

# AT AJANTA



2917  
601  
3-07155

外文书库

AT

# AJANTA

BY

KANAIYALAL H. VAKIL, B.A., LL.B.



FOREWORD

BY

W. E. GLADSTONE SOLOMON, I.E.S.

*Author of "Jottings at Ajanta," "The  
Women of the Ajanta Caves," Etc.*



*With 38 Illustrations*

BOMBAY

D. B. TARAPOREVALA SONS & CO.

"KITAB MAHAL," 190, HORNBY ROAD

1929

AT AJANTA

*Cave XVII*



**Mother and Child**

TO  
“ *BAKUL* ”

## PUBLISHERS' NOTE

---

THE Publishers desire to tender their thanks to Mr. Ghulam Yazdani, Director of Archæology, H. E. H. the Nizam's Government, for permitting them to reproduce several photographs contained in this brochure and supplying them with valuable information for incorporation therein.

They will always be pleased to receive from readers, visitors and those interested in the subject, new information, photographs, drawings, etc., which will add to the usefulness of the book.

## PREFACE

---

THE book is planned and written for a specific purpose. Its aim is to bring the world-renowned cave-cathedrals and monasteries at Ajanta nearer the popular mind and imagination. The assistance it proposes to offer to the visitor, student of art, or, one interested generally in the live and distinct artistic achievements of India, is of a character essentially practical. An attempt is now made, therefore, to classify the available information. There are, naturally, aspects or points in the book which, no doubt, reveal in treatment preferences that may be regarded as personal. But the book is not, on the whole, meant to convey more than the essentials necessary for the specific aim that has prompted its publication.

I am grateful to Captain W. E. Gladstone Solomon, Principal of the Bombay School of Art, for his kind references and loan of photographs. I am also thankful to the Archæological Department of H. E. H. the Nizam's Government for the facilities granted to me during my stay, last October, at the Caves, to Mr. Kallianji Curumsey Damji for permission to reproduce the photographs of his copies of the Ajanta paintings by Mr. Mukul Dey, and to Mr. C. B. Suthar, G. D. Arch., for architectural drawings reproduced in this book.

K. H. V.

*"Villa Vasant,"*

SANTA CRUZ :

February 20, 1928.

## FOREWORD

---

THE author of this book is one of the foremost of that energetic group of "constructive" art critics who in India are studying Art to new purposes. It is many years ago since I first met Mr. Kanaiyalal Vakil. He was then newly returned from a prolonged stay in Europe, and was, I recollect, full of the latest information about the Architecture, Painting and Sculpture of the Western World. His enthusiasm for Indian Art awoke an immediate response in one who—he admits it without shame—is also of the enthusiastic fraternity. Time has ratified these first impressions and has justified Mr. Kanaiyalal Vakil's optimistic but wholly reasonable methods of art criticism. That the optimist is badly needed in Indian Art to-day, few conversant with standard books on the subject, are likely to deny. For the function of the art critic is not mere destructive criticism of existing systems of Art or Art Education (there has been an excess of that in Europe as in India), but to point out to the public "the more excellent way," the way of true artistic progress. Mr. Vakil has rendered yeoman service to Western India, and not by words only but by the most devoted deeds. I know none who have more freely sacrificed time, health, and talent in the cause of promoting production in Indian Art at the present day than the author of this book. The fact that he has won the confidence of so many artists, is his



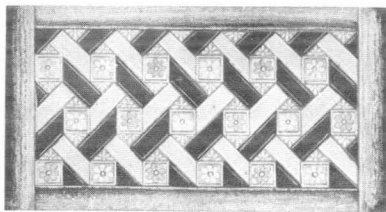
reward, for the distrust of the artist for the art critic is an inherited feud dating back long before the famous quarrel between Michael Angelo and Pietro Aretino !

The reader of this book will, it is hoped, find it to be a judicial "summing-up" of the case for the celebrated Ajanta Caves. The author has placed conveniently before his readers, in brief, the views and opinions of most of those who have written upon the subject of this perennially interesting Shrine of Art. It is a handbook of Ajanta Lore, replete with suggestive references. But I venture to think that the most interesting passages for most readers will be those wherein Mr. Vakil has yielded perforce to the urge of his artistic enthusiasm—impatient of restraint—those wherein we see the Scholar, Guide and Critic transformed into the Seer, before whose eye Indian Art unrolls its gorgeous achievements in the Past, only that he may point out triumphantly the path to the Future.

W. E. G. S.

BOMBAY.

*March 4, 1928.*



VIII—A

## Some of the Books Consulted

---

- “ Cave Temples of India ” .. .. Burgess & Fergusson.
- “ A History of Fine Art in India  
and Ceylon ” .. .. Vincent A. Smith.
- “ Indian Architecture ” .. .. E. B. Havell.
- “ My Pilgrimage to Ajanta and  
Bagh ” .. .. Mukul Dey.
- “ Jottings at Ajanta ” .. .. W. E. Gladstone  
Solomon.
- “ The Women of the Ajanta  
Caves ” .. .. W. E. Gladstone  
Solomon.
- “ Life in India ” .. .. Mrs. Spier.
- “ Survey Reports ” .. .. A. Cunningham.
- “ Ancient India ” .. .. Codrington and  
Rothenstein.
- “ Influences of Indian Art ” .. Andreas Nell (India  
Society.)
- “ La Sculpture Hindoue ” .. Wm. Cohn.
- “ Handbook of Architecture ” .. J. Fergusson.
- “ Guide to Ajanta Frescoes ” .. Archaeological De-  
partment, H. E. H.  
The Nizam's Govt.
- “ Rock-cut Temples of India ” .. J. Fergusson.
- “ Ajanta Frescoes ” .. .. Lady Herringham.
- “ The Paintings in the Buddhist  
Caves at Ajanta ” .. .. J. Griffiths.

*A De Luxe Gift Book*

# Studies in Indian Painting

By N. C. MEHTA, I.C.S.

With 17 Plates in Colour and 44 in Half-Tone.

Quarto Size (  $11\frac{3}{4}" \times 9\frac{1}{4}"$  )

**Price Rs. 56.**

This magnificent volume brings together a large amount of new material for the study of Indian painting. Most of these superb illustrations are reproduced here for the first time; and a large number of them are in colour. It has been universally admitted that there is no similar work which contains so many coloured reproductions as the present volume; and the credit therefore must be given to its enterprising publishers who have spared no pains and no expense to bring out the book in the best possible style.

The author has been fortunate to have been able to include in this work fresh examples of the classic age of India's pictorial art in the shape of the frescoes of Sittannavāsai, which are the only remnants of Pallava painting of the time of Mahendravarman I.

The author illustrates the decorated manuscripts and painted boards which constitute a considerable amount of material—religious and secular, still extant, but almost entirely in the possession of Jains and Jain libraries. These illustrate the pictorial art of Gujarat, which is of extraordinary importance for the knowledge of common life of the people—their manners, costumes and mode of living.

The magnificent development of the Moghul Art is shown by a number of masterpieces including the works of Abdul Hassan, Mansur Naqqāsh and Bishandās.

The author also deals with "Hindu" painting (which terms he prefers to Dr. Coomaraswamy's "Rajput") and points out the distinctive peculiarities of the Kangra, Garhwal, Benares, Datia. The pictures of Manaku and Chaitu in particular will come as a special surprise to students of Pahari Painting.

## Studies in Indian Painting—contd.

The illustrations contain reproductions of some of the finest, very old and rare representative masterpieces. The author deals with the various developments of India's pictorial art from the ancient times to the middle of the last century. His chapter on the recently discovered Pallava Frescoes of Sittannavāsai will come as a surprise to art enthusiasts and will be helpful to students as a link between the Age of Ajanta and Bagh and Moghul times. Two glorious portraits of the great Sawai Jai Sing II and Maharaja Pratap Singhji of Jaipur are also reproduced as well as two masterpieces from Jaipur Rasmandals and the Lifting of Mount Govardhana. Up to now Indian Painting was generally known in miniature but the extensive scale of these pictures will bring about a change in our views of Indian Painting in general and the Jaipur Art in particular. There are also some very good specimen of the facile draftsmanship of the Bundela School painters as well as illustrations of the Jain School from the pictorial roll of Ustad Salivaham. Amongst other paintings are flower studies by the great Mansur.

**Mr. E. B. Havel** says : " The publishers are certainly entitled to the highest praise for the admirable style in which the book is produced, and I congratulate them on the complete success of their attempt to prove that a book of this kind can be produced as well in India as in Europe. I do not know any book which has reproduced more successfully the delicate colouring of Indian Miniature Paintings."

**Studio** : " It is an original contribution to the subject, and at the same time so arranged that even those with an elementary knowledge can grasp the main tendencies and periods. Mr. N. Mehta has not only achieved a specialist work displaying scientific care and research—he has written some excellent art criticism in lucid style . . . . . The colour plates are well chosen and **A Durbar Scene**, and others linger in the memory."

**The Times Literary Supplement** : " The book should be of great interest and value to students of Indian Art. Mr. Mehta has the gift of presenting essential facts clearly . . . . . The colour plates show work which combines great nobility, as in the **Head of Mahadeva**, with fluid grace, as in the figures of **Celestial Dancers**."

**T. P. and Cassels' Weekly** : " A sumptuous volume . . . . indispensable for students of Oriental Art . . . . . This study of Moghul and Indian Painting . . . . . reveals, in Religious and Court Art, a wealth of coloured loveliness."

**Truth** : " Interesting not only in itself but also as an example of what purely Indian enterprise can achieve in the way of producing beautiful books. . . . . We are apt to forget that India has an artistic and cultural history extending back much farther than ours, into the morning of the world, and Mr. Mehta's volume is a welcome reminder of that often-forgotten fact."

**The Shama'a** : " A perennial source of joy in every home. We have no similar work with so many coloured reproductions. Taraporevala have by this production established their claim to be among the foremost art publishers in India."

## Studies in Indian Painting—*contd.*

**The Connoisseur:** "A valuable and highly interesting contribution to the literature on Indian Art . . . . The plates in colour, which include illustrations of some among the rarest and finest examples of Indian Art, are superbly reproduced, while the monochrome illustrations are of high quality. Altogether, both in matter and style, the work must rank as one of the finest modern publications ever issued in India, rivalling in quality books issued from the best contemporary European presses".

**Sunday Times:** "Alike for the excellence and rarity of its colour plates and for the scholarly erudition of the text, Mr. Mehta's volume is the most valuable addition to the literature on Indian art which has appeared for many years . . . . Abdul Hassan's "**Bullock Chariot**" and other masterpieces by Bishandas and Mansur Naqqash reveal the Zenith of Moghul Art during the reign of Jahangir. Aided by the zeal of his Publishers, Mr. Mehta has given us a standard book which materially increases our appreciation and understanding of Indian Art."

**Mr. Lawrence Binyon,** Department of Prints and Drawings, British Museum:—"I have read the book with interest and profit and am recommending its purchase for this department. As a piece of book production it reflects great credit on all concerned . . . . . The colour reproductions seem to me excellent."

**Sir Thomas W. Arnold, London:** "It is a fine volume and a valuable contribution to the study to which it is devoted. It has already received a ready welcome among authorities on the subject in this country."

**The Times of India:** "Both author and publishers of this magnificently produced work are to be congratulated, the former for his scholarly research and the latter for their very laudable enterprise. A work of great artistic value and absorbing interest . . . . . We cannot fail to recognise the claim the author has to our gratitude and to the gratitude of all those who have even the most amateurish interest in Indian Art."

**Revue Des Arts Asiatiques:** "This beautiful volume does undoubted honour to Indian publication. It has been printed with very great care and illustrated in an irreproachable manner. It contains a series of original monographs, chronologically arranged. In a word, it is an interesting and conscientious work and we heartily congratulate the publishers to whom the amateurs are greatly indebted."

**Spectator Literary Supplement:** "In Mr. N. C. Mehta's really fascinating book of Moghul and Hindu paintings, there is much which is quite new. All amateurs of Moghul painting will welcome Mr. Mehta's contribution to their knowledge of a fascinating period of Oriental art."

**Modern Review:** "Mr. Mehta's book has turned out to be a masterpiece of the book producer's art. We have felt a rare pleasure in handling this excellent volume and in feeling that it was **Made in India**. Illustrated with 61 superb reproductions of paintings belonging to different periods and schools, and

## **Studies in Indian Painting—contd.**

containing much valuable information on the subject-matter of the book, "**Studies in Indian Painting**" will be treasured by both students of art and by book-lovers. We congratulate the publishers on their success in bringing out such a volume. We also congratulate Mr. N. C. Mehta, who is known to all of us as an able writer, collector, and connoisseur in the field of Indian art, on his achievement as author of a really fine book."

**Islamic Culture:** "Mr. Mehta has earned the gratitude of every student of the Indian art of painting by this serious, scholarly and at the same time characteristically modest, contribution to our knowledge of that vast and fascinating subject. With its wealth of illustrations, published in attractive and imposing form by the enterprising firm of Messrs. Taraporevala it is a really memorable landmark in the history of Indian publishing. We recommend it to all readers who are interested in the subject, and to all collectors of handsome books."

**James H. Cousins, D. Litt (in The Madras Mail):** "Of solid advance in presenting materials for both the historical and æsthetical study of partially known regions and epochs in Indian art this book is a most encouraging example. Mr. Mehta's English is vigorous and clear. The substance is attractively presented and is of the utmost importance. The get-up of the book is superb, and places it in the rank of first class productions that are not only useful for their contents but a joy to the eye and feelings. The author is to be warmly congratulated on his public spirit in publishing the results of his enthusiastic researches in the history and quality of Indian painting and the publishers are equally to be congratulated on their enterprise in giving the book to the world in so rich a form. It should be in every public library and in the library of every School and College in India and should be widely known abroad."

**The Manchester Guardian :** "In each of these studies Mr. Mehta brings forward new materials which makes this volume indispensable to the student because of the number and excellence of the reproductions. A book entirely produced in India, it rivals the best of similar works in England."

**The Leader :** "A remarkable production by a gifted Indian which brings to light some new materials in the sphere of Indian Pictorial Art. We do not know which to admire more, the excellence of the illustrations or the erudition of Mr. Mehta . . . . . A valuable contribution to the literature on Indian Art . . . . . will rank as a standard work."

**The Indian Review :** "Apart from the excellence of its contents there is something in the style and get-up of this sumptuous volume which deserves the warm appreciation of book-lovers. Most of the illustrations are published here for the first time."

***Complete Catalogue of Taraporevala's Indian Books will be sent free on application.***

# CONTENTS

---

	PAGE
Publishers' Note .. .. .	ix
Preface .. .. .	xi
Foreword .. .. .	xiii
Some of the Books consulted .. .. .	xv
List of Illustrations .. .. .	xxi

## PART I

### General Information

#### (i) THE JOURNEY TO AJANTA

Map—Railway and Road Routes—Railway Connections—Residence for Visitors—Previous Intimation—Taxi Fares—Bullock Carts— Board Tariff—Permission to Copy .. ..	3
---	---

#### (ii) THE CAVES

Cave Numbers—Modern Discovery—First Copies—Another Attempt—The Third Effort— Other Copies—Conservation of Frescoes— Official Publications—Popular Favour—Age of the Caves—Their Site—Nature's Craftsmanship— Classification—Important Peculiarities— Pilgrims on the Quest—Method of Painting— Inscriptions—New Conclusions—The Most Important Caves .. .. .	II
--	----

## PART II

<b>Paintings</b>				PAGE
List of Main Caves of Interest	..	..	..	23
CAVE IX—Undistracted Art	..	..	..	27
CAVE X—Secular Life	..	..	..	28
CAVE XVI—Beyond Conventions—Conventions as Interludes—Rank and Costume—“ <i>Jatakas</i> ”—Episodes from Life	..	..	..	28
CAVE XVII—Lavish Profusion—Flying “ <i>Gandharvas</i> ” and “ <i>Apsaras</i> ”—“ <i>Shaddanta Jatak</i> ”— <i>Brahamin Jujaka</i> —Grandeur and Tenderness—“ <i>Matriposhak Jatak</i> ”— <i>Syama Jatak</i> —A Vast Composition — Supreme Artistic Value	..	..	..	33
CAVE I—Of World-wide Fame—Purity of Style—Expressive Draughtsmanship	..	..	..	40
CAVE II—“ <i>Hamsa Jatak</i> ”—“The Seven Steps”—The Human Form	..	..	..	42

**Essentials in the Paintings**

Decorative Designs—Of Foliage—Naturalism and Conventionalism—Woman at Ajanta—Beauty of the World—Free-handed Revelry—Not Rigid Moulds—Perfection of Line—Racial Character—Colours of Ajanta—Composition and Perspective—Form and Contour—The Drapery—“Thousand Years Ahead”—Thorough Study of Nature—Life, Not Formula—Not Extracts from Life—World Asset	..	..	..	45
---	----	----	----	----



## PART III

**Architecture**

## PAGE

List of Main Caves of Interest .. .. .	55
Salient Features— <i>Gupta</i> Period—Pre- <i>Gupta</i> Period—Continuous Links—Rock Architecture.	57

***Chaitya* Caves**

CAVE IX—Oldest <i>Chaitya</i> .. .. .	60
CAVE X—Wood to Stone .. .. .	61
CAVE XIX—A Perfect Specimen—Lithic Character—Changed Stupa and Umbrella .. .. .	61
CAVE XXVI—Diffused Decoration—Origin of Dome and Arch .. .. .	63

***Vihara* Caves**

CAVE XII—Oldest <i>Vihara</i> .. .. .	65
CAVE XI—Earliest Pillars .. .. .	65
CAVE VII—Temple <i>Mandap</i> .. .. .	65
CAVE VI—Two-storied <i>Vihara</i> .. .. .	65
CAVE IV—Largest <i>Vihara</i> .. .. .	66
CAVE I—Finest <i>Vihara</i> .. .. .	66
CAVE II—Side Chambers .. .. .	66
CAVE XVI—Highest Standard—Light Focus- sed—Beautiful Entrance .. .. .	66
CAVE XX—Helpful Material .. .. .	68
CAVE XXIV—Most Beautiful, if Finished .. .. .	68
CAVE XXV—Process of Excavation of <i>Vihara</i> .. .. .	68
Variety of Columns— <i>Viharas</i> Neglected .. .. .	68