

Interview

Gorgeous Gandhara Art

Isabelle Johne, German art historian, speaks at Goethe Institut

FAYZA HAQ



Sculpture of blackstone was one of the basic forms of Gandhara style of sculpture

PEAKING to The Daily Star, Isabelle Johne, an art historian, who recently presented a slide show and gave a lecture on Gandhara Art at the Goethe Institut, said that the Gandhara culture was of such importance that people of Bangladesh should be aware of it. She said that this art form is the base of a number of cultural influences found in Bangladesh. This is seen in the art exhibits at National Museum. She said that Gandhara art was of world importance.

Sculpture of blackstone that is found in Pakistan, Afghanistan and the northern part of India was one of the basic forms of Gandhara style of sculpture, Johne continued. As it is a world heritage, this should interest Bangladeshis too she felt. The stone sculptures produced here in Bangladesh have the same basic shapes, Johne explained. From the 8th to the 12th century Pala and Sina period such sculpture is found in north east and west Bengal too, she said.

Asked if there are any parallel cultures where such rich cultural influences have been combined, she said that it was rare as it had Indian, Iranian and Graeco-Roman influences.

Given examples of Gandhara art, she mentioned statues from the Zoroastrian, Greek and Roman religion representing gods and goddesses from the different regions and religions. Explaining how the various religions came to be combined, she said, it was based on the influence of trade, specially the Silk Route, as the exchange of goods is connected with ideas, beliefs philosophies as well as technical know-

how, as found even in some arts and crafts (in architecture and handicrafts, among others).

Talking about whether Gandhara Art had parallels in China, Tibet and Nepal, where Gautam Buddha, gods and goddesses have sculptures and artifacts, Johne said, "Not parallels, but there are sculpture and artifacts that are something similar to it."

Speaking of how she came to be interested in Gandhara Art, she said that she was fascinated in that particular genre of culture when she was studying Indian Art and Philology.

Dwelling on how she had the opportunity to undertake the study of Gandhara Art, Johne said that this was at the Institute of Indian Art and Philology in Berlin. She said, "For good education for an art historian I felt this was

necessary. I was fascinated by art and objects d'art from different parts of India." Speaking at more length she said, "I was particularly interested in Gandhara art as I did my Masters about a special mother goddess, Haritai- who happened to be an ogre, of whom there are many images to be found in Gandhara culture -- who devoured, according to legend, many children. Gautam Buddha is said to have converted her to a protecting goddess. I naturally studied a lot of Buddhism in the process."

Talking furthermore about the subject of Buddhism, she said that it naturally belonged to her essential course of studies at her institute. She said, "I had to study Buddhism, Hinduism and Jainism too, incidentally, all of which interested me equally even though they are all different from each other and might have more appeal for some other art historian."

Touching on how well preserved the Gandhara art is today, Johne said that many museums have collections of this art as in the Museum of Indian art in Berlin, a superb museum in Paris and in the British Museum in London, while there are some beautiful pieces in the Metropolitan Museum in USA and some private collections in Japan. Asked if she had the opportunity to study most them, Johne answered in the negative.

"During my lecture I shall speak about the life story of Buddha and some special gods and goddesses during the Gandhara period, the Iranian, Graeco-Roman deities and the fertility and prosperity they had brought in Gandhara life," she concluded.

Music

A Carnatic musical evening

AMRITA SHAROSHI

MUSICAL evenings at Bishwa Shahitya Kendra are not rare, but the one held on March 17th had a special spark to it. Sarva Sree Carnatic Music Center in its endeavour to popularise South Indian classical music presented an instrumental performance of the violin, *mridangam*, *kanjira* and *morsing* with two artistes from South India. The artistes had come all the way from South India with the purpose of organising a workshop, to train the students and teachers of the music center..

The concert, held at the Bishwa Shahitya Kendra, started off with a brief lecture demonstration by the founder/director of Sarva Sree, Meghna Ameen, in which she explained the basic ideas and formations of



Kannappam Ramprasad playing the violin

the 72 *Janaka* or *Melakarta ragas* (father ragas) and their *janyas*. The two musicians, Kannappam Ramprasad (violin) and Vazuvur Ravi (mridangam and morsing) began the musical performance with a rhythmic *swarajathi* in Raga *Bilahari*. Following that they performed ten-twelve *kritanams* of different composers and a few folk songs.

Two of Sarva Sree's instrumentalists, Debashish Roy and Jan E Alam, also joined in the part of the 'tani avartan' (pure rhythmic improvisation with different percussion instruments). The program was wrapped up with Professor Abdul Abu Sayeed's eloquent speech which turned the entire program into a complete success.

The author is a student of Sarva Sree Carnatic Music Center



Vazuvur Ravi playing the morsing

Channel click

Ntv turns 'Global'

Yet another Bangla television channel spreads its wings

CULTURAL REPORTER

Ntv, a popular private TV channel in Bangladesh, is going to telecast programmes in USA, Canada and UK from April 1, 2004. Yet another Bangla TV channel will air its programmes worldwide.

On February 6, Enayetur Rahman, the Managing Director of ntv, signed a 'Broadcast Rights Agreement' with his counterpart Shafkat Chawdhury, the Managing Member of NTVLLC of North America. NTVLLC will provide the required transmission facilities.

Enayetur Rahman said, 'Viewers will be able to watch our total programme schedule in USA, Canada and UK. However, we will only telecast 2-hour local programmes in the slot when we repeat our daily programmes.'



Enayetur Rahman, the Managing Director of ntv, signed an agreement with his counterpart Shafkat Chawdhury.

Ei Somoy marks a century



Arun Chowdhury, Shubarna Mostafa and Anisul Haq seen in the talk show

The daily talk show goes on air at 9:30am and repeats at 12:00am.

Event

Udichi commemorates 33rd Independence Day with a cultural soiree

Review of the two-day long programme

AFSAR AHMED



Amateur artistes performing at the Udichi show

MARCH, the month of our Independence, is celebrated with enthusiasm throughout the country. To pay tribute to the valiant sons of the soil and renew the vow to fulfil their dream of a happy and prosperous nation, numerous cultural organisations and NGOs mark March 26 with cultural functions. One such organisation is the Bangladesh Udichi Shilpigosthi, popularly known as Udichi. This non-communal and progressive cultural organisation, recently organised their two-day long cultural function beginning on March 21 at the Central Shaheed Minar premises.

The renowned cultural activist Satyen Sen founded Udichi, on October 29, 1968. In the wake of the mass upsurge against autocracy, this organisation's philosophy is to use music to create political awareness among the masses. The activities of Udichi, through music, drama, dance, fine arts and literature, have spread throughout the country, turning it into a powerful left-leaning cultural organisation.

With the catchphrase- *Shei Nirlojo Je Bhule Jai Ekattur* (Only

forces to unite against the fundamentalists and those who committed war crimes.

After the discussion, a dazzling cultural programme followed. Solo songs by Biman Biswas, Runa Jahan, Biswajeet Rai and others, and the solo recitation by Rafiqul Islam, Kabir Ahmed and others touched the audience's hearts. Shwaraka-Ipan Abritti Chakra put up a group recitation while Rangpur, a theatre group from Rangpur, staged *Aabol Taabul*, a

satirical drama.

On the second day, the closing ceremony began with the discussions where prominent cultural personalities and activists Ramendra Majumdar, Nasiruddin Yousuff, Mahmud Selim and Mahbubul Haider spoke, while Golam Mohammed Idu presided over the programme. Once again the speakers discussed the need for unity and the proper preservation of the Liberation War history.

Later in the evening, more people poured in. The audience was enthralled by the group performances of the country's leading cultural organisations- Chhayanaut, Udichi and Kranti, Bartho Praner Aborjona and Mora Jhonbar Moto Uddam were the outstanding performances of the evening by the amateur artistes of Chhayanaut. Well-known recitation groups Katha and Kajona enthralled the audience with their composition and recital, selecting poems depicting the history of the Liberation War from the poems of Shamsur Rahman, Mahadev Saha, Nirmalendu Goon and so on. Udichi staged their drama *Tantal*, while Shayannika charmed the audience with the performance of *Tumi Ki Kieboli Chobi*. Both the plays portrayed key social issues.

Ei somoy has selected different anchors from the relevant sectors to make the show productive. 'We believe in specialists,' says Shihab Sumon, one of the producers of the show. 'For example, a meaningful discussion on cultural issue is only possible if the presenter is acquainted with this sector,' he adds.

TV GUIDE

All programmes are in local time. The Daily Star will not be responsible for any change in the programme.

News Bulletin

BTV
News Headlines(Bangla) at 9:40 am; 12:10 pm; 2:00 pm; 3:10 pm; 4:00 pm; 7:00 pm.

News(Bangla) at 8:00 am; 1:00 pm; 5:00 pm; 8:00 pm.

News (English) at 3:00 pm; 10:00 pm; Late Night News(Bangla and English) 11:30 pm.

CHANNEL-i
Breakfast News 07:15 am; 9:00 am; News(Bangla) at 7:15 pm; 9:00, 10:30, 12:15 pm.

Telecast of BTV News(Bangla and English) at 11:30 pm.

ATN BANGLA
News(Bangla) at 8:00 am; 12:00 pm; 7:00 pm; 10:00 pm; 11:00 pm; Telecast of ATN News(Bangla and English) at 11:30 pm.

Lates News(Bangla) at 09:15 am; 10:00 am; 11:00 am; 1pm; 2:00 pm; 3:00 pm; 4:00 pm; 6:00 pm and 8:00 pm.

ITV
News Headlines(Bangla) at 5:02 pm; 6:30 pm; 9:45 pm.

News (Bangla) 7:30 pm; 10:30 pm.

TARA BANGLA
NewsHeadlines(Bangla) at 5:30 pm; 7:30 pm.

Tara News(Bangla) at 8:30 pm; 11:30 pm.

Tara News Bangladesh(Bangla) at 9:30 pm.

BBC World
Every hour on the hour

BTV

07:35 Suprohat
Bangladesh

08:25 Selected Nazrul songs

09:15 Anya Bhutan; Ocean

12:15 Shangbadpoter Pata

12:30 Health programme

01:05 Cartoon show: Godzilla

01:30 Educational

programme: *Shabar Jonika shikhi*

04:30 Open university

05:05 Information

Technology

05:30 Talk show

06:10 Nazrul song show:

06:35 Sandhya Meloy

07:05 World's weather day

07:30 The three stooges

08:30 Drama: *Sonar horin*

09:00 Drama: *Jaal*

09:30 Drama: *Jale tahaar chaya*

10:30 *Katha mala*

11:20 *Dindarer*

12:00 *Hoi Hullod*

10:15 *The Untold*

12:00 *Random Hearts*

2:45 *Daughter of Darkness*

4:45 *School Ties*

7:00 *Spy Game*

9:30 *Sleepstalker : The Sandman's Last Rites*

11:30 *Tollbooth*

2:00 *Fraternity Vacation*

4:30 *Gangs of New York*

7:00 *Sky Pirates*

9:30 *Zee MGM Select*

11:30 *Sweet Jersey*

1:30 *Child's Play 2*

3:30 *Just Shoot Me*

5:30 *American Idol*

7:30 *Chausath*

9:30 *Steven Spielberg Presents "Taken"*

12:15 *Dragonfly*

2:00 *Bold and Beautiful*

4:30 *Hollywood Squares*

6:30 *Law & Order: SVU*

8:30 *Baywatch*

10:30 *Friends*

12:30 *Just Shoot Me*

2:30 *Shetland Sheepdog*

4:30 *Amazing Animal Videos*

6:30 *Planet's Funniest Animals*

8:30 *Wild Card*