ABSTRACT

The present thesis embodies the result of my research in different problems related to cultural history of the regions of Kapiśa and Gandhāra (circa A.D. 629 to 1021 A.D.). The land of Kapiśa included the territory now situated in North-eastern or Eastern Afghanistan to the south of the Hindukush. Gandhāra included the Peshawar area and sometimes also the land comprising the Rawalpindi district (Pakistan). The locality lying between these two countries were also incorporated within one or the other.

The period covered by our thesis ranges from circa A.D. 629 to 1021 A.D. Significance of these two dates have been explained in the Chapter II.

The present thesis is prefaced by two chapters on geography and political history describing the background of the study proper. Chapter III describes the people of this area, their characteristic traits, social pattern, food and drinks, dress and ornaments, language and learning, etc. Chapter IV gives some idea about the flourishing condition of the economic life. Religious condition is the topic of the next chapter (Chapter V). The religious life is characterised by the catholicity of spirit. We may refer to Buddhism, Brahmanism with its different sects, Jainism and Iranian faiths and Islam as the prevailing faiths. Islam played a dominant role in the last phase and tried to subdue every other religions of this area.
Art is the subject of the next chapter (VI). Architecture of the period and the regions concerned retained much of the earlier style. Monasteries followed the earlier Indian style though absorbed a few Iranian elements. However, innovations were noticeable in the development of structural temples, the stylistic origin of which can be traced to the temples of the Gupta age.

Sculptures in stone, terracotta, clay, bronze heavily embellished all these structures. Sculptures betray persistence of the late Gandhāra style which absorbed Iranian, Gupta, Kāśmīra, Central Asian, medieval Indian art forms. Two local schools perhaps evolve out of the fusion of all these stylistic elements. Wooden reliefs reveal the presence of Nestorian motifs and remnants of painting display Byzantine as well as Indian Hellenistic and Iranian elements.

On the whole, we try to evaluate the data on the social and cultural life of the people which retained many features of life of earlier phases. Their way of life also assimilated much outside influences. Such fusions formed a rich culture in the regions of Kapiśa and Gandhāra in the period concerned.

Thus, the regions of Kapiśa and Gandhāra played well the role, which their geographical location assigned to them. As the gateways to India, the regions concerned,
witnessed entry of cultural influences and ideas which mingled with different traits of local customs and manners. The cultural acculturation enriched the mosaic of Indian culture.