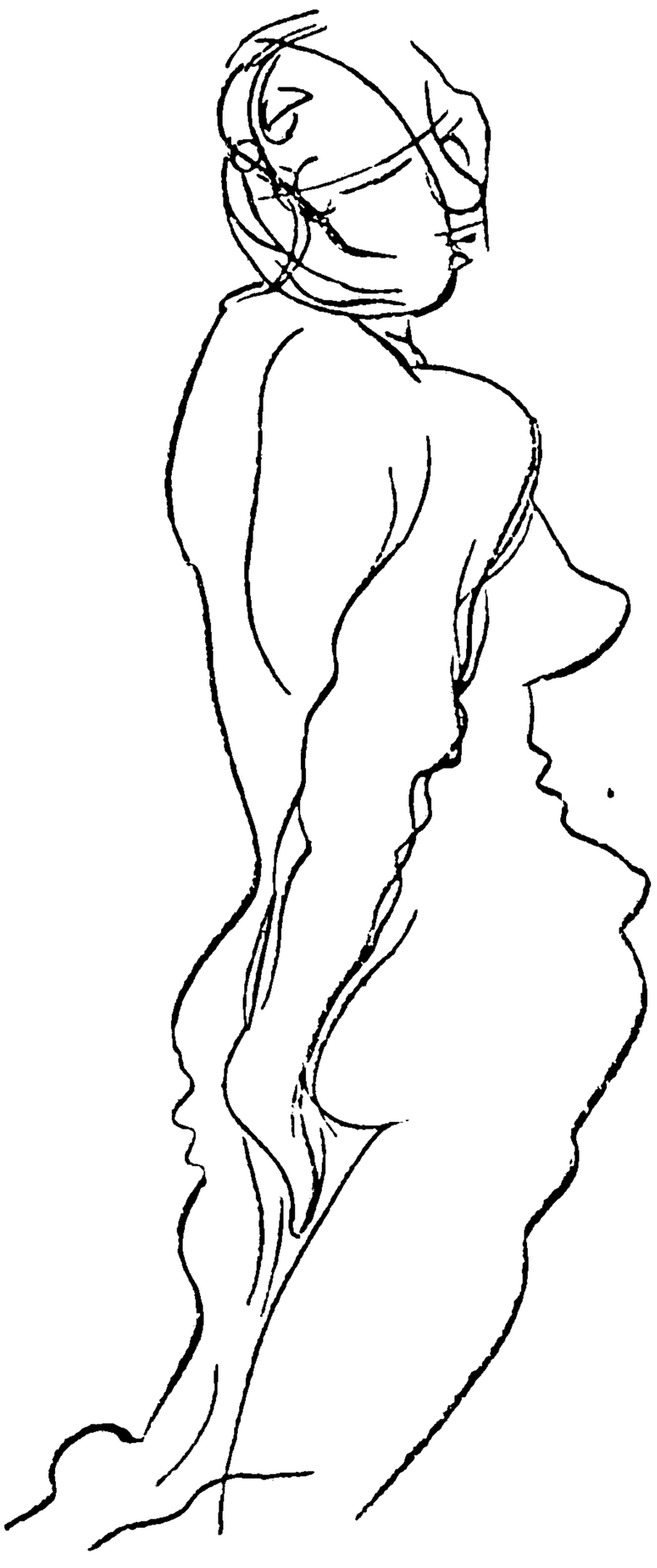


Fig. 6

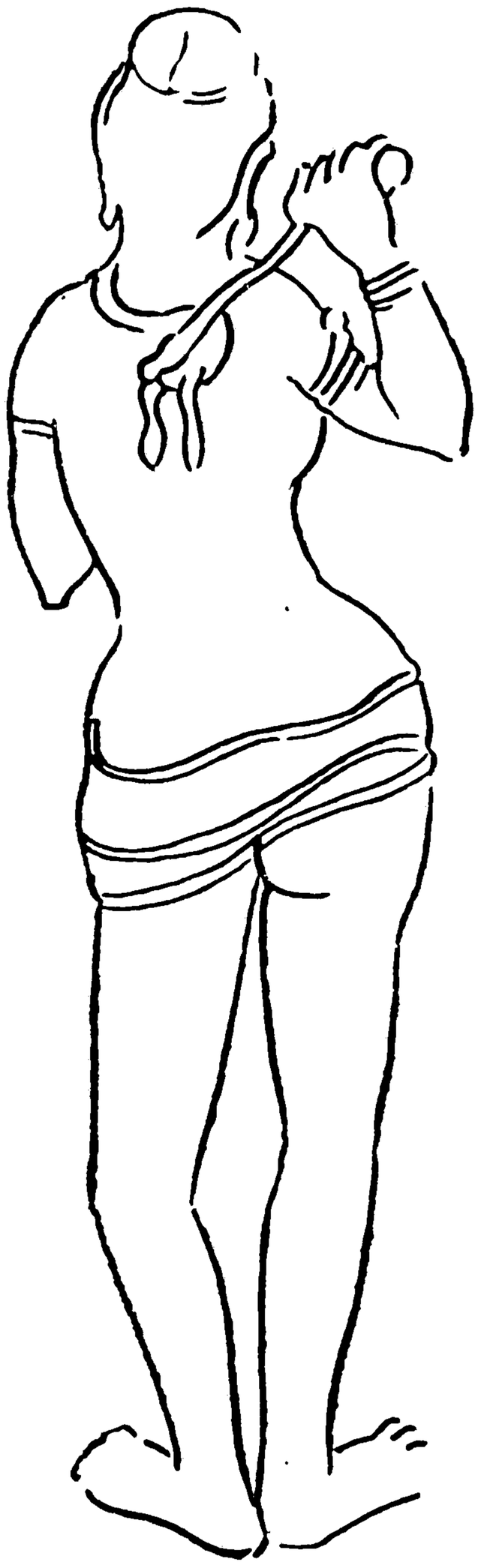


Fig. 7

Fig. 8

There is a similarity in the approach to the female figure in painting and sculpture by the old Indian artists and great modern European artists. Figures 5, 6 illustrating the study of female form by two modern French sculptors Mailol and Rodin, are reproduced. The other figures 7, 8, 9 are from the Ajanta paintings and later Indian sculpture. Figure 10 is from a camera-study of a Sinhalese girl by B. P. Weerawardane. The similarities in these studies of female form, in spite of the differences of time and space, can be seen and understood without any comments.

The women of ancient India and even of Ceylon did not encase their upper body with brassiere, chemise and jacket. They emphasised with jewellery the beauty of their necks, arms, breasts and waists. A class of religious ascetics preferred nudity. Women of aboriginal tribes covered their nakedness with a string of leaves or a strip of bark cloth. So the ancient Indian artists had ample opportunities to study the female figure.

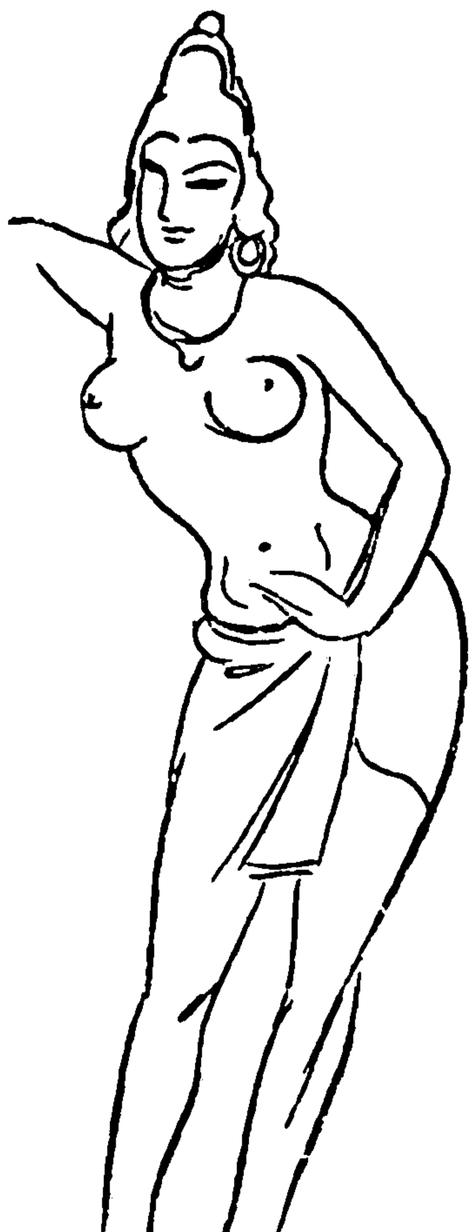


Fig. 9

Fig. 10

AN

EASY APPROACH

TO

INDIAN SCULPTURE

AN EASY APPROACH TO INDIAN SCULPTURE

INDIAN sculpture has many features which repel Europeans as well as the modern Sinhalese and many Indians. Plurality of heads and hands, a plethora of ornamental jewellery, elaborate head-dresses, and conventional gestures are some of them. The modern man sees all of them as abnormal, though the jewellery and dresses were normally worn and admired by educated people at that time.

Indian and European critics, especially Ananda Coomaraswamy and E. B. Havell, wrote volume after volume of critical studies and polemics to remove the ignorance and prejudices that prevented many people from appreciating Indian art. In spite of their efforts, these prejudices still remain or have increased—amongst the people of Ceylon, if not of India.

For a century or so, Europeans had despised primitive art. Their attitude has changed so much that artists now study primitive sculpture for inspiration. But their attitude to Indian art has changed very little.

In spite of many revivalist movements, we ourselves have failed to gain an insight into and develop a sense of appreciating statues with many arms and heads, or even to admire a real masterpiece in which the only features strange to us are ornamental jewellery and the elaborate head-dress.

India and Ceylon have changed enormously since the last two wars. The spread of education and science have destroyed many old myths, legends and beliefs. The assimilation of European culture has encouraged the

replacing of articles such as carved furniture, ornamental jewellery and other adornments with articles of simple design. Most of the ornamental and decorative elements in our buildings have disappeared. The result of these changes has greatly affected our ideas, tastes and fashions. Propaganda and art criticism, however erudite the latter may be, are powerless to change our modern preferences and tastes, which are the result of innumerable associations and habits slowly acquired by reacting to an environment fundamentally different to that of the old.

Therefore some of our present methods of reviving old fashions and educating people to appreciate our ancient sculpture with scholarly explanations of its spiritual symbolism and mythology are, I believe, of little value.

"A knowledge of the abstruse subject of Indian iconography does not contribute materially towards the appreciation of Indian sculpture," says K. de B. Codrington in his *Introduction to the Study of Medieval Indian Sculpture.*

In an age in which people are critical of old beliefs and myths, no amount of art criticism and propaganda will greatly affect their scepticism. Of course, it is not necessary to believe in myths to appreciate great art inspired and influenced by them.

A knowledge of the myths and symbolism with which the ancient artists interpreted spiritual ideas certainly helps a modern observer to grasp intellectually the meanings of ancient sculpture. But his scepticism and associations surely make his reactions half-hearted and superficial at the most.

Instead of resorting to mythology and elaborate symbolism, we should be able to adjust our minds and tastes to appreciate most of the creations of art in India and Ceylon. The Buddhists, except for the Mahayanists, did not create images with many hands and heads. Ramaprasada Chanda

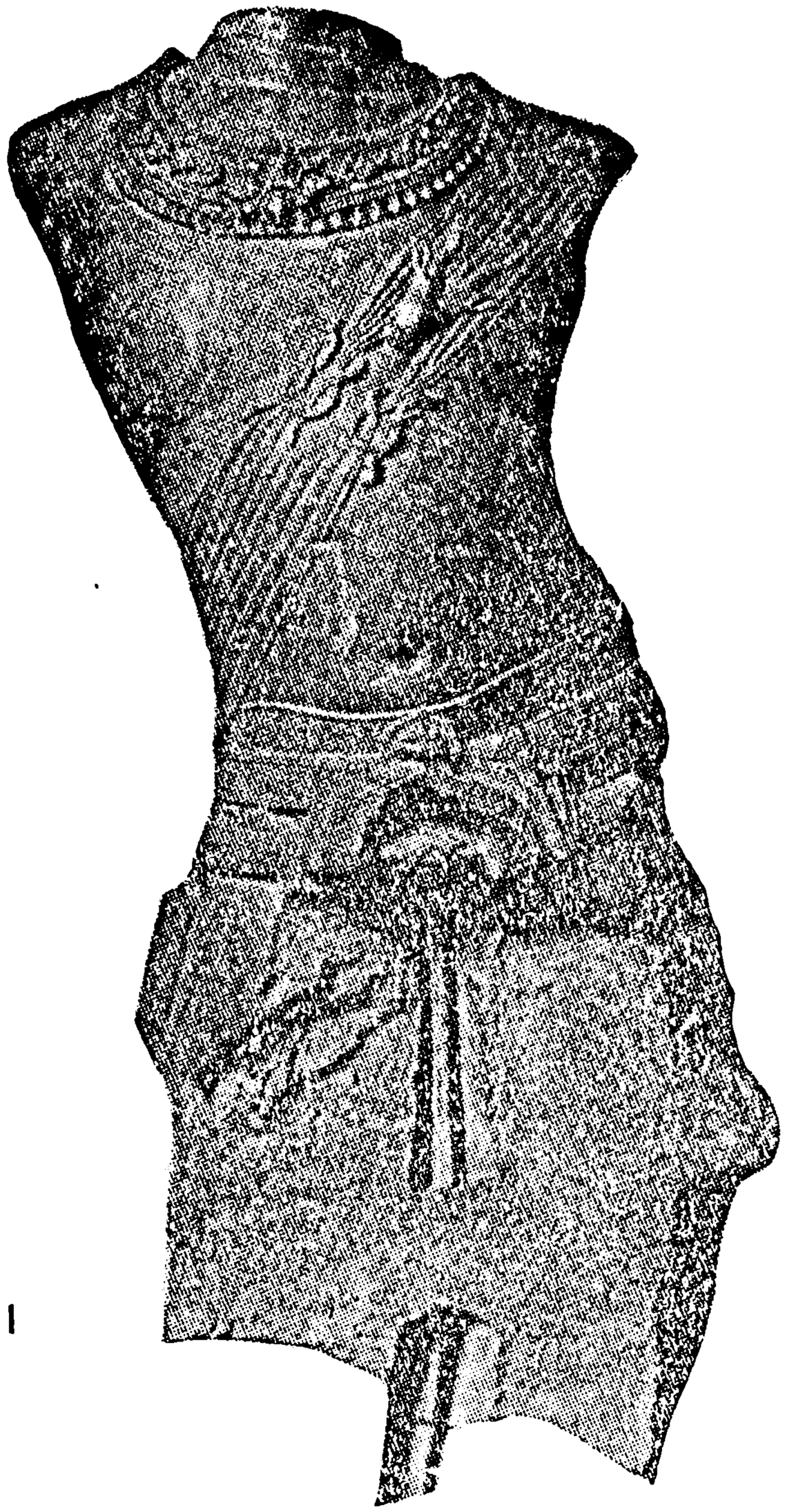


Fig. 11

in his *Medieval Indian Sculpture* says that the plurality of hands is one of the features of the images of Brahmanic and Mahayana deities that repel modern observers.

I think the best and the easiest method for the busy man of today to gain an insight into the genius of the ancient sculptor is to begin his study with torsos of male and female figures which are available in museums.

Nature and vandalism have removed elaborate ornamentations and conventional gestures from these torsos. When the head of a statute is broken off, the ornamental headdress and sometimes a weird symbol attached to it also disappear from the figure.

When the hands are broken off, the figure gets rid of the conventional gestures which puzzle the modern observer. Of course, such a mutilated torso does not represent the whole conception of the artist who made the original statue. The harmony and rhythm given to it by the artist will also be incomplete in a torso.

In spite of all these mutilations, a torso of an ancient statue will still retain some of the best features of sculptural art, just as the head-dress, jewellery, gestures of the hands, and other decorative elements of some of the ancient sculptures are like surface excrescences which conceal the statue's shape.

If the reader studies the illustrations given here, he will, I believe, be able to appreciate better the suggestion I have made. One of them (Fig. 11) represents an Indian torso that has been identified as that of a Bodhisatva or an aspirant to Buddhahood. Laurence Binyon in his paper on the "Art of Asia" makes a reference to this torso:

"The beauty of this torso is different from the beauty of a Greek marble, though there is resemblance of quality and a like sense of the grace of vigorous youth. But it has a kind of aroma of spiritual rather than bodily charm, mere torso as it is. It is vigorous but gentle, it seems to express the grace and poise of a spirit neither withdrawn from the delights of the world and disgusted with the morality of man nor, on the other hand, immersed in the life of the senses."

Fig. 13 represents a torso in the museum of the Archaeological Department at Anuradhapura. Accident or vandalism seems to have removed the head, feet, and an arm of this fine female figure. If the figure had necklaces and armlets, they seem to have been effaced by time and weather, giving it the simplicity of Greek sculpture.

Fig. 12

The sculptor's sense of modelling can be seen in the left hand and the upper body.

The torso suggests that soft plasticity of the female body, and the man who approaches it is tempted to touch it as if to feel the softness of living flesh. The sculptor with his fine modelling, successfully suggests repose or relaxation of the limbs and the body, imparting to the figure a seductive charm and grace.

The ancient Indian and Sinhalese sculptors did create beautiful human form. But their idea of the beauty of the human form was different from the Greek ideal. For them the ideal of feminine purity and beauty, as Havell says, "was centred in the chaste wife and mother."

Therefore the type of feminine beauty most common in Indian and Sinhalese sculpture is that of the young matron with broad hips and swelling breasts and a middle with two or three folds. The Ceylon torso admirably represents that ideal of feminine beauty.

Fig. 13

The headless figure of the Buddha (Fig. 12) represents the Buddhist ideal of the male type, and it has most of the features that give meaning to the form in sculpture. The Indian and Sinhalese poets introduced their heroes as having shoulders, waists and necks like those of lions.

These idealised features attain perfection in this torso of the Buddha. Its drapery, as conventionalised by Gupta artists, shows that they were conscious of the beauty of the nude body.

In sculpture solidity, roundness, rhythm and movement are important features. In spite of the mutilation, torsos retain some of these features which appeal to the modern student of sculpture. But in most of the ancient sculpture of India and Ceylon, in addition to these, there are features suggesting a mood or a spiritual quality. This special characteristic of Indian sculpture is, of course, missing in a mutilated torso as the student of Indian sculpture who begins with torsos needs to remember.

MOONSTONES

MOONSTONES

ON a recent visit to the ruined cities I was able to see and appreciate new aspects of beauty and originality in certain familiar pieces of ancient sculpture. One of them is the moonstone—a very beautiful creation of the sculptors of ancient Ceylon.

My present attitude towards the creations of sophisticated art, Eastern or Western, is tinged with cynicism. The question arises, therefore, how I could derive new pleasure from this very familiar piece of sculpture.

It is, I think, because I have been able to approach this peculiar work of the sculptor's art with the love and sympathy of a child for a beautiful thing. This sympathy, I must confess, is that of the cynic who, after a surfeit of modern art, develops a predilection for primitive art unspoilt by fashion and intellect.

The best way to enjoy a piece of art is to try to project one's personality into it. This suggestion does perhap, carry a mystical flavour, but it is the meaning implied by the word 'empathy'. To have an insight into the deeper things of life and art, a kind of intellectual mysticism is, I believe, better than rationalism.

The projection of his personality into the object of contemplation is possible only to a man who approaches it with sympathy and simple faith. In every piece of genuine art, I believe, there are elements which appeal to the child and to the primitive mind.

In spite of the great intellectual and aesthetic advancement of modern man, he is still a primitive in the instincts that form the basis of his emotional nature. The justification for labelling most of his refined emotional behaviour patterns, "the conventionall ies of modern ,civilisation", is to be found in man's unchanging instincts. Hunger is the same in us as in primitive man. In spite of all romanticism

and the refining processes to which it has been subjected for thousands of years, the sex instinct remains the same in us as in primitive man.

My attempt to philosophise on art and the emotions, without the qualifications of a philosopher or a psychologist, is perhaps but a clumsy way of giving the reader an idea of the mood in which I recently approached the study of the ancient sculpture of Ceylon.

The moonstone which lies near the so-called Queen's Palace (Fig. 14) is regarded by art critics and archaeologists

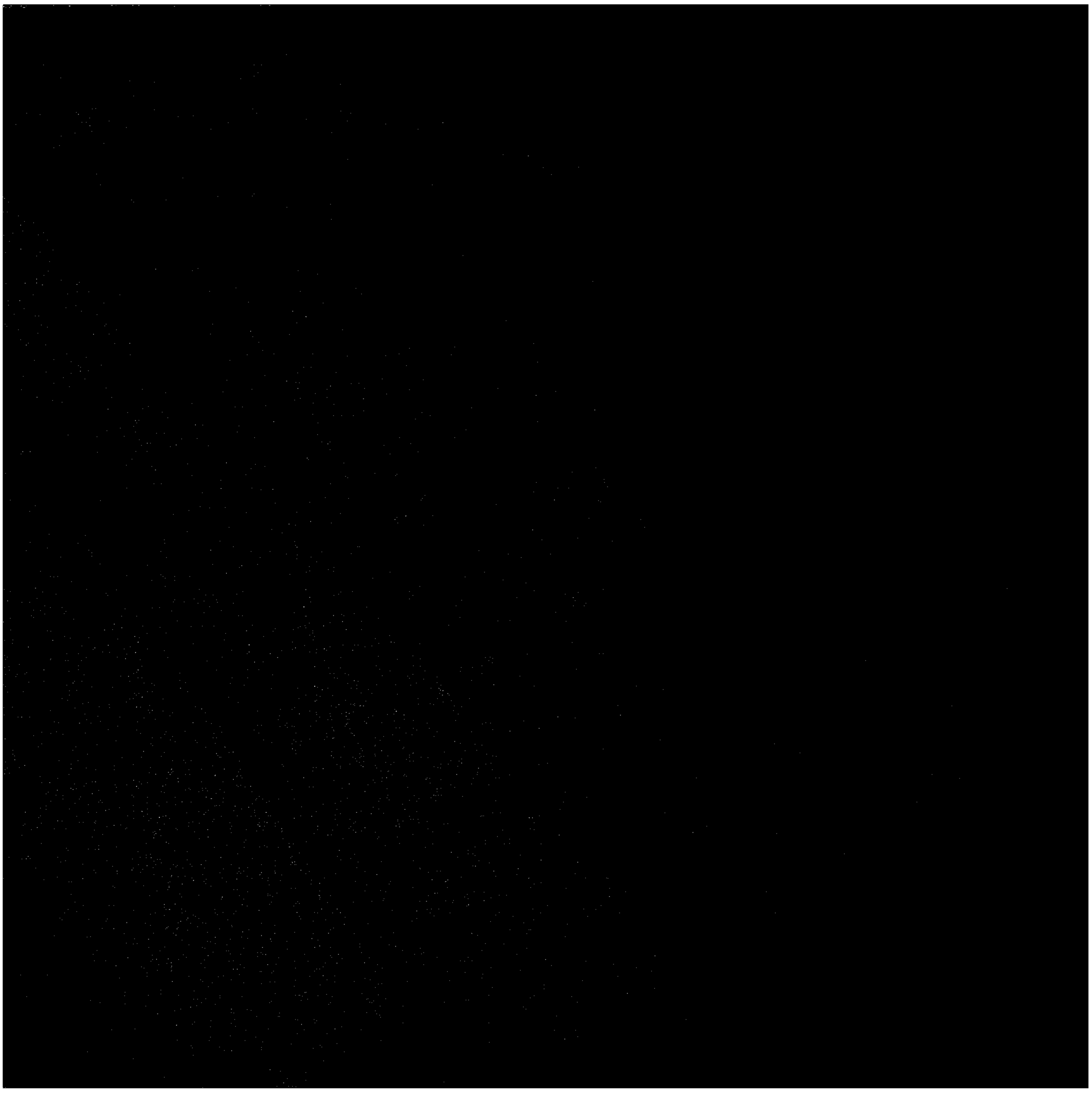


Fig. 14

alike as a masterpiece. It is, undoubtedly, a masterpiece. But this consensus of opinion did not make me overlook

Fig. 15

the other three or four moonstones at the steps of the ruined monasteries near Thuparama.

The carvings on one of these (Fig. 15) I found were buried under layers of accumulated dust. I fashioned a brush out of a soft stick and gently removed the dust. My artist friend joined me in this task, and after we had cleared the layers of dust, which was half an inch thick, we were delighted to see the figures of the horse, the elephant, the bull, and the lion assume the forms of

sculpture in the half-round. These animal figures surpass those of the famous moonstone at the steps of the Queen's Palace.

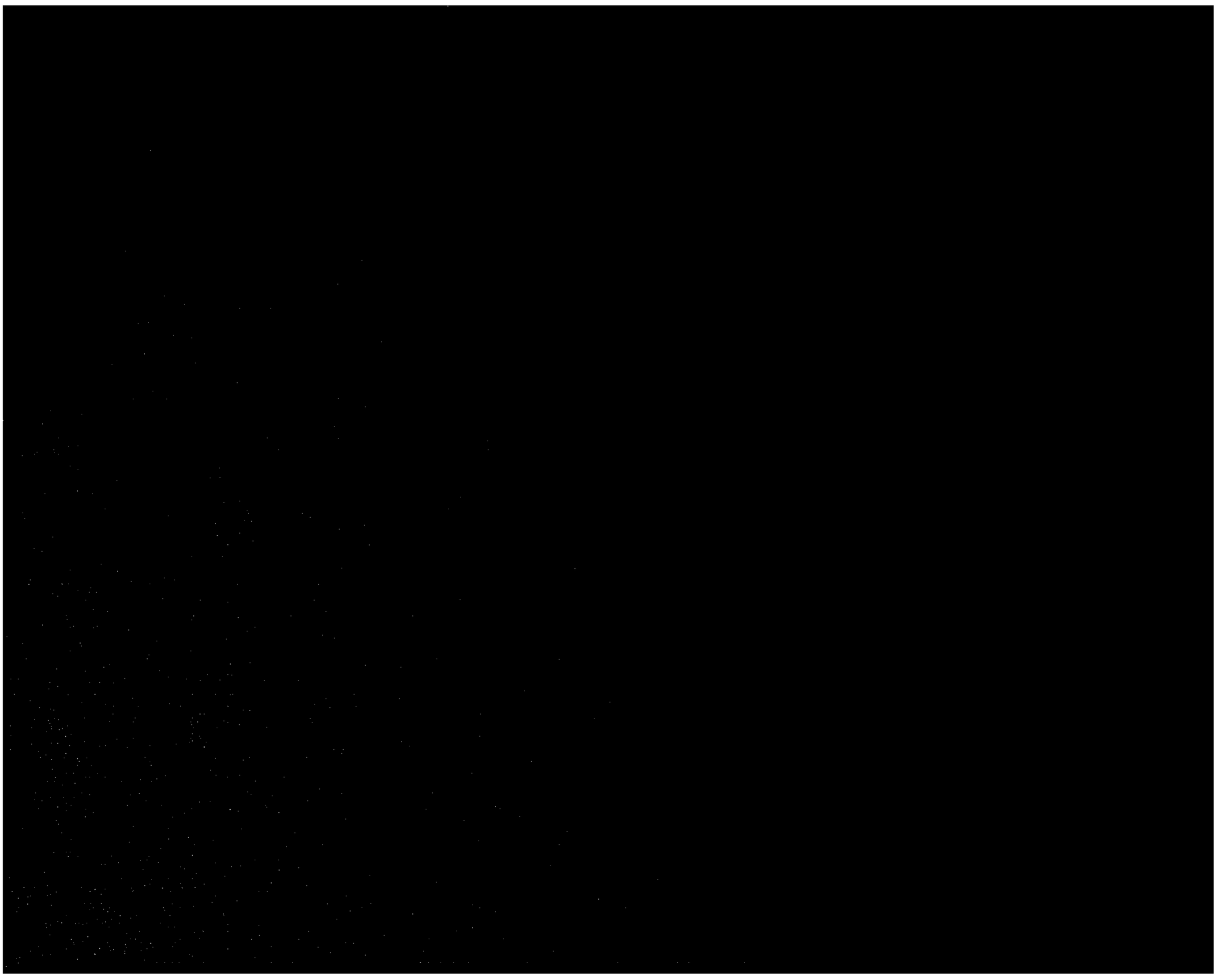


Fig. 16

The number of animals and their configuration differ in these moonstones. Fast-moving animals are suggested by two of them (Figs. 14 and 17). Another (Fig. 15) suggests slow-moving animals. The figure of the bull is remarkably suggestive in this moonstone. While the other animal figures suggest imperceptibly slow movement, the bull suggests pent-up energy which is ready to burst out into rapid movement. The impressive movement of one of the forelegs of the horse and the lion (Figures 6 and 5 from the right) in the same moonstone suggests that of well-trained performing animals.

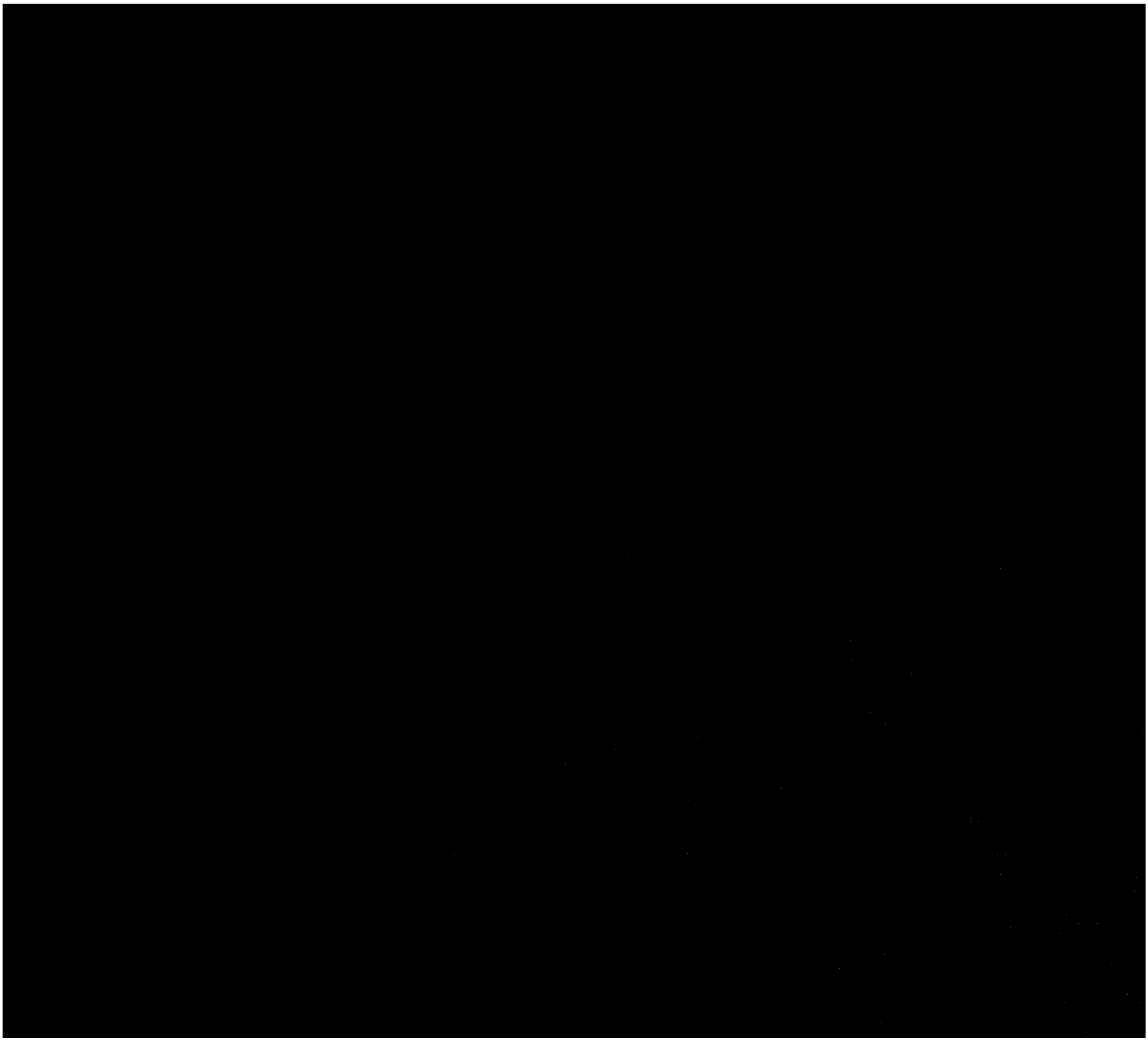


Fig. 17

U ually in the moonstones, the goose has a flower bud in its beak. In one of the moonstones (Fig. 16) the geese carry no flower buds in their beaks. Their necks and beaks seem to have been carved with mathematical precision, suggestive of the movements of the arms and the legs of rigidly-disciplined soldiers at drill.

These differences in the moonstones suggest that the ancient sculptors were not slaves of rigid convention. The similarity in design of the moonstones shows that the sculptor has been disciplined and restrained by convention. But the differences in conception and execution show that he had the freedom to assert his originality within the convention.

THE
UPANISHADS
AND
BUDDHISM

THE UPANISHADS AND BUDDHISM

ANCIENT Indian literature has attracted many Western scholars and linguists. But the Upanishads attracted, and are still attracting, the attention and interest not only of scholars but of students of idealistic philosophy and of religion and of many literary men in Europe. An idea of their curiosity and interest might be formed by referring to the lengthy annotated bibliography of translations and studies of the Upanishads given at the end of Dr Hume's book *The Thirteen Principal Upanishads*.

The speculations of the Upanishadic thinkers have been the background of all later Indian philosophy. Two or three of the oldest Upanishads are admittedly prior to Buddhism; and they formed the background of Buddhist philosophy, whether the Buddha was actually influenced by them or not. But Dr Hume in his book (pp. 6, 7) adduces evidence to show Buddhist influences even in the oldest Upanishads. "Evidences of Buddhist influences," says he, "are not wanting in them. In the *Brihadaranyaka Upanishad* . . . it is stated that after death the different parts of a person return to the different parts of Nature from whence they came, that even his soul goes into space and that only his *Karma*, or effect of his work, remains over. This is out and out the Buddhist doctrine."

The foregoing views prove the importance of the Upanishads in any study of Indian philosophy, not excluding Buddhist philosophy. But unfortunately, until very recently, the Buddhist tradition in Ceylon ignored the Upanishads.

The following is Dr Hume's translation of a passage referring to breath, reflection and the soul:

"Now the formless (Brahma) is the breath, and the space which is within the self. This is immortal, this is moving, this is the you.

" 'That person who is seen in the eye—he is the self of whom I spoke. That is the immortal, the fearless. That is Brahma.

" 'But this one, sir, who is observed in water and in a mirror—which one's he? '

" 'The same one, indeed, is observed in all these,' said he."

Because of the persistence of animistic conceptions in profound speculations, reading some Upanishads is difficult and tedious to modern students as well as to the Buddhists who reject Vedic tradition. Many Buddhist students, perhaps repelled by the hard and crude outer shell, ignore the core.

Dr Hume recommends Professor Paul Deussen's *Philosophy of the Upanishads* as the best introduction. To the student who wishes to have a comprehensive knowledge of the Upanishads and their philosophy, cosmology and science, it is the best. Being a scholarly exposition, it is difficult reading for a student without some knowledge of Indian religion and philosophy.

Dr Hume tries to be scrupulously faithful to the originals. Professor Winternitz in his *History of Indian Literature* quotes from Dr Hume's translation. The only handicap in his translation, for students in Ceylon, is the absence of the original text. Some of these students are Sanskrit scholars, and others, like me, may have a smattering of Sanskrit. All of them would naturally prefer a translation with the text.

But Dr Hume's book, I believe, is indispensable to students of Indian philosophy. It can be read as a very reliable translation of the thirteen principal Upanishads,

and used as a reference book not only on them, but on Indian philosophy in general and on the *Bhagavad Gita*.

In addition to the exhaustive bibliography, it contains an outline of Upanishadic philosophy emphasising its development, an appendix of recurrent and parallel passages in the Upanishads and the *Bhagavad Gita* and two indexes, one Sanskrit and the other English.

It will not be out of place to raise a question of special interest to Buddhist students. Their reluctance to believe in any unchanging metaphysical entity prevents them from making a serious attempt to read and understand the Upanishads. This reluctance is due, perhaps, to a confusion and a prejudice. The Buddha denied a creator and the individual soul that passes from birth to birth.

The Brahman or the Absolute of the oldest Upanishads is not God the creator. The denial of the individual soul and a creator by the Buddha, I believe, does not clash with the Upanishadic conception of Brahman.

There is a passage in one of the oldest Upanishads denying the survival of individual consciousness after death. Dr Roer, in translating the passage, quotes the explanation of Sankara, the great Vedantic thinker of India. Sankara compares the Absolute to the sun and the individual soul to the reflection of it appearing in a bowl of water. When the bowl is smashed the reflection disappears, and the sun remains the sole reality. It is clear from this explanation that the individual soul is not real.

The Buddha's denial of the individual soul does not alone refute the Upanishadic conception of the Absolute. If the Buddha denied any reality beyond the empirical world, then and then only can a Buddhist invoke his authority to repudiate the Upanishadic conception of the soul. But what is Nirvana? The Buddhist student will reply that

it is not a metaphysical entity. True, but then, is it not a reality that transcends empirical experience ?

I am not trying to maintain the absurd thesis that the Buddhist conception of Nirvana and the Upanishadic conception of Brahman are one and the same. My argument is to show that a Buddhist student cannot criticise and repudiate the Upanishadic conception without destroying the ultimate conception of Buddhism—Nirvana.

BUDDHIST CULTURE AND GUPTA ART

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THE period known as the Gupta Era in Indian history is regarded by the consensus of critical opinion as the flowering period of Indian art and literature. It was the age of Kalidasa, though some orthodox Brahmin scholars attempt to push him as far back as the first century seemingly for the sake of proving that he was not influenced by a Buddhist poet.

The beginning of Ajanta art was earlier, but it continued to develop and attained perfection at the beginning of the Gupta age. The Buddha statue, independently developed in Mathura in the second and third centuries, attained maturity and perfection in the hands of Gupta artists.

The Mahayanist poet Asvaghosha lived in the first or second century. A few Mahayanist philosophers and thinkers preceded the Gupta age. The Buddhist philosopher Vasubandhu and the great Buddhist logician Dingnaga lived during the Gupta period. The Chinese monk Fa-Hien visited India during the Gupta renaissance which he regarded, in spite of the Hindu revival, as the age of Buddhist culture at its highest development.

There was no religious intolerance in ancient India. Indian history and culture cannot be properly understood by thinking that the major Indian religions, Brahminism, Buddhism and Jainism, were opposed to each other and that they existed in watertight compartments. There was a greater religious tolerance in ancient India than there is today in India or Ceylon. But there have been periods in which each religion in turn exerted greater influence over the people and their rulers.

The Gupta age was only the beginning of a revival of Brahminism which was in eclipse during the period that began with the great emperor Asoka. But the Brahminical renaissance, at least in the plastic arts, was influenced by Buddhist art.

The early Vedic religion did not encourage religious sculpture or painting. It had no cult that required icons. The original Buddhism also did not require icons or images. The Buddha forbade paintings on the walls of monasteries and he condemned the arts of music and dancing.

But when Buddhism became a missionary religion, the converts, Aryan and non-Aryan, required a religious cult. So Buddhist monks had to resort to painting and sculpture, and later to produce religious icons. In response to this demand, there arose in the second century in Mathura a studio producing Buddhist icons.

During the Gupta period, Benares seems to have become the centre of Buddhist activity and art. "The Mathura School of Sculpture," says R. N. Saletore in *Life in the Gupta Age*, "is claimed to have succumbed later on to the influence of the Benares school . . . The chief cause of the rise of the Benares school is that, as Fa-Hien bears out, that city remained at this period a centre of Buddhist activity."

Images of the Buddha and of the Bodhisatva of the Gupta period surpass the icons of other Indian religions in serenity and classical perfection. Comparing the Gupta image of Mahavira with the Buddha image of the same period, Saletore says: "When compared with the Buddha image, in Dharma-chakra mudra pose, from Saranath, this (Jaina) image is certainly crude, disproportionate, lacking in balance and a delicacy of outline . . ."

Buddhist sculpture had a tradition of uninterrupted development until it attained maturity in the Gupta age. The Buddhist tradition being unsuited to the genius of

later Hindu culture, there developed a new and independent tradition in sculpture which attained great heights during the post-Gupta period.

In South India, the Andhra country was an early Buddhist centre. The history of Andhra sculpture supplies further evidence for this view of the development of Buddhist sculpture in North India. K. R. Subramaniam, in *Buddhist Remains in Andhra and Andhra History*, traces the origin and development of sculpture, and incidentally, architecture in Andhra.

After examining the oldest sculptural remains and tracing Andhra history, Subramaniam says: "Nowhere can be seen today such a large number of Buddhist foundations as in Andhra. They are the relics of a culture which has gone to make up Andhra civilization. All the earlier culture of the Deccan came to a definite shape under Buddhist stimulus, out of which emerged the new Brahminical culture of the post-Satavahana period.

"The sway of Buddhism over the Andhras between about 300 B.C. and 300 A.C. and its continued influence for another 400 years meant that the warp and woof of Andhra culture was largely Buddhist. Andhra architecture, sculpture and painting began and developed under Buddhist auspices."

The influence of Buddhist sculpture and painting was not confined to a portion of South India. Buddhism was the first Indian religion that inspired a peaceful but daring missionary spirit in the hearts of its adherents. Therefore, from the time of Asoka, Buddhists have spread their religion and culture in India and a greater part of Asia.

The early Indian art was not Buddhistic. But in the development of religious sculpture and painting in India and some other countries of South-East Asia, Buddhist influence was predominant until the Gupta age. The renaissance of sculpture in the Gupta age and the develop-

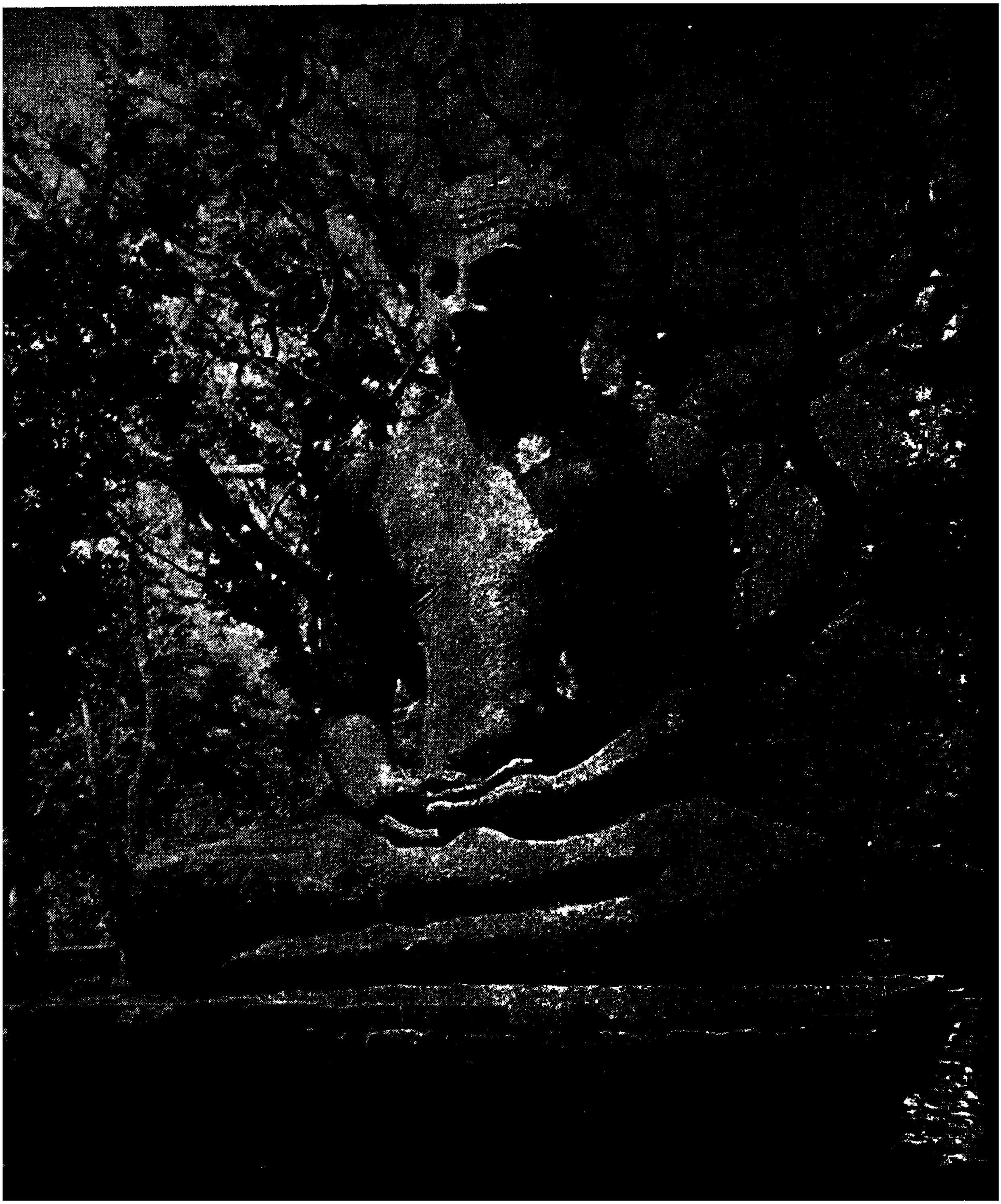


Fig. 18

ment of it in Andhra were not isolated occurrences. The development of early religious sculpture and the attainment of maturity and classical perfection during the Gupta renaissance became possible because of Buddhist culture.

Buddhist culture, of course, was Indian, and closer to the culture of the Upanishadic age. But it was quite different from the Hindu culture which took a new pattern during the Gupta age. The difference between the genius of Buddhist culture and that of later Hindu culture could be better appreciated by comparing two sculptural masterpieces—the Buddha image and the image of Siva in his cosmic dance—which represent the configurational differences of two cultures.

One of the great achievements of Gupta art was the perfection of the Buddha statue. The Saranath torso of the Buddha and the Sanchi torso of the Bodhisatva (Figs. 12, 11), both of the Gupta age, are regarded as two great masterpieces of Indian sculpture. And the sedentary Buddha of Anuradhapura (Fig. 1),* which was a product of Gupta tradition, is one of the highest achievements of Buddhist sculpture. The torso of a goddess (Fig. 11) is a good example of ancient Sinhalese sculpture influenced by Gupta art.

The German philosopher Count Hermann Keyserling thinks the grandest thing in the world is the statue of the Buddha in contemplation (Fig. 18). He argues thus in *The Travel Diary of a Philosopher:* "The East has succeeded in what has never yet been reached in the West: the visible representation of the divine. As such I know nothing more grand in this world than the figure of the Buddha: it is an absolutely perfect embodiment of spirituality in the visible domain. And this is not owing to the expression of calm, of soulfulness, and inwardness which it bears, but due to the figure in itself, independent of all concurrence with corresponding phenomena in nature."

*See frontispiece

The creative urge of the Gupta age was the accumulated result of the intellectual stir caused by the clash of Buddhist and Brahmin thinkers who lived in the preceding centuries. Sir S. Radhakrishnan in his *Indian Philosophy* introduces Nagarjuna, the Buddhist philosopher, as one of the most daring thinkers India has produced.

Gupta sculpture, if not Gupta painting as well, owes much of its greatness to earlier Indian culture which developed under the influence of Buddhism. The classical perfection attained by Gupta artists in the Buddha figure and figures of gods and goddesses is characterised as an 'efflorescence of serenity' by Dr Stella Kramrisch in her *Indian Sculpture*. The phrase used by Dr Stella Kramrisch becomes significant when the early development of art in India under the influence and inspiration of Buddhism and its culture is considered.

Even a superficial comparison of the art of post-Gupta India with that of the Gupta period indicates the powerful influence of Hinduism and its culture which inspired later artists to revolt from the restraint, serenity and conservatism imposed by classical art.

Immediately after the Gupta age, Indian sculpture declined into a florid and imitative art. Then suddenly emerged an art which defied classical discipline and all intellectual restraints. This phase of romantic and extremely individualistic art arose in consequence of the decay of Buddhism. The rise of popular Hinduism and its culture encouraged the assertion of individualism and appreciation of violent emotional experience, which were foreign to early Vedantic and Buddhist tradition and its culture.

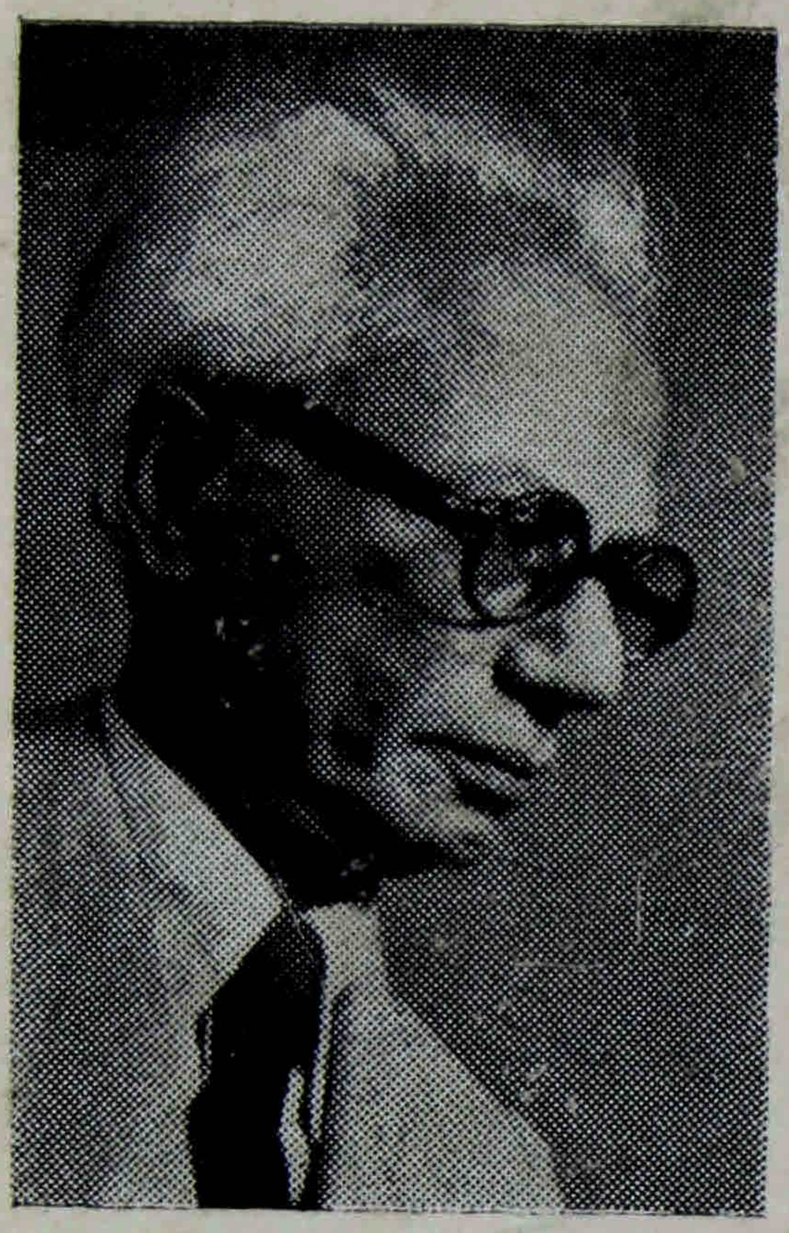
"Gupta art, like all art," says Professor Hocart, a former archaeological commissioner of Ceylon, in an essay 'Decadence in India' in his posthumous book *Life-Giving Myth*, "passes its zenith and declines into florid

and elegant but nerveless accomplishment. Then comes the revolt against form without content, against the excessive restraint imposed by the classical standards of perfection. It is the romantic period of Indian art. The emotions rise up against the tyranny of intellect, and in the pursuit of intensity destroy form.

"The revolt is in full swing in the seventh century. Even those who do not like its violence and defiance, its exaggeration and the cult of the monstrous, must allow a certain greatness to that art. At all events it is better than the inanities of late Gupta, just as the art of our romantics, with all its faults, is better than the artificial and hackneyed work of their predecessors. It may be unhealthy, but it is powerful . . . The romantic art of India delights in the presentation of old myths which had suffered the eclipse of Buddhism; but it is not the story that really interests the artist but the opportunity for emotional expression and for flaunting an aggressive creed The moral bias is typical of decadence."

The genius of later Hindu culture influenced artists as well as philosophers and mystics to assert extreme individualism. Tantrism, even the Bhakti cult and the extreme forms of asceticism which encouraged self-torture, were trends foreign to Upanishadic and Buddhist culture. The creation of one of the great masterpieces of Hindu art, Siva in his cosmic dance, became possible because of the new trends of Hindu culture. The same trend controlled by classical tradition can be seen manifested in superb artistic creations in the sculptures of Ellora and Elephanta.

Two distinctive features, serenity and restraint, characterize Gupta sculpture. They are foreign to the sculpture developed under the inspiration of the new Hinduism that emerged during the Gupta renaissance. So the two dominant characteristics of Gupta sculpture could have developed only under the influence of a culture shaped and moulded by Buddhist or Upanishadic mysticism.



MARTIN WICKRAMASINGHE

(1891) was born and bred in Koggala. Scenes in several of his books depict this village in the Southern Province, bordering the lake-like rivulet turned into a sea-plane base during World War II.

His first book, at age 19, was a polemic influenced by rationalism and 19th century cultural anthropology disguised as a Sinhalese novel. His second, three years later, was a book of essays, in one of which, inspired by Herbert Spencer, he indicated the lack of development of the Sinhalese language as a means of imparting knowledge essential for today.

Spending many years of his life as journalist and editor, he has continued to write book after book of short stories; novels, and critical studies of Sinhalese literature, culture and philosophy in Sinhalese.

His earlier works in English are SINHALESE LITERATURE, ASPECTS OF SINHALESE CULTURE, and THE MYSTICISM OF LAWRENCE. In the last he indicates the affinity of Lawrence's mysticism to Indian tantricism.