Chapter-II
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CRITIQUE OF INDIAN CIVILIZATION :

(ITS COSMIC, ICONOGRAPHIC AND VALUATIONAL BASES)

Cosmos

In this chapter, I propose to show that some of the works of Ghurye and Mukerjee reveal implicitly and explicitly the interrelationships among the three components mentioned above, namely, cosmos, iconography and values.

While cosmos refers to the meaning universe of people who inherit a particular religious doctrine, iconography is the approximation of particular kinds of art to this universe. The social values too are derived from the universe of meanings and reach into the spheres of daily life. There is no doubt that there is some reciprocity between the cosmography and aesthetic values, especially in the Indian context.

An outstanding feature of Indian religion is its a-historical dimension. Robert Bellah uses the term "archaic religions" to describe the Hindu, Jaina, Buddhist and Taoist religions. By contrast Bellah uses the term "historical religions" to describe Judaism, Christianity and Islam. While the archaic religions rest upon a cyclical notion of

1. Robert Bellah: "Religious Evolution" in D. Robinson (ed.) Sociology of Religion, Penguin, 1971. Bellah notes with reference to archaic religions: "The individual and society are seen as merged in a natural divine cosmos. Traditional structures and social practices are considered to be grounded in the divinely instituted cosmic order and there is little tension between religious demand and social conformity." p. 275.
time, the historic religions rest upon a linear notion of time. In the former the world is conceived to be without a definite beginning and an end, in the latter the world emerges at a particular date of history and also is expected to end by a distinct date. This difference in outlook has had a definite impact on the consciousness of people.

The Indian religions, mainly Hinduism but also to some extent Jainism and Buddhism, believe in the Karma-Samsara complex. The individuals carry with them the merits and demerits of past lives and attain salvation only after countless more births. The end of human existence is reached when the cycle of births and deaths is finished. On the collective level the passage of time is conceived in the measure in the measure of aeons called kalpas, which are further sub-divided into yugas. All these time-reckonings are cyclically postulated, so that at the end of four yugas a new kalpa arises and so on. Ultimately, in a grand sweep of time, the individual lives and worlds reach the end of cosmic cycle. The three processes of cosmos, creation, dissolution, are emanations of the creator's sportiveness (lila) according to Hinduism. The Jaina and Buddhist cosmologies are agnostically silent on this question.

The archaic religions may be said to have given rise to a "revealed" tradition and the historical religions to a "received" tradition. The archaic religions support an immanentist doctrine

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wherein the Divine and the human are in essence the same, although they may be separated by myriad forms and appearances. The world is therefore an unreal entity to these religions at least on some levels. By contrast, the Judeo-Christian and Islamic religions are transcendental in quality. The relationship between the divinity and the humanity rests on specific covenants. God is gracious, omnipotent and epitome of virtues. But he is far above the mundane consciousness; he dwells beyond the world of sorrows and sins. The redemptive grace of God comes to a few elect people who are led forward by a prophet.

The one exception to the transcendental tradition is Roman Catholicism. It has a cosmology in which a number of angels and saints intercede on behalf of the sinner through the mediation of its church. The god is therefore not so forbidding, awe-inspiring. A variant of Roman Catholicism is the Eastern orthodox church which mitigates the transcendental aloofness of god by the institution of icon-worship. The erring mortals and the sorrow-stricken people of the faith, pray before the icons of angels and numerous monks. Thus the Eastern church brings solace to the believers through its monastics.

3. Loc. cit.
Here I would refer in some detail to Ghurye's *Religious Consciousness* in which he tries to compare and contrast the states of religious consciousness among Sumerians, Egyptians and Hindus. It is a diffusionist study in the sense that Ghurye refers to some of the common elements which might have diffused from one civilization to the other. These elements included religious notions, patterns of architecture and liturgical models. In regard to Hindu religion, Ghurye speaks of three major shifts which occurred in the development of Indian cosmography.

The influx of ethnic groups into India, the interaction between agrarian and primitive communities and the rise of heretical and Bhakti sects were causes of these shifts. The first shift occurred when the speculative bent of post-Vedic people put forward "self-quest" as the only "sacrifice" worth cultivating. The sacrificial cults and the associated paraphernalia of ritual and ceremony made way for the individualistic quest for self realization. The shift occurred well within the Vedic cosmogony of the deities who personified the nature's forces or symbolised certain ideas of mankind. The upanisads were declared to be part of the Vedic complex, although the direction of religious consciousness was not the same in this new epoch.

In the Vedic era, the king and the priest together performed sacrifices for the benefit of a pastoral people. These sacrifices

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appeased gods, protected the community and even conferred a kind of
godhood on the sacrificers. The king priest model was superseded by a
monastic model derived from Jain and Baudhaka heretical sects in the
6th century B.C. Besides the Upanishadic model de-emphasized the
ritualistic and sacrificial elements and projected an individualistic
quest for self-realization. This could be described as the first shift.
The agrarian society grew out of its pastoral complex and allowed the
necessary surplus for a monastic group to go in quest of selfhood.

The second shift occurred when the Upanishadic speculation
gave way to theistic relationship of the gods and mortals. The
intellectual abstractions of Brahmins and mendicants were gradually
superseded by devotional effusions. Roughly the middle ages (7th to
15th century A.D.) were the times when the Bhakti sects flourished. It
was during their phase that Radha-Krishna-Devi complex spread in the
north; in the south the Shaivism of the Mayanars and Vishnuism of Alwars
propagated devotional poetry, worship and a type of egalitarianism. The
Bhakti movements acted as a via-media between the elitism of the Vedic
and post-Vedic phases on the one hand and the expressive urges of masses
on the other hand. Yet the links with the earlier phases remained intact;
Ghurye writes,

"The postulate of God in Hindu cosmology moves from
impersonal Vedic deities to theistic gods; but the
circle is completed when the personal gods are believed be
to the manifestation of the impersonal Brahman. The use
of "Om" as an adjunct to the worship of Shiva or Vishnu
suggests the links of the deity with the absolute (Brahman)".7

7. Ibid., p. 256.
According to Churye, the Muslim hegemony in several parts of the country spurred on a Hindu revivalism: the rise of Vijayanagara Empire in the 14th century was the culmination. In cyclical evolution there is always the possibility of reversal. The different phases of shifts do not have an abrupt break with the earlier phases. Also, the basic components of the meaning universe remain more or less the same, although emphasis may be laid on one or the other component.

Mukerjee's work Flowering of Indian Art refers to cosmic links in the iconographic evolution. In this book he has traced the developments in the various phases of art - sculpture, architecture, etc. - in terms of underlying metaphysical, moral and social values. Art becomes as it were a vehicle of some of these values. It does not exist as an end in itself. The early art of Mathura and Sanchi, the classical art of Guptas and the Tantrika art of the later periods were continuous affirmations of a vision. For instance, the animistic belief of the Harappa-Mohenjodaro civilizations was partly incorporated into the Vedic pantheon of personified gods and goddesses. The worship of lingam, the bull and the devi became part of the later Vedic cult. The Vedic altar later became the motif of the temple plinth and the daily rites performed in a temple were symbolically an act of sacrifice to the same purusha. The mimetic rites and rituals have forever continued to be a part of the religious creed of the Hindus. The modes of mimesis have undergone changes; but its essence - the replication of cosmos - has remained unaltered. Mukerjee writes:

"The living and undying contributions of Vedic culture to Indian ideology and values are its metaphysics and symbolism. The Brahmana literature clarifies the Vedic rituals and ceremonies including those connected with royalty for the instruction of the priestly class. It is also concerned with myths and legends. The hymns came later than the rituals and are found in the Aranyakas and Upanishads.

Vedic hymns rich in imagery and metaphor give a metaphysical interpretation to life, worship and art. The construction of the fire altar serves the myth of purusha or the Absolute and projects its rhythms. The Vedic vedi (altar) round or square, constructed with mathematical precision according to the prescriptions of the Shulva Sstra, is the prototype in Indian art of the Buddhist and Jain Stupa."\(^9\)

Thus according to Mukerjee the symbolism of Indian art derives from Vedic formulations based on cosmic process. He draws support for these assumptions from the works of Coomarswamy and Ganguli. I will again refer to this book in this chapter.

\(^9\) Ibid., pp. 44-45.
In another of his work *History of Indian Civilization* Vol. 1, No. 1, Mukerjee dwells on the key concept of Dharma which has both cosmic and social implications. It integrates cosmos and man, promotes order and continuity and influences the plastic arts. In chapter 1 of this book he writes that the two main sources of authority are shruti (Vedas and their exegesis) and smriti (canonical works). He states that the former are unchanging while the latter show modifications over the centuries. The modifications came about as a result of the competing ideological and ethnic pressures on Indian society. He dwells at length on this process of social absorption which was possible only because of the sway of Dharma.

According to him the numerous foreign hordes and tribes were absorbed into the Hindu fold without any serious disintegration. The dharmaashastras which were often cited as conservative authorities, were indeed rationalized interpretations of the changing social reality. Several conquerors and their tribes were accorded the rank of Kshatriya, although of a lower level. The intriguing development was that these alien invaders often emerged as champions of Hindu or Buddhist Dharma. Kaniska, Milindapanna and Mihiragula were among such defenders of Dharma. These kings propagated Hindu or Buddhist ideology but promoted art, literature and social conventions.

The implications of the relationship between the Dharma Shastra and the Hindu society are as follows. On the one hand, new ethnic elements were absorbed and given a certain status. On the other hand, the shastras decried the "miscengination" (Vamnasaamcara). This paradox is explained by Mukerjee as a device employed by the shastras to allow or encourage the adaptive process within the Hindu hierarchy only to the extent that it did not destroy the Varna-shrama. The recent looked commentators, Indian and foreign, according to him have at the rigidity of the Shastras and ignored the flexibility. Thus there is little substance in the view that the Shastras were a dead shell which stifled the adaptive mechanisms of Hindu society. The flexibility of the Shastras is indicated by the presence of numerous Shastrakaras whose prescriptions are moulded by the exigencies of desha (space) and kala (time).

In the later epic literature, in the Bhakti upsurge and the syncretic religious creeds, the notion of Dharma remains unchanged. The heretical Jaina and Buddhist creeds rejected Vedic ritualism but retained complete faith in Dharma as an integrative force. The wheel in Buddhism stood for the Moral order. It was the driving force behind the transmission of Mahayana to many lands beyond India. It was the main theme of the two great epics Ramayana and Mahabharata. It was also the main component of Bhakti creeds which were liberal and anti-caste. Thus Dharma provided an epistemology for even heretical groups in Indian society. Of course, one can criticise Mukerjee's emphasis on the concept without a commensurate emphasis on material and economic concepts. This view
coming from an erstwhile economist is also surprising. It is that Mukerjee made a volte face in his study of Indian society? How far removed is he from his earlier concern with plant and animal ecology, with institutional economics and ameliorative social work! We will have occasion to look into these problems elsewhere in this dissertation.

Suffice is to say that both the writers stand in proximity to each other in holding that a cosmic belief system based on cyclical notion of progress-decay and regeneration and on a-historicity is the sine qua non of Indian civilization and culture. They do not exercise much care in separating civilization from culture, but Ghurye is better positioned in the light of Alfred Weber's sociology of culture. 11 Weber held that civilization was a universal phenomenon whereas culture was a society-bound phenomenon. Tools and techniques may spread without affectation but idea-systems or belief-systems do not spread easily. Thurye's Religious Consciousness speaks more of the diffusion of techniques than of cosmogonic beliefs. Mukerjee's view that Mahayanism became a Pan Indian integrative and aesthetic force is questionable, since he is referring to a purely cultural category. I will refer to this dilemma again.

Iconography. Humayun Kabir\textsuperscript{12} in his work \textit{The Indian Heritage} has noted that in India the civilization and culture are nearly coextensive. The difference between classes and masses is one of emphasis, not one of quality of life. Kabir further notes that in India civilization (comprising material and civil achievements) and culture (comprising religion, arts and values) have approximated to each other, without showing the sharp discontinuity as in many European countries.

According to him it was also remarkable that the conquering hordes who came to India did not exterminate the natives, although some of them - like the Muslim invaders - used force to convert the native people to their religion. In America and Australia the white settlers vanquished the native settlers. But by contrast the caste system integrated diverse groups. It was not mere casta but also the culture which integrated diverse peoples through a common idiom of art and architecture. While music and painting in India were by and large individualistic achievements (with the exception of choral music and Ajanta frescos), architecture too belonged to the collective realm.\textsuperscript{13}

Sculpture and painting in India did not carry the imprint of individual's "signature." Thus although these arts were individually created, the spirit was collective.

\textsuperscript{12} See Humayun Kabir: \textit{The Indian Heritage}, Asia, Bombay, 1955, pp. 44-151. cf: Coomaraswamy's view that in India classical and folk arts had a genetic continuity. See his \textit{Oriental and Christian Philosophy of Life}, Munshiram Manoharlal, New Delhi, 1974, pp.130-146.

\textsuperscript{13} Kabir, op.cit. p. 151; see also D.P. Lukherjee: \textit{The Sociology of Indian Culture}, Ratnat publications, Jaipur, 1979, pp. 43-191.
In the colonial period the study of Indian architecture received special treatment in the works of British orientalists like Percy Brown, Havel, Ferguson, Cunningham, Tod and many others. More recently the works of Coomaraswamy also contain studies of Indian architecture. Indian architecture, especially of the sacred variety, is the main theme of many of these commentators' works, although to some extent civil architecture is also treated therein.

An interesting common element of Indian architecture is the absence of sectarianism. Notwithstanding some variations of detail, Hindu, Buddhist and Jaina styles of architecture do not essentially differ from each other. Coomaraswamy writes,

"The Indian temple (Vimana) is one, but there are provincial variations in its formal development, existing side by side with the secular variations in pure style. In respect of these, the only adequate classification is geographical. The three most clearly differentiated types are the Northern, marked by the curvilinear Shikara, the Southern, with a terraced pyramidal tower, of which only the dome is called Shikhara, and the central, combining both types with peculiarities of its own."\(^\text{15}\)

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\(^{14}\) See Coomaraswamy: History of Indian and Indonesian Art, Munshiram Manoharlal, New Delhi, 1974.

In the Hindu religions the temples and the statuary which adorn them are regarded as having definite symbolic functions. Earlier a reference has been made to the plinth of the temple which stands for a Vedic altar. The tower of the temple is also a symbol of cosmic relationship. Further the plant, animals, human species are profusely illustrated in the temple sculptures, irrespective of sectarian differences. The Shaiva, Vaishnava, Jaina and Buddhist temples and sculpture share many common elements. In the religion of Tao, similar symbolical expressions were used in painting the dragon or in building the curved roofs of temples.

In contrast to this the churches or mosques of the Judaism, Protestant Christianity and Islam expressly forbid animal or human imagery. Purely geometrical symbols are liberally used in mosques but representation of animals and men is forbidden. The fact is that in the archaic religions, the animals or human beings represent the species not in realistic but in symbolic terms. The face of a male or a female dancer does not denote the visage of any particular human being. It does not even represent a biological datum. It is a transformed image in which the animal or human being is an integral part of a cosmic order.

When the Muslims invaded India, many of them being of tribal origin did not comprehend the meaning of Indian architecture and sculpture. They razed many temples to the ground because of the belief that they were places of idolatry. Islam was a thin veneer on their tribal ferocity. Their vandalism made a deep dent into the Hindu-Muslim
relations. To this day, it has remained a sore point. Briefly, one theory holds that the Indian temples and temple-towers were strongholds of rebels and thus they were destroyed because of political expediency. The other theory holds that the temples' wealth was a great temptation to invaders. There is some truth in both the theories but the consequence was the same, namely, the wanton destruction of temples by Muslims on a large-scale in North India and on a small scale in South India.

The British who came after the Muslims simply kept their hands off the temples. The Muslims as well as the British did not interfere with the social structure - the caste system. Although they encouraged or brought about religious conversions, they did not make any attempt to undermine the basis of caste. They administered, as far as possible, the laws of the country on the basis of Indian conventions and customs. But the Muslims' interference in the temple and art of Hindus and other religious groups adversely affected the inter-communal relations in a vital sphere. That is to say it cut into the gestalt of Indian belief systems and created a profound internal imbalance. The subsequent reactions of non-Muslims towards Muslims have always been coloured by this awareness of the destruction of gestalt. This is more keenly felt in the North, where the Muslim vandalism was more severely felt. By contrast, in many parts of the South the Muslims' presence is more easily tolerated. Yet even in North great kings like Akbar tried to avoid hurting the susceptibilities of the non-Muslims.
The topicality of the theme is evident in several of the recent ideologies. The Arya Samaj, the Hindu Maha Sabha, the R.S.S. have frequently harped upon the ancient wounds. They have created another type of social imbalance by prompting revivalist feelings among non-Muslims and creating discord among the people. This Hindu revivalism has in the recent years been matched by Muslim fundamentalism which has often roused people and led them to violence.

Ghurye's Rajput Architecture and Social Tensions in India (chapter 8) make detailed references to Indian architecture. In Rajput architecture Ghurye adduces evidence to show that in spite of the political, military and social onslaught of Muslim conquest, the Rajput architecture retained its values intact and flourished in the period 14th to 17th centuries A.D. The Rajput art and architecture were based on the earlier foundations of classical art of Guptas. The Rajput dynasties patronized both civil (forts, palaces) and sacred (temples, funerary monuments) in numerous places of Rajasthan. Ghurye avers that Rajput architecture was the assertion of Hindu faith in its own destiny. Mukerjee looks at the same phenomenon of artistic endeavour in another way. He holds that the Rajputs were feverishly engaged in building


beautiful monuments in Dilwara, Abu and many other places, to ensure immortality for themselves. Their existence was fragile on account of continuous battles with Muslim overlords. At the same time they patronised the creation of numerous marble structures which they believed would last beyond themselves.

In his later work Social Tensions in India, Ghurye devotes an entire chapter (8) for the statement of his views on the relationship between Hindu-Muslim architecture. Here he is engaged in a polemic with some of the writers such as Tarachand, Kabir and Abid Hussain. These writers contend that the Islamic invasion might have unsettled Hindu sacred and civil architecture in the initial years of conquest, but this was compensated for by the later Muslim kings' patronage of Hindu-Muslim architectural fusion. The depleted creativity of Hindus in Rajasthan, Bengal and some parts of south was replenished by Islamic aesthetic values. In the North the attempt made by Akbar to build Fatehpur Sikri and his deputy Man Singh's patronage of a Hindu temple in Agra bear eloquent testimony to the Hindu-Muslim artistic rapprochement. The vaulted arches and domes were added to the Hindu floral columns in this process of fusion. Thus the new architecture combined the grace of arches and domes with the elegance of carved columns and quiet interior spaces.

Ghurye holds that notwithstanding the onslaught of Muslim rule at the centre, in Rajasthan, Bengal and South there was a fervent temple building activity in the period from 12th to 15th centuries. These temples were built in accordance with the purely Indian iconographic principles.

Whenever a "fusion" took place, the two aspects, Muslim and Hindu remained separate. For instance, the monuments at Fateh-pur Sikri did not represent any blend of Hindu-Muslim aesthetic values. In other words, the Hindu influence remained ephemeral to the distinctly central Islamic values. Even where it succeeded, as in the case of Man Singh's Gobind temple at Agra, the human dimension was lacking. The Moghul kings after Akbar and the Bahmani kings of the 14th to 17th century South invited Persian artisans to raise monuments. Taj Mahal and Gol Gumbaz are examples of purely Persian architecture with some Hindu ornamental features. In sum Ghurye is committed to the view that Hindu-Muslim patterns remain separate.

If we balance these two streams of thought we may arrive at a via media. Perhaps it can be said that the Hindu-Muslim fusion was more easily attained in the civil architecture (forts, palaces) and some tombs than in the sacred architecture (temples, monastic buildings, funerary monuments of holymen, etc.). At the same time we cannot agree with Ghurye's total rejection of such fusion. Firstly, his attribution of homogeneity of Muslim architecture is not correct. Secondly, be
himself has stated that Jaina architecture partook of some architectural
values and emerged none the worse for it. As already noted Jaina
architecture is not genetically different from Hindu architecture.
Therefore, Ghurye has to concede some fusion even if it be an experimental
one! He also adopts a specious argument regarding the multiplicity of
domes (ribbed or plain) in Hindu temples in Maharashtra and Central India.
He says that it was the poverty of people which prevented them from
choosing spires and towers!

Ghurye's methodology in comparing the two aesthetic streams
is biased and incorrect. The Hindu iconography has had no homogeneous
style. The Aryan, Dravidian and folk-tribal styles have mingled to
produce a composite architecture. Therefore, a variety of regional styles
have flourished although their core values may remain the same. The
Mathura, Sanchi, Gupta, Chola, Pallava, Hoysala, Vijayanagar art idioms
are well recorded by art historians. Ghurye does not give any specific
argument as to why Indian iconography could not draw values from Muslim
or Christian values. In other words, he has not explored the
phenomenological basis of the difference between Hindu and Muslim
aesthetics. If he had done so, he would have found that at least on the
level of secondary symbols and motifs, there is little difference between
Hindu and Muslim art. He attributes unnecessary rigidity to Indian art.
He is biased towards Islamic influence in architecture as in other spheres
of interaction. Ghurye seems to share with the average South-Central
Indians an unreasonable bias towards Muslim artistic values.
Valuations: In a global context the three main iconographic styles are preliterate (the pastoral Afro-Asiatic tribes), Asiatic (agrarian civilizations of China, India and Japan) and Euro-American (mainly industrial civilizations of Western Europe and North America). The hieratic art of ancient Egypt, the classic arts of ancient Greece and Rome, the Mayan art of Mexico, the Zen art of Japan, the cosmic art of India, the naturalistic art of Ming and Sung periods in China are some of the styles which have come down to posterity. As is well known, art and architecture have been used by art-historians and archaeologists as indices to measure the progress of civilization in society and culture. The arts of a civilization are a means of communication employed by the people of a society. Right from ancient to the present times, their role in communication is underscored by several archaeological researches.

The most visible aspect of Indian art and architecture are its numerous temples, belonging to Hindu, Jaina and Buddhist creeds. The temple-complexes\textsuperscript{19} of Kanchi, Madurai, Srirangam in the South, Puri Jagannath in Orissa, Kasi-Varanasi in U.P., Pushakaran and Nathdwara in Rajasthan, just to mention a few, not only served as sacred places but also occasionally served secular needs. It is interesting to note

\textsuperscript{19} See H.S.A. Rao: Urban Sociology, Popular Prakashan Bombay, 1974. Rao notes: "A temple town as at Madurai, Srirangam, Tirupati, Kashi or Puri, was the centre of diverse cultural activities. The employees of the temple included priests, musicians, attendants, dancers, office staff, craftsmen and workers. Often the temple maintained schools and hospitals. It was also a landowner contributing in its own way to the economic development of the region. Temples, in some parts of South India, were corporate bodies exercising secular powers." (p. 100)
that the Indian sacred architecture has been more lasting than its civil architecture. The palaces and forts of kings have crumbled in many parts of the country with the exception of those in Rajasthan. But the temples built in stone or brick and mortar have survived, if they were not subjected to vandalism. This is an index of the importance of religiosity.

Temple building in India has been closely related to certain forms of social legitimation. Barring the Muslims and the British, all the previous conquerors who came to India from such diverse lands as Greece, Asia Minor, Central Asia and Persia, embarked on or patronised religious architecture. Apart from these foreigners the indigenous kings did the same; a reference to them has already been made. A king legitimised his rule by his religious endeavour and he also integrated diverse ethnic groups. In India, the Divine Right theory of kings never took root; but a king's legitimacy via his religious duty was an accomplished fact. The king was regarded as the survivor of the temple god. An interesting instance of this gesture is noted in the installation of statues of Krishna Deva Raya and his two consorts at the entrance of the Tirupati temple, in a manner which suggests their servitude to God.

The manipulation of religious motifs and symbols for political purposes is in fact a secondary manifestation of a more basic integrative drive. Ghurye's God and Men and Mukerjee's History of Indian

20. See Ghurye: Gods and Men, Popular Prakashan, Bombay, 1968; Mukerjee (op.cit.)
Civilization Vol.1 refer to the rise of composite deities. Ghurye traces the rise of Shiva as a deity comprising the earlier vedic and folk elements. Likewise Vishnu, Ganesha, Skanda and Devi are composites of the heterogenous elements of the Indian belief systems. Mukarjee too refers to the multiple roles played by Krishna as friend of the farmer, warrior and the diplomat, the integrative march of Rama from North to South and the myriad faces of Devi (shakti) cult.

Analytically, the people may be thought as engaged in a project building gods. Sometimes builders are elites or whole communities. There is clearly a two-fold process. First, a composite god or goddess is evolved to reconcile the conflicting ethnic values; second, the composite god takes on myriad new forms to cater to local, regional and national needs. As such the application of dichotomy: Great Tradition-Little Tradition is inapplicable to Indian iconography. The dynamic element here has been constant urge to evolve new forms out of the existing ones and meet the changing religious needs.

There is striking isomorphism between Indian mythology and iconography. The one feeds the other; each undergoes change, reinterpretation and reintegration. In either sphere a staticity is absent. Yet there is no set purpose in Indian mythology or iconography. This is in accord with the cosmogenic impulse that creation leads to dissolution and back to recreation.
An important outcome of cyclical notion of time in Indian cosmology and mythology is that all historic movement is laden with anti-historic meanings. The past, present and future are only indistinctly separated in the meaning universe.

In fact, myth, art and architecture together contribute to a series of social functions. A reference has already been made to the integrative and legitimising functions; the communicative function may also be noted here. The absence of a rigid elite-mass dichotomy in India is due to the fact that a single gestalt operates in Indian society, in so far as religious, aesthetic and literary dimensions are concerned. I have already referred to Kabir's view on the absence of distinction between elites and masses in cultural outlook. The knowledge of Indian myths, legends, hierarchy of gods and goddesses is universally shared among all sections of people. Even ordinary, secular conversation tends to draw upon the original myths and legends. The icons and temples by visually reiterating the myths have supplemented the oral tradition.

A common element in both Ghurye and Mukerjee is that their indifference to the material and substantive relationships underlying the cosmic, iconographic and valuational bases of Indian civilization. The idealistic thinking is commonly shared by them. So some of the relevant questions are not raised by them but omitted from their purview.

Economic anthropology\textsuperscript{21} sheds some light on the substantive aspect. The term "redistributed economy" is used to designate agrarian

societies of pre-colonial era. Indian society attained a considerable agrarian surplus which was first stored in its temple-complex and then redistributed to the people in time of need. To a more or less degree the temple towns and forts wherein the king or chieftain resided served as the granary of people. It can be even said that the king or chieftain in association with priests controlled people by virtue of his command over agrarian surplus.

The material aspect of a temple complex is described by Romila Thapar.

"The income of the temple was sometimes so huge that it was profitably invested in trading guilds, or else money was loaned with interest to village bodies. In the Chola period, the temple not only supplied a substantial part of rural credit but also financed merchant guilds. The management committees of these temples consisted of temple priests, the local mercantile guild and the local village assembly. Thus the economic interests of both the temple and the rural and urban professions were interlocked." 22

If the attempts made by Ghurye and Mukerjee to study art and architecture are viewed in terms of methodology, the following conclusions

are reached. It is that they have looked upon art and architecture as a key to the understanding of Indian society. By and large the sociologists studying Indian society have almost entirely omitted or bypassed these fields. Even a well-known theorist of Hindu society, Dumont,\textsuperscript{23} has not given much attention in this regard. In his \textit{Homo Hierarchicus}, he has discussed the principles of Hindu caste organization rather than caste in relation to aesthetic tradition. In his \textit{Politics, Religion and Society} he makes a brief reference to the distinction between Aryan and Dravidian gods via the temples. But as remarked earlier, religious art and architecture are enduring components of people's configuration and reflect concretely the active links between man, social organization and meaning universe. To that extent Ghurye and Mukerjee have done well by inquiring into these phenomena. At the same time a valid criticism against the two authors is that they are attempting to revive the past glory. This urge might have arisen due to their social conservation or religious impulse.

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