

**JEWELRY
AND
PERSONAL ADORNMENT
IN
INDIA**

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Kamala S. Dongerkery

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And
Personal Adornment
in
India**

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P R E F A C E

IN TRACING the origin of jewelry in India and its development through the centuries, one is borne on the wings of time into the fascinating realm of our ancient civilization, the historical and cultural past of our country and the rich domains of her art and literature. The vastness of India and the bewildering diversity of its regions, despite its unity, pose difficulties that it is not easy to overcome. The subject is by no means free from complexity. In a book like this, therefore, a general rather than a detailed picture of jewelry is all that can be presented. The chief object of the book is to give the reader an idea of the important place that jewelry occupies in the lives and thoughts of the people, and especially of the women of India, its rich heritage of design and craftsmanship and its relation to the art, culture and economy of the country. In view of its numerous aspects, jewelry in India has a significance all its own, one could almost say without any parallel anywhere else, not only as a means of adornment of the person, but as constituting an important element in the cultural pattern of the life of the Indian people.

One thought that comes uppermost in the mind in the course of the present study is that jewelry need not be expensive except when it is made with the primary object of serving as an investment. This aspect has received due recognition in the way of life of the people. As a result of the changes brought about in the status of women by the new laws of inheritance applicable to them, the recent gold control order, and more and more women taking their place with men in all walks of life, women no longer go about wearing costly jewelry. Jewelry is, therefore, bound to develop on different lines in course of time, becoming more and more a means of personal adornment only. Less expensive jewelry, matching with costume and serving a decorative purpose only will have greater vogue, as it can be worn on any occasion and play its part as effectively as precious jewelry. The All India Handicrafts Board has contributed a great deal towards this change.

Viewing jewelry in its historical perspective, the illustrations selected can be placed period-wise. Even though the styles and designs are to be found continuously from one phase to another, certain styles have come into prominence in particular periods. The classification of the jewelry, so far as the illustrations go, is based on names in Vedic, Epic and Sanskrit literature, sculptures and frescos, the development of symbols and designs in different periods, jewelry associated with regions from the historical and geographical points of view, the development and prevalence of special types of workmanship, owing to the administrative contiguity and political control of areas and the impact of exotic influences. This new approach has been rewarding.

The archaic names of ornaments have been retained, since jewelry is not generally known today by its original names but by common terms such as bangles, necklaces, pendants and anklets according to the manner of its use. It is hoped that, while giving a synoptic view of jewelry of different periods, the original names, which are often of a romantic character, will also be revived and facilitate the cataloguing of the wide range of Indian jewelry.

Archaeologists, anthropologists, historians, authors of Sanskrit works and other writers of scholarly books have approached the subject of jewelry, each in his own way. I am indebted to them for the valuable source material thus provided by them, which has considerably lightened my task. Wherever I have ventured to draw my own inferences or make my own observations the responsibility is entirely mine.

My sincere thanks are due to Prof. D.N. Marshall, M.A., Professor of Library Science and Librarian, University of Bombay, for helping me with reference books required by me with his usual obliging nature.

Messrs. Tata Sons (Pvt) Ltd. have very generously allowed me the use of their jewelry colour plate blocks for this publication, which has added to its beauty. I am grateful to them for their courtesy and kind co-operation.

I must express my thanks to Messrs. Narotamdas Bhau, well-known jewellers of Bombay, for having supplied me, with some of the jewelry line drawings included in the book.

I am also indebted to Smt. Lalita Lajmi for making the line drawings of excavated jewelry. In this connection Dr. R.S. Gupte's book, *The Iconography of the Buddhist Sculptures of Ellora*, has been very helpful.

My husband's constant help and guidance have been invaluable to me. No words can adequately express what I owe to him.

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10th February, 1970.*

KAMALA S. DONGERKERY

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CHAPTER I

THE PLACE OF JEWELRY IN INDIA

GEMS AND jewelry, ivory and gold, silver and semi-precious stones have been the pride of the East for ages. The name of India conjures up a land of colour, beauty and sparkle, with its charming countryside and the glittering jewelry that adorns the person of her women-folk.

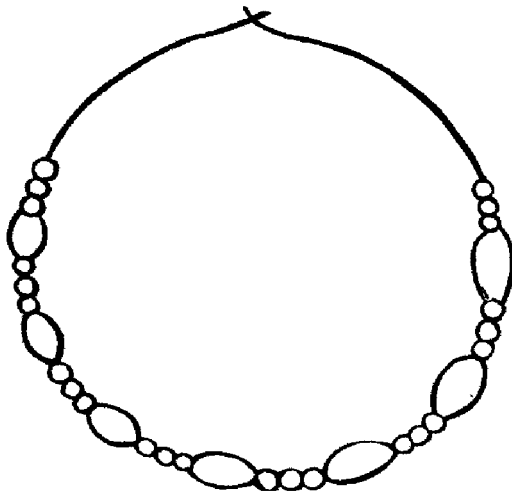
Do the women of India try to vie with one another by adorning themselves with jewelry, or does jewelry constitute something more than mere adornment are questions of absorbing interest and no small significance. A foreigner visiting India, especially from any of the Western countries, is often intrigued by the heavy jewelry that our women deck themselves with as a normal means of adornment in all parts of the country. Is it just a love of ornament that leads Indian women to fancy expensive jewelry? This is a question often asked by those who are not familiar with the Indian way of life.

The concept that underlies the wearing of jewelry by the

Indian woman becomes clear when the pattern of life in India is viewed in its proper perspective. Indians do not look upon jewelry merely as a means of adornment. It means much more to them. It is regarded as a kind of treasure, or valuable investment, that touches the life of the people at many points. That is why jewelry occupies a prominent place in the scheme of things in this country.

Side by side with its beautifying and decorative aspect, jewelry influences the cultural and socio-economic life of the country in an appreciable manner. Apart from its intrinsic charm and its economic value, a piece of jewelry needs to be viewed from more than one angle. It is because of this that jewelry exercises a widely extending influence over the lives of Indians—men, women and children.

The origin and significance of jewelry go back to the earliest



times, and one sees it through the ages as a remarkable manifestation of aesthetic urge, the inventive genius, the technical skill, and the prosperity or decline of the nation. Its development, from the Chalcolithic period to modern times, is a story of the ingenuity and progress of man in his search for new and enduring materials, resulting from his desire to make himself, and especially his womenfolk,

attractive. This desire was common to both men and women in early times as is evident from the fondness of both sexes for ornaments.

The sources that provide the material required for piecing together the story of jewelry from ancient times to the present day are to be looked for in the valuable finds from archaeological excavations dating back to the hoary past, the hymns of the Vedas handed down, first by word of mouth from generation to generation

and later recorded, the great epics—the *Ramayana* and the *Mahabharata*—the magnificent and enduring monuments of the visual and the plastic arts, and the great works of classical Sanskrit literature. The valuable material available from all these sources helps us to reconstruct the pattern of Indian life in ancient times, or in ancient civilization, as we know it today. That pattern, which is a combination of oral tradition, pictorial and plastic art, and literature of a very high order, presents a wonderful panorama of the resplendent civilization that has come down to us through the centuries and of which Indians are naturally proud because of the variety of its colour, form and content as well as its enduring quality.

The *Grhya Sutras*, which are co-eval with some of the Rigvedic hymns, describe the various *samskaras* of a person from birth to death. These *samskaras*, or important religious ceremonies, emphasize the principal stages in the life of a Hindu. They are observed in India to this day, although the ceremonial part has been largely cut out and simplified or modified to suit present times. Among them the most important are: *namakarana* (corresponding to christening), *vidyarambha* or commencement of education, *yagnopavita*, or investiture with the sacred thread—a symbol of initiation into Vedic studies, *samavartana*, or return from the teacher's house after the completion of one's education, *vivaha* or marriage and *mrtakarma*, or last rites after death. All these *samskaras* have their own significance and are accompanied by appropriate rituals and symbols.

A piece of jewelry is associated with each of the above mentioned *samskaras*: for instance, on the twelfth day after birth the child, at the *namakarana* gets the first physical shock when the goldsmith bores his ears with a gold pin which he curls into a ring; at the same time, a soft thin, black silk cord is tied round the child's waist and a similar cord with a pendant—*tali* or *taviz*—of gold or silver attached to it, is tied around his neck. The pendant is regarded as a protective charm to ward off evil or counteract the evil eye. The pricking of his ears is believed to help the child

to resist nervous diseases like epilepsy as a result of the shock he receives when the tender lobes of his ears are bored. At the *yagnopavita*, the child is invested with a gold thread which is worn over the left shoulder and encircles the right side of the waist. This is later replaced by three strands of cotton cord. A *pavitra*, or sanctified, gold ring, designed like a reef-knot with granular ornamentation, is also given to the child for being worn on his ring finger. At the *samavartana*, vermilion powder is applied to the forehead of the youth and a gold necklace is placed around his neck. For women, too, there are several occasions when jewelry plays a significant role. Particular mention may be made of the marriage *tali*.

In tracing the history of jewelry from the earliest times to our own, we find an unbroken chain of evidence to show that it has continued to exercise a fascinating influence on the minds of people, in spite of the variations of its forms or the materials used for making it. Many names and designs that were in vogue in ancient times are still in existence. Some names of ornaments of the modern age are ordinary words, while those in use previously were poetical or fanciful. This fact indicates that in the modern age of scientific advance there is a tendency for people to be prosaic and practical rather than poetic or imaginative.

Every article of jewelry referred to in the ancient texts had a meaningful name, and every design was a fulfilment of an artistic idea. The designs were of a varied nature: they were abstract, grotesque or fanciful, or with motifs delicately and elaborately wrought. Each period had its own conventions as witnessed by the varying patterns that prevailed from time to time.

Jewelry is regarded by Indians as something sacred, something to be cherished, treasured and preserved. Articles of jewelry, passed on from generation to generation as heirlooms, are treated as particularly sacred and preserved with special care on account of the sentimental value attached to them. They are rarely parted with either as gifts outside the family or by way of sale. Jewelry

is usually considered as a provision against a rainy day because of its easy convertibility into liquid cash at any time. This idea, which is always at the back of the mind of its owner or the person who has provided it either as a gift or token of affection, predominates over that of its being only a means of adornment in the Indian mind. This is different from the way in which people in Western countries look upon jewelry. Until recently, the Indian woman did not, as a rule, care for costume jewelry, although she did not mind wearing imitation jewelry comprising artificial pearls and semi-precious stones. Contemporary jewelry, however, is showing new trends.

The sanctity attached to jewelry by Indians, and especially by the Hindus and the Jains, is undoubtedly the consequence of the place it occupied as the wife's *stridhana* under the Hindu law which is also applicable to the Jains and the Sikhs. The word, *stridhana*, literally means woman's property. Jewelry formed the major part, and sometimes the whole, of a woman's property, comprising the gifts made before the nuptial fire, or at the time of the bridal procession, and all the gifts made in token of the love of her parents and other relations, her parents-in-law and their relations.

The law of *stridhana* which is a most complicated branch of the Hindu law, made more complicated by the mass of judicial decisions, some of which conflict with one another, has been dealt with in the *smritis* of the *rishis* or sages, and by different commentators in their learned commentaries that are treated as authoritative sources of the law. According to this law the property acquired by the married woman in any of the ways mentioned above belongs to her absolutely, unlike the property inherited by her from her husband, and she can gift away, sell or use her *stridhana* property independently of her husband. It is not subject to his control in any way. Jewelry formed the major part of a woman's *stridhana*, either because most of it came to her in that form, or she was accustomed to invest whatever cash she acquired in jewelry as the most convenient form of investment for her.

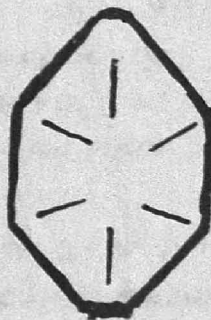
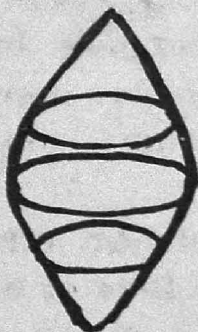
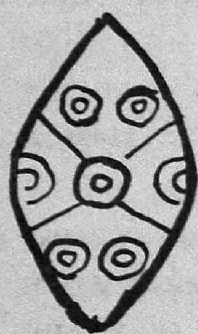
Stridhana was, and still is, valued by the Indian woman as her sole and absolute property which no one else can touch, including her husband. It was even more so in former times, when women were entirely dependent on their men-folk or on the joint family, and they themselves were incapable of earning any income by their own exertions, being mostly confined to their household duties or farm work, and not having received enough education to follow a career. This was before industrialization had thrown open avenues of employment to women workers. The modern Indian woman, because of her education and the prevailing economic conditions, especially among the middle and the lower middle classes, often follows a career, in addition to looking after the home, and thus acquires property by her own exertions, which also becomes her *stridhana*. In spite, however, of this and other changes in social and economic conditions in India, and also those brought about by legislation in the law applicable to women's property, *stridhana* continues to be highly valued by the Indian woman.

Stridhana, until recent times, and even today, consists mainly of the settlement made on her at the time of her marriage, when she is required to leave her parental home to make her own and face life's problems in a new environment. According to convention both the parents and parents-in-law make the settlement in the true spirit that it is to be a provision for the bride. If the parents settle her *stridhana* in the shape of jewelry, the parents-in-law add, as their own share, jewelry equal in value to that of the jewelry given by the parents. If the parents give cash, the parents-in-law have to enhance the amount of the settlement by an equal contribution, subject, of course, to the variations in custom in the different regions. Other valuable movable property received by the bride as gifts at the wedding is added to the *stridhana*.

In addition to the items of valuable jewelry, it is the custom to present to the bride some things that hardly cost a few rupees, but are, nevertheless, considered to be essential parts of the bridal gifts. These include bead, shell, copper, iron, coral and ivory

articles. This somewhat strange custom must, no doubt, have had a rational basis. It may, perhaps, be indicative of the origin of certain types of jewelry, or may have sprung from the desire to maintain some kind of equality between the rich and the poor in the matter of essentials in an important ceremony like marriage. Among the ornaments to which a woman attaches the greatest significance are those pieces of jewelry that fall in this inexpensive category. They are usually inherited from the mother or grandmother, or made for use on special occasions of religious significance. Some of them are required by custom to be worn at ceremonials, and some are symbolic of a promise, vow or *vrita*. The last mentioned type of ornament consists of a pendant or *tali*.

The discovery of large numbers of beads made of semi-



precious stones, found side by side with valuable jewelry in excavated sites, is a proof of the decorative value that was attached to

jewelry in ancient times, and the use of such beads to heighten it. This tradition continues to prevail even now, though the articles or material accessory to the jewelry may vary from region to region. They are indispensable accompaniments to costly jewels in every woman's jewel-box.

While ideas of sanctity, sentiment and value predominate in the possession or use of jewelry, the function of jewelry as a means of adornment is certainly not less important. On all auspicious occasions the Indian woman is expected to adorn herself with jewelry, particularly with that type of jewelry which she cherishes and values most. When ornamentation, design, form and colour have penetrated into the very pattern of Indian life, it is no wonder that jewelry should serve to enhance the personal charm of the woman and be assigned an important role in doing so.

Adornment is a vast subject and has been dealt with at considerable length, and with remarkably vivid descriptions, in Sanskrit literature, under the caption of *Alankara*. In the present book, however, the subject of adornment is necessarily restricted to jewelry alone as the means of adornment.

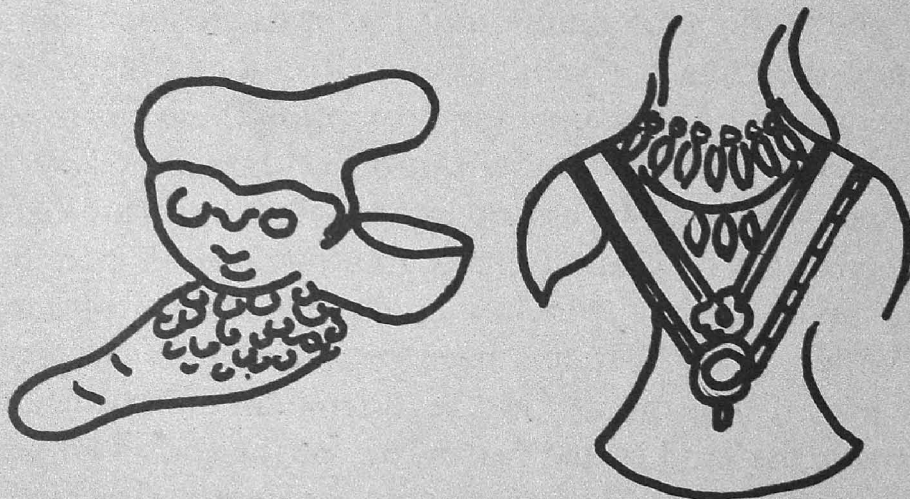
CHAPTER 2

IN THE WOMB OF THE EARTH

HIDDEN AWAY from human gaze and lying embedded in the womb of the earth in what was undivided India in ancient times, have been found vast stores of valuable jewelry belonging to cultures spread over the country nearly 3,500 years before the Christian era. From more than sixty sites excavated by the Government of India, extending over the Punjab, Rajasthan, Gujarat, Saurashtra and South India, articles of jewelry have come to light. These have been dated as belonging to the Bronze Age. Many of them come under the first 1,500 of the span of 3,500 years. Since they have been dated, it is said that they can be described as proto-historic objects, or those belonging to the earliest historical period. As the Mohenjo-Daro script has not yet been deciphered, the period is often termed proto-historic. The layman would be disposed to consider this a period of history, irrespective of the technical term used to describe it. Archaeologists are of the view that, as far as jewelry is concerned, not much

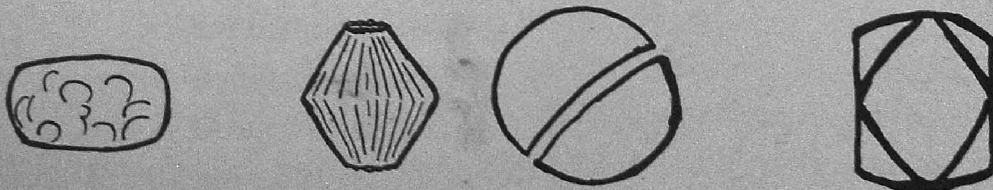
has been found so far which can be traced to the Stone Age except beads.

Beads constitute an important part of jewelry, and are apparently the precursor of semi-precious and precious stones. The earliest finds of jewelry and beads are contained in the large stock or collection of figurines in what is known as the Quetta Culture, *circa* 3,500 B.C. These terracotta figurines are loaded with jewelry on their heads and necks. The Quetta Culture



is believed to have “succeeded the pre-pottery level of culture”.

During these first fifteen hundred years jewelry appears to have developed considerably. When the curtain rises over the Indian scene, and brings from the hoary past the picture of the civilization of Harappa and Mohenjo-Daro into prominence, there emerges an agricultural state of society feeding an urban civilization. Such a state of society necessitated occupations of various crafts: “metal workers, tanners, carpenters, blacksmiths...gold-



smiths and other craftsmen”. The story of Indian jewelry, at this stage, unfolds itself in a fascinating manner. It is not a matter

of surprise to find a large variety of beads of different materials such as semi-precious stones, faience, steatite, terracotta, glass and crystals. Beads are evidence of sophisticated as well as primitive society, though the types and shapes may vary. The existence of so many different media for beads and the shapes, sizes and engravings revealed in this early civilization indicate that the lapidary art, or the art of bead-making, was highly developed and popular.

Hoardings of similar beads from the relics of the other contemporary civilizations of Sumer and Egypt disclose cultural affinities and trade contacts between these civilizations. There must have been exchanges of personnel for promoting these crafts and for the expansion of trade. The civilization of Harappa and Mohenjo-Daro is considered to be essentially pre-Aryan. The Vedic Aryans were a pastoral community, but this civilization had progressed further. Was such a state of civilized society restricted to the Indus Valley alone? It has been proved that societies like these existed in far-flung areas: in the Narmada Valley region, in the Panchanad, the land of the five rivers, or the Indo-Gangetic Plain. There is no doubt, therefore, that contemporary and equally developed civilizations flourished in other regions of India also.

It was, however, only "after the great Aryo-Dravidian synthesis had taken place that a conscious unity was achieved". The religion expounded in the Vedas, which later came to be known as Hinduism, can be traced to the proto-historic period that was essentially pre-Aryan in character.

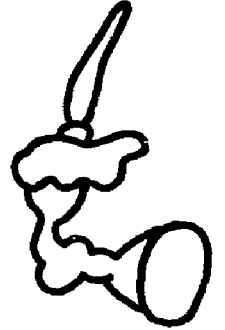
The evidence of iron, copper, bronze and gold, widely prevalent in India among the Deccan megaliths, has led historians to infer

that metal-craft was at one time highly popular. The undeciphered



script of Mohenjo-Daro, being an obstacle, it is not possible to give the names of the ornaments of those days, but the styles, designs and motifs speak for themselves, and they compare favourably with those of our own times.

Along with the numerous beads have been found gold and silver articles as well as others made of bone and ivory. The workmanship of gold and silver was elaborate, and appears to have had its counterpart in the other contemporary civilizations which produced similar beads. There was a combination of gold beads and semi-precious stones in the jewelry, and the gold beads, like those of the lapidarian variety, were of many beautiful shapes and varying sizes. There were spacers and terminals as well as pendants, and the workmanship comprised designs made of "gold wire, chopped gold, beaten gold and granulated gold". The archaic or antique jewelry of India also compares well with that discovered in the excavated sites of Mesopotamia and Egypt. Valuable collections of jewelry have been found underneath the pavements of houses in Taxila which included beautiful pieces. These patterns appear to be closely linked with those found in the later sculptures and frescos in India.

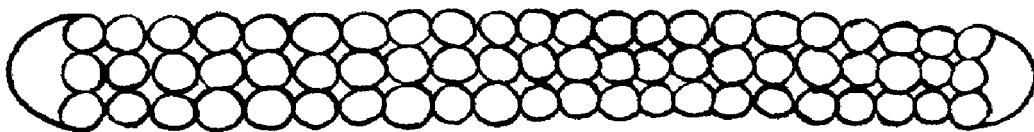
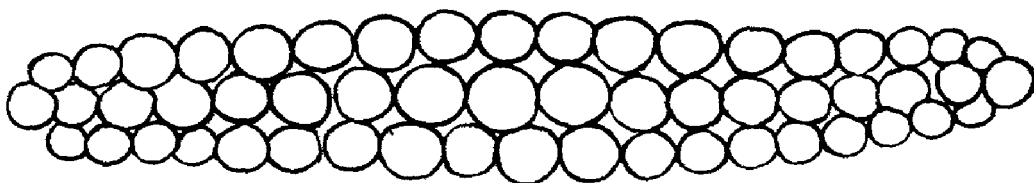


A glimpse of this wealth of jewelry is rewarding inasmuch as it gives us an insight into the tastes, styles, designs, fashions and workmanship of the times and the progress of the craft and of allied crafts as well. In the jewelry of the so-called Quetta Culture the ornaments on the terra cotta figurines indicate fillets for the head and others that covered the full neck, the lowest necklace often bearing a pendant, a feature common to jewelry sets of our own times, while the later Zhob and Kulli-mehi cultures indicate a much larger variety of ornaments. Wrist ornaments are also to be found on these figurines.

Although the archaeologically dated cultures of Quetta, Amri, Nandara-Nal, Zhob and Kulli-mehi have largely revealed terra-cotta figurines of clay, copper rings, copper beads, bangles and

hairpins, the hairpins being sometimes studded with semi-precious stones, particularly lapis-lazuli, have also been found. Ornamental bone pendants, silver rings, fillets and foils, with designs *en repoussé* have been discovered, the Kulli-mehi culture representing elaborately designed jewelry in abundance. Here, one comes across long necklaces, chokers, bead necklaces, and necklaces each having several pendants. All these articles have been dated between 3,500 and 2,000 B.C., the Nandara-Nal culture being the second phase of the Amri-Nandara-Nal period, described as falling between 3,000 and 1,800 B.C., and are, particularly rich in design and variety. Beautiful bead necklaces made of barrel-shaped, bi-conical, bi-hexagonal, cylindrical and discoid beads were unearthed in the Nal excavations. They constituted semi-precious stones, namely, agate, carnelian, limestone, lapis-lazuli-shell and glazed beads.

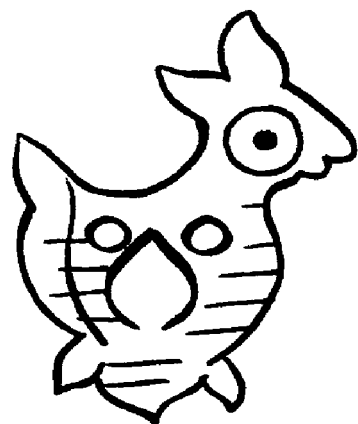
The collection of jewelry belonging to the Harappa and Mohenjo-Daro culture—2,700 to 1,800 B.C. is in a class by itself. It would do credit to any modern, sophisticated society. This



collection contains a number of gold ornaments, which, in fact, exceed the others in quantity. The range of these articles is very

wide and includes brooches, hair and head ornaments, amulets, buttons, girdles, breast-plates, collar-type ornaments, armlets, foot ornaments and finger rings. The amulets disclose a variety of animal motifs. The designs, motifs and workmanship of the jewelry cover nearly all the styles of traditional Indian jewelry that we see today, including beads of wire or what we now know as filigree work.

Jewelry making had achieved remarkable progress even in that early period. The gold and silver smiths seem to have been adepts at the various techniques of the jeweller's art of "drawing fine wire, mixing alloys, soldering gold, moulding and rolling it into thin sheets". They also knew the art of ornamenting their ware with inlaid work, jade and *en repoussé* work. The method of plating and gilding was also known to these craftsmen, and they used copper base for gilded jewelry. It is not certain whether they carried out enamelling in the present style, but it would appear that they inlaid colour and paste in the grooves of copper ornaments. It is likely that on account of the tarnishing quality of copper they covered it with enamel, and thus created a style of metal jewelry more economical than that made of precious metal.



The numerous amulets found among these hoards of jewels are of particular interest. People in all ages have believed in charms, symbols and amulets, attaching great value and sentiment to them. The ancient cultures

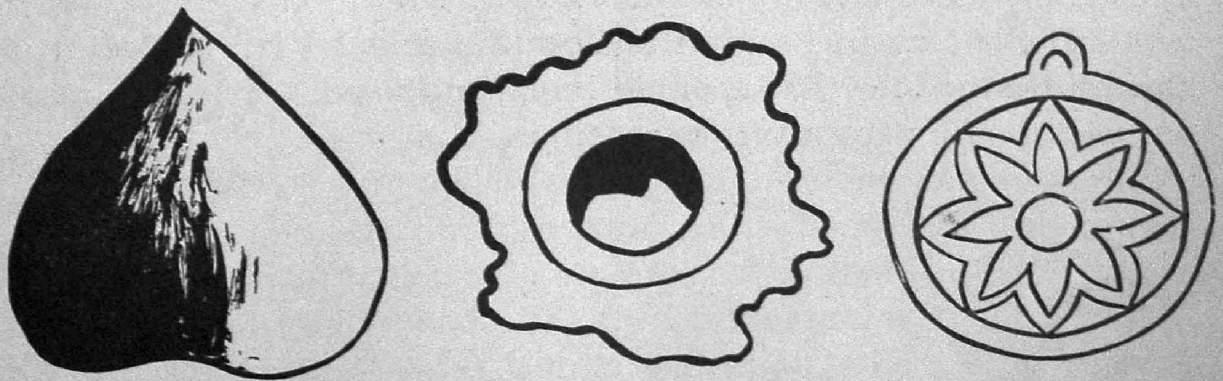


abound in amulets with beautiful designs of bird and animal motifs. It is believed by some that these birds and other animals have some connection with diseases or other evils and symbolize them. There may be some grain of truth in the belief concerning a few of the animal motifs but the abundance of such motifs raises some doubt about the correctness of the theory. The people of those times may have considered

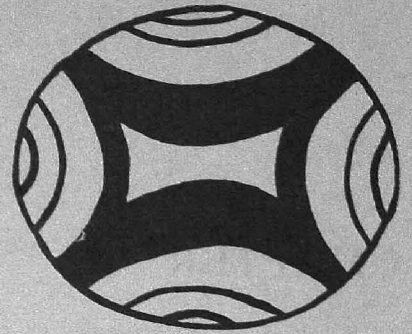
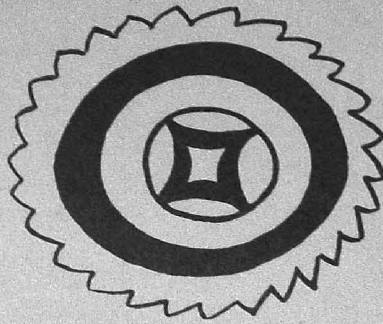
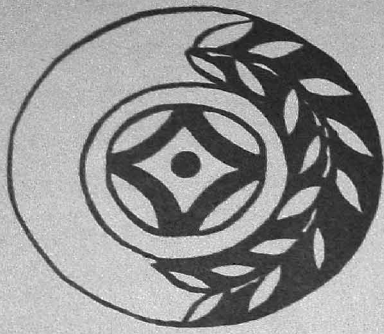
animal motifs to be suitable especially for pieces of jewelry meant for little children as animals attract their fancy more than inanimate objects. The power of the amulet to ward off evil was to be attributed to the amulet itself and not to the motif, unless it was believed, as some surmise, that the evil such as a disease the child was suffering from would be transferred to the animal represented on the amulet, which, again, is a far-fetched theory. The most acceptable explanation is that these motifs were designed to delight the children rather than for any inherent magical properties.



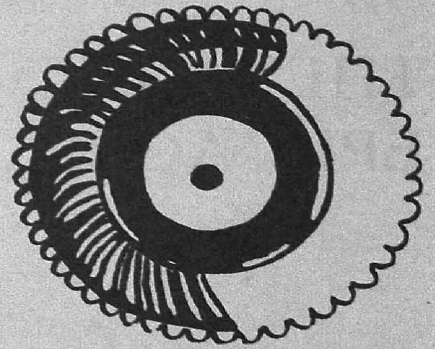
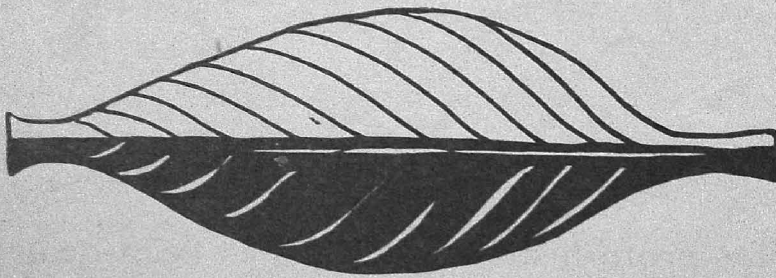
Another category of jewelry with animal motifs is that used for decorating the hair and the head. Such motifs are to be found engraved or embossed on hairpins of gold, copper or bronze. Hair and head ornaments were, perhaps, treated as no more than trinkets or accessories that could have trifling motifs.



The jewelry worn by adults generally had geometrical or floral designs, or leaf motifs, including the pipal leaf, the lemon leaf and the trefoil. The eight-petalled lotus is also to be noticed, while the mango design, regarded as a classical design and very popular in modern times, is not very prominent,



although it occurs in the ear-ornaments of the Harappan figurines. The fish motif is also found in some articles of jewelry. From the numerous forms, variety of motifs, geometrical and abstract patterns, and the shapes and sizes of beads and spacers found in ancient Indian jewelry one would be



justified in concluding that jewelry was a highly developed and

stylised craft, occupying a unique and important place in the adornment of the human body in ancient times in India. It can truly be said that jewelry has been an important aspect of Indian tradition and culture from very early times.

CHAPTER 3

THE VEDIC AND EPIC AGES

IN THE preceding chapter proto-historic jewelry has been dealt with at some length. Mention has also been made of the beads of the Stone Age. Obviously, before any hard and durable material came into use, man must surely have made use of the bounties offered by Nature in the shape of flowers, seeds, weeds and grass for adorning himself. Floral decoration has always been an important aspect of personal adornment in India. It may also be said to be an adjunct of jewelry, and even, perhaps, its origin. Without wreaths, garlands and bouquets no ceremony or auspicious occasion can become complete or graceful.

The word *sraj*, meaning a garland, occurs in early literature, and *pushkara sraj* signifies a garland of lotus flowers. The word *sraj* also means a necklace. Even today, flowers while serving a traditional, ceremonial purpose, continue to function as adornment in the same way as jewelry, and are, perhaps valued even more by women for their ornamental use. Floral, seed and grass

ornamentation being ephemeral in character, man in search of more enduring decoration for his women-folk, naturally turned his attention to material that would be more lasting and would retain its beauty and charm permanently. The value and importance of ornaments made of durable substances must have come to be realized by and by.

It is believed that the proto-historic period was followed by the Vedic age which witnessed a synthesis of the several units of civilization spread over the large expanse of the country. This was an age of the expounding of knowledge through high philosophical disquisitions and the building up of conventions relating to the Indian way of life. The Vedic hymns abound in descriptions and discussions covering various aspects of life, and are almost encyclopaedic in character. One has, therefore, to dip into them if one wants to explore the pearls of wisdom they contain to realize the wealth of the culture inherited by the people of India.

That richly designed jewelry existed during the Vedic age there can be no doubt. The sage Kakshivat, the reputed author of several hymns of the Rigveda, prays for a son "decorated with gold ear-rings and a jewelled necklace". He also refers to "largesses to priests and Brahmans" in the form of jewels. *Sraj*, mentioned earlier, was supposed to enhance the comeliness of the wearer. The Rigvedic references to jewelry indicate the existence of beautiful jewelry, and names are also ascribed to different pieces of jewelry. There must have been names for the jewelry of the proto-historic period, too, but they would become known only after the Mohenjo-Daro script was deciphered.

During the Vedic and Puranic periods *nishka* and *rukma* were pendants to ornamental chains and necklaces respectively, *karsna sobhana* was ear jewelry; *khadi* was anklet jewelry, while *opasa* or *mukuta*, as it was later called, meant a crown. It would appear that the *saj* (decoration or necklace) of the Deccan had its origin in the *sraj* of olden times. It is said that *kadi* or *khudwa* is a corruption of the word *khadi*. The jewelry termed *kumba* and *kurira* was worn exclusively by women. The later shell

bangles, finely carved and inlaid with gold, known as *kambu*, most probably had their origin in the ancient *kumba*. In *Virata* 10.1 these shell bangles are described as *parihataka kambu*.

Girdles were very much in fashion in those days, and in certain regions the fashion has continued even down to our own time. They were formerly known as *nyochani* and formed a part of the bridal ornaments. Later, they came to be known as *mekhala*.

The *nirukta* part of the *Vedangas*, Panini's Grammar and the Laws of Manu, all taken together, give a comprehensive picture of Indian jewelry as adornment, its place in the life of the people of the country and its economic aspect as settlement for women on their marriage. Historians have referred to the Epics as being earlier than the sixth century B.C. Since Panini has mentioned the chief characters in his work, the *Ramayana* is said to belong to an even earlier period. Students of history and sociology conclude that the War of the *Mahabharata* was fought a thousand years before the Christian era.

The jewelry of the Epic period is heavy, rich, varied and glamorous. Sita, it is said, had "jewelled butterflies and other ornaments in the raven black hair. Her eyes, resplendent with gems...bracelets and armlets on her arms and wrists...a golden zone binding her slender waist, golden anklets on her ankles, jewelled rings on her fingers and golden bells on her toes that tinkled as she walked with naked feet to accept Rama as her consort," must have been a glorious picture, dazzling the assembly by her natural beauty enhanced by the adornment.

King Janaka, Sita's father, had received the *chudamani*, an ornament for the head, from Kubera. It is described as studded with "pearls and costly gems", and was a unique piece of jewelry. Janaka gave this as a gift to Sita on her wedding day. Rama is said to have been delighted with the lovely ornament as it dazzled in the luxurious locks of Sita's hair. No wonder! Pearls have been included among the gems of the Epic period. The *chudamani*

contained pearls, and the first loss suffered by Yudhishtira at the gambling match in Hastinapur was a pearl. It is said, of course, that he lost many more valuables in the same match in the shape of jewelry of different descriptions.

The outstanding developments in the jewelry of the Epic period were the coming into vogue of heavy jewelry of solid gold and the numerous types of gold that came into use for making ornaments, for example, imitation and commercial gold. New names for the metal came into usage for differentiating the types. Thus *ashtapada* was the name given to gold from the Kailas-Manasa region; *paipilika* was granular or river-washed gold from Central Asia and Siberia and *jambunada* was the gold from Jambudwipa.

It is clear from ancient literature pertaining to the Epic age that by then precious stones had been discovered and pearl fisheries developed. A further step thus seems to have been taken since the proto-historic age. With the invention of imitation gold and alloys, it also appears that, while heavy gold ornaments were used by the richer people because of their value, cheaper jewelry also came into vogue as an aid to beauty among the less fortunate and the poorer classes.

It is worth recalling that the *Ramayana*, or the great story of Rama's life, reaches its climax, as it were, when Hanuman delivers to Sita in her captivity in the Asoka Vana of Ravana the *mudreyaki* or signet ring of Rama for identification.

Double-headed eagle pendant in gold with "Navaratna" (Kundan setting is famous in Indian jewelry)
—Courtesy Sri Meenakshi Sundareswar Devasthanam, Madurai.

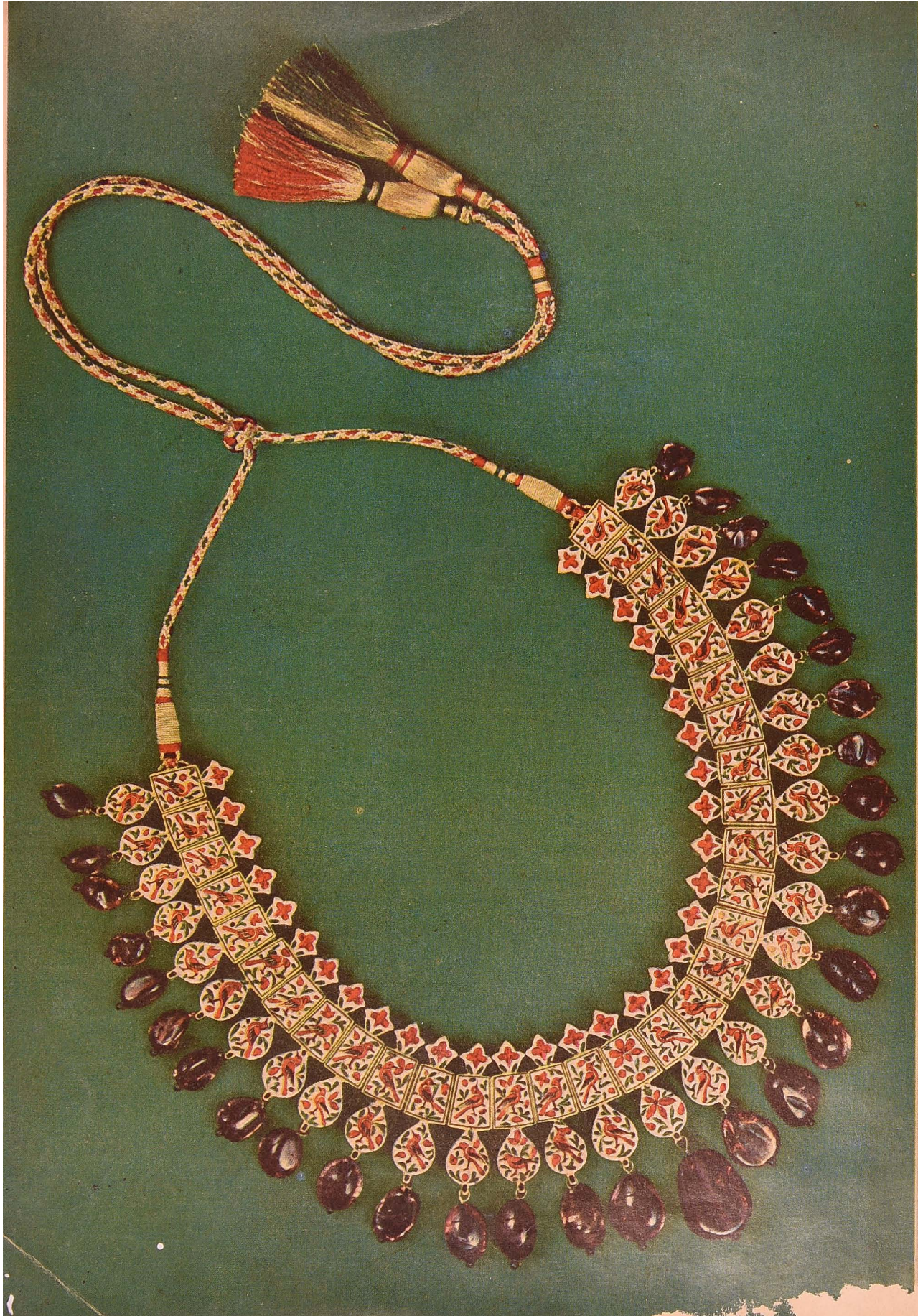




Gold Ornament for the hairplait
(Workmanship in chase design became popular in the time of the Cholas)

Shirpej—Chudamani of carved emerald and diamond (A chudamani was among the gifts to Sita on her wedding day by her father, King Janaka)
—Courtesy Nanubhat Jewellers.





Gold enamelled jawlar necklace set with emeralds, white sapphires and spinels (Enamelling has been known in India from ancient times)
—*Courtesy* Gazdar Private Ltd.

1. Ashtamangalaka mala—necklace, believed from ancient times to bring good luck; Bel-leaf tikka (choker), Keyura (armlet), Mekhala (girdle)

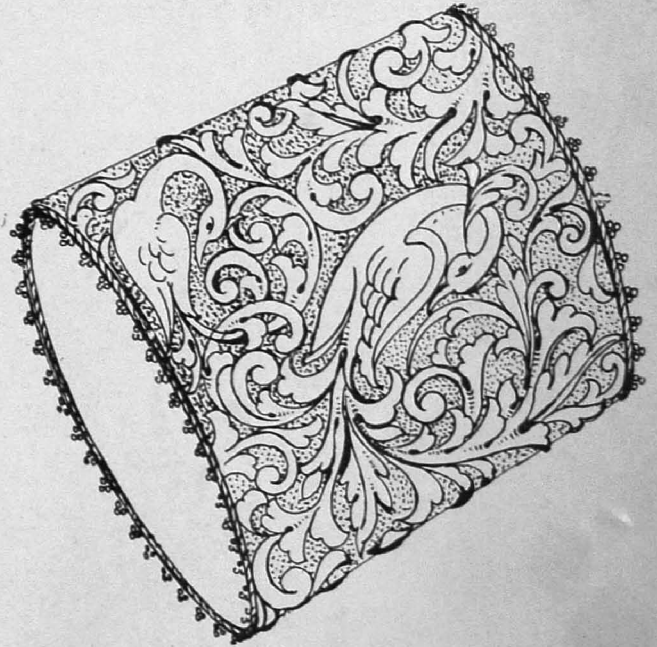
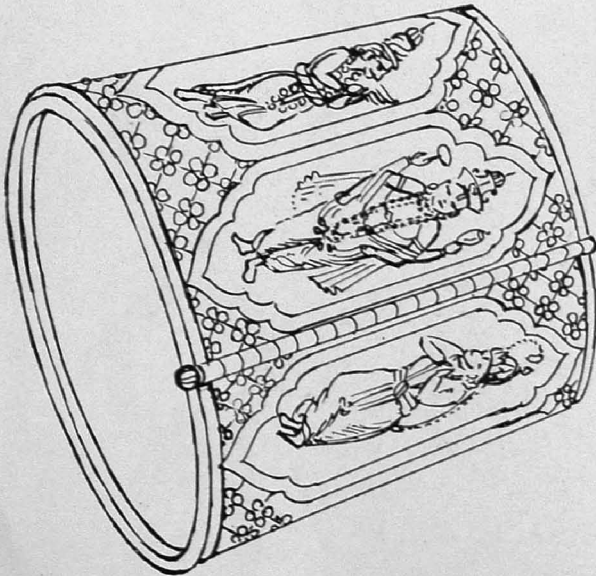
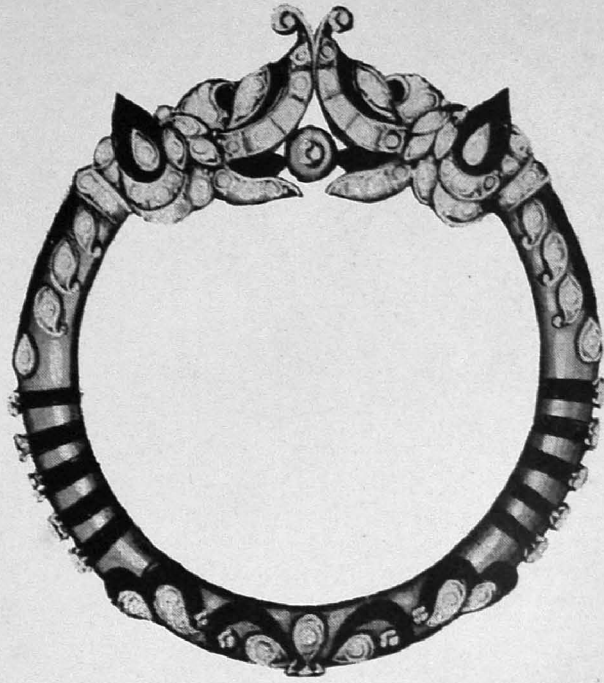




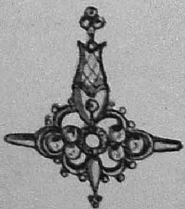
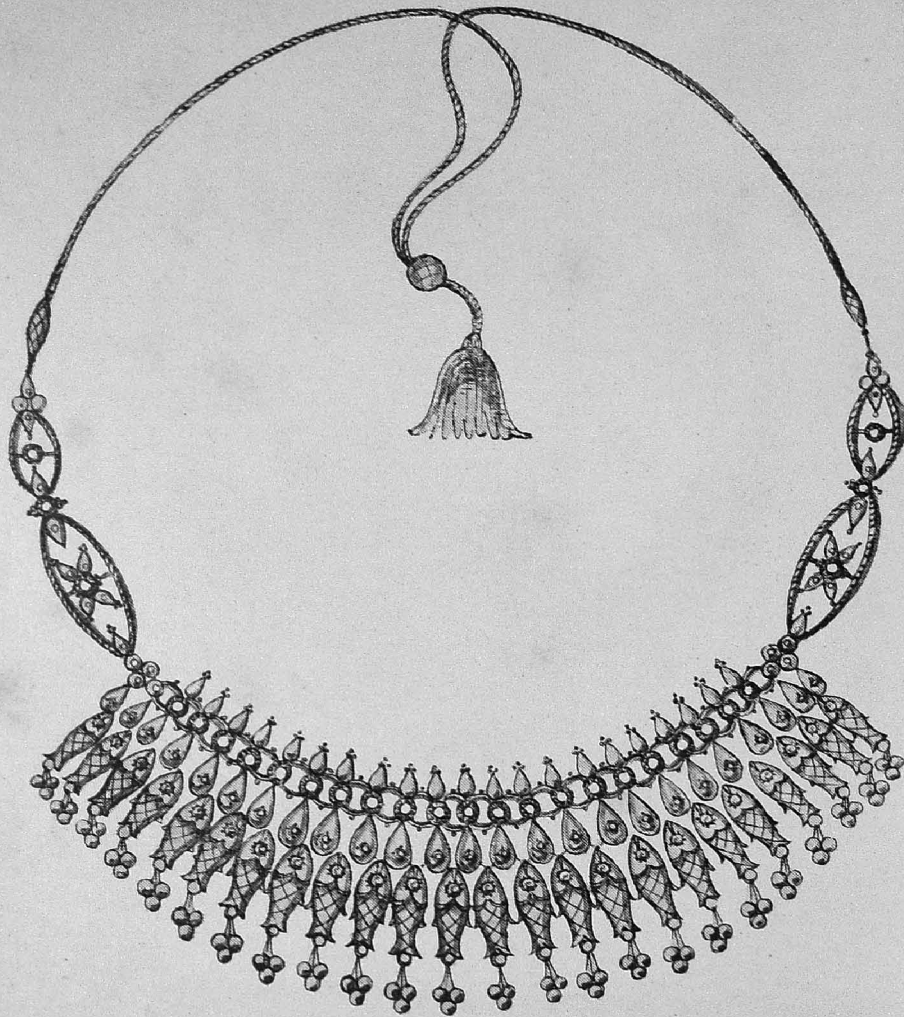
2. *Saj*, probably a corruption of *Sraj*, was a necklace of floral designs in the Vedic age



3. *Nishkakanthim*—an ancient ornament, now known as *Mohran*, *Kasumalai* or *Puthlihar*

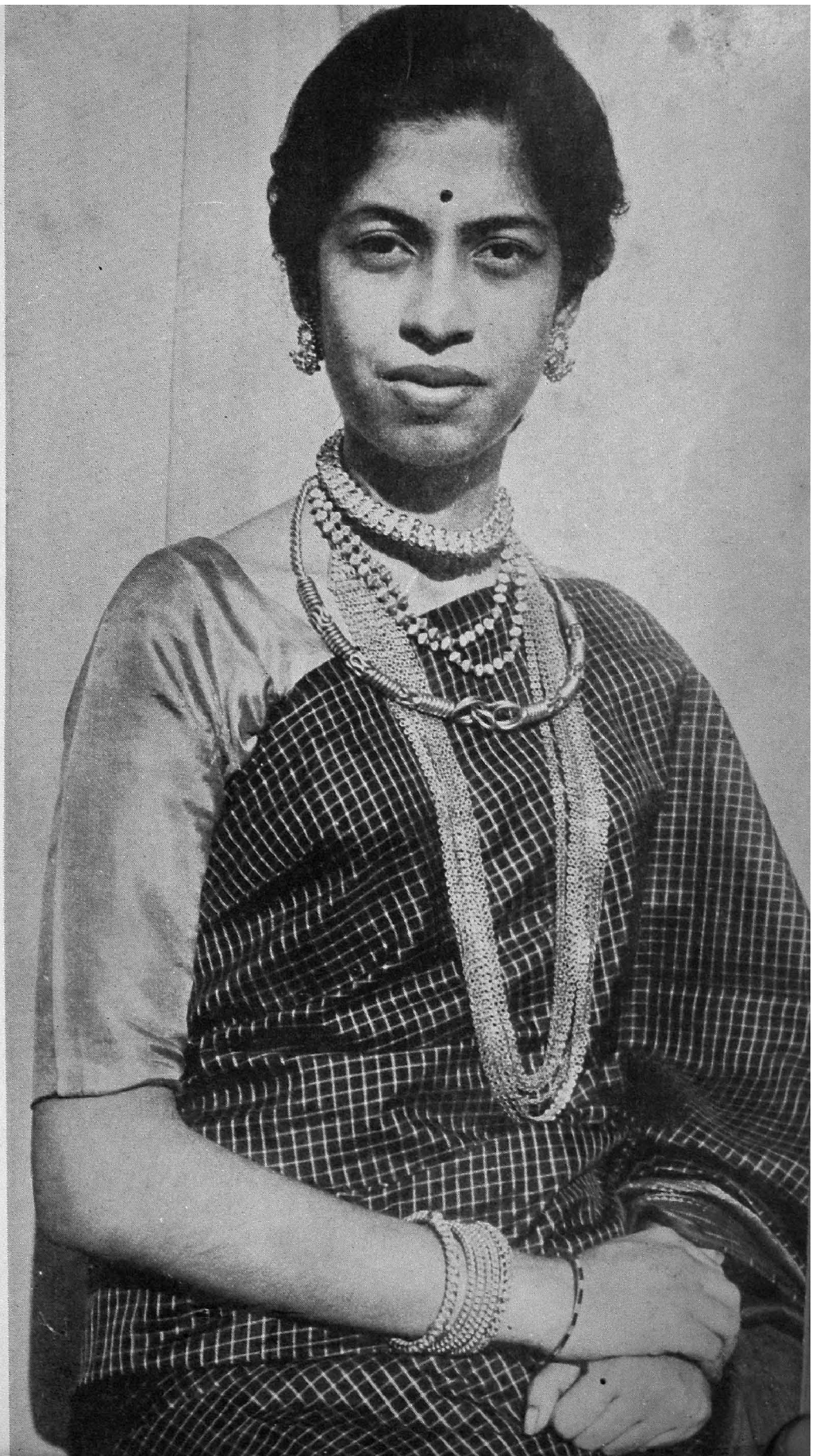


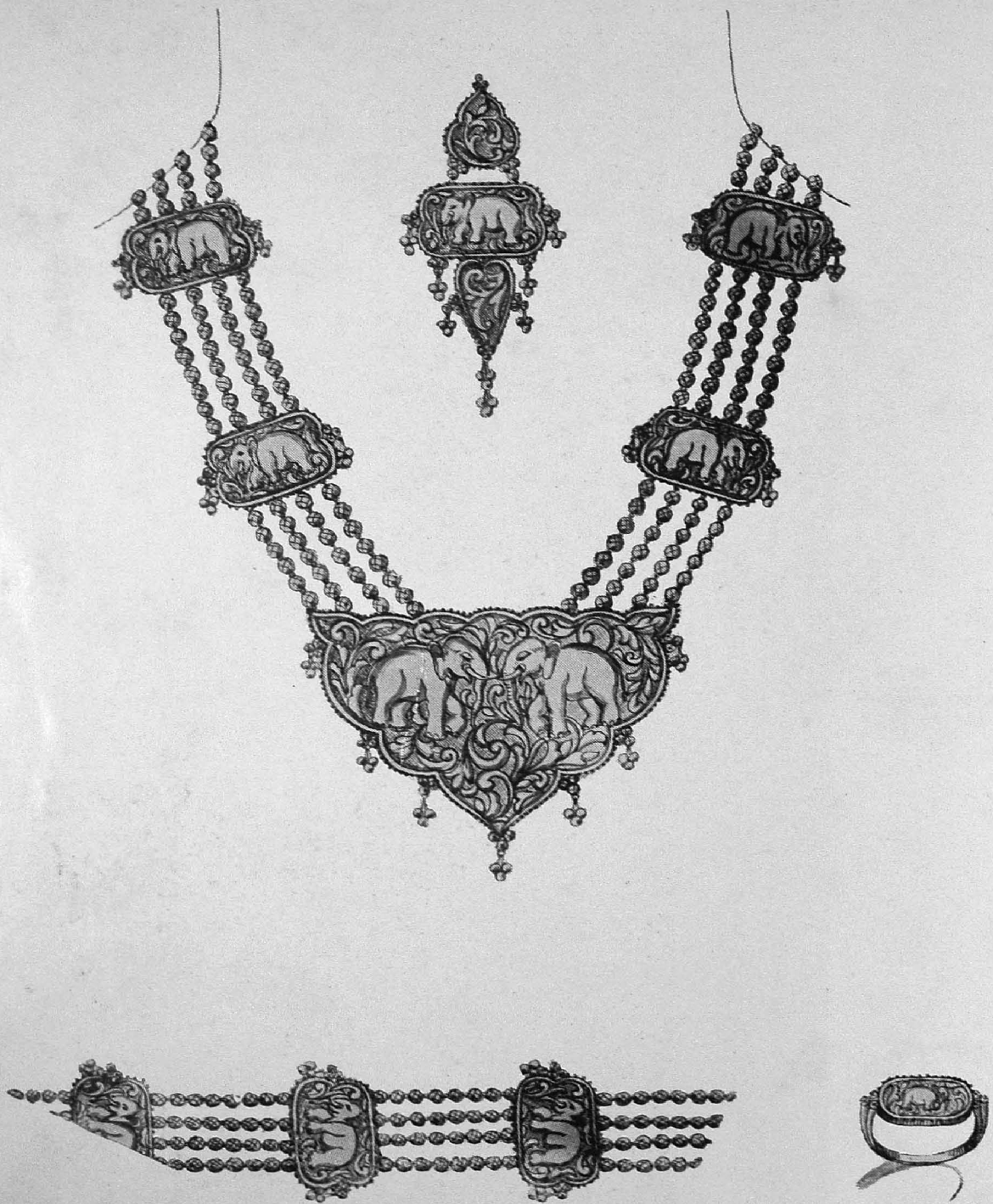
4. Animal designs of the Kushana period:
Makarika, Mithunaka, and design with deities in repoussé work.



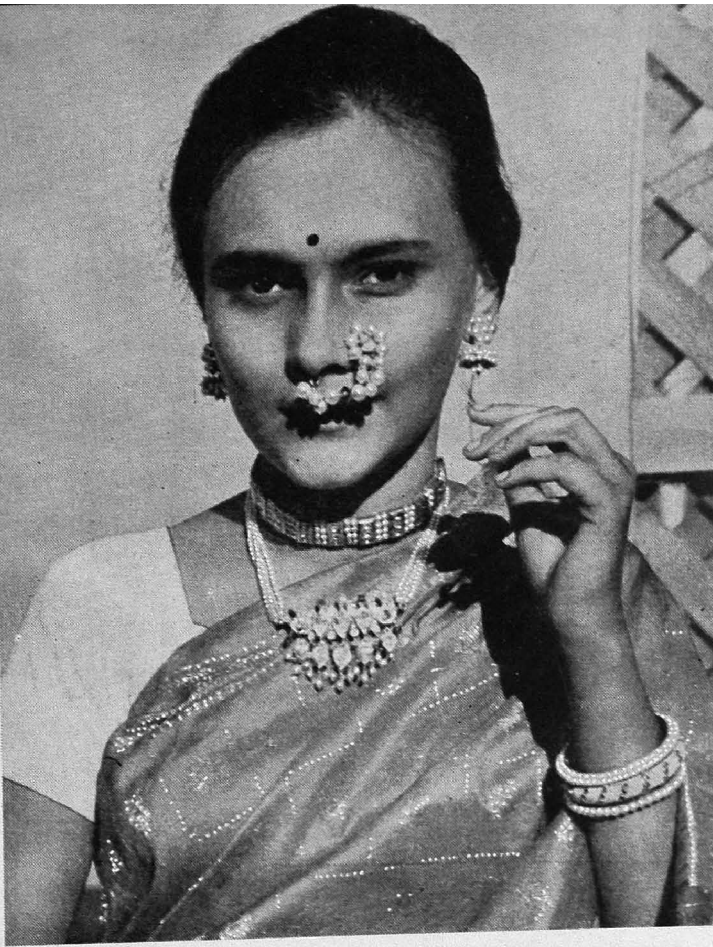
5. Nandipinnadaka, jewelry with fish design

6. Graded manner of wearing jewelry in the old days



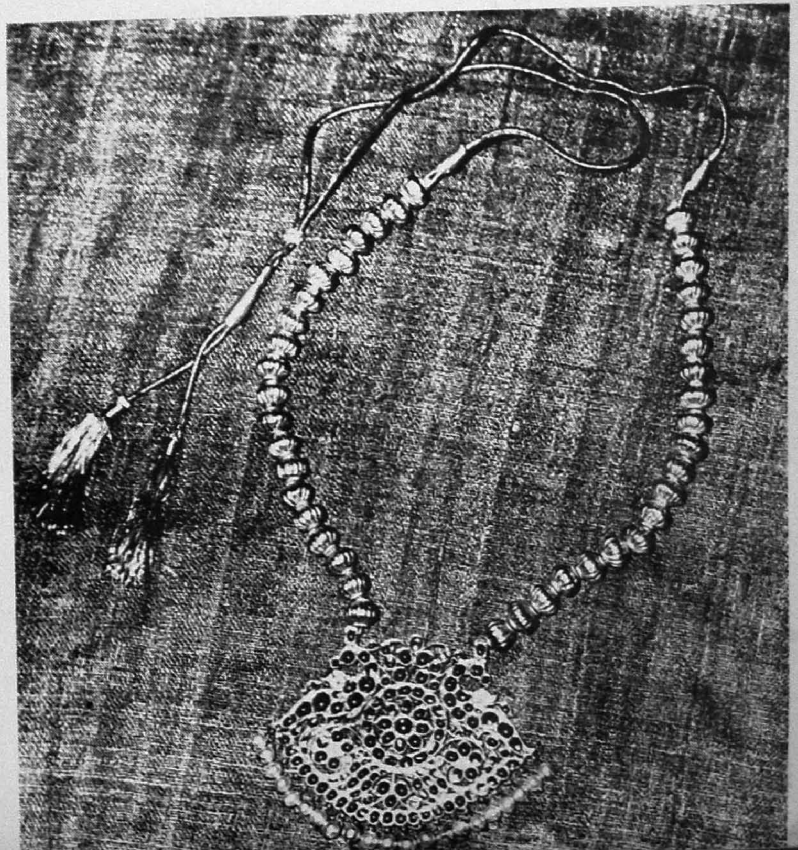


7. Phalakahara
(existed in the golden age of Sanskrit literature)



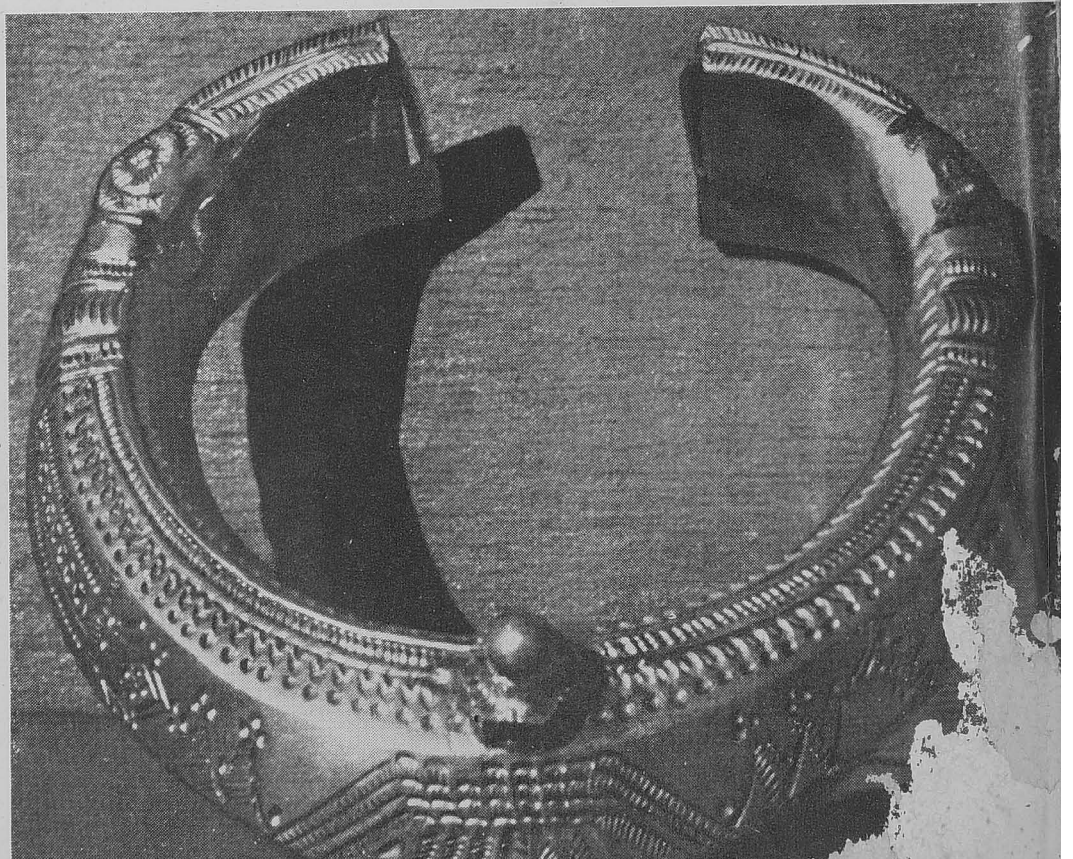
8. Medieval jewelry

Pearls and uncut stones—a feature of medieval jewelry

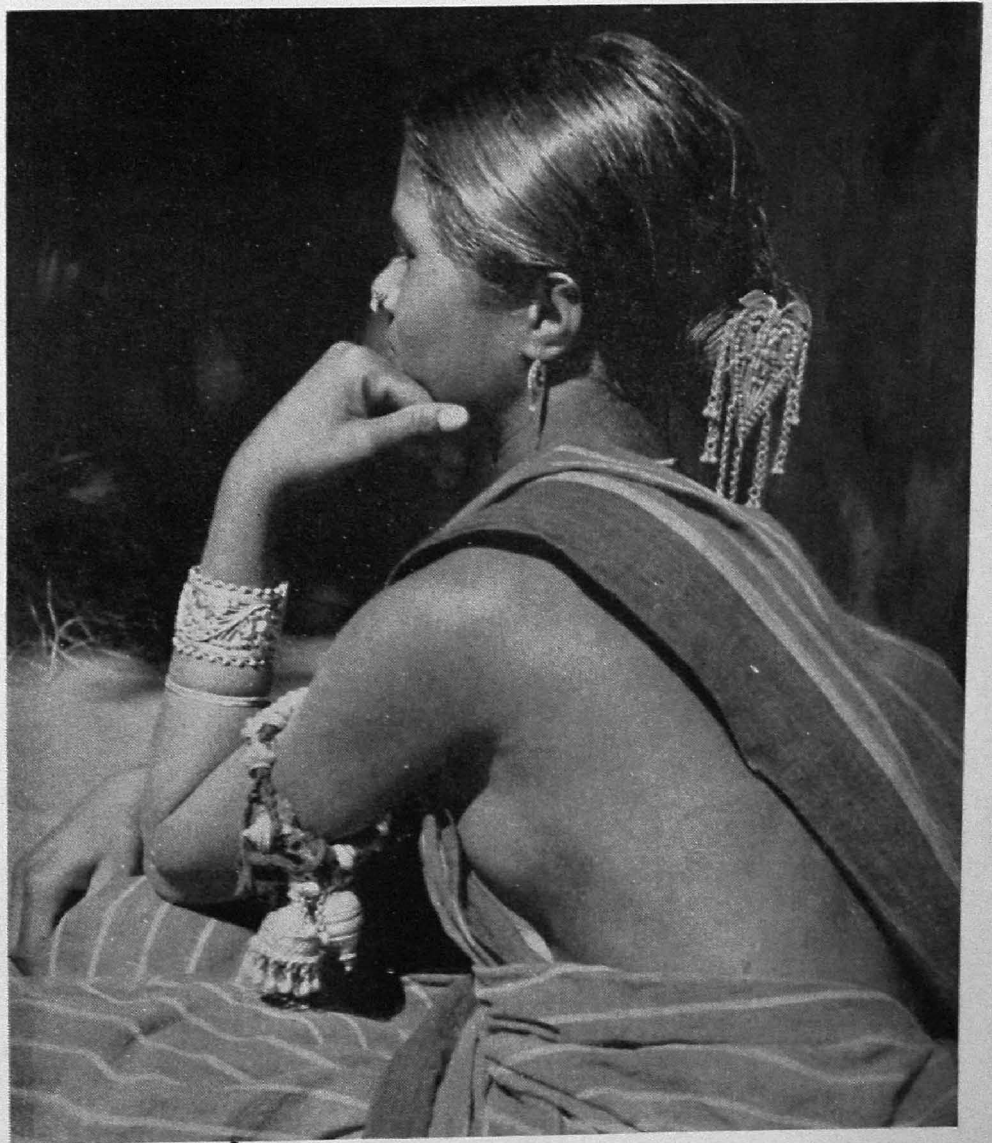




9. Tribal jewelry : earring



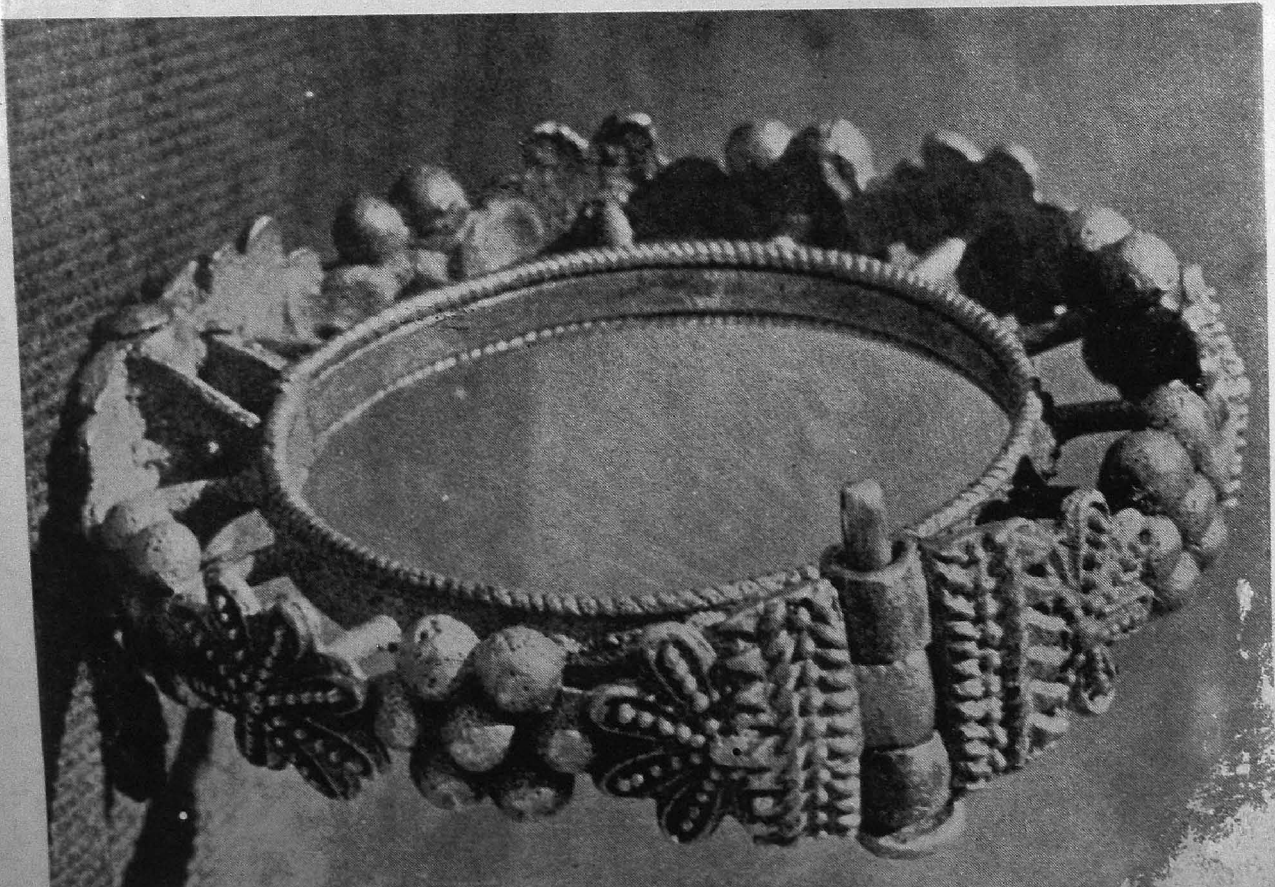
Torque



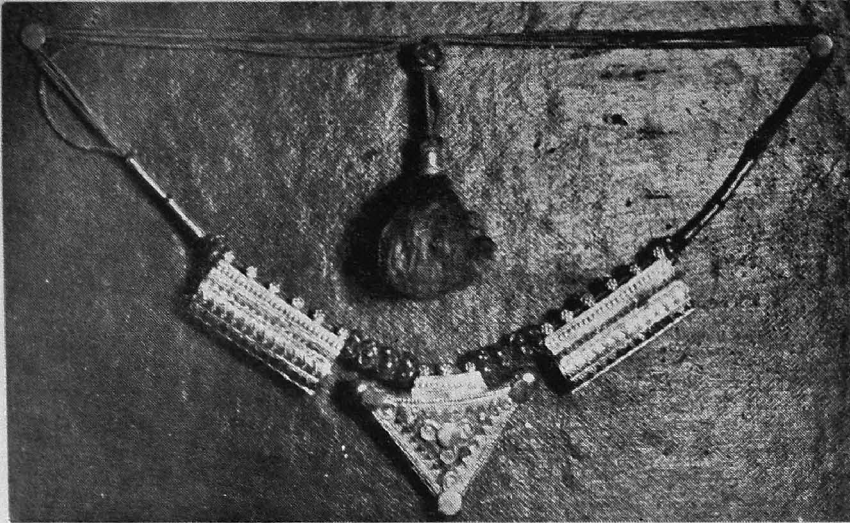
10. Jewelry of the Santhals



*11. Bhil jewelry
worn by
men and women*

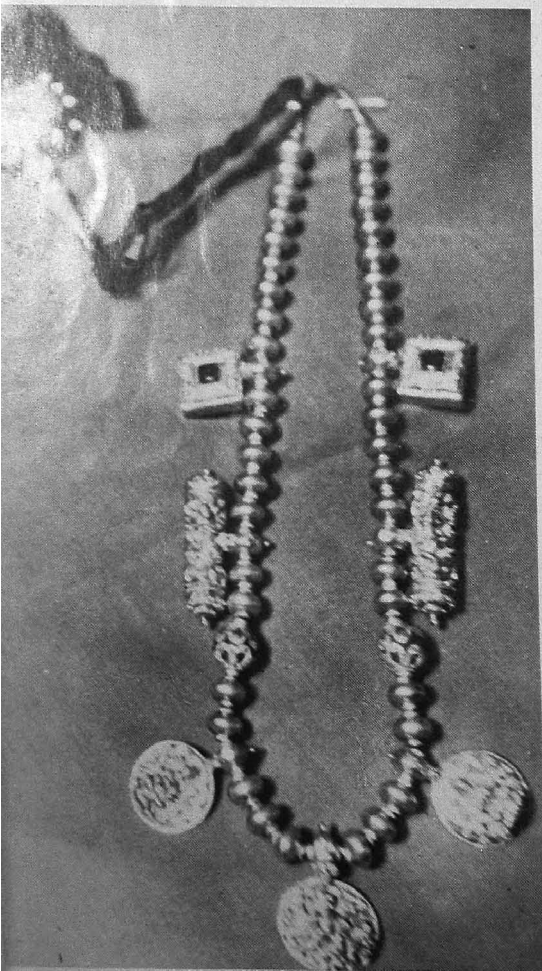






12. Folk jewelry →

Taviz or amulets

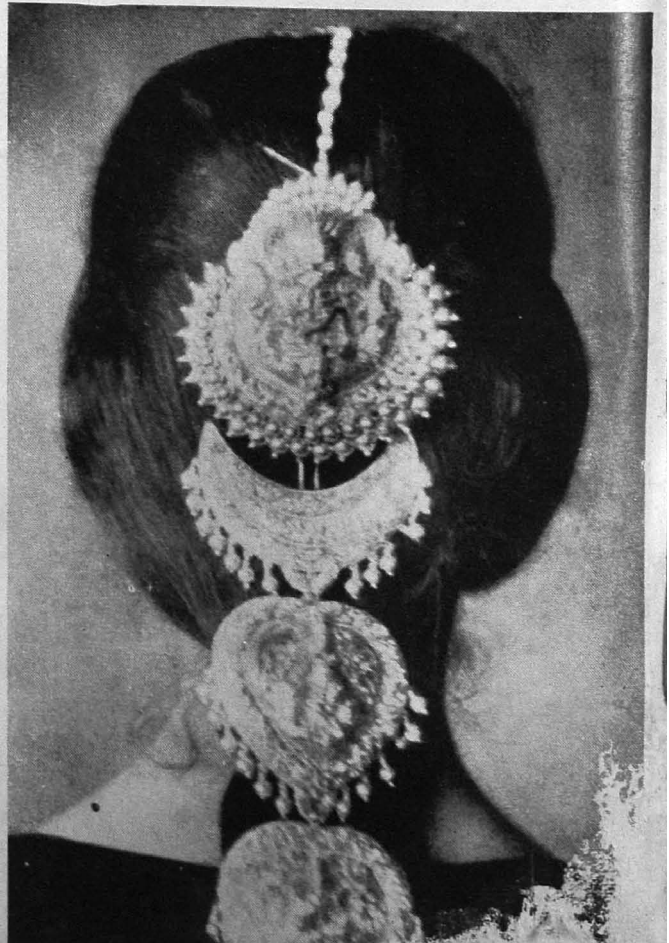
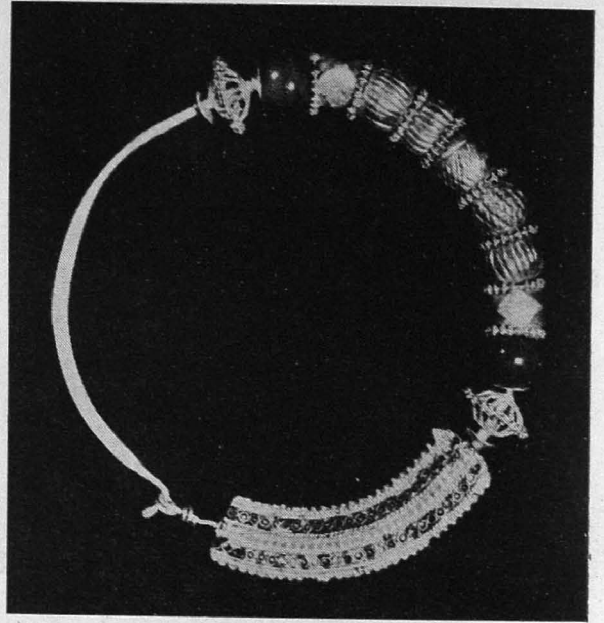


Taviz or amulets



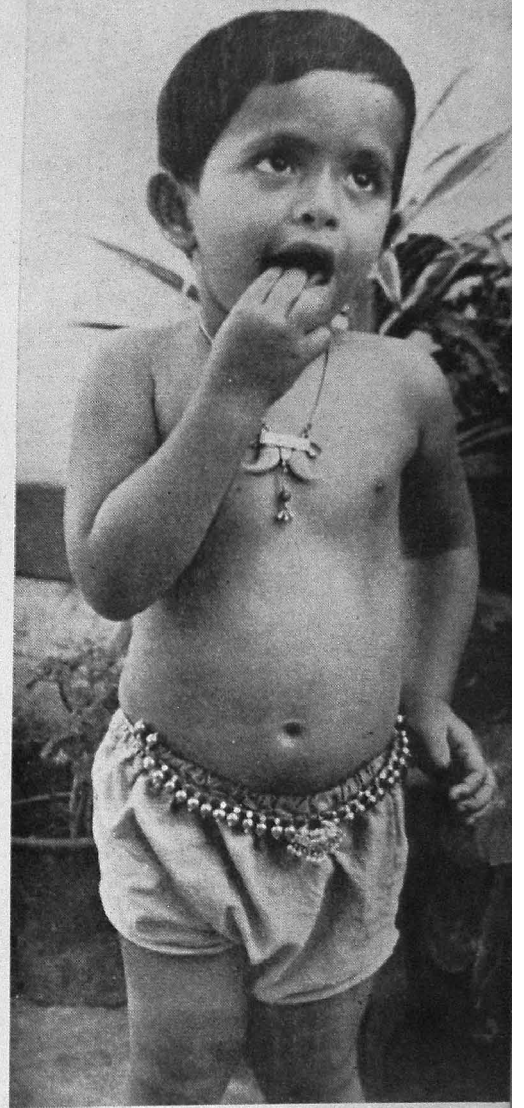
Bead jewelry



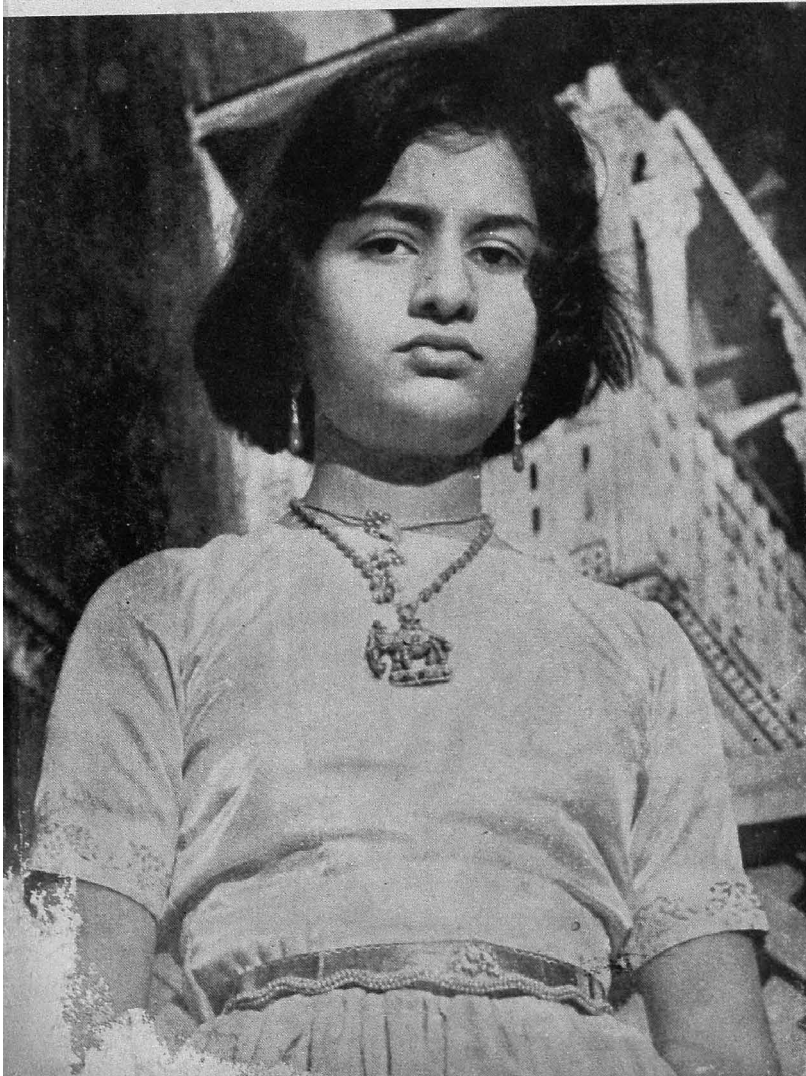


13. Folk jewelry for the hand, nose and hair

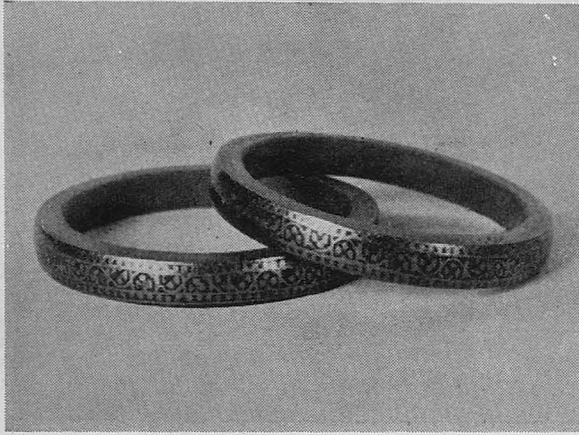
14. Children's Jewelry



Vyagranakha pendant



Coral necklace



Lac bangles

15. Modern Jewelry



Silver jewelry in repoussé and crustarii

CHAPTER 4

FLOWERING OF CULTURE

THE NEXT milestone in the history of jewelry, after the age of wisdom and enchantment of the Vedas and the Epics, was the age of learning and scholarship, the age of sculpture and the other fine arts and the age of style and adornment. It was also the age of material wealth and luxury. All these features contributed towards the creation of a glorious tradition and culture in India. The seventh century B.C. is looked upon by historians as an important landmark, or rather stage, in the cultural history of our country to which we are accustomed to look back with a nostalgic longing. By this time, monarchies had been established in several parts of India, and two new spiritual or religious ideologies, the Jain and the Buddhist religions, had been established. Historical records in the shape of sculptures, frescos and inscriptions are available from then onwards to enable historians to reconstruct the story of the progress of civilization, which is fascinating to a degree.



Trade and commerce, maritime communications and overseas routes had been fully established by that time. Political systems and organizations were taking shape. Jain and Buddhist traditions were taking root, and an attempt was being made at synthesizing the religious ideologies preached by Mahavira and Buddha. Bimbisara was king of Magadha, Udayana of Kausambi, and Prasenajit of Avanti. Ajatasatru, son of Bimbisara and a disciple of Buddha, founded the city of Pataliputra the importance of which was to continue for a thousand years.

While the Buddhists were attempting to unify the people of India through their religious teachings, the seeds of linguistic separatism were being simultaneously sown according to some sociologists. It was becoming a convention to expound Buddhism in the language of the region in order to reach the masses. The later disappearance of Buddhism from the face of India should serve as a warning finger to the pitfalls and dangers of the fissiparous tendencies that are being encouraged by linguistic separatism.

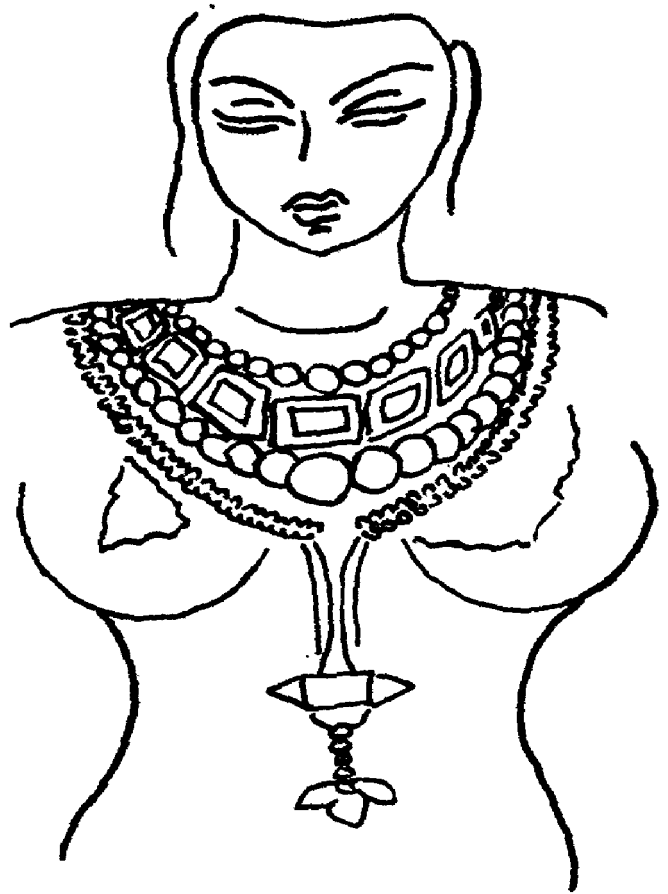
Rhys Davids mentions that it was said that "among the thirty-two good omens manifesting themselves when the Buddha became incarnate, bracelets and other ornaments jingled of themselves; when he appeared, he was like a shining gem placed on fine muslin of Banares; when, as Prince Siddhartha Buddha was moved to carry out the great renunciation, he sent away his ornaments, cut off his plaited tresses with the diadem placed upon them...the severed hair and diadem were suspended a league off in the air, where the archangel Saka...received them into a casket which he placed in the Tavatinsa heaven in the Dagoba of the Diadem". It will thus be seen how important a place jewelry occupied in Buddhist thought.

The Jain and Buddhist literatures record that there were great merchant princes, and that commerce flourished on a large scale. There were guilds and associations in existence. The middle classes owned gardens and guest houses and lived in comfort in luxurious mansions.

From the second century B.C. it is not only possible to get a glimpse of the types and articles of jewelry worn in ancient India through the sculptures and frescos found in the Caves of Ellora and Ajanta but also to find out the way in which they were worn, what constituted sets of jewelry, and the stylized forms that were in vogue. It would seem that design and tradition continued developing from one phase to another without a break, the progress or evolution being indicated by the refinement resulting from improved tools and techniques as well as exotic influences.

New trends in fashions of jewelry are evident after the seventh century B.C. *Avalokanika* and *avachulaka*, representations of the *chaitya* designs for head ornaments, definitely belong to the Buddhist period. These were added to by drum-like ornaments, called *avakasaka*, for widening the lobes of the ears, *palikarnadughanaka* (derived from *parikarmadrughanaka*), the *triratna*, a piece of jewelry comprising three gems to symbolize the Buddha, the Dharma and the Sangha. The *opasa* or crown with the triangular design of the Vedic period came to be known as the *mukuta* or *kirita*. It began assuming fantastic shapes.

The headdresses indicated the clan and the status of the wearer. The many kingdoms evolved their own head jewelry. In the sculptures and frescos of Ellora, Ajanta, Karla, Kanheri, Barhut and Sanchi the *mukuta* is a resplendent piece of jewelry. The





Buddhas and Bodhisattvas are naturally crowned with magnificent *mukutas*. The *mukutas* worn by women are, however, not so elaborate, being an adjunct to the hair styles.

Neck jewelry, known as *graiveyaka*, was of a high order and was beautifully designed. From a single strand of pearls or *ekavali*, a strand of graded pearls called *prakandaka*, a row of pearls with a large central pendant or *tarala* to elaborate necklaces, *phalakaharas* or necklaces with

plaques, there is an infinite variety of neck jewelry.

The *karsna sobhana* of the Rig-vedic period had come to be known by the general terms *karna-kundala*, and a variety of ear ornaments are to be seen in the sculptures. The *ratnavali*, a necklace of gems and gold beads, was described by Kautilya as *yashti*, while the *pralambika* was a necklace of pure gold. Long chains were known as *stanaharas*, *stana* meaning breast. The *Amarkosha* gives the names of *lambana* and *lalatika* to designs that include large floral motifs falling on the breasts.

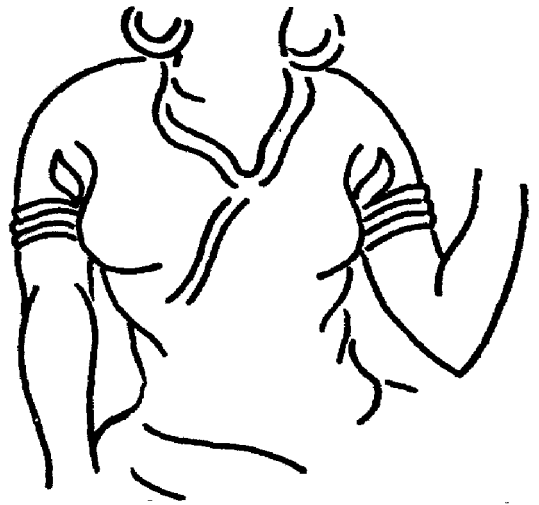


The *mekhala* (girdle) and *keyura* (armlet) assumed further prominence. The Bodhisattvas and the women in the sculptures sport beautiful *keyuras* and *mekhala*s respectively. They have excellent designs with selected motifs of the lotus, while the terminals of the *keyuras* are serpentine with jewels inset in the main designs. *Keyuras*, with trefoil designs and pearls, are also



in evidence. The *sinha-mukha* or lion-faced *keyura* is popular. It is said that the *sinha-mukha* motif is traceable to the Rashtrakutas, and is of Chalukyan origin. *Nupuras*, *kankanas*, *valayas* and *angulyas*, that is, anklets, bangles and rings of many styles abound in the sculptures. The *yagnopavita*, symbol of the initiation of the child into Vedic studies at the *upanayana* ceremony, is significant. It is seen worn by both men and women in the sculptures. Though a religious symbol, it is not

lacking in ornamentation. It vies with jewelry and forms a component part of it. The *sandhya*, prayer and ritual taught at the *upanayana*, was essential for both boys and girls at one time, but it gradually came to an end in the case of girls, as Manu and Yagnavalkya were not in favour of taxing the brains of women with Vedic studies. The sculptures in the Ellora Caves bear witness to the fact that the system persisted in spite of the lawgivers, though in a less prevalent form, up to the end of the seventh century A.D. One finds several female deities wearing lovely and ornate *yagnopavitas*.



The jewelry in the time of the Kushanas shows a new trend. The Kushanas had been making inroads into India from about the second century B.C. Kanishka had become a Buddhist, and, under his rule, the Kushanas tried to extend their power up to Mathura

in the West and Pataliputra in the East. The *Angavijja*, a book which enumerates the cultural material of that period, refers to a number of items of jewelry. Here, one finds that fish, bird and animal figures have crept into the motifs. There is also an affinity between the jewelry found in Taxila, contemporaneous with As-

syrian and Iranian jewelry, comprising battlement and fish designs, and the jewelry of the Kushana period represented in the later Mathura sculptures. In the *Angavijja* the latter is called *nandipinnadhaka*, *nandi* meaning a fish. The variety of ornaments and designs is astounding, and

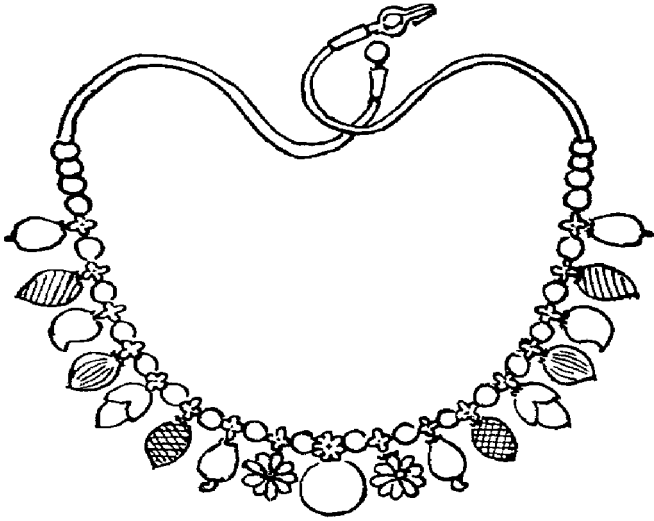


reveals mastery in the workmanship and the great imagination of the goldsmiths and designers in selecting subjects for ornamentation.

The new designs in jewelry that thus came into vogue were the motifs of *makarika* (alligator), *garudaka* (eagle), *rishabaka* (bull), *hāthika* (elephant), *sinha-bandhaka* (lion) and *chakravaka-mithunaka* (pair of birds). Such motifs were abundant in the amulets of the proto-historic period. Another new fashion that set in was the widening of the lobes of the ears by enlarging the holes. The *ketaki* flower strip was used for this purpose. It was known as *patra-kundala*. If a gold strip was rolled like the flower strip, it was called *kanchana-tala-patra* and was regarded as a fashionable piece of jewelry. It is interesting to observe that the widening of the ear-lobes is evident in the Buddhist sculptures. In the



Ramayana the *rakshasa* (demon) women who surrounded Sita in her captivity in Lanka are described as having ears with expanded lobes with circular rings inset in them. This practice is still prevalent in South India.



The *ashtamangalaka-mala* is an interesting and beautiful piece of jewelry the origin of which can be traced to olden times. It was a necklace containing eight auspicious, symbolic motifs with a pendant in the centre, and was believed to ward off evil. It was especially worn by men who had to go on perilous missions.

The *ashtamangalaka-mala* is represented in the Buddhist sculptures of Sanchi where Buddhist symbols are adopted. Even to this day this *mala* or necklace prevails as a symbol or token of the married state in the States of Madras and Mysore. The motifs, however, are borrowed from fruits and flowers. It is considered an auspicious ornament heralding happiness and prosperity for the married woman entering upon her new status in life.

CHAPTER 5

JEWELRY IN SANSKRIT LITERATURE

WE NOW come to the golden age of the culture of India which, through the period of the preceding centuries, developed into a well-ordered, stabilized and refined state of society. During this glorious era a mass of literature dealing with every aspect of Indian life came into existence. We have had a look at the great, mute monuments in stone and the beautiful murals in colour that speak volumes in their silence, and have seen the adornment of the human figure, which the anonymous sculptors and painters of the past resorted to by way of finishing touches to their lovely creations to enhance their natural beauty of form and proportion to enable succeeding generations to visualize the life and activity of the times in which they lived and worked. Side by side with the efflorescence of the plastic and visual arts, or, perhaps, a little later, there came upon the Indian scene a long line of succession of the greatest of our poets, dramatists and other writers, shedding lustre on the era, which may be described as the age of literary romanticism.

Beginning with Hala, Bhasa and the great Kalidasa, from the second century A.D., these renowned authors shone as stars of the first magnitude in the Indian literary firmament. There were at least twenty-three of them, each more illustrious than the other. Their works held the mirror up to the Indian life and thought of their time for the edification and delight of posterity. The beautiful descriptions in their works of contemporary life and events, the metaphors and similes with which they enlivened these descriptions and the soaring heights of imagination they attained are unparalleled in their grandeur and artistic beauty.

The beautiful passages in their writings waft us on the wings of time, enabling us to recapture the atmosphere of the period, along with the scenes described by the flights of their imagination and the wealth of their imagery. Almost all types of jewelry that are in existence today and many ancient types familiar to our forbears, are described in such detail and so vividly as to present a realistic picture to the mind's eye of the reader. There are superb descriptions of the adornments of the head, with the various fashionable styles of coiffure to which the ornamental pins, bands and other pieces of jewelry gave the finishing artistic touches. The illustrations, if any are needed, are provided in abundance by the sculptures and frescos of Ellora and Ajanta. There, one can see the ringlets, tresses, braids, chignons and buns which the modern woman is trying to imitate.

Hala, the earliest of the galaxy of writers referred to above, who is supposed to have lived prior to Kalidasa, writes of *dhamilla* in his *Gatha Sapta Sati* as unadorned braids of hair that stir emotions in the heart of a lover. Kalidasa in his *Meghaduta* refers to "*muktajala grathi tam alakani kaminiva*" or strings of pearls that rival the ringlets of hair on a woman's face. He again describes a river with golden flamingoes afloat on it as resembling the golden ornaments adorning the plaited hair of the earth in the following words: "*hemabhaktimatim bhume bhumen prameniniwa pipria*" *Pushpapatra*, *suvarnapatra* and *ratnapatra* were bands of flowers in gold workmanship and jewelled ornamental strips that were meant to

adorn the coiffure. The *mukuta* or crown and the *maulimani*, a jewel for the turban, were additional pieces. There were also the *chudamani* and the *chatulatikamani*, now known as the *bindi*, covering the central parting of the hair or *simanta*. In *Harsacarita* by Banabhatta, Mahadevi, it is said, as the crowned queen, was alone entitled to wear the *patta-bandha* or fillet. This ornament is also mentioned in the *Brhatsamhita* (chapter 49). A ceremony called the *simanta pooja*, is, to this day, performed when the bridegroom comes to the bride's house for the wedding. After some ceremonies, the heads of both the bride and the bridegroom are adorned with decorative bands of glistening foil or fragrant flowers. The *pattas* are evidently akin to the head decorations at ceremonials.

The most impressive ornaments are usually made for being worn round the neck. Kalidas in his *Meghaduta* speaks of a strand of pearls with a central blue sapphire in these terms: "*ekam muktagunam iva bhuva sthulamadhanranilam*". He also refers to the *muktayagnopavita* or pearl *yagnopavita*, similar to that sported by the female deities in the Ajanta sculptures.

The designs of ear ornaments are abundant. Banabhatta alludes to ear-rings, *trikantaka* and *balika* in his *Harsacarita*. The *balika* is a cone-shaped, tubular ear-ring which is still in existence in Mangalore, in Mysore State, and is also to be found in the jewelry of the fisherwomen of the Konkan coast. Buddhagosha, in a Pali text, refers to *valika* as strands of pearls dangling below the ear-lobes. The rolled gold strip used for enlarging the holes in the ears is referred to in Magha's works as *vilasini vibrame danta patrika*.

Bangles for the forearms are of numerous varieties and could form the subject of a thesis by itself. They are known as *kankana* or *valaya*. A gem-encrusted bangle is called *ratnavalaya*. *Valayas* were made of shell, metal, pearls, ivory and rhinoceros horn. The *jalavalaya*, referred to by Hala, was a perforated bracelet of filigree work. *Muktavalaya* was a pearl bangle. Necklaces with plaques interspersed were known as *phalakaharas*. *Phalakavalayas* were

made to match these. The *makaravalaya*, which we see today in the shape of a bracelet, with the heads of alligators as terminals, were also prevalent in those times.

Among the articles which Harsha sent as gifts to Hamsavega, the messenger from the King of Assam, was a belt inlaid with brilliant pearls, named *parivesa*. Belts and girdles were known by many names, depending upon the style and workmanship of each piece. A simple chain was *srinkhala*, while a golden cord or a golden girdle was *hemasutra* or *hapaniyamekhala*. The latter occurs in Kalidasa's *Kumarasambhava*. *Manimekhala* comprising a girdle with golden beads, it is said, chimed like the chirping of little birds during the rains. There were jewelled girdles, silk-braided girdles and corded girdles with beautiful names like *sarasana saptaki* and *kanchi*.

Anklet jewelry consisted of *nupura*, *tulakoti*, *padangade* and *kinkini*, that produced sweet sounds, *manjira tulakoti*, derived from the onomatopoeic sound *manjuiran manjirah*. Anklet jewelry was usually named after its jingling sound. It was sometimes called *kshudrighantika*. Jewelry thus reached the acme of its workmanship and was classified according to its use, design and medium.

CHAPTER 6

LEGAL AND CULTURAL INFLUENCES ON JEWELRY

OWING TO political upheavals India underwent many changes from the tenth century A.D. onwards. She showed a gradual decline from the high cultural level and the zenith she had reached in art, craftsmanship, literary excellence and material prosperity during the period ending with the tenth century. So far as jewelry is concerned, the eleventh century appears to be a period when the attitude towards it was radically transformed. Until then, the references to jewelry are indicative of its place more as an adornment or an aid to beauty. Besides, jewelry had been in use by both men and women.

The laws of inheritance and succession, expounded between A.D. 1070 and 1100 and A.D. 1090 and 1130 respectively by Vijnanesvara and Jimuta Vahana, the commentators of the Hindu Law laid down in the *Smritis*, in the *Mitakshara* and the *Dayabhaga*, gave to jewelry a new orientation. What till then was looked upon as a means of ornamentation thereafter assumed the aspect of a settlement or inheritance in the case of women.

According to Manu and the other seven important *Smriti* writers, a woman's property was of six kinds. They did not define the kind of property, but mentioned the mode of acquiring it. The ornaments worn by a woman during her husband's life-time could not be divided between her husband's heirs. Vijnanesvara commented that the kinds of property, according to the text of Manu, could not be less than six; it was not that it could not be more than six. The result was that, according to the Mitakshara school of law, property of any kind belonging to a woman became *stridhana* or woman's property. Jimuta Vahana's commentary was to the effect that immovable property received by a woman from her husband by inheritance could not be *stridhana*. This provided the basis for the Dayabhaga school of law in respect of *stridhana*.

Since the judgments of courts of law are based on the commentaries rather than on the original texts, jewelry assumed a special significance. In order to safeguard the interests of women, it appears that people began to invest in jewelry for making a settlement on marriage or a gift to the daughter or wife.

While jewelry assumed a different character after the tenth century, the names, styles and designs of jewelry also underwent considerable changes.

Muslim influence was also slowly spreading in the arts and crafts after this, although it was not very marked until the Mughal period. By the end of the thirteenth century almost the whole of North India, excluding Kashmir and some parts of Gujarat, had come under the power of Muslim rulers. The fourteenth century saw this power extending to the South of India. During the earlier incursions of the Greeks, the Kushanas, the Sakas and the Hunas, North India had offered them stiff resistance, but this time such resistance was not forthcoming. Unhealthy diplomatic alliances by the Rashtrakutas with the Arabs, and the Chalukyas with the Persians, perhaps to overthrow internal neighbouring powers, may have resulted in the weakening of the defence of the country.

The Vijayanagar kingdom in the South, no doubt, put up a stout resistance for nearly two centuries, but it was overthrown when the Maratha power rose to prominence.

The advent of Mughal rule helped to bring about a new synthesis of Hindu and Mughal art in India, which led to a resurgence of architecture, the fine arts and crafts. The Mughal emperors were great patrons and connoisseurs of the arts and crafts. Unlike Hindu art which included human figures, animals and grotesque and mythological figures, Mughal art laid greater emphasis on design, line and colour. Their art was dominated by flowers and foliage, a few birds like the peacock, a sprinkling of fish and other animal designs, the star and the crescent. The fusion of Hindu and Mughal art enriched the artistic products of the period.

One result of the impact of Muslim influence was that the beautiful Sanskrit names for jewelry, that were earlier associated with poetry and romance, were replaced by commonplace names, and more and more ordinary terms for pieces of jewelry came into use. Thus, *nishkakanthim* became *mohran* and *kasumalai* in the North and South respectively. Pearls and precious stones assumed greater importance. Uncut, but pierced, gems became very popular. Gems always had a special significance in India. The nine gems or *navaratnas*, each representing a *griha* or planet, it was believed, influenced the individual. The planetary powers were derived from the science of astrology.

Sets of nine gems became very popular during the reign of the Emperor Vikramaditya II (56 B.C.), and the *navaratna* ornament is supposed to have got its name from the collective epithet by which the nine sages of Vikramaditya's court were popularly known. Each gem among the *navaratna* had its own special quality. The nine gems constituting the *navaratna* ornament are *gomedac* (zircon), *lasania* (cat's eye), *sani* (sapphire), *hira* (diamond), *manik* (ruby), *moti* (pearl), *mongiya* (coral), *panna* (emerald) and *pukhraj* (topaz). According to the *Manimala* of Maharaja

Sourindra Mohun Tagore, jewelled ornaments of this kind should be worn to ward off evil astral influences. Thus, if the sun is evil, the ruby is propitious; if the moon, the diamond; if Mangal (Mars), the coral; if Budha (Mercury), the zircon; if Brahaspati (Jupiter), the pearl; if Sukra (Venus), the cat's eye; if Rahu (the ascending node), the emerald. The Muslims were equally enamoured of the *navaratna*, or *navratan*, as they called the ornament containing the nine gems.

There is a theory that the nose ornament came into vogue after the Muslim advent in India, since neither the sculptures nor Indian literature contain any indication regarding this ornament. The existence of nose-rings among the tribes (*vide* Chapter 5) would appear to disprove this theory.

After the tenth century A.D. the trend in the development of jewelry seems to have followed three distinct lines, namely, as dowry or settlement for the bride, as investment and as adornment. Where women inherited property, as among the Muslims, jewelry was looked upon more as a means of adornment with the consequence that it largely comprised what may be called fancy jewelry, while among the Hindus, Jains and Sikhs, to whom the Hindu law of *stridhana* was applicable, greater stress was laid on the investment aspect or the inherent value of jewelry. The largest section of the women of the country, especially the poorer among them and, particularly the agricultural labourers and the working men and women in the factories, regard jewelry as a kind of currency that can be easily converted into cash in case of necessity. To this section gold and silver, with the minimum of alloy, appeal more than fanciful ornaments for obvious reasons.

It could be said that with all classes of people jewelry has always served as a means of adornment to a greater or lesser degree. It has, therefore, developed in all periods of history as a creative craft, contributed to by the genius and skilled labour of the jeweller or goldsmith, the style and workmanship varying from one region to another. This had led to a diversity of designs and

tastes. There are, however, common, predominant features in Indian jewelry that are the result of age-old traditions and sentiments, revealing its essentially Indian character. The interchange of regional varieties in the types of jewelry, where they are to be found, are due to the migration of women from one region to another, which takes place when there is a change of domicile on marriage.

CHAPTER 7

TRIBAL ORNAMENTS OF INDIA

THE MANY tribes of India, spread over the Nilgiris in the South, in Central India or Madhya Pradesh, in Bengal, Bihar, Orissa, Assam and in the North-East Frontier Agency, have provided anthropologists and sociologists with ample material for study of the habits, social customs, dress and decoration of primitive society. These tribes, living close to nature in thick forests or mountainous regions, away from modern civilization, have their own ideas of beauty and adornment. Some of their conventions and fashions may seem queer, yet they have their own significance. Their jewelry or adornment comprises not many valuable, but traditional, pieces to which they attach great sentiment. Some of the tribes, particularly those of Orissa, deck themselves with flowers. No gathering would be complete for them without flowers in the hair of both women and men. It has been remarked that their love of decoration is only equalled by their aversion to clothing.

The tribes of the South are not lacking in interest in jewelry. Those of Kerala, in the Attapadi region, which is covered with thick forests, have their own way of bedecking themselves in order to make themselves attractive, but their economic condition does not allow them to indulge in anything more expensive than brass, aluminium, bead or glass ornaments. They decorate themselves fully with chequered bead necklaces. One of the most cherished ornaments among the Mudugas and Irulas is a coin necklace. It is the ambition of every woman to own one, and the menfolk, in the early years after marriage, try to live up to the aspirations of their women by making for them necklaces of four anna, eight anna and rupee coins in a graded order. Necklaces of beads and shells are common among the Pulayas. The Mullukuruma tribe seems to be a little better off economically as silver and sometimes gold ornaments are among their possessions. They wear jewelry in their ears and noses and on their arms and fingers. Some tribes like the Paniyanas, Mudugars and Konga Malayans have the dowry system. Formerly the dowry or bride-price was given by the bridegroom to the bride's parents, but under the influence of modern ideas it is now more usual for the bride's parents to give jewelry as dowry to their daughter.

There are interesting stories about the origin of jewelry. Dr. Verrier Elwin in his book on the Art of the North-East Frontier of India published by NEFA, Shillong, mentions that some of the tribes of the North-Eastern region look upon Nignur Botte as the original craftsman or maker of tools. They believe that "he made the first beads and persuaded the wood-pecker to cut holes in them." The Singphos (a small Buddhist tribe) say that the first craftsman was Intupwa who went in search of iron, having failed to cut wood with stone. He went to the trees, he went to the grasses, he asked the wild animals, and, at last, went to the water, which directed him to a goddess who had given birth to a girl. The girl was red as fire and black as iron. Intupwa smashed her to pieces and took the iron home. He then learnt to make a hammer by looking at the foot of an elephant and a pair of pincers when

he was gripped by a crab in its claws. After that, he made knives and arrows.

The married women among the Singphos wear their hair in a large knot on the crown of their head, fastened with bodkins of silver with chains and tassels, while the unmarried women gather their hair in a roll on the nape of the neck fastened similarly. They are sentimentally attached to a blue enamelled bead called *deomani*. All women insert pieces of amber into the lobes of their ears.

The Adis or Abors attach importance to a necklace of blue stones strung together. This is passed on from generation to generation, and it is believed that it has come down from God. They also wear large and long spiral ringed ear-ornaments that dangle and reach down to their shoulders, distending their lobes into different shapes.

The Padam-Minyong tribe is fond of beautiful ornaments. To a row of blue, black and white beads is attached a large pendant set in two horizontal bars of bone with vertical brass cylinders. A tassel of red wool completes the piece. The women of the Mishmi tribe wear bead necklaces in abundance. These are made not only of glass, but of carnelian and agate. They wear a band of silver on their heads. From this band small shells are suspended at the back of the head. Most of the tribal people believe that certain ornaments have a magical or healing effect. Iron, especially, is credited with such qualities. An iron fillet used during a wedding is supposed to ward off hostile elements. Bands that keep the hair in place are considered useful to prevent headaches.

While most of the tribes of India decorate themselves with beads, shells, beans, bamboo, feathers, horn, bone, hair, grasses and reeds, in the form of necklaces, belts, headdresses, rings and bangles, those of the North-Eastern Agency make their ornamentation colourful with red and black seeds, woollen tassels and blue, white and black beads. Some tribes scattered over the hills wear silver or copper bracelets, and anklets of cane or bamboo.

The chiefs of some of the tribes wear large silver ear ornaments. Unmarried girls wear screw-like, spiral ear-rings, wound round their ear-lobes, while married women wear abundant beads of semi-precious stones such as onyx and agate or of porcelain. Some of the tribes of the North-East Frontier wear polished wood and ivory armlets and feet ornaments of coloured cane. Bead ornaments are sometimes worn in such profusion by the women that they cover the breasts like a garment. Many tribes make their own metal ornaments. They work in iron, copper, brass and silver. The brass necklaces are large and heavy. The priests among the Khamptis make ornaments of bone, wood and ivory. Tibetan influences are traceable in the jewelry of the tribes in the North-Eastern Frontier Agency, the wheel of life on the beyop discs being reminiscent of the wheel on the *danki* bowls. The beyop disc is an ornament among the Shimongs of the left bank of the Upper Siang River, around which many stories are woven. According to one, a spirit named Wiyu, loved a human girl, and brought for her each time he visited her a bronze disc which she wore until a child was born to her. Young girls start with one beyop and go on increasing the beyops until their waists are covered with graded beyops that clank and chime with their movements. The beyops are discarded after a child is born.

The tribal ornaments of Central India, however, present a picture somewhat different from those of the North-East Frontier. Here, the tribes wear ornate and heavy jewelry which may be either low-priced or expensive. They are not particular about comfort in the wearing of jewelry. It is remarkable that many Indian tribes use nose-ornaments. While there is affinity between the proto-historic ornaments and tribal ornaments, nose-rings are a note-worthy departure. The existence of nose-rings among the tribes would appear to disprove the theory advanced by some writers that the nose-ring is exotic and was introduced after the advent of the Mughals into India. It may be that the sophisticated people in the ancient urban civilizations in India had discarded the nose-ring, while it continued among primitive societies. The

tribes of Orissa have not one nose-ring, but one on either side of the nose and a central piece. The Gadba women of Central India have enormous brass rings as ear-ornaments. The Kutia Konda and Marias deck the helix of their ears with numerous rings close to one another. They wear fillets and necklaces of beads in well-arranged patterns. The Saoras believe that the idea of wearing jewelry has come to them from the Hindus. The tribal jewelry of Central India discloses numerous varieties and designs. The jewelry covering their ears is tucked neatly into their hair just as the Kashmiris fix theirs to their caps. Their gilt *pajnas* or anklet ornaments weigh as much as one to two kilogrammes. The other ornaments have to keep to these standards of weight.

Rajnagar, situated at a distance of about five kilometres from Khajuraho, famous for its beautiful sculptures and architectural splendour, is known for its tribal jewelry. Khajuraho was built during the rule of the Chandel dynasty, between the tenth and eleventh centuries A.D. Rajnagar was at one time the capital of the Chandels, and is connected with the cities of Jhansi, Lucknow and Allahabad by road. The craft of tribal jewelry is still practised in the town of Rajnagar with great vigour, and the jewelry is made of silver, gold and baser metals like brass, zinc and nickel. The pieces of jewelry have special names, although a few are known by the common names of *anguti* (ring), *chora* (bangle), *pateyla* (bangle) and *bajuband* (armlet). The jewelry industry, which lists thirty-five broad categories of ornaments was founded during the reign of the Chandels in the eleventh century, and follows a hereditary pattern.

The jewelry prevailing among the Bhils, the tribes of the Aravalli Hills, and the nomadic tribes is slightly different from that of the other tribes, and comes closer to peasant jewelry, since they frequent the weekly bazaar and pick up ornaments that are put up for sale in the shops.

The Todas are a small tribe, numbering a little more than 700 persons who have attracted the attention of anthropologists

and sociologists. Dr. W.H.R. Rivers published a monumental work on the Todas in 1906. More theories have been evolved about the origin of the Todas than of any other tribe of South India. Dr. Caldwell, who has made a scholarly study of the South Indian languages, is of the opinion that they are a Dravidian race of Scythian origin. He disagrees with those Western writers who attribute a Celtic, Indo-European origin to them, mainly on account of their physical appearance. It is enough for the purpose of the present study to refer to them as a hill-tribe found in the Nilgiris, with certain distinctive characteristics.

The Toda men are accustomed to wear silver rings on the right or the left hand and gold ear-rings. The women wear bracelets or bangles, armlets adorned with bunches of cowries, necklaces, made sometimes of silver coins, ear-rings and brass circlets round the waist. These ornaments are generally made of either brass or silver. Some of these ornaments used to be massive, at one time. It is said, for example, that a pair of brass armlets worn by a woman on one arm weighed as much as six pounds or nearly three kilogrammes. Even gold ornaments are said to have been commonly worn in the past, but the jewelry they wear at the present day is of a paltry kind compared to what they used to wear once. The traditional ornaments worn by the members of the tribe include brass armlets worn by the women above the elbows, with armlets of Nilgiri nettle fibre that serve as buffers between the metal armlets, beaded necklaces strung upon thread made of the same fibre, iron bracelets on the left wrist, iron rings on the first finger of the left hand and silver chain necklaces with tassels of cowries. Although ear-rings are worn by both men and women, the boring of the ear-lobes is celebrated only in the case of male children. The ornaments worn by the Todas do not play any significant role in either their social or economic life.

It is interesting to mention a queer custom among the Todas with regard to the wearing of ornaments to which William Marshall refers in his book, *A Phrenologist among the Todas*, published in 1873. According to this custom, a man who falls ill with no hope

of recovery is dressed in all the ornaments and jewelry belonging to the family, which he wears until he dies or recovers. Marshall quotes the instance of a man who had revived from what was thought to be his death-bed, and who paraded about, wearing the finery with which he had been bedecked. This particular individual was permitted to carry the ornaments until his death.

Tribal people all over India have great attachment for jewelry modelled after simple forms they come across in their daily lives such as thorny seeds (*gokru*) cereals, coins, nuts and berries. Twisted wire makes artistic tribal jewelry. Keeled silver bangles and bracelets are made in the tradition of proto-historic steatite and faience articles of jewelry. It is rather strange that tribal ornaments should bear a close resemblance to the ancient ornaments of an urban civilization like that of Mohenjo-Daro. The metal jewelry of the tribes is more or less the same in many parts of the country.

CHAPTER 8

THE PEASANT OR FOLK JEWELRY OF INDIA

THE PEASANT or folk jewelry of India is by far the most artistic and elaborate among all the types of jewelry to be found in the country. It has the vigour and sturdiness in style pertaining to the children of the soil and a beauty of design borrowed from the simple, commonplace motifs, developed into artistic, exquisite and stylized patterns. The ornaments worn by an agriculturist or peasant constitute his bank account or assets: he does not, therefore, care for anything but pure gold or silver, if he can afford it, and if he is not prevented by controls imposed by the Government. Folk ornaments are more varied than those of the urban population. More metal is used in making them and that, too, of a malleable kind, that is, gold and silver without alloy. They have hardly any precious stones. Pearls and a few types of beads do, no doubt, go into the making of peasant jewelry. Preference is given to beads of gold and silver blown into beautiful shapes and sizes. Repoussé, chase and filigree work take more gorgeous forms and gems diminish in the rural areas.

A new element is visible, and jewelry becomes associated with mysticism. Melodious, devotional folk-songs, woven around the jingle and ring of the anklet bells, or the rhythm and tapping of the toe-rings, the tinkle and chime of bangles, or the tremor and music of the ear-rings resound in the villages. These songs depict the divine love of the child-god, Krishna, the gay and innocent abandon of rural India and the devotional ecstasy and spiritual longing of the simple village folk. Folk jewelry is varied and, while it differs in a slight measure from one State to another, there is a common style in sets and in the mode of wear. A single ornament with matching accessories is not the rule. On the other hand, a whole ensemble of jewelry is worn at one and the same time. Neck jewelry constitutes an important item, and comprises a choker, called *tikka* or *baleora*, underneath which is worn the marriage *tali* or pendant, strung on a chain of beads. Below this comes a necklace of large gold or silver ornamental beads, usually interspersed with corals or plain beads. This is known as the *pachmania* or *kashitali*. It has a pendant in certain regions which is called the *tan-mani*. Then comes the *hasli*, that is, a torque. After this stiff ornament, encircling those mentioned above, come the necklaces or chains, called *malas*, literally meaning garlands, having such romantic names as *mohan-mala* or *jivan-mala*. Finally comes the *putlya-har* or necklace of coins. Sometimes, a necklace of *tavizs* completes the set of neck ornaments.

Arm ornaments are generally of three kinds: the *bajuband* or *nagmurgi*, the *vanksari* or *vaki* and the *tad* or armlet from which a couple of large metal beads are suspended by fine chains, called *sargundi*. The *bajuband* and the *vaki* are often made of wire or filigree work and are expandable.

Jewelry for the forearm has a convention in its mode of wear. The first and the smallest bangle to fit the wrist is a *kada* or *toda*. This is beautifully designed. A *kada* is sometimes replaced by a *chudi* or *pohonchi*, meaning a bracelet. The set of ornaments for the forearm is conical in shape, starting with small bangles for the wrist and expanding in circumference as they go higher up to

fit the middle forearm. In some cases, instead of several bangles forming a set, a single, solid, broad ornament or gauntlet of about five inches in length covers the mid-forearm. The *kada* is followed by *bangdis* or bangles which are also called *chudis*. These are several in number and of a simpler design. They are normally presented by the bride's parents, while the decorative bangles on either side are brought for the bride by her parents-in-law. The *bangdis* are sandwiched between two *kadas*, the one on top being more decorative. The last ornament on the forearm, towards the elbow, is a *patli* or a broad, flat bangle which may be either plain or ornamented with a design.

Jewelry for the feet is never of gold except when it is intended for images of worship or deities. It is composed of a *chhara* or loosely made and broad ornamental chain, fringed with tiny globules, and encircles the ankle. Above this is worn the *shinde-shahi* toda, popular in the Deccan. Above this come various types of ornamental circlets. Each design has a name in keeping with the motif, which may be an *amla* or jowar sheaf or a *chaudana* (four grains). The *hathphul*, *arsi* and *anguti* are ornaments for the hand, popular in the North of India. *Hathphul* is a flower of silver which dangles on the back of the hand. It is attached by means of fine chains to the *kada* and the *anguti*, and is popular in Rajasthan. The *arsi* is a ring with a tiny mirror worn on the forefinger. It corresponds to the mirror in the compact powder-box in the modern woman's handbag.

Toe-rings are varied. They are made in numerous shapes and designs, and range in shape from a fish to a heart. Sometimes they are plain.

Ear-ornaments are of various kinds. The designs may be based on motifs ranging from an ordinary pea to a scorpion. Heavy ear-ornaments are held in place by ornamental chains the ends of which are tucked into the hair either vertically or horizontally. Nose-rings are common in several parts of India. They are not regarded by some persons as traditional ornaments.

Jewelry for the head or hair among the peasants normally consists of a *bindi*. In Rajasthan the women wear a small ornament on the top of the head. Hair-pins with varied floral motifs are worn on the chignon.

It is interesting to study the motif that dominate folk or peasant jewelry. They are simple, being borrowed from common objects such as seeds, thorns, flowers or leaves. Nevertheless, beautiful jewelry is produced in a number of exquisite designs. With a few permutations and combinations and an artistic touch here and there, the jeweller plies his art, bringing beauty and glamour to the Indian countryside.

CHAPTER 9

STYLES OF INDIGENOUS WORKMANSHIP

CONVENTIONS, habits, local manufactures, regional and sectional influences have an important bearing on the types of jewelry produced in India. Apart from the broad categories mentioned in earlier chapters, jewelry tends to be highly conventionalized among clans, hill-tribes, nomadic people and the aborigines. Here, too, one finds the same pre-dominant ideas of investment, settlement and easy convertability. Side by side with heavy jewelry, trinkets of baser metal, beads, shells and corals are to be found. While making ornaments for the bride, both parties would agree upon the items that each of them should make. Usually, the central bangles are made by the girl's parents and those on either side by the in-laws.

Broadly speaking, the styles in the indigenous patterns of jewelry fall in the following categories:

1. Beads in their various forms;
2. amulets or charms and conventional jewelry (*see below*);

3. chase or embossed work;
4. repoussé or engraved work;
5. kundan setting;
6. claw and closed setting (modern);
7. enamel;
8. gem jewelry;
9. crustarii or encrustation of semi-precious stones;
10. filigree work;
11. granular ornamentation;
12. crude setting;
13. tribal jewelry;
14. silver ornaments or folk jewelry;
15. ivory, shell, lac, glass, etc.

The chief styles of jewelry designs in some regions have taken different forms, depending on fashions and on the features of design and workmanship. Nevertheless, there are certain traditional styles that have been in existence in certain regions from times immemorial, and in others for centuries. The archaic styles of workmanship, setting of gems, types of designs and fashions have had an unbroken link with the past. Some tastes have persisted, though the ornaments may have undergone a few changes in their designs.

We have seen that beads were popular in the ancient civilizations. They varied in shape, size and design. Wherever such a civilization existed, beads continue to be popular even to the present day. The North-Western region of India, from Kashmir to Rajasthan, comprises jewelry of metal and gems and is fashioned very much after the ancient types of jewelry, although in place of faience, steatite and terra cotta modern media are used. This jewelry includes spacers, terminals, chains and beads. Metal embossing and cutting, or what is known as repoussé work, is a special feature of this jewelry. Gem-setting, beads of semi-precious

stones of all sizes and shapes and engraving are widely prevalent.

North-Western jewelry also comprises aigrettes, hanging over the forehead or temple, large, dangling ear-rings designed in relief, with fringes of beads, discs and geometrical shapes, necklaces and bracelets of pearls, precious stones, chokers and necklaces set with gems or designed with rosettes and having square or other shapes. By far the most gorgeous jewelry of this region today is of silver and gold and gems. The amulets of early times continue as before, and some of them have taken the form of large-sized pendants or medallions. A glimpse of the jewelry of the North-Western region will show that it has taken new shapes. Kashmir, Punjab, Delhi, Himachal Pradesh, Rajasthan and Saurashtra have each their own special types of jewelry.

The ornaments of each region or area have their own characteristics which make a special appeal. While the jewelry of Kashmir boasts of all the features mentioned above, it also abounds in gem-encrusted pieces and beads. Silver beads of numerous types, globular, discoid, etc., fringe the silver jewelry, making it look fantastic. Carnelian, jade, amethyst, jasper, cat's eye, turquoise, and lapis lazuli are the special stones in the jewelry of Kashmir. *En repoussé* work, with beautiful designs both in the glittering and the dull and oxidized forms, bringing the gems into relief, put Kashmir jewelry in a category of its own.

The jewelry of the adjoining regions of Chamba, Kulu and Himachal Pradesh has also much in common with that of Kashmir. Jewelry takes quite a different shape in the Punjab, where the tendency is more towards necklaces with several rows of pearls and chains with rosettes. *Kundan* setting, pearl and semi-precious stone assume greater importance. Muslim influence becomes more marked, and so uncut stones and pearls abound. Spacers, both ornamental and gem-studded, are a special feature of Punjab jewelry.

Rajasthan jewelry takes still newer forms. The bangles become broader, newer material is introduced, and one finds

ivory, bone and lac entering the field of jewelry. In Rajasthan there are more chains and beads, especially in foot jewelry. One also finds repoussé work yielding place to chase work for the treatment of broad surfaces, especially in bangles, armlets and foot jewelry. Girdles and key-chains assume greater importance, and so do hair and head ornaments.

While *kundan* setting (i.e. setting of the gems in an ornament with very fine gold) is a speciality of Jaipur, its beauty is further enhanced by the introduction of *minakari* or enamel work. A *kundan* setting of a high order must have a beautifully enamelled design on the back. Enamelling is also introduced to render intricate designs on the surface more effective. Cut stones or beads of precious stones are a special feature of Jaipur jewelry, and beads of amber, emeralds, rubies and garnets, as well as enamel beads vying with real beads, abound in it. More refined *kundan* setting, coupled with precious stones and pearls, place Jaipur jewelry in a class by itself. The Jaipur art of enamelling on jewelry is superior to enamel work done in other parts of the country. Enamelling is an ancient art. Enamelling on ornaments was known even in the protohistoric period. It is widely popular in connection with brassware and is practised in Lucknow, Banaras, Multan, Lahore and in Kangra and Kashmir, while it has reached almost perfection in Jaipur. Jaipur enamelling is in the ancient form of encrustation, and is of two types, namely, cloisonné and champlevé, the latter being more popular. (Jaipur enamelling vies with precious stones both in its lustre and colour.) The emerald greens, the ruby reds and the sapphire blues in enamel are matchless in their beauty. In Rajasthan, enamel work is done on silver and gold in equally exquisite forms. The art of Rajasthan and that of Kangra have many things in common, enamelling being one of them. The miniatures, for example, which are also a part of jewelry, being painted or enamelled on pendants and rings, are famous for their elegance of line and fineness of workmanship.

Coming down South to Saurashtra and Gujarat, one finds that the *kundan* setting becomes heavier, and takes on rounded

and square forms. The elegance of Jaipur jewelry recedes into the background, and more elaborate, ornamental metal beads with *kundan* setting carved beads of silver and gold and amulets, necklaces with several pendants, bangles, gauntlets and armlets similar to those of Rajasthan are in abundance. In Saurashtra, among the shepherds and peasants, the men wear almost the same neck ornaments as the women. The women of Kathiawar are fond of wearing numerous ear-ornaments and of decorating their fingers with plenty of rings.

The jewelry of Gujarat is archaic in its designs of chopped and beaten gold. Small beads of pure gold, hexagonal or octagonal in shape, often solid and sometimes filled with lac, strung in one or more rows, are much in vogue in Gujarat and Western India. For bracelets repoussé work is more popular than chase work.

The chief characteristics of Indian jewelry are its intricate design, gorgeous appearance and richness. Even when less gold or silver or semi-precious stones are used, the jeweller aims at producing an ornament that will look both rich and gorgeous and uses precious metal of pure quality, as far as possible, so that the jewelry retains not only its fancy character but also its intrinsic value.

The jewelry of Peninsular India is distinct from that of the North and, particularly, the North-Western zone. The workmanship is, perhaps, finer, and *kundan* setting is at its best, though it takes a different form, especially in Madras and Andhra. Rubies and diamonds are extremely popular in this region, and chase work is largely employed in all types of jewelry. In Madras, the setting comprises a frame which closes into the gems and foil is used underneath the gems to give them greater lustre.

Mythological themes and Puranic deities provide the motifs. They are either embossed or affixed, and make beautiful designs. The serpent motif, the Krishna legend, the goddess Durga, the Rama, Sita and Laxman group and Hanuman provide the chief designs. Of course, floral motifs, particularly, the lotus, the

champak, the jasmine and the rose predominate. Ornaments for the head and plait, pendants and arm ornaments are usually met with in chase work of thin gold foil, hammered from behind into designs.

The chase work of the South extends eastwards right up to the Eastern Himalayas and is also found in Nepal, Bhutan and Sikkim. Even the coin necklace or *rupiya har*, as it is called, is greatly favoured by the inhabitants of these Himalayan States.

The chase work of Mysore, Tanjore, Vizianagaram, Vishakapatnam and even that of Savantwadi and Goa is famous. The artistic achievements of the Cholas were numerous; those in metal-ware being the chief among them. It is said that the Cholas controlled the Bay of Bengal for about a hundred years, converting the Bay into a "Chola lake." During their rule the marked difference between North Indian or Aryan and South Indian or Dravidian culture diminished considerably and a healthy fusion was brought about.

Repoussé jewelry is produced in Madras, Mysore and further south. The motifs are embossed and often affixed. It may be said to be a form of miniature metal sculpture, since it is in relief like sculpture, apart from the fact that the motifs are freely drawn from sculptures. Repoussé work had been in existence since ancient times. It was known to the Greeks and the Romans. The Roman artists were known as *crustarii*. Repoussé jewelry of the South was at one time known as *swami* jewelry. It may be described as specialized metal ornamentation, and is carried out both in silver and gold. Silver encrustation on silver, copper and brass can be said to be a part and parcel of *swami* work. Tanjore is famous for encrusted metal objects.

The Malabar Coast in South India has another speciality which consists of ornaments decorated with tiny granules of gold. *Paipilika* or granular gold has been mentioned as an ancient form of the metal. It is interesting to observe that the ornaments of the Malabar Coast are studded with tiny granules of gold or *paipilika*.

which have a beauty of their own. This special feature is not only peculiar to the West Coast of Malabar, but it is also noticeable to some extent in the ornaments of Kerala and also in those of the Eastern Coromandel Coast and Orissa. The ancient *nishkakanthim* or *kasumalai*, as it is known today, is studded with such granules. We also find the granules in the *talis* or wedding necklaces in the style of the *ashtamangalaka-har*, in the *kaikatta* or coral bracelets and in the *kashi-tali*. Bracelets and armlets in silver and in gold are often studded in this manner. The *jivanmalai* or *jomalai* is another very popular necklace of the Malabar Coast.

Bombay and Western Maharashtra have their own special ornaments. Diamonds and pearls are popular here. Among the special ornaments are the *tan-mani*, a pendant of large stones and pearls, the nose-ornament or *nath*, of large pearls strung in the shape of a cashew-nut, the *chandan-har* or necklace containing several rows of gold sequins, the Kolhapuri *saj*, a necklace comprising several types of pendants, the *putlya-har* or necklace of gold coins, the *shinde-shahi toda* or bracelets and the *patlya* or flat bangles.

The outstanding type of jewelry in the East is the filigree work of Cuttack in Orissa. This kind of work is to be found with slight variations in Bengal and other parts of India, but the original home of filigree is Cuttack. Delicate as the finest lace, filigree jewelry is much sought after by visitors. The word filigree is made up of the words 'fil' meaning thread and 'gree' meaning grain. Delicate designs are made with fine wires of gold or silver. Although it is not possible to give the date of the origin of filigree jewelry, it would appear that the elegance of the filigree work of Cuttack is identical with similar work of "Arabia, Malta, Genoa Greece, Byzantium and Erutria, and was probably carried into the West by the Phoenicians and the Arabs and into Scandinavia by the Normans". Cuttack has an age-old history of this craft which seems to have spread into several regions around at a later date. It travelled to the South, established itself at Trichinopoly, moved further East into Dacca (Pakistan) and Burma, and also spread

into Rajasthan, though there have been slight variations in its form in the different regions.

Cuttack has a legend preserved in the palm-leaf records of the famous temple of Jagannath, which says that the founder of Cuttack was Makar Kesari, a prince who reigned in A.D. 953-961. Katak, in Sanskrit, means a royal residence. It had been the seat of kings for a long time and the last Hindu king was Mukunda Deva (A.D. 1560-1568). Thereafter, Cuttack became the capital of the Mughal *subedars*. The Marathas conquered it in the middle of the eighteenth century and it remained with them until it was annexed by the British in 1803. It was a division of the old Presidency of Bengal until the separate provinces of Bihar and Orissa were formed.

Besides jewelry, comprising filigree ornaments of all kinds for the neck, hair, ears, hands, fingers and feet, such work is to be found in evening bags, scent containers or *attar-dan* and betel-leaf containers or *pan-dan*.

Chase work is popular in Bengal. The jewelry of Bengal has borrowed motifs from Bhubaneswar, Konarak and Khajuraho. The circular discs in pendants and ear-tops in chase work bear similarities to the jewelry of the Chola period. Bengal, Bihar and Orissa having for a long time been under one political administration, the jewelry of these regions tends to be similar in design and workmanship. The filigree work of Orissa is also found in Bengal. Filigree designs are also to be seen in Nepalese jewelry and trinkets, although the setting of the stones is different. Coral and turquoise predominate in the jewelry of the Himalayan regions.

There is an admixture of styles in the jewelry of the Northern region of India. While ancient traditions are maintained and traces of the jewelry of the adjoining area of Rajasthan are visible, the Mughal influence seems to be remarkable. The jewelry abounds in heavy, dangling ear-rings, many-rowed necklaces and chokers interspersed with spacers, and consists largely of pearls, precious and semi-precious stones. Silver jewelry is also abundant and

shows a similar influence. These trends are also visible in the jewelry of northern cities like Allahabad, Delhi and Lucknow.

Nauratan jewelry is also popular in these regions. The jewelry of the North is usually colourful and comprises pearls and stones more than gold. *Kundan* setting of many kinds of stones is very much in vogue for this reason. One also notices in these regions the influence of the jewelry of the Himalayan States of Nepal, Bhutan and Sikkim and that of Tibet. Of course, this type of jewelry is more after the fashion of fancy jewelry with an antique and traditional touch making it suitable as costume jewelry.

The jewelry of Hyderabad (Deccan) is in a distinct category. The splendour of Mughal jewelry in pearls and precious stones is to be seen here in all its aspects. Uncut stones, brilliant diamonds, lustrous diamonds in Indian cut, emeralds of many hues of green, rubies of different shapes and sizes and finally, baroque pearls give to Hyderabad jewelry a special character. Hyderabad is especially noted for beautifully designed ear-rings, head ornaments, necklaces and hand and foot ornaments.

CHAPTER 10

CONVENTIONAL JEWELRY AND ADORNMENT

HAVING DWELT on the conception, basis, traditions and styles of Indian jewelry, we may now turn our attention to the functional aspect of jewelry as an aid to the enhancement of beauty, and some of the beliefs and sentiments associated with it. Jewelry has to blend with the costume, figure, complexion and bearing of the wearer. The jewelry of the different regions is designed to suit these conditions.)

In regions where the *salvar-khamis* (slacks and tunic) and veil are worn, the neck, head, wrist, hands and feet jewelry assume special importance, while in the case of the peasants of Rajasthan, Saurashtra, Gujarat and other places, where the heavily-gathered skirt predominates, abundant jewelry for the neck, arms and particularly, for the feet is common. In the Deccan, where the *sari* is ampler, head jewelry is comparatively less, since the *sari* covers the head and arms, and neck jewelry is favoured. Foot jewelry consists largely of toe-rings and anklet pieces and is worn only by young girls.) At the same time, in certain communities, for example,

in Hyderabad (Deccan), the same style as that of North India prevails. (In Bengal arm and anklet jewelry is popular; so also is jewelry for the hair and the head. Jewelry for the neck is not so heavy. From all this one may conclude that the styles of jewelry blend with the general pattern of the dress of the region.)

Conventions or customs with regard to jewelry commence from the time the child is born. These have already been referred to in the first chapter, where some of the *samskaras* or rituals in the life of the Indian woman are mentioned. There are many more conventions. An infant, particularly in the southern region, often has a wristlet of black beads with white dots on them around his wrist. This is supposed to prevent the effect of the evil eye. These wristlets are sometimes made of amber beads. Amber beads are also used for children's necklaces, as they are considered helpful for the maintenance of their good health. When worn daily by the child, these beads change colour, and such changes in colour are deemed to be a sign of the action of the beads.

(Tigers' claws are greatly valued among ornaments intended for children. They are believed to be propitious and to protect them from harm. The legend of tigers' claws used as pendants dates back to the Puranic age. It is said that Skanda, the son of Shiva, had tigers' claws as pendants suspended around his neck, and so had the Buddha as a child. A sculptured figure of Avalokiteswara shows tigers' claws in his necklace. A tiger's tooth was also mounted on silver or gold and put round the waist of an infant if he suffered from a navel protuberance. Ivory rings as pendants are put around the child's neck while it is teething, perhaps because they provide the child with something hard to bite to help him cut his teeth.)

Coral, too, is highly valued as it is supposed to have a beneficial effect on the skin by preventing blemishes and skin diseases. Coral is very popular in the South, and a child usually receives the gift of a chain of coral beads with a *taviz* or charm containing the picture of Hanuman from his paternal grandmother either at his *namakaran* or on his first birthday. A waist cord of black silk

or gold or silver was important as, perhaps, it enabled the mother to judge whether the child was gaining or losing weight at a time when weighing machines were unknown. Such conventions exist in almost all communities in one form or another. In a Muslim household when a child is first taught to say 'Bismillah', a word used by Muslims at the beginning of any action, a small gold or silver plaque is suspended on a red thread round his neck. The mother gets a *hasli* or torque on the fortieth day after the birth of her child.

Amulets or charms have a great significance, and are worn throughout India in many different forms, often as large sized medallions or as pendants. They may be rectangular, heart-shaped or of any other shape. Charms or talismans are to be found not only in India but practically all over the world, and are supposed to help man in fulfilling his wishes, dispelling his fears or satisfying his sentiments. Amulets are a special feature of folk-jewelry, particularly in an agricultural society. It is, therefore, not surprising that large hoards of amulets are often recovered from excavated sites in India.

In some regions a bronze bangle is put on the child's wrist. Anklet jewelry for the child is believed to assist him in developing a good gait and lending support to his feet if he happens to be weak on his legs. Even those who do not share such beliefs have a sneaking faith in them. They feel that there is no harm in treading the beaten path.

Wedding symbols such as a *tali* (pendant), a bronze, iron, glass or ivory bangle, black beads, an ornamental or central bead strung on a chain and silver toe-rings are worn by the bride when she completes the seven steps or *saptapadi*. *Saptapadi*, which is one of the essential rituals for a marriage ceremony among the Hindus, are common to some regions. There is a belief in some parts of the country that silver toe-rings or coils for the toes, known as *sutunguls* help to cure the wearer of migraine. What have been mentioned here as beliefs or conventions connected with the wear-

ing of certain types of jewelry are only illustrative in character, for the study of all such beliefs or conventions would involve a vast amount of labour and time, which the author has not undertaken in connection with the present book.

Gems, like precious stones, and pearls have a significance attached to them as auspicious articles or as birth-stones, that bring good luck to the wearer or protect her against misfortune. They are credited with certain attributes based on what are believed to be planetary influences (see Chapter 6).

A colourful glass bangle costing a few paise only has a rightful place in a woman's jewel-box. An ivory bangle or comb, silver hair-pins and similar trinkets are a symbol of *soubhagya* or good fortune, and an auspicious function like a wedding starts with the bangle wearing ceremony. A bangle-seller is called in who supplies bangles to married women, maidens and friends of the family. Vermilion and saffron powder, wreaths of flowers for the hair and collyrium for the eyes are deemed as important as the woman's jewelry. These aids to adornment go with the articles of jewelry in a woman's jewel-box. A married woman is expected to make use of all these aids meticulously for enhancing her beauty and keeping herself trim.

The bangle-seller's lane at Char Minar in Hyderabad-(Deccan) is a typical centre of absorbing interest. Here, one sees the gorgeous, multicoloured bangles that are within the reach of the poorest of women, rose-red bangles of glass which take the place of the rich woman's bangles set with rubies, greens in infinite varieties vying with nature's foliage and outrivalling the emerald-encrusted ones, glistening golden circles more radiant than those of refined gold, blues that push the sapphire into the background and crystal bangles as lustrous as those of genuine diamonds. One gets lost in this enchanting land. No wonder the women of India deck their forearms fully with these sparkling bangles and treasure them more than their valuable ornaments! In closing the present chapter, I can do no better than quote a few lines

from Sarojini Naidu's beautiful poem, 'Bangle-Sellers':

. . . these delicate, bright
Rainbow-tinted circles of light?
Lustrous tokens of radiant lives,
For happy daughters and happy wives.

Whose hands have cherished, whose love has blest
And cradled fair sons on her faithful breast,
Who serves her household in fruitful pride,
And worships the gods at her husband's side.

CHAPTER 11

CONTEMPORARY JEWELRY

JEWELRY HAS been taking an entirely new turn during the last decade and a half. It is tending to switch over to its rightful place as a means of adornment rather than a form of investment. Its decorative aspect has been receiving greater attention and it has also been showing new trends both in its own forms and in the outlook of the people. Almost till the last decade jewelry consisted of valuable pieces made of precious metals and gems, and was worn on ceremonial occasions. Jewelry for daily use comprised a few simple items that could be worn with ease and without discomfort. The new ideas that have caught on tend to give a new perspective and a rational approach to jewelry as a whole in the context of present-day conditions.

The atmosphere in India, surcharged with an intense desire to revive all that is beautiful and indigenous, the appreciation of the various schools of arts and crafts and the recognition of traditional craftsmanship have combined to give a new orientation to fashions in jewelry. The impetus given to arts and crafts at the

national level has been mainly responsible for the proliferation of decorative art. It must be mentioned in this connection that a great deal of effort and organizational work has been put forth by Smt. Kamaladevi Chattopadhyaya, formerly Chairman of the All India Handicrafts Board, since its inception in 1952, for the rejuvenation of decadent crafts and the revival of those that had become extinct. Jewelry is one of those crafts that received support and encouragement from her, leading to the creation of new forms and the utilization of new media and a transformation in the conception of jewelry. It is now regarded not as an investment or an indication of wealth but as a lustrous facet in the pattern of the aesthetic and cultural life of India. The change in the outlook of the people towards things that are beautiful and well designed, irrespective of their value, is a great step forward ensuring not only stability to the craft but promoting contemporary tastes, while being economically within the reach of ordinary people.

Today there are certain distinctive trends noticeable in the general attitude towards jewelry. Ancient forms are being sported with a sense of pride and satisfaction and are becoming popular.) There is a definite swing towards antique and traditional jewelry. The old designs are coming into vogue once again. The cumbersome jewelry of rustic India is to be seen in the most fashionable cities. The desire to wear exotic jewelry is diminishing and a patriotic fervour in the choice of indigenous designs is taking its place.

Another important trend is in the mode of wear. In the present age of quick communications, greater interchange among the people of different countries and women taking their place along with men in all walks of life, it is natural that fashions in jewelry should be influenced in more ways than one. Exotic forms have had their impact not so much on jewelry itself but on the manner of wearing it, and adornment with just one or two pieces and the discarding of precious jewelry for ordinary use.

What were elaborate sets of jewelry in former times, comprising a large number of items worn simultaneously, are now

split up into smaller units to match with costume, hair-style and make-up. Design and colour are chosen with an eye to their suitability for the enhancement of elegance and charm. Jewelry thus blends with the ensemble of the Indian woman and fulfils its function as an ornament. An elaborate pendant, for example, is worn with a very plain dress or sari to serve as a focal point, or a tremulous hair ornament accentuates a hair-do. Jewelry like the clanking *mekhala* or girdle adorns the slim waist of a teenager, while broad gauntlets of India's countryside gleam at evening parties on the forearms of sophisticated women.

The matching of jewelry with the sari and blouse is receiving more and more attention. Silver and pearls to lend colour to drab grey, ivory and gold to set off the creams and broken white, colourful and assorted semi-precious stones to relieve the monotony of *chutney* green, coral and turquoise to tone down the yellows, and amber and carnelian to soften the primary tints help to give glamorous touches to the costume of the Indian woman.

Large silver, box-shaped pendants, suspended on long thin chains, chokers reaching high up to give a poise to the neck and head, toe-rings that bring into relief a shapely streamlined foot, and *chudies* that emphasize the roundness of the wrist are some of the ornaments preferred by modern women.

The media, too, have changed. Silver, copper and white metal, at which people used to look askance, are now in common use. Oxidized silver and copper jewelry is now produced in larger quantities. Similarly, enamelled jewelry is fancied. The research that is being conducted in the design centres of the All India Handicrafts Board has gone a long way towards the introduction of new designs and materials. Mother-of-pearl is used with advantage in the making of lustrous ornaments, while fragrant sandal-wood is gaining ground. Faience and steatite jewelry, once the pride of pre-historic India, is being developed as an item of the ceramic craft. Cloisonne work, too, is interesting people more and more.

Jewelry is being put to other uses for decorating accessories. Ornamented handbags are popular, and what used to be a *hasli* or torque formerly now adorns a woman's handbag as an artistic handle, and what could be a lovely pendant cleverly conceals its clasp. People are making many uses of jewelry articles which indicate ingenuity and adaptation to suit modern conditions.

India has thus developed in recent times what in Western countries is called costume jewelry, but it is not a departure from the gorgeous traditional craft. It is only an adaptation of traditional forms, in less expensive media, to harmonize with the general style of dress and decor. Silver jewelry and semi-precious stones are replacing precious ornaments.

The jewelry industry of India, with its remarkable record in its various stages of development, has kept pace with changing conditions. Viewed in its historical perspective, it has never lost its place as a high-ranking craft. Recent export figures indicate that it comes only next to the major handicrafts of India such as the carpet and *zari* industries. The figures of internal consumption would perhaps be astounding. The fact that in its various forms jewelry has begun to appeal to all sections of the public is an indication of the levelling up of the masses.

The recent departures are healthy and most welcome since they serve many purposes. On account of its low cost, contemporary jewelry is within the reach of every one and useful for everyday life. It incidentally helps bridge the gulf between the rich and the poor and provides scope for giving effect to novel ideas and putting jewelry to ever new uses. The modern trends have, above all, given an incentive to the creative aspect of the jewelry industry, and introduced many interesting features in the trade that have accelerated its pace, improved its quality and ensured a continuous supply for the benefit of people with varied tastes, and without involving a heavy drain on their ability to spend.

Appendix I

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Appendix II

**REFERENCES TO SANSKRIT AND PALI LITERATURE,
INSCRIPTIONS AND FRESCOS**

Ajanta Caves
Angavijja
Bana, Harsacarita
Buddhagosha
Buddhist Jatakas
Brihadeshvara Temple, Tanjore (Inscriptions)
Ellora Caves
Hala, Gathasaptasati
Jain Kalpasutras
Kalidasa, Abhidhyan Shakuntala
Kumarasambhava
Kautilya, Artha Shastra
Magha, Padataditika
Rigveda
Virataparva (Mahabharata)

Appendix III

GLOSSARY

Adikarai	anklet
angada	single-rod armlet
anguliyaka	ring for finger or toe
annam	swan
apavartaka	chain with alternating pearls and globules
ashtamangalaka-mala	necklace containing eight auspicious symbols
asimalika	string with scimitar-like pendants
avachulaka	head-ornament with a chaitya design
avakasaka	drum-like pendants for widening the hole in the lobes of the ears
avalokanika	head ornament with a chaitya design
avaghataka	string of pearls
avidhavalakshana valaya	auspicious bangle
bahu-jalaka	ornament for the arm
bhadram	auspicious mark on the forehead
bhujavalaya	armlet
chakravaka-mithunaka	pair of loving geese
chandani	head-ornament
chirachudaka valaya	general term for bangle of conch, ivory or rhinoceros horn symbolizing the <i>sowbhagya</i> of a woman
chudamakarika	head-ornament with an alligator design
chudamani	jewel worn in the crest of a diadem
danta-patra	strip
ekavali	single string of pearls
gandupadaka	single and spiral anklet

garudaka	eagle-design
gopuchcha	tapering necklace in the shape of a cow's tail
hansaka	anklet of swan-design
hara	necklace
hastakataka	heavy bracelet
hathika	elephant-design
hemasutra	gold cord
kaikarai	bracelet
kanchana talapatra	gold strip for the lobes of the ears
kanchi	girdle
kanchi katapaka	multi-stringed girdle with jingling beads and plaques
karnaveshtana	ear-wrap
karna puraka	ear-drop or <i>jhumka</i> (Hindi)
karna pushpa	ear-ornament
karnakhilaka	light rod inserted in the ear-lobe
karnot pidaka	heavy pendant for the ears
karnalodhaka	light rod inserted in the ear-lobe
karna-sobhana	ear-ornament
katakam	bracelet
khadi	bangle
kilaka	head-ornament
kinkinika	anklet-bells
kirita	crown
kondanam	necklace
kumbha	ear-pendant
kundala	coil
kurira	probably a diadem worn by a woman
kshudraghantika	anklet bells
lalanti	pendant
magaraka	alligator-design
makarika	”
mekhalika	single zone belt
manimekhala	globule-patterned girdle
manjira tulakoti	jingling anklets
maulimani	embellishment for the turban
modiram	finger-ring
mohanmala	necklace of gold beads
mohr	head-ornament
muktavalaya	pearl-bangle
muktavali	string of pearls
mukuta	crown
mudreyaka	signet-ring
muttuvalaya	bracelet of pearls
nag	head-ornament with serpent motif

nandi pinnadhaka	fish-design
nayakamani	central gem or bead
nishka	coin
nyochani	girdle
nupura	jingling anklet
opasa	projecting triangular crown
padajalaka	ornament for the feet
padaka	pendant
padakalapaka	ornament for the feet
padakhuduwa	"
padamasaka	"
padamudrika	"
padangada	"
padaveshtana	"
palikarna dughanaka	drum-like ornament for the ear
parak	ornament for the forehead (Ladakh)
parihataka kambu	shell-bangle
pariharyaka	rod-like heavy ornament for the leg
patra-ketaki	flower-strip rolled for the ear-lobe
pattigai	girdle
phalakahara	necklace of plaques and rows of pearls
pippalamalika	necklace or peepul motifs
porpu	gold-flowers
prakandaka	string of graded pearls
prakaravakrakundala	ornament worn by Arjuna when disguised as a woman
rasana	girdle
ratnavalaya	bangle of gems
ratnavali	necklace of gems and gold beads
rishabhaka	bull-design
ruchaka	bracelet of gold discs or coins
rukma	pendant
saptaki	girdle with seven motifs
sarasanamekhala	girdle
sinhakundala	lion-design
sinhabandhaka	head-ornament with a lion faced design and pearl strings suspended from its mouth
sirshajalaka	head-ornament
sirshaka	string of pearls with a big central pearl
sraj	flower garland
sringarspattikavalaya	broad bangle with decorations
srinkhala	waist chain for men
suchika	bracelet with needle-points
sutti	ornament for the forehead
suvarnasutra	gold string

tarala	pendant attached to a string of pearls
tirupattam	diadem
tripisachaka	pendant with three grotesque figures
tudiya	collapsible armlet
upasirshaka	row of pearls
uretha-dinara-mala	coin-necklace
urujalaka	ornament for the thighs
valaya	bangle
varna-sutra	gold string
ventaka	spiral rings for fingers
vidyadharaka	design with flying vidyadhara couples
vyagranakha	children's ornament of tiger's claws
yajnopavita	sacred thread
yashti	string of pearls with a precious stone in the centre

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