stone of various colours. It was not until later that Islamic art also took over the Hindu enthusiasm for luxuriant plant forms and created lotus pillars, lotus domes and arches wreathed in flowers.

Sculpture and Painting

Architecture alone thus opened an exceptionally wide field to the sculptor and painter. In addition there were the bronze statues for use in processions, innumerable small figures of household gods, clay figures for various feasts (these were subsequently thrown into the water), idols and toys of baked clay, terracotta reliefs for the smaller temples, tips for standards decorated with figures, mirrors, jeweller's work and so on. For their part, the painters had not only to decorate the walls of the temples, palaces and courtisans' houses with frescoes from the myths and epics, but also had to illustrate manuscripts of palm-leaf and later, of paper, and to execute portraits on wooden plaques and paper and larger paintings on cotton cloth.
The sculptor in stone generally designed his figure first on the outside of the stone with a brush before setting to work with his chisel. For the temples, statues and reliefs were not let in: after the stonemason had roughed them out, they were worked straight out of the wall. For this reason the easily transportable religious figures (murti) are found far more frequently in our museums than other sculpture, far more common but almost irremovable. Bronze, mixed from eight metals, and later brass was cast by the cire-perdu process. Paintings were executed direct on the wall, using the fresco-secco technique, or painted on a thin layer of chalk over the very rough paper, using stone or vegetable colours.
Although they were familiar with drawing from nature, the artists nevertheless generally worked from memory, idealised the figures and stylised them in poses and gestures taken from the art of dancing. The vitality of Indian figure work is traceable on the one hand to frank and tactile sensuality, on the other hand to a strongly expressive rhythm and an equally sensitive reproduction of mood by the attitude of body, head and hands and a noble, if sometimes insipid facial expression. Coarse realism, often exaggerated into the grotesque, was perfectly well known, but was only used for popular scenes, demons, and so on. Usually the landscape was only hinted at, but from the seventeenth century, under European influence, it was given in greater detail. Of the ancient painting, only fragments have been preserved, at Bagh, Ajanta (Cat. 341—352), Badami, Kancipura, Sittanvasal, etc., or engraved on metal or stone; from the Middle Ages, as well as the frescoes of Tanjore, Lepakshi, Kanci, etc., we also have Buddhist and Jaina palm-leaf manuscripts. The great majority of works still available originate from the period since the fifteenth century, especially from the seventeenth to the nineteenth century. Alongside historical portraits and frequently unique illustrated Persian and Hindi works, certain sets of pictures recur almost regularly: a few popular religious books, like the Bhagavata-Purana and Devi-Mahatmya, the Hindu Epics, the Gitagovinda (the Indian "High Song"), the Rasikpriya of Keshavadas (a collection of erotic poems), hymns and music illustrations (Ragmala); these in the nineteenth century made up the library of every nobleman's home.

Iconographic Symbolism

The artists took from the art of dancing a fixed canon of attitudes (sthana), seated poses (asana), arm positions (hasta) and hand gestures (mudra), of which each, either by itself or in conjunction with another, bore a particular meaning, so that the hand-play builds up the danced pantomime into a complete story, even containing psychological undertones. The attitudes are characterised by strong body-bending movements (dvibhanga, tribhanga, samabhanga) inspired by women carrying children or water-pots on the hip. The highly complicated footwork does not start at the toes but at the heel, a result of wearing open sandals. The seated poses include a representation of langour (lalita), meditation (yoga), teaching (pralambapada), attack (alidha), etc. The hand gestures indicate protection (bhaya), prayer (anjali), holding (ardhachandra, kataka), meditation (jnana, yoga), threatening (tarjani), giving (varada), explaining (vitarka), preaching (oyakhyana), and others. Thus, with the addition of characteristic costumes, crowns (kirita-mukuta, royal crown; jata-mukuta, ascetic's hair-style; karanda-mukuta and kundula-bandha, hair-style for goddesses and queens and so on), and jewelry, especially the large belts (makhala) nearly every type of human being or god could be indicated. Many arms expressed divine power, many heads divine omniscience. This was not regarded as freakish because the person of a god was not experienced as anatomical reality but as a vision (Sadhana); in good Indian works of art, therefore, many arms never give the effect of a single physical mass but as the