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I Love India

India: the country with a northern region so high that it is known as the Roof of the World, and a southern region so wide that it spans thousands of miles. Within India’s borders is a robust spread of nature, terraces, flatlands, rivers, streams and forests. India has a long history. Its population comprises of diverse races living together in harmony and its people is highly intelligent. India is thus able to create a unique and excellent culture: two important religions, Buddhism and Hinduism, originated here before spreading all over Southeast Asia. India’s great achievements in philosophy and literature are well known.

It can be said that the development of Indian art has peaked. It is widely known that the Ajanta Caves, while majestic and magnificent from the outside, contain within overwhelming sights: an endless composition of murals in elegant colours and drawings in forceful lines. The art of the formidable caves in Ellora is a mystery. Countless elaborate sculptures of people and animals adorn its interior and exterior, every one of them astoundingly beautiful and lifelike, as if sculpted with supernatural abilities. In comparison, the Khajuraho Temples have a distinctive air. Thousands of stone carvings adorn the tower and its surroundings, depicting every mortal activity such as religion, war, farming and weaving, music and dance, poetry and literature, costumes and make-up. The most prominent of these is the presentation of sex and love, the most outstanding ones being depictions of sexual poses and facial expressions of coyness and tenderness. Emotions are revoked and resonance is generated by the boldness of such creativity and the display of human nudity.

Indian music, with its lasting rhythm and tone of sadness, is the people’s complaint to the gods. In contrast, the style of Indian dance is vibrant and energetic, always expressive of the force and harmony of strength. In short, Indian art possesses the beauty of purity, honesty and simplicity, and has a latent energy. This is the characteristic of the spirit of a big country. The architecture of Angkor Wat in Cambodia and Borobudur in Java is, to a certain extent, influenced by Indian art. However, owing to various historical and geographical reasons, these are inevitably lacking in the same spirit. It is a pity, but nothing can be done about this.

Last year, we organised a tour to India. Besides visiting scenic spots and admiring great architecture, our greatest wish was to use its rich spirit and majestic styles as a source of inspiration and reference for our artistic creations. Perhaps some people might say, “Singapore is but an island country. What can it do?” This is not so. The 20th century has entered an age of sea and air travel, and Singapore is favoured in these times. Consider Singapore as a reference point: to the east, the Pacific Ocean and the Americas; to the west, the Indian Ocean and nearby Buddhist countries, the Middle East, Europe and Africa; to the north, China; to the south, Indonesia and Australia. The view is so extensive and magnificent, we need nothing more. No one would dare say that we cannot incorporate Eastern and Western cultures and create our own art, one that is eternal and great.
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