

## Hermann Goetz

Professor Dr Hermann Goetz, formerly Director of the history of art section of the Süd-asiens-Institut of Heidelberg University, died on July 8th 1976, a few days before his 78th birthday. Goetz was certainly one of the most productive scholars forming part of this new foundation. In the bibliography of his published work compiled upon the occasion of his 75th birthday, 383 publications are listed including 32 books. To this number more than a hundred book reviews must be added. Yet it is not just the volume of his work but its range that is imposing.

In an initial phase, during the first world war, Hermann Goetz was interested in the Ottoman Turks and he learned the languages required for this purpose. Later, his interests widened to include Iran and, as a quite logical development, extended further to centre upon India in the age of the Moguls. His many scholarly contributions in this field began with essential and illuminating studies on Indian miniature painting. A splendid starting point was the famous Jahāngīr album which, owing to its unusual format, had long lain concealed in the midst of the map collection of the Staatsbibliothek of Berlin. This work required him to take into consideration a wide background of ethnography. Study of figurative art automatically led to the study of the themes represented: e.g. the customs and usages of the Mogul empire and, consequently, the popular customs of that age viewed as a background and sphere of influence. A vast pattern of interconnexions had to be studied, without which that state system would be incomprehensible: it had been founded by an adventurer belonging to one of the last migratory movements to reach India from the north-west.

Goetz at this stage was already looked upon as being a scholar of international importance. Out of a large number of possible contacts, he was led to one in particular by the workings of his own destiny. At the beginning of the thirties, which were so arduous for his country, he took up a post as Curator at the Kern Institute for Archaeology and Indian History at Leiden University. The great indologist, Jean Philippe Vogel, who thus became his protector and superior, had only just completed his own fundamental discoveries in the Punjab-Himalaya area whose picturesque traditions were well-known to Goetz, too, since he had made them an object of study. It was obvious that Goetz must pursue this line of research, especially since the restrictions on the employment of foreigners in Holland, in force at a time when refugees were crowding into that country, prevented him from taking up a permanent appointment as a scholar there. Consequently, Goetz accepted a grant to work in India. There followed a phase in his life during which he managed to understand and interpret with greater clarity than ever before the evolution — enriched by outside stimuli — of north-west India and with it the transition from ancient to mediaeval art in India. He threw fresh light on that strong reaction that had followed the period of great migratory movements. If today we investigate the role of the last pre-Islamic dynasty of Afghanistan, we encounter further evidence of this expansion originating in India.

Though a determined adversary of the National Socialist regime, Goetz was interned in India during the second world war. Yet this very restriction of his freedom of movement enabled him to work on the superabundance of things seen. And thus after the war his publications grew, and his competence extended to ever-wider spheres. But even when dealing with the most heterogeneous subjects his starting point was always specific "key" objects. His earlier activity in museums led him to look back upon the past in Europe, and this spurred him to an approach in which the entire system of correlations between East and West is seen in all its consequences.

His return to Germany occurred in stages, but once it had taken place he found himself induced to write far-ranging works of synthesis such as his outline of Indian art — widely read in a number of translations — in which he describes the development of this art over 5,000 years. At the same time, he formulated a number of general ideas regarding this art and repeated them at a commemoration in honour of Nehru when he gave the "Nehru Memorial Lecture". At Heidelberg, he managed to create a tradition of teaching and research and to help his disciples even after reaching the retirement age for university teachers. When he was past 70 Goetz still undertook long journeys during which he was able to see with his own eyes the radiating influence of those centres of art he had studied over many years.

His work as an organizer and director of museums has not been forgotten in India and will not be in the future. For example, after the war till his retirement in 1953, he was the director of the Baroda museum and picture-gallery and worked under enormous difficulties and dangers connected with the dividing up of India. Next, he reorganized the National Gallery of Modern Art in New Delhi, but in 1955 was forced to return to Germany, victim of a tropical illness contracted as a result of 19 years in a tropical climate. He remained in Germany till 1958, organizing there a number of displays and exhibitions on Indian art, giving lectures, etc. Back in India again, at Baroda he organized another museum which also contains a good collection of European art. His definitive return to Germany occurred in 1961, and he was one of the earliest members of the Heidelberg Südasiens-Institut.

It behoves us to state clearly what Hermann Goetz left to us as a legacy: that is, an awareness that with the new situation in the world as a whole, a limitless field of research projects has come into view — both arduous and challenging, and likely to fill the lives of many scholars. What filters from these researches into general culture can have a healthy effect on many afflictions of the age in which we live and prove more beneficial than those concoctions achieved by mixing up changeable ideologies.

It is the same task that we believe the journal *East and West* has set itself as a moral undertaking thanks to its editor Giuseppe Tucci. Our faith in the unity of knowledge and its everlasting value is confirmed by this analogy in intentions at the highest level of achievement, notwithstanding the originality and divergent nature of the work done when it comes to individual activities.

KARL JETTMAR



HERMANN GOETZ  
(1898 - 1976)