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THE YOGA OF ART

by

Dr. Harsha V. Dehejia, M.D., M.R.C.P. (London), M.R.C.P. (Glasgow), F.R.C.P. (C), F.C.C.P.

A thesis submitted to
the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research
in partial fulfilment of
the requirements for the degree of
Master of Arts

Department of Religion

Carleton University
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June 6, 1986

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[Signature]
Thesis Supervisor

[Signature]
Chairman, Department of Religion

Carleton University
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ABSTRACT

The *Yoga of Art* by Dr. Harsha Dehejia in four chapters, with a prologue and epilogue and with a glossary of Sanskrit words. Chapter One lays down the parameters of the inquiry, which is the inquiry of aesthetic experience in the classical Indian tradition. Art creation is not examined in any detail and the reasons for this are explained. Two art forms, namely aesthetic emotion or *rasa* and aesthetic form or *rupa* are chosen. The problem of the relationship of art and *bhakti* are explained. Chapter Two examines the dynamics of *rasa* emphasising *dhvani* as the major artistic device. It is shown how *rasa* is a transcendent experience. Chapter three examines the dynamics of *rupa*, emphasising its visual features, and demonstrates that it too is capable of leading the prepared aesthete to a higher experience. Chapter Four sets the aesthetic experience derived from *rasa* and *rupa* in the framework of the epistemology of Kaśmir Śaivism, and shows that this system of Indian thought is capable of providing a firm metaphysical undergirding to aesthetic experience, making art experience a yoga in its own right.
Dedicated to the Spirit of India, where the deeds of man may speak of his quests, but the spirit of man is revealed through his music.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.

Any attempt to acknowledge the large number of individuals who have played a part in this undertaking is somewhat akin to tracing the roots of a tree and, like the roots, I am sure—many of them would not like to be publicly recognised. Yet it is my pleasure to take this opportunity to gratefully acknowledge at least some of these. Prof. Nalini Devdas has, over the last ten years, been instrumental in blossoming and guiding my budding interest in Indian thought. Prof. V. Chari has patiently and painstakingly read and interpreted Sanskrit texts with me; without his invaluable help, this treasure would have remained unopened for me. Prof. V. Subramanian has given valuable suggestions throughout this project. Prof. K. Mishra of Banaras Hindu University, during his short visit to Ottawa, unfolded the nuances of Kashmir-Shaivism. Smt. Devangana Desai of Bombay gave me an engaging insight into Tantric art. Everyone in the Department of Religion has been very helpful, providing support that is especially needed by a part-time student. My wife Sudha, and my two sons Vivek and Rajeev, have been constantly by my side, inspiring, helping, and encouraging me at all times.

Finally, in the spirit of the 'upside down tree' of the Bhagavadgita, I acknowledge the ultimate source of all roots.
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Art and religion, which are so basic to the Indian way of life, and particularly to the Hindu tradition, defy simple definition. The two terms remain without their exact Sanskrit equivalents. And in the understanding of this apparent anomaly perhaps lies the answer. For pithy definitions may sometimes foster complacency and discourage a serious inquiry, an ardent quest.

In its broadest sense, religion in the Indian tradition is understood to be realisation of ultimate Reality. However in its more limited and prevalent sense, religion implies ritual, incorporates the occult and the magical, and has room for attributes such as fetishism. Religious practice cannot divorce itself from the concept of divinity, insists on a moral outlook, allows considerations such as merit (pūnya) and grace (prasāda), and presupposes the twin concepts of śraddha understood as faith and commitment, and saranāgati or surrender and taking refuge. This latter understanding of religion is closely intertwined with bhakti or devotion. In view of this may Hindus may perhaps consider it to be almost a sacrilege that one could by-pass religion as narrowly defined, in
our quest for a transcendent realisation. The Hindu tradition, in its vastness and catholicity, has room for all types of religious experience. In presenting art as a yoga it is exactly this other path, which by-passes the ritualistic variety of religion, that we are treading. In removing art from the framework of narrowly defined religion, we are not pitting art against religion, but merely ensuring that art will be appreciated and understood on its own merit and that aesthetics will be given its rightful place as a means of higher realisation.

If religion in the Indian tradition defies definition, art remains equally elusive. The Indian tradition affords an exalted status to poetry as an art form, and in the expression of meaning, art has a close connection with language. In keeping with that tradition we propose to define the classical art of India as 'sanskrit', the dictionary definition of which is 'that which is made perfect'. As will be shown classical Indian art achieves perfection through the skill of the artist and inspires a similar quest for perfection in the aesthete. In opting for this definition, we wish to underscore not only artistic perfection, which is a hallmark of classical Indian art, but also the embodiment of an idea, a vision that is also a sine qua non of Indian art.

Yoga, etymologically defined as 'union' refers to the union of the individual with ultimate Reality and is a pan-Indian concept, and stays outside sectarian distinctions. In electing
to keep art out of the narrow concept of religion it is but
natural that the inquiry be entitled the yoga of art, rather than
the religion of art.
CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION

"Men must find and feel and represent in all their creative works Man the Eternal, the creator."
Rabindranath Tagore, The Religion of Man.

In an unbroken tradition, from times pre-historic to the present, art has remained an integral part of Indian life, and has not only cut through social, religious and cultural barriers within the country, but has accompanied Indian trade and thought in their movement across the frontiers. The Indian tradition affords an exalted position to art and, significantly, holds both
the artist and the aesthete in equal esteem. Historically speaking, art and aesthetics in India interacted with social, political and cultural factors, and every age produced its own artists and aestheticians, who while carrying the tradition within them, reacted to situations that prevailed in their age. The turn of this century was an axial period in the history of art and aesthetics in India. It was a period when Indian artists and aestheticians were reacting to Western ideas and counter-reacting to Western interpretations of Indian art; it was a time of a modern Indian artistic renaissance when, after long years of colonialisation, Indians were rediscovering themselves; it was an era of self-discovery and self-affirmation. Ananda Kentish Coomaraswamy was one such modern aesthete and it was he who brought into focus, "... the important part once played in Indian thought by the concept of Art as Yoga, a subject sufficient in itself for a whole volume."¹

Coomaraswamy was one of the first modern aestheticians, of the Indian sub-continent, to have used the phrase "yoga of art", and the present inquiry is an examination of that phrase. Art involves equally the artist and the aesthete and an examination of art must include both the creation and the appreciation of art. Yoga of art implies that art pertains equally to the artist and to the aesthete and that an examination of art must include both the creation, and the appreciation of art. This inquiry addresses itself to exploring the concept of art as yoga and,
more importantly seeks to determine if the tradition of Indian aesthetics upholds the concept. The sense in which the term yoga would be applied to the appreciation of art will be explored in the concluding chapter. Here it suffices to note that Coomaraswamy, and aestheticians who follow him, use the phrase the 'yoga of art' in the sense of a method chosen with the aim of achieving a direct realisation of that which is considered to be ultimately Real, through the medium of an art object. The question then arises whether art, in its own right and without being subsumed under the traditional methods of bhakti and jñāna, can direct one towards what one accepts as ultimate Reality.

1. RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PHILOSOPHY AND ART IN THE INDIAN TRADITION.

It is important to lay out the scope and parameters of this inquiry and highlight the background upon which this inquiry is being undertaken. Any philosophic, as opposed to historic, inquiry about art cannot rest with merely psychological, social and anthropological considerations. Art is a statement of the philosophy of the age that produced it and remains an inspiration for the ages that followed. In this matter, Indian art is no exception. However, it is to be noted that neither Indian philosophy nor Indian art emphasise novelty. On the contrary, there is a constant return to certain foundational concepts that
were thought out early in the tradition and given voice in the Vedas and the Upanisads. For this reason, in interpreting the intention of the Indian artist one has to suspend archaeological presuppositions and art criticism as commonly understood, and penetrate the form to experience the spirit of art. Havell reminds us that, "if we apply Western analytical methods to the exegesis of Asiatic aesthetics we shall never form any just or complete conception of them, until we have learnt to discard all our Western academic prejudices and realised the paramount importance of Indian philosophy and religion among the great creative forces which moulded Asiatic art." Accordingly, in this inquiry, Indian aesthetics will be approached within the context of the Indian philosophic tradition, and Indian art will be interpreted from this perspective.

2. INTERPRETATION OF CREATIVE GENIUS.

The idea of poetic vision presented in the Rg Veda has deeply influenced the manner in which Indian aestheticians approach art creation. Following Sri Aurobindo, Jeannine Miller, in her studies of the Vedas, speaks of the difficulties of modern scholars in interpreting the creative inspiration of the Vedic poets, which is expressed in a flow of inter-connected symbols. She states that, "the highly civilised mind is incapable of probing beyond the physical and the rational... and can take in only two dimensions of existence." The Rg Veda itself has
said of the sage-poets, "Their lowest abodes are visible, they dwell in realms concealed beyond." In keeping with this idea the Indian artists have, "used their visionary gifts, their own method of observation to determine what lies beyond physical appearances." Indian art, along with aesthetics, is an attempt to reach that "guhyesu vratesu", "those hidden realms". Sri Aurobindo writes that, "the whole basis of Indian artistic creation...is directly spiritual and intuitive...and its highest business is to disclose something of the Self, the Infinite, the Divine." Reminding us of the suprarational origin of art, Sri Aurobindo says "The intellect is not the poet, the artist, the creator within us; creation comes by a suprarational influx of light and power which must work always...by vision and inspiration."

An artist in India has been called praJāpata or creator, and the Indian aesthetic tradition has maintained with unwavering consistency that at a philosophic level of understanding creation in general and art creation in particular remains a mystery. Accordingly, the Indian aesthetic tradition has focussed on aesthetic appreciation, which is considered to be explicable to a large extent, rather than on the mystery of the artist's inspiration. The essence of creativity or artistic inspiration is termed pratībhā. Etymologically related to the root 'light', the word pratībhā signifies a burst of enlightenment. Abhinavagupta describes it as "an intuitive
capacity to produce novel objects." A text of Kashmir Saivism, the Isvara Pratyabhijña Vimarsini, equates pratibhā with Mahesvara himself. According to the Kashmir Saivites, Siva's primal act of creation is considered to be neither the fulfillment of a lack nor the outcome of a self-imposed purpose, but an utterly spontaneous act of unbroken delight, symbolized by his dance. The Kashmir Saivite literature speaks of human creativity as a spanda, a spontaneous act born of bliss, re-enacting and representing "that essential nature of the Universal Consciousness which is responsible for its apparent change from the state of absolute unity." According to the tradition it is a kriya, not a karma or a volitional act. According to this tradition, both Siva's primal act of creation and the human artist's creative expression are kriya, spontaneous activity that does not lead to bondage, and not karma or volitional activity with consequences in the process of rebirth. This line of thought is first expressed in the creation hymn of the Rg Veda, which states that perhaps even "the Lord in Heaven" cannot explain the essence of creative kriya, and ends with the cryptic line "He, truly, knows it, or maybe He does not know!"

The Vedas do offer some hints at the process of artistic creation. The one sustained symbol of artistic creation in the Vedas is the ratha or the chariot, since the chariot for the Vedic rṣis was a "symbol of the means of communication and
communion"11, implying that the function of art was primarily to communicate a vision. Another symbol of artistic creativity in the Vedas was the "suparnah"12 or the golden bird, emphasising once again the flight of vision. Despite these and other hints about artistic creation, there is no doubt that the creative process is sacrosanct and no amount of probing will yield any useful or rationally meaningful answers. This reminds one about the passage in the Chāndogya Upaniṣad, "Verily, my dear, that finest essence which you do not perceive—verily, my dear, from that finest essence this great Nyagrodha tree arises."13 Dasgupta points out that the "aesthetic state is... in itself a wholly new state which no fruitful analysis of its causes and conditions can manifest to us."14 He goes on to say that, "how the conscious mind helps to create a definite picture of the shadowy subconscious image or emotion is very difficult to ascertain. Rabindranath said in one of his poems that he could not describe the nature of his mysterious working which was there all the time."15

There is yet another problem that one encounters in dealing with artists and the creative process. This problem especially pertains to the Indian tradition, where succeeding generations of artists, most of whom remain entirely unknown, tended to amplify and reinterpret earlier artistic forms rather than to create entirely novel forms. Artists can be divided broadly into three groups. The first generation artists, the adisilpis or the
sage-artists, were the pristine artists, especially in the silpa tradition, about whom we know nothing, for they are not only anonymous, but the sāstras are silent about their pratibha. The second and subsequent generations of master artists worked within the tradition, recreating art forms from the prescriptions laid down in the sāstras. Thirdly, the craftsman, who often were artists in their own right, worked in guilds under the guidance of the master artist, functioning more as artisans than as artists, in creating the art object. All these three types of artists are working under different states of art creation, and very little of what can be said about the one would apply to the other. In the light of these constraints in interpreting artistic inspiration and art creation, this inquiry will follow the approach of the traditional Indian aestheticians and will focus its attention exclusively on art appreciation, as conducted by an aesthete, and not on art creation, realising of course that the artist is very often also an aesthete. Although the yoga of art, for the purpose of this inquiry, does not investigate the process of art creation in any detail, it is important to examine the creative process as this throws light on the aesthetic process.

Aesthetics, unlike other disciplines has been a great social unifier in the Indian context. Even though the Hindu tradition sets up the nāgarika or the urban elite as the aesthete par excellence, art appreciation has been able to cross religious,
social, racial, sectarian and caste barriers. Aesthetes do not set up any temporal or hierarchical distinctions, and therefore it is possible to speak of them as a group.

3. THE QUESTION OF MARGI AND DESI ART.

In art, as in other disciplines like linguistics, a distinction has been made very early in India between the classical and the folk, or the mārgi and the desi, with the implication that the classical is higher and svargya or heavenward leading, and that the folk is plebian and meant merely for lokānurānjakas or worldly entertainment. The exalted position given to Sanskrit is a good example of this division, while other languages like Prakrit have enjoyed a secondary position. Although there has been a cross-fertilisation between the two traditions over the centuries, the dichotomy and the hierarchical attitude between the two has remained, and it is only recently that an attempt is being made to understand folk art and to restore to it its lost glory. There are interesting and important anthropological questions that remain to be settled regarding the origin and development of folk art, questions beyond the scope of this purview. Most forms of folk art have no formal aesthetics as yet, and there are no śāstras of folk art, and therefore this type of art does not lend itself to a critical analysis and will not feature in this inquiry.

Mārgi has both a chronological and stylistic
connotation. Chronologically, mārgi refers to the classical period of Indian art which "begins with the official adoption of Buddhism by the emperor Asoka in the third century B.C. and ends with the invasion and occupation by Muslim powers."  
Stylistically mārgi art refers to the type of art that is prescribed in the sāstras. Occupying an intermediary position between the mārgi and the desī, and not forming part of our inquiry, is Tantric or ritual art. It is significant that although we shall be applying Tantric methods to our analysis of mārgi art, Tantric art per se as exemplified by yantras will be excluded. This is so because as, Devangana Desai puts it, "The art of Tantra is religious in function and is not primarily meant for aesthetic appreciation."  
At no time, it must be remembered, has the division of art into these three categories remained in watertight compartments.

4. FOCUS ON RASA AND RUPA.

Two art processes, rather than specific art forms, have been chosen for this study, namely rasa or aesthetic emotion and rupa or aesthetic form, for we are interested in studying aesthetic principles rather than art objects, in understanding the vocabulary and grammar of art rather than a particular artistic composition. In presenting the dynamics of these two art processes, it will be demonstrated that the Indian artist uses artistic forms and techniques to embody an idea, a vision.
As the Vāsudeva states, "The work of art can only nourish the spectator, he can only have delight in it, when he is not cut off from its meaning." An art object, for an aesthete, is not only a source of beauty, but also, at the same time, an invitation to explore the reason for that beauty. Aesthetics should not only involve studying artistic forms, but more importantly present a method of arriving at the artistic meaning. Coomaraswamy has suggested that "we ought to abandon the term aesthetic in its present application and return to rhetoric", the latter understood as "the art of giving effectiveness to truth."  

Rasa has remained the cornerstone of Indian art and provides not only a chronological continuity to art in the Varṣī tradition, but more importantly, establishes the link between different art forms. The term rasa has many nuances of meaning which can be summed up as "aesthetic emotion" or "aesthetic flavour". Rasa is essentially a dynamic process, which is initiated by the contact between the prepared aesthete and the emotive situation presented by the art object, and which is brought to fulfillment in the mind of the aesthete. An understanding of rasa is pivotal to Indian aesthetics and there is general acceptance of rasa as the most important component of traditional Indian art. Niharajjan Ray points out that "when rasa came to be regarded as the most important determinant of the artistic ultimate...a higher conception of art
seems to have emerged and art expression appears to have come to be invested with a deeper meaning." The dominance of rasa or aesthetic emotion pertaining to the art object over vastu or the external form of the art object, and over alaskāra or creative imagination in the embellishment of the art object points to a recognition by the Indian aestheticians of the inward and personal aspect of art. This dominance of rasa made sure that art had to be inwardly experienced and not merely appreciated at a sensory level, for "the aesthetic mode is an experience of the whole man and not a part of him." The exalted status of rasa also ensured and underlined the importance of transcending superficial mental states in an aesthetic experience, a point that will be explored in the following chapters. Pandit states that rasa "became in Indian aesthetics and art-theory the most comprehensive principle signifying the art-process in all its phases, the creative, the created and the appreciative," and she goes on to say that "rasa as a quality of the art object and of aesthetic consciousness could synthesise both aspects (namely emotional and intellectual, sensual and spiritual, practical and contemplative) and offer a point of reconciliation."

The value of kāsa or the search for emotional fulfillment in the Indian arrangement of purusārthas or the goals of life is well acknowledged. Pandit reminds us that "emotions alone provide the material for a subjective re-living
which transcends the objective order."²³ "When rasa is taken to be the essence of the art-work, it is perceived like a quality, as preciousness is in diamonds... but it is that totality of effect which arises from the object as a whole."²⁴

Rasa, from very early in the Indian tradition, has been able to provide the bridge between the subjective and the objective aspects of aesthetic experience. This is so because rasa as "aesthetic flavour" comprehends both the arousal and development of an aesthetic emotion in the mind of the aesthete, as well as the objective components of the art object, which arouse and sustain that emotion. Following the central importance given to rasa in Indian aesthetics, in this inquiry, the question of art as yoga is approached from the dynamics of aesthetic emotion.

Rasa can be studied from many different perspectives, not all of which are important to us in this inquiry. In particular, the question of the number of rasa has been strenuously argued by aestheticians for centuries. The question whether śānta rasa or bhakti rasa is the ultimate rasa has engaged the minds of aestheticians. Our interest lies essentially in the dynamics of rasa and our purpose is to determine whether or not rasa can lead the rāsika, the one who experiences the rasa, to a higher realisation, independently, and without becoming related to the traditional practices of jñāna yoga and bhakti yoga. Accordingly, the argument regarding the number of rasas although of
passing interest will not occupy our primary attention.

If rasa or aesthetic emotion has provided the cornerstone of Indian art and art theories, rūpa or aesthetic form is the very idiom of Indian plastic art. For this inquiry it is of cardinal importance to note that, in the mārgī tradition, only an art form that conforms to the prescriptions laid down in the sastras and which is a visual symbol of the cosmic Puruṣa can be called a rūpa. The term rūpa, in this inquiry, has been used in its wider sense of form as understood in the mārgī tradition. A certain bias, within the tradition, in favour of śilpa or sculpture in bas relief, as opposed to chitra or painting, must be admitted. It should be pointed out that nṛtya or dance and śilpa have a close connection and what can be said about śilpa applies in general to nṛtya. However, as Barrett and Gray point out the "history of Indian ... painting is too fragmentary." Ancient Indian painting was predominantly of the form of wall painting, and most of it was in caves and cave temples and was meant mainly for the monks. Although art historians have spoken of its antiquity in India, and illustration of sacred texts was an ancient Buddhist and later Jain practice, painting in the Indian visual art tradition has not enjoyed an exalted status. Traditional plastic art in India was mainly public art, and śilpa rather than chitra was the perfect artistic expression for this purpose. It was not until the Mughals
patronised painting as a court art, that painting became part of
a more popular movement, a movement that was later to be embraced
by the artists of the Punjab hills and Rajasthan who developed
miniature paintings in the Hindu tradition.

Silpa or sculpture in the Indian context is synonymous
with sacred imagery and this provides an interesting contrast
with rasa. While rasa as an aesthetic principle stands
above the division of art into sacred and secular and thereby
pertains to both, rūpa parts company with the secular and
stays exclusively within the sacred. However, the approach taken
in this inquiry is that though rūpa is defined as a symbol of
the cosmic Purusa, it can be viewed as an art object, which
is to be enjoyed solely for its aesthetic qualities, and not as a
focus of ritual practices. It will be shown that rūpa can
lead to a higher experience on the basis of its aesthetic
qualities alone. The case for art as a yoga is even stronger if
it can be shown that rūpa, purely on aesthetic grounds,
outside of religious ritual, can lead the prepared aesthete to a
higher experience. For, in the ultimate analysis, while rūpa
is a plastic form of deep aesthetic value, what is more important
to aestheticians is the idea or the vision that the rūpa
embodies and the way in which it does it. As Kramrisch points
out the cardinal feature of the Indian rūpa which is
essentially architectonic, is "transubstantiation ... made
visible by the transformation of the plastic means."
According to Rabindranath Tagore rūpa, as a symbol of the Infinite, moves from the formless to form and carries the mind of the aesthete to the formless again:

Incense craves to dissolve itself into fragrance and fragrance wants to remain enveloped in incense. Melody seems to find itself articulated in rhythm and rhythm wants to get back to melody. Idea craves to be embodied in form and form seems to release itself in idea. The limitless seeks its intimate association with the limited, and the limited craves to lose itself in the limitless. I know not whose logic it is in creation and destruction, that there is an unceasing intercourse after freedom and freedom is always looking for a nest in bondage.  

A complete inquiry into Indian aesthetics should ideally include nāda or the aesthetics of sound, tāla or the aesthetics of rhythm, and vāstu or aesthetics of architecture, which are artistic expressions of great importance in the total spectrum of the Indian art experience. Within the scope of this inquiry it will not be possible to examine this total spectrum of classical Indian art. However, an important feature of Indian art is that there is a thread of continuity not only in a chronological sense, but from one art form to another. And therefore, the principles of rasa and rūpa could be extended to the other art forms. The following dialogue between a rṣi and a king brings out this interconnection between the various art forms rather vividly:

King. O Sinless One! Be good enough to teach me the methods of image-making.
Sage. One who does not know the laws of painting can never understand the laws of
image-making.

King. Be then good enough, O Sage, to teach me the laws of painting.

Sage. But it is difficult to understand the laws of painting without any knowledge of the technique of dancing.

King. Kindly instruct me then in the art of dancing.

Sage. This is difficult to understand without a thorough knowledge of the laws of instrumental music.

King. Pray teach me the laws of instrumental music.

Sage. But the laws of instrumental music cannot be learnt without a deep knowledge of the art of vocal music.

King. If vocal music be the source of all the arts, reveal then to me, O Sage, the laws of vocal music."

5. THE PROBLEM OF THE RELATIONSHIP OF ART AND BHAKTI.

The relationship between art and religion in the Indian tradition is an intricate one, particularly when it comes to sacred imagery. Bhakti has been a prime moving force in the development not only of the temple but of the various arts that the temple fostered. The Indian viewpoint is very often a holistic one, and to sequestrate one activity or principle and study it in isolation, is to truncate and distort the Indian view of life. The thrust of our argument will be that, in its widest sense, Indian art directs the aesthete towards ultimate Reality and therefore qualifies to be a yoga. However from the standpoint of bhakti yoga, it is difficult to isolate art from religious ritual and everything it signifies, and therein lies the fundamental problem for us. "Ritual and prayer are the
two expressions in act and word of man's sense of dependence on
divine or supernatural powers"³⁷ Aesthetics stays outside
the realm of ritual and prayer which are a fundamental part of-
bhakti yoga. Stated differently, bhakti yoga requires
that ultimately all other considerations be subordinated to it.
Our concern is to justify aesthetics as an independent and
bona fide discipline, not to be subordinated by any other, and
capable of leading the prepared aesthete to a higher experience
outside of jnana yoga or bhakti yoga; in other words to
demonstrate that art is a yoga on its own. Justification for art
as a yoga in this inquiry will be sought not in the jnana or
the bhakti traditions but in the epistemology of Kasmir
Saivism. It will be shown that this system of thought can give
ultimate validity to aesthetic experience. It is more than of
passing interest to point out that Abhinavagupta, who championed
the rasa theory was also the high priest of the Kasmir
Saivite school.

6. METHOD AND TEXTS

And finally a few words about the methodology and the
approach of this inquiry: the method is essentially an analysis
of the concepts of rasa and rūpa from the texts, and of
the epistemology of aesthetics from texts of Kasmir Saivism. No
field surveys, of artists or aesthetes, were undertaken.

The main rasa texts consulted were those by Bharata,
Anandavardhana and Abhinavagupta. It is interesting that while rasa as an aesthetic principle has been exhaustively written and commented upon by Indian aestheticians, when it comes to rūpa there has been an influx of Western aestheticians in the field, aestheticians who having totally immersed themselves in the Indian tradition, wrote from within the tradition. From amongst these mention is specially made of Krämerisch and Boner, whose writings have brought to light some important aesthetic principles especially in silpa, and whose findings therefore are important to us. The silpa texts in general give elaborate information about the construction of sculpture and the religious rituals that go with it, and do not seem to deal with aesthetic theories in any depth. For this reason the Vastusutra Upanisad is a text of great importance for our purpose, as it is perhaps the only text that sets out in clear terms the aesthetic principles that underpin the concept of rūpa. And finally equally important are modern Indian aestheticians, who influenced as they were by Western aesthetic ideas, dug into their own roots, to present their own aesthetic views. In this group are mainly Rabindranath Tagore, Sri Aurobindo and Ananda Kentish Coomaraswamy, along with Hiriyanna and Niharajnan Ray. It is important to include these modern aestheticians in this inquiry, both of Western and Indian backgrounds, to show that Indian aesthetics is a very vibrant, modern and on going concern, and that art and aesthetics in all its aspects has enjoyed an
unbroken tradition in India.
NOTES


* ibid p. 14. Rg Veda III.54.5

* ibid p. 14.


* Locana 1.6 (pratibha)


11 J. Miller, p. 53.

12 ibid. p. 53.


15 ibid. p. 5.


17 Smt. Devangana Desai, personal communication.


22 ibid. p. 32.

23 ibid. p. 40.

24 ibid. p. 43.

25 Barrett & Gray, Preface.


28 original from Visnudharmottaram quoted in

CHAPTER 2. RASABRAHMAN

raso vai sah. rasam hyeyya labdhvā ānandī bhavati
Taittiriya Upanisad, 2.7

In the Indian scheme of the goals of life or puruṣārtha, emotional fulfillment has an important place, and in keeping with that schema, which dominates every aspect of Indian thought, it is postulated that each activity of man fulfills itself only when it leads to mokṣa or spiritual freedom. Kāma or
emotional fulfillment is one of the four ends of life. The rasa theory of Indian art is an example of how emotions can be utilised and transformed through the medium of art for a higher end.

The Indian tradition deals at length with the origin and function of emotion as a part of the human consciousness. Early in the tradition it is made clear that emotional processes are an integral part of a larger and more exalted state of being and not merely the flickerings of a superficial mental state. There is no better place to start an examination of emotion as a human faculty than the Vedas.

1. EMOTION IN THE INDIAN TRADITION.

We are told that the dhiyas or 'thought-visions' of the Rg Vedic risis arise from a coming together of the 'hrd' or heart, 'manas' or mind and 'manisa' or intuitive reflection, "indraya hrdā manasa manisa...dhiyo marjāyanta".1 The Vedic scholar J. Gonda explains at length the function of the 'heart' and the association of the 'heart' with the rasa of soma in the vision of the Vedic poets: "the process which the visions undergo in the heart is in the Rg Veda explicitly described as purification or clarification".2 He reminds us that the "soma juices which are drunk by the officiants are believed to be in their hearts"3 and "by finding with, or in the heart the light of
higher insight ... one becomes an all seeing-rsi." Gonda, points out that terms such as "ocean in the heart" and "sieve of the heart" are commonly used in the Rg Vedic hymns. It is clear, he writes, that the term 'heart' does not denote a physiological or anatomical organ but the "centre of the integral individual." According to Caraka, the ancient Indian physician, "the heart is the only seat of consciousness."

Modern aestheticians have drawn on the Vedic concept of 'heart' in their interpretations of the dynamics of rasa. Coomaraswamy draws our attention to the Upanisadic term 'antar-hṛdaya-ākāsa' or the "immanent space in the heart...at which place the only possible experience of reality takes place"; "it is the totality of this ideal space at the innermost core of our being where only the full content of life can be experienced." Rabindranath Tagore refers to the "cave of the heart...where the song is heard".

All of this leaves hardly any doubt that in the Indian tradition emotional consciousness, designated 'heart' is not the seat of raw or gross emotions, but rather a focal point of emotional, intellectual and intuitive processes, and one that can lead the individual to a transcendent state. It is important to keep this in mind when one discusses rasa or aesthetic emotion, for aesthetic emotion is not just a heightened state or another type of emotion, but emotion purified and transformed into an altogether new state.
2. **THE EVOLUTION OF THE CONCEPT OF RASA.**

The concept of *rasa* is fundamental to Indian art and has provided the continuity in its long and unbroken tradition. It is the thread which has held all its various and diverse art forms together. The meaning and implication of the term *rasa* has evolved over the millennia. In the *Rg Veda*, *rasa* seems to mean juice or sap or essence, and in keeping with the general tenor of the *Rg Veda* it perhaps was meant in a botanical sense. In the *Upanisads* however, *rasa* came to acquire a more exalted meaning, signifying Brahman as the bliss immanent in the universe, and it was this that led the *Upanisadic* *rasis* to declare, "*raso vai sah*". It was Bharata writing in the first century B.C. (Bharata's dates vary from the third century B.C. to the third century A.D.) who made *rasa* the cornerstone of aesthetic experience. From Bharata to Anandavardhana and then to Abhinavagupta, with many commentators in between and beyond, the concept of *rasa* grew integrally and evolved within the tradition. The contribution of Kashmir Saivism to the development of the *rasa* theory is a very significant one, although, *rasa* has not remained the sole possession of any one school.

In this chapter, our concern is not with the historical evolution of the concept of *rasa*, but with the dynamics of *rasa* as a process of transformation, which occurs in the hearts of the artist as well as the aesthete, through the medium of the art.
object. In the Indian tradition the term 'art object' is used in its widest sense and includes not only performing and visual art but in particular kātya or poetry.

It has already been mentioned in the first chapter that Indian aestheticians hesitate to probe the heart of the artist, preferring to view artistic creativity as an unfathomable mystery. The emphasis in our exploration of the yoga of art from the rasa standpoint is on the experience of the aesthete and not on art creation. The following discussion leads to the understanding of the transformation of raw emotion to aesthetic emotion, which takes place in the heart of the artist and is re-enacted in the heart of the aesthete.

3. BHARATA, THE FATHER OF THE RASA THEORY.

Bharata is considered the father of the rasa school and this has important implications for Hindu aesthetics. In the first place nātya or dramatic expression, for that was what Bharata wrote mainly about, becomes the artistic form par excellence and a model for all other art forms. Nātya is a performing art, which integrates several different major art forms such as nātya, nṛtya, saṅgīta and kāvyā or dance, drama, pure dance, music and poetry, along with other minor arts such as stage decorating and the making of costumes. The dialogue between King Markendeya and a rṣi quoted in the Visnudhārmottara further brings out the inter-relation of one
art form with another in the classical Indian tradition. In dance drama, rasa or aesthetic emotion is aroused on the basis of specific dramatic situations, and this principle is extended to all other art forms. This explains, for example, the intensely dramatic quality of Indian sculpture. Another feature of natya as an art form is that it highlights the important role the spectator or the art beholder plays in the dynamics of art. And finally, Bharata points out the mythical origin of natya as an activity mainly for "krīda" or sport, which subsequent aestheticians uphold, asserting that the main purpose of art is pṛiti or delight, understood in its association with rasa as pleasure that transcends the senses.

By making krīda, the spontaneous play of delight, the basis of art creation and appreciation, Indian aestheticians seek to free art from primarily utilitarian or didactic concerns. The implications of the idea of spontaneous play for the yoga of art will be explored in the concluding chapter. Here it suffices to emphasize that both for the artist and for the aesthete, the well-spring of rasa is a spontaneous heart.

Bharata’s Natyāśāstra exalts the position of the kavi or the poet and sets him up as the prototype of all other artists. This distinguishes aestheticians from art historians, for the latter take their cue from visual art, with a preference for monumental art, whereas Indian aestheticians give pride of place to the kavi. In classical Indian art,
ideologically, if not chronologically, the kavi came first, and it is the kavi that provides the link between the Vedas and aesthetic tradition. In the Rg Veda, the term rṣi is used interchangeably with kavi, emphasising that the poet is not only an artist but a seer, that he has not only imagination but vision. When Rabindranath Tagore says "ān̄̄ kavi!", he is tracing his lineage to the Vedic rṣis.

4. **RASA AND THE POETIC GENIUS.**

The tradition places a heavy responsibility on the poet and in turn requires that he be "well versed not only in poetic composition but learned in the ways of the world," emphasising the sīkṣā or the training that is required of him. However, the kavītābīja or the 'seed of poetry', it is said in no uncertain terms, is the pratibhā or the poetic genius. The 'seed of poetry' is nurtured by training, but is not produced by it. In fact, what the later aestheticicians term pratibhā is not different from the dhi or the 'thought-vision' of the Vedic poets. Gnoni, a modern aesthetician, says in his interpretation that pratibhā arises for a moment from the contact of the poet's mind with the essential nature of the Ātman.

It is important to note that the tradition does not excessively probe into the poet's genius beyond maintaining that it is a samskāra or a "latent (psychic) impression"
brought forward from past births. The term saṃskāra carries with it undertones of kāma and rebirth, concepts deep in the Indian consciousness, giving rise to popular statements such as, 'poets are born, not made.' Not resting with these attributes the kavi has been further called a "prajāpati"; a term usually reserved for the Lord of the Universe, which not only puts the poet on a pedestal, but more importantly gives a secure place to his creation, namely, kāvya. We are told that so skilled is the poet that protean are his themes and equally endless his creations.

5. THE DEFINITION OF RASA.

Bharata defines rasa as "tatra vibhāva-anubhāva-vyabhichāri saṃyogāt rasa nispattih," "rasa is produced by a combination of determinants, consequents and complementary psychological states." Several important ideas stem from this rather cryptic definition of Bharata, ideas that have been commented on exhaustively by later aestheticians, but the most important concept in this definition is that the cardinal process underlying rasa is one of transformation, from sthūla to sūksma or gross to the subtle, from laukika to alaukika or mundane to supra-mundane, from samsāric or worldly realism to artistic reality, from individual to universal and from the particular to the general. In interpreting the transformation that takes place in the heart
of the artist, later aestheticians have implied such processes as 'distancing' or 'detachment' and 'quietening'. The classical example given in the texts is that of the poet Valmiki, who when he was grieved with the poignant death of the Kraunca (bird) couple, did not write of his personal sorrow, but converted this deeply emotional experience into the epic of *Ramayana*. The implications of the link between *rasa* and these psychological attitudes of detachment and quietening for the yoga of art will be explored in the concluding chapter. Here it is sufficient to note that, whereas detachment and quietening are hard-won fruits in the traditional disciplines of yoga, they arise spontaneously in the heart of the artist, as antecedents of his creative inspiration.

The word *nispatti* in Bharata's definition, the dictionary definition of which is 'to bring about', is open to at least two interpretations. It can be argued that *rasa* is a totally new creation, a new state, from the emotive situation. It can equally be argued that it is not a new creation, but merely an uncovering or revelation, not cognition but recognition. *Rasa* will then become an uncovering of that which is already present in the depths of consciousness, and *rasa nispatti* would then be a revelation to oneself of one's own depths. Bhatta Nāyaka championed this latter theory. He is quoted as saying, 'that the real meaning of birth (*nispatti*) as used by Bharata cannot be perception or production or
manifestation, rather it lies in something entirely different...namely in revelation (bhavana).” Rasa is realised when, "the thick layer of mental stupor occupying our consciousness is lifted.” The Upanisadic implication in this concept of rasa, namely that avidya or ignorance is none other than the removal of avidya or ignorance, is clearly evident. According to this interpretation, rasa is ultimately a form of self-knowledge, and this has profound implications for our inquiry into the yoga of art. We shall return to this idea of rasa as self-knowledge in our discussion of the rasa experience of the aesthete.

8. RASA AND RASIKHA.

A special quality of rasa is said to be its ability to be transmitted or to flow in the same state and without change from the artist to a sahr-daya or a prepared aesthete, a quality unique to rasa as opposed to bhava or raw emotion. The tradition affords equal status to the art beholder as to the artist, but in turn expects the same training or siksa and assumes the same inherent capacity or sanskara in the beholder who is undertaking an art experience. Thus the capacity to experience art is itself an art. Abhinavagupta says, "the poet’s experience is the same as the spectator’s.” Commenting on this statement of Abhinavagupta, Hiriyanna remarks that the "appreciation of poetry is essentially the same as the
creation of it." This movement of rasa, which aestheticians have compared to the movement of the seed through the tree to the fruit, takes place not only because of the capacity of rasa to flow from the artist to the aesthetic through the art object, but also, and equally importantly, because of the capacity or readiness with which the aesthetic accepts the art experience, as readily as, "dry wood accepts fire."  

Abhinavagupta defines a sahrdaya as "those people who are capable of identifying with the subject matter since the mirror of their heart has been polished, through constant recitation and study of poetry and who sympathetically respond in their own hearts; he is one whose heart melts and whose heart is not hardened by the readings of dry texts on metaphysics." The link of the term 'sahrdaya' with the Vedic hrday is obvious, emphasising that the aesthetic, like the poet, analyses poetry not at a superficial mental level but brings to bear all his higher faculties on the art experience. The term 'polishing' in Abhinavagupta's definition also has the Upanisadic implication of 'removal of ignorance'.

It is only the 'polished heart' of the aesthetic that is capable of total identification with the art object, a process called tanmayibhava. Tanmayibhava signifies that the heart of the sahrdaya engages itself with the art object seriously, deliberately and completely, leaving no room for
feelings such as, "it is happening to me, no it is not happening to me." 
Removing the duality of the subject-object consciousness and assuring a total art experience. 
Tanmayābhāva implies the concepts of 'distancing' and 'detachment.' Identification with the art object or situation is not possible if the aesthete becomes personally involved with it, clings to it or craves to possess it. Thus the height of aesthetic ecstasy takes place when the self, released from the burden of its afflictions, finds complete identity with the aesthetic situation. Gnoi notes that "the task of generalisation carried out by the poetic expression breaks the barrier of the limited "I" and eliminates in this way the interests, demands and aims associated with it." The rasa theory regards the process of identification as a distinct and positive phase of the art experience, consisting mainly of an expansion and enlargement of the self on a new plane of existence. Identification implies "an urge for a 'withness' with the object, for becoming one with it; this urge is in the form of a drive which seeks constantly to transcend the self to a plane of existence, where the unhampered consciousness can dilate on and enjoy an uninterrupted delight." 

Tanmayābhāva cannot take place unless the fetters of the superficial mind have been released. Understood in this sense, tanmayābhāva, where the rasika melts his personality in the art experience, cannot be totally different from a yogic
dhyāna in which the mind of the yogi achieves oneness with the object of concentration.

The term sahrādaya for a prepared aesthete focusses attention once again on the seat of art experience namely hrd, which as explained earlier is not merely a centre of raw emotions but a focus of emotional, intellectual and volitional forces that are capable of lifting the entire personality to a higher state of being. Sri Aurobindo uses the term "supra-rational aesthetic soul" as a synonym for hrd. The parallels between a kavi and a sahrdaya are too obvious to be missed. Also the link of the term sahrdaya with the Vedic hrd is very clear, emphasising that the aesthete, like the poet, experiences art not at a superficial mental level, but by bringing to bear all his higher faculties on the art object. Between the two there is a dynamic relationship, artist and aesthete bound by rasa, reminding us of Tagore's words: "Idea craves to be embodied in form and form seems to release itself in idea."

7. THE NATURE OF RASA.

Our exploration of art as yoga leads us to questions about the specific nature of the expansion of consciousness that is indicated as rasa. Traditional aestheticians seem to hesitate to answer this question, and they point to the indescribable sense of wonder aroused in the aesthete who...
experiences oneness with the art object. Aestheticians speak of how rasa arises and how it affects the aesthete, but what exactly is rasa? Much can be asked and a lot has been written about the rasa experience. Etymologically, it can be said, rasyate iti rasah, what is relished is rasa. Equally cryptically, it has been said, "pratitireva visista rasana". Rasa experience is a special kind of knowing. Yet this is not altogether satisfactory and it would be not unreasonable to seek in the sastras a description of this unique aesthetic state called rasa. Abhinavagupta calls it, "a form of self-contemplation", a "magic flower"; a "life emotion freed of its limiting factors". Coomaraswamy suggests samvega, which he translates as 'aesthetic shock', as the essence of rasa experience, and goes on to explain that samvega is "by no means merely an interested aesthetic response but much rather ... disinterested aesthetic contemplation." He goes on to say that "in the deeper experience that can be induced by a work of art our very being is shaken." Visvanatha summarises the rasa experience as, "cātākāra" or a sense of wonder, characterised by cittavistara or expansion of the heart.

However, after one has exhausted all similies and adjectives to describe the rasa-experience, one is forced into a Upanisadic 'neti neti' situation to describe the rasa state, as does Abhinavagupta; when he says that "rasa is altogether
different from śamyagjñāna (correct knowledge), bhṛānti (erroneous condition), anadhyaśāsaya (uncertainty), vijñāna (ordinary knowledge). It is distinct from wordly objects and also different from such things as their imitation, reflection and pictorial presentation, determination, fancy, magic and so on. This statement of Abhinavagupta again reminds us that rasa is a "magic flower": rooted in ordinary emotional and sensory states, it blooms into an ineffable rapture and sense of wonder.

8. THE NUMBER OF RASAS.

Related to the question, "what is rasa?", is the question, "is rasa one or many?" If there are many rasas, we would have to raise the question whether some rasas or some types of rasas are more conducive than others in fostering a yoga of art. There is considerable discussion about the exact number of rasas. Bharata postulated eight basic rasas. Later a ninth, the Śanta rasa was added. From nine the number kept on growing and several sub-types were added. Ramachandra and Gunachandra divide the eight aesthetic sentiments into two classes viz. pleasant and painful; the erotic, comic, heroic, marvellous and quiet are classified as being pleasant, whereas the pathetic, furious, odious and terrible are categorised as painful. However, there is agreement that, even though the rasa experience may
begin with specific emotions, it culminates in a sense of wonder, which transcends all classifications and divisions of emotion. The sense of wonder indicates a unique and unified rasa experience which goes beyond the pleasure and pain of specific emotions. Raghavan in concluding his discussion on the number of rasas, accepts that "all the rasas are but forms of some one of them... rasa is rasa. It is one. It is like the Brahman or the Sphota. Rasa is fundamentally one and hence it is that Bharata refers to it in the singular number." Mammata supports the unified concept of rasa and declares that "the suggestion of rasa is counted as only one kind on the basis of general characterisation, namely non-perceptibility of the sequence."

The idea of a unified rasa experience is suited particularly to our quest for a yoga of art, for ultimately we are concerned not so much with the preparatory dynamics of rasa and the specific emotions linked with it, as with its culmination and eventual fulfillment. The culmination of rasa will be the theme of the concluding section of this chapter, where we will focus on the telling statement that the tasting of rasa is the 'twin' of the tasting of Brahman.

9. DHVANI.

Before turning to the culmination of rasa, however, it is necessary to raise a crucial question. Is rasa capable of
infinite expansion, or does it bear the marks of inherent limitations? If rasa is capable of expansion what are the dynamics of its development? Does rasa carry within itself the impetus for self-growth? It has been noted that rasa as experienced by the aesthete is an expansion of consciousness; but rasa is not conditioned solely by subjective factors, for its association with the art object is never severed. The most helpful suggestions, in answering these questions, comes from the theory that rasa, through its connection with the art object, is inherently capable of 'reverberation'.

Translated variously as 'reverberation', or 'vibration', dhvani has come to occupy a central place in Hindu aesthetics. Attributed to Anandavardhana, the concept had its origins even earlier. The recognition of dhvani was crucial in moving rasa from the perhaps less profound connotation given to the term by Bharata to the inner, deeper, more mystical rasadhvani of Abhinavagupta. While rasa was developed in the framework of natya and later applied to art in general, dhvani was formulated in the context of poetry and later extended to art. In essence, the dhvanivādins assert that rasa can only be suggested and not expressed. Viśvanātha states that a word or sentence can have three meanings: the abhida or the expressed primary meaning, laksana or a metaphorical meaning and vyangya or the suggested meaning. Anandavardhana simply defines
dhvani as "dhvaniṁśa arthāntaraṁ,"" dhvani
is just another or extended meaning", and goes on to add that,
"the learned men of yore have declared time and again that the
soul of poetry is suggestion." We are told in no
uncertain terms that, this other or suggested meaning is
available only to the refined and the sensitive. Mammata says
that, "the expressed (primary meaning) produces a mere
comprehension in one who knows the meaning of words, while the
suggested produces charm in men of taste alone." Anandavardhana says that "it (dhvani) is not understood by a mere
learning in grammar and in dictionary. It (the suggested
meaning) is understood only by those who have an insight into the
true significance of poetry." And he goes on to explain,
"that [the suggested] meaning remains beyond the understanding of
persons with a grounding merely in the science of meanings and
words but averse to aesthetic contemplation of the intrinsic
significance of poetry."

A number of implications can be derived from these pithy
remarks of the dhvaniśādins. In the first place, it is made
abundantly clear that the rasika, if he is to partake of
rasadhvani, must be a sensitive, refined person. It is in
the understanding of rasadhvani that the real implication of
the term sahrdaya comes through. At the same time, there is
little doubt that the true and proper understanding of
dhvani, and of art in general, was restricted to a small
group of the elite. Such an intention is deep in the Hindu consciousness. When it came to knowledge, it was supposed to be passed on only to one's 'son and worthy pupil'; it is interesting to note that in matters artistic the śārī tradition is no different.

A second, and equally important, derivative of the concept of dhvani is the rejection of the primary or the expressed meaning, for it is only when the primary meaning is left behind that the implied meaning comes through. Anandavardhana says, "the suggested meaning flashes suddenly across the truth perceiving minds of perceptive critics when they turn away from the literal meaning." This 'turning away' is a voluntary act of the rasika. For in dhvani, as opposed to laksana, there is no "mukhyārthabādha" or breakdown of the primary meaning and therefore no necessity per se to turn away from that meaning. In electing to opt for dhvani rather than abhidha, the art beholder is dipping into his artistic resources and faculties, into his tradition and training, and assuring himself an exalted experience.

A third, and equally important, consequence of dhvani is the fact that art appreciation is progressive rather than instantaneous. In the case of laksana or metaphor, the change of meaning, on account of mukhyārthabādha, is sudden; this is called saamālaksyakrama. In the case of dhvani it is gradual or asaamālaksyakrama. This gradual change in
meaning is compared to the passage of a "needle through a pile of lotus leaves." It implies a deliberate, contemplative and deeper art appreciation rather than a superficial and trivial art encounter. For the lexical meaning of words is *niyata* or fixed, while the suggested meaning of words is *aniyata* or unfixed and open-ended, the only qualification being that the *rasika* stay within the tradition. It is important to point out that in the appreciation and realisation of *dhvanis* one does not have artistic license as understood in the modern sense. The question of artistic freedom was not an issue with traditional Indian artists or art beholders. The capacity to extend the meaning of an artistic situation, as understood by the concept of *dhvanis*, was assumed to be still within the confines of the tradition.

The concept of *dhvanis* was not without its critics. Mahimabhatta who was the most vocal of the critics of *Dhvanyaloka* asserts that "*sabdas* or words have only one function and that is *abhidhā* or the primary meaning. If meanings other than the primarily denoted ones are understood from words, it is because of the peculiar ability of the denoted meaning and not because of the words." To put it differently, these critics deny that two meanings can co-exist at the one and the same time in the same art object or poetic word. Abhinavagupta answers these critics by saying that "just as the *ātman* comes to be associated with life only when found in a
special kind of body, so also dhvani acquires the status of poetry only when it is encased in the body of beautiful sounds and (suggested) meanings adorned with guṇas and alaṅkaras." Anandavardhana answers his critics with the doctrine of ghatapradipanyāya. According to this doctrine a lamp, ḍīpa, lit within a pot, ghata, reveals what is already there but was hidden in the darkness, and having revealed it, the light continues to shine, even though it may lose its importance; by the same token, words (of a kāvya) reveal the suggested meaning, but having done so, do not cease to exist.

As it has been pointed out, the idea of dhvani was developed by writers on poetics. However, we wish to take the position that what has been said with regard to the poetic word can be extended to all art objects. We hold that all art objects in the mārga tradition are replete with suggestive meanings. The art object reverberates with dhvani, but the suggested meanings are released or manifested only when there is contact between the art object and an aesthete.

We began by raising the question whether rasa bears the marks of inherent limitations or whether it has the capacity for integral growth. Aesthetic experience brings together three factors: the art object, the sahṛdaya and the rasa or aesthetic emotion that arises through their contact with each other. We have noted that, when the heart of the aesthete enters
into oneness with the art object, the narrow barriers of the subjective mind are broken, and the aesthete experiences an expansion of consciousness. As his consciousness expands the aesthete becomes more and more capable of penetrating through the face value and primary meaning of the art object. He becomes more and more capable of catching the resonances of dhvani. As we have noted, this has been compared to a needle skillfully penetrating through a pile of lotus leaves. The suggested meanings are manifested layer upon layer, each more profound than the one before it. Correspondingly, the heart of the sahrdaya becomes purified and responsive.

Since the consciousness of the aesthete and the suggested meanings of the art object are capable of such growth and expansion, it follows that the aesthetic emotion that arises through their contact also has the impetus of expansion. We have noted that the aesthete's oneness with the art object awakens in him an ineffable sense of wonder, which is indicated as a unique form of knowledge. Rasadhvani signifies that this sense of wonder 'reverberates' and grows as the aesthete becomes more and more attuned to the art object. It is to be emphasised that though these three factors - the hrd of the sahrdaya, the dhvani of the art object and the rasa that arises through their contact - are distinguished for the purpose of discussion, they interpenetrate each other and are bound together in the unity of the art experience. It becomes evident, then,
that a true yoga of art must be based on the recognition of these three in the art experience. The unique significance of each of them must be preserved, while recognising their bond.

10. A METAPHYSICAL BASIS FOR DHVANI.

It is possible to expand the theory of dhvani or suggested meaning from the special field of poetics to aesthetics in general because, in the classical Indian tradition, art objects are considered to be endowed with meaning. We have noted that, according to the dhvani theory, the meanings that stem from the poetic word are not on the same level: the suggested meanings, discernible only by the prepared aesthete, are considered to have a higher value than the primary meaning or expressed meaning. And, in putting forward this idea of levels of meaning, the dhvani theory maintains that the reverberations of suggested meaning cannot be heard either by a person who clings to the primary, literal meaning of the word, or equally, by one who denies and abandons the primary sense. When the dhvani theory is extended from poetics to all marga art, it is implied that all art objects of the marga tradition are resonant with levels of meaning.

When the dhvani theory is extended to art in general, it is implied that the sensory form and the primary meaning expressed by the art object are neither superfluous nor unnecessary: they are as necessary for the higher meaning as the
first step is for the second. The lower meaning is never lost, all that is of value in it is included and elevated into the higher. It is not surprising that Indian aestheticians find a basis for the dhyana theory in a metaphysical system that accepts, not just one but many levels of reality, the lower yielding itself to the higher without necessarily losing itself. Voicing his discomfort with the mayavada of Sankara, Abhinavagupta finds a philosophical undergirding for his aesthetics in Kashmir Saivism.

In this context, Rabindranath Tagore's comments on art are helpful since, in his characteristic non-sectarian manner, he bases his aesthetics on the Upanisadic roots of Indian thought. He turns to the Isa Upanisad to stress the importance of both the sensory realm and the higher levels of meaning that are manifested through it to a responsive person. In his interpretation of the Isa, Tagore says that this Upanisad makes no clef between the apparent and the ultimately real as Advaita Vedanta does. The Isa Upanisad reminds us that, "into a blind darkness they enter who follow after the Ignorance, they as if into a greater darkness who devote themselves to the Knowledge alone." So Tagore comments, "the sole pursuit of the infinite leads to a deeper darkness. For the absolute infinite is emptiness." By 'absolute infinite' Tagore means an utterly transcendent Absolute that is totally untouched by the world of senses. The Isa Upanisad reminds us once again that "he
who knows That as both in one, the Knowledge and the Ignorance, by the Ignorance crosses beyond death and by the Knowledge enjoys Immortality." The world of sensory experience does not constitute unreality or falsity, but is the very means of attaining to the ultimate Truth. These words of the Isa can be interpreted to signify that this whole universe, as it appears to the five senses, reverberates with meanings that reach, level by level, towards the ultimate Truth. That which the senses apprehend is not negated, abandoned or deprived of worth as the higher level of meaning becomes revealed, for as Tagore says, "when you deprive truth of its appearance it loses the best part of its reality." The Tantric overtones in this interpretation are too obvious to be missed. He further says that, "there is a point where in the mystery of existence contradictions meet." When the Isā Upanisad is made the basis of the dhvani theory, the implications are profound, since we are now in a position to raise the question: do the suggested meanings that reverberate from an art object have a limit or do they extend infinitely? Tagore's answer, on the basis of the Isā, is that art is that mystery where the "infinite becomes finite without losing its infinity." If one seeks to experience this mystery, the sensory form of the art object and its primary meaning should never be abandoned, for, without them, the suggested meanings can neither arise nor rise towards infinity. It becomes clear why artists and aestheticians have
difficulty with the māyavada of Śaṅkara and opt for a system or an interpretation of reality where one can move from ecstasy to ecstasy. The beauty and the bliss of aesthetic experience is the transformation of the vācyārtha or the expressed meaning into the vyangyārtha or the suggested meaning; without the former there would be no art, without the latter there would be no aesthetic experience. Once again in the words of the Isa Upanisad, "neither the transitory nor the eternal has any meaning separately. When they are known in harmony with each other only then through help of that harmony we cross the transitory and realise the immortal." On the basis of the Isa it can be said that the art object provides this harmony, this meeting of the finite and the infinite.

11. **RASA AS AN ALAUKIKA STATE.**

In our discussion of the origin and dynamics of rasa we have suggested a correspondence between the expansion of meaning reverberating from the art object and the expansion of rasa towards an exalted state of wonderment. We now explore what the texts say about the highest reaches of rasa. We shall focus on three ideas: rasa as a supramundane state, the experience of rasa as the 'twin' of the experience of Brahman and the linking of outflowing dynamism (vīmārṣa) and inward rest (vīśrāṇti) in the rasa experience.

The key to the understanding of the rasa experience lies in the concept of bhuj (to enjoy) or bhoga (fruition).
"Bhuj" for Bhatta Nāyaka meant aesthetic pleasure arising because of release from individuality and specificity, a state described by him as 'sādhāranākṛta' or universalisation. Gnomi notes that the task of generalisation carried out by the poetic expression breaks the barrier of the limited "I" and eliminates in this way the interests, demands and aims associated with it. An alaukiKa state, it may be argued, can stem also from a religious experience. Indian aestheticians addressed themselves to this problem in no uncertain terms, and have said the Vedas issue commands like masters and the ṛṣiṇiḥṣaṁś give us good counsel after the manner of friends; but poetry differs from them and is unique in its capacity to instruct one delightfully like one's sweetheart. Abhinavagupta echoes the same feelings when he categorises सास्रस as "laukika." Bhatta Nāyaka notes that, "this rasa is poured forth spontaneously by the word which is like a cow, for love of her children; for this reason it is different from that which is (laboriously) milked by the yogins." The almost pejorative reference to learning and the learned in this verse are too obvious to be missed, a position that is consistently taken by all rasavādins. It is significant that though rasa is not noetic in nature, it leads the rasika to a state of intuitive knowledge. Ray reminds us that "the language of art is not the language of intellectual but of intuitive knowledge, knowledge gained through
feeling and experience and hence through actual living." \(^1\)

He goes on to say that, "art experience is an experience of being, not of knowing." \(^2\)

Indian aestheticians maintain that the artist is not concerned with giving us a 'photographic' description of an emotional situation as it actually occurs in the everyday laukika world. The emotional situation is transformed by the poet's sensitive heart and his imaginative power. The art object expresses the poet's vision of an emotional situation, and not raw emotion. As a consequence art objects do not claim to satisfy egoistic or practical needs. Their appeal is not limited to specific persons and they can be enjoyed by all sensitive aesthetes. Since art objects do not bolster any one's ego or become confined to anyone's specific needs, they can be enjoyed in and for themselves.

12. RASA AS BRAHMASVADASAHOJODARA.

The essence of the ultimate rasa experience is found in this famous and often quoted verse of Visvanatha:

``
sattvodorekād
akhandasvapraķaśānandacincmayaḥ
vedyāntarasparsyaśūnyo
brahmavādasahydration
lokottaraṃattaṃkāraprāṇaṃ kaiścit
pramaṇābhiiḥ
svākaraṇaḥ abhinnatvam śvadāyaḥ
rasah."\(^3\)
"Rasa is tasted by qualified persons. It is tasted by virtue of the emergence of sattva. It is made up of full intelligence, beatitude and self-luminosity. It is void of contact with any other knowable thing, twin brother to the tasting of brahman."

This leaves no doubt about the exalted state of rasa. The transformation that started with the raw emotional state completes itself in the camatkāra or the state of aesthetic wonder or rapture. The rasika in a state of camatkāra has left the ordinary world of nature and history, with its spatial and temporal limitations, a world of dualities of pleasure and pain, of subject-object consciousness, and has taken an aesthetic leap into a world of bliss. It is important to point out that Indian aestheticians do not discuss the psychology or the intermediate steps of this aesthetic leap. "The aesthetic experience though composed of the same material as the ordinary states, breaks away in the intuitive moment from its empirical base and becomes momentarily a new and different kind of experience."** The camatkāra of the rasika is a totally new state of consciousness, a state of "pure contemplation, characterised by a total absence of conceptual thought." "According to Indian thought the whole realm of intuitive knowledge wherein the aesthetic also partakes, belongs to the highest order of human consciousness."**

It is significant that the camatkāra of rasa refers
not only to a transformation of the emotional state with which the experience started, but a total transformation of the personality of the rasika. It becomes clear why the Rg Vedic rsis considered hrd as only one component of the larger dhi, which signifies intuitive understanding or wisdom, for one cannot alter the hrd without affecting the dhi.

Aestheticians of the Indian tradition maintain that the exalted wonderment of cañatkāra is brought about by a combination of drutī or fluidity, vīstāra or enlargement and vikāśa or expansion, which are states of consciousness brought about by aesthetic contemplation, and which aid in breaking the limitations of the ego. "Aesthetic experience is a modality of this unbounded consciousness, characterised by the immersion of the subject in the aesthetic object to the exclusion of everything else."*

The one single feature of the cañatkāra of aesthetic experience, which truly makes it an alukika experience, is vīśrānti. This is defined as resting on one's own state of consciousness, a state also described as svaprakāśa or self-luminous. Saṃsārika or laukika experiences, and emotion in particular, lack the all important quality of vīśrānti, for as Abhinavagupta would say, this type of consciousness is not free from "obstacles", "Vītavighna pratitigrāhyo bhāva eva rasah".** He goes on to enumerate numerous obstacles because of which "he (the aesthete)
cannot immerse his consciousness in them (the art object), so that no rest...can take place.** The implications of the term *viśrānti* become evident only when it is recognised that Abhinavagupta and many other aestheticians espoused Kāśmir Saivism. The metaphysics of Kāśmir Saivism provides for two conceptually distinguishable, but existentially inseparable, modes of consciousness: *viśrānti* where consciousness is turned inward, abiding in its own luminosity, and *vīmārśa* where consciousness moves outward to embrace objects. The *vīmārśa* movement is followed by a reversal, whereby consciousness 'returns' as it were, and rests in its own luminosity or self-awareness. This rest is technically called *viśrānti*. It is in the understanding of this *viśrānti* or consciousness resting on itself, that the essential feature of Kāśmir Saivism, a school to which Abhinavagupta and many other aestheticians belonged, comes through. "The intimate essence of consciousness according to the Śaiva is beatitude, a resting in oneself to the exclusion of everything else." And it is in the understanding of this concept of *vīmārśa* followed by *viśrānti* that Kāśmir Saivism parts company from other philosophic schools, and in particular, from Advaita Vedānta. Pandey writes that "admission of *vīmārśa* or self-consciousness in the Absolute by the Śaiva is the point of distinction between the Śaiva and the Vedāntic conception of ultimate Reality. The latter holds that the Brahman is
Śānta...it is self-shining and not self-conscious...The Śaiva
maintains that the Absolute is not only self-shining but also
self-conscious."71 Pandey goes on to say that in ignorance
of Abhinavagupta's system of Kāśmir Śaivism, scholars tried to
interpret his aesthetic theory in the light of systems such as
Vedānta, but without success."72 To put it differently, one
can say that although one need not follow any of the accepted
schools of philosophy when discussing aesthetic experience, there
is no doubt that it is best understood within the framework of
Kāśmir Śaivism. Abhinavagupta, who wrote from within the
tradition of Kāśmir Śaivism, also wrote extensively on aspects of
it, which makes it that much more important to choose Kāśmir
Śaivism as a basic frame of reference in the understanding of the
ultimate rasa experience.

Abhinavagupta postulates two steps in the total aesthetic
experience. The first step, namely tanmāyatābhāva or total
identification of the rāṣiṇa with the artistic situation has
already been touched upon. It is the stage at which the
"universal mental state is apprehended...having been) awakened
from the sub-conscious (samskāra)" by the aesthetic
situation. This corresponds to the Parāsaṁvīt of Kāśmir
Śaivism or the Nirvikalpa samādhi of the Advaita Vedāntin.
The Advaita Vedāntin would stop at this stage contending that
this is the ultimate Reality and that one need go no further.
The Śaivite, however, posits a single reality with two aspects,
one Transcendental and the other Immanent, the Śiva Tattva
and the Śakti Tattva, which operate inseparably at all levels
of experience. Therefore the aesthetic experience cannot stop at
the stage of tānmayībhāva, which is marked by an identity
without a trace of difference. At best tānmayībhāva can
provide the background upon which the next step should take
place. The second stage of the aesthetic experience, according
to Abhinavagupta, is when the universalised basic mental state
sinks back as it were, to open up the Śiva and the Śakti aspects,
as they operate in the aesthete, and hold these two in a tension
free state of rest or dynamic harmony, which is nothing other
than Ananda. It is only by understanding the Śiva and
the Śakti tattvas that one comprehends fully why the
Śaivites maintain that the Absolute is not only self luminous
but reflexively self-conscious of its luminosity. The ultimate
rasa experience, therefore is not just a contentless
aesthetic ecstasy, but a caṣātāra that holds the richness
and splendour of rasa in perfect harmony with consciousness
itself, a state of consciousless also called by the Śaivites
vyatireka turīyatīta. The metaphysics of Kashmir Śaivism
provides for the interpretation of rasa as an experience in
which consciousness rests within itself, holding together the
subjective and the objective aspects in ecstatic harmony. Within
the richness of the rasa experience there is both
vīśrānti and vīmārṣa. The implications of this
'two-in-oneness' of viṣṇapti and viśārṣa will be discussed in the concluding chapter. There is no negation of the world, no denial of objective experiences, for the Kashmir Saivite but merely bhoga or pleasure, understood not in a hedonistic but obviously artistic sense. This is a state of aesthetic pleasure where an emotional experience, which began with the encounter of the artistic situation, has not been heightened but transformed into a totally new state called rasa, in which the Siva and the Sakti tattvas are held in a state of dynamic equilibrium. At this stage of the aesthetic experience one can rightly acclaim "raso vai sah, rasaḥ hṛvāya labdhva anandī bhavati".
NOTES

1. indray's hrda manasa manisa...dhivyam arjanya
Rg Veda, 1.61.2
quoted in J. Gonda, The Vision of the Vedic Poets. (The

2. saavyak srayanti sarito na dhena antar hrda manasa
puyamanah
like streams, the words of religious inspiration flow, in
the interior together clarified by heart and mind.
Rg Veda, 1.62.2 in J. Gonda, p. 278.

1 ibid p. 279.
2 ibid p. 280.
3 ibid p. 286.

4. hrdaya cetanadhisthah eka.
The heart is the only seat of consciousness.
ibid p. 286.

5. antar-hrdaya-akasa.
The immanent space in the heart.
Chandogya Upanisad. 8.1.1-3

"Ami chini gō chini." (from a poem in Bengali by Tagore)

"raśa vai sah. rasam hyevāya labdhvā anandī bhavati.
For He is rasa, having obtained which, one attains bliss.
Taittiriya Upaniṣad, 2.7


11 kṛiḍā nītakām icchāma dṛṣyām srayām ca yad bhavet.
We want something by way of diversion, something that engages both the eye and the ear.
Bharata, Nāṭyaśāstra, (ed). M. Sastrī, (Varanasi: Benaras Hindu University, 1972) 1.11

12 saktir nipunatā lokaśāstrā kāvyaśāyāveksnāt. kāvyajñā śīksāyābhyaṣa iti hetus tad udbhave
Poetic imagination, proficiency resulting from a study of the world, sciences, poetical compositions and the like, practice under the guidance of those who know poetry - these constitute (conjointly) the cause of origin (of poetry).


14 "saktitī kaviśābījarūpah saṃskāra visesah"
Poetic imagination is a peculiar latent impression which forms the seed of poetry.
Mammata, Kāvyaparākāśa, 1.3 gloss, p.6.

15 apāre kāvyā samāre kavirekah praśāpatih, yathāsāmaḥ rocate viśvām tathēdām pariwartate, Śringārī cetkaviḥ kāvyes jātān rasamayām jagat, sa eva vītarāgasct nīrasan sarvasva eva tat.
In the limitless world of poetry the poet is the sole creator. The world changes in the way he conceives it. If the
poet is inspired by love then the whole world becomes filled with rasa. If he is devoid of raga (passion) then everything becomes insipid and spiritless.


**tatāra vibhāva anubhāva vyabhachāri samyogād rasa nispattih.**

Emotion in poetry comes to be expressed through the conjunction of their causes in symptoms and other (apcilla) feelings which accompany the emotions.

Bharata, Natyaśāstra. 6.31, gloss

**17** kāvyasyātma saevarthās tathā cādikaveh purā, krauncaadvandva-vyogotthah sokaḥ ślokatvam āgatah. That meaning (rasa) alone is the essence of poetry, so it was in the case of the first poet (Valmiki), whose sorrow arising out of the kraunca couple took the form of poetry.

Anandavardhana, Dhyānyāloka. 1.5


**19** nāyakasya kaveh shrotuh samāna anubhivas tatāh The experience derived from a drama by the actor, poet and listener are bound together in a common experience.

Abhinavagupta, "Locana." 1.6, Dhyānyāloka. (Kāvyamālā rpt.) p. 34.


**21** The rasas stand in the relation of the seed to the tree. The rasa present in the mind of the poet is like the seed in relation to the tree. The poem is in the position of the tree. The poetic ornaments and expressive actions are like the flowers blossoming forth from the tree. And the delection of the spectator is the fruit. Therefore the whole world is filled with rasa. The poet's experience is the same as the spectator's.

Abhinavagupta, "Abhinavabharati." (Natyaśāstra) 6.38

**22** yo artho hrdayasamvādi tasya bhāvo rasodbhavah, sarīram vyāpyate tena suskam kāsthām ivāgnina When a meaning, charged with emotion, strikes the heart of the sym pathetic reader, it courses through his body, like fire through a dry log.

Bharata, Natyaśāstra. 7.7
23. yeśām kāvyāṇusilanābhyanāsavasād viśadibhūte
mamamukura varpaniyatanmayibhavanayogyetā te
svahrdayasayadabhabhajah sahrdayāh.
Abhinavagupta, "Locana." quoted in Masson and Patwardhan,
Aesthetic Rapture. Vol 2. (Poona: Deccan College Postgraduate
and Research Institute, 1970) p. 10.

24. parasya na parasyete mameti na mameti ca,
tad āsvade vibhāva deva paricchedo na vidyate.
This is another’s (experience) only; this is not another’s -
this is mine; no, this is not mine'. In the gustation of the
emotive situation there is no consciousness of any such
distinction.
Singh (Varanasi: Chowkhamba Sanskrit Series, 1976) 3.43.

25. R. Glimli, The Aesthetic Experience according to
Abhinavagupta, p. xxiv.

26. S. Pandit, An Approach to the Indian Theory of Art
and Aesthetics, (New Delhi: Sterling Publishers Pvt. Ltd., 1952)
p. 47.

27. Śri Aurobindo, Hour of God. Volume 17.
(Pondicherry: Sri Aurobindo Birth Centenary Library. Sri

28. N. Ray, Idea and Image in Indian Art, (Delhi:

29. pratiśvara viśista rasāna.
Rasa is a special type of knowing.
Abhinavagupta, "Locana." 2.4. p. 84.

30. svātmāramapatiḥ svātmādvārena viśvām tathā
paśyan
His mind fixed on his own self and assuming the form of the
self, he sees the world in that very form, through the
contemplation of his own self.
Abhinavagupta, "Abhinavabhāratī." 1.107, p. 114

31. vibhāvadi-carvāṇādhbhubha puṣpavat tatkāla
sāraivodūtā na pūrva para kāla anubandhitā
daukikāsvādād yogiṃvasayāc ca anya evayām rasaśvadah
The gustation of the presented emotive situation is like a
magic flower, something that arises out of that presentation and
lasts only for the duration of that gustation. It is not related
to either the moment preceding or the moment following.
Therefore this rasa experience is distinct from ordinary relishing as well as from the experience of yogis. Abhinavagupta, "Locanā." 1.21, p.70.

32 rasānātma-kā-vīta-vighna pratītī grāhyo bhāva evo rasah
Rasa is the life emotion apprehended as being freed from its limiting factors. Abhinavagupta, "Abhinavabhārati." 6, p. 657.


34 ibid p. 184.

35 Visvanātha, Sāhityadārpana. 3.13. gloss p. 106.

36 tatra nāyam nama laukīka padārtha-tad anukara-vyatirikta-ām pratibiśa-ālekhya śādraśya-āropa adhyavasāya utpṛekṣā svapna-sāyendrajāla-dvi-lakṣanam tad grāhakasya saṃyagānā-bhrānti-saṃśaya-anavadhārana anadhyavāsāya-vijñāna-bhinnā vṛttantāsvādarūpa-saṃvedana saṃvedyam vastu rasavabhāvam iti.
Rasa is altogether different from correct knowledge, erroneous cognition, uncertainty, ordinary knowledge. It is distinct from worldly objects and also different from such things as their imitation, reflection and pictorial presentation, determination, fancy, magic and so on. Abhinavagupta, "Abhinavabhārati." 1.1, pp.15-16.


39 asaśānātmarukṣaśvam tu saśānyam āśritya rasādu dhvanir ekabheda eva ganyate
But the suggestion of rasa etc. is counted as only one kind on the basis of general characteristic, namely, non-perceptibility of the sequence. Māmata, Kāvyaprabhāsa. 4.42ab gloss

40 arthe vācyāsccha lakṣyaśccha vyāngaśccha tridhā matah Viśvanātha, Sāhityadārpana. 2.2

41 dhvaniṁrāma arthāntaraṁ
Dhvani is just another meaning.
Anandavardhana, Dhvanyaloka. 1.13

$kāvyasyātma dhvanir iti budhair yah sāmaṇāta
poorvaḥ
The learned men of yore have suggested time and again that
the soul of poetry is suggestion.
Anandavardhana, Dhvanyaloka. 1.1

Mammata, Kāvyasprakāśa. 5.47cd gloss, p. 175.
sābdārtha śāsana jñāna mātreṇaiva na vedyate,
vedyate sa tu kāvyārtha-tatvajñāreva kevalām
It is not understood by a mere learning in grammar and in
dictionary. It is understood only by those who have an insight
into the true significance of poetry.
Anandavardhana, Dhvanyaloka. 1.7

atha ca vācyā-vācakalakṣaṇa mātra kṛtasramānaṁ
kāvyatattvārtha-bhāvana vimukhānām
But the fact is that the meaning remains beyond the
understanding of persons with a grounding merely in the science
of meanings and words but averse to aesthetic contemplation of
the intrinsic significance of poetry.
Anandavardhana, Dhvanyaloka. 1.7 gloss

$tadvat sacetasaṁ so artho vācyārtha vimukhātmanām,
buddhau tattvārtha darśinyam jhatity evāvabhasate
The suggested meaning flashes suddenly across the truth
perceiving minds of perceptive critics when they turn away from
the literal meaning.
Anandavardhana, Dhvanyaloka. 1.12

padma pātra sāta vyati bheda nayena
This original quotation by Abhinavagupta has in turn been
quoted by all commentators including Mammata and Viśvanātha.
see Mammata, Kāvyapraśāsa. Vol 1. p. 62.

K. Krishnamurthy, Dhvanyaloka and its Critics,

śārīrasya khalu viśiṣṭa adhiṣṭhānayuktam sati
ātmani jīvavyavahāraḥ na yasya kaśyācid iti cet.gunālaṅkāra-
auṣṭiya sundara sābdārtha śārīrasya sati dhvananākhyā-ātmani
kāvyarūpata vyavahāraḥ
One speaks of a body as being alive only when it is invested
with (possesses) the various organs of perception... true, but we
can speak of dhvani as being the soul of poetry only when the
various poetic qualities, ornaments and charming words etc. which
constitute the body of poetry, are present.
Abhinavagupta, "Locana." 1.4, p. 20.

Isa Upanisad. 1.9.


R. Tagore, Personality. p. 51.

Ibid p. 44.

Ibid p. 44.

Ibid p. 44.

Isa Upanisad. 1.14.
R. Tagore, Personality. p. 61.

R. Gnoli, The Aesthetic Experience according to Abhinavagupta. p. xxi.

Mamata, Kavyaprapakaśa. 1.2 gloss. Also see Masson and Patwardhan, Aesthetic Rapture. p. 21.

uttara karatavya aunukhyena laukikatvāt
A statement (such as the sastras make) is said to be wordly (or mundane) because it is directed towards the performance of a duty.

Abhinavagupta, "Locana." 1.18, p. 70.


Ibid p. 149.

sattvādrekād akhandasvapraṣāsanandacintayā, vedyāntarasparśasūnyo
brahmāsvadāsahodarāh. lokottaracamatkāraprāṇah kiscit prasātrbhīhi, svākāravad abhinatvenāyam āsvadyate rasah."

Rasa is tasted by qualified persons. It is tasted by virtue of the emergence of sattva. It is made up of full intelligence, beatitude and self-luminosity. It is void of contact with any other knowable thing, twin brother to the tasting of Brahman. It
is animated by a camatkara of a non-ordinary nature. It is tasted as if it were our very being, in indivisibility.

Viśvanātha, Sāhityadarpana, quoted in R. Gnoli, The Aesthetic Experience according to Abhinavagupta, p. 47

" S. Pandit, p. 22.

ibid p. 28

R. Gnoli, The Aesthetic Experience according to Abhinavagupta, p. 47

" S. Pandit, p. 21.

R. Gnoli, The Aesthetic Experience according to Abhinavagupta, p. 62


ibid p. 63.

" S. Pandit, p. 23.

original quotation by K.C. Pandey, in S. Pandit, p. 21.

K.C. Pandey, Indian Aesthetics, p. 140.

ibid p. 141.
Whatever be the medium, all art needs to express itself in form. Every civilisation eventually gives visible expression to their concept of beauty; artistic vision if strong enough cannot remain mute and must translate itself into form and acquire the immediacy of the visible and the palpable, and in so doing
acquires a dimension of reality. Man, as Tagore says, is indeed a "maker of forms"; for he is not content to contemplate beauty, but he is impelled to give his vision a visible form. The Vāstu-sūtra-Upanisad (hereafter called VSU) says, "on account of having two aspects (nirguna and saguna) Brahman acquires form."²

Kramrisch rightly states that "India thinks in images."³ When it comes to visual form, there are a large, almost bewildering, number of visual images that one has to contend with even within the mārgi tradition, and perhaps even more in the folk tradition. At the outset a distinction must be drawn, for the purpose of this inquiry, between aesthetic and religious experiences associated with images within the mārgi tradition, emphasising that one experience need not negate the other. An aesthetic encounter stems from purely physical and sensory stimuli presented by the image, and in the prepared aesthete who is fully immersed in the tradition, can be converted to a higher experience, an experience which will be shown to be ananda or spiritual bliss. A religious encounter with sacred images, on the other hand, is undertaken with a specific ritual or sādhana which includes, "abhigāmanā or going to the temple or deity with the speech, the body and the mind centred on him, upādāna or collecting the materials of worship such as flowers, incense, sandal paste, ājñā or the very act of worshipping the icon and svādhyāya or the
muttering [chanting] of the mantra usual to the particular cult divinity." This śādhanā is also called upāsana or pūja. Generally, this upāsana is undertaken as if the image was inhabited by a living being or spirit, a concept developed mainly by the Vaiṣṇava tradition and called arcavatāra. This type of religious experience, also called bhakti, will not occupy our attention, as our aim is to show that the aesthetic experience has a status of its own, even when it comes to rūpa, and that it need not be subordinated to the traditional practices of devotion and knowledge.

In chapter two we have focussed on how rasa arises and develops on the basis of the dramatic situation, or rasa, portrayed in the art object. We now turn from what the art object portrays to its formal structure. The thrust of our argument in this chapter will be that, quite apart from the dramatic situation portrayed by the art object, its form also is replete with meaning. Only the aesthete who has trained the eye and cultivated the mind can respond to these meanings. We will show that, in this sense, just as the content of the art object gives rise to rasadhvāni, its formal structure becomes the basis of symbolic and suggested meanings. It follows that, since the formal structure of the art object is the basis of resounding meanings that gradually unfold, the outward shape or structure presented to the senses cannot be abandoned or negated in a yoga
of art. In this sense, there is a rūpadhvani, just as there is a rasadhvani and, a true yoga of art cannot ignore either of these dhvanis. The discussion on aesthetic form that follows will apply mainly to sculpture in base relief, as this, as explained in chapter one, is the most common idiom of the Indian visual artist.

1. THE COSMIC PURUSA.

In the mārgi Hindu tradition of visual art, form or rūpa, also called mūrti, (although the terms rūpa and mūrti are used synonymously the term rūpa will used in preference to mūrti in this inquiry) comes to acquire a definitive meaning and cannot remain a generic term for a multitude of possible forms. Even within the realm of sacred images, rūpa stands for the figurative, representational image, and cannot include abstract art such as the yantras, mandalas and other abstract art forms, or the multitudinous forms of folk art. Rūpas and must remain, for those within the tradition, an anthropomorphic concretisation of the cosmic Purusa. It must be made clear that rūpa, in this inquiry, refers mainly to public rather than private art, a form of art that was sponsored by a patron, and was displayed permanently in public, but was never for personal or private enjoyment. Art and artists in the mārgi tradition enjoyed an exalted status, and the traditional rūpakāra or image maker
had a certain responsibility to society. There was a constant interaction between the society on the one hand and the artist on the other, the artist leading in a certain sense, by his artistic creations and the society responding and accepting his creations. The Hindu artist thus functioned within the strict confines of his tradition, and at the same time was governed by his potential audience. This made sure that he gave expression in his rupa to the vision of the tradition and never used it solely for self-expression.

The Vedas provide both the concept and the imagery of the cosmic Purusa, but yet the Vedic Indian showed a considerable amount of hesitancy or inhibition in committing his artistic vision into form. It is interesting to point out that, while the Vedas do not issue any definite proscriptions against the making of visible forms, there are some strong hints at the inhibition of the Vedic tradition in making sacred forms. The Śvetāsvatara Upanishad says, "there can be no image of him whose name is great glory." Vedic art remained largely aniconic and the only manifestation of Vedic plastic art was the vedī or the sacrificial altar. The Vedic altar was considered to be the one form that corresponds, both in its outward structure and in the symbolism associated with it, to the form of the cosmic Purusa. The autochthonous Indian on the other hand, at the same period of time, was expressing himself in a variety and profusion of visible forms.
A number of theories could be offered for the inhibition of the Vedic Indian to express himself in plastic form, although a detailed analysis of this question is outside the scope of this inquiry. It could be postulated that the desire of the Vedic Indian to remain aniconic is in keeping with the tradition of keeping sacred knowledge private and for the benefit of the 'son and the worthy pupil'. Such knowledge was not meant to be offered to all and sundry, although it must be admitted that the Vedic yajña, which was considered to be the embodiment of sacred knowledge, was by no means private. The exhibition and display of art was certainly not a Vedic trait. It could also be postulated that the Vedic Indian resisted the ideas and practices of the autochthonous Indian, who was free and uninhibited when it came to creating and worshipping visual forms and figures. Banerjea points out that "words like sandra, pratima etc. might have signified, from a comparatively early date symbolical representations of divinities which were not associated with particular cults. Such use in fact can be found in texts assignable to a period when the cult gods and goddesses had not made their appearance, or even if they had done so, had not been assigned any important position in the religious lives of the higher sections of the Indo-Aryans." According to this thesis, the use of plastic forms as sacred images around which rituals were practised, as well as the public display of such forms, originated with the autochthonous tradition rather than
the Vedic tradition.

The source of rūpa is the Puruṣa sukta of the Rg Veda. It is here that Reality is consecrated as a cosmic Puruṣa. The hymn describes the formation of the world from the body of the primordial Man.

A thousand headed is the Man with a thousand eyes, a thousand feet encompassing the Earth on all sides he exceeded it by ten fingers breadth.

The Rg Veda, after having elaborated on the cosmic Puruṣa, goes on to give it an archetypal status when it declares, "rūpaḥ rūpaḥ pratirūpaḥ bhavati". The VSU interprets this verse to signify that all forms are but reflections of the one primal Form, and that the only form of artistic merit can be a visual representation of that primal Form. Although the original quotation in the Rg Veda refers to Indra, who by the power of his Maya, puts forth multiple forms of himself, Pippalāda, author of the VSU, takes the term rūpaḥ in the neuter gender, referring to the cosmic Puruṣa and to forms in general, and not specifically to the form of Indra.

The conception of the cosmic Puruṣa is the basis not only of aesthetics in the Śaṅgī tradition, but also of metaphysical speculation, and in combining the two functions, an indissoluble bond between aesthetics and metaphysics has been made in the Hindu visual tradition. Aesthetics and metaphysics,
as far as rūpa is concerned, are so closely wedded together that the artist is also at the same time a udgītha or sacrificial priest. The idea that the aesthetic form points beyond itself to the source of all cosmic forms has wielded a powerful influence on the Indian aesthetic tradition. The following statements of Śrī Aurobindo bear witness to the continuing power of this idea:

[the] greatness and continuity of Indian sculpture is due to the close connection between the religious and philosophical and the aesthetic mind of the people; the Indian sculptor is concerned with embodying spiritual experiences and impressions, not with recording or glorifying what is received by the physical senses; the Indian sculptor stresses something behind, something more remote to the surface imagination but nearer to the soul and subordinates it to the physical form.

Underlying the acceptance by the mārga tradition of the cosmic Purusa as the archetypal form, is a basic Tantric idea, "What is here is there. What is not here is nowhere." Although this concept of the homology between macrocosm and microcosm comes to the fore in the Tantras and dominates the Tantric tradition, its roots lie in the world-view of the Vedas and the Upanisads. This fundamental Tantric idea is at the root of not only the creation of rūpa, but also, more importantly, of its appreciation or realisation. The rūpa becomes not only a copy of the archetypal Purusa but a bridge for the correlation of the macrocosm with the microcosm, the jīvātman with the parāātman. This idea has profound implications for
aesthetics. Since every rūpa is considered to be a concretisation of the cosmic Purusa, it follows that the structural form of every rūpa is perceived to be a point of correlation between macrocosm and microcosm. The homologous relationship between macrocosm and microcosm that was first established through the creative sacrifice of the Purusa, and is reproduced in every Vedic sacrifice, is reflected and reaffirmed in every aesthetic form. In this sense the traditional visual artist imitates the role of the sacrificial priest, the udgītha.

From the Veda onwards the image of the cosmic Purusa is a recurring one and it becomes not a passing but a sustained metaphor. In the Brihadāranyaka Upanisad a graphic picture of the cosmic Purusa emerges thus:

The life of all beings became three-fold, the east was his head, the intermediate quarters on either side (north-east and south-east) his arms, the west was his hind part, the intermediary quarters (north-west and south-west) his thighs, the south and north were his sides; heaven his back; the sky his abdomen, this earth the chest, thus being established in the waters.  

In the Aitareya Upanisad the cosmic Purusa is described thus:

Fire became speech and entered into the mouth, air became breath and entered into the nostrils, the Sun became sight and entered into the eyes, the disā became hearing and entered into the ears, herbs of healing and the plants and trees became hairs and entered into the skin, the Moon became the mind and entered into the heart, death became āpāna the lower breathing and
entered into the navel, the waters became the seed and entered into the organ. Terms such as "ādipurusa, virāt-purusa, ādi-avatāraḥ, virāt-prāṇaḥ" occur in the Bhāgavata Purāṇa. The Bhagavadgīta graphically describes the Viśvarūpa. The significance given to the human form in all these texts is of the utmost importance in understanding both the structural from of the art object, as it is conceived in the mārga tradition and the meaning invested in that form. The human body, by virtue of its individual parts and its organic unity, is considered to be the perfect symbol of the correlation and the harmony between the microcosm and the macrocosm. This explains why most of the art objects of the mārga tradition are based on the human form. This human form that is so familiar to us is invested with infinite worth in the tradition because it is perceived as a microcosmic copy of the infinite Purusa. Aesthetically, the cosmic Purusa establishes the human form as the basis of rūpa and the norm of plastic beauty, for as the Aitareya Upanisad says, "puruso vāva sukṛtam", "Man indeed is well made." Metaphysically, it points to the correlation of the macrocosm with the microcosm. Both these ideas are of cardinal importance to the plastic arts in the mārga tradition. The image of the cosmic Purusa provides a focus for the traditional artists to relate to the universe, it is the centrepetal force that prevents a scattering of their
creative energies, it the point of rest of creation and creativity, the channel of reintegration of the universal Reality with the reality within. This is the supreme function of visual art in the Ṣārgī tradition. Rabindranath Tagore, in his writings, expresses the view of modern Indian aestheticians who follow the tradition in accepting the image of the cosmic Purusa as the basis of aesthetic form. These modern aestheticians agree that the image of the cosmic Purusa provides a focus for the traditional artists to relate to the universe, for in the words of Tagore:

> art awakens a sense of the real by establishing an intimate relationship between our inner being and the universe at large, bringing us a consciousness of deep joy; [for] the man who shapes brings the real very close to us, throwing light upon our awareness of the reality within man. What is hidden, veiled in the shadows of unfamiliarity gives no pleasure... [but] by joining himself to the universe... man makes acquaintance of his own inner being. Thus in artistic creation the Real stands before us in all its immediacy.

We have cited Tagore as an example of modern Indian aestheticians who hold the view that the creative energy of the artist is put to use, not for mere individual self-expression, but to attain insights into the nature of reality and to heighten consciousness.

It is interesting to note that, with the dawn of the modern era in India, sculptors and painters, desiring individual self-expression, have broken away from the orbits of the
mārga tradition to a far greater degree than musicians and dancers. Individual self-expression, as understood in the modern sense, was never an issue with the traditional Indian artist. That the mārga tradition did not smother individuality is witnessed by the variations among rūpas that portray the same theme. No two Natarājas, for example, are exactly alike. However, for the traditional Indian artist, the ideal of beautiful form continued to be based on the cosmic Purusa. This concept set the tone for all visual art of the mārga tradition and left but little room for such artistic expressions as portraits and statues of historical persons, or for mere portrayal of landscapes.

2. DHYANA OF THE ARTIST.

Rūpa as opposed to rasa, implies a physical formation. For the purpose of understanding the process of art creation, as well as the mārga attitude towards the self-expression of the artist, the creation of the rūpa can be broken down into various steps. Although this inquiry does not focus on the yoga of the artist or the artisan, but mainly on the yoga of the aesthete, it is important to understand the creation of the rūpa, so that we can better understand the task of the aesthete. For in rūpa as in rasa, the aesthete’s undertaking is the mirror image of that of the artist; remembering of course that the artist very often is also an
aesthete. Since the same types of visual forms are created in the sārāgī tradition generation after generation, it becomes necessary to distinguish between the sage-artist or the pristine artist or rṣi, who first conceives of a rūpa, and others who follow after him. For example, it is theoretically possible to distinguish the sage-artist who first conceived of the form of the Natarāja from others who used it as their model. Accordingly, in this inquiry, we distinguish between the dhyaṇa of the sage-artist and the dhyaṇa of those who follow after him. Although there are no references in the texts to historical personages who were sage-artists, it is evident that the artistic contemplation that gives birth to an original aesthetic form, must differ from the psychological processes through which others re-interpret this model. Second and subsequent generations of artists, who recreate the same or similar type of rūpas, are acting under historical and psychological conditions that differ from that of the sage-artist. The aesthete is to take his cue from the sage-artist rather than the subsequent generation of artists.

The first step in the evolution of the rūpa is the dhyaṇa of the artist. It will be shown that in this first step, the conception of the rūpa is dependent on the coming together of the artist’s individual genius and inspiration (pratibhā) and his discipline of contemplation (dhyaṇa), which has as its focus the traditional imagery of the cosmic
Purusa. It is this step that transforms the rupa from formlessness to form, "arupad rupa"\[26\].

Dhyana, for the Indian artist, was a disciplined activity and one that could be deliberately induced. This dhyana of the artist is not a 'trance', in the sense of a loss of volitional control, or a contentless ecstasy, but a meditative discipline focussed on the cosmic Purusa, with the express purpose of revealing its form. The artist 'sees' the form of the cosmic Purusa, in his dhyana, just as the Vedic rzes 'hear' the cosmic sounds out of which they compose the hymns. The desire on the part of the sage-artist to visualise the cosmic Purusa is the key to the entire dhyana. As the VSU says," The intention [to worship] leads to the appearance of a particular form."\[24\] The sage-artist adores and delights in the form that rises in his mind. This could be called an inner or subtle adoration in contradistinction to the ritual worship that is performed in front of images. As the VSU says," it is in the process of dhyana that the form becomes clear."\[27\]

The artist prepares himself for his dhyana by his intense training, siksa, which includes an intimate knowledge of the measurements and proportions prescribed for the rupa by the sastras. It is important to point out that the artist's dhyana differs from that of the bhakta, because of his specific purpose of re-interpreting and re-creating the rupa. Furthermore, his training has made him an aesthete of the highest
order, and his aesthetic sensibilities enter into his dhyāna. A bhakta on the contrary need not necessarily be an aesthete. On the basis of the sources available to him Mulk Raj Anand describes the artist's dhyāna thus:

The artist performs purifactory ablutions and sits down to focus his attention on... a dhyāna-mantra. He then offers flowers, incense and other gifts to the form conceived. The mental picture is thus seen in all its details and the work of art is complete in the mind even before being translated into form. The artist then begins the task of technical elaboration, during which time he must hold fast to the conception evolved through yoga... The kind of mental state designed to be secured through the practice of yoga can also be cultivated by the artisan through tuning up the functions of the body and the mind into perfect obedience to the faculty of intuition and though the deliberate invocation of dreams...  

Heinrich Zimmer points out that the mārga tradition provides a rich store-house of bijamantras, seed mantras, and yantras, diagrams, to facilitate the dhyāna of the artist who wishes to re-create a proper variant of a primordial rupa. The artist's dhyāna is a formal activity, brought into focus by a specific mantra or helped by a linear yantra. Zimmer notes that, "mantra, dhyāna and linear yantra are three quantities that are congruent in the underlying idea." The rich store of seed mantras correspond precisely with images that can be invoked through them, and therefore, they lead to a complete and accurate inner visualisation. Zimmer explains, "it is the power of the syllable
(mantrasakti), whether whispered or simply inwardly articulated, that can, in the realm of inner vision, produce whatever corresponds to the sound.\textsuperscript{30} If a yantra is used as the focus of concentration, it is the dhyāna that harmonises, "outward sight and inner vision."\textsuperscript{31}

A feature of the artist's dhyāna is that the image, which appears to his inner vision in its entirety, is in perfect harmony. Zimmer, in his description of dhyāna says that:

\begin{quote}
no part of the manifestation presented to the inner vision is in motion, and that inward sight does not shift its focus from point to point. All that appears before the inward eye is equally in focus, so that everything present shines forth with equal clarity. Each part is at rest within itself.\textsuperscript{32}
\end{quote}

Zimmer contrasts our ordinary modes of recalling images that have arisen in our consciousness with the dhyāna of the artist. He points out that "our untrained inward sight is generally successful in recalling images that have appeared, only to vanish immediately ..."\textsuperscript{33} By contrast, in the supra-sensory inner vision of the artist's dhyāna, these images remain stable and ensure that they are translated into aesthetic form. It is important to note that the rūpa is algebraically, but not arithmetically, complete in the dhyāna of the artist. In this sense, the primary creation of the rūpa takes place in the mind of the artist. The translation of it into a material medium, by contrast, is a process of construction, calling in the skill of the craftsman.
It is important to focus on the dhyāna of the artist as it sheds light on the dhyāna the aesthete must undertake.

3. THE MEANING OF MEASUREMENT IN RUPA.

We have seen that rasa arises, not through the portrayal of raw emotion, but through the transformation of emotion within the context of a dramatic situation. Similarly, aestheticicians of the mārgi tradition, stress that the rūpa is not a photographic representation, but an aesthetic transformation of the natural visual form. The measurements and proportions presented in the sastras have the purpose of effecting this transformation.

Vatsyayana, in his Kāmasūtra, lists six essential ingredients of rupa. These are: pramāna, rūpa-bheda, bhāva, āvanyā-yojana, sādṛṣya and varnīka-bhāṅga or proportion, perception, emotion, grace, resemblance to reality and the artistic use of implements and materials. Of these pramāna and sādṛṣya need further elucidation since they are related to the mārgi view that the aesthetic form is a concretisation of the cosmic Purusa.

Pramāna is the hallmark of rūpa. It is by virtue of its harmonious proportions that an aesthetic form achieves organic unity and becomes a reflection (pratibiśa) of the form of the cosmic Purusa. Mulk Raj Anand makes the illuminating comment that “aesthetic pramāna expresses in plastic terms
the norm of properly directed action, speculative prāṇa expresses the norm of properly directed thought."36.

It is significant that the proportions prescribed in the sastras are not based on the empirical study of natural forms and shapes but on idealised conceptions in the minds of the creators of aesthetic forms. Thus Sukrāchārya asserts that even an ill-made rūpa that conforms to the prescribed proportions is to be preferred to the form of man, "however attractive the latter may be, for perchance one (man) in a million has perfect form, perfect beauty."37 The connotations of this statement will be further explored in the discussion on sādrṣya.

Pramāṇa in the Indian visual tradition, signifies not just linear measurements, but also rhythm and harmony. This combination and inter-relation of measurement (māna) and harmony (tālā) is brought out by the term tālā-māna. Modern interpreters of the aesthetic tradition have stressed the concept that the measured inner rhythm of the rūpa bears witness to the correlation between the microcosm and the macrocosm. Coomaraswamy maintains that, according to the tradition, all rhythm in art corresponds "in the last analysis to cosmic rhythms."37 Writing on artistic rhythm in the same vein Tagore says:

"It is the magic of mathematics; the rhythm which is the heart of all creation which moves in the atom and its different measures fashions the rose and the thorn, the sun and the planets. These are the dance steps of numbers in the arena
of time and space which weaves the maya, the patterns of appearance, the incessant flow of change that ever is and is not. It is the rhythm that churns up images from the vague and makes tangible what is elusive. This is maya, this is the art in creation and art in literature which is the magic of rhythm.⁳⁶

It is worth noting that in Tagore's poetic language maya has the double connotation of 'measurement' and 'magic', and is not used in the sense in which Sankara uses the term.

The inner rhythm of the rūpa, based on its proportions, creates the impression of movement, a movement in situ. Nihar Ranjan Ray, in his interpretation of the aesthetic tradition, says that the measured rhythm of the rūpa is to be correlated with the rhythm of the life-breath (prāna) of the universe. As he puts it, the rūpa is endowed with "an inner reality of rhythmic vitality and movement (or) prāna which is its essential form."³⁷

The large number of texts dealing with sculpture, the silpaśāstras, give in exquisite detail the principles of measurement and rhythm by which the sculptor must be bound. While the minutiae of these measurements and proportions are of no importance to us in this inquiry, the principle of pramāna or measurement brings home the fact that mathematical precision is the keynote of rūpa, both in its conception, as well as in its execution and realisation. Pramāna is the dhāra of the rūpa, and it is through this dhāra that it is perceived as a reflection of the perfect form of the cosmic
The Ṣārgi ideal of beauty in form is fulfilled only by a formalised rūpa that conforms to certain precisely stated aesthetic principles of harmony and rhythm; hence, in the Ṣārgi tradition, only an art form made in accordance with the canon can be called beautiful. Although we are not concerned here with the relationship between the aesthetic tradition and society at large, it is to be noted that the sastras influenced the minds of the artists and the aesthetes alike, so that they could seldom see beauty outside the prescribed models. In a certain sense, this could be called the tyranny of the tradition, but it was one factor, amongst others, that was responsible for maintaining continuity through the troubled and chaotic periods of Indian history. It must also be remembered that there was a constant cross-pollination between the Ṣārgi and the desī traditions, one enriching the other so that the Ṣārgi tradition did not become stale or irrelevant.

When we turn from prāṣāda or proportion to the principles of sāḍrśya or correspondence to reality, it seems at first glance, that these two principles are at variance with each other. As we have noted, the principle of measurement is not based on the study of empirical forms, but seeks to reflect an ideal of perfect beauty inculcated by the tradition. Sādrśya, on the contrary, insists on correspondence to empirical reality. How are these two principles brought
together, and what is the philosophic basis for the harmonizing of pramāṇa, which looks beyond this imperfect world, with sādrśya, which turns towards it? In this inquiry we take the position that both pramāṇa and sādrśya are based on the concept of the cosmic Purusa. The principle of pramāṇa points to the perfection and transcendence of the form of the cosmic Purusa, while the principle of sādrśya indicates the immanence of the Purusa in the world as we know it through our senses. Together, pramāṇa and sādrśya seek to indicate the correlation and unity of the macrocosm and the microcosm.

Although sādrśya is accepted as a principle in the mārgī tradition, the VSU does not elucidate its significance. We therefore turn to modern interpreters of the aesthetic tradition to seek an explanation of what ‘correspondence to reality’ connoted for the artist and the aesthete.

Modern interpreters, beginning with Coomaraswamy, stress that sādrśya does not signify realism. They maintain that the artist of the mārgī tradition does not aim to give a photographic representation of the empirical form. According to these interpreters, the purpose of the principle of sādrśya is to suggest the essential nature of the object and the inner laws of its development, namely its svadharma, and to indicate that, by virtue of its svadharma, the object is in harmony with the cosmic laws, the dharma of the universe. The rūpakāra or creator of visual forms depicts the essential
nature of the object, as he intuits it in the inner vision of his dhyāna, and shows that it is this essential nature which makes it a manifestation (pratīrūpa) of the cosmic Purusa.

In the words of Sri Aurobindo, "for the Indian mind form does not exist except as a creation of the spirit and draws all its meaning and value from the the spirit." 40

Modern interpreters, therefore, stress that sādṛṣya is to be understood at many levels: first, the correlation between the aesthetic form and the intrinsic nature of the object portrayed; second, the correlation between the rūpa and the intuitive vision of the artist, and finally, the correlation between the well-proportioned form of the rūpa and the ideal form, namely, the form of the cosmic Purusa.

Coomaraswamy points to the correlation between the aesthetic form and the inner vision of the object in the artist's mind, when he speaks of the "indivisible identity of form and content." 41 Stella Kramrisch expresses her agreement with Coomaraswamy when she says that, "the figures of Indian sculpture are based primarily on a reality which is not seen but felt." 42 Kramrisch also elucidates the significance of sādṛṣya as the correlation between the aesthetic form and the intrinsic nature of the object that it portrays, when she says that "the sculpture does not depict the concrete, gross (sthula) physique as perceived and interpreted, but shows the subtle (sūksma) reality of life as felt in and through the"
According to modern interpreters, sādṛṣya is based on information which is gathered by the eye as a visual organ but which is processed by the inner eye. Stella Kramrisch remarks that "Indian sculptural form then, is neither a record of the appearance nor of the structure of the body. It aims rather to render the inner experience and awareness of life in the body." She correctly says that the whole aim of sādṛṣya is to "proceed beyond empirical truth to express the metaphysical", but she perhaps goes too far, when she says in the same breath that "Indian sculpture (has) no reality other than in states of inner awareness." Rūpa is not photographically descriptive of objects as they are presented to the human senses, but rūpa does conform to the manner in which sensory experience is interpreted in the more exalted states of human consciousness. Rūpa, as aesthetic form, depicts beauty in its purely physical form, but it hints insistently at the metaphysical basis of beauty. Herein lies its significance for a yoga of art.

4. THE GEOMETRY OF RUPA.

An important intermediate step in the progressive evolution of rūpa, still within the dhyāna of the artist, is the basic geometric framework of the composition. At this stage the cosmic Purusa starts acquiring a geometric form-language.
Reduced to its basic geometry, the rūpa can be considered as made up of a centre, intersecting lines and the periphery, which is usually a circle or a square, each playing a specific role in the totality of the image. While the periphery delimits the image, the centre or the madhyābindu is the source of its dynamism, and the lines give the image its emotional character. It is the interplay of these three geometric parameters that constitutes the rūpatattva or the essence of form and it is these three that play an important factor in the tāla-māna of rupa.

The VSU emphasises the role of rekha or lines in the logic of composition when it says, "the lines are the Truth, and the lines are the cause of the form," and, "the line is the support of the composition." The VSU describes three types of lines: vertical or agni rekha which conveys a feeling of elation, horizontal lines or ab rekha which conveys a feeling of longing, and diagonal lines or vāyu rekha which imparts a feeling of energy. The main vertical middle line is likened to the "post of Meru, the backbone in the animal, the marrow of the tree, the soul in living beings." With horizontal lines, the VSU explains, the panel is divided first into ten and later into fourteen compartments. At every step in the progressive evolution of rūpa the interconnection between the microcosm and macrocosm is never forgotten.
If the *rekhā* displays the emotional character of the image, the *bindu* or the focal point is the source of the image. For we are told, "*bindu brahmāvā*, the *bindu* is the *brahman*, and further, "it is the *bindu* that imparts glory and harmony to the image." The *bindu* ensures that the *rūpa* does not remain a static art form but gives the impression of a dynamic art process. The *rūpa* gives the impression of at least two types of movement: a dynamic physical movement like the axis of a wheel, and more importantly, a psychic centripetal movement, gathering toward itself forces that it liberates, making sure that the physical centre of the art form is also the metaphysical centre of the art experience. In her interpretation of its centripetal movement, Kramarisch writes that "the urge towards form at any moment has an outward direction but it becomes form only by the corresponding countermovement." In *rūpa*, no movement exists without its counter-movement. The appearance of balance of movements creates harmony within the *rūpa* and makes it a symbol of cosmic harmony. By the balancing of centrifugal and centripetal forces, the *bindu* creates the ambience of rest in the midst of action, of serenity in the midst of dramatic tension, features that are the hallmark of *rūpa*.

With the *bindu* comes the actual or implied circle. The gloss on the VSU says, "The circle is the All. The breath of life is contained in its form even as the mind is in Man. The
circle is Time according to Vastuveda." The conception of the circle limits the composition in a physical sense, while, at the same time, endowing it with the attributes of wholeness and organic unity. The circle is also symbolic of cosmic unity. Moreover, the concept of circularity gives to the rūpa the dimension of time. By means of the circle in the geometric grid, the dramatic situation depicted in the rūpa is set within the framework of time, and is given a cosmic dimension. The circle also gives to the rūpa its stability by ensuring that it will maintain a centripetal rather than a centrifugal force. Alice Boner explains that not only the circle or the periphery but "every curve with a constant curvature is part of a circle and has in itself the tendency to close into full circle...it gathers up movement as a pool gathers up the inflowing waters."  

The vṛttam or circle is, more often than not, an imagined or invisible periphery, sometimes suggesting itself by an arc or a curve, and at other times by a semi-circle, but in no uncertain terms calling attention to itself by the bindu. In her interpretation of the geometry of the rūpa, Vatsyayan argues that it is the function of the bindu to ensure that the "one breaks into the multiple and the configuration of the multiple invariably returns to the unity of the one." This "breaking up of the whole into parts and then bringing together of the parts" is not a meaningless exercise like putting parts of a jigsaw puzzle together, but is meant to
"evokes a psychic state."\[16\]

The VSU makes it amply clear that these basic geometric shapes, namely, the circle, the square, the triangle and the lines, or the basic grammar of rūpa, are not mere abstract or arbitrary shapes but cosmic shapes, reminding one of the Vedic yajña. As Vatsyayan puts it "these geometric motifs and figures have their own logic and meaning and the (rūpakāra) uses these with extraordinary sensitivity and understanding."\[17\] The human body is reduced to the point of geometrical abstraction so that the rūpa may become, not just another form in the world of forms, but a fit receptacle for the form and feeling of the cosmic Purusa. It is the function of the geometric forms to manifest the causal and the subtle components of consciousness. The interplay of these basic geometric shapes, as an intermediate step in the evolution of the rūpa, ensures that the "panel is a microcosm reflecting all the elements of the Macrocosm."\[18\] Finally it is the interplay of these basic cosmic forms that creates the "mahā-chandas"\[19\], the principle of order and rhythm. That chandas is not only metre in poetry but a principle of order and rhythm in all arts is shown in the Aitreya Brahmana where the term 'chandomaya' is applied to all kinds of Śilpa. The VSU leaves no doubt about the importance of the geometric under pinning of the rūpa when it says that by "depending on the essential lines (tattvatarākha) the soul of
form becomes manifest. The geometric grid is a yantra and the rūpa is a mandala. This is the principle of form or rūpatattva, a phase when the rūpa moves from a mere yantra to a mandala, and it is this that leads to a firmer, more deliberate appreciation of form, a "dhārana" or clear conception, fit enough to embody cosmic myths.

If the geometric form corresponds to the causal and subtle states of consciousness, the mandala corresponds to the waking state. This is the next phase in the evolution of aesthetic form, "arupad rūpam", from formless to form. It needs to be emphasised once again that although these different processes are being presented here in stages merely to gain an understanding of the underlying mechanisms, in the dhyāna of the artist, the various steps take place simultaneously and at many levels, and without fragmentation.

5. SYMBOLIC MEANING IN RUPA.

We have seen that sādṛṣya or correspondence with reality is one of the principles governing rūpa. However, as it has been pointed out, realism was never a feature of rūpa, and the full significance of the aesthetic form does not emerge until its symbolic value is perceived. The mārgi tradition endows the rūpa with symbolic value, and the symbolic meanings that emerge from it can be understood only against the background of
the rich mythology and the multi-dimensional systems of Indian culture. It is evident that an understanding of the symbolic value of rupa is essential in developing a yoga of art.

The Indian visual artist does not copy the natural object, but renders it into an aesthetic form filled with symbolic meanings. A modern interpreter of the tradition says of Indian art "it is not so much an illustration as a translation of a reality."\(^1\) He further comments that in the process of this, "translation of a reality" the rupa acquires a visionary character, and he goes on to say that "Indian art is generally synaesthetic - a mixture of media combined in a manner which resembles, but is not identical with, oneric experience;"\(^2\) "a kind of recollection in tranquility of the rapture of visionary experience."\(^3\) It is this visionary character of Indian visual art that modern aestheticians emphasise when they use such terms as 'symbolic', 'recondite', 'angelic', 'indirect', 'noumenal', 'abstract', 'metaphorical' and 'metaphysical'. All these meanings are captured by the term parokṣa.

Coomaraswamy interprets the statement "parokṣa-priya iva devah"\(^4\) to mean that parokṣa is synonymous with 'angelic'. The significance of this statement emerges when it is set in the context of Indian mythology. For it is evident that Coomaraswamy, in the historical period in which he was writing, translated devah as 'angel' with the hope of capturing the
understanding of his Western audience. Using the language of Indian mythology, we may say that the Indian visual artist depictions the natural object, not as the ordinary human eye sees it, but as the devas see it with the 'divine eye'. In the context of Indian mythology it can be said that the artist's dhyana is in conformity with the state in which the devas, by their very nature, continuously live. It is in this sense that Coomaraswamy translates the following statement of the Aitreya Brahmana as "it is in imitation of the angelic works of art that any work of art is arrived at here."**

Modern commentators have also stressed that the symbolism that pervades the entire spectrum of rūpa must be understood, not in any superficial or token sense, but as a highly evolved, integrated and sophisticated language of symbols. As Coomaraswamy explains, "symbolism is a language and a precise form of thought, a hieratic and metaphysical language and not a language determined by somatic or psychological categories."**

Artists of the mārgi tradition use, "geometric, vegetable or theriomorphic symbols"** drawn from the purāṇas. It is in the manifestation of these symbols that the artist displays his skills, and in the understanding and realisation of these symbols that lies the skill of the aesthete. Only the trained eye can penetrate beyond the outward form of the rūpa and perceive its symbolic meaning. Thus, symbolism in
rūpa demands a resolution not by the eye, but by the ‘eye of the eye’\textsuperscript{28}. Coomaraswamy reminds us that the "traditional symbols are never the invention of the particular author,"\textsuperscript{29} but are, rather, the treasure of the tradition. It, therefore, becomes clear why both the artist and the aesthete need to be steeped in the tradition. The traditional mythology undergirds and inspires both the creation of the rūpa and the aesthetic appreciation of its full import.

Because of the mythology that undergirds it, the symbolic meaning of the rūpa cannot be realised if it is approached from a purely intellectual level. Zimmer rightly points out that the:

\begin{quote}
mythical symbols of India resist intellectualisation and reduction to fixed significations. Such treatment would only sterilise them of their magic. In the myths of India we are brought the intuitive, collective wisdom of an ageless, anonymous and many sided civilisation. The myths are effective primarily on a subconscious level, touching intuition, feeling and imagination...[they] soak down and shape the deeper stratification of the psyche.\textsuperscript{30}
\end{quote}

The myths form part of the oral tradition that is incorporated in the rūpa. Zimmer describes this oral tradition as that "whole and consistent body of culture which has been handed down not in books but by word of mouth ... from time beyond the reach of historical research."\textsuperscript{31} Since this treasury of myths arises from the primordial wisdom of a mythopoeic society, if they are unduly dissected and explained,
their charm, beauty and meaning is destroyed. A person who cannot allow the mythology to "soak down and shape the deeper stratifications of the psyche" is incapable of realising the full aesthetic value of the rūpa. For the myths provide the emotional content of the rūpa, which becomes the basis of the rasa experience. It is by virtue of its symbolic import that the rūpa moves the mind, from its involvement in physical forms, to the contemplation of metaphysical realities, thereby becoming a fit object of dhyāna, both for the artist and the aesthete.

The symbolism of the rūpa links it not only with the myths of the Puranic tradition but also with the yajña or sacrifice of the Vedas. Pippalāda, the author of the VŚU, emphasises that sculpture is indeed a yajña and the sculptor, a sthapaka or a priest of art. Yajña has both a metaphysical and magical sense, and it is with the former that we are concerned. The overriding metaphysical meaning and motive of yajña is establishing a correspondence between the microcosm and the macrocosm. We have already shown that this is the keynote of rūpa.

The various components of the rūpa not only blend into a harmonious whole but the inner harmony of the rūpa acts as a catalyst in the transformation of both the artist and the aesthete. This transformation equilibrates one’s inner being with that of the cosmos. Rūpasaubhāgya or harmony, is the
sine qua non of rūpa. "The entire composition consists of self-sufficient units, which paradoxically enough gain that quality only by their intrinsic inter-connectedness." The lay out of the Vedic altar and the śīlpa-pañjara or the grid upon which the rūpa manifests have much in common. The VSU tells us in no uncertain terms that "Sūlva is the discipline for sacrifice, śīlpa is the discipline for image making." The strong connection between visual art on the one hand and yajña, on the other, is further underlined by the VSU when it says: "it is from the knowledge of form that sacrifice originates in the world." In equating rūpa with yajña, Pippalada gives Indian sculpture its pedigree and connects it unquestionably with the Veda itself.

There is another sense in which the rūpa is compared to a yajña. The Vedic altar was laid out in a pattern of geometric shapes which blends together to form a harmonious whole representing the harmony of the universe. In the sārgi tradition, this inner harmony of the Vedic altar was taken to be the prototype of all harmonious shapes.

6. RUPADHVANI.

In a prepared aesthete the rūpa cannot remain a mere piece of art, useful for its superficial sensual artistic qualities, but, by the very nature of its ultimate meaning,
breaks out of its form to reveal the formless, much as in the artist the formless gave rise to form. In many ways, the dhyāna of the aesthete is a mirror-image of that of the dhyāna of the artist; in the former it is the formless that gives rise to form, in the latter it is the form that proceeds to the formless.

There is ample evidence in the texts to establish that rūpa like vāk has a function and meaning beyond its outer form. The VSU says that "whatever one attains through (sacred) word they can attain through form". For a word is a mere symbol and carries with it a meaning, either singly or in combination with other words. By the same token, the constituents of the rūpa are capable of offering a metaphysical meaning to the prepared aesthete. The aesthete does not merely react to the superficial structure of the image, but interprets the symbols and combines the visual imagery with the verbal tradition to derive the artha or the ultimate meaning. This meaning is clearly above and beyond the actual form. Since it is a vehicle of meaning the eventual function of the rūpa is for dhyāna. The VSU says, "thus form is to be meditated upon as a means of spiritual ascent." Herein lies the importance of the Indian śilpakāra; for just as a kavi will use words to create kāvya, the śilpakāra uses form so that it can contain and yield a metaphysical meaning. The śilpakāra achieves this metaphysical meaning indirectly,
"vakratah", by using artistic devices and by ensuring fidelity to myths and legends. This revelation of meaning by indirect means is the function of rūpa characterized by harmonious proportions and correspondence to reality, pramāna and sādṛśya. The meaning abides, in and emanates from, its physical shape and form. If its aesthetic properties are denied or negated, it ceases to be a vehicle of meanings. What is true of rasa is also true of rūpa: it is the heart of the sahrdaya, the prepared aesthete, that has the capacity to receive and respond to the indirectly suggested meanings that arise from the aesthetic form. As the VSU says, "the science of sculpture is mainly to manifest the attributes [of the deities, as revealed in the myths]."

The VSU gives us firm support for our own position that rūpa, like vāk, is capable of revealing manifold meanings, both directly and indirectly, by suggestion. At the same time it is to be understood that the purely aesthetic nature and value of the rūpa is never jeopardized or abandoned. It is precisely because of its aesthetic qualities that at no point is the aesthetic excellence of the rūpa undermined, compromised or taken for granted. For rūpa is no ordinary form but surūpa or perfect or ideal form. And it is this perfection of form that leads to "divyatva" or divine nature in the aesthete. In this context, "divine" can be interpreted as the tranquillity, rapture and heightened
consciousness of aesthetic dhyāna. In order to effect this transformation to divine nature, the first requisite of rūpa is that it lead to "pramāda" or pleasure in the beauty of the image, for from this pleasure will arise love and from love contemplation, which in turn ensures "the very bliss of Brahman".

Pippalāda declares in a sentence that sums up our entire argument when he declares "the higher and ultimate understanding of artistic form is none other than metaphysics", making the unequivocal connection between aesthetics and metaphysics.

For the purpose of this inquiry, it is of the utmost significance to note that nowhere throughout the VSU does Pippalāda mix bhakti and aesthetics, or the holy and the beautiful or magic and meaning, or arca and artha. Instead, he leaves us with the very definite impression that a purely aesthetic appreciation and realisation of the rūpa is a valid, bonafide, artistic activity, fully capable of leading the prepared aesthete to ineffable anāhāda.

It can be argued that the meaning of the rūpa resides not in the rūpa per se, but in the mind of the rūpakāra who created it and in the consciousness of the rasika who appreciates it. And, on the basis of this argument, it can be further claimed by some that the rūpa is totally meaningless on its own, when it is separated from the artist and the aesthete. Guided by Pippalāda's exposition, we take the position
that the aesthete's mind is influenced by the physical attributes of the rūpa: its shape and form, its harmonious proportions, its inner rhythm and its capacity to resemble Reality. These physical attributes turn the mind of the aesthete, stage by stage, like the "needle though a pile of lotus leaves" of the rasa experience, from its primary meaning as directly presented to the eye to its symbolic import, and finally to the metaphysical realities that it symbolises. The rūpa, though mute, gives insistent visual hints that encourage a calmer, more deliberate understanding of its form. Such continually deepening understanding is what Pippalada calls rūpadrājña.

The value of the rūpa, therefore, lies not just in its bāhya ākāraṇa or superficial attractiveness but in its capacity to suggest an artha, or another, deeper meaning, a quality that we propose to call rūpadhvani after the dhvani of Anadnavardhana. We emphasise that the dhvani of the rūpa is, first and foremost, an aesthetic phenomenon, and is not governed by such factors such as bhakti or ritual. Dhvani in the rūpa arises because of the artistic devices used by the artist. These devices not only embellish the beauty of the form, but lead the aesthete towards the highest possibilities of aesthetic experience. A number of these artistic devices can be enumerated, namely: mukhyārthaśabādha or breakdown of the primary meaning, mudras or hand gestures, bādhras or the weapons, laksanas or superficial
attributes, prāṇa or proportion, the gāthas and the kathas or the mythology that introduces a sense of cosmic realism, and finally the overall rhythm or harmony of the form. Mukyārthabādha arises as a result of the superhuman features of the Hindu rūpa, features such as multiple arms or heads that may lead a non-aesthete to call it monstrous, or unrealistic situations such as a figure sitting on a lotus or a swan, or lying on the coils of a serpent. Mudras, as the VSU says, demonstrate the "emotional attitude of the image," but invoke the aesthete to enter deeply into the tradition to move their meaning from the merely psychological to philosophical. Thus the abhaya mudra or the gesture of 'fear not' prompts the aesthete to ask, "fear not from what?" and thereby initiates a contemplative inquiry. Likewise, the bādhras, which "communicate the power of the figure," invite the aesthete to penetrate their outer form to get at the symbolic meaning. Specific laksānas or visible marks have been assigned by the tradition to certain divinities, a good example of which are the signs ascribed to the Buddha; it is these laksānas that connect the rūpa to the myth that forms its context, and therefore, its ultimate meaning. And the last, but not the least, of the artistic devices that impel the aesthete to move beyond the outer form of the rūpa to its total import is its overall harmony. This harmony is created by its geometric constituents and by the formalised proportions that govern it.
It is these artistic devices that eventually nourish and support the rasa, and together constitute the artha of the rupa; it is this that gives the rupa a rupadhvani, an extended meaning without which the rupa cannot lead the aesthete to ananda.

Thus, both in rasa and rupa experiences, dhvani becomes the key aesthetic concept in the margi tradition. If the dhvani of rasa is mediated through emotions, the dhvani of rupa is mediated mainly through a visual process, neither activities demanding a religious ritual or outlook, and both strictly staying within the confines of aesthetic phenomena. Pippalāda uses at least two terms to qualify rupa: rupasaubhāgya or harmonious form and surupa or perfect form, both emphasising the artistic perfection of the rupa. However, Pippalāda makes it amply clear that the rupa, by definition, is a vyaktarupa or a form that, though mute, is capable of manifesting attributes, or in other words, meanings. He further states, "it is the form that transforms the mind." It is this transformation that qualifies rupa to be called truly a rupadhvani. Ultimately the Indian concept of rupa or beauty in form lies in the conception and understanding of dhvani.

We are now in a position to argue that it is not necessary for a rupa to be consecrated as a ritual object or made the
focus of bhakti in order to give it the capacity of transforming the mind. We have the support of the Visnuadharmottara when it says, "hetumca tadākara, form indeed has a purpose". The rūpa's perfect form, inner harmony and its capacity for reverberation of suggested meaning, and above all its rasa, combine to give it the capacity to transform the consciousness and to heighten the awareness of the aesthete. It remains for us to explore whether a yoga of art can be developed on the basis of rasadhvani and rūpadhvani.
NOTES


2. dvิด 확 brahma rупavat bhavati.
   "On account of having two forms [nirguna and saguna] Brahman acquires form."
   A. Boner et. al. _Vastusutra Upanisad_. The Essence of Form in Sacred Art (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1982) (hereafter referred to as VSU), 4.3.


5. na tasya pratima asti yasya nama mahadyasah
   "There can be no image of him whose name is great glory"
   J.N. Banerjea, p. 78.

The word autochthonous is used in preference to terms such as original or native.

Personal communication from Mrs. Pupil Jaykar. Mrs. Jaykar’s monograph _The Earthen Drum_ is perhaps the first attempt to analyse the folk arts.

6. ibid, p. 39.


8. rупam rупam pratirупam bhavati.
   "Every form is an image (of an original form)."
   VSU, 1.2

9. VSU, 1.2 gloss

10. VSU, p. 54 fn # 45.


12. ibid. p. 234.
19 ibid. p. 203.

20 yad ihaśta tad anayatra, yaṁ nehaśta na tat
kvačit:
"What is here is there, what is not here is nowhere."
Woodroffe, J. Sakti and Saktism. (Madras: Ganesh and Co.,

Bṛhadārānyaka Upaniṣad, 1.2.1. quoted by
K. Vatsyayan. p. 14

Aitareya Upaniṣad, 1.2.4. Śrī Aurobindo. The

15 The Bhagavadgītā. Chapter XI.

20 puruṣo vai vāva sukṛtam
"Man indeed is well made."
Aitareya Upaniṣad, 1.2.3, Śrī Aurobindo. The Upaniṣhads.

21 R. Tagore, p. 86.

22 ibid, p. 84.

23 ibid, p. 82.

24 ibid, p. 86.

25 ārūpād rūpa
"From form to formlessness"
VSU, 5.21

26 sankalpād vikaḷpā iti viśeṣah
"The intention [to worship] leads to the appearance of a
particular form."
VSU, 5.19

27 dhyāna prayoge rūpa sauṣṭhavam spaṣṭam bhavati
"It is in the process of dhyāna that the form becomes
clear."
VSU, 3.14

28 Mulk Raj Anand, The Hindu View of Art. (Bombay:
Asia Publishing House, 1957) pp. 75-76.

29 H. Zimmer, Artistic Form and Yoga in the Sacred
ibid, p. 58.
ibid, p. 53.
ibid, p. 60.
ibid, p. 56.
Mulk Raj Anand, p. 85.
ibid, p. 85.
ibid, p. 81.
R. Tagore, p. 79.
Sri Aurobindo, p. 211.
A. Coomaraswamy, p. 183.
ibid, p. 26.
ibid, p. 25.
ibid, p. 24
*tatha rekha hi satyam, rekha rupasya karanaam*
"The lines are the Truth and the lines are the cause of the form"
VSU, 4.26 gloss
*rekha nyasasyadharaah sa dhareva*
"The line is the support of the composition."
VSU, 2.8 gloss
VSU, 4.26 gloss
"brahmabindvavalambanenarupāngañi saubhāgāñibhavanti"

"It is by adopting the centre that the limbs of the image become harmonious"

VSU, 6.11 and 6.13


1. vṛttām iti visvam, tad rupa prānāḥ, yathā
   puruṣasya manah sa vṛttā-kālaḥ eṣa vāstu vede
   "The circle is the All. The breath of life is contained in its form even as the mind is in Man. The circle is Time according to Vāstuveda"

VSU, 2.6 gloss


3 K. Vatsyayan, p. 48.

4 ibid, p. 49.

5 ibid, p. 49.

6 ibid, p. 56.

7 VSU, p. 18.

6 VSU, p. 111.

20 tatva-rekhāvalambane rūpātmāpratyakṣaṁ bhavati
   pratirupe cā
   "By depending on the essential lines the soul of form becomes manifest."

VSU, 2.21 gloss

6 VSU, 1.7 gloss


6 ibid, p. 21.

6 ibid, p. 24.

6 A. Coomaraswamy, pp. 136-37.

6 ibid, p. 126.

ibid, p. 152.

K. Vatsyayan, p. 12.
"The Kena Upanisad (1.1) while urging the pupil to go and seek beyond the reach of the eye, the ear, the speech or the touch, describes this absolute Brahman, as the ear of the ear, the mind of the mind, speech of the speech, life of the life (Breath), the eye of the eye, and yet beyond all this."

VSU, 5.21


ibid, p. 286.


yajñasya sulvasādhanam silpa rūpasya sādhanaṁ

"Sulva is the discipline for sacrifice, silpa is the discipline for image making"

VSU, 4.9

rūpa-jñānād yajñah prabhavati loke

"It is from the knowledge of form that sacrifice originates in the world."

VSU, 6.25 gloss

yat kīcchā vācā tad rūpena vijnānavācā prapannena acaranti. sa evaṁ veda

"Whatever one attains through [sacred] word the same they can attain through form."

VSU, 4. introduction

evaṁ arohaṇe rūpam dhyeyāṁ

"Thus form is to be meditated upon as a means of spiritual ascent."

VSU, 5.17 gloss

Here, it is to be noted, we have departed from the original text. The text uses the word aropane which would mean 'superimposition'. We have taken it to read arohane which
means 'spiritual ascent'.

** VSU, 2.10 gloss

** lakṣaṇa-prakāśartha-silpa-vidyā
"The science of sculpture is mainly to manifest the attributes (of the deities as veveled in the myths)."
VSU, 6.3

** VSU, 3.1 gloss

** VSU, 6.15

"sa esa rūpaprajñā brahma sākṣātkāra ānandaḥ iti"
From understanding the image [comes] the very realisation of Brahman
VSU, 6.15 gloss

** yathā brahma-vidyā tathā rūpaprajñā
"The higher and ultimate understanding of artistic form is none other than metaphysics."
VSU, 2.10 gloss

** karaṇudra rupaḥ sa bhavan jñāpayati
"Hand gestures manifest the emotional attitude of the image."
VSU, 6.16

** bahuḥ balaṁ jñāpayati rupe
"The weapons communicate the power of the figure."
VSU, 6.17

** VSU, 2.22

** VSU, 3.1

** VSU, 3.13

** rūpadhārāya vṛttiriti sreṣṭhā
"Is it the form that transforms the mind?"
VSU, 6.24

** hetuṁ tadākara
Form indeed has a reason.

Visnudharmottara Purāṇa, Third Khanda, Priyabala Shah (editor), (Baroda: Oriental Institute, 1961), 46
CHAPTER 4. THE_EPISTEMOLOGY_OF_AESTHETICS.

"bhogo yogayate sakṣat patakan sukṛtayate, 
   mokṣayate ca saṃsāraḥ kuladharame kulesvara"
   Kulārṇava Tantra, 2/24

Chapters two and three explored the dynamics of the rasa 
and rupa experience, with the emphasis on the art object, as 
exemplified by kāvya and śilpa. It was shown how these 
art forms, which are repositories of artistic information, yield 
this information to the aësthetete. The emphasis in the preceding
two chapters was primarily on the art object. This chapter will examine the epistemology of aesthetic experience and shift the attention from the art object to the aesthete. We are concerned here with the processes that occur in the mind of the aesthete who receives and responds to the dhvani of the art object.

In applying epistemological methods to the examination of aesthetic experience, our purpose is to expand and clarify our argument that aesthetic experience is a form of intuitive knowledge.

1. Metaphysics and Aesthetics in the Indian Tradition.

Both aesthetic emotion and aesthetic form in the Hindu tradition, are artistic creations, created within the strict confines of the tradition, embodying in the one case a feeling; and in the other: a vision, giving outer expression to a sense of beauty and delight, exalting the senses and leading, almost demanding, the aesthete to enter into his inner resources, to bring the experience to a transcendent culmination. Sri Aurobindo is right in saying that: "the whole basis of Indian artistic creation perfectly conscious and recognised in the canons, is directly spiritual and intuitive", and that "its highest business is to disclose something of the Self, the Infinite, the Divine." He further comments that the Indian artist does not depend on "an idea in the intellect, a mental imagination, an outward emotion" but instead dips into an
"Idea, image, emotion of the spirit." He continues, "This is the distinctive character of Indian art and to ignore it is to fall into total incomprehension or into much misunderstanding... And it is because of this that the ordinary aesthetic instinct will not suffice, a spiritual insight or culture is needed if we are to enter into the whole meaning of Indian artistic creation." 2

Sri Aurobindo's statement has been given in full because it emphasises that the word 'meaning' or artha sums up the entire undercurrent of the mārga artistic activity. Aesthetic meaning is to be grasped not by the intellect but by direct intuition; and, unless the aesthetic emotion or form is propelled to its ultimate meaning, the artistic encounter remains sterile, incomplete and superficial, perhaps not moving beyond a hedonistic experience. Hiriyanna puts it succinctly when he says that "the beautiful as a value needs to be striven for and achieved (sādhyā) no matter whether one approaches it as an artist or as a spectator." 3 Thus, the creation and appreciation of beauty in art is, in essence, the intuitive understanding of the meaning of the art object, and such understanding is a discipline or sādhana. Stated differently, it is the function of the aesthete to seek and realise artistic meaning.

A sound epistemology of aesthetic experience must be grounded in a metaphysics that provides first, a firm support for
objective experience as exemplified by aesthetic experience, and second, an ontological basis for affirming creativity and creation as values that are not denied or negated at any point. We need to place art experience within the orbits of a system of thought that gives credence both to the creator as well as to the connoisseur, the artist as well as the aesthete, art creation as well as aesthetic experience. In the major darsanas or schools of Indian philosophy, the question of the relationship between the subject and the world of objective experience is set within the framework of the quest for ultimate Reality. Radhakrishnan sums up the problem when he says, "When we divide the subject from the object the question of building the bridge from one to the other becomes difficult. Either we have to hold that the object is the creation of the subject or that there is no object at all." The epistemology of aesthetics must not only provide an understanding of objective experience as exemplified by art experience, but at the same time, explain creation and creativity.

Art preceds aesthetics, and the proper understanding and realisation of what is created cannot be done in isolation from the creative process itself. The major schools of Indian thought set their examination of the nature, value and significance of creative processes also within the framework of the quest for ultimate Reality. From our perspective, it is important to note that a metaphysical system which considers creative processes to
be either ultimately unreal or of little value cannot provide a firm basis for artistic experience. We have already pointed out that Abhinavagupta and many aestheticians who followed him, found in Kashmir Saivism a firm metaphysical basis for their aesthetic theory. In this chapter we will show that Kashmir Saivism, both in its metaphysics and its epistemology, offers a strong support to artistic experience, both for the artist and the aesthete. Abhinavagupta maintains that the schools of Realism, which include Samkhya, Nyaya, Vaisesika, Mimamsa and Carvaka, cannot provide a satisfactory basis for art. It is true that all these schools of thought, except Carvaka, accept consciousness as an ultimate metaphysical category, but they do not perceive creativity to be an ultimate value within consciousness. In Samkhya, for example, all creative processes stemming from human consciousness, including art creation, are seen as happenings within samsara, governed by karmic or current psychological causes. If pushed, this school may offer a psychological explanation for the artist's activity, but it does not perceive conscious acts of creativity to be of any ultimate value for the soul, the purusa. Abhinavagupta takes the position that for those who are content with the superficial and the momentary, these Realistic systems of thought are ideal. He implies that, for those who seek to give an ultimate meaning to the objective world, as exemplified by art, these schools of thought will not suffice.
From the Idealist schools of thought, we only need to consider seriously the epistemology of Śankara's Advaita Vedānta, for this was the exalted system of Indian thought in Abhinavagupta's time, and still is. The Viśiṣṭādvaita of Ramanuja is an important school of thought, as far as Hindu aesthetics is concerned, for it gave a prominent place to kavya, sangīta, nṛtya and all forms of visual art within the auspices of the temple. Chronologically, Rāmānuja came much later than Abhinavagupta and therefore, we do not have Abhinavagupta's evaluation of Viśiṣṭādvaita and of the practices of bhakti associated with this school of thought. From our perspective, Rāmānuja's system offers only qualified support for a yoga of art. The major obstacle in Rāmānuja's Viśiṣṭādvaita, from the aesthetic point of view, is the fact, that for Rāmānuja, bhakti is the overriding *modus operandi*, and all experiences must be subordinated to it. A pure aesthetic experience, devoid of bhakti, would be unacceptable to Rāmānuja. However, it is to be noted that Viśiṣṭādvaita, considered purely as a metaphysical system, can offer a firm ontological basis for establishing the ultimate value of aesthetic experience. Viśiṣṭādvaita affirms the reality of the world and the validity of objective experience, by regarding this world as the 'body of God'. It establishes the value of all creative processes by granting them an ontological basis in the creative energy of God. And, above all, it grants ultimate value to
beauty by perceiving it to be an essential attribute of God.
But, by the same token, in practice, the followers of Rāmānuja
insist that the perception of beauty should be subordinated to
bhakti, thereby denying the possibility of developing
aesthetic experience as a sādhana in its own right. And in
this lies the problem for aestheticians.

2. THE_EPISTEMOLOGY_OF_SĀNKARA.
Sāṅkara recognises the objective world of name and form as
 provisionally real, and further recognises that the perception of
this objective world is a function of all beings. For
Sāṅkara, this world of manifold perceiving subjects, and
objects of perception, has no existence apart from Brahman. In
his metaphysics, Sankara recognises the world as provisionally
real, and in his epistemology, he strongly argues that the world
of objects is not a creation of the subjective mind, thereby
distinguishing his view from that of the Viśīkhaṇṇavādins.
Nevertheless in the end, he would have us insist that the
universe is ultimately unreal, an appearance maintained by
ignorance (avidyā), and superimposed on Brahman.
Correspondingly, in his epistemology, there is a sharp break
between the perception of objects and the knowledge of Brahman.
To use his own analogy, there is no way, whereby the truth of the
rope and the illusion of the snake, can be upheld at one and the
same time. In the light of ultimate truth the reality of the
universe is contradicted and consequently, objects of perception are divested of ultimate value. The mind that rests in the contemplation of Brahman and the universe of objects are "adrift like two logs in the ocean." never to meet again. From the perspective of Abhinavagupta's criticism, there are major problems in accepting Sankara's metaphysics as a framework for aesthetics. Sankara's Mayavada ultimately rejects the world of objects and, therefore, cannot give ultimate value to the art object. Further since Sankara's Brahman does not include the world of objects and is essentially passive and nirguna, as a consequence, all creative processes, whether in material nature or in human consciousness, including art objects, are relegated ultimately to the status of sayâ.

3. THE TANTRIC EMPISTEMOLOGY.

Abhinavagupta worked within the framework of Kâśmîr Saivism, for it was important for him not only to enunciate his theory of aesthetics, but to show that art was a form of higher realisation. He found in the metaphysics of Kâśmîr Saivism the most suitable framework for his theory of aesthetics. Kâśmîr Saivism is a generic term for a number of heterodox, advaitic systems of thought brought together under the umbrella of Saivism. Believed to have been systematised and developed in the Kâśmîr valley, in the tenth century, it had a number of exponents, but the high priest of them all was Abhinavagupta. It
is not necessary to outline this system of thought in any great
detail; in particular we need not consider its rituals and cults.
Our interest lies in its epistemology, with special reference to
aesthetic experience.

4.1 THE CONCEPT OF ĀBHAŚA.

The transcedent godhead of Kāśmīr Śaivism, called
Parasāvid or Anuttara resembles the Brahmaṇ of Sāṅkara,
and is something about which nothing can be said, an entity
therefore beyond words. The Śaiva sāstras declare that "it
is undefinable in terms of everyday life," which is similar
to the Vedāntic declaration that, "there the eyes do not reach,
neither speech, nor the intellect." However the
fundamental difference between the two systems is that kāśmīr
Śaivism does not recognise the maya of Sāṅkara but instead
postulates the concept of ābhāśa. Etymologically meaning
"reflection", Abhinavagupta defines ābhāśa as "all that
appears, all that forms the object of perception or conception,
all that is within the reach of the external senses or the
internal mind, all that can be said to exist in any way and with
regard to which the use of any kind of language is possible, be
it the subject, the object, the means of knowledge or knowledge
itself, is ābhāśa." Several metaphysical implications
follow from the concept of ābhāśa. First and foremost,
ābhāśa affirms the reality of the manifested world, without
negating the non-duality and the transcendence of the Absolute. Ābhāṣa allows differentiation without duality and affirms the ultimate reality and value of creation without compromising the integrity of the creator. The Śaiva sāstras explain the significance of ābhāṣa with the analogy of one flame lighting another, where the first flame remains intact when the second arises, and both flames are identical in essential nature, though manifestly distinguishable. The Chāndogya Upanisad hints at the concept of ābhāṣa when it declares, "That is whole, this is whole; from the whole the whole becomes manifest. From the whole when the whole is negated, what remains is the whole." The concept of ābhāṣa is central to Tantric epistemology, and it enables one to understand creativity and the understanding of what is created as an integral activity. It is ābhāṣa that assures the ontological bona fides of the art object. The concept of ābhāṣa signifies for the Kāśmīr Śaivas that the world-manifestation arises out of a free and a spontaneous creative activity, spanda in the Absolute. Furthermore, ābhāṣa connotes that creativity is the spontaneous self-expression or self-projection of the Absolute: the created world displays the very nature of the Creator. In Kāśmīr Saivism, therefore, creativity of all forms is of ultimate value because it has its ontological basis in the Absolute. The concept of ābhāṣa or emanation has, as its correlative, the idea of levels of reality. Each lower level is a manifestation...
or ābhāsa of the one above it. All the levels are correlated and at each level a form of differentiation is displayed without the negation of non-duality. At every level there is the differentiation into subject and object, but this differentiation is based in, and unified by, the non-duality of consciousness. In this sense ābhāsa signifies the "self-projected reflection of consciousness."¹¹ In making it dependent, ontologically on consciousness itself, ābhāsa is not an illusion but like a "dream within a dream."¹² The analogy of a dream should not be taken as a reversion to the āyāvāda of Śaṅkara, or as the espousal of subjective-idealism. For Kasmīr Śaivism, this universe of indvidual subject and objects is the true self-expression or real emanation of the consciousness of Siva. In this sense the world is Siva's dream. Similarly, the subjective awareness and objective experience of the individual is the dream of self-expression of individual consciousness. The individual's 'dream' is included and transcended in Siva's dream. In questioning the reality or otherwise of ābhāsa, the Tantric would argue, "are you real?"¹³ For if you are real, the Tantric would argue, the ābhāsa is also real. As Tagore writes, "the fact of their [the art object's] existence enkindles in us the awareness that we also exist."¹⁴ The reality of the objective experience reinforces the perceiver's subjective reality, in proclaiming its own reality, the art object encourages a realisation of the aesthete's reality. This onus in
the dialectic about reality, for the Tantric, is on the subject and not the object, objective experience merely reinforcing subjective reality. The concept of ābhāsa implies that the artist's creative self-expression is a reflection or a manifestation, at the human level, of Śiva's creative self-expression. As the world reflects Śiva's consciousness, so the art object reflects the consciousness of the artist. The aesthete's enjoyment of art is a reflection of Śiva's spontaneous enjoyment of the world.

What is noteworthy in the Tantric argument is that at no stage does it allow any sense of duality, for the Tantrics argue that, "any sense of duality in an experience is a source of ignorance." No level of experience is abandoned as untrue, no type of experience is negated; every experience, on the other hand, is included and transcended in a higher level of experience, every level of ābhāsa used to activate the otherwise passive self.

4.2 THE AHAṀ AND THE IDAM.

The immanent godhead of Kaśmir Śaivism is termed prakāśāvisvarāśraya indicating that the Absolute is now beginning to display its two constituent parts, which were preserved in potentia in the transcendent state as unity-in-diversity; prakāśa also called Śiva tattva or Aham signifying self-awareness or the sub-stratum of
manifestation, and viśarṣa or Sakti tattva or Ida, denotes that power of manifestation which gives rise to self-awareness, will, knowledge and action. Stated differently, prakāśa is the 'I' and viśarṣa the 'myself', both being held in dynamic equilibrium, an example of reflexive consciousness, which is a cardinal feature of this variety of Indian thought. Viśarṣa or reflexive consciousness is the active component of the immanent godhead, as compared with prakāśa which is the passive and dormant. It is viśarṣa that provides content to what would otherwise be an empty godhead. The Kasmīr Śaivites point out that viśarṣa acts spontaneously and with freedom, it possesses not an act of will but play, not the expression of a lack, but the display of fullness, its action termed kriyā or spanda, meaning spontaneous action rather than karma or volitional action.

The concept of viśarṣa is the key to the understanding of not only creativity and creation on the one hand, but the appreciation of what is created, or aesthetics on the other. In making viśarṣa a part of the immanent godhead the Kasmīr Śaivites opened the door to objective realisation as a form of higher experience. Viśarṣa is no sāya or illusion, it is real. At the human level, constituting what the Vedantins would call the ātman, the same prakāśa-viśarṣa-maya principle operates at the core of the human personality, with one important difference, namely that prakāśa which is of the essence of
knowledge at the human level, is not capable of self-awareness, since it is dormant, and therefore needs the activity of its vimāraṣa aspect. While the cosmic Śiva is capable of self-knowledge and does not need objective realisation, the Śiva tattva at the human level is dormant without its Śakti. In making vimāraṣa an integral part of the ātman or the core of the human personality, Kāśmir Śaivism opens the ātman to the world and provides it a window to embrace and entertain all forms of worldly experience. Herein lies the fundamental difference between this system of thought and Advaita Vedānta, for Śaṅkara’s māyā which is the operative principle of worldly experience, would have no place in the ātman. The Śaivites then go a step further and emphasise that since prakāśa at the human level is not self-aware of its luminosity and essentially dormant, but becomes so only on account of it being awakened and aroused by vimāraṣa, the more the vimāraṣa is active the more self-aware will the prakāśa be. Pandey remarks that the "phenomenon of knowledge is not the result of mere existence of the subject and the object but that of the unification of the two by relation of identity, tadātmya sambandha." This not only encourages, but makes it mandatory for the self to seek out, participate and indulge in worldly experiences, rather than turning the back on the world, as the Advaita Vedāntins would have us do.
4.3 COGNITION IN INDIAN EPISTEMOLOGY.

We now turn to the cognitive process with the purpose of establishing that aesthetic awareness is not merely an emotive experience, but a process of knowledge, which has the capacity not only of grasping nuances of meaning but of expanding into the realisation of ultimate Reality. Cognition in Indian epistemology begins and ends with the cognising self. The first step in this process is the wish to perceive the object. The next step, the actual process of cognition is likened to a ray of light that leaves the subject, reaches the object and is reflected back to the cognising self giving rise to an image. The first cognitive experience is a superficial, dim and tentative experience of the object and is called an indeterminate experience or nirvikalpa pratyakṣa. After the object has been dimly cognised a determinate experience or savikalpa pratyakṣa takes place, where, "there is a union of the subjective and the objective wave of consciousness in the sea of the all inclusive universal consciousness."17 In other words, Kaśmir Śaivism maintains that the cognitive process is more than what it appears to be. In the final analysis, cognition is a super-sensuous experience, anubhava, which implies "the subject becoming what the object is."18 To use the Indian idiom, 'you do not just cognize the jar but you become the jar'. This is the basic framework of cognition in most Indian system of thought and one that applies to any objective experience, in any
individual, aesthete or otherwise. In an aesthetic experience, it is at the stage of the saṇkalpa pratyakṣa that dhvani comes into play, for without it, it would remain a mere intellectual activity. For dhvani may begin with aesthetic reasoning but ends with a suprarational aesthetic experience. It is here at the level of saṇkalpa pratyakṣa that both rasadhvani and rupadhvani lead to a progressive realisation of the particular art experience, the cognising mind experiencing layer upon layer of rasa and rūpa like “the needle that goes through a pile of lotus leaves,” each step producing a subtler, more refined, universally expanded and extended experience. It is here that rasa is tasted, it is here that rūpaprajña or the inner sense of form is revealed. The suggested meanings or resonances revealed by the art object are grasped by direct intuitive insights at this stage, these insights becoming more profound as they move through the resonances. It is to be noted that the attitude of the perceiving mind and what it puts into the cognitive process, is an integral part of determinate perception. Saṇkalpa pratyakṣa calls into play the various aesthetic faculties of the aesthete, faculties acquired by sīkṣa or training or by sāṃskāras or latent inherited psychic impressions. It is here that the gāthas and the kathas have their full import, the aesthetic pramāṇas are translated into their metaphysical counterpart, and the suggestiveness of dhvani
comes into full play. Hiriyanna notes that, "the savikalpa pratyakṣa is a matter of observation and is given in introspection. We become aware of it not as it arises but in a second knowledge termed anuvyavasāya." The Kasmīr Śāiva interpretation of the cognitive process provides the epistemological framework to explain the union of the aesthete and the art object. Thus savikāla pratyakṣa, rendered as a multi-layered, open-ended cognitive step, becomes vital to the development of an epistemology of aesthetics.

4.4 BHOGA AS A COGNITIVE PRINCIPLE

It is important to note that, while savikalpa pratyakṣa as a cognitive process is common to all Indian systems of thought, Kasmīr Śāivism stresses it to bring out the full objectivity of the experience. It is this multi-layered, open-ended cognitive step that is utilized to realise the full impact of dhvani in an art experience. What is more important however is that Kasmīr Śāivism permits this savikalpa pratyakṣa to proceed to a higher realisation, without sacrificing any of its objective content. In other words Kasmīr Śāivism shows the way how cognition can be transformed into a yoga, how objective (rather than subjective) contemplation leads to higher realisation, how an art experience is converted into the yoga of art. At no step in the epistemology of Kasmīr Śāivism is the objectivity of the experience lost. The subject
embraces the object, not only to enjoy it, and fully realise it, but to transform this cognitive process into an act of higher realisation, a process called bhoga in Tantric terminology.

Kāśmir Saivism was developed in the intellectual and cultural ambience of the Tantric tradition, from where it inherited the idea of bhoga. For Tantrists bhoga is knowledge, bhoga is yoga, and conversely there can be no yoga without bhoga. Tantric yoga is therefore essentially a type of jñāna yoga. The Kulārṇava Tantra clearly says that, "O' Kulesvarī, in this path of Kula, the objective worldly enjoyment becomes the means of yoga; what is normally taken as vice becomes a virtue, and the world which is ordinarily a cause of bondage becomes a means of liberation."21. It is made amply clear that the purpose of bhoga is sublimation leading to mokṣa, for bhoga arises from, and leads to, the higher self, leaving no room for a hedonistic interpretation of bhoga. It is only when bhoga is truncated from the higher self, introducing a sense of duality, that it becomes hedonistic and materialistic, for as Misra points out, bhoga implies "being seated in the transcendent Self enjoying the pleasure of the Self and not the enjoyed object, or enjoying the pleasure of the Self through the object."22. Tantric bhoga, while giving validity to the objective world, shifts the emphasis from the object to the subject, just as, to use a Tantric analogy, the enjoyment of the light of the moon is not
right until one realises that the light of the moon does not belong to it but really to the sun. The Light of lights is the immanent godhead, Śiva-Sakti, through whom all subjective-objective experience becomes possible. The Tāntrics remind us that "the moment the attention is turned from the Self to bhoga, it is a fall." 

We have shown that, in the Tāntric sadhāna, enjoyment and knowledge are held together so that our experience of the world of objects becomes the means of the realisation of Śiva as the ultimate subject. One more aspect of bhoga remains to be discussed, namely the inseparable association of enjoyment with tranquility, bhoga with viśrānti. Abhinavagupta argues that the cognitive process, which moves out towards the knowledge and enjoyment of objects, is not complete until it is reversed so to speak, and brought to rest in the knowing subject. This signifies that all objective knowledge culminates in a deepening awareness of the subject and of the significance of subjectivity. This culminating moment of resting in the subject is technically called viśrānti.

It is for this reason that the concept of bhoga is described as "asidhāravrata" or moving on the edge of a sword. Bhoga, which take place at the stage of savīkāra pratakyāsa, ensures two things; firstly that the object is fully and properly enjoyed (cognised), and that secondly that this cognition is brought to rest by the process of viśrānti.
Abhinavagupta describes the process of cognition thus:

As for the knower, when he attends to an object and says I have known this object, he takes delight in the object, having freed himself from desire and possessiveness, and he then rests in himself. Therefore even from the encounter between the knower and the object, there arises the fullest delight from the complete and ultimate knowledge of that object.  

Tantric cognition implies a complete and total understanding of the objective experience as presented by the object, and ensures the "destruction of the sense of the not-self, not being the self." Applying this to the rasa and rūpa experiences it suggests that bhoga means a total, deliberate and penetrating aesthetic realisation rather than a mere superficial aesthetic appreciation, and calls into play the total commitment of the aesthete. The Tantric epistemology of bhoga, therefore, shows the process of removing the duality between the object and the subject, making the object ontologically a part of the subject. Unlike subjective Idealism, this process does not obliterate the identity of the object, but merely brings it together. Bhoga ensures that the subject and the object will not be "adrift like two logs in the ocean".

4.5 Viśrānti, A CULMINATION OF BHOGA.

If a full and total cognition of the object is the afferent aspect of bhoga, viśrānti is its efferent aspect. Viśrānti or rest, implies resting the vimarsa on the prakāśa; rest understood not in a physical or psychological
sense, but a psychic or spiritual rest, where every trace of duality in consciousness has ended. Aesthetically speaking, it can be said that viśrānti means that there is no more searching for meanings, no more the quest for symbolic significance, no more does the mind wander with the gāthas and the kathas, no more the play of rekha. In the words of Tagore, "From the words of the poet men take what meanings please them; yet their last meaning points to thee." Viśrānti is this "last meaning." Viśrānti is the bliss of aesthetic experience, viśrānti is the bringing together of Śiva and Pārvati. At this point there arises the "fullest delight from the complete and ultimate knowledge of that object."

Sāvikālpa pratyakṣa at this stage of viśrānti gives way to sāvikālpa jñāna, or samādhi, which is knowledge of the ultimate subject. It is important to point out that in this culmination of objective experience the objectivity of the object is not lost, but merely brought into dynamic harmony with the essential consciousness of the experiencing subject. Up to this point aesthetic appreciation has been an intellectual process, beyond this it moves into the suprarational. Aesthetically speaking, viśrānti is the suprarational realisation of the triune unity, without any trace of duality, of beauty as presented by the art object, the individual self and cosmic Śiva, a realisation that beauty is none other than Śiva. It is
vishranti that applies the "collyrium paint of wisdom (to) grant glorious vision to the eyes," to bring a realisation that beauty is Truth, that rasa and rupa are nothing but brahmaananda. It is this feature of Kasmir Saivism that sets it apart from Advaita Vedanta, for, in the latter, objectivity is a hindrance rather than a help in an ananda experience.

Epistemologically, prakasa or dormant self-luminosity and vimarsha or an active display of self-consciousness are inseparable, like Siva and Parvati, and it is only in that state of unity and full activity of both that there can be ananda or bliss. The process of vishranti not only assures the culmination of cognitive experience in ananda, but at the same time removes the gulf between the subject and the object, so that the subject looks upon the object as "identical with one's own self." It is for this reason that Kasmir Saivites consider cognition a recognition, and this system of thought is also sometimes called pratyabhijna or remembrance. It is, as it were, the cognising self, as a result of the cognising experience, remembers the identity between the subject and the object which has existed all along, but which was hidden. In this sense, it can be said that the aesthetic experience has not added any new knowledge, but has merely uncovered existing knowledge.

S COGNITION IN A JIVANMUZTA.
Aesthetically, the question arises whether every form of cognition leads to ānanda. Abhinavagupta states that, "to the liberated in life the entire objective world appears as a mere reflection on the self, and therefore, as really non-different from it." 31 "He looks upon the entire objective world that is reflected on him as his own manifestation." 32 Such a person is a jīvanākta and to such a person the diversity of the objective world which is ordinarily looked upon as bondage, appears as identical with one's own self. In the case of such a person even the condition of an earthen jar would lead to ānanda: the aesthete however would need an encounter with rasa and rūpa to lead him to rasananda and rupānanda. Perhaps this is one of the reasons why it is said that rasananda resembles brahmananda, like a twin brother, but is not identical with it.

6. TOWARDS A YOGA OF ART

The origins of yoga are pre-historic but it was Patanjali who systematised the concepts and objects of yoga. Although when it comes to its methods and ultimate objectives, Tāntric yoga parts company from Patanjali's yoga. Patanjali's yoga calls for the eventual withdrawal from the objective world and can be termed the "yoga of alienation", while the Tāntric yoga is the "yoga of integration." 33 Tāntrists have no difficulty in accepting
the basic postulates of Patanjali as preparatory steps. Patanjali worked within the Samkhya tradition and the end point of his yoga was kaivalya or kevala Purusa or a state in which the purusa is self-contained and uninvolved with prakrti. Kaivalya is said to be a state of pure consciousness, transcending the duality of subjective and objective modes of experience. This position is obviously unacceptable to Tantrists for whom the objective experience is a means of realising the transcendent subject.

Abhinavagupta regards six components as essential to his yoga, viz. pranayama or breath control, dhyana or contemplation, pratyahara or restraint, dharana or concentration, sattarka or logic and samadhi or the merging of the consciousness with the Ultimate. Abhinavagupta eliminates yama or self-control, niyama or ritual observances and asana or postures from the basic eight of Patanjali. Thus contemplation, restraint and concentration form a part of the Tantric yoga. Aesthetically speaking, it emphasises the basic discipline required of an aesthete, who approaches the art experience, with a sense of dedication and purpose, devoid of egoity and after proper preparation. Any superficial or hedonistic artistic activity would not qualify for a true aesthetic experience in the margi tradition. The disciplines prescribed by Abhinavagupta have much in common with the disciplines prescribed for the aesthete in the margi
tradition. The non-acceptance of yama or self-control by Tantrists is not hard to understand, as Tantric yoga requires a seeking out, embracing and participating in objective experiences and not an introspective withdrawal which is a feature of Patanjali's yoga.

The main feature of distinction between Tantric yoga and Patanjali's yoga is the concept of sattarka. It is sattarka that brings about self-recognition, by uprooting the apparent distinction between the subject and the object, grasping "the true subjective nature of what appears to be objective." Sattarka is the understanding that in every act of cognition the subject projects itself into the object, so that objective experience is always a reflection of the nature and attributes of the subject. In Tantric yoga it is sattarka that permits a seeking out of objective experiences and making it a part of higher realisation. Lest it be felt that every objective experience, irrespective of its quality, becomes a bhoga, Tantrists are quick to point out the concept of apūnakhāyi or incomplete knowledge. Aesthetically speaking, while there is no illusion in art experience, there is always the risk of an incomplete art experience. To be more specific it would suggest that to be content with a superficial rasa or rūpa experience without an unfathoming of the dhvani would be an apūnakhāyi. Built into the Tantric epistemology is the step-ladder approach of knowledge to greater
knowledge, a position particularly suited to Indian art that incorporates dhvani as its principal artistic technique. Nothing is rejected and nothing is negated, by the Tantrist as he embraces art experience and elevates it to its ultimate, by penetrating the surface to arrive at the deeper - who tastes emotion only to transform it into rasa, who is not content with mere form, rupa, but seeks its inner sense, rūpaprajña. It is only apūrnakhyaṭi that would introduce a sense of duality in the art experience, and duality is the very source of ignorance for the Tantrists say, "It is the sense of duality that becomes an obstacle in (right) knowledge."\

7. BHOGA AS YOGA.

The term bhoga, even within the Tantric tradition, is capable of several interpretations. Although we have restricted its use to aesthetics, for a Tantrist, any objective experience that leads to a higher realisation can be called bhoga. For those who prefer to follow the Tantric rituals, the pañcamaṇḍalas or the five 'Ms' (women, wine, meat, fish and gestures) become bhoga. Since the corner-stone of Tantric yoga is bhoga, and bhoga itself is so protean, no consistent definition of yoga is possible in the Tantric framework. Mishra is right in pointing out that "unlike the yoga sūtras of Patañjali there is no systematic treatise on the Tantric yoga." Different interpreters of Tantra offer
various definitions. Mishra suggests that Tantric yoga is the "unfolding of the Kundalini." Abhinavagupta in the Tantrasāra states that "yoga is a form of experience which is of the nature of perceiving unity with that form", referring to the ultimate nature of Śiva. Tantric sāstras, as opposed to Patañjali's yogasūtras, remain rather imprecise about yoga, and leave its concepts rather amorphous.

Tantra has been called the right system for the present age or Kali yuga. It has been said that, "in the Kali age the fool who seeks to attain siddhi by the paths shown in other sāstras is like a thirsty man who digs a well on the very banks of the Jahanvi." For no other system can incorporate bhoga or pleasure and moksa or liberation, no other ideology can claim to be "bhaktimuktikarāṇīka"; and no other practice would "make it possible to attain in one life or in one week that which was rarely attained even by Devas like Indra." There is yet another reason why Tantric yoga is the yoga for this age. The Tantralokāviveka states, "[Tantric yoga] permits one to be a Kaula within, a Śaivite outside and a Vaidika amongst the people, like a coconut which keeps its nectar-like juice hidden inside." This sutra brings out at least two important features of Tantric yoga. Firstly, the sādhaka is enjoined to keep the Tantric practices personal and private, almost a secret to himself, making this kind of yoga a private rather than a public yoga. Secondly, it
permits the sadhaka to be an eclectic, and prevents his aesthetic sadhana from being a cult. Thus a practitioner of the yoga of art has indeed great freedom; he need not change his outward religious and social practices, and does not get into any conflict with other traditions. It is for this reason that aesthetics does not set up any social and sectarian boundaries. Thus bhaga leads to freedom without necessitating withdrawal from the world. This signifies that, by accepting the Tantric principle of bhaga the artist and the aesthete alike, can aim to develop a life-style of personal and artistic freedom and yet lay claim to an exalted state of being.

In conclusion, we return to the question with which we began our inquiry. Can aesthetic experience be seen as an independent form of yoga? The concept of ananda pervades the entire Upanisads and Bharata hints at the exalted nature of natya when he says that, "what final goal the scholars of Veda reach, what final goal the performers of yajña reach, what final goal the benefactors reach, that same goal is attainable (by the Natyasāstra)”. He has further said that" the gods will not be propitiated as much when they are worshipped with sandal and garlands as they will be when they are by the praises contained in the enactment of the drama.” However it remained for mediaeval aestheticians like Abhinavagupta to fully expound this view that art experience points to a transcendent goal. Understood in this sense one is able to affirm the Upanisadic
mahāvākyā: 'tat tvam asi', 'that thou art', through the yoga of art.

While art in India is pre-historic and has had an almost unbroken tradition through millenia, aesthetics came into its own only with the Tantric aestheticians. Not only did Tantric aestheticians legitimise aesthetics as a form of higher realisation, but they succeeded in giving aesthetics a status of its own, independent of religious implications, the term 'religion' being used in a ritualistic sense. Aesthetics for the Tantrists and specially the Kāśmir Śāivites, was an artistic truth to be realised through a process of knowledge, and not as an appendage of bhakti, as it in fact became when the bhakti cult spread across the country in medieaval India.

The Mahānirvana Tantra which elaborates on the "tatasthalalaksana Brahman" or the Brahman that is objectively realised from its earthly forms, clearly states, "That same Brahman which is known from His external signs...for those who would know Him through these external signs, for them Śādhana is enjoined."

"That is, the same Brahman, who may be known in its inner nature by the real or direct knowledge (sva-rupa-jnana) of Self, may also be apprehended through the senses, from its manifestation in the created world." Thus Tantra does not disclaim the introspective contemplation of the self as advocated by Śankara and Patanjali, but points out that objective contemplation based on sensory experience, or bhoga, can also lead to the same
results. Following Abhinavagupta, there were a spate of aestheticians, who wrote exhaustively on various aspects of aesthetics, and it would not be wrong to say that in medieval India there was more aesthetics than art in India.

8. MODERN_INDIAN_AESTHETICIANS.

Of the modern Indian aestheticians there are two worthy of special note, namely, Sri Aurobindo and Rabindranath Tagore. It is they, from amongst many others, who have preserved the Indian tradition of keeping aesthetics within the realm of philosophy rather than art history. They themselves were artists first and aestheticians next. On examining their ideas it is interesting to note that the influence of Tantrism on them seems obvious. It is important to stress the contribution of these modern aestheticians, in order to show that the influence of Tantrism was not just short lived or local, but has fully pervaded Indian culture. When Tagore says, "I dive down into the depth of the ocean of forms, hoping to gain the pearl of the formless" or "Ever in my life have I sought thee with my songs," or "In this playhouse of infinite forms I have had my play and here have I caught sight of him that is formless," he is defining the basic postulate of Tantric yoga that one may ascend "from form to formless." And then again when Tagore says that, "deliverance is not for me in renunciation. I feel the embrace of freedom in a thousand bonds of delight. No I will never shut
the doors of my senses. The delights of sight and hearing and
touch will bear thy delight," he indeed is speaking of
bhoga.

In opting for bhoga as a sustained aesthetic principle,
the door opens up for breaking away from tradition and bringing
in its wake the acceptance of modern and secular art. For
bhoga lays down no grāmāṇas, knows no limits, accepts no
barriers and works without boundaries. Tagore says this in no
uncertain terms:

Art is not a gorgeous sepulchre, immovable
brooding over a lonely eternity of vanished years.
It belongs to the procession of life, making
constant adjustment with surprises, exploring
unknown shrines of reality along its path of
pilgrimage to a future which is as different from
the past as the tree from the seed."** "If
today we have a living soul that is sensitive to
ideas and to beauty of form, let it prove its
capacity by accepting all that is worthy of
acceptance, not according to some blind injunction
of custom or fashion, but in following one's
instinct for eternal value.**

Sri Aurobindo has stressed the suprarational nature of art
creation and art appreciation:

But as with truth of religion, so with the
highest and deepest truth of beauty, the
intellectual reason cannot seize its inner sense
and reality... its secret inner law of beauty and
harmony... can be seized by vision, not by
intellectual analysis; great art... seeks for a
deep and original truth which escapes the eye of
the mere sense or the mere reason... Where the
greatest and most powerful creation of beauty is
accomplished and its appreciation and enjoyment
rise to the highest pitch, the rational is always
surpassed and left behind.**
Indian art, from its pre-historic beginnings to its contemporary state has evolved and changed, but yet remains a palimpsest, where the past is not totally erased, it is a sangam where folk and classical traditions have mingled, an upside down tree "urdhva mūlam"², which has sent its branches in every direction in a celebration of life, but has kept its roots above. Aesthetics, in the marga Hindu tradition is the domain of the "supra-rational aesthetic soul"³⁹, and "to find highest beauty is to find God."⁴⁰. We have given an exalted position to art and aesthetics in India, for it was none other than Bharata who said that "music and singing are more holy and beneficial than thousands of religious baths and incantations."⁴ⁱ

Art in India is a spiritual adventure, driven by a quest for delight and indeed a yoga.
NOTES


2 ibid, p. 211.


5 ibid, p. 382.


Sankara's position has been explained at length as Abhinavagupta directed his critique mainly at Advaita Vedanta.

7 na vidyate uttara prashnaprativacorupam yatra "it is undefinable in terms of everyday life." Pada Trimśika Vivarana , 19. in K.C.Pandey, p. 321.
"na tatra caksur gacchati no vag gacchati na mano na vidmo na viśāṇīmo..."
"There the eyes do not go, neither the mind, nor the intellect..."
Tavalkaro Upanisad. 1.3 in K.C. Pandey, p. 323.

K.C. Pandey, p. 320.

10 pūrṇam adah pūrṇam idam pūrṇat pūrṇam udacyate.
pūrṇasya pūrṇam ādāya pūrṇam eva avāśīyatē
"That is whole, this is whole, from the whole the whole becomes manifest. From the whole when the whole is negated what remains is again the whole."
This is an invocatory verse from the Upanisads. Swami Chinnayanananda includes it in Discourses on the Chandogya Upanisad. (Madras: Chinnaya Publication Trust, date not given) p. 67.


12 Ibid., p. 135

13 Personal communication from Prof. Kamlakar Mishra.


15 dvaitapratīta tadvājānam tucchatvad bandha ucyate
"This apprehension of duality is the real illusion (or ignorance)"
Tantrāloka, 1/30 in K. Mishra, p. 136.


17 Ibid., p. 412.

18 Ibid., p. 412.

17 padma pātra sata vyati bheda nayena
"a needle going through a pile of lotus leaves."
This original quotation by Abhinavagupta has been quoted in turn by all major commentators including Māmata and Visvanatha. see Māmata, Kavyaprakāśa. Vol 1. (ed.) R.C. Dwivedī (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1967) p. 62.

bhugo yogayate saksat pataka sukrtayate, moksha yate ca saṃsārah kuladharame kulesvari.

"O! Kuleśvari, in this path of kula, the objective worldly enjoyment becomes the means of yoga, what is normally taken as a vice becomes a virtue, and the world, which is ordinarily a cause of bondage, becomes a means of liberation."

Kulārṇavā, Tantrā. 2/24 in K. Mishra, p. 49.

22 K. Mishra, p. 79.
23 K. Mishra, p. 79.
24 K. Mishra, p. 79.
26 atmani atmahāvo villyate "destruction of the sense of the not-self, not being the self."
Abhinavagupta, Tantrasāra. (Bombay: Nirnayasagar Press, 1918) 5.40

28 Indian artists have artistically depicted the concept of prakāśavimarsamaya by showing Siva and Parvati as a couple in love.

29 K.C. Pandey, p. 539.
33 K. Mishra, p. 139.
34 K.C. Pandey, p. 538.
36 dvaitpratha tadajñanam tucchavād bandha ucyate "it is the sense of duality that becomes an obstacle in (right) knowledge."
Tantrāloka. 1/30 in K. Mishra, p. 136.
37 K. Mishra, p. 142.
38 K. Mishra, p. 142.
39 tat svarūpaṁ anusandhāna atma vikalpa vīseso
yogah
"yoga is a form of experience which is of the nature of
perceiving unity with that form [of Siva]"
Abhinavagupta, Tantrasāra. 4.27
41 ibid, p. 114.
42 antah kaulo bāhi śaivo lokācare tu vaidikah,
sarmadaya tistheta narikelaphalaṁ yāthā.
"[Tantric yoga] permits one to be a kaula within, a Saivite
outside and a Vaidika amongst the people, like a coconut which
keeps its nectar-like juice hidden inside."
B.N. Pandit, Aspects of Kashmir Saivism. (Srinagar: Utpal
43 ya gatir vedavidusam yagatiryañākāraṇam ya
gatirdanāsalināṁ taṁ gatīṁ prāpnuyāt hi saṁ.
"what final goal the scholars of Veda reach, what final goal
the benefactors reach, the same goal is attainable by [the
Natyāstātra ]."
Bharata, Natyāstātra. 37.27
na tathā gandhāmadyena devah tasyaṁ puṣṭah. tatha natya
prayogasthaṁ nityam tasyati manālāṁ
"the gods will not be propitiated as much when they are
worshipped with sandal and garland, as they will be when they are
by the praises contained in the enactment of the drama."
Bharata, Natyāstātra. 37.29
44 J. Woodroffe, The Great Liberation. Mahānirvāna
45 R. Tagore, Gitānjali. song # 100.
46 ibid. song # 101.
47 ibid. song # 96.
48 ibid. song # 73.
ibid. p. 61.


S. Radhakrishnan, (translator), *The Bhagavadgita.* (London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd, 1960) 15.1 "As the tree originates in God, it is said to have its roots above." p. 326.


snana japya, sahasrebhayah pavitraṃ gītavādīt \[\ldots\] "music and singing are more holy and beneficial than thousands of religious baths and incantations." Bharata, *Nātyaśāstra.* 36.26
EPilogue

If the turn of the present century was an axial period for Indian aestheticians, who led a renaissance in the visual and performing arts, the present period for Indian art, marked as it is by art festivals and glossy art books, seems to be characterised by a certain superficiality and a drifting away from its roots. What was once the preserve of the cave temples is now displayed in exhibitions, what was once in the hands of rṣis and kaviṣ seems to have been taken over by art historians. Increased awareness of Indian art seems to have been at the cost of a proper understanding of its methods and meanings. Art appreciation seems to have replaced art experience. It is important to state this to provide a backdrop for the present inquiry, which endeavours to put classical Indian art in its proper perspective. Towards this end, this inquiry is a small but original contribution.

The inquiry has been an undertaking to demonstrate that aesthetic experience in the classical Indian tradition, on its own merit, without being subordinated to rituals and practices commonly held under the rubric of religion, is capable of providing a transcendent experience to a prepared aesthete. Two major art experiences, in the mārgi tradition have been
chosen, and it has been demonstrated by presenting their
dynamics, that each leads the aesthete to a higher experience.
From the perspective of its dynamics, it has been shown, that
dhvani or the transformation of meaning, is the central
artistic device of classical Indian art. It has been further
demonstrated, that from amongst the schools of Indian thought,
Kasmir Saivism provides the legitimacy to aesthetic experience,
and within its framework, art experience can be understood as a
form of yoga. Ontologically, Kasmir Saivism affords a reality to
art objects and art experience alike. Epistemologically, Kasmir
Saivism, points to the twin concepts of bhoga and
visranti, as essential for a yoga of art. It is important to
point out that in opting for Kasmir Saivism as a school of
thought, within which to understand art experience, one is not
committed to the rituals and practices of either Kasmir Saivism
in particular or Tantrism in general.

The creation and realisation of art, has been and will
remain, in the Indian tradition, an exalted experience,
consorting with every aspect of Indian life, but yet at the same
time retaining its freedom, for itself and its followers.
GLOSSARY OF SANSKRIT WORDS

A
abhidha expressed meaning of words
abhasa in Kashmir Saivism: reflection
abhigamana going to (a place of worship)
adikavi first poet in the Indian tradition viz. Valmiki
adisilpi the first or pristine sculptor
advaita non-dualism
agama the Tantric texts
aham in Kashmir Saivism: the Siva tattva, the 'I'
alaskara ornamentation
alaukika other worldly, supra-mundane
amūrta formless
anadhyavaśaya uncertainty
ananda bliss
aniyata rot fixed
anubhava experience
anuttara transcendent godhead
apurnakhyāti incomplete knowledge
artha meaning
arca worship
ātman individual soul or essence
avasthā state of being
avidyā metaphysical ignorance

B
bādhra weapon
bāhyā ākarṣana outer attraction
bhakti devotion
bhāvanā revelation
bhoga enjoyment
bhṛantī erroneous cognition
bhija seed
bindu centre
brahman ground of all being, not an object of worship but rather of meditation and knowledge
brahmānanda bliss of Brahman
C
camatkāra wonder
cittavistāra expansion of consciousness
chandas metre, rhythm
chandomāya full of metre
chitra painting

D
darsāna vision, applied to school of philosophy
deva god
desi folk
dhāranā hold
dharma moral order
dhiya thought vision
dhvani reverberation
dhvaniśādīn advocate of the dhvani theory
dhyāna contemplation
dīpa lamp
druti fluidity

G
gathā story
ghaṭa pot
gunas qualities

H
hrd heart

I
idam in Kashmir Saivism: the Shakti tattvā, the 'myself'
ijyā offering through worship
itihāsa history

J
jivanmukta liberated in life
jīvātman individual soul
jñāna knowledge

K
kāma desire
kaivalya Samkhya term for spiritual freedom
karma volitional action
kathā story
kavi poet
kavītābijā seed of poetry
kāvya poetic composition
kevala only
krīdā play, sport
kriya spontaneous act

L
lakṣaṇa mark, attribute, metaphor
lokāṇurāṇjakāsecular entertainment
laukika secular

M
madhyābindu centre point
mahēśvara another name for Siva
manīsa intuitive reflection
manas mind
mandala circular diagram
mantras sacrificial formula, mystical verse, incantation
mārga classical
maya illusion
maya-vādins those who advocate the maya doctrine
mokṣa spiritual freedom
mudra hand gesture
mukhyārthabādha breakdown of primary meaning
mūrti image

N
nāda sound
nāgarika urban elite
nātya dance drama
nirguṇa without qualities
nirvikalpa indeterminate, devoid of concepts
nispatti manifest, born, bring about
niyatā fixed
nṛtṛya dance

P
pāncamaṅkara the five gestures of the Tantrics
parāsaṅvid in Kaśmir Śaivism: the transcendent godhead
parāhāṃṣan cosmic soul
parokṣa symbolic
pramāṇa source of right knowledge
prāṇa-prāṇa pleasure
prajāpati lord of creation
prākāśa light, fulgurance
prakāśavimānasmaya in Kaśmir Śaivism: the twin concepts of
prakāśa or self-awareness in dormancy and the vimānsa the
outgoing consciousness, held in dynamic harmony
pratibhā poetic genius, creativity
pratyaḥṣijñā recollection
pratyahāra withdrawm of the senses from external objects
prāṇa life breath
priti pleasure
puja worship
puraṇa ancient text
purusa The universal Being, literally that which resides in a
body, visualised both as an anthropomorphic cosmic Being and the
unrevealed universe.

R
raga passion
rasa aesthetic emotion
rasadhvani a suggested aesthetic emotion
rasika aesthete
ratha chariot
rekha line
rishi sage
rupa form
rupasaubhya harmonious form
rupadhvani suggestiveness in form
rupakara one who makes rupas
rupaprajna intuitive understanding of form

S
sabda word
sadhana discipline
sadharanakaraṇam generalisation (of emotions in poetry)
şadanga the six limbs
śadṛṣya correspondence with reality
śadhyata that which is to be accomplished
saguṇa with qualities
śakti energy, the female principle of Siva
samādhi state of deep meditation
samlakṣyakrama of perceptible sequence
sanskara latent psychic impression
samvega aesthetic shock
saṅgama confluence
saṅgīta music
saṃsārika secular, worldly
saṃyagjñana correct knowledge
śanta peaceful, quiescent
śārūpya similarity of form
śastra a scientific treatise
sattarka in Kashmir Saivism: that principle which brings about
self recognition by removing the distinction between the subject
and object.
sattva purity
savikalpa determinate knowledge
shradhā commitment, faith
sharanāgati surrender (to a higher Being)
śiddhi spiritual accomplishment
śikṣa training
silpa sculpture
silpa pañjara the cage or grid of sculpture
spanda in Kashmir Saivism: spontaneous creativity
sthula gross
sthapaka priest
suksma subtle
sulva sacrifice
surūpa pleasing or perfect form
sūtra aphorism
svadhyaya chanting to oneself
svaprakaśa self-awareness
svarga heavenly land

I

tala rhythm
tanmayibhāva total identification
tattva essence

U

udgītha Vedic priest
upāya means, method
upādana offering in ritual worship

V

vāk Divine word
vākrataḥ indirectly
vāstu architecture
vacyarthā expressed meaning
vedī sacrificial altar
vidyā knowledge
vijñāna secular knowledge
vikāsa expansion
vimarsa in Kashmir Saivism: outgoing consciousness
vistāra rest
vistāra enlargement
visvarupa the cosmic form
vṛttam circle
vyangyānta suggested meaning

Y

yajña sacrifice
yama restraint
yantra instrument
yoga yoking the individual soul with the Universal Soul
yuga aeon
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