CHAPTER IV

Oriental Influence on Panjab Drama
The theatre assumed its full stature only after Greeks had had their rule in the northwestern regions of India, mainly over Punjab. And thus we arrive at the baffling question of Greek influence on classical Indian drama and far that matter, drama in the Punjab.

The philological approach to the question of drama in the Punjab districts has led us to believe, with a fair degree of certainty that there was in existence some sort of a local Prakrit drama in centuries later than the 6th century B.C. which was on the way towards a regular art but was not quite developed in the beginning. Greek tragedy assumed its full stature at the hands of master dramatists like Aeschylus, Sophocles and Euripides in about the same times and the two phenomena stood apart, distant and unconnected, taking their own speed and courses of development; for there subsisted no contacts between the peoples of Greece and the Punjab or the lands inhabited by them. The nascent drama of the Punjab in the centuries preceding the start of Indo-Greek contacts was therefore a product of the soil, an indigenous growth. One can also imaginatively visualise it to be neither serious comedy, nor serious tragedy nor one of developed literary content or style but as is the case with all folk dramatic forms, largely farcical or broadly melodramatic with very little finesse to boast of. The ‘fool’ or the clown should have been there as the focal character of all such compositions and crude humour and triumphant violence.
The period 600-325 B.C. of Indian history is marked by the growth of Buddhism and Jainism. These two religious movements exerted powerful influence in the kingdoms and the republics of the time and the whole political complexion of the country changed at accelerating pace. Tradition has it that Mahavira died in 546 B.C. and Buddha passed away three years later in 543 B.C. and we are told that 36 republics did honour to the memory of Mahavira and organised a federal illumination at his death. Meanwhile Rajagriha, Kapilavastu, Girit Vasthi grew up as chief Buddhist centres. Vaissau is another place where Buddhism seems to have reached.

Neither Buddhism nor Jainism reached the borders of Panjab during the life times of the founders of these faiths or even sometimes later. Early Buddhist as well as Jain texts are silent about conditions in the Panjab regions. Luniya has observed that Alexander saw Jain monks on the banks of Indus. This should not mean that Jainism had reached as far as Indus and Panjab was already converted, for there exists not an iota of evidence to show that Panjab had received any impact of Jainism.

1. Know has suggested that a greater ritual, borrowing from popular mime of the Vedic times. Keith, however, does not agree. 44.
2. The Sanskrit Drama by Keith P. 25.
3. Regarding Vardaman, Mahavira there is disagreement about the date. B.N. Luniya places him between 599-578 B.C. He also makes the following observation "For the next thirty years he moved from place to place and preached his doctrine in Kosala, Magadha and further east. He paid frequent visits to the kings Bimbisara and Ajat Shatru who honoured him highly. Some modern scholars prefer 488 B.C. as the date of his death." Luniya Evolution of Indian Culture P. 126.
4. Luniya: Evolution of Indian Culture, P. 130.
before or immediately after the Greek invasion. Buddhism too, like Jainism did not enter the bounds of Punjab for some centuries and the territory was wholly non-Buddhist at the time of Alexander's invasion. This faith too like Jainism did not enter the bounds of the Punjab for some centuries after the death of its founder and in all probability it was Ashoka Maurya who first brought Buddhism to this territory.

GANDHARA-A RESERVE OF SATSKRIT.

It seems that Punjab due to its peculiar environments, geographical position and political aloofness lagged behind in joining Jain or Buddhist heretical revolts and the province maintained its Brahminical character when the areas lying to its east had gone predominantly Buddhist or Jain. When Pali, the sacred Prakrit of the Buddhists, flourished in those areas, Punjab still retained its Taxila in its pristine glory. This important university metropolis was also the capital of Gandhara, the greatest grammarian of Sanskrit who ever lived, was born in a village located not very far from this world famous seat of Sanskrit learning. Panini is believed to have lived in the Punjab one or two centuries after Buddha and Mahavira. The two heretical faiths that took shape in the 5th century B.C. brought about the Prakrit movement too in the domain of language but as we know that at least till the Ashokan times the Punjab...
remained unaffected and Sanskrit language and scholarship of high order flourished within its borders. As such, the whole of Punjab generally and Gandhara area particularly was a special preserve of Sanskrit and therefore of Aryan culture. Sanskrit was cultivated here and was not given up altogether, like was the case with areas where Pali came to replace the Sanskrit of the Hindu scriptures.

The medium of instruction at Taxila, where Vedic arts and sciences were pursued by scholars from four corners, was Sanskrit.

One may go through the list of the various subjects taught at this seat of Sanskrit learning but is not likely to strike upon Dramaturgy or something allied to it, which fact would strongly suggest that during the centuries, the dramatic art had not as yet assumed an importance that would merit its inclusion there as a subject of higher studies or training.

PARISIAN CONTACT.

Paradoxically Punjab and specially its western portion known as Gandhara seems to have fallen under Persian domination during these very centuries. Taxila, the capital of Gandhara, was at the peak of glory and Sanskrit learning was supreme at the university located at this city. This presents an intriguing situation showing that this Gandhara region of the Punjab territory, during the 6th and the immediately succeeding centuries when the two anti-Brahminical movements raised their heads in the eastern part of northern India, the Persian empire extended towards the western fringe of this country lying in the Punjab and Gandhara formed the twentieth strag of
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DRAMA IN THE PANJAB

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The Cambridge History of India, vol. 1 PP.331 f.
PRASHA IN THE PUNJAB

But as it seems, despite this serious cultural inroad from outside, the tempo of Sanskrit language and learning localised at the capital of Gandhara, remained unaffected. The Persian conquest of a part of Punjab brought about its political dismemberment from the rest of India. These were the times when India to the east of Punjab presented a medley scene of monarchical and republican states with varied systems of government, while the land and the people lying between Jhelum and Jumna, i.e. the Punjab Sano Gandhara, formed a buffer between these territories of eastern India beyond Punjab and western Punjab comprising Gandhara region. Besides, culturally this Persian contact was historically consequential in more than one directions. The fact that Gandhara formed part 1 of the dominion of Darius whom Alexander defeated, possibly caused him to invade India in 227 B.C.

If Gandhara belonged to Darius, Alexander could not be ignorant of the fact and after when he had

About the start of the century B.C. we note the horde of Cyrus (c.558-530 B.C.), the founder of the Achaemenian empire of Persia, knocking at the gates of India and destroying the famous city of Kapisha near the junction of the Chorband and Panjshir rivers north east of Kabul. The district west of the river Indus became tributary to the Persians and the name of Gandhara began to appeal prominently among the subject nations in the early inscriptions of Darius (522-486 B.C.), the most illustrious among the successors of Cyrus .

Majumdar, Raychaudhuri and Datta: An Advanced History of India (1956) PP.63-64.
vanquished the Persian emperor, he marched into Gandhara simply, as it seems to claim the territory for himself as the exact thing to be expected from him. This may also explain the listless subordination offered byAmbhi the ruler of the Gandhara at Taxila to the Greek conqueror.

It is never our task to narrate, the chain of events pertaining to the short lived Alexandrian adventure in India, for we have a far limited purpose in view i.e., to discuss only what has direct bearing on our subject the state of Drama in these parts during these eventful times when as a direct consequence of certain very significant historical developments, the Panjab and more especially its western portion of Gandhara, began to acquire a cultural complexion different from the rest of India. We will therefore try to bring out a fuller picture of the social Panjab as it presented itself in the times of Persian contact and Alexandrian campaign and study the question of drama in this province as a possible contemporary institution.

The Greek references to the Panjab in those early times, on careful appraisal are found to substantial corroborate the story of Panjab topography and social and

2. Beyond Gandhara, Alexander had to fight for every inch of Panjab territory and his progress was bloody and painful till he reached the bank of Beas, the last of Panjab rivers on the east from where he was forced to beat retreat due to the fierce and determined resistance offered to his army by the turbulent Panjab communities who had known freedom and the profession of arms for generations and who knew how to fight to the last in defence of their heartths and homes, and most valued of all, their freedom. The people of the Panjab were quick to make short shrift of the last vestige of Greek power among them and assert their independance as soon as Alexander turned his back and left the soil. G.B.
economic life gleaned from Panini Sutra called Ashtadhyayi as well as the epic of Mahabharata and the following facts of importance for the subject under study emerge.

The Punjab was a land inhabited by a number of warlike Gamas, Valava, Kohudraka (Kokar of today?) Madra, Keikey, Bharat, Ushinara Gandhara, Vaushyaya etc. Kuras were also in the eastern parts of the Punjab. These Gamas were ruled mainly democratically by Kshatriya aristocracy and were full of soldiers of the highest mottle. We know from the account in the Mahabharata that almost the whole of Punjab sided with the Kuras in the great conflict of arms narrated there in. These various Gamas and tribes were unequal in cultural attainments, some almost bar baric, others like Gandhara, of very high refinement to their credit.

Early Buddhist texts show India divided into 16 Mahajanapadas or principle states and Gandhara is mentioned as the 16th, while the remaining Punjab does not figure anywhere in the list. From this it can be easily inferred that over a considerable period of time during the early days of Buddhism in India, the whole of Punjab with the exception of Gandhara districts politically linked to Persia was divided, the Kuras an Yavana, as a class of republicans in the late Vedic period...... It is interesting to note that this republican tradition continued in the Punjab in the latter times, for it contained several powerful republics at the time of the invasion of Alexander, the great.


"Alexander had to face a number of Punjab tribes and a number of confederacies of tribes such as Siboi, Agalasso Oxdrakoil, Rathaiots."

V.A.Smith: Early History of India P.323.

See Also Paninikalin Bharatavratha by V.S. Agawala pp. 463.
into independent under-developed tribal regions, who were prompt to guard their freedom in isolation from the rest of northern India, providing in all likelihood the recruiting grounds for mercenary soldiers for anyone who could afford the expense and maintain them. In this, the Punjab got broken into two compartments, Gandhara and the rest. These were not only politically separate but culturally unequal as well. They possessed different social and economic organisations on the eve of Alexander's invasion of this country. The very damaging references to Sauvira and Aratta areas of Punjab in Baudhayana may also refer to pre-Greek conditions in parts of the Punjab which were not Gandhara and also of subsequent Punjab of the Indo-Greek times.

LAND OF "VAR-DARSH.

Such a state of affairs obtaining over centuries in the non-Gandhara Punjab would not argue in favour of literary fertility or richness and one may safely assume that the territory was almost barren and unproductive of literature of any sort.

Speaking specifically of drama, the extra-ordinary physiques of these Punjabis and their profession of arms, the fact that the province was a li-l. "The Dharm Sutra of Baudhajna mentions one eight states in India as forbidden lands for Aryas and Sauvira (Nultan) and Aritta (Punjab) are among those enlisted" R.K.Mookerji: Ancient India P.97.

Raimini has referred to Greeks and Sakas as "Outer Shudras" while Panthjali has included large parts of Punjab areas as falling out of Aryavarta.

V.S.Aggarwalla: Paninikanin Bhartavarna PP.42-43
up into tribal regions and the non-existence of powerful and extensive monarchies in these areas of violent fighters and proud wielders of the sword, all point out to the prevalence of conditions that make for the existence on a universal scale of manly and virile forms of communal dances of some sort. One can distinctly visualise patriotic soldiers of great Puru dancing their way to the front to meet the Mala~harm army of the Greek invader. The existence of preparatory and inspiring war dances following a call to arms may also be taken for granted. In those days, the tiller of the land was also the soldier, the hand that drove the plough would also wield the sword. So in those heroic times when soldierly and peasantry were one, the people as a whole had their dances. There could have existed the post-triumph processional marches of the people marked by much hilarity and demonstrative mirth. The big drum (Dhol) should have been in much evidence there.

I have no doubt that the present day Phangra originated in those very remote heroic days when Panjabis were most vigorous and knew the rhythmic way of expressing their sense of triumph and achievement. The occasion was not always the impending conflict or the combat triumphant resolved. Possibly there were celebrations of seasonal festivals with drum and dance and choral singing too. It is further to be conjectured that nataš did perform some sort of play in the local dialect in front of rustic and unsophisticated public gatherings but the level of performance
could not also be much above rusticity. The performing communities were definitely low in social rank and being insufficiently literate or totally illiterate, committed everything to memory and like minstrels passed on their verbal texts and artistic techniques from generation to generation. Very little could have been preserved in writing and it was not, attempted. This aspect of the community life of Punjab, it seems, was not so distinct or conspicuous as to merit notice of the Greek chroniclers who otherwise interested themselves in looking aspects of Punjab life of the times, with the result that once again we are left with our old time weapon of speculation and surmise, in order to build up some sort of a story about theatre in those days, however flimsy and without substance it may look.

GANDHARA REGION.

In Gandhara too, with all the culture the region could boast of, there seems to have existed no drama much above the folk level. The conditions here were certainly less turbulent, more stable and therefore conducive to the growth of art and literature. And in any case Taxila flourished in the 6th century B.C. (which is very possible) and later centuries and could produce ancient drama.

It must be admitted at once that we have extremely little authentic information regarding the performers of these mimes, believed to have existed before the origin of Drama.  

Keith: The Sanskrit Drama. P.49.

2. Taxila is mentioned in Ashtadhyayi(4/3/73) It was the famous capital of Eastern Gandhara and was a big metropolis and a trade centre situated on the trade route from the times of Panini upto the days of Huna, it did not lose its eminence V.S.Aggarama, Pannikulam Bharadawara P.80.

Great as an emporium of commerce the city (Taxila G.S.) was greater still as a seat of learning crowds of eager scholars flocked to it for instruction in the three Vedas and the eighteen branches of knowledge. Tradition affirms that Mahabharata was first recited in this city. Majumdar, Raychaudhuri and Datta, An Advanced History of India (1960) P.64.
prodigies like Panini and Chanakya and many others with name and fame, the phenomenon can only be explained on the basis of full autonomy and conditions of prosperity existing and persisting there all the times during the Persian rule, which, it seems, was at the most nominal, if not merely technical. And then Persians knew no drama under Achaemenids and their rather loose political contact will Gandhara at this stage could not therefore be fruitful in the direction of the birth of growth of this art form in the soil.

ALEXANDER’S INVASION AND AFTERS.

What happened to Punjab life as a result of invasion by Alexander, requires a very careful answer. The expedition lasted in all for three years, out of which a total of nineteen months were spent in India, mostly in the Punjab territory. According to V.A. Smith India remained unchanged or unHellenised. He observes that no author, Hindu, Buddhist or Jain makes even the faintest allusion to Alexander’s invasion of India.

The Punjab, as found by Alexander, was still mostly tribal, though prosperous, with a dense population, warlike, rich in animal life but disunited and a victim of internecine conflict. As we go through Greek accounts of this campaign we come across the evidence of hurried activity on the part of Punjab communities in favour of national integration, to organise united fronts and confederations in the face of invading foreigner. Hookerji enlist at least one gain accruing to Punjab from Alexanderian invasion, the province received an impetus towards

1. A History of war G. Brown does not mention anything like drama having been practised in Persia in days of its early history, G.C.
2. V.A. Smith: Early History of India P.110.
unity. Credit, however, goes to Chander Gupta Maurya for bringing about the political unification of Panjab within an empire that extended from Persia up to Southern India. He, as a youth, is believed to have led the patriotic Panjab revolt against the Macedon Greek rule, expelled the Greek garrisons and recruiting a formidable force in the Panjab, invaded the Magadha territory and replaced Maha Nanda on Patliputra throne. It is a fact to be remembered that Chander Gupta Maurya started on his adventurous career with anti-Greek actions and led a popular movement against them in the Panjab. Later on, as we know, he inflicted a crushing defeat on Alexander's successor Seleukos Nikotar, the Syrian emperor and married his Greek daughter. Since the patriotic king triumphed over the Greeks all along, he or his court could not be expected to be weekly amenable to or readily receptive of cultural influences from this side. And this is exactly what seems to have transpired. Not even Greek chroniclers posted at the court of Chander Gupta have referred to any institutions and practices that have even a remote impression of the Greek culture about them, no such custom or manners with their roots in the life of the capital city of the newly built empire or any other city or territory of Chander Gupta's dominion have been alluded to. The Panjab during the reign of Chander Gupta, although for the first time under one Government and with its complexion of amanish disunity greatly modified as a result, forming as it did an integral part of the first Indian empire known to history proper, was a purely Punjabi in character never. This was inspite of the fact
that neither the capital of the empire, nor other places
and areas of Mauryan India were isolated.

MAURYAN TIMES.

There was a constant intercourse with foreign
states and men of business from distant lands visited
Patliputra and the country in large numbers. Chander
Gupta cultivated close friendly relations with rulers of
Asian territories and had Maganthes, the ambassador
of the Greek ruler Seleukos posted at this court.

Maganthes was succeeded by another Greek ambassador
Dismochos in times of Bindusara (298 B.C.) his successor
Seleukos was assassinated in 286 B.C. and was succeeded
by his son Antiochos who followed the friendly policy
of his father towards India. But as it seems, India of
Chander Gupta Maurya or Bindusara was strongly immune to
Greek culture and Greek influence in matters of court
life, administration, army organisation etc. and is
conspicuous by its absence. Maganthes, himself has
gone into detail describing the imperial entertainments
but drama or anything near drama has not been even
distantly suggested.

The above is almost a definite proof of the
absence of drama at the royal Mauryan courts. If such
was the case at the Imperial capital and court, there
could be no drama (the developed type) elsewhere in
the empire. Thus the possibility of drama, much less
a theatre of Greek type or influenced by it, in the
Punjab, is ruled out at this stage.

The fact that drama is not included in the
list of royal amusements and pursuits of leisure also
1. V.A.Smith: The Early History of India (1924) P.134,
2. V.A.Smith: The Early History of India PP.126-130.
sets at rest all speculation about the possible prevalence of developed drama in any part of northern India, before or during the Mauryan rule.

Unfortunately the accounts prepared by Megasthene were lost in original and are traceable only as citations in the work of Greek historians like Strabo, Diadotus, Pliny, the elder, Arrian, Plutarch and Justin who wrote much later. But even if that be as it is, had he mentioned drama at the Indian capital it could not have been missed by all of them. Thus the absence of reference to the art, in the works of later Greek historians cannot be ascribed only to inadvertence on their part.

NO DRAMA IN ASHOKAN TIMES.

Coming to Ashokan times, we find that like his grand father, emperor Ashoka did not care to introduce drama in his court or capital and no evidence of the existence of drama in these times as a sufficiently developed institution in Gandhara or any other part of Panjab is forthcoming. Kharoshthi script was used in Mansehra (Bazaar district in Pakistan) and Shahbajgarhi (40 miles north east of Peshawar) rock edicts and language of the two is also said to be the local dialect. The fact may be quoted as another proof that Panjab continued to be outside as another the sphere of Prakrit (Pali) influence and in the matter of script the Persian influence was actually stronger in these parts.

1. The Fragments of Megasthenes have been edited by Schwanbeck under the title of Megasthenes Indica (Bonn, 1846) and translated by Mo Crindel in Ancient India as described by Megasthenes and Arrian (Trubner, London, 1871).
2. V.A. Smith: The Early History of India (1924) p. 175.
It is not the only item that marked out the north-west from the rest of India. Instances showing Gandhara area restive under Mauryas can be quoted. The Taxilians revolted against the local visceroy at least twice and in one case the legend has it, prince Rama, son of Ashoka, was blinded in this very city, for which outrage the Gandhara people earned the wrath of Emperor Ashoka, resulting in the wholesale banishment of local people to Khotan in central Asia where as a result, a colony of Panjabis grew up. It shows that the spread of Buddhist creed and the bonds of common government failed, as it seems, to bring about uniformity of outlook and that measure of emotional and cultural integration of Panjabis areas with the rest of India as would make them one nation Panjab retained its characteristics identity even at the end of the Mauryan rule.

Mauryan rule gave no drama to the Panjab. It did not receive impetus from Greek quarters, precisely because Greek influence during all this period was weak and remote, transitory in nature and of little consequen especially in the domain of dramaturgy. The developed form of dram simply did not subsist in Mauryan days throughout the Panjab. Mauryans were succeeded on the Fatiliputra throne by Hindu revivalists the Shungas, followed by Kanavas.

1. Taxila was known as one of the chief cities under the Mauryas and if Tara Nath is to be believed, a certain Virasena was ruling Gandhara sometimes after Ashoka. If Subhag Soma was descendent of Virasena, he may have ruled both the Shringapurades and Gandhara.
3. V.A. Smith, The Early History of India (1924) p.203.
while in the south, Satavahana of Andhra ruled over a
large portion of India (185 B.C. to 225 A.D.). Throughout,
the Panjab stood apart and had a very different story to
narrate.

**INDO-GRACE IN THE PANJAB.**

Bactria (Baklah) had been colony of Greek
settlers in the heart of Asia and was bordered on the
north-east by Parthians (called Pehlavas by Indians)
who occupied a territory south-east of the Caspian sea.
The Bactrians were settled between the Hindu Kush and
the Oxus. The Greek strap Diodetus II (250–230 B.C.)
broke away from Emperor Antiochos II and his successor
and making Bactria independent of Syria heralded a
Hellenistic revival there, made his way towards Panjab
and reduced the Indian King Subhagasa (200 B.C.) who
ruled over Kabul region and probably also over Gandhara.

It was however his son Demetrius who made real progress
1 towards India. House of Euthydemes was, however, ousted
by Suratides who became king of Bactria in 162 B.C.
Mithradtis established himself sovereign of Parthia in
6171 B.C.

According to R.K. Meekorji, by about 2nd century
B.C., while the house of Suratides held sway over Bactria
Kabul, Gandhara and Taxila, the descendants of Euthydemes
ruled over the rest of Panjab from their capital, Sakla
(modern Sialkot). Diodetus I and II were the
1. "The 1st Indo-Greeks who rule over Taxas was a son to be Agathocles, probably a son of Demetrius I who must have ruled for some time after Antalions death, both the brothers may have covered twenty years after the death of Demetrius I in 185 B.C., and thus Agathocles died at about the same time as Demetrius II."
2. "Sakla was a very old city known to Mahabharata as the capital of Madra, people of the Upanishadas lying between rivers Ravi and Chenab."
* Meekorji: Ancient India p. 213.
most distinguished descendants of Euthydemus. Strabo, the Greek historian, tells us that the dominion of Demetrius II and Menander extended in the west up to Sindhu delta, Surastra and Kutch. King Menander (Malind of the Pali book, Malind Panha) is the most important of Indo-Greeks who ruled over Sakla Deftta, the Land between Ravi and Chenab in the Panjab. The important thing about Menander is that he got converted to Buddhism and came to be known later as the defender of the Buddhist faith when the rest of the country was putting the clock back and turning Brahminical under the Shunga Brahmin dynasty at Patliputra.

Sanskrit books give an account of Yavan (Greek) invasions of Shunga dominion and these were led by Demetri II and Menander. From about 2nd century B.C. onwards, a notable figure was Hermias (20–30 A.D.) for nearly two centuries Panjab remained under a motley of Indo-Greek rulers who were originally drawn from Bactria, the Greek settlement in Asia Minor, and not Greece proper.

Menan or a occupat on o Can rail with the great centre of Ashkalyati and Taxila, has been proved by evidence of coinage. In the north re-occupied Hazara and Swat Valleys, he evidently controlled Udyana and Abhisara and incursions in Kashmir by him are doubtful. Western Classical and Indian literary sources as quoted by A.K.Harain are almost unanimous on Menanders conquests in India and he probably advanced beyond the Hysaprias (Bass) as far as Yamas or Yamas, Baidasa’s drama Malvihangni-mitra records a conflict on the banks of Sindhu in which a Yavana was defeated, U.S.

2. "It is a long way to Gandhara from the shores of the Aegan, yet Greek rule lasted there for three hundred years and Greek cultural influence for another four or five hundred years after that."

Toynbee: East to west, P.124.

* The Panjab or a considerable part of it, with some of the adjoining regions, remained more or less under Greek rule for more than two centuries.*

V.A. Smith: Early History of India, P.254.
Two centuries over which approximately the Indo-Greek rule lasted over parts of the Punjab is not an insignificant period in the life of a people. They were bound to be seriously affected by the culture of the rulers and some such influence is naturally to be conceded. But it seems that instead of being jealous protagonists of the Greek culture, these aliens, during their long sojourn here, did very little to Hellenise the land of their adoption. First of all they were not in a mood to act as jealous missionaries, secondly, there was visible a marked willingness on their part to get naturalised in the Punjab society. Further more, Greeks in the Punjab were far removed from their original homeland; they already had a long history of separation from Greece, running over centuries and their present source being Bactaria, where Persian influence must have had its own effect, these Indo-Greeks were in fact already bereft of their Hellenistic traits and distinctive characteristics, even when they entered the plains of the Punjab.

Yavana Kingdom: non-Hellenistic?

Talking of Bactarian Greeks, Dr. Harain rightly states that they did not look back to the Seleucids or to the Greek world in the middle east for inspiration or hol

1. Amoreshti script (and sometimes Brahmi) too was adopted by the Indo-Greeks and remained in vogue along with Greek language and script. King Menander undoubtedly the most powerful of the Indo-Greeks became a convert to Buddhism. Some important Greeks turned Hindus also. In fact, their very names were changing and turning Panjabi with the rest that coins of a number of them carry these modified names and titles. These bear bilingual legends. Dr. Bhanwat Sharan Upadhyaya writing in "Hindi ka Brihat Itimad" observes that these Greek rulers were Indians for all practical purposes (PP,699-700) G.S.

2. A.K. Harain in the introduction to his book "Indo-Greeks
Narain is very much near truth when he discovers Bactaria itself "not to be a fifth Hellenistic state" and Yavana Kingdoms were obviously much less so.

All this would not, however, contend that Indo-Greeks were not different people than the natives of the Panjab. They were very much different and we know that their contact resulted in a good deal of give and take; that they did not keep aloof and were fused in the Panjab society ultimately would suggest that all that was distinct ly theirs was also merged in the new Panjab society that resulted from this fusion.

It is, therefore, difficult to agree wholly with those who would rule out all possibility of any Greek influence on the growth of the drama in the Panjab as they argue that Indo-Greeks lost their identity in the Panjab society and in doing so also gave up whatever small cultural distinctions they possessed at the time of their occupying Panjab.

FACTORS MAKING FOR GREEK INFLUENCE.

An attempt at the study of the nature of Indo-Greek rule in the province has been made in order to make it serve as the back drop to the study of the state of drama in these times and the possible Greek influence on the native dramatic activity and art.

GREEK SETTLEMENTS IN THE PANJAB.

Dr. Upadhye states that there grew up in areas occupied by the Indo-Greeks (mostly in the Panjab) purely or predominantly Greek cities or cities with Greek streets.

1. V. A. Smith: The Early History of India (1924) pp. 254-56.
2. Dr. B. S. Upadhye in Hindi Sahit ka Brihit Itihas Part I, 694.
and enclaves. He counts Taxila and Sakla, besides others among such urban points, Upadhyæ makes another positive assertion in connection with Indo-Greeks, that in these cities they staged dramas by famous Greek dramatists and practised Greek art and literature. He also alludes to St. Thomas who wrote in the 1st century A.D. that Indians had dubbed Homer in their various languages which they would recite occasionally. Plutarch has followed St. Thomas in this.

However these statements may not be wholly or even partly authentic and, therefore, further probe in necessitated.

Numismatic evidence available points out the fact that the language adopted by the Indo-Greeks was the local Prakrit and not Sanskrit or Persian while the script was generally Kharoshthi. These were Prakrit times running all over northern India and it is known that Arha-Magndi and Boli Prakritas were being extensively employed by Jains and Buddhists in the eastern parts of the country. The Punjab had its own Prakrit for ordinary business use while Sanskrit remained strictly confined and was used as medium of specialised and higher university studies at Taxila. While in Math Shunga days Sanskrit revived in the rest of northern India and was in general use, this did not come about in the Punjab where Greeks ruled and Buddhism was the dominant religion. Further more Shunga were on term of hostility with the Punjab Greeks and were opposed to them

unreligious and national grounds. Thus popular use of 1. Dr. B.S. Upadhyæ Infndi Sahitya Ka Brikit Itihas Part I 1934.
2. V.A. Smith, V.W. Tarn and A.K. Narain.
Sanskrit did not come about in the Panjab areas till after the institution of the Mahayana Buddhism in these parts.

In that case there could have existed no 'Sanskrit' drama in the Panjab during the full span of Indo-Greek rule.

**FORMATIVE PERIOD.**

Let us see what W. V. Tarn has got to say about the state of drama in the Panjab in these days. In his monumental study 'Greeks in Bactria and India,' he refutes the suggestion that the classical Sanskrit drama of the Gupta Period was in any way derived from Greek drama. "No one now doubts that the Indian drama was a native growth, precisely as the Greek drama was, though it may be a matter of debate whether its origin was religious or secular and what part was played by different elements. But the much convassed question of whether during its formative period it underwent any or what Greek influence is another matter."

It may be said that Indian drama as it grew later on is essentially of Indian species, and certainly a product of the soil but that it remained immune to foreign influences altogether and was not even distantly affected by anything Greek even during the total period of about two centuries over which the Indo-Greek rule

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Drama in the Panjab

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lasted in the Panjab is open to question.

No drama belonging to this period has come down to us. In fact there was none in existence. Prof. Luders discovered fragments of Buddhist dramas by Ashav Ghosh in 1911 and Ashava Ghosh belonged to the times of of Panishkta. This leads us to conclude that regular drama developed in the Panjab and elsewhere in times very much close to the Indo-Greek rule in the Panjab. Another conclusion to which we have already arrived is that there was no such drama existing in times prior to Greek contact with India. Persians who held parts of Panjab under their political hegemony prior to the Greeks for at least a century had no drama of their own. A.D. Rusalkar in his article contributed to the culture Heritage of India, has summarised the case of those who discern no contribution of the Greek influence on the growth of Indian drama, as follows:

"Weber also sought to trace Greek origin for the Indian drama. The antiquity of Indian dramatic theory and practice goes against such inference. There is of course nothing impossible in the presumption of the influence of Greek Drama on Indian drama; but we lack positive evidence. The usual coincidences pointed out between Sanskrit drama and the Attic comedy such as division into acts, number of acts, departure of all actors from the stage at the end of the acts, scenic convention of a side, the announcing of the entry and identity of a new character by a remark from a character already on the stage etc., cannot be regarded as the source of the influence. Since the Greek theatre, so far as we know, has no use for the curtain, the argument based on Yavineska (curtain) is of little value. Even the word be taken to be so called on account of the material which came from Greek merchants no influence from Greece is found on the Indian stage arrangement. Besides there are several fundamental differences between the conceptions and theories of Sanskrit and Greek drama. The former entirely disregards unities of time and place: romantic and fabulous elements are fully introduced the theatres were square, rectangular or triangular. How even if certain striking parallels and coincidences be found between Greek and Sanskrit drama, there is no evidence of influence from any side. Fundamental differences render borrowing or influence out of the question, so that the affinities should be considered as independently developed."

own and therefore could not have influenced our native
dramatic practices in whatever shape or form these existed
in those days. We have already pointed out to that fact
that drama was not practised during the Mauryan rule in
India and the Indo-Greek period in the Panjab on any
noticeable scale.

Biographers of Buddha and Mahavira have in both
cases narrated small incidents in which it is related how
Buddha and Mahavira were attracted by some play like
performances but details are lacking, the performances hav
not been fully described with the result that it is
difficult to determine their exact nature. Possibly they
saw, if they ever did, only folk performances of some sort
and although folk performances can be dramatic, these are
rarely drama proper.

Thus Sanskrit drama, as we know it is definitely
a post Indo-Greek phenomenon. Assuming that Ashava Gosha
1
and Bhasa had smaller predecessors in the line and drama
writing and staging came into vogue earlier to make it
possible for them to give us things of such superior
finish as the dramas by these two authors are known to be,
we cannot possibly take this period of practice back
beyond the period of Indo-Greek rule in the Panjab. This
fact in itself is highly significant.

Tarn builds his argument after A. B. Keith who
says that there was already nascent Indian drama in the
2
2nd century B.C., or at least early in the 1st century. If
this be correct, says Tarn, there must have come about
some sort of contact between the Greek and Indiadratic
arts and stage 1 discounts the consideration of some that
[as regard ng Bhasa are uncertain. I agree with Dr. Ke it
who says that Bhasa lived and wrote later than Ashava Gosh
2,
2. "The balance of probabilitv, therefore is, that the Sanskri
drama came into being shortly after, if not before the middl
of the 2nd century B.C."

Keith, The Sanskrit Drama p. 45
it is not known that Greek plays were acted in the Panjab. According to him "There were Greek Teleis and Polis of any pretensions without a theatre is unthinkable, the one at Babylon has been excavated." Tarn has very cogent arguments to prove that Indo-Greeks had their own Greek theatre when they ruled over parts of Panjab. According to him, Greeks were fond of works of Homer and Euripides and would not fail to take them along when going to distant lands. This, according to Tarn is proved by what they did in Egypt. Plutarch has recorded that Euripides and Sophocles both were staged at Susa and Tarn says that in this we should believe Plutarch. We have it also on the authority of Tarn that the works of Sophocles (495-406 B.C) reached India which is proved by the discovery of a vase found near Fashwaar (now in Lahore Museum) on which there is a scene painted from Antigone. The vase is of local manufacture as it seems and from this Tarn concludes that people in Gandhara were interested in Sophocles. Their interest in other Greek dramatists at Greek centres like Pushkalavati or Sakia is implied. This belief of Tarn however, needs closer examination. If we choose not to go by wrong implications, there should be more weighty evidence than the solitary vase painting in support of the Tarn thesis. No Greek historian has even remotely alluded to the construction of any theatre of the Greek type any where in the Greek occupied Indian territory, nor any discovery, similar to one at Babylon has been made here so far. The discovery of a vase painting is too flimsy an I.V.W.Tarn: The Greeks in Bactria and India P.381.

*I have a vivid visual memory of the little Greek Theatre that still stands today among the vast rubble sounds of Babylon*.

Toynbee: East to West P.124.
2. I.V.W.Tarn: Greeks in Bactria and India P.381.
evidence to base these far fetched conclusions upon. Weighier evidence on the point is however, not altogether lacking.

GREEK DRAMA

The view of Reisch that it was not the Greek drama proper but their mim was that influenced Indian drama seems more plausible but nothing much is known about Greek mim itself and efforts have been made to reconstruct it from the Roman form about which better information is available. However the fact that mim originated with the Greeks and was practised widely by them is one of paramount significance. Numerous notices of Greek mim actors in the Greek world have been collected from inscriptions. It is also known that mim was acted within the Seleucid empire, for Antiochus IV included some in his triumphal celebrations in Ephesus and it should seem that companies of mim actors did visit India. Now it is known that while Greek dramas were staged without the use of a curtain, they usually had it while playing a mim. The view of Reisch is clearly inadmissible. For it is generally held that the children of the Persians, the Cappadocians and the people of Susa sang the dramas of Euripides and Sophokles; if we are to believe Philostratus, a Brahman boasted that he had read the Herakleidai of Euripides and Plutarch has described in inimitable fashion the strange scene at the Court of Croesus of Persia, when the messenger arrived, bearing the head of Croesus, and the actor Jason substituted the ghostly relic for the head of Penthesilea in the Bakchis which he had then performing. We need not doubt from these and other passages the existence of performances of Greek dramas throughout the provinces which formed the empire of Alexander, the scepticism of Professor Levi in this regard is clearly inadmissible.

Keith: The Sanskrit Drama P.59.
N. Tarn: Greeks in Bactria and India P.50.
Reich that the much discussed Yavinka (Javinka) was borrowed by Indian drama from Greek mime and not from Greek drama proper as some have insisted, seems nearer the truth and a distinct possibility. But if this much was the effect of classical mime on Indian Drama, it could have been for less substantial, almost little as regards serious drama. According to Tarn this latter influence did not go beyond borrowing perhaps a stock character like the 'fool' or vidushak and nothing that goes to the root of the matter. Even here he makes this profound observation that in Kali Dasa's most important play, Shakuntla or its fool, nothing resembles even remotely the Greek mime.

But then let it be agreed that a comic drama in the Panjab, specially the one that resembled mime of the Greeks did not come down to us and only the serious type and that too only partially, has been saved and preserved down to our times. It is obvious that non-literary farce like the Fabula-Atelliana is ephemeral by nature.

In all probability, the Indo-Greeks did not build huge theatres in the Punjab cities of the Athenian what Allardyce Nicoll calls Hellenistic of Graeco-Re

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I. In the popular dance and mime of popular est ry we must seek the origin of the Indian drama.... of popular drama nothing has come down to us." Masson, Grabowska Stern: Ancient India and Indian Civilization, p.293.
Drama in the Panjab

1. types. Moreover they were not expected to be Hellenistic zealots for removed as they were from their homeland temporally as well as specially.

It will now be relevant here to try to gauge as to what transpired with the Greek drama itself in its country of birth and growth, for much had changed in this respect by the time Indo-Greeks found themselves established in the Panjab soil. The popularity of the tragic drama notably diminished with the passage of time and in days of Greek-Roman theatres, the dramatic fare consisted mainly of comedy, which dealt with ordinary life.

Even the age of neo-comedy of Menander (341-291 B.C.) was long past when Indo-Greeks whose home was not Greece but Bactria in Asia, came to acquire power over Panjab regions. It happened in the 2nd century B.C., obviously they were not under the influence of those great dramatists of Greece who lived centuries before Alexander. There is therefore little possibility of the existence of any regular Greek drama of Euripides (430-406 B.C.), Sophocles (496-406 B.C.) or even Aristophanes (448-380 B.C.) during the Indo-Greek.

"Next comes the Hellenistic comedy, so called because the type of plays house erected from the 4th century onwards mostly territories outside Greece but under the impress of Greek or Hellenistic Culture. It corresponds in theatrical age to the movement which in history is symbolised in the conquest of Alexander the great. Finally when the Greek Civilization was coming to an end it met with rapidly spreading Roman ideas and out of these two forces sprang a third type of theatre which is usually called Graeco-Roman."

Allardyce Nicoll: The Development of the Theatre (1948) P.17.

2. "The old comedy was followed by the middle comedy (ca 355-336 B.C.) full of literary criticism and parody while that in the turn was supplanted by the new comedy chiefly championed by Menander (342-291 B.C.) in which domestic life was humorously drawn."

period of Panjab History. It is therefore to be expected
that no serious Greek drama was being staged among the
Greek settlers. The *mime type*, the popular non-serious
performances, might have been held among them and that
is the only possibility. If at all there were held
performances of classical tragedy, these were rare,
staged in improvised theatres and before select gatherings
of Greeks and this too could happen in the very early days
of their settlement in the Panjab. Tragedy, not even seri-
comedy, could have been there as a regular institution.

Mimes as Non-Literary.

Mimes being non-literary and popular does not
call for the notice of the historian and generally go
unrecorded. No wonder, no record of these cheap type
popular performances, perhaps in later times with the
local language substituted in place of the Greek, has
come down to us in the form and shape accord to the
1. "It is not un y y t and ans rom the 3rd century B. C. to the time of Kanishka might have had occasion to see
performances of Greek plays by Greek settlers in India but
they were not the least affected in their own dramatic art
and expression by Greek tragedy. It is more probable that
the Indian tradition in the art of the drama was already
fully founded when Greek dramas came to the knowledge of
Indians.

There is, however, one possibility, Neo-Attic comedy as
in the plays of Menander has a certain similarity with
Sanskrit drama. Tragedy is wholly absent in Indian drama.
and Sanskrit drama presents either a more serious and exal-
type which deals with the deeds of the heroes and heroes
of Hindu myths and legends or a less exalted, if more
popular type which deals with the lives of contemporary
people both aristocratic and ordinary. Sanskrit drama of
this type is a veritable comedy of manners which has a
unique place in the gallery of what may be called "a Hall
of Ancient Men", in world literature. We may be permitted
to postulate a possible connection between the Sanskrit
comedy of manners and its Greek equivalent. But one cannot
be dogmatic about it either way.*

Suniti Kumar Chatterji. Introduction to 'Indian Drama'
Dharm Sutra, the language of Maleeschas was forbidden to the Indians. If this was a strict religious injunction, we may take it that Indians did not generally take to the Greek language and thus even if there existed some small institution of Greek drama, a bleak possibility as we have seen, it was confined strictly to the numerically very small Greek population in Panjab towns under their occupation and their plays were not the concern of the ordinary local inhabitants at all. The influence of such an exclusive and short lived institution even if there, could have worked only weakly on the formation and development of the drama native to the soil. It is, however, not very certain that these Dharm Sutras had any force in the Panjab in the Indo-Greek times.

CONSIDERATION OF THE SERIOUS GREEK DRAMA.

But these injunctions of the Dharm Sutras were not unfeet symptomatic of the personal prejudices of the authors. The injunctions were there because their violation was already there. Otherwise there could not have come about Indo-Greek cultural exchange on such a formidable scale, proofs for which are ample and convincing. Author of Gargi Samhita paid a glowing tribute to the genius of the Greek thinkers

1. Apestamba 1.32,10; Vasishtha VI, 4.
2. "Sir William Jones was the first to point out similarities between the Samkhya system and Pthahorean philosophy. The establishment of the Achaemenian empire touching the frontiers of the India and Greece provides definite evidence of India's contact with Greece before Alexander which some scholars are inclined to deny."

"Schareder who has shown the similarity of many religio-philosophical and mathematical doctrines of Pthagoreans with those current in India credits India with the origin of the doctrines."

to whom she ascribes the origin of astronomy and considers them worthy of veneration as God. She is the same person who called the Greeks wicked and evil in a different context.

We cannot, therefore, rule out the possibility of the serious Greek drama having been studied by our men of learning at least in the Panjab, for drama along with science and philosophy was prized very high by the Greeks and those who would be interested in their science and philosophy would naturally come upon their drama. Possibly some of them did read Greek drama, may be, in some rare cases witnessed it staged. But Sanskrit literature of old is silent about it. In any case, it all failed to generate any neo-Greek dramatic movement in the Panjab like it did in Italy, where Roman theatre, in most cases, was nothing better than a copy of Greek classical tradition. These Indian studies of the Greek drama, if at all made, were it seems mostly inconsequential in the beginning.

A.D. Naalkar, formerly of Bharatiya Vidya Bhawan, Bombay thinks that the antiquity of Indian dramatic theory and practice goes against the inference of Weber who sought Greek origin for Indian Drama. But almost in the same breath however he expresses the somewhat contrary opinion that there was nothing impossible in the presumption of the influence of Greek drama on the Indian but again according to him ositive proof to this effect was lacking.

"he we possess genuine fragments of these very ext books of astrology) but the most considerable are those of the Vridhha Garg Sanskrit or Gargi Samhita which is well known for containing in pseudo-prophetic form some allusions to Greek rule in India........It is important, however for its assertion that the Greeks are barbarians, yet among them the science of astrology was well established and those who knew it were honoured like seers....."

Keith: A History of Sanskrit Literature (1948) P.529
YAVINIKHA, DERIVED.

YAVINIKHA is the name given to the curtain of the Sanskrit stage. It is quoted as a positive proof of the connection subsisting between Sanskrit and Greek theatre, for Yavinika is a word derived from YAVANA meaning 'Greek'. This should imply that the Sanskrit Yavinika was borrowed from the Greek stage and thus the connection between the two stages stands proved. This has been disputed and scholars, mostly Indian, have sought to explain away the phenomenon very differently in an obvious bid to escape from the awkward implications that follow if the theory regarding the Greek origin of 'Yavinika' is accepted. Some have said that the Indian curtain is called Yavinika as the name was made of Yavana or Greek cloth or does it mean a curtain made of Yavan material? There is no doubt that the word is derived from 'Yavan', the name given by Indians to Indo-Greeks. Dr. Harmanand, Director of Hindi Department, Patiala would however have Yavinika as Javinika which according to him, is a Sanskrit word carrying the meaning 'one that moves with speed'. This however, is a change of convenience and lacks plausibility.

We have debated the possibility of improvised theatre or temporary stage employed by Greek settlers in the nab or perforin their la's and miss. Such a 1. 'The word Yavanika was looked upon as being connected with Yavana: the ancient word to mean 'a Greek'. This is the 6th century B.C. Greek word Yavanes, which became contracted to Iones, then Iones, the Ionian branch of the Greeks, who were nearest to the peoples of western Asia as well as India and known among the Semitic peoples of Hebrew, Yawar, Arabic, Yun or Yun and gave the old Persian Yana and Sanskrit Yavana Prakrit 'Yana'. But a more likely interpretation has been for this word- it is a middle Indo-Aryan or Prakrit modification of an old Indo-Aryan or Sanskrit word 'Yaminika' from the root Yan, meaning to bind to fix, used for curtain with ropes to fix it.' Sumit Kumar Chatterje, Introduction, Indian Drama (The Pub.Div), PP, 7-8.
2. Keith on the other hand calls Javanika, the Prakrit form of Yavinika.

stage did have a curtain. Only this curtain, if borrowed by Indians, could be called Yavinka, for as has been surmised, it was part of the equipment of Yavan (Indo-Greek) popular theatre and should connote a curtain borrowed from the Yavana stage.*

Raised Platt Form Stage.

The introduction of the stage as a raised plat form with a curtain, 'the Yavinka' in our folk theatrical performances is decidedly a post Indo-Greek phenomenon. Earlier, the performances took place on level ground. The ritual drama was like that. It is within reason to believe that the Punjabis and other Indians after them were following the Indo Greek example when they started performing on raised plat forms for their stage, equipped with a curtain even when the Greek popular plays were extremely confined and exclusively meant for unmixed Greek Audiences.

The Question of Romantic Tragi-Comedy.

The foregoing discussions would suggest that after all there is a connection, however feeble, of the Indian stage with that of the Indo-Greek and now the all important question whether the two sorts of drama are related in the matter of form and substance remains to be studied and resolved. It is known that Indian classical theatre staged the romantic tragi-comedies mainly while Greek master dramatists wrote either tragedies or comedies, those latter too like those of Aristophanes totally differing from the Indian conception.

Conclusion of Greek Tragedy.

Now the general belief about the Greek tragedy is that it is the kind of drama essentially tragic to be held, brimful of unrelieved gloom to the end and its story
ended invariably in the failure and physical liquidation of the hero. This notion is highly erroneous and misleading and is a sweeping generalisation. It is perhaps because the majority of these dramas are of this nature. We should know, however, that sense of 'resolute optimism due to which right principle wins, permeates the philosophical and ethical conflicts in Aeschylean tragedies. 'The Persians' of Aeschylus with its situations fixed on the peaks of titanic passion in a patriotic drama commemorative of the Greek triumph over Persian invaders is in fact a comedy in the modern sense strictly from the standpoint of the Greeks who successfully met the challenge of the indomitable foe while the Persian desecra is their tragedy. It is a real comedy of Greek patriotism and valour. It is said of Phrynichus, a contemporary of Aeschylus that he was fined one thousand drachmas for writing a drama that reminded the Athenians of the loss of a colony due to the weakness of the mother city. Tragedy, therefore was not allowed to depress rather it inspired. Dover refuses to call the Prometheus Trilogy (another epic-tragedy) a tragedy in the orthodox sense for the end of the trilogy is comic in as much ascontending parties at long last stand reconciled, with the result that Prometheus, the first humanitarian rebel of the dr emerges triumphant. Sophocles, dabling of the Athenians, introduced comic episodes in his tragedies as a measure of changing the temp of action. According to Dover, three of his tragedies are character ones in a social dr.

"The tragedy as a whole is not, however, a tragedy of rebellion but a divine comedy."

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one idyl and only two tragedies of fate. Euripides de-
flated the Homeric stock figures, gave them human
characteristics and in doing so created a form of tragi-
comedy and a few of his plays like 'Helena' are close to
comedy of character."

Menander, the neo-comedian gave us the well
known comedy of manners. The essential characteristic
of Greek tragedy was its 'exalted view' as against the
low mood of the Aristophanes comedy. While discussing
Euripides, Vaughan in his 'Types of Tragic Drama' has
emphasised that Euripides gave pathos and reflective
bent to his tragedies, supplanting its stern character.
He was more realistic than his predecessors, abundantly
romantic and placed his action in romantic settings. We
can see that the spirit of Euripides is more akin to
Sanskrit drama than other Greek dramatists who preceded
him. The strict classical would of the early Greek trage
dy already broken and the example of Euripides was
there to introduce further qualitative and structural
changes in it in anticipation of the future play
wright who would be guided by his special genius and the

1. "It is none the less true that by his very pathos
Euripides profoundly modified the character of tragedy
as it came to him from Aeschylus and Sophocles as indeed
it has been concerned by the tragic poets of all ages and
nations. To them the sterner note is of the essence of
tragedy and pathos, however much it may, into their dra-
mentation, as an element, an which is strictly subordinat
the more austere strain distinctive of tragedy. Though
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John Gassner: Masters of Drama P.34

2. "It is none the less true that by his very pathos
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Vaughan: Types of Tragic Drama P.68.
dictates of the audiences of the times and places far removed from Greek soil proper.

Thus it is that Greek tragedy was of fluid conception. It lacked the steel frame rigidity of Aristotle's definition. It did not always end in catastrophe and physical liquidation of the Principal Characters. On the other hand, it would sometimes end in actually a sort of reconciliation or satisfactory capitulation from the point of view of the hero, which fact is of the nature of comedy rather than of tragedy.

Now, what may be a point of very striking similarity between the Greek and the Indian classical drama is the fact that Indian Sanskrit drama was like Greek tragedy written in an 'exalted vein' and it was very much unlike Greek comedy of Aristophanes which later drama was composed in a low mood and came at the end of tragedy writing in Greece.

Thus it is that between Greek classical tragedy and classical comedy it is more with the former than with the latter that Indian Sanskrit drama resembles, which fact though strange is none the less true. Luniya however does not agree. The point however required detailed discussion.

1. It is believed chiefly by Weber, W n chland So ar the Indian Drama was influenced by the Greek and we are indebted to Greek drama for the idea of the screen, the parasite and the clown. The Indian drama like the Greek avoid, the portrayal of violent or unseemly action, but arguments have been levelled against this view specially by Sylvain Levi and Macdon. H.G. Rawlinson rightly observes that the Indian drama with its neglect of the unities, its mixture of prose and verse, comedy and tragedy resembled the severe Greek tragedy as little as a florid Indian temple resembles the Parthenon.

B.N. Luniya: Evolution of Indian Culture P.296.
As to tone, there is no doubt that it is exalted in Sanskrit drama like in Greek tragedy but when we come to the consideration of substance we find that it has nothing Greek about it. In fact, the resemblance intone also is of such fugitive he as to be almost non-discriminable on casual examination with the result that while points of resemblance have gone almost unnoticed, emphasis has always come to be laid on the substantial differences between the two arts by more than one Indian as well as western scholars. The differences of substance, form and presentation technique have made the two look widely different products. Some of these differences may be explained away on grounds of differences of time, places and the history of the growth of the art; that obtained between the dramas of the two countries.

The form and presentation technique of the dramatic art has much to do with the geographical and climatic conditions and environments of the place where the drama is to be staged. Similarly, the substance of a play is generally concerned with the environment, the life and society of the time and place where the drama is composed. Thus even if drama of one country actually inspires a dramatic movement elsewhere, it may not be an exact copy of the former and may have striking differences in such matters as form and substance.

Archaeology has not so far revealed any ancient open air theatre in any part of the Panjab or its vicinity like the one at Athenae. This should mean that the Indo-Greeks did not stage their plays in the Athenian like theatres in the Panjab. One thing therefore, is certain
that nothing of the type of translating the Greek Drama in this province took place, before, during and after the Indo-Greek period. There was no such phenomenon as Panjabi Drama on the lines of Roman Drama, the latter as we know, was based upon the Greek drama in substance and form in a major way; but the influence did work in some subtle fashion effecting its advent and growth as well as make up. The influence, as we have seen, was not fresh and full blooded, it was feeble and greatly modified from the original but it was there all the same. Was it like a catalytic agent that the influence worked with the native phenomenon or did it get acclimatized with the native growth and was indistinguishable as an influence from the finished product. In view of the peculiar circumstances obtaining in the Panjab, the Greek influence seems to have worked somewhat in the latter manner.

The drama and the audience of the drama are inseparable and one affects the other. Now the Panjab audiences were not the Greek audiences of old and wanted their own things on the stage. They had their own history and culture, their own mythology and social and

"Jo Gasmer seems every present to serve on the fate of tragedy of Greek inspiration suffering suffering an inglorious doom at the hands of Roman audiences.

"Rome which adopted a facile Greek culture as a fashion produced a number of dramatists who based their works upon

Hesychius, Sophocles and Euripides especially the last but "soon the Roman plays became purely literary drama intense for private reading, rather than for production, since the Roman masses who were in a sense the original movie patron had no feeling for tragedy."

John Gasmer "Masters of Drama", P.135.
religious institutions. They were not suffering from any inferiority complex like the Roman intellectuals and did not believe in borrowing wholesale so that whenever some borrowing took place the process was unconscious and imperceptible even to themselves. Thus we take it that our intellectuals as well as our audiences were at one in rejecting the substance of the Greek tragedy and accepting possibly some unprominent features of the form of Greek Drama, an attempt at discussing which should certainly prove fruitful.

The Greek tragedians drew largely on epics for their stories, so did the Indian dramatists but the Indian epics were not Greek. There figure a large number of gods of the Greek pantheon in the Greek tragedy; the Indian gods figure similarly in the Indian tragic-comedy. The stories generally pertain to the royal houses in the case of both. These points of similarity, however, may be just coincidental and insignificant for our purpose.

SIMILAR PRODUCTION CONVENTIONS.

Some of the production conventions of the Indian Classical Drama and those of the Attic comedy are common and do suggest a deeper connection between the two. For example the division into acts, number of acts, the departure of all actors off the stage at the end of acts, the scenic conventions of asides, the announcing of the entry and identity of the new character. But while the epics cannot be said to know the drama, there is ample evidence of the strong influence on the development of the drama, exercised by the recitation of epics.

Keith: The Sanskrit Drama p.29.

"With the passage of time, the rhapsodes, doubtless, took upon them the newer art of drama".

with a remark by a person already on the stage (recognition scenes) and some other such conventions which are common to both the arts do contain the suggestion of one borrowing from the other in the matter of dramatic form and stage technique. As already made out, the humorous stock character Vidushak of the Indian drama could be a clear contribution of the Greek mime to the Indian stage. The 'parasite' seems also conceived on Greek lines and resembles the Greek 'parasite'. One can find further points of resemblance in a number of stage practices common to both the countries. There obtains an injunction against enacting death, murder and violence and both resort to report, relation or indirect suggestion in such cases. The messenger is exploited rather too much by both the arts. The device of tragic suspense is common, curse and boons are orders of the day in the two. In order to provide aid to scenic impression, the back grounds of the stages in both cases were made suggestive and harmonious with the sentiment. There was no dearth of colour in the production, while mechanical contraptions were employed to suggest some sort of scenery. Both stages had mechanical arrangements that served to depict the descends or ascents or flights of heavenly characters. Similarly, spectacular effects such as the racing chariots were presented on both the stages. It has been shown that the Greek tragedians did violate in a number of cases unities of the time, place and even action so dear to the renaissance critic and which exercised him so much but if as a rule they stuck to the unities the main reason for it was the growth of a convention under certain exigencies of the stage on which
and the conditions under which they had to give their performances. We the Punjab were not so circumstances in the matter of our theatres. The limitations of an Athenian theatre are not there. And then we had our own process of evolution. Once the drama took its birth, under what ever circumstances there seemed a history of practical experience in the field of dramaturgy and histrionics with the result that Natya Shastra of Bharat and the stage practices described therein belong to the stage that was arrived at the end of a sufficiently long process in which obsolete representational methods were discarded and new conventions taken up, along with the accompanying developments and changes in the stage craft.

THE RESULT OF GREEK CONTACT

At the time of inception, however, the Greek example seems to have been before the eyes of our dramatists who too the native folk tradition, matched it with the Greek practice in the Punjab (which in itself was a much altered affair than the centuries old classical Greek), adopted some of the salient features of this decidedly more advanced theatre and then allowed this renovated form to go forward under the logic of special circumstances that constituted its future environmental factors of formative influences. Thus we got our Indian Classical Drama as the result of this Greek contact during the Indo Greek rule in the Punjab.

The Greek contact was responsible for bestowing upon it the 2nd stage of its development; the transition came about from a folk art, in the course of time, into the finished classical. It offered the raised platfo
stage, the Yavinda and a number of stage practices and conventions and was important of all, an idea to be achieved and to be recognised as a great literary instrument of entertainment and edification on the lines of the Greek masters of drama which worked for its steady progress. Indian classical drama is, therefore, rooted in the times of optimum Indo-Greek contacts in the Punjab. That it was not what Greek classical tragedy or even comedy was, does not necessarily rule out Greek influence, which in this case worked itself out in a more than usual subtle way, but as we have seen, was fundamentally responsible for giving the Indian drama a decisive turn and in course of time raised it from a non-literary folk art into a literary thing of renown and permanent artistic value.

SOME OTHER STRUCTURAL RESEMBLANCES

Now, if we proceed further on the basis of our postulate, so other structural resemblances between the two dramas, the Greek and the Indian, are bound to gain added significance. Something like the Nandi Path, Prastavana, and the Bharat Vakya of the Sanskrit Natak occurred in the Greek tragedy. About the role of 'chorus' in the Greek tragedy, we know that it got dissociated gradually from the in action till it faded away altogether towards the end. Prastavana of the Indian play was like the prologue and an iPath is like Parodos of the Greek Drama. After Parodos we have the episodes or the story proper, divided into acts which is exactly the case with the Sanskrit classical drama. Action is closed with a choral finale called Oxodes which is like our Bharat Vakya.
A very close study of the two dramas, their structures and stage technique is bound to bring out many more points of resemblance and is bound to dilute our impressions about the widely believed divergences of the two arts. Giving the widest margin for coincidence that may happen in the case of two similar art forms however distinctly practiced, we cannot but suspect here the existence of influences which should be much more than merely superficial or to say the least, remotely inconsequential.

Drama Practised in the Panjab.

We will now endeavour to build up the possible shape of the drama that was practised in the Panjab at the beginning of the Indo-Greek period, with the help of available material in the time.

It is known that popular entertainers in those days were still of very low social status. They belonged to the Bata, Kushalva, Martak and Bharat Sudra castes and their art could not have won any good measure of social respect. It was considered low even by the professional entertainer himself. The drama player and the mimic both belonged to this category and it seems that before the advent of Greek rule in the Panjab no body took them or their art including mime very seriously. However the first reaction of the Greek play would have been one of admiration and emulation and by slow degree, the Panjab People, both

1, "It must be at once true of the extremely little authentic information regarding the performers of these mimics believed to have existed before the origin of drama."

Keith: The Sanskrit Drama, P. 49.
general and the entertaining classes must have been attracted by the Greek mime which had a superior presentation technique than that of the local folk art. The Panjabi folk artist could be expected to be a keen learner by actually seeing or even hearing about the Greek performances failing however to receive their full import.

Thus it is that the native dramatic play by slow degrees but as is expected, progressively began approximating the Greek play, till finally it adopted its superior stage and acting methods and became almost equal to the foreign art.

**BIRTH OF A NEW CLASS OF ACTORS IN THE PANJAB.**

I am inclined to make another conjecture in this connection. Indo-Greeks, whatever their strength were completely absorbed in the Panjab society and this they must have done by settling down among the Panjab Hindus in the form of profession castes. The Greek mime actors, it is very much to be expected got absorbed in the Panjab society, as a separate caste or castes and may be the Bhatta and Bhaira (Drummers) had the Greek mime actors for their ancestors, while the 'Dooms' of today are most probably the descendants of the Indian entertaining classes of old. In any case it is a hard fact of history that Greeks who came to India did not go back, as also their mime performers.

**ADVENT OF APA-GANATED DRAMATIC FORM.**

Thus came about the ultimate amalgamation of the two arts, the Indian folk drama and the Greek mime. By chance a t appe e on B ra s surv ve in the modern form of Bhat.

Keith: The Sanskrit Drama P.30.
and thus also came about through this fusion process, a regeneration in the field of dramatic activity in the Panjab till, at last, the renaissance of Sanskrit Language and learning in the Panjab and in other parts of India had its impact on this amalgam of the native and the Greek folk drama and brought about the flowering of the Indian classical drama and theatre and their stalwarts.

FLOWERING OF THE INDIAN CLASSICAL DRAMA.

This drama, as we have seen, though distinctive looking in character had certain traits which could be attributed to the influence of distant Greek classical drama, tragic as well as comic and the nearer tradition of Greek mime as practised in the plains of the Panjab in the days of Indo Greek rule. The substance of this drama though similar in many important respects to that of the Greek, was yet peculiarly Indian and national, drawn from the Indian sources and up to one hundred percent, related to Indian society and history.

TWO FOLD DIVISION OF DRAMA.

The Natya Shastra by Bharat is generally believed to have been written or compiled before either Bhar or Bali and is ascribed to 2nd century A.D.

1. He cannot assuredly deny the possibility of Greek influence, the sense that Weber admitted the probability; the drama or the mime, may as played at Greek courts, have aided in the development of a true drama, but the evidence leaves only a negative anger to the search for positive signs of influence.

Keith: The Sanskrit Drama, P. 68.
2. Manomohan Ghosh in his introduction to the translation of Natya Shastra pp. LXXXII-LXXXVII.
It means, the main body of the Indian classical drama is later than the writing of this oldest treatise on Hindu dramaturgy. Of course there are in it interpolations of much later times but we have to believe that Sanskrit drama (as it is called) in all its branches was defined in the 2nd century B.C. when the original text of the Shastras was composed.

Now Natya Shashtra gives a ten fold division of plays and describes their structure. These divisions are (1) Natakas (2) Prakarana (3) Natika (4) Samavakara (5) Damaviga (6) Dipa (7) Vyayogas (8) Prabanas (9) Bhana (10) Vithis. Some of these forms have been described in analytical detail while others have been accorded cursory treatment. Now there obtains an intriguing factor about the types that received cursory treatment in the Natya Shastra. It is this that very few examples of these plays have come down to us from the descriptions available. It is clear that these were the less perfected forms of drama and probably ceased to exist as mentionable preservable forms when the new Sanskrit Classical drama grew up.

We are driven to conclude that forms or types of drama which received cursory treatment at the hands of the author of Natya Shastra and of which examples are not available, belonged to the early formative period of

G.S. 2. Talking of Dipa, one of the ten types of drama described in the Natya Shastra, Manomohan Ghosh, its translator, gives the following observation: "With the advent of literary plays of a more developed kind, it has naturally become extinct." He makes a similar observation about Samvika, G.S.
classical drama and were more or less elevated forms
of folk practices that preceded the latter.

Some very interesting side light is thrown on
the states of native dramatic practices in times immedia-
tely before the break of the glorious period of Indian
classical drama with the help of material information
available in the Natya Shastra and a searching enquiry
into the question is likely to prove rewarding. This is
therefore what we get from the book which is relevant
to our purpose.

LIGHT COMEDY IN THE PANJAB.

According to Natya Shastra, 'Prahasan' is a
farce or a one-act play in which the comic sentiment
predominates. There is lot of wit, satire and humour and
the improper conduct of various sectarian teachers and
courtesans and rogues are laughed at in it. It is nothing
if not a developed from of mime. 'Bhan' is another
example of the small play where only one actor takes the
stage and enacts a monologue, relating one's own or
another's adventure. He speaks after repeating answers
to his question supposed to be given by a person who
remains invisible throughout. The actor enacts a rogue
or parasite exciting laughter through ludicrous and
frivolous imitation of grotesque. Of the smaller one-
act-play types mention may be made of Bhanika, which
calls for perfected histrionic action on the stage and is
only a variation of Bhan. Another, a kind of a very
short one-act play, is known as Vithi. According to Natya
Shastra, it should be acted by one or two persons. It may
contain any of the three kinds of characters, Superior,
middling and inferior. This type has not been described

in detail and nothing can be said about its exact nature, as no specimen of Vithi, which was, no doubt practised on a large scale to merit being enumerated as a separate type among the ten main types of drama described, should resemble the modern Nagal from the fact that this was to be performed by one or two actors only. We may conclude that the light comedy in the Panjab did assume some tangible forms comparable to the Greek or Roman which most probably inspired these in these early days, but failed in the long run to develop into literary drama. Because of the historical factors that went into the creation of these various forms of light comedy, we are confident that these flourished in the Panjab area.

PRE-CLASICAL TRAGIC DRAMA IN THE PANJAB

From low comedy, we pass on to what is bound to startle us with its aspect perilsously similar to Greek tragedy. As many as five of the ten types of drama described in Natya Shastra i.e. Samavakara, Thamriga Dima, Vyayoga, Utristhitikanka or Anka belong to this category and have a strong suggestion of close affinity with the Greek theatrical system.

Old specimens of Samavakara, Thamriga the Dima or the Anka are extant and this again is a highly significant fact and might show that these forms, though tangible, had not yet acquired the status of literary drama and belonged to the pre-classical stage. An Analysis of the nature of these various types of drama as described in the Natya Shastra would be revealing, for, first of all, Prof. Knoe believed in the existence of popular mime even before the Vedic ritual drama. G.S.
these are not necessarily comedies. We suspect that they are the opposite of comedies, stern, almost melodramatic with the exalted tone of a Greek Tragedy. The subject matter of Samayakara is given out as deception, excitement or love. Thanmriga is a play in which gods are involved in a fight over the divine females. It is said that in this type of play plot of love is to be based on causing discord among females, kidnapping them and oppressing the enemies and when persons intent on killing are on the point of starting a fight, the impending battle should be avoided by some artifice. It seems that the Thanmriga was a play of intrigue in which only gods and goddesses participated. Dima has been described as a play with a well-constructed plot and a well known hero of the excited type. It has not contain the comic and erotic sentiments. The incidents presented should be mostly earthquake, fall of meteors, eclipses; battle, personal combat, challenge and angry conflict. It showed energetic activity of many kinds. The sixteen character which it must contain should include gods, Natas, Rakshasas, Yakshas and Pishchachas. Who will mistake it for a comedy? About Vyayoga, Natya Shastra says that it is a play with a well known hero and some female characters. The events related in it are to be of one day's duration. It is to have one act only and to include battle, personal combat, challenge and angry conflict. There should be no mistake about its being comedy of the later literary Sanskrit drama. Bhasa.

Madhyama Vyayoga is the only old example of this type

1. Natya Shastra (Translation, Manomohan Ghosh XX.34-35).
of play. The next type Utskrishvikunka has been called a kind of one-act tragedy. It is also known as Anka. It is a one act play with a well known plot and it includes only human characters. It should abound in the Pathetic sentiment and is to treat of women's lamentations and despondent utterings when battle and violent fighting has ceased and its plot should relate to the downfall of one of the contending characters. Pranab Chatterjee has cited Urotanga of Bhadra as its possible solitary example. But this too is not true to the description in the Natya Shastra.

Now the above information and material should be enough to dispel our illusion about the total non-existence of tragic drama among us in the past. It has been there and what is more it was the dominant type in the Panjabis. Those who count too much on the fact of our classical Sanskrit drama being absolutely non-tragic and therefore to be spiritually and physically different species from that of the Greek drama, have been labouring in ignorance, so that their conclusions have no base to rest.

Panjab, the land of grand and violent styles.

There is a very interesting chapter in the Natya Shastra which talk of the Zones and local Usages etc. While 'Zones' pertain to the stage divisions, 'Local Usages' are connected with the Styles of dramatic performance and the countries in which they prevailed. These are Avanti Dakshinatya, Ranchali and Odhra, Magadi, Sindhu and Sauvira are given out as taking to Avanti Local Usage.

Countries such as Ranchala Saurastra Kshmir Hastina ur...
Drama in the Panjab

Valhika, Sakla, Madra and Ushinara, which are contiguous either to the Himalayas or to the Northern bank of Ganga, take to the Panchala Madhyaama Local Usage. In this Usage the Grand (Sattavati) and the violent (Arabhavati) styles are known to predominate. The application of these styles means, paucity of songs and excessive movement and extraordinary gait and steps. The Panjab falls within this geographical region of Panchala-Madhyaama Local Usage. This was also, according to Natya Shastra, the area of the Grand and the Violent styles.

The plays have been divided into two types: Sukumara (Delicate) and Avidha (Violent). It is the type of plays that apply the Grand and Violent styles. It is further stated that Dima, the Samyakara, Vyayoga and the Thauriga classes of drama were known to be of the violent types, and therefore applied grand and the violent styles and had Panchala for their Local Usage. Now these happen to be the very classes of drama, examples of which have failed to come down to us and are supposed to have belonged to the less developed non-literary types which flourished in the Panjab before the advent of Sanskrit classical drama, the Natak and the Purakama types. These varieties of plays, as we have seen, were actually non-comic, more ak

But people have different msses and countries, customs, languages and manners. I have prescribed a fourfold classification of the dramatic performance which is attached to four different styles according to the preference of (different) people. (Hence) countries are connected with the performance which relate to the style such as the verbal (Shurti), the Grand (Sattavati), the graceful (Kishiki) and the violent (Arabhavati) and from these countries arise the Local Usages and also the entire performance including them. *

to the Greek tragedy, but which ceased to exist with the rise of the classical drama in later times and which replaced it completely.

There is an indication given in the Natya Shastra regarding the dramatic personas for these extinct forms of drama practised in the pre-literary times in the Punjab. It is said that women actresses were needed for the Taishiki (graceful) style and for this purpose nymphs (Apsaras) were specially created by Brahmans at the bidding of Bharat. By implication we have it that only men actors played the Drama of the Grand and Violent styles and women came to assume their roles on the Punjab stage in the later dramas written in the graceful (Taishiki) style called Natakas and Parkarnas.