CHAPTER V

THE GUPTA PERIOD
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The people of the Gupta age had their own sports and pastimes. Sometimes the kings and nobles fuddled themselves with wine and women. Women enjoyed themselves in public baths by playing pranks in water. They also loved to sit in the swing (dolā) within and outside their homes. Dice (akṣa) playing was as popular as watching cock-fights. Bull fighting was equally popular. Hunting was also favourite of the people and the nobles. Likewise there were many other sports and pastimes that people of the Gupta period enjoyed immensely. The detailed description of sports and pastimes is as follows:

SPORTS

HUNTING

References to hunting are found right from the Vedic age. Pāṇini names it as lubdhayoga. Hunting, probably an aristocratic amusement was favourite with kings and nobles. While enumerating the advantages of hunting Kālidāsa appears to echo the enthusiasm of Kauṭilya. According to him it "causes the disappearance of phlegm, bile, perspiration and that it yields the acquisition of skill in. aiming at still and moving objects, the
ascertainment of the appearance of beasts when provoked, their sense of fear and ferocity." Hunting, according to him, makes one intimate with the art of throwing down the moving mark; gives understanding of their signs of fear and ferocity and endows the body with excellent qualities owing to a conquest over fatigue. Danṭin was also equally enthusiastic about hunting. He says that "There is nothing so beneficial as hunting (mrgayā). It gives the legs magnificent exercise; and long-winded speed might prove very handy after a defeat. It dries up the phlegmatic humour, thus promoting digestion, the sole foundation of health. By reducing fat, it makes the body vigorous, sinewy, agile. It gives power to endure cold, heat, wind, rain, hunger, thirst. It interprets the mental activities of living beings from their physical expression. It supplements scantly crops with the flesh of deer, buffaloes, wild oxen, and other game. It makes land routes secure by killing such creatures as wolves and tigers. It wins the confidence of the jungle tribes. It fosters energy, thus impressing hostile armies." Thus hunting was considered useful to the human body as well as to the society and state. Kālidāsa has given vivid picture of the hunting expedition of king Dāsaratha in Raghuvamśa. He says, "The king permitted by his ministers went on hunting. The
king rode on horseback to the forest, crowned with a rustic garland wearing a leaf coloured armour for the sake of camouflaging. The forest was already occupied by persons who carried with them nets and packs of dogs, which was further cleared of conflagrations and robbers and which was full of pools of water. Antelopes, yaks and birds were provided for the required targets. There the king shot down the deer, boars, wild buffaloes, rhinoceroses, tigers, lions, elephants and yaks. It seems that the shooting/a wild elephant was traditionally forbidden. On the royal hunt, king was surrounded by Greek women with bow in their hands and their persons decorated with garlands.

In the course of hunting expedition princes wore particular kind of hunting dress. Kālidāsa refers to such a costume (mṛgayāvesāṃ). The Yavanīs or the Greek attendants of the king, while hunting, were at once marked out by their distinctive attire. No mention is made of the articles of their apparel specifically except that they moved about with a bow, putting on many garlands and encircling the king. In the famous so-called bacchanalian group of the Muttra museum the attire of the Greek females may be seen. It is a long sleeved jacket and a skirt falling down on the feet which are shod with plump shoes and a fillet like
vestana checking the locks of hair from falling. A perfect specimen of a Yavanī is instanced in a figure carved on a railing pillar with a sword in hand and wearing bobbed hair. The coins issued by the Gupta kings bear testimony to the hunting as a favourite sport of the kings. 'Tiger-slayer' type of Samudragupta, 'lion-slayer' type of Chandragupta II, 'tiger-slayer' type and 'rhinoceros-slayer' type of Kumārgupta I clearly show their skill at hunting. In the tiger type coin of Samudragupta, the king tramples on a tiger, which falls backward as he shoots it with a bow in his right hand, while with his left hand he draws his bow back behind his ear. In the lion-slayer type coins of Chandragupta II, which may be compared to his father's tiger-type coin, the king is shown wearing a dress and ornaments, shooting with a bow a lion which falls backwards and he tramples on it with one foot. On some of these coins the lion retreats with its head turned back, while the king is shooting. Likewise the lion-slayer, tiger-slayer and rhinoceros-slayer type coins of Kumārgupta I supports the view that hunting was a popular sport. In the rhinoceros-slayer type the king is shown riding on a caparisoned horse, attacks a rhinoceros. In cave XVII of Ajanta also many such hunting scenes are depicted.
WATER-SPORTS (Jala-Krīḍā)

Bathing, swimming and boating were some the several water sports (toya-krīḍā). Women enjoyed to a questionable extent in childlike raptures, baths in public tanks. They beat the water to produce the sound resembling that of tamţams.

It was probably the custom for a king to sit in a boat and watch the women of his seraglio sporting in the water and splashing water at each other to the tune of music. We read a beautiful description of it given by Kālidāsa in the sixteenth canto of the Raghuvamsā. There the king enters the water of the Sarayu with the ladies of his harem and disports himself in their company. He rows about in a boat with his attending Kirāṭī. He throws out coloured water on the ladies who beat the water of the river to music. It is termed as Jalavihāra or Vārivihāra.

The mention of fountains (vāriyantra) or water-wheels fitted in a garden is also made by Kālidāsa. While describing a fountain, he says," The peacock desirous of drinking the drops of water thrown up flies round the revolving vāriyantra". There was some sort of contrivance at the top of it which made the fountain revolve and throw sprays of water up and round.

It has been mentioned by Kālidāsa in Raghuvamsā that
people enjoyed sporting in tanks (dīrghikā) and reservoirs of water known as Vāpī. Perhaps dīrghikā and Vāpī were both tanks with the only difference that the former was a long narrow reservoir of water while the latter was a square one. The poet makes mention of a gṛhadīrghikā to distinguish it from a dīrghikā of the public parks and locates it in the pleasure garden (pramādana). Vāpī had a flight of steps paved with emeralds. Dīrghikās were furnished with secret chambers meant for amorous sports (gūḍhamohanagṛha).

GARDEN SPORTS

Garden sports in ancient India included picnics (Vihārayātra), plucking and gatherings of flowers (puspacayana). Every great city in those days was surrounded by extensive gardens and parks where the residents of the city could find some relief from the congested streets of the town, known as udyanaparamparāśu. Gardens were of two kinds. They were the pramādana attached to the palace or the house, and parks for the citizens (nagaropakap-thopavanāni) generally situated outside the town. Both were laid out spaciously enough to contain an orchard and a flower garden which contained stone or crystalline benches to cool the body, tanks (dīrghikā) containing pleasure rooms, reservoires of water (vāpī) and wells.
(kūpa), columns on which domesticated birds perched, water fountains and irrigation channels and a zoo, perhaps an adjunct of the pramadavāna alone.

In the Kāmasūtra also we find reference to these gardens that were outside the town and a whole day was spent in picnicking there. Attired in there best nāgarakas would go out of the town early in the morning mounted on horses accompanied by ganikās and servants. There they arranged for their daily meal and passed their time in playing dice or watching fights of cocks, quails or rams or in any other way that please them. In summers water-sports were played in the gardens where tanks were made. Joyous ladies spent their time either in swinging or plucking flowers which they utilised them in abundance in their toilet, while children played with balls. Many such specimens of balls have been excavated at Kumrahar, dated to the Gupta period.

Then there were many festive occasions which were celebrated with great mirth, like the marriage of a creeper to tree. Then there was dohada or the ceremony of touching the Aśōka tree with the foot or a maiden or giving it a embrace or a spray by mouthful of wine, which caused it to blossom. Pāṇini termed this sport as Salabhaṅjikā. Scenes of dohada are depicted vividly in the sculptures of the age. Kālidāsa also make frequent
The most exquisite description of a garden is given by the poet Kalidāsa in his work *Vikramorvasī* where, he says, “the peacock and the swan strut and hover over the fountain to catch the sprays, where the domesticated caged parrot shouts for water, and the bees crowd on the Karnikāra trees”.

**SWINGING**

Swing (dolā) was a common means of merriment which people, especially women, enjoyed immensely without any fear of being thrown away. Swings were provided both inside and outside the homes. Inside the houses of wealthy persons cushioned swinging cots were set in motion by servants with the help of ropes.

In the literary work, namely, *Malavikāgnimitra*, queen Irāvatī says: "I wish to enjoy the pleasure of sitting in the swing in company with your lordship". The passage quoted above suggests that there were regular joy-swings in pleasure gardens attached to the mansions of the rich people. Another passage in the *Raghuvaṃśa* suggests that swings were meant for tougher sports also (Līlāgāreṣu). That men also enjoyed swinging, is evident from the earlier quoted passage.
WRESTLING

Wrestling was also a popular sport. It seems wrestling matches (malla-yuddha) were greatly enjoyed by the people. Varāhamihira, contemporary of the Gupta age has made mention of wrestlers in his Brhatsāṁhitā. Wrestling matches were also known to Vātsyāyana, but nāgaraka appeared to have been rather a spectator at this game rather than one who took active part. It seems gymnastic was also in vogue. The discovery of a terra-cotta figure of the muscular body of a gymnast at Maheshwar supports the conclusion.

DICING

Dice, a game of chance, attracted many men. Vātsyāyana considered dice (dyūta) to be laudable amusement of the citizens of both sexes. His Kāmasūtra recognises gambling as one of the sixty-four fine arts which a citizen is supposed to know. Vātsyāyana is of the opinion that a women should study the sixty four arts and practise them in private. The Brhatsāṁhitā of Varāhamihira speaks of people who used to live by gambling. He is of the view that those people who play dice will be oppressed under the star pusyā.
Playing dice was a favourite sport for kings also. This is made clear from a reference found in the Raghuvamśā of Kālidāsa. During the svayamvara of Indūmatī, a certain king sportively cast up the dice to make her know that he was an expert in dice-play. Some kings got so absorbed that they used to forget their royal duties when engaged in dice-play.

Like the preceding period dice, was also played on board. Dice, made of gold and ivory, were also used. There were several forms of games in which dice were used, like, vibhītaka, pāśaka and pañcika. Yosōdharā while commenting on the Kāmasūtra of Vātsyāyana notices twenty forms. According to him fifteen belong to the nirjīva class, wherein the stake is an inanimate object, such as money, and five belong to the sajīva class, which had a living object such as a cock or a ram as the stake.

Vātsyāyana refers to ākaraṣakṛdā. Exact connotation of this term is not known. Perhaps ākaraṣakṛdā and akṣakṛdā are synonyms. Mention of two boards, namely, dyuṭapalaka and ākaraṣaphalaka by Vātsyāyana make us infer that ākaraṣakṛdā and akṣakṛdā are two different games.
Gambling was played in a gambling house under the supervision of sabhika. Mṛcchakaṭika by Śūdraka throws sufficient light on the office of a Sabhika. A Sabhika named Māthura maintained a gambling score or record-book (lekhaka) in which the earnings and losses were entered. It was customary for a player to square up these accounts before they entered another gambling house. It was also the duty of a Sabhika to report the important matters to the king. Sabhika used to invite even a defeated gambler for another round of play provided he had come with money. Collection of arrears was also one of the most important duty of a Sabhika.

According to one reference found in the Mṛcchakaṭika, gamblers used to form a sort of association. When Saṃvāhaka did not pay the debt which he owed to his opponent, the caretaker of the gambling house drew a circle round him and said that Saṃvāhaka was bound by the gambler's ring. Gamblers were punished severely for non-payment of outstanding debts. In Mṛcchakaṭika Saṃvāhaka tried all possible tricks to throw dust into the eyes of the Sabhika but was finally punished. The defaulters were physically assaulted, to the extent of bleeding through nostrils, by the keepers of the gambling houses. To pay off their debts, players were subjected to various tortures. For instance, they were
suspended (by their legs) with head hanging down for a whole day. Sometimes hounds were let loose on them who nibbled at the flesh on the tights and at times they were dragged on rough roads in order to get their backs bruised by clods of earth and stones. They were even forced to sell their parents to pay off their debts. However, all those who could produce surety by themselves were let out.

The description in the *Mṛcchakatika* points out that gambling was considered as an approved social recreation. Just as Kālidāsa describes the virtues of hunting, Daṇḍin too dilates on the advantage of gambling (*dyūta*). Gambling he remarks, "develops an unexampled magnanimitv, since you drop a pile of money like a straw. With its alternations of winning and losing, it liberates you from servile joy or despondency. It nourishes impetuousity, the basis of all manliness. It compels a continuous exercise of quick intelligence in detecting tricks (very difficult to perceive) with dice, sleight of hand, the board and other equipment. Demanding exclusive attention, it gives superb training in mental concentration. It makes for delight in audacity, the companion of brisk resolution, for ability to hold one's own while rubbing up with the toughest
customers' for the cultivation of self-reliance; for getting a living without stinginess." This game of dice was essentially a sport of stakes, in which large sums sometimes were either lost or won. When these games were in action brawls must necessarily have taken place.

PASTIMES

COCK-FIGHTS

Watching cock-fights was a popular pastime of this age. Cocks were most familiar domestic birds during the age. A cock-fight implied a large and enthusiastic gathering of people. Cocks had particular names and were armed with knives or blades and were placed in their pens.

Daṇḍin gives us an amusing account of this pastime. " I came" says Pramāti, one of his characters,"to a large market town, where businessmen were raising a tremendous bombilation over a cock-fight (tāmracūdayuddha), so that I could not repress a snicker as I joined them. And a certain Brāhmaṇa who sat near me, a gay old gentleman, quietly asked an explanation of my merriment"." How in the world", said I," can men be such fat heads so as to match crane, that cock in the western pen, against cocoanut, the rooster in the eastern pen" ." Be still", said the wise old boy, " Don't give these ninnies a tip
and he handed some betel-gum (camphor flavour) from his little box, filling in the intermission with spicy anecdote. Then the two birds, went at each other full tilt, stab and counter-stab, with wing-flapping and cock-a-doodling. And the poor cock from the western pen was beaten. The old gentleman, delighted at backing a winner, made a friend of one inspite of the disparity in age, gave me bath, food and other comforts in his own house that day, and when I started next morning for Shravasti, he set me on my road, turning back with the friendly farewell "Don't forget me when your business is done".

Vātsyāyana in his Kāmasūtra also explicitly states that cock-fighting was accomplishment of every cultured man and women. Again he further clearly lays down that in the daily programme of a citizen "the morning is spent in amusements, the afternoon with friends, cock-fighting or teaching parrots to talk and at evening time there is singing". Varāhamihira also refers to cock-fighting in his Brhatsamhitā. He has also alluded to bull-fighting. Bull fighter was called Uṣrā-Kṛṣṇaka. Vātsyāyan also refers to fight of quails or rams.

It seems cock-fights gathered a huge crowd. Prior to show, people might have laid bets on their birds.
Therefore, it would be not correct to surmise that cock-fights were associated with brawls.

**MAGIC**

It seems watching magic shows was also a popular pastime. Varahamihira makes mention of magicians (kuhahajjiva). A number of magical practices were prevalent. Abhicāra is the generic word denoting these practices. The ceremony of Nīrājana Kṛtyā, vetāla were abhicāra rites. They were magical rites mainly performed to ruin an enemy or infuse life into a dead body. They were in a way abuse of a magical rite. Vatsyayana, also includes magic as one of the sixty four arts. Varahamihira, also makes mention of jugglers (Indrajālajña) and jesters (hāsyajña).

**GOSTHĪ**

Another diversion which was very dear to the nāgarakas was gosṭhī or social gathering where they diverted themselves in pleasant talk with persons of the same status and position as themselves by their education, intelligence, character, wealth and age, there they engaged in competitions in making verses or in various other sports of skill and art. These gatherings were held everyday in the afternoons and on special occasions.
they were held on a comparatively large scale. These goṣṭhis provided opportunities for the nāgaraka to exhibit his intellectual accomplishments and mastery of the arts they were most popular with him. There were competitions in the extempore composition of verses, completion of a stanza of which a part reply was given, the proper reading of books, with proper intonation and accent, either singly or in groups, the reading of passages in prose or verse that on account of many harsh sounds were hard to pronounce, and the art of composing and expounding passages written in a secret code or cypher. These competitions required a very comprehensive literary and artistic training. A game called pratimālā was also played. In this game a number of persons had to recite verses one after another, the condition being that every reciter must repeat a verse commencing with the letter with which the previous speaker's verse ended and anyone unable to supply his verse sufficiently quickly had to pay a forfeit. This is, perhaps, like the game called antākṣri. Besides the literary competitions, there were tests of proficiency in the fine arts like painting, singing, instrumental music and the skill and dexterity were also tested in practical arts such as the stringing together of flowers in a garland and so on. Sometimes gapikās or artists
of great celebrities were invited to these social meetings. At the gosṭhis were also discussed the sixty-four arts or paṇcāla. Vātsyāyana says that if a person is not well versed in sixty four arts, although, he has knowledge of other sciences, is not much respected in the discussion in the assembly of the learned. Women also met together in gosṭhis or social assemblies among themselves. It was a qualification for an unmarried girl to attend gosṭhis.

DRINKING

Besides the gosṭhis, the people also arranged drinking parties at each other's house. They drank various kinds of liquors with sauces of various tastes and flavours. There are numerous references to vendors of wine that indicate popularity of spirituous liquors. Not only men, women also did not show any compunction in taking intoxicating drinks. There is a reference to men taking wine in company of their consorts in the spring seasons. (XIX.18). Cave XVII of Ajanta Caves, also shows sportive and jolly couples sipping wine and wooing their partners.

Wine was sometimes flavoured with lotus buds (Satpalam madhu).
Varāhamihira enumerates the disadvantages of drunkenness as such. "To wine are due a number of vices. It tends to weaken men of scantly means, intelligence, strength and welfare, losing all common sense and depending on the urge of sense organs, a drunkard is unable to discriminate between what should be eaten and what not and the like. He takes mother for wife and vice-versa, a house for a clod of clay, and a well for a house, he regards a little of water as an ocean and the latter as flat earth, and poses as befriending a king. What else there is that a drunkard would not to do". But all this was not enough to desist people from taking wine. Varāhamihira, gives a piece of practical advice, viz., one may drink in secret while receiving a guest, on festive occasion or at the instance of a physician, but only so much as does not make one's common sense disappear. Drinking wine was forbidden for a man performing a sacrifice or other rituals.

TAMING OF BIRDS & ANIMALS

Birds and animals have played an important role in man's life. People used to domesticate birds and animals. Birds that were popularly domesticated were parrots, peacock, cock, cuckoo and mainā. Cuckoos were known for their sweet melody and peacocks for their
glorious plumage. Besides, these birds people used to keep monkeys for own amusement. At the kings palace, besides these birds and animals of sport, lions and tigers were kept in cages.

Vātsyāyana says, that after meal a nāgaraka should attend to such acts as teaching the parrots to speak and witnessing the fight of the lāvaka birds (quails), cocks and rams. This shows that taming of birds was an important part of the day’s schedule in the life of a nāgaraka.

Peacock has been very frequently mentioned with its different names like mayūra, barhi, śīkhangī, kalēpī and śikhī by Kālidāsa in his plays. The peacock was mostly tamed by women. The dancing of peacock was really admired. Its circular movements have been often compared to dancing.

**DANCE AND MUSIC**

Nṛtya or dance has been cultivated in India from very early times and during the age of Guptas it had reached almost a height of consumation with its various division and details. Kālidāsa considered dancing to be one of the chief amusements of human beings. In the execution
of this art can be noticed the behaviour of men arising from three qualities of goodness, passion and darkness. \((\text{traigunyodbhavam})\).

The achievement of proficiency in this art was cultivated by persistent practice.

In the times of kālidāsa dancing was conducted by a dancing master \((\text{nātyācārya})\). Sometimes in a music salon \((\text{Saṅgītācālā})\). Kālidāsa makes mention of various kinds of dancing, which were perhaps in vogue those days. Although, he does not give a detailed and specific reference to the kinds of dance we get, nevertheless, a glimpse into the many sidedness of it from what we gather from his works. Among them are \text{calika}, \text{khuraka}, \text{kutilika} and \text{mallaḥaṭī} and the five-limb dance called \text{pancāṅgābhīnaya}. \text{calika} as explained by the commentator Kāṭayavema, is that kind of dance in which the dancer while acting the part of another, gives expressions thereby to his own sentiments. It was considered by experts the most difficult to be performed. \text{Kutiḷika} and \text{mallaḥaṭī} are kinds of dance of which the former is danced without the help of \text{rāga} but in accompaniment of a particular pose and gesticulation called \text{ardhamattalī}. \text{Galitaka} is another distinct type of dance and gesticulation. Besides these a number of other dancing
postures and acting gestures have been mentioned like the caturasraka, ardharcaturasraka, sthānaka, and vānaka as also modes of dancing by falling on the knees or acting with hands joined.

Many such dancing scenes are depicted in Ajanta Cave No. XVII which represents the abhigēka of a king with some dancing girls and advances in action to the right of the ruler. In this painting there are four women with cymbals in their hands and accompanying them is a male drummer, who plays on a drum. In addition, nearest to the king, is another dancing girl who appears in the execution of a dance. On some of the fragments of the dado of the Siva temple at Bhūmarā, the panels of which depict dwarfs blowing the slightly bent horns (kāhalas) there are some dancing figures of dwarfs. In one, the right hand is raised to the right ear, while the left leg is lifted likewise and the left hand is loosely flung in front, while the right leg is bent a little. In another panel an exactly opposite posture is revealed. There are other variations of such postures. The right hand is raised in front while the left one is placed on the breast, and the left leg is slightly bent while the right leg is kept straight. At other times this posture is slightly modified: the right arm being raised a little over the head and the
right leg, a trifle bent. The panel of Aurangabad Cave VII dated to be of 5th Century illustrates solo dance to the accompaniment of the fourfold orchestra the drum, the flute, the lute, and the cymbals.

Music and dancing were important subjects which were mostly specialized by ladies, particularly the courtesans who practised them as trade. Kings were expected to be proficient in fine arts no less than in other important branches of learning. Allahabad prasasti of Samudra Gupta describes him as pastmaster of poetry and music. The prasasti says that "he put to shame (Kāśyapa) the preceptor of (Indra), the lord of the gods, and Tumbūra and Nārada, and others, by his sharp and polished intellect and choral skill and musical accomplishments - who established (his) title of "king of poets" by various poetical compositions." The expression gandharva-lalitair alludes to his proficiency as a musician and player on instruments, chiefly the Vīnā. His excellence in music is also attested to by his lyricist type of coins. Probably, there were few other Gupta emperors like Samudra Gupta, who were among the musicians or poets of note, although obviously Skanda Gupta had perhaps some skill as a musician. His Bhitari stone pillar inscription tells us that he was well
disciplined in the understanding of musical keys.

As mentioned in Mālavikāgnimitra there used to be school of music called saṅgaṭaśāla. There the students studied music. Musical concerts were arranged by the teachers of the saṅgaṭaśāla in which their skill as well as their pupils was put to test.

Music may be studied under two heads, popular and technical. There are many allusions to both but the latter has been elaborately described. Popular music was cultivated exclusively by women. They may have picked it up in course of time without any regular training within the house where they hardly needed any instrument to aid their vocal music. They sang auspicious songs at the time of marriage and sang songs of glory while watching the standing crops. While bathing in a river, they sang and beat the water to their rhythm of sweet music. On festive occasions, they had ample opportunities of cultivating the old traditional songs suited to the occasions.

MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS

The dance and singing could not have been performed without musical instruments. Some of these musical instruments can be seen in the sculptures of the Śiva
temple at Bhumara, ascribed to the early fifth century A.D. On some fragments are preserved two kinds of drums: one short, and the other long, both of which tied to the ends, were slung on to the shoulders. Cymbals were also shown. Conches can also be seen.

In Cave No. XVII at Ajanta the paintings reveal a number of musical instruments, among which some are long-stringed with a gourd at the bottom, cymbals and lengthy straight flutes. Here too are three kinds of drums which may well be compared in their prototypes which can be seen in the Siva temple at Bhumara.

Kālidāsa refers to several musical instruments. Among these may be mentioned tūryavādyā, vallakī, and the alodya, which was a stringed instrument like vīpā. The other instruments mentioned by him are vīpā, vepu. There were various types of the tabor called mṛdaṅga, puškara, and muraja. While dundubhi was a type of kettle-drum, jalaja was a conch sounded in peace and the ghanta was a type of a bell.

FAIRS AND MERRIMENT

At the temple of Śaravasti, the goddess of learning and the fine arts, on a fixed day every fortnightly, a Samāja or an assemblage of nāgarkas was held regularly.
They were accompanied by musicians, dancers and other artists permanently employed by them for performances in honour of the deity. Besides, when any parties of actors, dancers or other such artists visited the town, they were given opportunity of showing their prowess before the divinity. On the day following the performance stipulated rewards were given or were relegated or were asked to repeat their performances at the pleasure of their patrons. On special occasions, various kinds of festivities were held on a grand scale to honour different deities in constraint of customs. On some of these occasions there were processions (yātrā) like the procession of images that Fa-hien had seen in Khotan when "they swept and watered the streets inside the city, making a grand display in the lanes and byways." There used to be many festivals like Kaumudī-jāgarana, Holi, Aloka-caturthī, Suvasantaka and many other less popular festivals that were immensely popular. Kaumudī-jāgarana was the festival in which the whole night of the full moon in the month of Asvina was passed without sleep by playing dice or similar amusements. Another similar festival yakṣarātri that falls on the night of the new moon of kārtika in which people freely indulged in gambling, was also a popular festival. Suvasantaka was
the festival of the vernal full moon, frolic and music in which people tied around necks garlands of jasmine flowers. In these festivals women of the cities and town entered the harem of the king and sported with the royal ladies there. The most popular seasonal festival were Kaumudi-mahotsava and Vasantotsava. The first festival was for the arrival of winters and the latter for the springs.

GAMES OF THE CHILDREN

It seems children of the age had many playthings to play with like ball, toy animals and also toy carts. Many terracotta toys in the shape of birds, bulls, rams, elephants, horses have been discovered at Maheshwar. The perforated discs discovered at the site of Maheshwar might have been used as playthings by passing a double thread through each of the perforation. The girls took delight in making garlands of flowers, building small houses of earth, of wood, playing with dolls, or in cooking imaginary food with such materials as earth etc. They sometimes played games of chance with dice or cards, or other games like odd and even, the game of close fists and so on, or they might play the game of finding out the middle finger or the sport with six pebbles. Sometimes a number of girls played together at
games involving some exercise of the limbs (Kṣvēditakāṇi) such as hide and seek, spinning round holding each other's out-stretched arms.
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