

HISTORY CHAPTER-9

CLASS-7

THE MAKING OF REGIONAL CULTURES

INTRODUCTION

- If we refer to a person as a Tamil or an Oriya, this usually means that he or she speaks Tamil or Oriya and lives in Tamil Nadu or Orissa.
- We also tend to associate each region with distinctive kinds of food, clothes, poetry, dance, music and painting. Sometimes we take these identities for granted and assume that they have existed from time immemorial.
- As we will see, some traditions appear specific to some regions, others seem to be similar across regions, and yet others derive from older practices in a particular area, but take a new form in other regions.

The Cheras and the Development of Malayalam

- The Chera kingdom of Mahodayapuram was established in the ninth century in the south-western part of the peninsula, part of present-day Kerala. It is likely that Malayalam was spoken in this area. The rulers introduced the Malayalam language and script in their inscriptions.
- At the same time, the Cheras also drew upon Sanskritic traditions. The temple theatre of Kerala, which is traced to this period, borrowed stories from the Sanskrit epics.
- The first literary works in Malayalam, dated to about the twelfth century, are directly indebted to Sanskrit.,

Rulers and Religious Traditions: The Jagannatha Cult

- In other regions, regional cultures grew around religious traditions. The best example of this process is the cult of Jagannatha (literally, lord of the world, a name for Vishnu) at Puri, Orissa.
- To date, the local tribal people make the wooden image of the deity, which suggests that the deity was originally local god, who was later identified with Vishnu.
- Anantavarman, decided to erect a temple for Purushottama Jagannatha at Puri. Subsequently, in 1230, king Anangabhimha III dedicated his kingdom to the deity and proclaimed himself as the “deputy” of the god.

The Rajputs and Traditions of Heroism

- In the nineteenth century, the region that constitutes most of present-day Rajasthan, was called Rajputana by the British.
- These cultural traditions were closely linked with the ideals and aspirations of rulers. From about the eighth century, most of the present-day state of Rajasthan was ruled by various Rajput families. Prithviraj (Chapter 2) was one such ruler.
- These rulers cherished the ideal of the hero who fought valiantly, often choosing death on the battlefield rather than face defeat.

Beyond Regional Frontiers: The Story of KATHAK

- The term kathak is derived from katha, a word used in Sanskrit and other languages for story.
- The kathaks were originally a caste of story-tellers in temples of north India, who embellished their performances with gestures and songs.
- Kathak began evolving into a distinct mode of dance in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries with the spread of the bhakti movement.
- The legends of Radha-Krishna were enacted in folk plays called rasa lila, which combined folk dance with the basic gestures of the kathak story-tellers.

Beyond Regional Frontiers: The Story of KATHAK

- Subsequently, it developed in two traditions or gharanas: one in the courts of Rajasthan (Jaipur) and the other in Lucknow.
- By the third quarter of the nineteenth century it was firmly entrenched as a dance form not only in these two regions.
- .Emphasis was laid on intricate and rapid footwork, elaborate costumes, as well as on the enactment of stories.
- It is recognised as one of six “classical” forms of dance in the country after independence.

Painting for Patrons: The Tradition of Miniatures

- Another tradition that developed in different ways was that of miniature painting. Miniatures (as their very name suggests) are small-sized paintings, generally done in water colour on cloth or paper.
- The earliest miniatures were on palm leaves or wood. Some of the most beautiful of these, found in western India, were used to illustrate Jaina texts.
- The Mughal emperors Akbar, Jahangir and Shah Jahan patronised highly skilled painters who primarily illustrated manuscripts containing historical accounts and poetry.

MINIATURE PAINTINGS

- Another region that attracted miniature paintings was the Himalayan foothills.
- By the late seventeenth century this region had developed a bold and intense style of miniature painting called Basohli. The most popular text to be painted here was Bhanudatta's Rasamanjari.
- Nadir Shah's invasion and the conquest of Delhi in 1739 resulted in the migration of Mughal artists to the hills
- they found ready patrons which led to the founding of the Kangra school of painting. The source of inspiration was the Vaishnavite traditions. Soft colours including cool blues and greens, and a lyrical treatment of themes distinguished Kangra painting.

A CLOSER LOOK -BENGAL

- Bengali is now recognised as a language derived from Sanskrit, early Sanskrit texts (mid-first millennium BCE) suggest that the people of Bengal did not speak Sanskritic languages.
- From the eighth century, Bengal became the centre of a regional kingdom under the Palas (Chapter 2). Between the fourteenth and sixteenth centuries, Bengal was ruled by Sultans who were independent of the rulers in Delhi.
- In fact by the fifteenth century the Bengali group of dialects came to be united by a common literary language based on the spoken language of the western part of the region, now known as West Bengal.

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- In fact by the fifteenth century the Bengali group of dialects came to be united by a common literary language based on the spoken language of the western part of the region, now known as West Bengal.
- Early Bengali literature may be divided into two categories – one indebted to Sanskrit and the other independent of it. The first includes translations of the Sanskrit epics, the Mangalakavyas (literally auspicious poems).
- The second includes Nath literature such as the songs of Maynamati and Gopichandra, stories concerning the worship of Dharma Thakur

Pirs and Temples

- The early settlers sought some order and assurance in the unstable conditions of the new settlements.
- These were provided by community leaders, who also functioned as teachers and adjudicators and were sometimes ascribed with supernatural powers. People referred to them with affection and respect as pirs.
- This term included saints or Sufis and other religious personalities, daring colonisers and deified soldiers, various Hindu and Buddhist deities and even animistic spirits

PIRS AND TEMPLES

- Bengal also witnessed a temple-building spree from the late fifteenth century, which culminated in the nineteenth century.
- We know that temples and other religious structures were often built by individuals or groups who were becoming powerful – to both demonstrate their power and proclaim their piety.
- Many of the modest brick and terracotta temples in Bengal were built with the support of several “low” social groups, such as the Kolu (oil pressers) and the Kansari (bell metal workers).

PIRS AND TEMPLES(cont..)

- The coming of the European trading companies created new economic opportunities; many families belonging to these social groups availed of these. As their social and economic position improved.
- The temples began to copy the double-roofed (dochala) or four -roofed (chauchala) structure of the thatched huts.
- In the comparatively more complex four-roofed structure, four triangular roofs placed on the four walls move up to converge on a curved line or a point. Temples were usually built on a square platform.

Fish as Food

- Traditional food habits are generally based on locally available items of food. Bengal is a riverine plain which produces plenty of rice and fish. Understandably, these two items figure prominently in the menu of even poor Bengalis.
- Fishing has always been an important occupation and Bengali literature contains several references to fish.
- Brahmanas were not allowed to eat non- vegetarian food, but the popularity of fish in the local diet made the Brahmanical authorities relax this prohibition for the Bengal Brahmanas..

Thank you