

river journeys

the academy of
Indian Dance

“The Ganga is the river of India, beloved of the people, round which are intertwined her racial memories, her hopes and fears..... She has been a symbol of India’s age old culture and civilisation, everchanging, ever flowing, yet the same Ganga.... a symbol and a memory of the past of India, running into the present and flowing onto the great ocean of the future.”

Pandit Nehru

Contents

1	River Journeys - An Introduction to the Project	Tina Cockett
3	Celestial Waters - Myths of the Ganga	Sita Narasimhan
6	Ganga’s Journey - Cities and lands of the river	Tina Cockett
10	Source to the Sea - A Geographical Perspective	Abani Kumar Bhagabati
13	Vanishing Ganga - Ecological Concerns	Sundarlal Bahguna
17	Tale of Two Rivers - The Thames and the Ganga	Tina Cockett
19	Introduction to Indian Dance	Tara Rajkumar
22	Dancing a River - Ideas for Dance Work	Tina Cockett
25	Introduction to Indian Music	Gerry Farrell
31	Painting a River - Ideas for Visual Art	Bhajan Hunjan
35	Resources	
39	Appendix	

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River Journeys

Tina Cockett

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Inspired by the Ganga*, **River Journeys** is the Academy of Indian Dance's second theme based project for schools and colleges. The education pack explores the mythological, geographical and cultural aspects of this river and how they can be used as a starting point for dance. The pack accompanies dance workshops, cross arts residencies and INSETS for schools led by professional artists from the Academy. Workshops introduce pupils to the basic elements of South Asian dance as well as helping them to become aware of the cultural importance of the Ganga. It is hoped that **River Journeys** will also encourage schools to celebrate the significance of rivers in our lives and in particular their own local river.

Across time in many different cultures the river has come to symbolise the eternal replenishing power of water as well as the individual's journey, both physical and spiritual, from birth to death. In ancient Greece and Egypt the soul had to cross a river to reach the underworld, while in India the Ganga has come to represent the very spirit of the land as Mother Ganga. Artists from many traditions have been inspired to paint rivers and their everchanging reflections, musicians have composed sonatas while dancers have tried to capture the elusive movements of its flow. The theme of rivers, and in particular the Ganga, offers a rich and exciting stimulus and resource for activities across the school curriculum.

The education pack is intended to provide teachers with basic background information on the project and ideas for developing the theme through dance, music and visual art. In addition it can act as a resource for programmes of study linked to the National Curriculum in the following suggested subject areas:

Geography

Places and Themes:

A comparative study of a local area and a locality in a developing country eg: India or Bangladesh.

A comparative study of the River Thames and the Ganga or London and Calcutta.

The River - the physical features of a river system and basin, study of a local or major river.

Water Pollution - causes and effects of river pollution.

Religious Education

Hinduism : deities and the significance of the Ganga.

mythology and stories.

places of worship and pilgrimage.

festivals, rituals and customs.

The Academy's workshops can also contribute to culturally diverse approaches to dance within the context of the **P.E.** and **Expressive Arts** curriculums. Please contact the Academy for further details about programmes for schools and teachers.

* The River Ganges is known as the Ganga in India and is referred to by this name throughout the pack

Sita Narasimhan

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'Patitoddharini Ganga'

'You who raise and bear the fallen, Oh Ganga'

runs a popular Bengali song. To the Hindus the Ganga is the river of salvation and redemption, a river to immerse and purify ourselves in, which will bear us to God's compassion, to still our own restlessness and carry us into the ocean of His love, whose waves roam endlessly to dissolve our false shores of 'I' and 'mine' with which we bind and shatter ourselves. All these high-sounding ideals are echoed by innumerable songs in all of India's many languages.

In the realm of the gods, Svarga Loka, she is the goddess Ganga. She is also the many streams of the Himalayas, which nourish the foothills and the plains, and flow into the ocean, and into the nether world where she brings the dead back to life. She is a physical river, whom we use and abuse; she is also the underground river of inspiration and grace that runs through all of us, purifying, cleansing and creating.

Stories told, sung and danced help transmit culture and beliefs. They touch everyone - old and young, rich and poor, educated and illiterate. They sink into people's heart and minds, shaping our imagination. Indian mythology turns into story our deepest as well as our most fleeting intuitions, glimpses of meaning and possibility in the seemingly shapeless and meaningless tangles of our lives. A myth is literally a story told. These stories have a universal significance and tell us things about the outer world, as well as the inner world within us. They also relate to one another, both in the world of story, and in the physical world around us.

To the dancer, these inter-related stories give possibilities of new creative ideas in which different perceptions come together. The story of the Ganga is a tale of descent from the heavens, involving creation, nourishment and destruction, yet located in specific geographical places and involving the major deities of Hinduism. For centuries these deities have been danced to and about in both the classical and folk traditions. Ganga is found in the secular dances of celebration marking the seasonal changes, in the dances of personal anguish and reconciliation and in the dances about the gods involved in the story.

According to Hindu belief there are many worlds beyond our physical reality. There is 'paraloka' the realm of pure consciousness where Ganga exists as eternal. Then there is the realm of the gods, Svarga-Loka, where Ganga exists as a goddess (devi) and Indra rules as king. In the world of men, she is the physical river. Finally there is 'patala' - the nether-realm where Ganga flows through the underworld.

The Myth:

Sagara, an ancestor of Rama, King of Ayodhya, had no children. With the sage Bhrigu's favour, one of his wives bore a son, the other a gourd. The gourd burst open, and out came sixty thousand boys - the Saagaras. The first boy, Asamanjas, understood nothing. He was an idiot while the Saagaras grew to be big, bad and burly.

Puffed up with pride, Sagara wanted to perform a horse-sacrifice, which would then make him King of Svarga-Loka, dethroning Indra. To do this he had to let a white horse roam at will through

the world and defend it against all comers. Indra in self defence became an 'asura', a god of power, and drove the horse to the underworld. There he left it near the great sage Kapila who sat deep in meditation. Sagara's sacrifice was in danger of failing. The consequence would be chaos in the world. Insolently his sons dug a pit sixty thousand leagues deep, in search of the horse.

Tormented by this terrible excavation the earth complained to Brahma, the Great Creator, who reassured her that the princes were courting their own destruction and good things would befall her in the end. The princes finally reached the foundations of the earth where the mighty elephants stood supporting her on their backs. Nearby they saw the horse and thinking that Kapila had stolen it, they rushed to attack him. Disturbed from his meditations, the mighty sage opened his eyes and the princes were reduced to ashes by the flames of his rage.

However Ansuman, the son of their idiot brother, had all the graces of the phases of the moon - he was a kind of moon prince. In reverence he went up to Kapila and asked for the horse. The sage allowed him to take the horse and the sacrifice was completed. Thus began the rule of the Sun-Kings in India, the line of Rama, who was an avatar of Vishnu. Kapila also told Ansuman that he could redeem the Saagaras if the celestial waters of the eternal Ganga flowed over their ashes.

It was Ansuman's grandson, Bhagiratha who achieved this task. His name is synonymous with superhuman effort. He performed many prayers and austerities, imploring Ganga to descend from her heavenly abode to purify the ashes of his ancestors cursed by Kapila. Brahma consented to let Ganga come down, but warned that the earth could not stand the shock of her descent - only Lord Shiva alone was powerful to bear her fall.

Ganga who did not wish to mop up the world's sins, threatened to engulf the whole world in her fall. She came in terrible torrents, foaming and raging, uprooting trees and tearing up hills. But when she came to Mount Kailas, Shiva was waiting to catch her in his matted locks of hair. Unable to escape from them, she wandered aimlessly around his head, her spirit broken, her strength dissipated. Bhagiratha prayed again to Lord Shiva, who released Ganga into the seven streams which form the river and her tributaries on earth.

The main course of the river flowed straight down to the crater. But alas the impetuous river flooded the sacrificial ground of the sage Jahnu, who quite simply swallowed her up. Bhagiratha implored him to release Ganga and Jahnu allowed the river to emerge from his ear. When the sacred waters reached the depths of the pits of the sea, they flowed over the Saagaras' ashes and brought them back to life. This was how the sea was filled with sacred water.

Ever since Ganga has flowed from heaven, through the earth and into the ocean and patala. She is the celestial water brought to earth with divine ingenuity, against all odds, to save the souls of the foolish, the arrogant and proud, in the deepest pits of the underworld.

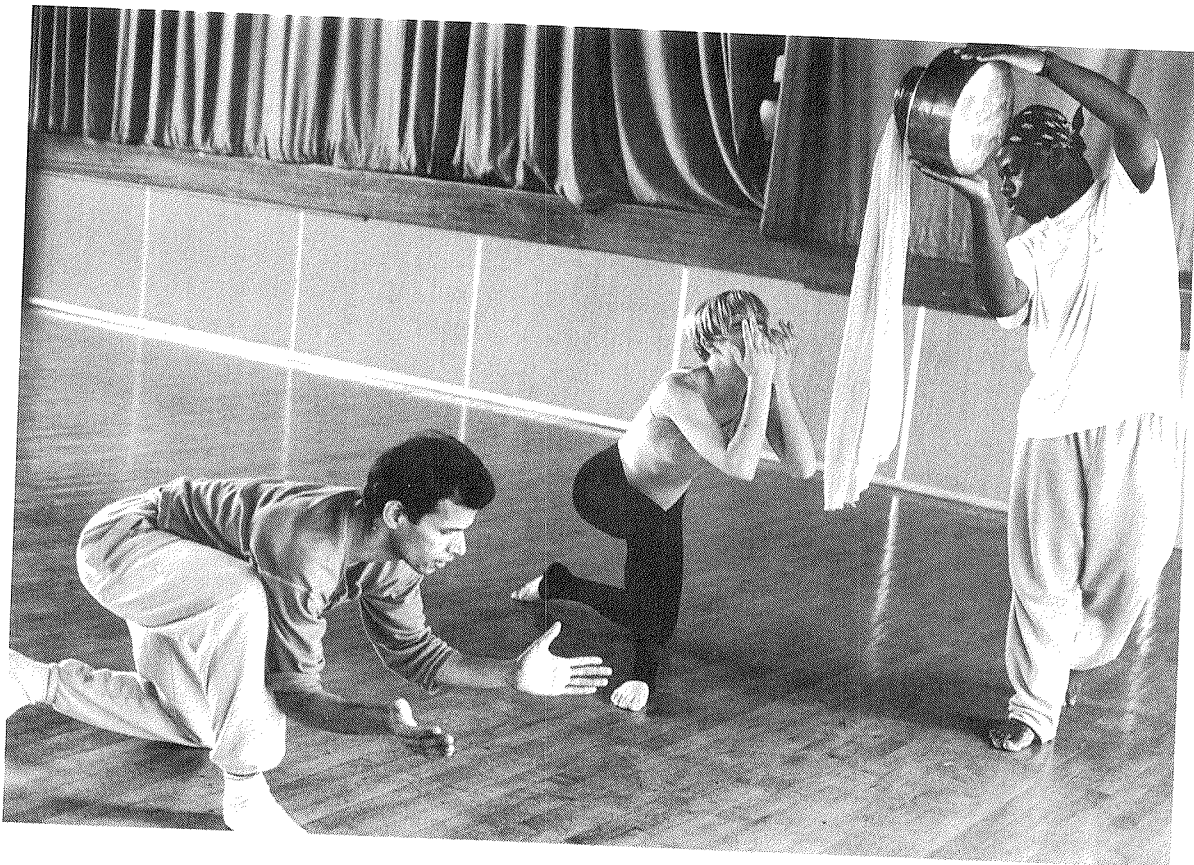
But this is still not the whole story for one of the streams ran underground from the Himalayas. The River Saraswati is the real but invisible presence of Saraswati, the goddess of learning and the consort of Brahma. The river meets the Ganga and Yamuna at Prayag, near Allahabad which is where the Kumbh Mela happens when the Sun and Jupiter are in the sign of Aquarius. Their confluence is called 'Triveni' and is revered as a fount of inspiration, both secular and sacred.

Every detail of this long story is woven into many different songs and dances in India, celebrating divine inspiration and liberation. For Ganga's journey from the abode of the heavens, through the worlds of the gods, through the world of men to the ocean symbolises divine grace according to Hindu belief. The tributaries of the Ganga have their own glory. It was by the banks of the Yamuna where Krishna was born, grew and lived. Whether we are dancing Shiva or Vishna or

Rama or Krishna, or our own pains and joys, the Ganga is present. The celestial waters of the Ganga represent God's plenitude, grace and mercy, redeeming man's pride and greed.

Thus we can understand why all Hindus wish to die by the Ganga and have their ashes scattered into her waters to be carried down to the ocean to be redeemed as the sons of Sagara were.

'In this age (Kali Yuga) Ganga is holy. Those who bathe in Ganga, purify their family for seven generations. As long as a person touches just a drop of Ganga water, so will they reach heaven. There is no place of pilgrimage greater than Mother Ganga'.



River Journeys Project at Kingsway Princeton College - Jayachandran and students
photo by Aeden Kelly

The Cities and Lands of the River

Tina Cockett

Education Officer

Academy of Indian Dance

Throughout the Ganga's two and half thousand kilometre journey from the mountains to the sea, there are many holy sites and cities along its banks. The river is deified as one of the forms of the Mother Goddess bringing fertility to the land through her waters and rich silt deposits. The river goddess is often depicted in art and sculpture as a beautiful young woman standing upon a mythical beast (makara) which sometimes takes the form of a river crocodile with its long thin jaws. In one hand she hold a lotus, a symbol of peace and fertility. She also holds a water pot to represent the sacred and cleansing properties of her holy waters.

High in the Himalayas at Gangotri, near to the source of the Ganga, people pay homage to the spirit of the river during the festival of Dussehra. Images of the Mother Goddess are carried down to the river to celebrate the harvest and the earth's continued fertility. After the autumn monsoon, this important festival is celebrated throughout India in many different ways.

Flowing southwards the river leaves the Himalayan foothills behind at Rishikesh which is a major pilgrimage centre with its many temples and ashrams. To pay homage to the sacred Ganga, pilgrims feed the fish as part of their personal rituals and fishing is forbidden anywhere in the city. Nearby holy cows wander at will. These animals are revered as symbols of the Mother Goddess and no strict Hindu will harm them or eat beef. Here the climax of Dussehra is held after dark beside the river. Lighted divas (small earthenware lamps) with flowers are set on leaves and floated on the river as offerings, while on the river banks the people chant, play cymbals, blow conch shells and wave lights in praise of Mother Ganga.

Further downstream is the ancient city of Hardwar. Its name means 'Doors of Hari', Hari being the god who preserves the world. Pilgrims crowd the river banks from dawn to dusk to bathe in the sacred waters, to pray and fill their water pots with holy Ganga jal (water) to be taken home and used for purification rituals. As in Rishikesh, in the evenings the river is ablaze with light as the divas are carried downstream by the current.

From Hardwar the Ganga flows eastwards across the plains of Uttar Pradesh. At Allahabad, the Yamuna meets the Ganga. The confluence of the rivers is called the 'Triveni Sangam' as it is thought the two rivers are also joined by the invisible form of a third river - the Saraswati.

"On a river without water
a lotus blossom floats,
while gazelles leap silver
in the moonless night.

Whoever can surmount the vortex
of Triveni
where the rivers meet
will float forever on the waves of time.'

Phatik Chand

Allahabad has been a sacred centre since ancient times for according to legend Rama and Sita visited it during their fourteen year exile from Ayodhya. In the 17th century it was named Allahabad or 'abode of God' by Akbar, the famous Moghul ruler. King Akbar built a massive fort overlooking the river and the city became the seat of provincial government. Allahabad remained under muslim rule until the British arrived 200 hundred years later.

The famous 'Kumbh Mela' is celebrated in a twelve lunar year cycle at Allahabad, Hardwar, Nasik and Ujjain. Millions of people, including many sadhus (holy men), yogis and pilgrims, from all over the country crowd the banks to wash away their sins in the holy river. According to legend it was at these places that the nectar of the gods fell into the river. This nectar (amrita) has life giving properties and the mela (fair) celebrates its return to the earth. The festival of 1977 was especially sacred, because of the auspicious position of the planets, and was attended by fifty million people!

Further downstream Varanasi (Benares) has been a major centre of learning and pilgrimage for over 2000 years and is considered one of the holiest places in India. At the 74 ghats (bathing steps) on the river's edge, people come each dawn to pray to the Sun god Suraya and bathe in the Ganga. Sadhus and brahmin priests sit by the river to pray, meditate and read the scriptures. In the city there are also many temples - the biggest one being the Golden Temple dedicated to Shiva as the Lord of the Universe. Varanasi is also a holy place for Buddhists as the Buddha is said to have preached his first sermon at Sarnath, a short way from the city.

People also come to Varanasi to die as this city is believed to be a very auspicious place to pass into the next life. To die at Varanasi and to have one's ashes consigned to the sacred waters of the Ganga, is considered to be the best of deaths for a Hindu. This ensures release from the endless round of death and rebirth - or at least the achievement of a better birth in the next life. Therefore hundreds of corpses are cremated every day on the burning ghats and their ashes scattered into the river.

Varanasi is also famous for its crafts. It is renowned for fine weaving, in particular saris and brocades. The brocades are woven in silk with the use of silver and gold threads for the 'pallavas' or endpieces. The weavers are known as 'karigar' which means artist and come from Muslim families. Another speciality is its rich brass work. Craftsmen hand beat and decorate a huge range of pots, vases, trays and statues.

The Ganga continues its journey into the state of Bihar, where the town of Patna has given its name to a variety of long grain rice. The marshy land of the whole area is ideal for rice growing as it floods easily. The town is dominated by the Gola, which is a huge dome shaped granary. Built in 1786 for the relief of famine, it has a stairway spiralling round outside right up to a hole in the top. Patna also has an important Sikh temple. The temple is dedicated to Govind Singh, the tenth guru (or teacher) of the Sikh religion.

Throughout India there is a lack of piped water into homes, so people in the rural areas have to depend on wells, pumps and rivers for their water supply. Drinking water is collected in large brass pots by the women and carried home on their heads. Younger children may use all sorts of smaller containers including buckets and plastic bottles. The washing of clothes is usually carried out at the river's edge. A familiar sight at sunrise is the dhobi (washerman or woman) standing waist deep in the river pounding piles of dirty clothes against rocks. Every day these dhobis collect mounds of dirty clothes from their customers, laboriously marking them, before piling them precariously onto cycle carriers and carting them away to the river. The clothes are returned a few days later, beautifully washed, starched and pressed for the equivalent of a few pence.

However this traditional occupation is now under threat with the sale of washing machines in India reaching about 500,000 last year. Middle class housewives have abandoned the dhobis' services to use washing machines as a quicker method of having clean clothes.

From Patna the river now flows towards the border with Bangladesh where it joins the Brahmaputra and Meghna, fanning out into many channels to form the delta. A large part of this delta forms the southern half of Bangladesh. The main channel in this country is known as the Padma. Flowing southwards in India the Ganga is known as the Hooghly on which is situated the vast city and busy port of Calcutta.

Calcutta is 144 km from the sea and the Hooghly is constantly being dredged to keep it clear for shipping. In spite of its long coastline, India has few large ports and Calcutta handles a great deal of the country's trade. Boats of all shapes and sizes crowd into the port, while towering above them is the famous Hooghly Bridge which spans the river.

Also on the river is the famous temple of Kalighat. Kali is another name of Durga and each October at the festival of Durga Puga many clay statues of the Mother Goddess are carried down to the river to be ritually thrown into the water. Having spent ten days in the realm of man, the goddess is symbolically returned to the earth from whence she came.

Where the River Hooghly flows into the Bay of Bengal is Sagar Island, where according to legend the souls of the 60,000 sons of King Sagar were redeemed. During the festival of Makar Sankranti in January, many thousands of pilgrims come by bus, foot and boat every year to wade across the water to the island. Just before dawn the beach is thronged with people, all making their way to the sea to bathe at the point where Ganga meets the sea, and to pray.

“ As the river flows into the ocean
thinking 'I am the ocean',
so a man flows into the universe
thinking 'I am the universe'.”

Kaivalya

In neighbouring Bangladesh, the country is dominated by water with its many rivers, streams, canals and lakes. No less than 33 rivers flow through the country and are all linked to the Ganga, Brahmaputra and Meghna systems. With the presence of these rivers, the heavy monsoon rainfall and the low-lying land, floods in Bangladesh are an annual event with sometimes devastating effects. Towns and villages have grown up along the rivers and canals and over 80% of them have not yet been linked to the nation's road network. Therefore country boats (golois) made of wood and powered by oars, sails and engines, are a vital means of transportation for people and goods.

For many Bangladeshi villagers textile production is their main means of livelihood - a tradition that goes back to antiquity. A wide variety of fabrics are woven on handlooms from cotton, silk or linen. The yarn is either hand dyed before weaving in large wooden tubs or dyed and printed when finished. One of the most famous folk textile is the 'kantha' cloth. Originally embroidered quilts made of old saris, kanthas were stitched by village women using traditional designs - trees, flowers, mythical figures of birds and animals and symbols of the sun and moon. Today this tradition has been revived to create new cloths in the traditional designs. Aimed at the export and tourist market, kanthas are produced in women's co-operatives, providing a valuable source of income.

Thus the Ganga on her epic journey from the mountains to the sea touches the lives of millions, bringing them prosperity, salvation, nourishment and inspiration as well as the threat of destruction. It represents the whole panorama of life on both the physical and spiritual planes, truly Ganga is 'Loknadi' - the River of the World.



Contemporary Kantha Quilt

reproduced by kind permission of John Gillow from his book *Traditional Indian Textiles* pub. Thames and Hudson

Dr Abani Kumar Bhagabati

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The source of all the major north Indian rivers lie in the Himalayas. These rivers belong to three principal river systems - the Indus, the Ganges and the Brahmaputra. The Great Plain of India which has been an area of immense significance in Indian history and culture, is formed by these three river systems. Among these, the Ganges system has the highest basin area (861,404 sq km) within India.

The Ganga emerges from the meltwater of the Gangotri glacier at a place called Gaumukh (cow's mouth) with an elevation of 4,255 metres. The little river here is known as the Bhagirathi. About 200km downstream, the Bhagirathi is joined by another stream, the Alakananda. Their combined flow at Deva prayag forms the great river we call the Ganga (Ganges). From Devaprayag the Ganga passes through the rugged outer Himalaya along a steep and deep channel until it comes out of the mountain at Rishikesh. In the mountainous segment, the river flows over many rapids with great speed. It then emerges into the Great Plain of India at Hardwar, a famous sacred place of the Hindus.

The Upper Ganga, being mountainous, receives heavy snowfall in winter which makes human habitation difficult. Even subsistence farming can not be carried out successfully during this season. In the Alakananda Valley, however, the farmers mostly use terrace cultivation on the slopes and grow cash and food crops like maize and wheat.

The middle or plain course of the Ganga starts from Hardwar and continues down to Farakka in West Bengal for a distance of about 2,000 km. This course is characterised by outstanding loops or meanders and extensive floodplains on both banks. The younger alluvium of the floodplain is locally called 'bhanger', while the older one away from the active floodplain is called 'khadar'. The altitude of the plain in Western Uttar Pradesh and Bihar remains below 150 metres.

The major right bank tributaries to join the middle course of the Ganga are the Yamuna and the Son. On its left bank the river is fed by a large number of Himalayan tributaries such as the Ramganga, Gomoti, Gandak and Kosi. The middle course falls within three different states of India - Uttar Pradesh, Bihar and West Bengal. Beyond the city of Patna in Bihar the river is considerably wide and its bed is dotted with innumerable sandbars.

The middle Ganga with its extensive fertile alluvial plains constitutes the heartland of India's agricultural economy and culture. The floodplains under the domain of the monsoon climate has made this part of the Gangatic Plain highly suitable for living and farming. In most of the areas of this plain, the density of population per km is now more than 500.

The middle plain consists of a number of historically important regions like the Ganga-Yamuna Doab (Doab means 'area between two rivers'), Awadh and Mithila plains. The Ganga-Yamuna Doab, for example, is a distinct geomorphic entity. This area until the 17th century was covered by dense forests which were the home of tigers, elephants and buffalo. But with the increase of population and its demands, the area has now become intensively cultivated region.

The use of the Ganga water in the floodplain agriculture has a long history. The Muslim kings during their rule from the 12th century onwards developed canal irrigation systems to a great extent which was further extended by the British. The Upper Ganges Canal, the Lower Ganges Canal and the Sarada Canal are the best examples of canal irrigation systems in India. This has

Source to the sea

made possible the cultivation of sugarcane, cotton and pulses as cash crops, besides other major crops such as wheat, rice, maize, potato, tobacco. Thus the area has now been able to support both 'kharif' (summer crop) and 'rabi' (winter crops) without any significant fallow period.

It is important to note that the middle course of the Ganga forms an axis around which many big inland cities are found. Among these are Kannauj, Kanpur, Allahabad, Varanasi, Patna, Monghyr and Bhagalpur. Along the Yamuna, an important tributary of the Ganga, the historic cities of Delhi, Mathura and Agra are found. The most damaging aspect of urban development along the river is that none of the large cities have complete sanitation systems. Therefore much municipal and domestic garbage and sewage drains untreated directly into the river. Added to this pollution is the burden of industrial and agricultural waste.

The lower course of the Ganga begins from Farakka in West Bengal and continues through Bangladesh till it merges with the Bay of Bengal. Farakka is at the apex of the Ganga-Brahmaputra delta, and to the west flows the Hooghly, a distributary of the Ganga. The city of Calcutta is located on the bank of the Hooghly in West Bengal. The Ganga reaches Bangladesh at the western extremity of Rajshahi district and after forming the boundary between India and Bangladesh for about 140 km it enters Bangladesh. In Bangladesh the river is joined by the mighty Brahmaputra. Thereafter the combined course named Padma joins with the Meghna and runs to the Bay of Bengal.

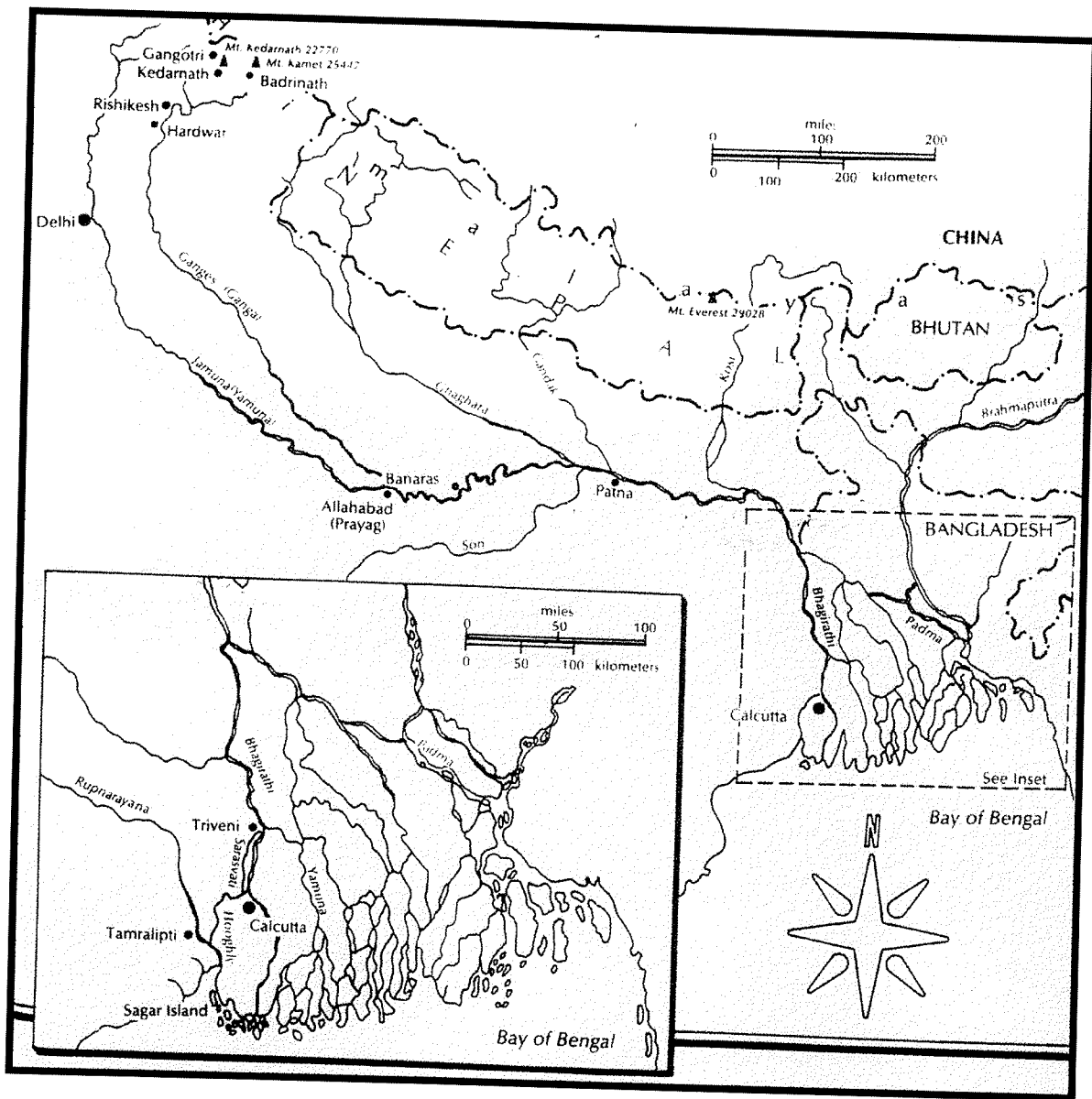
The delta covering parts of West Bengal and Bangladesh is marked by the Hooghly on the west and the Padma-Meghna on the east. It is composed of clay, sand and marl with recurring layers of peat and lignite. The delta is 130,000 sq km in size and criss-crossed by a network of shallow channels. The Ganga, in fact, flows from a relatively drier area to a region of increasing rainfall with the result that most of its tributaries carry a large load of silt to the deltaic region. The southern part of the delta has been formed by recent deposits and is, therefore, muddy in character. With an area of about 26,000 sq km this part of the delta is known as 'sundarban' or beautiful forest. It supports a mangrove type of luxuriant forest which is famous for the home of the magnificent Royal Bengal tiger. On the other hand, in the north eastern part of the delta there is a sizeable depression which is popular as a resting spot for large flocks of migratory birds.

The delta region in Bangladesh receives heavy rainfall, the yearly average 170 - 200 cm. Moreover, the Brahmaputra adds more than 20,000 cubic metres of water per second on average, and thus the river becomes broad and active particularly in summer regularly creating devastating floods. The delta also experiences cyclonic conditions before and after the south west monsoons.

The economy of the delta region generally depends on agriculture. The main crops grown are rice, jute, pulses, wheat and sugarcane. In winter, as the river water subsides, tidal water penetrates further inland and makes the soil saline. As this results in farming becoming less productive, many farmers shift their occupation to fishing during this period.

Thus flowing for a length of 2,506 km from its source to the sea, the Ganga along with its numerous tributaries forms the spinal cord of the life and culture of India and Bangladesh.

The route of the Ganga River from the mountains to the sea.



'Ganga is part of our civilisation and we must fight to save her!'

by Sundarlal Bahguna

Leading environmental activist -
Chipko Movement and Tehri Dam Campaign

(From an article in 'Sapthaik Hindustan' and translated from the original Hindi by Mira Kaushik and Tina Cockett)

The Himalayas is a sacred area and the source of India's main rivers. All our civilisation is based on the banks of these life giving rivers, but politicians are trying to stop their flow in the name of development. Modern man has only power and money as his gods.

If we ignore the plight of the Ganga and the Himalayas, then we abandon all those great beliefs and values that we as Indians hold dear. From the Vedas to Gandhi, from Shankaracharya, Guru Narnak and Tulsidas to Vivekananda - all the philosophers and saints have been inspired by the Ganga and Himalayas. Ram Tirth was so overwhelmed with his love for the Ganga, he exclaimed 'Mother Ganga I give myself to you. My body and limbs become as fragrant flowers in offering for you!'

Sivan Saraswati said 'Ganga is not only a river, but a sacred centre.' It has miraculous powers which do not exist in any other rivers in the world as its water has the ability to kill off harmful bacteria. The healing properties of Ganga water have been described in 'Charak-sanhita' and medicines made from the waters of the hilly regions above Hardwar (where Ganga is free of pollution) are very effective. King Akbar believed that this water was the nectar of the gods and had his meals prepared only with Ganga water. Scientists have now recognised the self cleaning property of this water which can kill off germs and impurities in normal conditions.

The Ganga has contributed tremendously to the economic growth of the country. Every year the river washes down soil from the mountains to the plains making them rich and fertile. The construction of the canal Ganga Naher which diverted water to the parched land of the north, has enabled the region to become fertile and thus very prosperous. Due to the annual floods thousands of landless people are able to have the opportunity to grow vegetables on the deposited silt, which is rich in minerals and nutrients.

More than a century ago the first hydro electric plant was built on the Ganga, and before the era of the motor car water transport was the most important means of travel in the country. That is why many of India's most important industrial towns have grown up on the banks of the river.

Swami Chidranand stated 'Ganga is not only a sacred river. It is a symbol of the national and cultural unity of India'. People from all corners of India visit the pilgrimage centres chanting 'Long Live Mother Ganga - Ganga Maya Ki Jay!'. They go to the river bank to commemorate their ancestors (sharad) by taking a dip in the waters. Every twelfth year at Hardwar or Alahabad there is the important Kumbh Mela' where thousands of pilgrims congregate for a month to celebrate, according to legend, the return of the life-giving nectar to the river water. There are also many famous yoga and meditation centres situated along the banks of the Ganga.

Vanishing Ganga

But today this great river is threatened by two dangers - pollution and misuse. Our sacred Ganga finds herself helpless in the grip of these two terrible demons.

Like the locks of Lord Shiva, the trees of the Himalayas protect the fragile earth of the Himalayas and help control the torrential flow of the monsoon rains. In the middle of the last century people started to commercially exploit the forests, stripping its tree hair and making the mountains bald. This has created soil erosion and flooding in the Himalayas. There are many stories of disasters all due to the deforestation and the consequent flooding and soil erosion. The ancient folk songs of Garhwal tell of the drowning of two hundred and forty temples due to floods after the river had been diverted, while the floods of 1970 and 1978 at Alaknanda caused many deaths and destruction giving rise to the formation of the Chipko Movement.

Canal construction has diverted water away from the river. There is so little water left during the winter, that this great river has become a dirty trickle in many places. Another danger is the big dam projects which are planned for Lakhwar (Dehra Doon) district. This project entails a 265 metre dam being constructed to produce 2400 megawatts of electricity every 6 hours, while every second 300 cubic feet of water will be diverted to Dehli. The plan threatens over 100,000 tribal people with displacement from their ancestral lands for the sake of neon signs in the city.

The Himalayas is still a young mountain range prone to earthquakes. It is almost certain that during the lifetime of the dam, it will experience a 8.5 Richter scale quake. In this event Hardwar and Rishikesh will be submerged under 200 feet of water and the flood will reach Meerath and Bullandshahar. The devastation will cost billions of pounds and no matter what kinds of precautions are taken, millions of lives will be lost.

Tehri dam is not the only one: there are many proposed projects including the Narmada project which consists of a development of 30 large dams, 125 medium dams and nearly 3000 small dams for the Narmada, India largest westward flowing river. The main scheme, the Sardar Sarovar Project (SSP) will flood 120 miles of forests and farmland in Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh and Maharashtra. Over 350,00 people, many of them tribal people, will lose their land with little hope of compensation. They have organised a massive grassroots resistance which was instrumental in the World Bank withdrawing its funding in March 1993.

The expansion of tourism on the sacred spots of Gangotri, Yanumotri, Badrinath, Kedarath marks the last death throes of the Ganga - all for the sake of earning foreign currency! Every time I think of Gangotri, I think of the burnt pine tree. This big pine tree used to shade the temple in summer and protect it from avalanches in winter by breaking the snow falls. But in 1984 the tree was cut down and burnt to clear the site for a tourist lodge.

From unknown times thousands of pilgrims used to travel to this place every year and they always came with devotion, self discipline and respect. But tourists come to just enjoy the region, turning the sacred spots into a holiday camp. This disrespect is despoiling the home of the Ganga and turning it into the equivilant of the 'fleshpots' of Thailand. To make it worse the UP government has recently allowed liquor stores to open. compounding the degradation of the area.

Though Ganga water is known to have healing properties, the water at Karnpur, Barouni and Hougli is at its most polluted. At Kashi and Allahabad where people suffering from mental, physical and spiritual disorders bathe in the Ganga to cure their ailments, the same water is the source of polio, typhoid and diarrhoea. 80% of Calcutta's population

suffers from dysentery every summer.

According to the findings of a survey conducted by Allahabad University 66 out of 80 industries situated on Ganga's banks in Karnpur dump poisonous effluent into the river and in West Bengal 43 industries do the same. In most of these cities, water up to 10 feet from the bank is unfit for human consumption. Every day in Benares 400 dead bodies are burnt on the banks of Ganga while every year 9000 animal carcasses are thrown into the water.

The liquid waste from the government opium factory in Gazipur is released into the Ganga while around 40 million litres of sewage contaminate Ganga in Patna. Between Bhagalpur and Barauni a Bata shoe factory regularly pollutes Ganga along with liquor and sugar mills, petrochemical plants, powerstations, releasing their waste into the river. Near the shoe company fish can only survive for 48 hours because an oily film on the water suffocates them. Fish are also threatened by the building of the Farakka Dam which has interrupted their annual migration from the sea to Hardwar.

Now this pollution of the Ganga has reached its source - the rise in temperature through global warming has caused landslides as the glaciers start to move. The increase of pilgrimages and tourism has placed further strain on the area. Cities like Uttarkashi, Tehri, Shrinagar, Rudraprayaga, Karnaprayag, Joshimath etc have expanded tremendously but without any increase in sanitation. In all of these cities raw sewage has no where else to go but into the Ganga.

When Ganga reaches the plains, much of its water is taken into irrigation canals. As a result there is very little water left to wash away the sewage. The Green Revolution has certainly brought prosperity to local farmers, but has bankrupted the nation's natural resources. The life giving waters of the Ganga are poisoned with insecticides and pesticides. The nuclear power station of Naraura presents a new danger as this is an earthquake zone. If this plant was damaged during a quake, it would threaten the whole area with radioactive contamination.

Pilgrims to the Ganga since time immemorial have given rise to many ancient cities along its banks. But now exploitation and pollution present new dangers and this is the contribution of our industrial society. This is the same society which has created laws to save the rivers. There may be programmes to clean Ganga but they lack any real effectiveness. Though there were no laws in olden times, the people kept religious observances which maintained the purity of the river. It was a sin to wash dirty clothes in the river or pollute it with human waste or do any 'vulgar acts' near its banks. Fishing was prohibited in holy cities. In 1808 the traveller Rapier mentions seeing 4-5 ft long rui fish which were so tame that the Brahmins could feed them by hand. These fish also helped to keep the river pure.

The story of 'Save the Ganga Movement' is 75 years old. The British government wanted to build a dam in Hardwar which would have prevented the natural flow of the river. According to Hindu scripture all religious rites, especially scattering of ashes from the funeral pyres, are prohibited in stagnant water. With the lack of protest from the authorities to this plan, the priests went to Pandit Malviya who mobilised the whole nation into saving the Ganga. Finally the government had to bow to pressure and on 26 Sept 1917 orders were issued that the Ganga should continue to flow naturally past Har-ki-pauri, the most sacred spot in Hardwar.

In 1952 Archaraya Binovabhava raised the issue of pollution in Ganga on its banks at

Benares and started the 'Clean the Ganga' movement. A few years ago the priest of Sansankatmochan temple, Professor Mishra, expanded the movement, and in the north the Chipko Movement has contributed by preventing deforestation near Ganga's source. Today the same movement has turned its attention to resisting the building of Tehri dam which threatens the life of the river, its green valleys and local people, while those living on the plains will live under the shadow of death from the flood danger.

Ordinary working people are often the instigators of new movements. The fishermen of Kahalgon (Bihar) started a 'Liberate the Ganga' movement to throw off the control of the landlords. Now another movement has been initiated to save the fish stocks from being destroyed by pollution. Their slogan is 'Let the Ganga flow free' (Ganga ko mukt behne do).

I believe the dangers for the Ganga have been created by the definition of development by our materialistic society. This society has forgotten our tradition of respecting Nature and now considers Nature as merely another commodity for businesses to exploit. It is foolishness to equate the worth of Ganga with a kilowatt of energy or with some hectares of irrigated land. This is short term thinking.

The solution is not to build dams but to grow a shield of trees on Ganga's banks. This will control the water flow and attract enough water to fulfil the needs of irrigation and electricity permanently. Today Bhagirath's Ganga is appealing to every Indian, especially the youth of this country, to save its precious heritage. I am waiting for the day when hundreds of youngsters will mobilise from Gaumukh to Gangasagar to spread the message 'Save the Ganga' to the whole of India and the world.

Tina Cockett

Education Officer
Academy of Indian Dance

Shortly after his election in 1985 India's Prime Minister, Rajiv Gandhi launched a national campaign to combat the pollution of the Ganga. Named the 'Ganga Action Plan', it is a £200 million programme to cleanse the river by diverting domestic waste and sewage into treatment plants and recycling it as energy to run them. As part of this plan school children are encouraged to help monitor the quality of the river water while information about river pollution is spread through youth volunteer schemes, exhibitions, eco-camps and films.

Ganga is vital to India's economic and spiritual health for over 200 million people rely on it for domestic water, irrigation and the promise of salvation. The river may receive offerings of flowers but it also gets the waste of India's ten major cities. Near its source in the Himalayan foothills the trees are disappearing. As a result top soil is washed away, clogging the river with silt which adds to flooding problems in Bangladesh 2500 km downstream.

A river is a living thing and like all living organisms it needs oxygen, without it fish and water-plants can't breathe. Fill a river up with more and more waste and eventually it suffocates. The Ganga can cope with the waste from rural villages, it is broad enough to self-clean its waters a few miles downstream. But the large amounts of waste from the cities need major engineering works. The sanitation systems built early this century are being extended and repaired to cope with demand but these traditional solutions are no longer adequate as towns have simply outgrown them.

In Allahabad, for example, municipal waste is being diverted away from the town by intercepting the open drains and channeling them into large new treatment and recycling works. This project is being funded by the new national water authority - Central Ganga Authority which is all part of the Action Plan. Chaired by the Prime Minister, it co-ordinates the work of the three states and the ministries involved. Thus the management of the Ganga, like the Thames, has come under one authority. And this authority has made use of Thames Water consultants under the Technical Co-operation Programme between India and Britain. Expertise and knowledge is being shared to maintain the health of two great rivers.

The Ganga and the Thames may be very different - the Ganga is over ten times as long but they both obey the same natural laws and have played a vital role in the development of India and England. Some two thousand year's of history are reflected in the 250 km of the River Thames as it flows from the Cotswolds to the North Sea. Fields, woods, towns, ancient churches, colleges and inns stand along its bank as do factories, power stations, boatyards and the London docklands. Its name is said to derive from the Celtic 'tamasa' meaning dark water, and this word may have its root in the Sanskrit 'tamas' meaning dark. The Celts were river worshippers and personified the river as a male god - 'Old Father Thames'. Julius Caesar called the Thames 'Tamesis' which is a Latin version of the word. In the time of Alfred the Great the river was recorded as the 'Tames' and by 1600 'Thames' had become the standard spelling.

The River Thames, the highway which brought the world's trade to London has also suffered from pollution as the city grew and prospered. In Victorian times parliamentary sittings had to be suspended because of the overpowering 'Great Stink' emanating from its waters. Gradually the river suffocated under the weight of the industrial and domestic waste poured into it by London and the towns of the Thames valley. By 1957 the river was biologically dead. It was so black and lifeless that people demanded that something should be done and a massive conservation plan was launched.

the tale of two rivers

Industry was banned from pouring its chemicals into the river and scientists found a way of treating the city's sewage. Today, after almost a hundred years, salmon have returned and at Westminster bridge anglers have the chance to catch perch. The Thames and its tributaries supplies all of London's drinking water as well as providing water for industry, power and leisure pursuits. But the maintenance of these standards needs constant monitoring and continued investment.

Recently a report from Friends of the Earth highlighted the illegal dumping of industrial toxic waste into the river, while the London Anglers' Association expressed concern about the efficiency of some treatment works. The Ganga Action Plan includes an education programme and youth project to raise public awareness and encourage individuals to take responsibility to stop the spread of pollution. In Britain too the public need to be aware of the state of our rivers and the steps we can take to keep them healthy.

Overall the Thames may be clean enough but this mighty thoroughfare has fallen into disuse with the collapse of the docks, and freight going onto the roads. Unlike the Ganga which is worshipped every day, Old Father Thames is ignored by the majority of Londoners. The 52 or so tributaries of the river have been largely paved over and forgotten. London's canals which wind for 40 miles across the city could rival Amsterdam if they were recognised and used.

Formed in 1987 the London River Association is pressing for the Thames to be designated a national park. The purpose of the organisation is to promote the Thames as a focus for industrial activity, transport, a resource for public enjoyment and a habitat for wildlife - in other words to reclaim this neglected river and make it once again central to the life of Londoners. There may be more bridges across the Thames than temples on its banks, but its water flowing from Gloucestershire to the North Sea offers us the same opportunity as the Ganga to show respect and celebrate the living spirit of the river.

Introduction to Indian Dance

Tara Rajkumar

Founder of the Academy of Indian Dance

Dance in the Indian sub-continent is the culmination of thousands of years of cultural synthesis incorporating all the rich variety of the land.

The fine arts of the continent are closely linked together and often follow the same basic principles. There is practically no dance without music and rhythm. Rhythm is the life-line, around which revolves dance and music in perfect synchrony.

The origin of South Asian dance is almost obscured in the mists of time. Throughout history it has been associated with the mythology, philosophy and spiritual beliefs of the Hindu culture, and in more recent times the Islamic tradition.

In ancient India the temple was not just a place of worship, it was also a centre for arts. Through its architecture it was the mainspring of sculpture and painting. Here poets presented their work to the public, philosophical discussions took place in the temple precincts and eminent musicians and dancers performed regularly for festivals and religious rites. Dance, music and art became vehicles for expressing both the secular and spiritual dimensions of life.

Dating from as early as the second century BC up until the nineteenth century, there is evidence in both sculpture and literature that dance had a profound influence upon all the other art forms.

The earliest known treatise on the performing arts is the **Natya Shastra**. This monumental work was written by Bharata the Sage in about the second century. For such a colossal and detailed work to be written, a well established and flourishing performance tradition must have been in place.

From the second to the eighth century, dance and music were considered a part of drama and they were consciously conceived parts of a whole. From the eighth century there was a marked diversification. Dance gradually became disassociated from drama and regional styles developed in different parts of the sub-continent. These different classical styles then came into their own, practised and perfected by dedicated artists who kept them alive through harsh periods of political upheaval and lack of royal and social patronage.

From the twelfth to eighteenth century the Moghul empire flourished and then declined in the northern regions. Under the patronage of the emperors the arts, especially music and art, were encouraged in the courts. Kathak developed from the storytelling tradition to the subtle and complex form of today. Islamic aesthetics did much to refine the practise and form of the arts under the influence of the Moghul courts.

With the advent of the British, dance among other arts suffered a temporary eclipse, especially in the cities and towns where British rule was established. Through the imposition of British schooling and Victorian values dance was not encouraged, particularly amongst the middle classes.

However in the first half of the present century, pioneers such as Rabindranath Tagore, Uday Shankar and Rukmini Devi, were tireless in reviving and re-defining the rich dance heritage. In the

past forty years South Asian dance has undergone a dramatic explosion with an increase in performers, teachers, students, companies and schools both in India and Britain. The different dance styles have flourished and their repertoires have been enriched through devoted research and practise. Contemporary and traditional work now attracts audiences throughout the world.

Through the centuries, as dance became separated from drama, regional variations became more distinctive, each with their own technique. Nevertheless they all follow the same basic rules and guidelines as set out in the Natya Shastra. The emphasis shifts from one aspect to another to give each style a unique quality of its own.

The Natya Shastra defines three basic classifications of technique which are found in all classical styles:

Nritta is pure dance movements or the method of movement followed by a specific style. This consists of putting together a number of stylised poses and movements with footwork patterns, set to specific rhythm cycles: these do not convey any meaning, evoking neither mood nor sentiment.

Natya is the dramatic aspect of dance, where expression within the dance context is emphasised.

Nritya is a combination of mime and movement

The later texts mention yet another classification of dance technique - **tandava** and **lasya**. Tandava is the vigorous and masculine aspect of dance and lasya represents the graceful and feminine side. This does not in any way suggest that men dance tandava and women lasya but simply states the two distinctive types of movement which all dancers are expected to perform.

An important form of dance presentation is **abhinaya**. The word comes from abhi - towards, and naya - to lead. So abhinaya is the ways in which the dancer tries to lead an audience towards a sentiment or mood, towards a theme or story. There are four types of abhinaya:

Angika - expression through the body

Vachika - expression through speech and sound

Aharya - expression through costume, ornaments and props

Satvika - expression through refined feelings, mood

Dancers often recite the following sloka (hymn) which describes the aspects of abhinaya through the symbolism of Shiva as the Lord of the Dance.

'I bow to the Supreme Shiva whose body is the universe, whose speech is the eternal word and whose ornaments are the moon and stars'

Movements of the body, facial expressions and hand gestures play an important role. The **hastas** (hand gestures) form a codified language of their own. There are both single-handed gestures and double-handed gestures. In fact the hands are often the focal point with the other movements accompanying them.

'Where the hands go, the eyes follow
Where go the eyes, the mind must follow
Where the mind rests, there is concentration
Where concentration is, rasa arises'

The facial expressions are used to evoke the appropriate emotions or sentiments. According to the theory of aesthetics there are nine basic **rasas** (emotions or moods): love, scorn, grief, anger, fear, courage, disgust, wonder, and peace.

Through gestures along with the appropriate facial expression and body movement, the dancer conveys to the audience the theme, story or mood of the dance piece.

The main classical dance styles share the basic elements of nritta, natya and nritya as well as performance in bare feet with some styles wearing ghunghroos (bells) around the ankles to enhance the rhythmic footwork. However the different styles have evolved their own particular characteristics which reflect the traditions and cultures of the regions from which they come:



Bharata Natyam developed in the temples of Tamil Nadu in southern India. It has a driving percussive energy flow. Space and movements are perceived along geometric lines accompanied by crisp footwork.



Kathak originated from the storytelling traditions of northern India. It later flourished at the Hindu and Moghul courts where it developed into the subtle and sophisticated form of today. The style is marked by its complex footwork, rapid spins and sudden still poses.



Odissi comes from eastern India and was nurtured in the great temples of Orissa. Its fluid and lyrical lines are punctuated by freezes in sculptured poses which can still be seen on the temple walls.



Manipuri is the very graceful and soft style from Manipur in north east India. The dancers use small steps and low leaps, the women dressing in long stiff skirts. The legends of Krishna form important themes in performances.



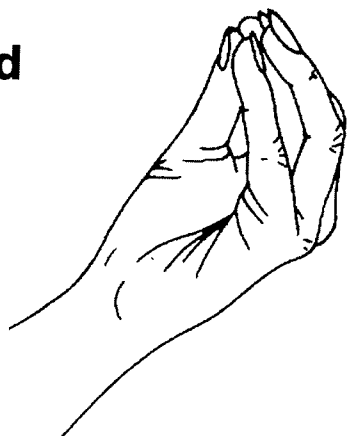
Kathakali developed in Kerala in south west India. This vigorous, dramatic and demanding style owes much to the martial arts tradition. It uses highly stylised mime, makeup and costume to depict the characters from Hindu myths and legends.



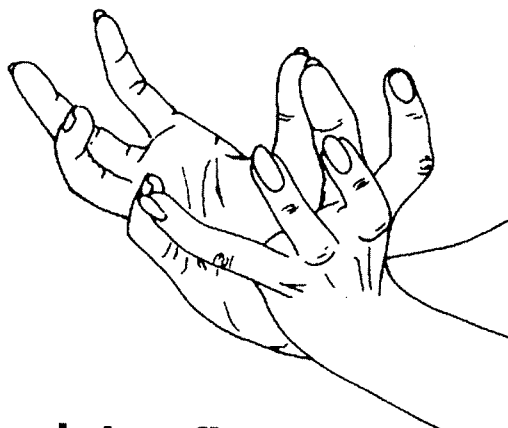
Mohini Attam also comes from Kerala. It is performed by women in white and gold costumes. It has the flavour of both Bharata Natyam and Kathakali with an overlay of local folk dances, in particular Kaikottikali.

A selection of South Asian Dance hand gestures

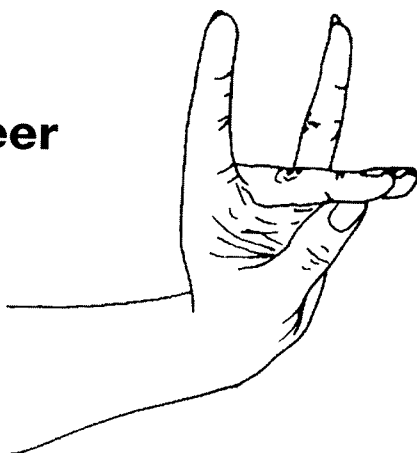
bud



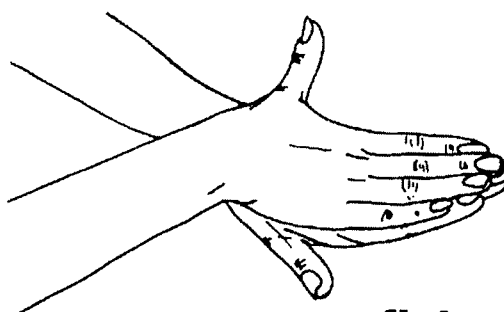
lotus flower



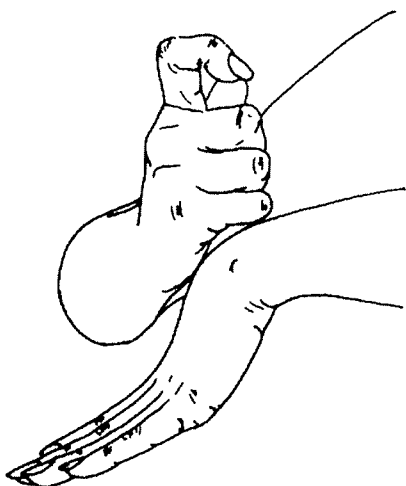
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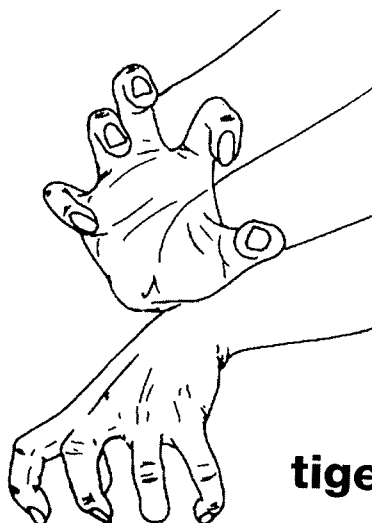
fish



parrot



tiger



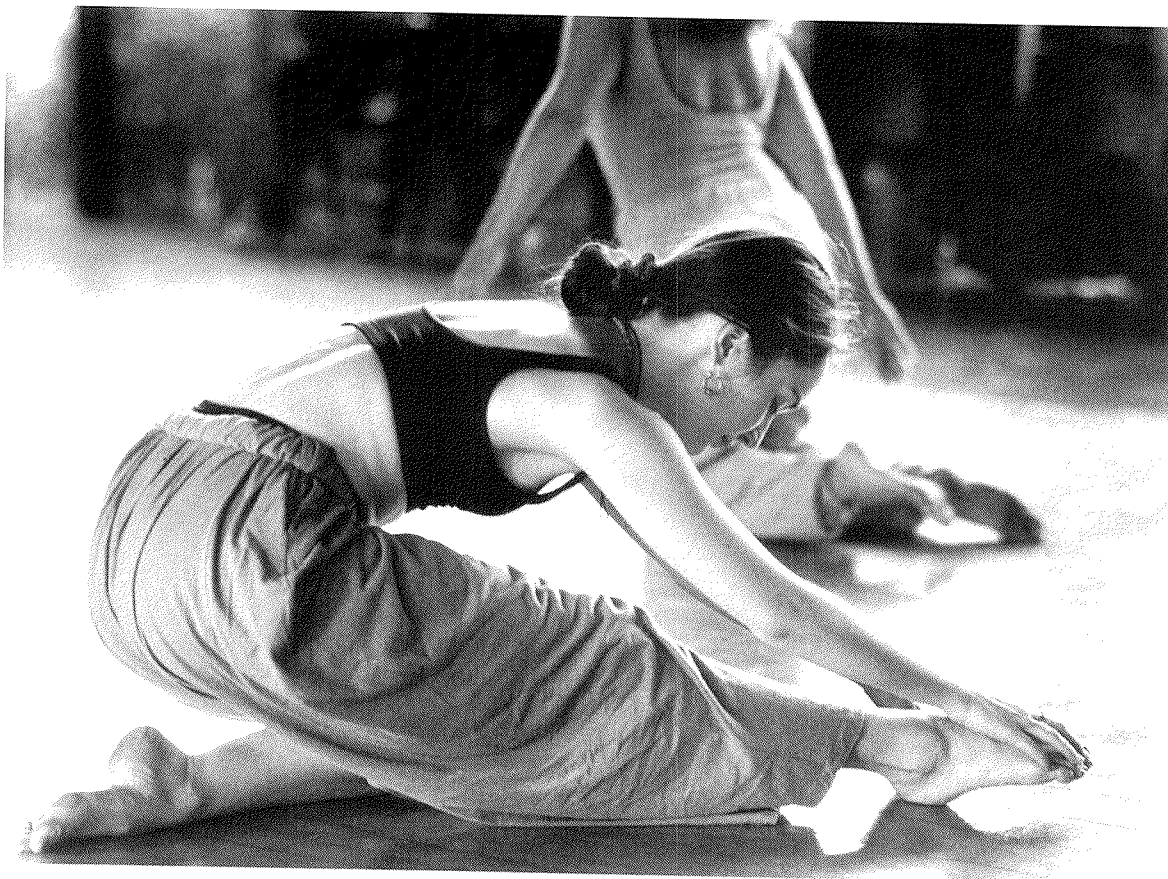
Dancing a River

Tina Cockett

Education Officer
Academy of Indian Dance

- Using the photographs in the pack as a starting point, talk about the different activities/occupations of the river bank e.g. washing clothes, fishing, collecting water, making offerings, funeral rites, and the types of movements/body shapes associated with them. You can also use the occupations or festivals associated with the different cities along the Ganga (see section 'Ganga's Journey' for further information).
- Using lengths of material, mark out the path of a river. Decide which is the source and which the delta. Get the pupils to take up positions representing chosen activity placing them appropriately along the material so that you have a frieze of poses.
- For certain number of beats, get the pupils to move into another pose and hold it. There is the opportunity here for pupils to chant or recite the bols (rhythmic syllables) as they move once they are confident with the exercise. This is more appropriate for older pupils.
- Repeat this exercise a number of times with different rhythms/beats as a starting point for dance. You can then introduce stylised movements and gestures from South Asian dance - steps, shapes and hand gestures.
- Building on the exercise, put the class into groups with the task of starting from an activity - as a group or as individuals. Something has to interrupt this flow of movement (either in terms of the river or their activity) which then must be resolved. This might lead to an 'ABA' dance form. It gives pupils the opportunity to bring issues surrounding the Ganga and rivers in general - floods, pollution or dam building. (See Appendix for newspaper cuttings which can be used as stimuli)
- There are lots of movements associated with water. The pupils can explore the movement of water/river with their arms, hands and whole bodies. Scarves and lengths of materials can be used as a stimulus and prop as well as water sounds from Side One of the accompanying tape. The pupils can work individually, with a partner or in groups.
- Encourage the pupils to articulate about words associated with water movements - tumbling, swirling, cascading, flowing etc. These can be used as a stimulus for movement. Experimenting with the rhythm and metre of the words, using them as sound accompaniments for dance. Poems found in the pack (or water poems from other sources) can also be used as a stimulus or accompaniment and are suitable for partner work.
- Teach the pupils the gestures, steps and movements used to represent water and rain in South Asian dance. Put the class into groups and ask them to express the movement of water/river using traditional gestures and their own motifs to create dance sequences.

- Building on the above work, begin to put the items together to create a dance item either in abstract or dramatic terms.
- Similarly the story of Ganga's descent to earth (see section 'Celestial Waters') can be used as a basis for dance/drama work. The pupils can take on the different roles of the story exploring how they might be characterised through dramatic expression drawing on South Asian dance technique.
- There are many folk dances associated with the different festivals and occupations of the Ganga. The pupils can create their own dussehra dance using traditional and creative step patterns and gestures showing how the clay images are made and carried in procession through the streets to be immersed in the Ganga with great celebrations. Music from Side Two of the accompanying tape can be used.
- Art work exploring water and rivers can also be used as a stimulus for further dance activities (see section 'A Journey with Paper, Paint and Water'). If an environment for dance is created, the relationship between dance and the visual setting can be explored through shape, texture, rhythm or imagery.



River Journeys Project at Kingsway Princeton College photo by Aeden Kelly

An Introduction to the Music of India

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Music in the Indian sub continent has a long and ancient history and has always played an important role in Indian life and culture. Traditionally the word 'sangeet' (music) had a wider meaning encompassing dance, drama and music. All these art forms were, and still are, closely integrated. There are two main systems of classical music in India: North Indian (Hindustani) music and South Indian (Carnatic) music.

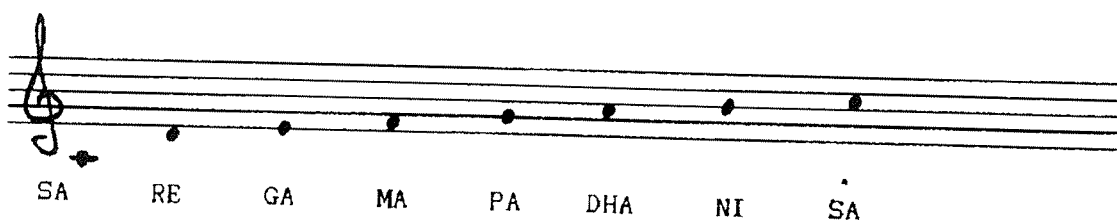
The two basic musical principles of Indian music common to both North and South India are 'rag' and 'tal' - the ways in which melody and rhythm are organised.

There is no equivalent of 'rag' in Western music. Sometimes it is translated as 'scale'. This is inaccurate. Any rag may be based on a particular scale but it is much more. A rag is the way in which the notes are omitted in ascending or descending phrases. Rags are also associated with certain moods and particular times of the day or seasons of the year. A style of painting developed in India called 'ragmala' which showed the sentiments of the rags in pictorial form. The rags were also deemed to be male or female, The female version was called 'ragini'. One of them most famous ragmalas is 'ragini Todi', which depicts a beautiful woman whose playing on the vina (stringed instrument) has attracted all the animals from the forest to listen.

There are hundreds of ragas in Indian music but the number of scales on which they are based are quite small. In North Indian music there are ten basic scales, in South Indian music seventy-two.

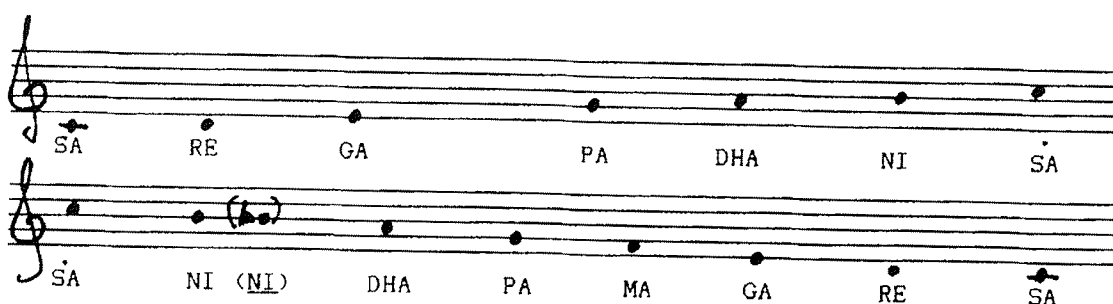
Here is an example of the musical features of one North Indian rag Alhaiya Bilaval. This rag is based on the following scale.

Fig 1



Underneath each note is the Indian name; this is called SARGAM. This scale is like the Western major scale and is called 'Bilaval' in Indian music. However the musical features of rag Alhaiya Bilaval, although based on this scale is somewhat different. Rag Alhaiya Bilaval has a particular ascending and descending pattern:

Fig 2

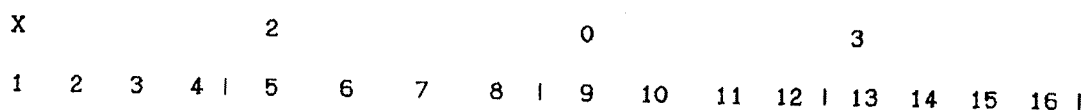


Already the feeling of the scale has changed. MA has been omitted ascending. Also a flattened 7th is sometimes introduced in the descent, giving the rag its special musical flavour. From this basic musical material composition can be created in the rag and the ascending or descending patterns used as the basis for long and complex improvisations.

Compositions in different rags are also used to accompany Indian dance. Sometimes dancers also sing melodies whilst dancing. This is a very traditional way of performing.

Rhythm is important in every kind of music. The system called 'tal' is the name given to the particular manner in which rhythm is organised in Indian music. Tal is the way in which groups of beats are divided. For example 'teental' is one of the most common metres in North Indian music and is often used in Kathak.

Fig 3

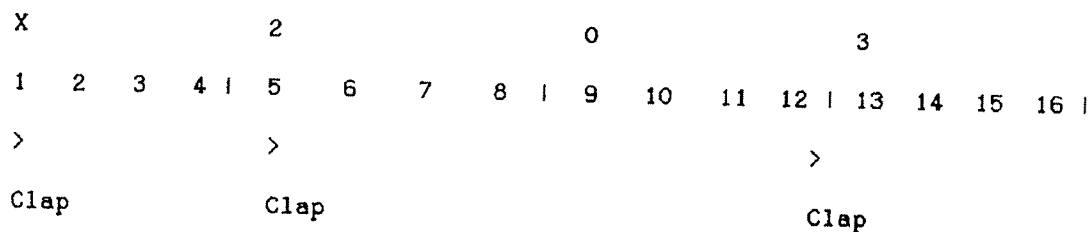


Here the 16 beats are divided into four equal sections starting on 1,5,9 and 13.

There is a special way of clapping tal in Indian music. In fact the work 'tal' comes from Sanskrit and means a flat surface like the palm of the hand. The beats marked X, 2, and 3 are clapped. The beats marked 0 are left khali (empty) and are indicated by silently turning the palm upwards.

So the clapping looks like this:

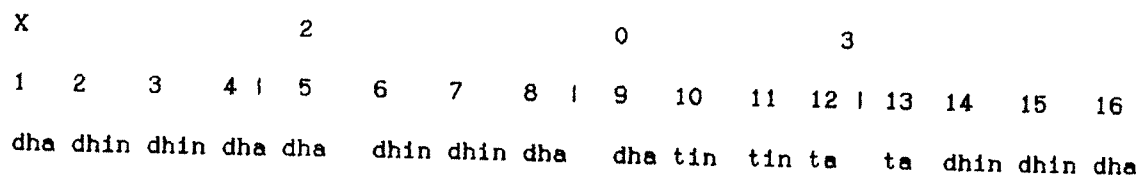
Fig 4



The tal always return to beat 1 which is known as the sum and starts again. This is why it is sometimes called a time-cycle - it goes round and round.

There are many tals in Indian music with different numbers of beats such as 14,12,10,9,8,7 and 6. Tabla players used special sounds for each beat of the tal as a way of remembering and creating compositions. These sounds are called 'bols' and come from the Hindi word 'bolna' which means to speak. Here are the basic bols for teental:

Fig 5



Tal plays a crucial role in Indian dance. All sequences of movement and footwork have their specific bol to which they are set. In Kathak, dancers will often be seen on stage reciting the bols before dancing. This develops into a friendly, improvised competition between the dancer and the tabla player, which is an integral part of the excitement of the Kathak performance. In Bharata Natyam and Odissi, the vocalist sings the bols to accompany certain dance items.

The dancer also keeps the beats of the tal with his or her feet which are echoed by the sound of ghungroos or bells worn around the ankles. One of the most exciting aspects of Indian dance is this close interplay between the dancer and drummer exploring the tals of the composition.

River Journeys - making the music tape

Side One of the music cassette was created during a two week residency with Performing Arts students at Kingsway College, London. Under the direction of Andy Gall (composer), Jon Petter (musician) and Jayachandran (dancer) the students worked to making a music piece which would express the various aspects of the Ganga's journey as it flows from the Himalayas to the Bay of Bengal. The music was used to accompany their dance piece created during the residency and performed as part of the 'Camden Dance in Education Festival' at The Bloomsbury Theatre in July 1992.

The music uses the sounds of water, bells, percussion and the jaltarang (Indian water xylophone) sampled onto a synthesizer along with the ghattam (Indian clay pot) and thumbi (one stringed instrument) played by the musician with vocals and recitation of bols (rhythmic syllables) from the students.

The music falls into the following sections which can be used as a stimulus or accompaniment for dance and other creative activities:

- The Mountain Temple - making offerings to the river
- The Monsoon Rains and Storms
- Song - 'The River Hums with Many Voices'
- Bols - speaking rhythmic syllables for dance
- Celebrating a festival - a folk dance
- Song repeated with water sounds
- The River Goddess Mourns - the burning ghats/the drowned valley/the polluted waters.
- The River City - Calcutta

The following notation along with the cassette can be used to teach pupils the song and bols from the tape.. A simple jaltarang can be made by using small ceramic dishes or glass jars with varying amounts of water to produce different notes.

Side Two is a selection of music in the folk tradition from the Academy of Indian Dance's 1985 production of 'The Return of Spring'. This can be used for creative work based on the activities along the river bank or festival and processions.

TA DHI NU TA DHI MI TA HA TA JAM TA RI

TA KA DHI NU TA DHI MI TA HA TA JAM TA RI

TA DHI NUTADHIMI TA HATA JAM TARI TARA DHI NUTADHIMI TA HATA JAM TARI

TA TA JAM TA TANAM TA TARAM TA TA RI

TA DHANA TA JONU TA DAMI TA KITA TARI TARI TA JAM

A KITATAKA TARIKITA TOM TARI TARI TA JAM TA KITATAKA TARIKITA TOM

TA KITA KITATAKA TADHIM TADHIM TA TA DHIM TA TADHIM TA TADHIM TA TADHIM TA

TA DHI TA TA DHI TA KITATAKA TARIKITA TOM

DHI TA KITATAKA TARIKITA TOM TA KITATAKA TARIKITA TOM KITATAKA TARIKITA TOM TA

TANKITUTAKA TAKU TANKITUTAKA TAKU TANKITU TAKA TAKU TANKITUTAKA TAKU

TARIKITA TARIKITA TARIKITA TARIKITA TA

The River Hums With Many Voices.

Jon Petter / Jayachandran

The musical score consists of two systems, each with three staves: Hum, 1st, and 2nd. The time signature is 3/4. The first system includes lyrics: 'Ta-ro-o', 'Ta-ro', 'Ta-ka Dhim Dhi-mi', 'Ta-ro', 'Dhim Dhim Ta-ka', 'Dhim Dhim Ta-ka', 'Dhim Ta-ka Dhim-i', 'Dhim Dhim', and 'Dha-'. The second system includes lyrics: 'Ki-ta Dhim Ta-ri', 'Ki-ta Dhim Ta Nam', 'Ta-ri', 'Ta Dhim Gin-na Tu-m', 'Ta-ro', 'Lan-ku Dha-lan-ku', 'Jin Jin Ki-ta', 'Jin Ta-ri-ki-ta', and 'Ta-ro'. The second system also features '1st time' and '2nd time' markings above the Hum staff.

The parts can be sung/hummed together, or built up gradually one by one. (Listen to the cassette for an example of one way to arrange it.)

Painting a River

Bhajan Hunjan

Artist in Residence,
South Hill Park Arts Centre, Bracknell

Water is a necessity for survival, it is an essential part of living; it is a force that both gives life and destroys. Rivers flowing have been used as metaphors for journeys, both physical and spiritual. Artists and craftspeople from different times, backgrounds, countries and cultures have explored the theme through a variety of techniques from the Indian miniature painters to the Impressionists, from the Pattam scroll painters to David Hockney.

Art workshops can range from using marks and effects produced by water based techniques to representational images depicting water and rivers. The following ideas and information provide starting points for pupils or students to begin thinking about issues involved, through a variety of techniques.

● Exploring Drawing Techniques

Use pencil, pen and ink, coloured pencils or pastels, charcoal and chalk on paper, starting with initial drawings on small sheets of paper before moving onto large scale. Using line work explore drawings representing water, looking at patterns in water, repeated line work, cross-sections in water, etc.

Fig. 1

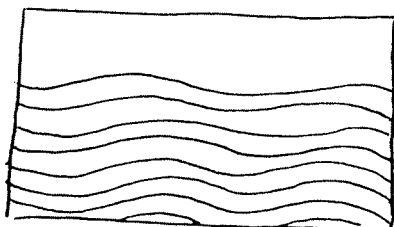
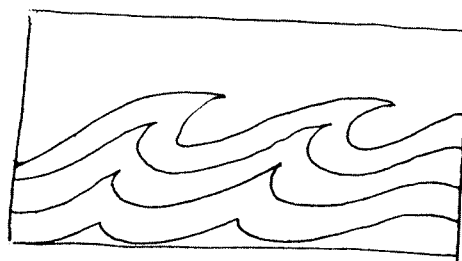


Fig. 2



● Inks/Water based paints on damp paper

Apply of coloured inks and/or water-based inks with a paint brush on damp cartridge paper or stretched damp cartridge paper. Other ways of applying inks/paint can be explored e.g. splattering with use of an old toothbrush, sponge etc. Explore marks made by this technique further by re-damping of paper and building up layers of ink and/or coloured water based paints. Interesting results are produced, as marks are not easily controllable. These would be determined by factors such as the amount of water in the paper, position of paper (e.g. upright, flat on table or held at an angle) and by density of paint.

● Mixing of thinned oil paints and water-based paints on paper

Apply of thinned oil paints alongside water-based paints with a paintbrush. Mixing of these two liquids produces astonishing results. These comprise of bubbly effects with different tonal results.

● Marbling - marks produced by picking up of thinned oil based inks floating on water using a sheet of paper.

Thin different coloured oil paints with white spirit in separate containers (e.g. empty yoghurt containers or small bottles). Half fill a container (e.g. plastic paper tray, photographic tray, plastic basin) with cold water. Splatter very small quantities of marbelling inks or thinned down paints all over the water using a paint brush until a thin layer is seen floating on water.

Gently put a sheet of paper on the water by lowering one side of it first in order to prevent the formation of air-bubbles. Pick up gently after half a minute or so. Students can work with a few colours together (e.g. clear blues, green etc). Different effects can be controlled by the thinness or thickness of paint floating on the water and the time allowed between placing the paper on the water surface and lifting it up.

Specialist marbling inks are available from educational suppliers, especially recommended for younger students.

● Collage

Use a variety of materials (e.g. paper, coloured tissue paper, fabric etc) arranged and glued to a backing (card, paper or fabric). Collages can explore themes associated with the project with designs based on traditional techniques (e.g. scroll painting, Kantha quilts, Shisha (mirror) embroidery of Rajasthan where the mirrors represent water).

● Working on fabric using tie and dye technique

Tie and dye is a traditional dyeing technique used throughout India and in particular in Rajasthan. Materials needed - cotton fabric or muslin, string, small round objects (coins, small pebbles, lentils). Dyes - cold or hot water. Method - for a circular design, tie fabric tightly with strong string around a small round object. Using different sized objects and varying the amount string used, will produce variety in the patterns produced.

Fig. 3

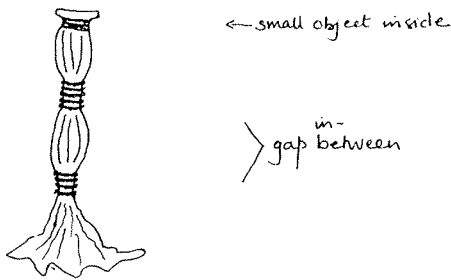
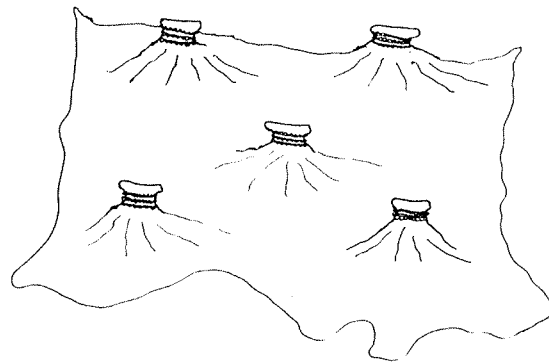


Fig. 4



For a linear, wavy pattern fold the fabric like corrugated card, gather from one end and start tying. Leave small gaps between tyings.

Fig. 5

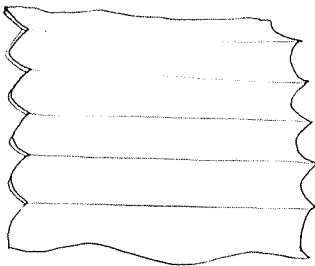


Fig. 6

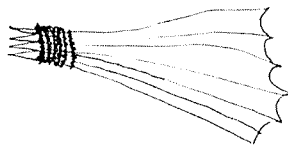


Fig. 7



Dye the fabric. Leave to dry before untying the string. The dye will have penetrated the untied areas of the fabric and not the tied parts.

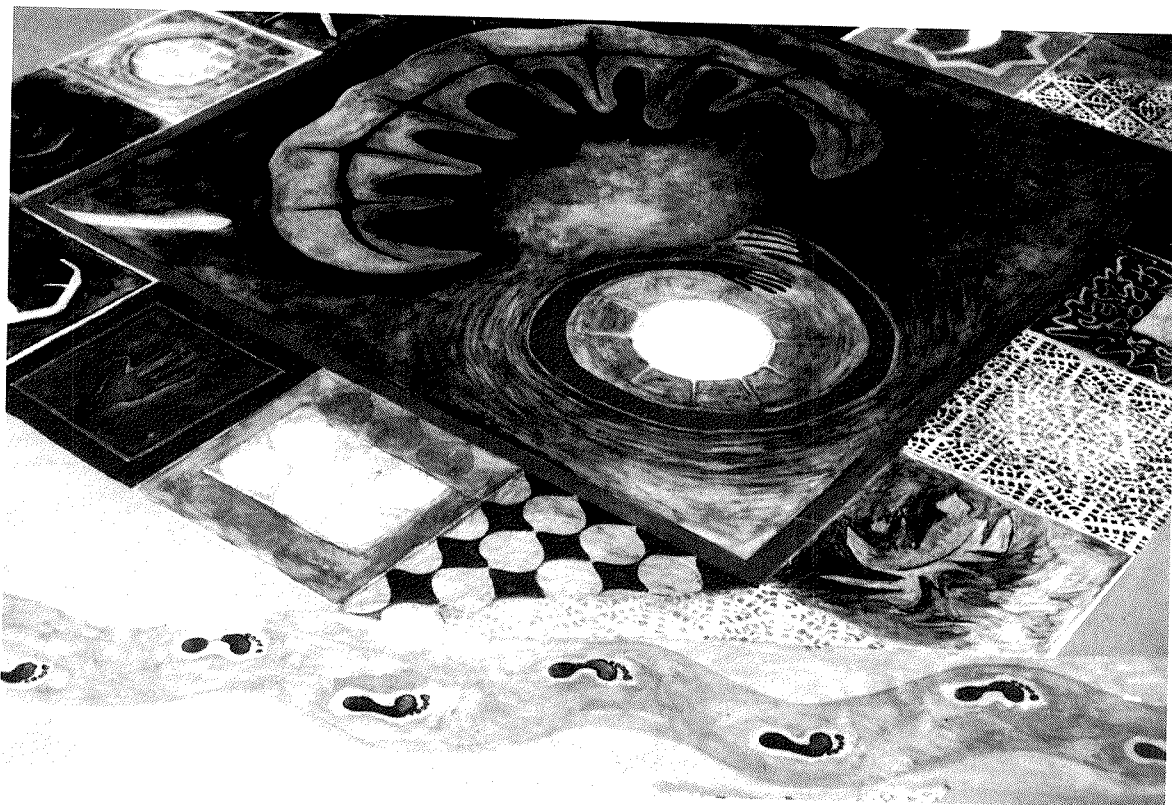
For more than one colour, do not untie the string. Continue tying more string tightly on the gaps which have been previously left untied and dye again with a different colour. This can be repeated several times.

This is the basic method. Further information and ideas are easily obtainable from specialist books found in most craft sections of libraries and book shops.

● Floor Pieces

Floor pieces are made all over India for different purposes and using many different methods - paints, coloured powders, grain (rice, lentils), and spices (turmeric, chilli powder).

They are associated with the celebration of seasonal changes, marriages, religious rites and festivals and are also used to bring good fortune. They are largely made by women on floors which mark the entrance to their homes or local temples. A common name used for these is 'rangoli' a term which comes from Gujarat. They can be temporary or permanent pieces.



Temporary rangoli uses chalk, coloured pigments/powder, grains and spices. Before creating your rangoli make sure the floor space to be used is very clean, swept, washed with water and dried thoroughly. The location should be undisturbed and not used for walking through. It needs to be separated from other areas by tape. Ensure that the area will be draught free.

The designs to be used should be practised and drawn on paper before working directly on the floor. The scale needs to be clearly worked out beforehand.

The initial marking on the floor is made easier by using chalk, string, marking tape and long straight bits of wood (e.g. for a circle use a length of string fixed to the centre to draw the circumference). Once drawn out in chalk, start working outwards from the middle, filling in areas with selected dry material, levelling down gently with the hand as each section of the design is finished.

Permanent or semi-permanent designs can go directly on the floor or a movable surface e.g. hardboard, plywood, fabric, lino etc) can be used. If a moveable surface is used, investigate if it needs to be primed first in order to get the best results when using paints.

As in the previous section initial drawings should be worked out on paper, planned with measurements and overall scale in mind, then transferred on the surface selected. For a more longer lasting surface on which performance might take place, use liquid paints mixed with a little P.V.A. glue and/or household emulsion or acrylic paints.

Cut out card stencils are extremely useful for repeated patterns. These can be used for initial drawing on the surface and/or when painting. A sponge can be used to dab the paint through the stencil.

Your floor piece can be fixed to a wooden floor with small tacks when using hardwood or plywood. Lino and fabric surfaces can be taped to the floor with gaffa tape.

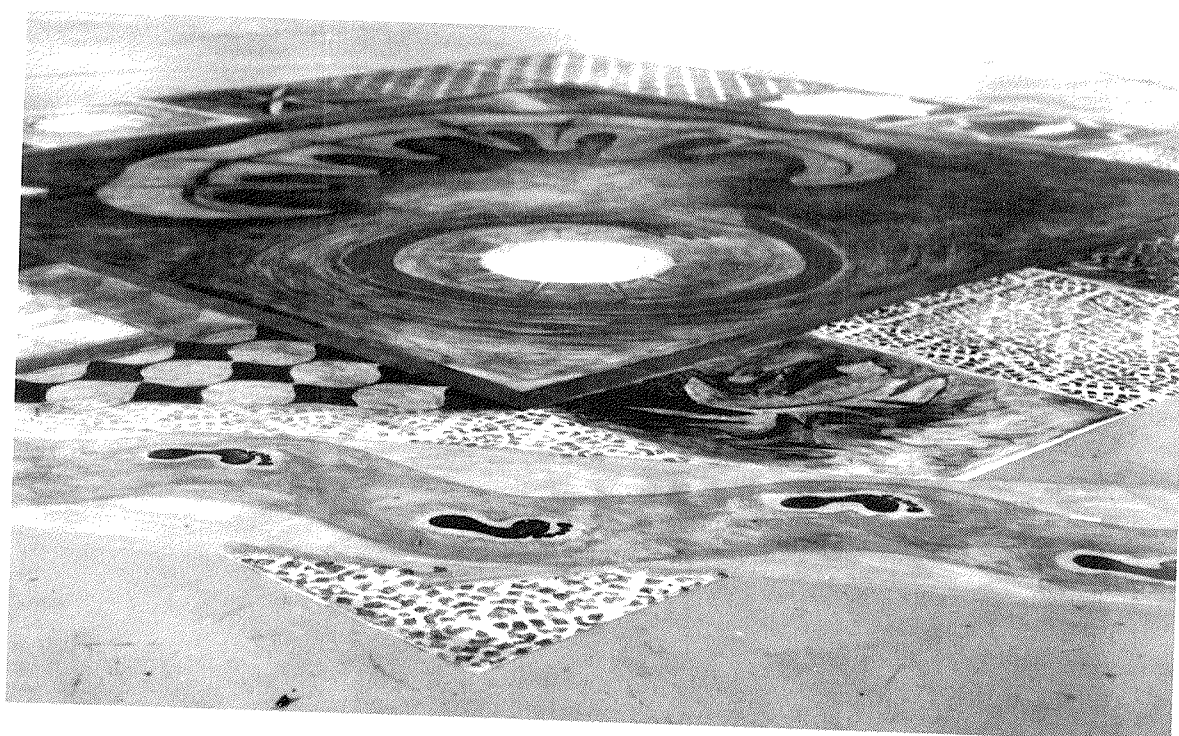
Illustrations: Floor piece Bhajan Hunjan

Aspex Gallery Portsmouth Dec 1989

- **Creating an environment for Dance**

Rangoli pieces can be created especially as a dance floor - care must be taken that the piece is suitable for dance and safe to perform on. Dying techniques can be used on fabrics to be hung as banners and back drop.

Clear acetate sheets can be used for drawing/mark-making using permanent or water based pens (available from graphic shops for this purpose). These can then be projected onto walls, backdrops etc using an overhead projector. Alternatively colour transparencies can be made of marbling/rangoli/paintings etc. Once slide-mounted they can be projected onto screens, walls, backdrops, people etc. These can create an everchanging or stable environment for the dance performance to take place in.





Illustrations: *Floor piece* Bhajan Hunjan
Aspex Gallery Portsmouth Dec 1989

Books on the Ganga, geography of the Indian sub-continent and environmental issues:

I = Infants P = Primary

A Journey down the Ganges	Laurie Bolwell	Wayland I
The Ganges	illus. Corinne Burton	Macdonald Ed I
Rivers of the World - The Ganges	Gina Douglas	Wayland P
The Story of our Rivers	Lila Majumdar	Nat Book Trust P
The Day the River Spoke	Kamala Nair	Nat Book Trust P
The Story of Mother Ganga	Kamala Chandrankant	Anada Book P
The Ganga from Snows to Sea	Swarn Khandpur	Ratnabharati
A Tale of two cities - Photographs and activities about London and Calcutta		World Wildlife Fund
Bangladesh Information Handbook	Lily Khan	ILEA
Bangladesh - The Strength to Succeed	Jiim Monan	Oxfam
India - Paths to Development	Julia Cleves Mosse	Oxfam
Focus on India	Shahrukh A Hussain	Evans Ltd P
Staying Alive	Vandana Shiva	Zed Books
India's Environment - Crises and Responses		Nataraj Pub
Can the Ganga be cleaned?	Brojendra Nath Banerjee	BR Pub Delhi
A Ganges of the Mind -		
A Journey on the river of dreams	Steven Darian	RadaSagar
Songs at the River's Edge -		
Stories form a Bangladeshi Village	Katy Gardner	Virago
Sailing against the Land -	Eric G Jensen	Intermediate Technology
Boats and boatmen of Bangladesh	Trygrve Bolsted	
In Search of Wild India	Charlie Pye-Smith	Channel 4 Books
The Ganges	Raghubir Singh	Thames & Hudson
Islam & Ecology	Ed Fazlun Khalid	World Wildlife Fund
	Joanne O'Brien	
Hinduism & Ecology	Ranchor Prime	World Wildlife Fund
Pancavati -		
Indian Approach to the Environment	Banwari	Shri Vinayaka Pub
The Himalaya Kailas-Manasarovar	Rommel & Sadhana Varma	Lotus
Ignoring Reason, Inviting Disaster: Threat to the Ganga-Himalaya		Friends of Chipko
The Damned, Rivers,		
Dams and the Coming Water Crisis	Fred Pearce	Bodley Head
Water Pollution: Finding the Facts		Friends of the Earth
River Pollution: A Sleuth's Guide		Friends of the Earth

Art and Textiles:

Textile Arts*

M Singer & M Spyrou	Black	
Woven Air - The Muslin and Kantha Traditions of Bangladesh	Whitechapel Gallery	
Traditional Indian Textiles	J Gillow, N Barnard	Thames & Hudson
Handwoven Fabrics of India	Ed J Dhamija & J Jain	Mapin
Hindu Art	T Richard Blurton	British Museum
Islamic Art	Barbara Brend	British Museum
Moghul Miniatures	J M Rogers	British Museum
Islamic Designs Pattern Book	Eva Wilson	British Museum
Shisha Embroidery	N Cross & F Fontana	Dover Publications

Hinduism:

The Religions on the World - Hinduism	Simon & Shuster Young Books	
The Story of the Hindus	J Suthren Hirst	Cambridge Bks P
Hinduism - An Introduction	Shakuntala Jagannathan	VFS P
India - A Concise History	Francis Watson	Thames & Hudson
Living Festivals Series - Hindu Festivals	J Mayled	RMEP

South Asian Dance and Music:

Rhythm of Joy	Leela Samson	Lustre Press India
The Spendours of Indian Dance	M Khokar & G Thukral	Himalyan Books India
Classical Dances and Costumes of India	K Ambrose & R Gopal	A&C Black
The Dances of India	R Massey & J Massey	Tricolour Books
The Dance of Shiva	Pratima Mitchell	Hamish Hamilton P
Indian Music in Education	Gerry Farrell	Cambridge Uni Press
Indian Music in Performance	N Sorrell & R Narayanan	Manchester Uni Press
Music in India: The Classical Traditions	Bonnie Wade	Prentice Hall N.J.
Indian Music	Leela Floyd	Oxford Uni Press P

Videos and education packs:

'Gift of Tradition' - South Asian Dance in Birmingham

SAMPAD, MAC, Canon Hill Park, Birmingham B12 9QH

tel: 021-440 4221

'Aranya Amrita' - Manjusri Chaki Sircar & the Dancers Guild of Calcutta

Oxford Independent Video, Pegasus Theatre, Magdalen Road, Oxford

tel: 0865-250150

'Making of Maps'- Shobana Jeyasingh Dance Company

The Place Theatre, 17 Duke's Road, London WC1

tel: 071-383 3252

Useful Addresses for information on issues regarding ecology, rivers and The Thames:

The Naramada Campaign and Newsletter

The Ecologist, Agriculture House, Bath Road, Sturminster Newton DT10 1DU tel: 0258 473748

Friends of the Earth

26-28 Underwood Street, London N1 7JQ tel: 071 490 1555

London Rivers Association

24-31 Greenwich Market, Greenwich, London SE10 9HZ tel: 081 293 9275/9276

NRA Thames Region

Kings Meadow House, Kings Meadow Road, Reading RG1 8DQ tel: 0734 535000

'River Watch Kit' for simple testing of your local river are available from the National Riverwatch Organisation. Send a cheque for £5.00 to Richmond Publishing Co. Ltd., PO Box 963, SLough SI2 3RS stating that you require a 'River Watch Kit'.

USEFUL ADDRESSES IN LONDON FOR INDIAN DANCE, MUSIC AND ART RESOURCES

Academy of Indian Dance

The Place Theatre
17 Duke's Road
London WC1H 9AT
tel: 071 387 0980

Resource library for reference books, videos, cassettes, photographs and costumes. Theme based workshops and residencies for schools and college, and in-service training sessions for teachers.

The Hotung Gallery

The British Museum
Great Russell Street
London WC1
Ed Department tel: 071 6361555
8637

Magnificent collection of sculptures of Hindu deities. Education department organises India tours and INSETS for teachers

Hornimann Museum

London Road, Forest Hill
London SE 23 3PQ
tel: 081 699 2339
Musical instruments, costumes and crafts.
Living Waters Aquarium on conservation of our environment. Activities for pupils and teachers.

Books from India

45 Museum Street
London WC1
tel: 071 405 7226

General books including children's on Indian culture, music, dance, literature and art - book lists and mail order are available.

Indian Music Promotions

88 Kingsfield Avenue
North Harrow
Middx HA2 6AS
tel: 081 427 3530

Selection of records, cassettes and musical instruments available through mail order

Nehru Gallery of Indian Art

Victoria & Albert Museum
South Kensington
London SW 7
Ed. Department tel: 071 938

Paintings, textiles and artefacts mostly from post-15th century

Commonwealth Institute

Kensington High Street
London W8
tel: 071 603 4535
Displays, exhibitions, resource centre and book shop.
Programme of lectures for pupils and teachers

Soma Books

38 Kennington Lane
London SE11
tel: 071 735 2101

Jas Musicals

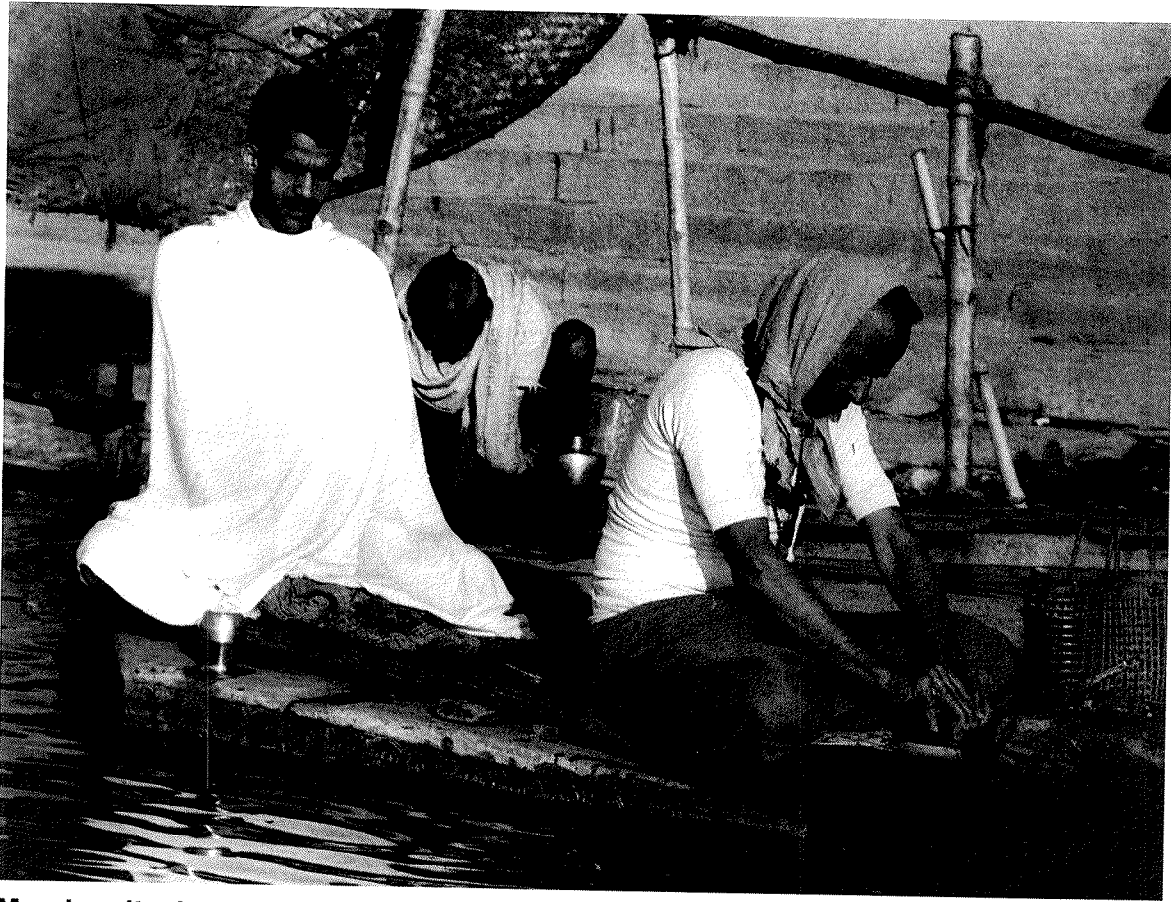
108 The Broadway
Southall
Middx UB1 1PX
tel: 081 574 2686



A dip in the river at Hardwar
photo by Helene Rogers

fisherman on the beach at Gangasagar
photo by Helene Rogers





Morning rituals at Varanasi photo by Helene Rogers

Festival rubbish in the river at Calcutta photo by Helene Rogers





Fetching water from the river photo: Roderick Johnson/Images of India

Rangoli design outside a temple photo by Helene Rogers



Dhobis facing a washout

WITH THE Indo-British partnership initiative and India's rapid efforts to liberalise their economic policies, many businessmen are eagerly awaiting to realise the full potential of the Indian market.

From big corporations to smaller, family-run enterprises, there is a financial buzz as India prepares to welcome investors and the investors prepare themselves for a market ripe for an economic and industrial boom.

However, there are always two sides to the coin, and in India there is a small group of entrepreneurs for whom India's new dawn signals the setting of their sun.

India's traditional dhobis may soon become extinct, replaced by washing machines after a five-year consumer boom.

Sales of Japanese and German washing machines increased five-fold to about 500,000 last year as middle-class housewives, who used to patronise dhobis - and wait a week for their laundry to be returned - seek a faster route to cleanliness.

Many resentful dhobis have been forced to seek menial employment in shops and offices. Others handle carts equipped for ironing around the streets.

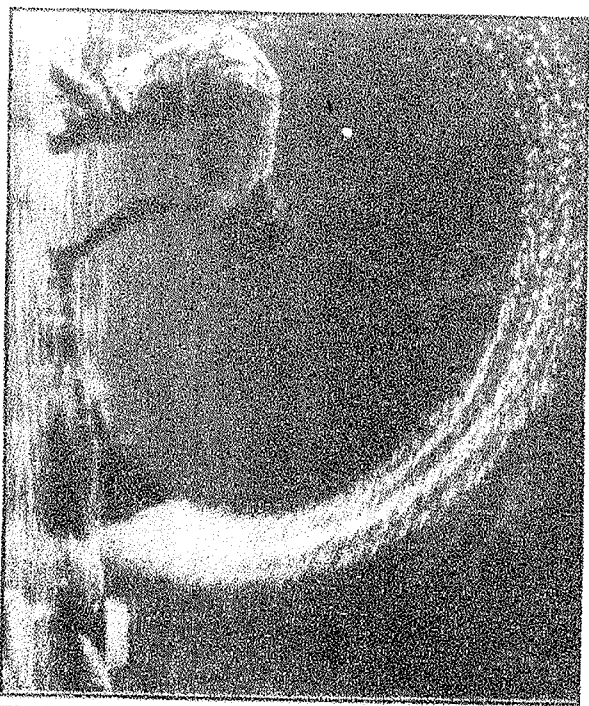
"The machines only wash

the clothes," said Dulari Ram, a dhobi for more than 40 years. "They still need pressing." The few dhobis who doggedly pursue their calling, knowing little else, wash shrinking piles of clothing.

For decades dhobis were a familiar sight, standing waist-deep in rivers at sunrise, pounding piles of dirty clothes against rocks.

They collected mounds of dirty clothes, laboriously counting and marking them, before piling them precariously on bicycle carriers and carting them away to a river.

The clothes were returned a week later, beautifully washed, starched and pressed for less than a penny an item.



Dhoban ... making light work of traditional washing in the Indian sub-continent

INSIDE

UK News 23 ■ Arts 4 ■ News From India 50 ■ Feature 7 ■ In-Review 8 ■ Business 9 ■ Indian Stock Exchange 10 ■ Legal 17 ■ Films 19-21 ■ Your Own 21 ■ Dissident 22 ■ Main

INDIA MAIL

Aug. 1993

India drops World Bank dam loans

Knockout blow to Narmada project

From Indiamail New Delhi Bureau

Environmental campaigners have dealt what could prove to be a decisive, knockout blow to India's \$3 billion Narmada dam project.

The scheme to dam the Narmada River in north-western India has been dogged by controversy ever since it was first mooted nearly 50 years ago.

It hit the latest rocky patch last week when New Delhi asked the World Bank to cancel its remaining loans for the half-finished \$3 billion scheme to dam the Narmada River.

The river, fifth largest in India, flows from the highlands of Eastern Madhya Pradesh to the Bay of Cambay in Gujarat, stretching a length of 1,312km.

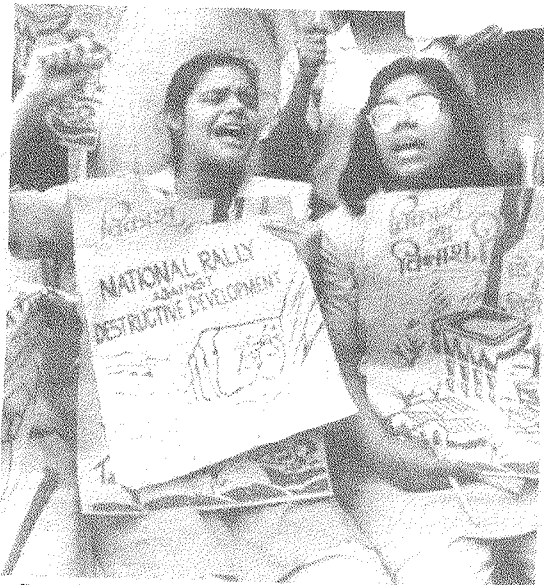
Of the \$450 million sanctioned by the World Bank and the International Development Association, \$280 million has been disbursed. As a result of the Indian decision the bank will not give the remaining \$170 million.

Ever since the Bradford Morse Commission raised questions about the environmental aspects of the dam last summer, supporting some of the assessments of critics in India and environmentalists abroad, the project has sunk deeper into controversy.

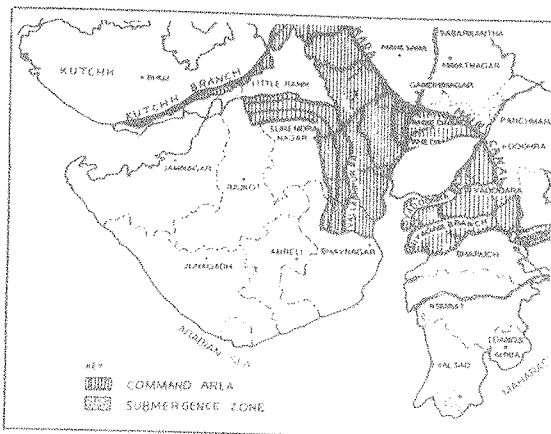
The World Bank vice-president, Mr Joseph Wood, and director in charge of India, Mr Heinz Vergin, said that the latest development would not affect the Bank's involvement with other projects in the country.

The World Bank, six months ago, laid down tough new conditions for its continued participation in the scheme and India is now believed to have told it that these cannot be met.

India was asked by the Bank to improve detailed plans for resettling displaced villagers and to



Damn the dam... environmentalists demonstrate in New Delhi against the Narmada project



prepare a full study of the project's environmental effects. The deadline set by the Bank expired last week.

The Bank's withdrawal will highlight the growing power of international environmental groups and raise doubts about the value of projects such as dams in developing countries.

The Narmada project was first mooted in 1946 but was delayed by dispute between the three states which share the river's water - Gujarat, Maharashtra and Madhya Pradesh. The arguments were finally resolved in 1979 and it was not until 1985 that the World Bank approved the loan.

By then, environmental lobbyists' power in India and overseas had grown and economists were starting to question the merits of big dams, in that they rarely delivered the full benefits expected and caused environmental damage.

It was pressure from environmental activists which forced the World Bank in 1991 to commission an independent review by Mr Bradford Morse, a former senior US development aid administrator, and Mr Thomas Berger, a former Canadian Supreme Court judge.

The report, delivered last summer, condemned the alleged failure to protect the environment or the interests of displaced villagers.

The Bank's pullout now could boost the efforts of Indian anti-Narmada campaigners, who have won international attention by staging demonstrations on the bank of the reservoir which is steadily filling up behind the Sardar Sarovar Dam, the biggest of several being built across the Narmada and its tributaries.

INTERNATIONAL NEWS 9



Monsoon season . . . Rickshaw drivers wade through floods with a third of the city of Dhaka under several feet of water yesterday

PHOTOGRAPH BY RAJIBUR RAHMAN

Four die as flood waters rise

FLOODING in south-eastern Bangladesh has engulfed vast areas of Chittagong and Cox's Bazar, leaving 500,000 people marooned and at least four dead, *Arshad Mahmud reports in Dhaka.*

Heavy monsoon rains also inundated areas of the Bangladesh capital, Dhaka, disrupting businesses and forcing residents to stay indoors. Officials recorded three inches of rain in the city in nine hours.

The Chittagong area has already been devastated by two floods in the last two months. Worst affected this time are the low-lying areas of Nazirhat, Fatkchari and Rajuan. Here mud and thatch houses have been completely destroyed, forcing the homeless to take shelter in schools and other government buildings.

More than 40,000 acres of agricultural land are under water and road links between Chittagong and Cox's Bazar were cut for several hours. More rain is expected in the next few days.