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Foreword

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FOLK ART OF KUMAON

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FOREWORD

Alongwith the population Census, 1961, the Census Organisation undertook a comprehensive survey of traditional crafts throughout India. These surveys belong to two series. In one series are those where intensive investigations have been carried out not only on the techniques and forms of the crafts, but also of the economy of the crafts and the living and working conditions of the craftsmen. The other series relate to the study of the craft forms, motifs and designs. The present report belongs to the second series.

This project was initiated by my illustrious predecessor, Shri A. Mitra in 1960 when he saw the illustrated article entitled "Folk Art of Kumaon" by Shri Upreti. Shri Mitra was so impressed by the faithful and scientific recording of the subject of the article that he immediately invited Shri Upreti to write a monograph on the said topic. In course of time, Shri Upreti prepared his draft monograph and sent the same to this office for publication. The editing of the monograph was done by late Mrs. Ruth Reeves, Honorary Adviser, Handicrafts, in the office of the Registrar General, India. It is a pity that she could not live to see this monograph in the press. S/Shri M.K. Pal and Ramesh Chand of the Handicrafts and Social Studies Unit of the Office of the Registrar General, India rendered valuable assistance in connection with the review of the work and post-editing follow-up measures under the general guidance of Dr. B.K. Roy Burman, Deputy Registrar General, India.

I avail myself of this opportunity to thank Shri Upreti for collaborating with the Census Organization in the present project and my colleagues in the Census Organization who have been associated with it. We owe a great debt of gratitude to the late Mrs. Ruth Reeves for the abiding and dedicated interest she showed in this as well as the other projects connected with craft surveys.

NEW DELHI
April 8, 1969.

A. CHANDRA SEKHAR
REGISTRAR GENERAL, INDIA.

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GENERAL INTRODUCTION

Origin

The folk art of Kumaon* is not very different from that of other parts of India.** The underlying principles, techniques and the purpose behind it are largely the same as those found elsewhere. Folk art is one of the most important aspects of the traditional arts of India because in all its forms and wherever in India it exists, it is dominated and shaped by religious motives. In it one not only discovers the contemporary Indian's urge for art expression, but upon investigating its inner significance one can also come to know the past and present Indian consciousness, India's age-long culture, religion and philosophy.

The traditional art of India had roots deep in the religious urge of the people, and as such it tended to militate against the idea of 'art for art's sake'. The Indian Artist was rarely free to give unfettered expression to his imagination. His art being always in the service of religion he was largely dependent for his inspiration upon the priests who dictated the needs of worship and thereby determined the scope and limits of the work required from the Artist.

For a deeper appreciation of Indian folk art there must be an understanding of the spiritual and cultural activities of ancient India from which it originated. According to Dr. Radha Kumud Mookerji in his *Notes on Early Indian Art*, in its traditional form, the origin of Indian Art dates from a much earlier period than that of the Vedas and Upanishads of circa 1,000 B.C. whose insistence on the pursuit of *atman* (soul) as the only reality led the Indian mind inward rather than towards personal artistic expression. The contemplation of forms was resisted by the Vedic people as a hindrance to the contemplation of the formless, this for them being the highest truth and objective to be achieved. Such an attitude was, therefore, essentially anti—"art for art's sake". Vedic religion aimed at the expansion of the self into the infinite and absolute, while art aims at the opposite objective. That is to say, it seeks to understand the infinite in terms of the

finite and is ambitious in reducing the Formless One into a multiplicity of forms. In brief while religion strives for the infinite and the universal, art *per se* seeks the finite and, by this token, individual art expression.

Yet, at the very dawn of her history, India had an art. The reason for this is that India's history is not solely Aryan and Vedic. Some of it is non-Aryan to this very day. Thus, failing Vedic beginnings, Indians earliest known art fed on the elements and materials of the popular religion and folklore of the Dravidian people with the result that outside the realm of the Vedic religion there flourished a vast world of popular beliefs peopled with deities known as *yakshas*¹ and *nagas*², together with feminine divinities signifying powers of fertility. The gods of the popular cults were generally spirits of the earth often of those which were believed to inhabit the mountains.

As has just been stated, not only is Indian civilization pre-vedic, but the essential features of the Hindu religion as we know it today were present in Mohenjo-Daro of circa 2500 B.C. 'There is enough in the fragments we have recovered', says Sir John Marshall regarding the religious artifacts found in the Indus Valley sites, 'to demonstrate that... the religion of the Indus people was the lineal progenitor of Hinduism'. In fact, Shiva and Kali, the worship of the *lingam* and other features of popular Hinduism were established in India long before the Aryans came.

Following the above view one should not, however, jump to the conclusion that the roots of Indian art did not exist in the Vedas at all. It is true that so far no archaeological evidences of the arts of the Vedic Period have come to light, but mention of a number of gods and goddesses such as Indra (God of rain), Varuna (God of water), Vayu (God of wind), Mitra, Gayatri and Usha, in whose praise hymns were written, can be found in the Vedic literature. From those hymns, forms of these deities can be conceived and later on these took definite plastic shape.

*Kumaon is a sector of the Himalaya and is situated in the State of Uttar Pradesh, India. It adjoins Kashmir in the north-west and Nepal in the south-east. To the north it borders Tibet and in the south are the plains of Uttar Pradesh. Politically, it comprises the Himalaya District of Garhwal, Almora and Naini Tal. The inhabitants of Kumaon are known as *Kumaonis*.

**On the subject of folk art in other parts of India, the following publications may be cited:

Thurston Edgar, *Ethnographic Notes in Southern India*. Second issue, Madras Govt. Press, 1907. Plates XI and XVI.

Tagore Abanindranath, *L'Alpina ou les Decorations Rituelles au Bengale*. Traduction d'Andree Karpeles et de Tapan Mohan Chatterji. Paris, Editions Bossard, 1921.

Kramrisch Stella, 'Kantha', *Indian Society of Oriental Art*, Vol. VII (1939), pp. 141-167, especially p. 142.

Das Sudhir Ranjan, Alpina of the Kumari-Vratas of Bengal. *Journal Indian Society of Oriental Art*, Vol. XI (1943). pp. 126-132.

Elwin Verrier, *The Tribal Art of Middle India*, London, Oxford University Press, 1951. Figures 194-198, 206-227.

¹*Yakshas* are lesser supernatural beings. They are the demon followers of Kuber, the god of wealth.

²*Nagas* are denizens of the world beneath the waters of streams and tanks, who are sometimes identified with the dryads of tree spirits.

The question now is how the formless was eventually envisaged as having various forms. It is widely believed that the early Hindu *yogis* (sages) in a state of *yogic* trance and high contemplation had visions of gods and goddesses in their various forms, with weapons and other elements associated with them; also, that *mantras* (sacred incantations) were revealed to them in the same way. According to the Vishnu Dharmottaram,¹ 'worship and contemplation of the Supreme Being are possible for a human being only when He is endowed with form, because human beings are limited and finite.' In the Bhagvad Gita, also, Lord Krishna has said, "The worshippers of the nameless, unmanifest, abstract Brahman shall have to experience great difficulties. For abstract Brahman as the ultimate goal is attained with greatest possible difficulty by the embodied soul" (Chapter XII verse 5):

The attainment of *atman*, the central aim of Vedic thought has thus to begin in what the Upanishads themselves dictate as *pratika-upasana*. *Pratika* and *pratima* indicate that which is placed before—an apparent object of worship as representative of the invisible Supreme Being. Again, the *Yamala*² says: 'Men see Him in various ways, each according to his own inclination.' This religious idealism thus leads directly to its opposite; idolatory, the worship of forms and images as representations of aspects of the divine being. Hence there arose an infinite number of deities as expressions of the infinite aspects and phases of the supreme deity, the formless and infinite. To express the numberless qualities of the supreme soul, a symbolic technique was developed and elaborated. The eternal spirit was symbolized and analysed by the sages in its three main aspects: Brahma, the Creator, Vishnu the Preserver and Shiva, the Destroyer. Gradually, all kinds of symbolic images were invented to represent their multifarious phenomenal activities. Form was given to the formless even in imaginary superhuman types, which resulted in the many-headed and many-armed gods and goddesses of the Hindus, interwoven with legends. Indra has thousand eyes; Brahma is usually depicted with four faces and Ganesh with his elephant head is sometimes represented as having sixteen arms. Behind each god and each legend there is some abstract idea or allegory. For example, the many arms of Ganesh symbolize the overwhelming power of the god; the third eye of Shiva on the forehead represents the eye of wisdom and the ten arms of the god-

dess Durga symbolize the power of the divine mother extending in ten directions.

Along with the legends, the rituals were also elaborated upon. According to the *Tantras* there are four kinds of worship.³ One of them is *dhyana* or contemplation. For contemplation a form (*murti*) was considered necessary, since the mind cannot remain concentrated on what is formless (*amurta*). Sir John Woodroffe, in his *Shakti* and *Shakta*, has classified such forms in three groups:

- A. "The grossest forms are images, which are three-dimensional, having hands, feet and so forth. In them nothing is left to the imagination. The particulars of the image, i.e. how it should be shaped, its colour, posture, etc., are given in what are called meditations, or *dhyana*, and the dimensions may be found in the *Silpa Shastras*.⁴"
- B. "Less gross forms are pictures or representations in the flat, and emblems such as the *saligrama*, sacred to Vishnu, the *lingam*, or sign of Shiva and the inverted triangle which is the emblem of the divine mother. Thus, a *lingam* set in a *yonis*, or triangle, represents the union of Shiva and Shakti of god and his power: the union of static and kinetic aspect of the one ultimate reality."
- C. "A still more subtle form is the *yantra*, which literally means 'instrument' viz., the instrument by which worship is done. It is, as shown in the flat, a diagram which varies with each of the *devatas* or divinities and has been called 'the body of *mantra* (incantation)'".

All the above mentioned forms are represented in Kumaon folk art, along with ritualistic decorations used on various ceremonial and festive occasions.

As Indian folk art has its seat in the Prehistoric Age, a great admixture of non-Aryan elements can also be traced in its motifs and bearings. Manasa, the snake goddess, and Sitala, the goddess of small-pox, are considered to be of non-Aryan origin. Furthermore, certain beliefs and rituals connected with marriage and social ceremonies, though originally stemming from earlier and therefore more primitive sources, were later absorbed and have been preserved by the women folk of Kumaon and other parts of India as religious duties right up to the present day.

¹ A well-known Hindu art treatise called a *Silpa Shastra*

² One of the original *Tantra Shastras*. There are three *Yamalas*: *Brahma Yamala*, *Vishnu Yamala* and *Rudra Yamla*.

³ The four different forms of worship are:

(i) Seeing the Brahman in all things, this being the highest form,

(ii) Constant contemplation of the *Devata* in the heart, this being the middle form (*dhyana*).

(iii) Recitation of *mantras* and reciting of hymns—low form (*japa*).

(iv) Mere external worship, this being the lowest form of worship (*pooja*).

⁴ The scriptures or treatises describing the technical aspects of the various crafts and the rituals connected with their production and installation in a temple.

Nor are traces of contact with foreign cultures lacking in the various design motifs used in Indian folk art. According to the historical evidence, the sea-faring Dravidians living in such Bronze Age cities as Harappa and Lothal traded with the ancient Chaldeans, the Assyrians, Egyptians, Greeks and Romans in the West and with Sumatara, Java, Malaya and China in the East. Therefore, in order to understand the general character of Indian folk art all of these factors must also be taken into consideration.

Ritual Decorations

India has a large variety of ritual floor and wall decorations known by different names in different parts of the country : as *alpana* in West Bengal; *chowk-purana* in Uttar Pradesh; *rangoli* in Gujarat; *Kolam* in Madras and *Marhana* in Rajasthan. These are not mere decorative forms, but are spontaneous expressions pour out of deep devotion and religious feelings and given shape during such creative activities, thus stimulating life and energy. In the past, this type of art was largely confined to the folk, hence it has remained almost a domestic art. It is not taught in any school. The mother at home teaches it to her daughter as a part of her domestic duty and the daughter to the grand-daughter. Thus, this art has been passed on from one generation to the other. In Kumaon, particularly during the four months of the rainy season (*chaturmas*) the first duty of the housewife, after cleaning the house properly at day-break, is to decorate the threshold of the main door with designs drawn with rice paste. In earlier times no girl of Kumaon was considered fit to be a bride until she had perfected herself in the art of *alpana* draughtsmanship. After the marriage ceremony, when she first entered her new home she had to give proof of her being an accomplished house wife by executing an *alpana*, or *alpana* on the threshold of the house. Such traditions are now

gradually dying out, but they are still preserved in old-fashioned and orthodox families.

The whole life of a Hindu is full of ceremonies. According to the *Shastras* there are sixteen *sanskaras*¹ or purificatory rites a Hindu has to undergo from the time of conception till the time his body is cremated. The whole year round, from one end to the other, there is a veritable galaxy of festivals. Every day he should perform three *sandhyas* (private religious services) at sunrise, mid-day and sunset. At each ceremony and festival of a sacred nature, the women set themselves joyfully to decorating with different figures, designs and patterns, the floor and walls of the room where the offerings of flowers and fruits will be placed, be it the seats on which the bride and bridegroom squat like little gods to be united in love, or the small wooden throne on which the child sits to receive the name by which it will be known in the world.

Material and Techniques

In painting these figures and designs the only material required is a handful of rice, ground up and mixed with water, wheat flour, dry earth colours and some vegetable dyes², which in the past were locally prepared. For the brush, simply the tips of fingers, fist the palm, plus small thin painting sticks wound at the end with cotton are used. With one twist of the hand the women artists draw creepers, flowers and various other patterns.

On important ceremonial occasions, such as the thread ceremony or a marriage, the wall and floor paintings are done on a very elaborate scale, filling the entire spaces with complicated patterns and designs. This work often starts at least two months before the actual ceremony takes place. Sometimes three or four expert women work simultaneously on a particular design, one putting down the dots another joining them

¹ The sixteen *sanskaras* are:

- (i) *Garbhadhana* or *garbhalambhana*—ceremony of conception.
- (ii) *Punsavana*—on the first indication of a living male's conception (*i. e.* quickening of male child).
- (iii) *Simantonmayana*—arranging the parting of mother's hair in the fourth, sixth or eighth month of her pregnancy.
- (iv) *Jatakarmana*—touching an infant's tongue three times with honey and ghee after birth.
- (v) *Nama-karmana*—giving the new born infant a name on the tenth or twelfth day after birth.
- (vi) *Nishkramana*—taking the child out to see the sun when it is four months old.
- (vii) *Annaprasana*—feeding the child with rice between the fifth and eighth month.
- (viii) *Chudakarana* or *Chaula*—Shaving the head of the child in third year, but leaving one lock of hair on the crown of the head.
- (ix) *Karnabhedha*—boring the ears.
- (x) *Vidyarambha*—learning of alphabets.
- (xi) *Upanayana*—introduction into the order of twice-born men by investiture with the sacred cord.
- (xii) *Vedarambha*—beginning of the Vedic study.
- (xiii) *Kesanta*—cutting off the hair, performed on a Brahman in his sixteenth year; on a Kshatriya in his twenty-second year and on a Vaisya in his twenty-fourth.
- (xiv) *Samavartana*—Solemn return home after completing a course of study with a preceptor.
- (xv) *Vivaha*—marriage, which completes the purification and re-generation of the twice-born.
- (xvi) *Antyesti*—funeral ceremonies.

* For elaborate descriptions on sixteen *Sanskaras*, see "Hindu Sanskaras," by R. B. Pandey, Benaras, 1949, p. 79 ff.

²The vegetable dyes used are prepared from the following materials : red from rhododendron flower petals; green from leaves; yellow from turmeric and black from burnt pulse (*urad*).

with dashes, while the third paints in the colours. Some of the designs, particularly those which are of a sacred nature meant for the *chowki* or seat of the deity are drawn on the actual day of worship. Their execution is often synchronized with songs of the women, the chanting of *mantras* by the priest, the playing by musicians of musical instruments such as kettledrums and pipes, and the ringing of bells and blowing of conch-shells. Thus, the whole atmosphere is filled with joy and gaiety.

Motifs : These wall and floor configurations consist primarily of geometrical patterns, and the main symbols employed are the line, dash, dot, circle, square, triangle, *swastika* and lotus, all of which seem to have had their origin in the *Puranic* and *Tantric* rituals.¹ According to Sir John Woodroffe Mediaeval Hinduism is largely *Tantric*. Both popular and esoteric Hinduism are in their practical aspects largely *Tantric*. *Tantra* denotes that body of religious scripture (*shastra*) which is stated to have been revealed by Shiva as the specific scripture of the fourth and present *Kali* age. The five *Tantras* are believed to have originated from the five mouths of Shiva.

The influence of Tantric worship is evident from the fact that about four-fifths of the temples and shrines in Kumaon are dedicated either to Shiva or to his divine female counterpart known as *Shakti* (energy). On the top of almost every hill in Kumaon there is a temple of Devi, the mother goddess, with a local name such as *Shyahi-devi*, *Kasar-devi*, etc. Down in the valley by the river bank, or at the confluence of two streams or

rivulets, a Shiva temple will generally be found. The name of Shiva is often changed to denote the place where the temple stands, e.g., *Jageshvar*, *Vimandeshvar*, *Dandeshvar*, *Bageshvar*, etc. In such case, the term *Ishvara* stands for Shiva which is derived from the Vedic *ishan*.

Free adaptation of natural objects in Kumaon folk art can easily be discerned. Motifs have often been borrowed from native and domestic environments and modified to fit in with the local sense of rhythm and expression. The different motifs used are mainly creepers (flowing from stems with rhythmic off-shoots of leaves), flowers, leaves, the conch-shell, the trident, birds, fish, footprints, plants, trees, animals and anthropomorphic figures.

Classification

The folk art of Kumaon can broadly be classified into five groups :

- (1) *Aipana* or *Alpana*-floor decorations.
- (2) *Bar-boond* or wall patterns.
- (3) *Jyonti* and *patta* or figure drawings.
- (4) *Dikara* or clay image.
- (5) Miscellaneous.

Illustrations of each category along with brief explanatory notes have been provided in the sections that follow.

A statement indicating the basic differences among the five categories is furnished at appendix II.

¹According to Monier-Williams, Tantrism or Shaktism in Hinduism was arrived at in its last stage of mediaeval development, which phase in Hinduism may be described as a kind of 'worship of force.' In order to acquire magical and mystical powers, the tantric worshippers, along with *vijas* and *nyasas*, also use *yantras*, which are mystical diagrams—generally a combination of triangular figures like the inverted triangle of the freemasons and supposed to possess occult powers. Each of the *Shakti* (female divine energy of male gods) has a *yantra* assigned to her.

SECTION I

1. Aipana (Floor Decorations)

The word *aipana* used in Kumaon is a local adaptation of the common word *alpana*, which is derived from the Sanskrit word *Alepana* indicating the basic technique of execution. The root *lip* means 'to plaster' (with the fingers), and not 'to paint' (with a brush). *Aipana* is executed in the courtyard, on the steps leading to the main door of the house, on the threshold, on the floor of the room where the worship (*pooja*) is to be performed, on low wooden seats, on the upper surface of the winnowing scoop, on the outer surface of the pot in which the sacred plant (*tulsi*) is sown or on the floor round the mortar (*ukhal*) which consists of a hollow stone sunk in the courtyard.

Usually the *aipana* design is executed with rice paste (*biswar*) mixed with water. It is done with the finger tips on the floor, which is first smeared with ordinary sienna red clay. The execution is swift, direct and simple, and the surface of the floor is kept moist so as to enable smooth and swift painting.

The artist starts her work from the centre of the *aipana* and goes on building it up step by step with different decorative designs. The rice paste mixture is easily absorbed by the ground and dries within a short time, leaving a bright white design against the red-brown background. Ordinarily *aipanas* are drawn with liquid colours, but sometimes they are also made with wheat and rice flour and dry-powdered earth colours. As a general rule, each part of an *aipana* consists of two groups of designs, the ceremonial and the decorative. The ceremonial design is something like a *yantra* (geometrical representation of a deity) or a symbol assigned to a particular deity, which the artist is required to portray in its proper shape and put in its proper place; consequently she has no option regarding these factors. However, she is at liberty to give free rein to her imagination as regards the decorative pattern around the ceremonial design. In the decorative designs as well the motifs used are often fixed by tradition, with emphasis on objects which are supposed to be auspicious or are used in *pooja* (worship), such as the betel leaf, a conch-shell, the trident, fish and lotus.

PLATE NOTES

Plate 1.—The *pitha* (seat) of Shiva or Mahadeva. This *aipana* is drawn on the floor for *Parthiva pooja*, that is to say, the worship of Shiva who is also known as Parthiva. This *pooja* (worship) is done on any auspicious day during the four months of Baisakh (April-May), Sravana (July-August), Kartika (October-November) and Magha (January-February), being the months sacred to Shiva. The ceremony is

usually performed with the wish to be blessed with a son. The central part of the design consists of a number of concentric squares with a cross in the middle, which is meant to represent four pathways, each having a gate at its end. These pathways lead from four different directions to the centre where the main *lingam* (Phallus), which is worshipped as a symbol of the God Shiva, is placed. Around it, along the lines of the squares, twenty-eight, a hundred and eight, or a thousand and eight *lingams* are placed for worship. The *lingams* are made either of cow-dung, clay or rice flour mixed with scented herbs. The larger square indicates an altar or raised platform, while the number of lines around it are drawn to represent a low flight of steps leading from the ground to the raised floor of the sanctuary, this being the seat of the divinity. Around the main ceremonial design is a running border of creeper or betel leaves which is added for purely decorative purposes. On the two extreme ends are borders composed of motifs borrowed from the waves of the ocean and known as *lahari bel*.

Plate 2.—Another design for the *pitha* (seat) of Shiva is here shown with a square in the middle intercepted by a cross. Again it represents the four pathways and a flight of steps leading to the centre where the main *lingam* of Shiva is placed. On the four corners of the square are four *swastikas*, symbols of the divinity. The interlaced squares seen in plate 1 have here been depicted differently, with depressions in the middle and the sanctuary which, instead of a square, consists of a circle with rays emanating from it. The exterior decoration consists of a border design called *ganelia bel*, *ganelia* being an adjective derived from the noun *ganel*, which means snail. The spiral motif represents the coiled snail shell with the snail protruding from the opening. Other designs are added, but merely as space-fillers.

Plate 3.—The *chowki*, or seat, of Lakshmi, the goddess of wealth and fortune of the Hindu pantheon, is executed on the floor for the worship of Lakshmi during Diwali, the festival of lights, celebrated in October-November. The design is composed of a geometrical pattern consisting in the centre of two interlaced triangles called Saraswati—signifying the presence of Saraswati, the goddess of art and learning. Encircling this is a creeper border motif enclosed by a wider twenty-four petalled lotus flower border pattern. The wide outer circular border is decorated with the footprints of Lakshmi, which on this occasion have a ceremonial importance. As Lakshmi is often depicted standing on a full blown lotus flower in the centre of each pair of her footprints, a lotus flower is painted to signify this goddess's presence. The repeating impres-

sions of the footprints are made by the women placing their fists together in a vertical position after dipping them in rice paste and then stamping them like printing blocks into the painted burnt sienna floor. The toes are then printed, so to speak, with their finger-tips in the same manner. There are four additional pairs of footprints decorating the four corners facing the central design. On either side of the central square are wide border patterns called *tupuki bel*, *tupuka* meaning 'dots'. On this *chowki* (seat) the clay image of Lakshmi and the articles required for her worship are placed interspersed with lighted earthen oil lamps.

Plate 4.—This is still another floor design for the seat (*chowki*) for Lakshmi, the constituents of which are similar to those used in plate 3, only differently arranged. Also, the lotus petals in the circular border around the Saraswati symbol have been depicted in triangular shapes instead of in the round. Bands of the footprints of Lakshmi with their lotus marks form a cross behind the central circle indicating her entrance from four different quarters. The borders consist of *swastikas* enclosed in crossed stems of creepers; also flower and plant motifs ending in outer borders of four straight lines.

Plate 5.—The *chowki* of Saraswati, the goddess of art and learning. This *aipana* is drawn on the floor. The design consists of a *bindu* or point (the absolute) in the centre, with a series of concentric circles round it, signifying expansion, an evolutionary process. The presence of the deity is represented by the main symbol of two interlaced triangles, which, in the diagram, is worked out by means of a number of parallel lines. This main symbol is enclosed by a circular linear pattern from which emanate sixteen triangularly shaped lotus petals, and these in turn are edged with a linear border with small dots outlining the last line. On the four corners of the principal design are also features two interlaced linear triangles, only these have been shaped like betel leaves for decorative purposes. The two wide-end borders consist of repeating linear triangular motifs. This *aipana* is the simplest design drawn by the women for worship of the goddess on ceremonial occasions such as the ceremony of giving a child its first lesson in learning the alphabets or that of the sacred thread ceremony*. It should be parenthetically added that Saraswati is also sometimes represented by a five-pointed star.

Plate 6.—This *aipana* is also connected with the worship of goddess Saraswati. It has two interlaced triangles in the centre and features the conventional eight-petalled lotus (*Ashta-dal-kamal*) around it, encircled by two other lotus designs. The designs on the four corners constitute mere decorations.

Plate 7.—Design drawn on the floor for the *chowki* (seat) of the goddess Saraswati. The ceremonial aspect of this *aipana* is also conveyed by two interlaced triangles or a six-pointed star in the middle within a square. The circular design in the centre and the arches around the triangle are merely decorative. On the four corners of the square are placed four *swastikas*. The rest of the space is covered with borders composed of different motifs.

Plate 8.—This *aipana* represents a *chowki* (seat) for the worship of Durga, the goddess of power and strength. The deity is worshipped for nine days during Dussehra, a festival which falls generally in the first week of October every year. The central design of the *Chowki* is composed of a number of *swastikas* woven in an intricate pattern which is called *Khoria*. The pattern is made by putting nine dots along the vertical border line and nine along the horizontal one. The whole square thus consists of eighty-one dots which are joined by dashes in a particular order. These nine dots seem to represent the nine names or forms¹ by which the mother goddess Durga is known, the *pooja* also continues for nine days during 'Nava Ratri' (nine nights sacred to Durga). Round this ceremonial design are drawn eight lotus petals in a stylized form within a square. The borders consist of different motifs borrowed from nature which are the ornamental parts of the design.

Plate 9.—It is also the *chowki* of Durga having the *khoria* that is the *swastika* pattern in the middle, which is surrounded by two interlaced squares—a pattern called *athajala* (having eight corners). The borders around it consist of flower, leaf and triangle motifs.

Plate 10.—It is another design of the *chowki* for goddess Durga. In this design there is an addition of fish motifs round the main ceremonial design. Fish is considered a symbol of good fortune.

Plate 11.—This *aipana* is also associated with the worship of goddess Durga. Here also the central design consists of *khoria* or *swastika* pattern surrounded by the four sides of a square. On the four corners of the square are the crown motifs called *kalgi*. The extreme border is made of the elements of sun and moon in stylised form. On the periphery of the circle are shown rays of light emanating from it.

Plate 12.—This *aipana* is called *Janeu* (sacred thread ceremony) which is drawn on the floor or on the low wooden seat on which the boy sits for receiving the sacred thread. The central part of the design consists of the ceremonial pattern composed with seven stars within hexagons which signify the *Sapta Rishi* or

*See description of the sacred thread ceremony in plate 12.

¹The nine forms of Durga are:—Shaila Putri, Brahmacharini, Chandraghanta, Kooshmanda, Skandamata, Katyayani, Kal-Ratri, Maha Gauri and Sidhi-datri.

the seven great sages¹ who are visible in the heaven during night in the form of seven stars, also known as the Great Bear. The rest of it is mere ornamentation consisting of a border of leaf, creeper and cowrie-shell motifs.

The design is made on the occasion of *brat-bandha* or *upanayana*, the sacred thread ceremony, which is one of the most important *sanskaras* (purificatory rites), enjoined for a Brahmin in his eighth year, for a Kshatriya in his eleventh and for a Vaisya in his twelfth, though the time may be extended in each case. *Upanayana* is an induction into the order of twice-born² men by investiture with the sacred cord, which is generally a thin coil of three threads, commonly called *yajnopavita* or *Janeu*. It is worn over the left shoulder and allowed to hang down diagonally across the body to the right hip. The three strands represent *kayadanda*, *vag-danda* and *mano-danda*: controllers of body, speech and mind. The threads speak to the wearer of these necessities. The wearing of the sacred cord by members of the twice-born classes—Brahmin, Kshatriya and Vaisya—is the mark of their second and spiritual birth. The Brahmin as a mark of distinction, wears six threads instead of three.

After *upanayan* the boy becomes a Brahmachari wedded to strict celibacy, and is taught the *gayatri mantra* which may be translated thus: 'Let us meditate on that excellent glory of the divine vivifier. May He enlighten our understandings.' This prayer is repeated twenty-eight or a hundred-eight times after wrapping the sacred cord three times round the four fingers and once round the thumb of the right hand.

Plate 13.—This design is also meant for *chowki* or seat for Thread Ceremonial Ceremony. This type of ceremonial design is also made with red colour on the back of the white coat which the boy puts on after the termination of the ceremony. The wide borders on the extreme ends are composed of motifs borrowed from the waves of the ocean, which have been drawn by wavy lines. On the four corners of the main central design are *turang*, a decorative form derived from the crown (*mukut*).

Plate 14.—This *aipana* is executed on the threshold of a door. It is composed of different borders. The first border consists of rose motifs with four curved lines in between them. The second and wider border is known as *gagari* (pitcher). The third border is called *kotha* (apartment). The fourth one is known as *tupuki* (dots) since it is composed of lines and dots. The last one bears the name of *ghiroli* or *motichur* and consists of curved lines with leaves.

Plate 15.—The *dhuliargha chowki* is an *aipana* for offering at cow-dust time. It is drawn on a larger scale

on the floor of the courtyard for welcoming the bridegroom. The *aipana* consists of four main parts. The middle part, within a circle, contains the main ceremonial design; four cross lines representing *arani* (fire-sticks) used in Vedic times for kindling fire by friction to light the sacrificial fire. Over this circular part of the design the articles of *pooja* and objects of gifts to the bridegroom and the priest are placed. The top part of the design is called *gagari* (pitcher), which signifies a pitcher full of water. On the two sides of the circle are two branches springing from its periphery which are called *phanga*. The bottom part of this *aipana* is called *asan*, the seat on which the bridegroom stands when he is first received by the father of the bride. On the right side of the bridegroom stands the priest.

Plate 16.—This *aipana* is also executed for the reception of the bridegroom and is known as *chowki of dhuliargha*. The central ceremonial part of the design is almost the same as the one depicted in plate No. 15. Round it fish has been drawn in stylised form. Instead of two branches *phanga* on each side it has only one. The top of the *aipana*, called *gagari*, has also been depicted differently.

Plate 17.—Another design of the *chowki of dhuliargha* in which the central, ceremonial part representing '*arani*' has been encircled by a number of stylised lotus petals. The other parts of the *aipana*—*gagari*, *phanga* and *asan* have here been depicted in a different way. On both sides of the *asan* are *swastikas*.

Plate 18.—This design is drawn on the wall of the kitchen (*rasoi*) on the occasion of *mesh sankranti*. The festival is known as *bikhoti* in Kumaon and takes place in the spring season sometimes in April. The design is called '*nata*', which literally means kinship or relationship. Its execution is expressed by the term *nata bandhana*, meaning to tie the knot of kinship or relationship. This *aipana* is executed with the object that the ties or bonds or kinship or relationship among the members of the family may remain firm and strong, and that they all may prosper in life. The main constituents of the design depict the ears of grain standing in rows side by side, symbolizing prosperity and plenty. The ears of grain are shown joined with each other, representing unity and concord.

Plate 19.—During Diwali this *aipana* is generally drawn on the walls of the kitchen. It consists of conventionalized human figures drawn with finger-tips, which produce an elegant effect. The human figures on the right side represent Lakshmi and Narayan; Lakshmi is the goddess of wealth and Narayana or Vishnu is her husband. On the left side the three figures depict the Hindu trinity. These figures have been depicted on a raised platform with a ladder leading to

¹The names of the seven sages are:—Kashyap, Atri, Bharatdwaj, Jamadagni, Gautam, Vishvamitra and Vashista.

²Twice-born (*dwija*) because they have had two births, one natural and the other spiritual.

it from each side. On the top on both sides of each design are shown the ears of grain.

Plate 20.—This *aipana* is also drawn on kitchen wall during Diwali. The figures on both the sides represent Lakshmi and Narayana.

Plate 21.—This *aipana* is executed on the floor or on a low seat on the occasion of the worship of the sun; it is called the *chowki* of the sun god. It is meant for worship at the end of the naming ceremony (*nam-karma*) of the child when it is taken out in the open for having the first view (*darshan*) of the sun. It is also used for 'surya pooja' (sun worship) on the occasion of 'surya vrata', i.e. when fast is observed on any Sunday, particularly in the month of *Paus* in winter, for obtaining the blessing of the sun god. At the top of the *aipana* on the right and the left are depicted the sun and the moon respectively. The figures in the middle are called 'suk sarang' and represent Vishnu and his consort Lakshmi reclining on the thousand-hooded serpent 'shesha naga'. In the middle is the lotus flower rising from the naval of Vishnu. The lower part of the *aipana* contains the implements used for *pooja*. From left to right at the top are *athajal* (seat for the deity), a conch shell, a bell and a *kundi* (copper vessel). At the bottom from left to right are an *asan* (seat), an incense pot, water jug (*jal patra*), a lamp (*arati*) and a second *asan*.

Plate 22.—On the occasion of the festival of lights, this '*aipana*' is drawn on the wall and meant for worship of Maha Lakshmi, the goddess of good fortune and wealth. She is also addressed as 'Shri'.

In the *Rigveda*, the word Lakshmi is used to denote as auspicious and beautiful object. In the *Taittiriya Upanishad*, Shri is mentioned as the goddess who gives clothes, cows, food and drink. In the *Grihya Sutra* she is described as the goddess of fertility and propagation of species. In the *Mahabharata* she appears as the goddess of wealth and prosperity and consort of Vishnu. In the *Puranas*, she is said to have been produced by the churning of ocean and thus she is conceived to have been born out of the ocean; she is supported by the lotus.

She is usually depicted seated or standing on a lotus flower with four arms and between two or four elephants pouring water over her. The elephants here symbolize the clouds (*megha*) since the prosperity of the earth depends on the rains from the clouds. The lotus on which Lakshmi is seated symbolizes fertility and growth, while she herself is the deity of prosperity and wealth.

In this *aipana*, Maha Lakshmi has been depicted with four arms holding the *chakra* (discus) and the *padma* (lotus) with two left hands and the *trishool* (trident) and the *shankha* (conch-shell) with two right hands. Beneath Lakshmi her *chowki* is shown,

consisting of a geometrical pattern called *khoria* or *bhadra*. On both sides of the *chowki* are pairs of the footmarks of Lakshmi. On the two extreme corners at the bottom are shown two water ponds (*jal-kund*) from where the elephants are supposed to take water for offering to the goddess. On each side of Lakshmi are two pairs of elephants offering her garlands of flowers. On the four sides of the border are the footmarks of Lakshmi with a lotus in the middle of each. On the occasion of her worship the footmarks of the goddess are also drawn from the threshold of the main door of the house to the family treasure chest or money box, as an indication of the incoming of the goddess of wealth and prosperity.

On the day of 'Mahalakshmi pooja', for worship in the night the image of Lakshmi showing her between two elephants is also drawn with sandalwood paste on a bronze dish which is then filled with rice or parched paddy *khil*. Over it is constructed an arch with two sugarcane sticks. On the rice is placed an idol of the goddess in front of which are put ornaments, coins and sweets. Around it are arranged lighted earthen lamps (*deepaks*). The *deepak* is supposed to be a symbol of purity, piety, sanctity, peace and inner illumination.

Plate 23.—This *aipana* depicts *Ghuiya* which represents *Alakshmi* the goddess of poverty and bad luck. This figure is drawn on the floor as well as on the back side of a winnowing scoop on 'Ekadashi', i.e. on the eleventh day after the *pooja* of Mahalakshmi in Diwali. On that day, early at day-break, after the *Ghuiya* is drawn with rice paste on the back side of the winnowing scoop, on the front side of it are placed two lighted earthen lamps, (one small and the other large) one pomegranate (*Darim*) and one walnut (*Akhrot*). The *Ghuiya* (goddess of poverty and bad luck) is then beaten by striking against the back of the winnowing scoop with a stalk of sugarcane by the mistress of the house who in this manner goes round every nook and corner of the house uttering these words: "Welcome Lakshmi, be seated O Narayana, and get out you "*Ghuiya*". This rite is performed with a view to turn out *Alakshmi* the goddess of ill-luck and poverty from each and every nook and corner of the house and to welcome Lakshmi, the goddess of wealth and good fortune, and her husband, Narayana or Vishnu, the god of preservation. After thus going round the whole house, the pomegranate and the walnut are put into the stone mortar (*ukhal*) in the courtyard and then threshed with the wrong end of a wooden pestle (*Moosal*) as an indication of smashing the ill luck of the whole family. The small earthen lamp which is meant for *Alakshmi* is left to extinguish by itself outside the courtyard by the side of the stone mortar. The big earthen lamp meant for Lakshmi and Narayana is kept inside the house where the daily *pooja* is done. On this occasion the stone mortar (*ukhal*), the grinding stones (*chakki*), the winnowing

scoop (*soop*) and even the broom (*koochi*) are decorated with *aipana* since these are important articles for every household peasant.

At the four corners of the design are here shown four pairs of footmarks of Lakshmi, who is thus supposed to be entering the house after the departure of

Alakshmi. The two extreme borders are composed of the motifs of the footmarks of Lakshmi and lotus leaves. On this occasion, two pairs of footmarks are made starting from the threshold of the main door upto the place where household gods are kept. The two pairs of foot-marks represent the incoming of Lakshmi and Narayana.

SECTION II

Bar-boond (Wall Patterns)

Bar-boond is a sort of all-over repeat design with which the whole wall is covered. The word *bar-boond* literally means dashes and dots : that is to say, the various patterns are made by putting down a certain number of dots and then joining them with dashes. The number of dots required for each pattern is fixed by tradition. The patterns thus formed are then filled in with different colours. The colouring is done with a sort of brush which the women prepare by wrapping a piece of cotton around one end of a small thin wooden stick no larger than a matchstick. For this purpose dry earth colours, artificial colour *bazar* dyes are used. The execution of *bar-boond* requires greatest patience and careful plotting on the picture-plane. A single wrong dot or dash might upset the whole pattern. The hues most favoured are bright red, vermillion, yellow, green and violet. These patterns are known by the number of dots used in completing a unit of a particular pattern, or *bhadra*, such as the *bhadra* of twenty-four dots, that of twenty-nine dots and so forth. These are given such names as *galichi-bar*, *gauritilak-bar*, *mosti-bar*, *katari-bar*, *surji-bar*, *swastik-bar*, and the like, according to the shape given to the unit of a particular pattern.*

PLATE NOTES

Plate 24—Mosti-Bar with border.—This pattern is a composition of ten dots. 'Mosti' means mat. The colours used are yellow and red.

Plate 25—Almoria-Khoras.—It is a composition of four dots, the name 'Almoria' is derived from Almora, a historic town of Kumaon; Colours used in this pattern are yellow, red and green.

Plate 26.—Galichi-Bar with border (a).—It is a composition of ten dots 'Galichi' means carpet. The colours used in this pattern are yellow, red, blue and green.

Plate 27.—Galichi-Bar with border (b).—This pattern is composed of 12 dots. The colours used are yellow, red, violet and green.

Plate 28.—Katari-Bar.—A composition of seven dots. The colours used are yellow, red, violet and green.

Plate 29—Sangalia-Bar.—This pattern is known as *Sangalia Bar*. *Sangalia* means a chain. It is composed of 22 dots and the colours used are yellow, red and green.

Plate 30—Bhadra of 24 dots—This pattern is a composition of 24 dots and the colours used are red, blue and green.

Plate 31—Swastika Phool (a).—It is a composition of 24 dots and the colours used are yellow, red, violet and green.

Plate 32—Swastika Phool (b).—This pattern is also composed of 24 dots and colours applied are yellow, red, blue and green.

Plate 33—Swastika Phool (c).—This pattern is also known as *Bhadra* of 19 dots because it is composed of 19 dots. The colours used are yellow, red, violet and green.

Plate 34—Gauritilak-Bar (a).—This design combines two different patterns : 'Mahadev' and 'Jhimora'. It is a composition of 35 dots and is rather complicated but most popular. The colours used are yellow, red, blue and green.

Plate 35—Gauritilak-Bar (b).—Showing process of execution on the margin.

Plate 36—Surji-Bar.—*Surji* is derived from the word *Surya* which means sun. The colours used in this pattern are yellow, red and violet.

Plate 37—Gulab-Chameli.—Composition of two flower designs : *Gulab* signifying a (rose) and *chameli* a (jasmine).

Plate 38—Niboo with Border.—This pattern is a composition of nine dots and the colours used are yellow, red and green.

**Galichi* means 'carpet'; *mosti* for 'mat'; *katari* for 'dagger' and *surji* for 'sun'.

SECTION III

Patta and Jyonti (Figure Drawings)

A *patta* is a two-dimensional image or picture of a particular deity depicting his or her various aspects and is meant for worship. It is drawn either on a wall or a sheet of paper on festival or ceremonial occasions such as *Janmashtami* (festival held around the 8th of August to celebrate the birth of Lord Krishna), *Dashera* (festival held in October to celebrate the worship of the goddess, Durga), *Diwali* (festival of lights held in October—November to celebrate the worship of goddess Lakshmi), and so forth. The *pattas* are prepared mainly for the *pooja* (worship) of Lord Krishna on *Janmashtami* Day and depict the main events of Krishna's life and his *leela* (sports); for the worship of Durga, (goddess of power and energy) during *Nav-Ratri* (the nine nights) sacred to the goddess; for the worship of Maha Lakshmi, the goddess of wealth and prosperity, on the occasion of *Diwali* and for the worship of *Gobardhan*, a sacred hill which Lord Krishna upheld on his little finger to humble the pride of Indra, the Lord of rain and thunderbolts, when the latter created havoc on the earth by pouring down heavy showers from the heaven. Besides these, there are *pattas* for worship on the occasion of *Harishayani*, *Haribodhani*, *Durbashtami*, and *Bat-Savitri*.

Jyonti is derived from the word *jiva-matrika*, which means 'mother of living beings'. The picture consists of three female divinities *jiva-matrikas* along with Ganesh, the elephant-headed god who is the remover of all obstacles. The *pooja* of *Jyonti* is performed as a sort of thanks-giving after the successful termination of a particular ceremony such as the child naming ceremony, the sacred thread ceremony or the marriage ceremony. The offerings presented to the female divinities *jiva-matrikas* are distributed among the daughters and sisters in the family after the *pooja*. The family priest is given only the *dakshina* (a gift of money). The *pooja* of *Jyonti* is always accompanied by ceremonial songs sung by the women of the household.

PLATE NOTES

Plate 39.—Jyonti for Chhati and Namkarma.—This picture with all its decoration is called *Jyonti* and is painted on the wall for worship on the occasion of *Chhati* for the ceremony held after the sixth day of a child's birth, also for the naming ceremony (*Namkarma*) on the eleventh day after child's birth.

¹ The seven *Jiva Matrikas* are: Kalyani, Mangala, Bhadra, Punya, Punyamukhi, Jaya and Vijaya.

² The sixteen *matras* or *Matrikas* (divine mothers) are:—Brahmani, Kamalendu, Saumyavadana, Maheshwari, Lilaya, Kaumari, Ripudarpanashkari, Chakrayudha, Vaishnavi, Varahi, Ghanaghor, Ghargharmukhi, Aindri, Bajrayudha, Chamunda and Rudra.

³ For details see explanation at plate No. 12.

In the centre are depicted three of the seven *Jiva-Matrikas*¹ (mothers of living beings). These three female figures are also believed to represent three *Maha Shaktis* (great powers), namely, *Maha-Kali*, *Maha-Lakshmi* and *Maha-Saraswati*. On the right is Ganesh, the elephant god; above him is the sun and below is a pattern called *Sodash-Matras* composed of sixteen conical shapes which correspond to sixteen vowels of the *Devnagri* script, and also symbolize sixteen *Matras* or *Matrikas*² (divine mothers).

The second border around the main picture is called *Chhaji-bel* because its motif has been borrowed from the *Chhaja* (roof of the house). The third border is composed of a flower pattern made by putting six dots horizontally and six vertically. The two panels on the two extreme sides are called *Sangalia-bar*. *Sangalia* is derived from *Sangal* which means chain. On the top of the main picture are two borders painted in a red colour. The uppermost one is called *Chhota-Himachal*, and the one below it, after the green border is called *Bara-Himachal*. *Himachal* means the Himalayas and as such the motifs of these borders represent the holy Himalayas. The *Jyonti pooja* is also performed on the occasion of the thread and marriage ceremonies.

Plate 40.—Jyonti for Thread Ceremony.—This *Jyonti* is prepared on the wall on the occasion of thread ceremony called *Upanayan* or *Vrat-bandh*. In the centre are three *Jiva Matrikas* (mothers of living beings), together with Ganesh with his vehicle *Vahana* the rat (*mooshak*), below which are sixteen *Matras* (divine mothers) having conical shapes. Above are the sun and the moon with stars. The pattern of the panels on the two extreme sides of the picture are known as *Sangalia-Bar*. The top-most border and the third one below it are called *Chhota-Himachal* and *Bara-Himachal* respectively.

Above the main picture in the horizontal panel on the left (the hexagonal design with seven stars having wings on both sides) is called *Janeu*.³ A similar design on the opposite is known as *Chhapari*. In between these two designs in the middle is depicted the ever-green tree called *Haryala-bot* representing the *Kalp-taru*—the life-giving tree and the desire gratifying celestial tree. On both sides above this tree are two parrots and below are two ever-burning lamps.

Plate 41—Jyonti for a Marriage ceremony.—This *Jyonti* is made on the occasion of the marriage ceremony (*vivaha*). In the centre are depicted three *Jiva-Matrikas* with Ganesh on the right, above whom is the sun and below are his vehicle, the black rat and the sixteen *Matras* shown with conical shapes. The pattern of the panels on two extreme sides are called *Swastika-phool*, a composition of 24 dots. On the top, as usual, are *Chhota-Himachal* and *Bara-Himachal*.

The horizontal panel in the middle consists of two lotus designs on two extreme sides, two ever-green trees with two parrots, and Radha and Krishna in the centre.

Plate 42—Patta for Krishna Janmashtami Pooja.—This *patta* is prepared on wall or on a paper for the worship of Lord Krishna on the occasion of *Janmashtami*, the sacred day of His birth which falls on the eighth day of the fortnight of *Bhadra*.¹ The illustrations on the *patta* are connected mainly with chief events of Lord Krishna's life and His 'leela' (playful acts), but in between are also depicted other important gods and goddesses and local deities.

For the convenience of description this *patta*² has been divided in three sections viz., extreme left, extreme right and the middle.

Extreme left—On the extreme left at the bottom, Krishna has been depicted as a cowherd *goala* tending the cows.

In the picture next to above, Krishna has been shown in a playful act with *gopis* (cowherdesses). This episode is known as *cheer-haran*. Krishna is sitting on a tree after stealing away the clothes of the *gopis* who were taking bath in a pond nearby. Below the tree the *gopis* are shown requesting Krishna to return their clothes.

On the top-most left corner, Shiva has been painted with four arms. Below him in the centre is his *chowki* (seat). On the right of the *chowki* is *Simgha*—the lion, vehicle (*vahana*) of Parvati. On its left is *Nandi*—the bull, vehicle of Shiva. On the right hand side of Shiva is his son Ganesh and on his left is his consort Parvati.

Extreme right—on the extreme right corner at the bottom are painted two trees with flowers called *kukuri* (on the left) and *Mukuri* (on the right). On the top of these trees four birds are sitting eating the fruits.

The next picture above it shows seven *Ranis* of a local *Raja* going to a water pond (*naula*) for washing *birura* (a mixture of seven kinds of grains and pulses)

on the occasion of *Durbashtami* which falls on the third day after *Birura Panchami*.

The third picture from the bottom depicts Mahalakshmi with four arms. On her both sides above, are two elephants with flower-garlands. Beneath her feet is a lotus flower with foot-marks on its both sides. On her right hand side is a water pond (*naula*), below which is the *Kalash* (water pitcher).

On the extreme right, the top-most picture represents —(from left to right)—Ganesh's consort Ridhi, Ganesh and 'Suk-sarang'. In the same order, above, are the sun, the moon, eight-pointed star called *Atha-jal* and five-pointed star known as 'Saraswati'.

Middle section—In the middle at the bottom row (from left to right) are (a) Devaki and Jasoda swinging baby Krishna in a cradle (*Palna*); (b) *Jyonti*—showing three *Jiva-Matrikas* together with Ganesh beneath the sun; (c) Birth of Krishna—on both sides of cradle are Nanda and Jasoda.

Second row from the bottom—(From left to right) are (a) Bhakta Prahlad, (b) the family priest performing *pooja*. Next to him is the *chowki* with father and mother of Krishna, (c) *Jyonti* for Krishna's *Chhati-Pooja*.

On the third row eight of the ten incarnations (*avatar*) of Vishnu³ have been depicted.

The fourth row from the bottom consists of 'Sapta-Rishis' (seven sages).

On the fifth row (from left to right) are (a) Naga-Kanya praying to Lord Krishna, (b) Krishna subduing the five-hooded poisonous serpent called 'Kaliya Naga' shown with a long curved tail, (c) Vasudeva carrying the new-born child Krishna in a basket across the Jamuna river to Nanda's house, (d) Krishna's mother Devaki, (e) *Simgha* (lion), (f) *Khoria-chowki* of nine dots, (g) *Kalpa Briksha*—the desire gratifying celestial trees, (h) sun, moon and a five-pointed star and (i) Naga-Kanya.

On the sixth row (from left to right) are Rukmani, Krishna, Radhika, Hanumana, Lakshmana, Rama and Sita.

On the top-most row are (a) Suk-sarang, (b) Vishnu reclining on Shesh Naga with Lakshmi sitting at His feet, (c) Brahma with his consort and (d) *Khoria—chowki* of nine dots. Below it, is shown 'Kubja' (hunch-backed lady, a great devotee of Krishna), applying sandal wood-paste *chandun* on Krishna's forehead.

¹ According to *Brahma Purana* it was the month of *Bhadra* (August-September) but according to *Vishnu Purana* it was the month of *Shravana* (July-August).

² This *patta* of *Janmashtami* is one of the oldest and a typical traditional one, which was procured from Naini Tal.

³ Ten popular incarnations of Vishnu are:—Matsya, Kurma, Varaha, Narasimha, Vamana, Parasurama, Rama, Krishna, Buddha and Kalki.

The Puranic story behind the advent of Lord Krishna is as follows :

Once the Mother Earth oppressed by the demons, approached the Gods on Sumeru mountain and prayed them to relieve her from the tyranny of the demons. The Gods were moved but not knowing what to do, along with Earth, went to Brahma, who took all of them to Vishnu. At that time Vishnu was taking rest reclining on Shesh Naga (thousand-hooded serpent). The Gods started to eulogise the merits of Vishnu who thus propitiated, agreed to deliver Earth from the oppression of the demons. He then tore away two hair, one black and another white, which, he told, would take birth on the earth and would relieve her from sorrow. Krishna and his brother Balarama are believed to be the two incarnations of these two black and white hair of Vishnu.¹

Another part of the story relates the birth of Lord Krishna on the earth thus :—

After marrying Devaki, the daughter of the king Devaka, when Vasudeva was returning home his bridal chariot was being driven by Kansa, the king of Mathura and a cousin of Devaki. They had not gone very far when a heavenly voice was heard proclaiming "Beware O'Kansa, the eighth issue of this newly married couple will be the cause of your death". Kansa got terrified and at once sprang up from his seat and raised his sword to kill Devaki. Vasudeva intervened and averted the murder by promising to hand over to Kansa all the issues upto the eighth as soon as they were born. But Kansa would not trust them. So he loaded them with chains and imprisoned them in Mathura, guarded by his own men. Six children were killed by Kansa one after another, the seventh child Balaram was transferred to the womb of Rohini (another wife of Vasudeva) and he was born a son of Vasudeva and Rohini in the home of Nanda. The parents and Kansa now awaited the birth of the eighth issue. At mid-night of the eighth day after the full moon in the month of *Bhadra* the world witnessed the birth of the divine child. Mother Devaki for fear of Kansa cried for help. Suddenly a heavenly voice was heard saying "Take this child forthwith to Nanda's place in the milkmen's colony at Vairata and there exchange it with Jasoda's new born daughter." To his great surprise Vasudeva found the shackles on his feet untied, the cell-doors flung open and the sentries fell to sleep. Without any trouble he

took the baby and passed through the cell-doors quietly and took his path to Vairata.

It was the dead of night, murky gloom prevailed all around intercepted by occasional streaks of lightning and heavy downpour was pattering the earth. The way lay across the river Jamuna which was in spate. Vasudeva had no time to lose, with the baby in his arms he stepped into the river. The water was more than waist deep, but as soon as the feet of the baby touched the water its level subsided. The great snake spread his hood over the baby to protect it from the heavy downpour. Without much difficulty Vasudeva crossed the Jamuna and across it he found a jackal showing him the path to Nanda's place by the light which the Heavens supplied. Reaching there he quickly exchanged the child with Jasoda's new born daughter and hastened back to the prison cell with her. The prison-doors closed automatically and he put on his shackles as before. The cries of the baby awakened the sentries who delivered the news to Kansa. Kansa rushed to the prison and forcibly snatched the baby from Devaki's bosom. The sight of the baby filled him with fear. He caught hold of it by the feet and as he was going to dash it against a stone it slipped away from his hand and with a flash of lightning vanished in the sky with the voice "O, Kansa, what would you gain by killing me. He who will kill you, is alive." Later on Lord Krishna killed Kansa and relieved the earth from his tyranny and oppression.

Plate 43.—Patta² for Durga-Pooja or Patta for Devi-Pooja.—This *patta*, commonly known as 'Devika-thapa'³ is painted by the household ladies on wall or paper for 'Devi-Pooja' during the *Naurtas* or *Navratri* (nine nights), a festival which is celebrated along with Dashera for ten days in the month of *Aswin* (September-October). The colours predominantly used in execution of this *patta* are yellow of turmeric, leaf-green and red.

This *patta* is meant, primarily, for the worship of Mother Goddess Durga, but along with her image, other deities, local and family gods and goddesses are also depicted. The main figure in the centre of the *patta* is called 'Chhatrawali Devi' (Goddess with a Canopy) which is no other than Mother Durga, the Goddess of power, force and energy, represented here with eight arms (*asta-bhuja*). The two lions below are her vehicles (*vahana*). On her right is the Kot-Kangra Devi, the family goddess (*kul-devi*)⁴ of the

¹ According to some Puranas, Krishna was the full incarnation of Vishnu and Balarama that of Shesh Naga.

² This *patta* was prepared by an old lady of Naini Tal, Smt. Radhika Devi popularly known as Radhi Didi.

³ The word *thapa* is derived from *Sthapana* which means installation. Colloquially *thapa* means to print or to paint.

⁴ The Chaudharies of Kumaon are considered among the martial races of Kumaon. They migrated from Nagarkot and Kangra in the Punjab during the time of the Katyuri Rajas who then ruled over Kumaon. In Dwarhat there is a famous temple dedicated to the Kotkangra Devi. It is said when the first batch of the Chaudharies was migrating to Kumaon from the Punjab, according to the custom prevalent at that time, they also carried with them the *dola* of their family goddess—Kotkangra Devi. When they reached a place which is now called, Dwarahat, the *dola* suddenly stopped and the bearers could not carry it further in spite of their best efforts. The priests interpreted this incident in the sense that the Devi did not want to move further and wished them to settle down there. It was done and a temple of the Kotkangra Devi was built at that spot.

Chaudharies of Kumaon. On her left is the 'Jwala Devi'¹ and below her is shown the Dwarapala (the gate-keeper) of Goddess Durga.

On the extreme left corner at the bottom of the *patta* is the image of Nava Durga (nine Durgas) depicted herewith nine heads², eighteen arms and two feet. On the right side of this figure is the Punyagiri Devi (goddess who dwells on the Punyagiri hill³ near Tanakpur) and on its left side is the Dunagiri Devi (goddess who resides on the Dunagiri⁴ hill near Dwarahat).

Above the image of Nava Durga is the 'Yantra' of the Devi, shown here with two interlaced triangles in the centre circumscribed by twelve lotus petals and eight 'swastikas' on four corners. The two figures on the right side of the 'Yantras' are 'Bhujabali'—the god having strong arms (above) and yantra Devi—goddess of the 'yantra' (below).

On the extreme right corner at the bottom of the *patta* is the image of 'Nau-Chandi' (nine Chandies) represented by nine separate heads.⁵ Above this is the 'yantra' of Bhagwati or Devi, shown with two interlaced triangles in the centre. The figure next above it is called 'Chamunda'⁶. The central part of this figure consists of the 'yantra' and at its four corners are depicted four heads.

On the middle second row from the top of the *patta* (from left to right) are (a) twin sisters joined with hands called 'Anyari' and 'Ujali' Devis i.e. goddesses of darkness and light who personify night and day (b) 'Khorla' a pattern composed of 'Swastikas' (c) Rama⁷ and Lakshman⁸ (d) 'Nava Durga' shown here differently with six heads out of nine. On the top-most row (from left to right) are the sun having a bell below it; Lakshmi and her husband Vishnu; Brahma and his consort Saraswati; Bholanath (a local god) holding his horse on his right; Golanath (another important local god) with his horse on his left; Bala (an associate of Golanath); Barmi (wife of Bholanath); Lanikura (a local godling and an associate of Golanath); Ridhi (consort of Ganesh); Ganesh and the rat, (above it) Suk-sarang⁹ and (at the top) the moon *Bholnath or Bholanath*¹⁰ (commonly known as Bhwal-

nath is considered by some the incarnation of Mahadeva or Shiva and his wife Barmi the part of Shiva's Shakti. According to the folk legend the origin of Bholnath is as following:—

One of the Chand Rajas of Kumaon Udaychand had two queens and each had a son born to them. When the two princes grew in age, the elder one fell in bad company and was consequently turned out from the kingdom. The younger prince ascended the throne as Gyanchand. After a few days the elder prince disguised as a Sadhu came to Almora where he stayed at Nail Pokhar, but he was detected. Raja Gyanchand for fear of his throne being usurped by his elder brother got him murdered by a *Mali* (gardener) of *Baria* caste along with his wife who was pregnant. After death, the elder prince turned a *Bhoot* (spirit) with the name Bholnath, his wife became a *Bhootni* and the baby in the womb also turned a *Bhoot*. All these three spirits thereupon began to harass the people of Almora, particularly those of the *Baria* caste. In order to pacify these spirits with worship, eight temples of Bhairava¹¹ were built in Almora viz., Kal Bhairava, Batuk Bhairava, Bal Bhairava, She Bhairava, Garhi Bhairava, Anand Bhairava, Gaura Bhairava and Khutkunja Bhairava.

Golnath is another important local god most widely worshipped in Kumaon, popularly known as Gwel Devata. In different parts he is known by different names such as Gōril, Gorla, Gwalla, Gol and has his temples all over Kumaon. There is interesting folk story connected with his birth which runs as following:—

Once upon a time an illustrious Katyuri Raja Jhal Rao by name ruled at Champawat, the ancient capital of Kumaon. He had seven *Ranis*, but had no children. One day he went for hunting in the forest by the side of the river Kali. After a long and fruitless chase he reached the village of Dubachaur where in a field he saw two buffaloes fighting. The *Raja* tried his best to separate them, but could not succeed. He got too tired and thirsty and sent his servants to fetch water. One of the servants hearing the noise of a water-fall proceeded in that direction and found himself in the premises of a hermitage where he saw a beautiful young

¹ Jwala Devi is the goddess of fire (*Jwala* means fire). According to 'Kumaon-Ka-Itihas' page 649, she is the family goddess of the Pandeyes of Deolia.

² The nine heads are meant to represent the nine different forms of the Mother Goddess Durga. Their names are: Shailputri, Brahmacharini, Chandraghanta, Kushmanda, Skandamata, Katyayani, Kalratri, Mahagauri and Siddhidatri.

³ & ⁴ On the top of Punyagiri and Dunagiri hills there are temples dedicated to the Devi which are important for pilgrimage and people in large number go there during Navaratri.

⁵ The names of these nine heads are same as those of Nava Durga.

⁶ Chamunda is another form of Shakti who killed the demon warriors Chand and Mund.

⁷ & ⁸ Rama is believed to be the incarnation of Vishnu who killed Ravana, the demon king of Lanka on 'Vijaya-Dashmi' day. Lakshmana is the incarnation of 'Shesh Naga' the great serpent on which Vishnu reclines.

⁹ Suk-sarang is the representation of Vishnu and his consort Lakshmi reclining on the great serpent Shesh-Naga with lotus rising from Vishnu's naval which symbolizes creation.

¹⁰ Bholanath is also the name of Shiva.

¹¹ There are eight Bhairavas who work as the gatekeepers of Shiva's dwelling place.

woman lost in contemplation. The servant awoke her from her *Samadhi* (trance) and asked her permission to take water from the fall. The woman opened her eyes slowly and asked the servant not to cast his shadow on her body lest her contemplation be wasted and permitted him to fill the pitcher. When the servant placed the pitcher under the water-fall, due to the force, the water began to spray all around and consequently the woman got drenched and remarked what could else be expected from the servant of a Raja who was unable even to separate two fighting buffaloes. Amazed at her omniscience, the servant requested her to accompany him and attempt the feat herself. She agreed and on reaching the spot, evoking the aid of her deity she caught the buffaloes by their horns and separated them. The Raja was astonished at her strength and prowess and asked who she was. She told him that her name was Kali¹ and she was the niece of a Raja who was maimed by leprosy and they both were busy in propitiating the deity while his servant disturbed her. The Raja was so much captivated by her beauty that he expressed his desire to make her his *Rani*. He then accompanied her back to the hermitage, where he stayed for a few days and by his services pleased her uncle so much that he agreed to give his niece to the Raja. After marriage Kali was brought to the palace in a golden palanquin.

On account of her physical and mental charm she became most favourite *Rani* of the Raja which roused the jealousy of other seven *Ranis*. In course of time Kali became pregnant. The Raja asked her to inform him immediately by ringing a bell if a male child was born to her. One of the seven *Ranis* maliciously rang the bell while there were still some days for the child to be born. The Raja immediately came and on finding that the child was not yet born felt very irritated. After a few days he had to go on tour to a distant part of his realm. When the time of delivery came near, the other *Ranis* bandaged Kali's eyes on the pretext that it would be unlucky for her to see her first child at the time of delivery. As soon as the baby was born, the jealous *Ranis* removed him and placed a pumpkin on her bed. The seven *Ranis* shut the baby inside an iron box lined with salt. Strange enough, the salt soon was converted into sugar and the child remained alive by eating it. The *Ranis* then in desperation threw the box in the river Gori. Floating down the current the box

got entangled into a fisherman's net. The fisherman was childless and thinking it a gift of God adopted the child and named him as Goril after the river Gori.

The child grew up. One day riding a wooden horse he went to the river-side where the seven *Ranis* used to come to fill their pitchers. He asked them to make way for his wooden horse which, he said, wanted to drink water. The *Ranis* laughed and asked him how it was possible for a wooden horse to drink water. He retorted if it was possible for a woman to give birth to a pumpkin it was also possible for a wooden horse to drink water.

The story reached the ears of the Raja who sent for the boy. Goril recounted the injustice, done to his mother by the seven *Ranis* and the deception practised on the Raja. He was at once recognised as the son of the Raja and the seven *Ranis* were ordered to be fried alive in a cauldron of boiling oil.

After the death of the Raja Jhal Rao, Goril ruled over Kumaon with great fairness and justice, and was universally loved during his life time. After his death he became popular god and there are a number of temples dedicated to him all over Kumaon. At Chitai near Almora there is a famous temple of Gwel Devata where people seek redress failing to get justice in the courts of law on account of lack of evidence or money. Applications are presented in this divine court by aggrieved persons and there may be seen a big pile of such applications with the priest of the temple which is daily growing.

Plate 44—*Patta* for Durga-Pooja—Another design. Explanation given above.

Plate 45—*Patta* for Durga-Pooja—Another design. Explanation given above.

Plate 46—*Patta* for Maha Lakshmi-Pooja : This *patta* is painted by the household woman or girls on the wall, or on a sheet of paper, for the worship of Maha-Lakshmi, the Goddess of wealth and prosperity, on the occasion of *Dewali* (the festival of lights).

In the centre of the *patta* has been portrayed the figure of Goddess Maha-Lakshmi having a bright white complexion and four arms and standing on a thousand-petalled lotus (*sahasra-dal-kamal*). On either side of

¹Kaliris also known as Kalindra.

NOTE:—The worship of Durga is primarily the worship of *Adi Shakti* (The Prime Force). According to the Indian view the Power or Force is conceived as feminine being. Whatever may be its form, it embraces within the range of its activities the three main divisions of existence namely the creation, the sustenance and the destruction. The same power in one form is conceived as being responsible for creation, in another form for maintaining the existence and in the third form destroying the created. In Bengal during Durga Pooja a clay image of the Mother Goddess is made for worship having ten arms. In her retinue are placed other gods and goddesses such as Kartikeya, Ganesh, Saraswati and Lakshmi together with Mahisasura—the demon born of the buffalo into whose body he entered for fear of being killed by the Goddess.

The exploits of Durga, particularly the killing of the demon Mahisasura (buffalo-faced) are described in the Markandeya Purana. The Purana relates the story of the buffalo-demon, his mysterious birth, his meteoric rise and finally his end in the course of his encounter with Goddess Durga. The whole legend is a dramatic representation of the battle between the divine energy represented by Goddess Durga (symbol of knowledge, truth and righteousness) and the temporal power of the Devil personified by Mahisasura. In other words, the Power of righteousness defeats the forces of wickedness. The worship of Goddess Durga is done for the purpose of giving protection, welfare and prosperity.

her are shown, her female attendants holding ears of corn. On each side are depicted two elephants¹ offering garlands of flowers to Goddess Lakshmi. On the head of each elephant there is a *trisula* (trident) to emphasize its divine aspect. On the two extreme corners at the bottom of the *patta* are water ponds (*naula*) from where the elephants are supposed to take water for offering to the Goddess.

The word '*Diwali*' is a diminutive form of *Deepa-wali* which literally means a row of lamps. It is the festival of lights. Amidst the pervading gloom of the night, illuminations are done and fireworks are blazed across the sky. The festival is held at the ushering in of the cold season which also marks the end of harvesting of the *kharif* crop. On this occasion the members of the business community worship their account-books, ink-pot, pen and other articles associated with their trade, along with *Maha-Lakshmi-Pooja*. On this day they also square up their whole year's accounts. The festival is observed for five days which commences with *Dhan-trayodashi* and ends with *Yama-dvitiya*. In between are *Narak-chaturdashi*, *Amavasya* and *Bali pratipada*.

On the day of *Dhan-trayodashi*, early in the morning after bath, the wealth (*dhan*) belonging to the family in the form of coins, ornaments and jewellery is worshipped and then it is exposed for *darshan* for all the family members. In ancient times on this day people also used to go to the king's palace for *Raj-darshan*. Following an age-old custom on the night before most of the people keep a gold or silver coin bearing the king's effigy under their pillow while going to sleep and after walking early in the morning they first have a full view or *darshan* of the coin. It has been a tradition to purchase at least one new utensil on this occasion. At night a *Yama-deep* (lamp for Yamaraj, the God of death) is lit. The *Yama-deep* consists of a large earthen oil lamp in which are lit as many cotton wicks as there are members of the family. This is done so that god Yama may bestow his favour on each and every member of the family. After the *Pooja* of *Yama deep*, the family priest is offered *dakshina* (a gift of money).

On the day of *Naraka-Chaturdashi*² people go to a river or a stream nearby to take bath quite early in the morning when it is still dark. Just before the bath the whole body is anointed with sesamum oil (*til* oil). While taking bath the people utter these words repeatedly "*Nar-har, Nar-har, Dharam Hamar Ghar*" which means 'let the evil be destroyed and let the righteousness prevail in our houses'. That day a new

set of clothes must be worn after this bath. Then the elderly members of the family pat at the back of their children and bless them with the following words :—

"*Barh barh, dharti jas chakal, akasjas lamb, tali dharti mali raja, syal jas budhi, syu jas taran, Markandey jas aayu, lakh dashain, lakh bagwal, lakh holi, lakh hariyala*", meaning thereby 'grow as wide as earth and as tall as sky, below is the earth and above is the king. May you have the intelligence of a fox, strength of a lion and age of Markandey:³ May you live to see one lac Dussehra, one lac Diwalis, one lac Holis, one lac Hariyals'. On a bronze disc are placed an earthen lighted lamp, a *lota* full of water, sesamum oil, turf (*doob*), a bitter gourd (*tit tumarh*) and a lump of earth dug with the ploughshare. The disc is then waved round the heads of children and other family members uttering *mantras* which mean "Oil is the abode of Lakshmi and water is the abode of Ganga, with these whoever takes bath on the *Chaturdashi-day* of *Deepawali*, will never see '*Yama-Lok*' (hell)".

This is done with a belief that all may prosper in life. The articles placed on the bronze disc are only symbolic. The lump of earth dug with the ploughshare indicates agricultural prosperity; sesamum oil signifies Lakshmi, the goddess of wealth; the *lota* full of water represents the holy river Ganga; the *doob* (turf) symbolizes growth and expansion; the burning lamp is the symbol of purity, sanctity and inner illumination; and the bitter gourd signifies a drug or medicine useful for life. In the night illuminations are done and this day is called *Chhoti Diwali* in popular language.

The third day of *Diwali* is the *Amavas*, commonly called *Bari Diwali* which is the main day of illumination and decorating the houses and in the night Lakshmi *Pooja* is performed. Along with *Maha Lakshmi Pooja* other gods such as Indra (the god of rains), Kubera (the custodian of heavenly wealth), Indrani (consort of Indra) and Jayant (son of Indra) are also worshipped. During the course of the *Pooja*, while making oblation to goddess Lakshmi, prayer is done in Sanskrit *mantras* which mean 'Neither I should suffer from ill-luck in any of my births, nor I should be born a pauper. Oh! Maha Lakshmi I bow to thee, and accept my oblation'. On this day people observe fast (*vrat*) and take their meal only once in the night after worshipping goddess Lakshmi. At the end of the *Pooja*, sweets and parched rice (*kheel*) are distributed to children, relatives, friends and neighbours. On this shipping goddess Lakshmi. At the end of the *Pooja*, *Diwali*.

¹ The elephants symbolize clouds and as such they are sometime represented holding water-pitchers with their trunks and offering water to Goddess Lakshmi.

² *Naraka Chaturdashi* is named after the demon king Narakasur who was killed by Vishnu in the last quarter of the preceding night. It is, therefore, believed that those who take a bath at this hour will escape hell (*narak*). According to the Mahabharata, Narakasur was killed by Lord Krishna. See story on page 17.

³ Markandeya *Rishi* is believed to be immortal.

The fourth day of *Diwali* is called *Bali Pratipada*.¹ On this day *Govardhan Pooja* is done. For this purpose a *patta* of *Govardhan* (Plate No. 47), is painted on a piece of paper or on the wall where *Pooja* is performed. In front of this *patta*, clay-images of Lord Krishna, a cow and a *Gujari* are put and a replica of the mount *Govardhan* is made with cowdung on which a creeper of *ghaneli* is placed. By the side of it, a churner and a big vessel full of curd are also placed, and an offering of *mishrit bhojan* (mixed food) consisting of cooked rice, pulses, vegetables, milk, *bara*, and other preparations is made to the gods. It is only on this occasion that *Kacha* food is offered to the gods and all kinds of pulses and vegetables available are mixed together for cooking. During the *Pooja mantras* are chanted in Sanskrit which mean "O, the Supporter of the mount *Govardhan* (i.e. Lord Krishna) and the Preserver of Gokul and Thou who giveth the shelter to the world under Thy arms, may thou be the Bestower of crores of cows to us".

After the completion of the *Pooja*, the food offered to the gods is distributed to the *Kanya-Kumar* (unmarried girls and boys who have had no thread ceremony). A part of this food is also given to the cow. On this day, cow² is also worshipped; she is garlanded with flowers and is served the best food. *Govardhan* literally means 'the growth of cows'. On the body of the cow marks of palm with five fingers *hathyli*³ and a circle *mana*⁴ are made with rice-paste. The same marks are also made on the back of the coat of the cowherds and children. This tradition seems to have originated with the idea of giving a mark of distinction to the cows belonging to a particular cowherd. *Hathyli* (palm-mark) is also the symbol of blessing (*ashir-bada*) and *mana* is the symbol of plenty-food (*anna-purna*).

The origin of *Govardhan Pooja* is as following :—

On the occasion of *Diwali* the inhabitants of Gokul used to worship Indra, the God of Rains and they used to place all kinds of delicious food on the mount *Govardhan* as an offering to Indra. This was not liked by Lord Krishna who, on one of such occasions, went to the mount *Govardhan* and ate all the food himself. Thereupon Indra got enraged and created deluge to wash away the whole of Gokul by pouring down heavy rain from the heaven continuously for seven days and nights. Lord Krishna, to save Gokul and its inhabitants from the wrath of Indra, lifted the mount *Govardhan* and held it on the tip of his little finger and the cowherds gave support with their sticks. The whole Gokul which was thus brought under the shelter of mount

Govardhan was saved and Indra had to yield to Lord Krishna and acknowledged his supremacy as an incarnation of Vishnu. Since that time on the next day of *Maha-Lakshmi Pooja* in *Diwali*, *Govardhan pooja* is done for the prosperity of cows, and Lord Krishna is worshipped in place of Indra.

The fifth and the last day of *Diwali* is called *Yama-Dvitiya* or *Bhatri-Tika* or *Bhaiya-Dooja* or *Bagwal*. On this day sisters and brothers meet and apply *tilak* on each other's forehead and exchange presents. In Kumaon sisters offer *choora* (a preparation of newly harvested rice), to their brothers at the time of *tilak* or *tika*. According to the legend when Yama came down to visit his sister Yamuna (Jamuna), for 'tika', she received the boon that all brothers who visited sisters on that day and interchanged presents, should escape hell. As such, after the name of Yama this day is called *Yama-Dvitiya*.

There are various legends relating to the origin of *Diwali* festival. Some of them are given below :

I

According to a story mentioned in Mahabharata, the world was once ruled by Narakasura, a demon emperor who by virtue of his prowess and boons secured from the God became all powerful and an intolerable menace to the Gods, sages and to all men of piety. He conquered and plundered not only the earth, but the heavens as well. He carried away the daughters of Twashta, the divine architect and also the fair daughters of the Gods, Gandharvas (heavenly musicians) and others, numbering about 16 thousand and imprisoned all of them. He robbed Aditi, the mother of the gods of her ear-rings. That was too much for the gods to bear and headed by Indra they supplicated Lord Krishna at Dwaraka to kill Narakasura, as none else was equal to the task. Lord Krishna with the help of his consort Satyabhama slew the Titan of the Hell and rescued the imprisoned damsels and returned the ear-rings to Aditi. To signalise this victory of Lord Krishna over the demon emperor Narakasura, the champion of darkness, myriad lights are put on and as this day happened to be the fourteenth day of the dark half of the month of *Kartik* it was named as *Narak-Chaturdashi* and is celebrated as *Chhoti Diwali*.

II

According to some traditional sources the festival commemorates the day on which Lord Krishna substituted the worship of *Giri Govardhan* in place of Indra.

¹ This day is called *Bali-paratipada* after the name 'Bali' a legendary king of the nether-world. For story see page No. 18.

² Just as cow is worshipped on this occasion, similarly horse is worshipped on *Vijaya Dashmi* or *Dussehra* and a black dog is worshipped on the occasion of *Bhairava Ashtami*. The cow is also worshipped on *Gopa-Ashtami* which falls on the eighth day after *Maha Lakshmi Pooja*.

³ The word *hathyli* comes from *hath* which means hand.

⁴ *Mana* is a kind of bushel for measuring corn. The circular mark is made with *mana* by dipping its rim into the rice-paste.

III

Some believe that the festival originates from the epic age and the occasion marks the triumphal return of Shri Rama to Ayodhya after killing Ravan, the demon-king of Lanka and the embodiment of evil forces. The people of Ayodhya illuminated and decorated their houses as expression of joy and relief on the august return of their beloved king to his capital after fourteen years of exile. This day was also the coronation day of Rama.

IV

Another legend relates to the cobra story as following :—

Once a king was foretold by an astrologer that his life would come to an end on a certain night and that the death would appear in the form of a cobra at midnight. On the fatal night, as advised by the astrologer, the king ordered every home in his kingdom to be kept neat and clean and to be illuminated and decorated. In his own palace, he placed lights at the door and at the four corners of his bed, and sprinkled rice and flowers everywhere to propitiate the cobra. His queen kept vigil all the night. At the appointed time a thousand hooded cobra approached near the bed of the king and told the queen that he was sent by Yama, the God of Death to take away the King's life to his master. But the cobra was so much pleased with his grand reception that he asked the queen to wish for a boon. Of course, the boon she chose was to extend the life of her husband. The cobra agreed to give another span of life to the king. On the scroll relating to the destiny of the king, a zero had been written to indicate the end of life. The cobra stealthily put a seven before the zero to change it to seventy and then handed the scroll back to Yama who was effectively deceived by the trick. The king got a new lease of life and instituted the feat of *Diwali* in gratitude, which he devoted to Yama. Hence the last day of the festival is known as *Yama Dvitiya*.

V.

There is another story relating to Bali, one of India's legendary kings of the remote past, noted for his unbounded charity. Raja Bali who is believed to be the king of three worlds—heaven, earth and netherland was unrivaled in generosity and piety, but was too ambitious. He wished to assert supremacy over Indra, the king of Heavens. The gods thereupon appealed to Lord Vishnu who appeared on the earth before Bali in the form of a dwarf which is regarded His 'Bamana Avatar' (dwarf incarnation). After praising Bali for his well-known generosity the dwarf begged from him as much land as he could step over in three spaces. As soon as the gift was granted by Bali, the dwarf swelled into a giant and in two mighty strides occupied the

whole of heaven and earth and asked Bali for space to place the third step. Finding himself quite vanquished, Bali asked the dwarf to place his third step on his head and Vishnu then put his foot on Bali's head and pinned him down into the netherland (*Patal Lok*)—a region of eternal night and confined him to that. Bali's last act of charity and nobility did not, however, go absolutely unrewarded. Vishnu acclaimed him the king of *Patala*, where he is believed to be ruling even to this day and granted him permission to come to the earth once every year. This day falls during *Diwali* when Raja Bali is supposed to rule over the earth and his votaries celebrate this occasion with illumination marked contrast with the dark abode of *Patala*. The fourth day of the festival is known as *Bali-pratipada* after his name.

VI

It is believed that on the main day of *Diwali*, Goddess Lakshmi tours the world and She might stay in any house of Her choice. Therefore, on this day everybody keeps his house tidy, bright and well decorated to receive the Divine Guest. There is a popular folk story how a poor brahmin was lucky enough to receive the Gracious Visitor and became wealthy and prosperous which is as following :

Once upon a time a *Raja* who had four daughters asked them as to whom they owed their life and their means of sustenance. The first three answered that they owed everything to the *Raja*. But the youngest and the most beautiful of them boldly replied that it was the all due to her own fate. Thereupon the king became very angry and got her married to a poor brahmin. The couple went to the forest near the king's palace and lived on the brink of starvation. Every morning the brahmin used to go out abegging and return in the night sometimes empty handed. One day the princess asked her husband not to come back empty-handed, but should come with whatever he could get. The brahmin could not get any alms that day, but while returning home he saw a dead snake on the roadside. He picked it up and brought home to give it to his wife. His wife at once threw the snake on the roof of the hut.

A few days after, the *Raja* went to the tank near his palace to take bath and left his clothes and his pearl necklace by its side. A kite that was passing by picked up the pearl necklace and flew away. As it came near the hut of the princess, on seeing the dead snake on its roof, the kite picked up the snake and dropped the pearl-necklace instead, at that spot. The princess, having noticed this, took the necklace and recognised as belonging to her father the *Raja*.

Next day it was proclaimed by the beat of drum that whoever would give a clue to the recovery of the *Raja's* necklace would be amply rewarded. On hearing this, the princess sent her husband to the *Raja's* palace with the necklace, but told him to return it only on

condition that the *Raja* would agree to keep his palace and all the houses in his kingdom in complete darkness on the following *Diwali* day. The *Raja* agreed to the condition and got back the necklace. On the following *Diwali*, there was a complete darkness all over the kingdom except in the little hut of the princess in the forest. On *Amavas*, during her nocturnal tour Goddess *Lakshmi* could not find her way due to complete darkness and eventually entered the hut of the princess which was the only spot of light in the vast sea of darkness. With the goddess came fortune. Gradually the brahmin, through the grace of Goddess *Lakshmi* grew in wealth and prosperity and the *Raja's* fortune began to decline.

Plate 47—*Patta* for *Govardhan-Pooja* : This *patta* is prepared on the occasion of *Diwali* for *Govardhan Pooja*, on the next day of *Maha-Lakshmi Pooja*. In the centre of this *patta* Lord *Krishna* has been depicted up-holding the mount *Govardhan* on the tip of the little

finger of his right hand. With his left hand he is holding the flute. On his right and left two cowherds (*gwala*) have been shown supporting the mount *Govardhan* with their sticks. On the extreme left in the middle, one cow-herdess (*gopi*) and one cowherd are churning curd for making butter. Above it, on the extreme left top corner, one cowherd and one cowherdess are shown offering flowers and on the corner above is the sun. On the extreme right in the middle, a cowherd has been shown carrying earthen pots full of curd (*dahi*). In front of him is a cowherdess (*gopi*). On the extreme right top corner are shown *Ganesh* and his consort. Behind *Ganesh* in the corner above is the moon. At the bottom row (from left to right) are : (a) two *gopis* carrying curd in earthen pots on their heads, (b) a cowherd offering food to the cow and the calf and (c) a cowherd and cowherdess churning curd.

Other details regarding *Pooja* and its origin have been given above in Plate No. 46.

SECTION IV

Dikara (Clay Images)

Dikaras are clay images of gods and goddesses made either in relief or in three dimensional forms, and it goes without saying that they are meant for worship. They are prepared out of fine clay mixed with cotton by the girls and women of the household. After the images have dried in the sun they are coated with a liquid white colour made of rice flour and then are painted either with earth colours mixed with gum or with ordinary dyes available in the market. Painting is done with a piece of cotton fixed to the end of a match-stick. When the images are finished one has only one word to describe them: they are beautiful for they have been produced *con amore*.

The aesthetic quality found in these terracottas lies in their simplicity of execution, their unsophisticated expression and bright colouring. Although these images do not bear testimony to anatomical perfection, they represent the deep religious sentiment, devotion and spontaneity of the artist who modelled them and painted them. They reflect the social and cultural environment of the locality in which they were produced through their variety of shapes and costumes—an aspect which unconsciously penetrates deeper into the unconscious collective mind of the people who behold the terracottas. Indeed, these *dikaras* are this mind.

The *dikaras* are made for worship on the occasion of one of the most important and popular festivals of Kumaon, which is called *Harayala* (greenery), or the festival of the rains. This is primarily a farmer's festival celebrated at the advent of the rainy season on the first solar day of the Hindu month of *Shravana* which falls around the middle of July. This is also known as *karka sankranti*¹ or the commencement of the sun's southern course in the heavens. On this day, the sun having reached the most northern point, the *karka rekha* (the Tropic of Cancer), it begins its southern course (*dakshinayana*), which it continues till *makar sankranti*² (*uttaraini*) that falls during the second week of January. The word 'Sankrant' means the passage of the sun from one constellation to another.

Ten days previous to the festival of *Harayala*, five or sometimes seven kinds of seeds—barley, wheat,

mustard, pulses (*gahat*, *bhatt* and *urad*) and maize—are mixed and sown with due ceremony in small baskets full of earth, which are then placed in a separate room or in a corner of the house where the household gods are kept. The baskets are kept covered so that the offshoots get no light and thus remain yellowish in colour. Water is sprinkled on them daily at both times of prayer, early morning and evening. The place is fenced off with cotton thread. One day before the actual celebration, a kind of mock weeding is performed with a wooden hoe following which many kinds of fruits are placed near the young yellow shoots and amongst them the *dikaras* (painted clay images) are set. The mistress of the household, dressed in her very best, performs *pooja*, assisted by the family priest. The priest chants a *mantra* in Sanskrit which says: "O *Harkali*, I bow unto thee: Thou remainest ever amidst the green paddy fields and takest away the sufferings of those who bow before Thee."

This festival is celebrated yearly to commemorate the marriage anniversary of Shiva and Parvati. The remaining part of the ceremony is observed the next day which is *Sankranti* Day. That day's *pooja* is performed by the master of the household, who thereafter cuts the yellow stems and offers them to the gods. The young shoots are then worn on the headdresses of young and old, the girls and women tie them in bunches at the end of their long braids of hair while some of the shoots are stuck with cowdung around the frame of the house door. At the end of the ceremony the clay images are immersed in a river, brook or pond or laid near a temple.

On this occasion, the *dikaras* consist mainly of images of Shiva, his consort Parvati and their sons, Ganesh and Kartikeya, with their spouses. Sometimes, along with these images a *Gojari* (milkmaid) and a female clove beggar are also made. These images are made either in a group—Shiva with His whole family or singly. This colourful group of Shiva and His family represents 'the collective organism of life.'

Shiva, the Blessed One, is the third member of the Hindu trinity³, and is also known as Mahadeva, the supreme god, in the pantheon of the Indo-Aryans. He

¹ *Karka Sankranti* falls on the day when the sun has moved 23½° North of the equator.

² *Makar Sankranti* falls on the day when the sun has moved 23½° south of the equator and is celebrated by the farmers going to rivers and ponds to bathe and give alms for the possible killing of worms and insects during their agricultural undertakings.

³ The manifestation of cosmic activity is represented in Hinduism by the trinity of Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva, who together symbolize the powers of creation, preservation and destruction. Brahma is depicted as having a red body and four mouths; Vishnu as being as dark as the petals of a blue lotus and having four arms, while Shiva is represented as white like the purest crystal. This trinity embodies the totality of energy.

is very stern god for he is the destroyer of all evil. According to the *Puranas*, his complexion is very fair "like the purest crystal". His whole body is duly smeared with the ashes of the pyre. He has a large knot of hair (*jata*) on his head, with the crescent moon as its adornment; a third eye on his forehead; a serpent on his shoulders and a garland of human skulls around his neck; a *damaru* (the drum) and the *trishool* (trident) in his hands; an elephant's hide and leopard skin for his loin-cloth and a bull as his vehicle, all these things symbolising the nature of the universe and its process. Shiva is also called Gangadhar, the container of the Ganges in his coiled and matted hair. According to the Puranic story, when the river Ganges descended from heaven, Shiva intercepted it with his head in order that the earth might not be crushed by the weight of its falling water. Thus, the Ganges, emerging from his head, represents the nectar of immortality. He has a blue mark on his throat (*nil kantha*) caused when in order to save the world, he drank the poison which issued from the churning of the ocean. The story further adds that in order to reduce the heat caused by the poison in his body he had to bear the crescent, which has a cooling effect. The crescent moon like a tiny sickle on his head, represents the complete control he has over his mind. It also symbolizes the first utterance of sound—the first manifestation of the element that is perceived through the quality of sound. The serpent stands for the diverse energies he has subdued and controlled, and also symbolizes *kala* (time of death), over which he also has full control. The third eye on his forehead symbolizes wisdom. According to tradition Shiva's third eye normally remains closed, but when some unpardonable wrong makes him wrath it opens and from it emerges the ray that scorches every thing in its path. When Kamdeva, the god of love, once tried to distract Shiva from his deep meditation, he was burnt to ashes with this ray. The Blessed One's three eyes are also believed to refer to time present, past and future. Sometimes Shiva is also depicted as having five faces (*panchanana*) to denote his five-fold character.

The *trishool* or trident is a symbolic weapon having three sharp ends for the destruction of the three bodies of man, material, mental and moral, thereby helping him to reach spiritual excellence by transcending all that is mundane. The *damaru* (drum) connotes sound, the vehicle of speech, the conveyer of divine truth, and thus symbolizes the creative energy of the absolute.

The bull, Shiva's vehicle, called *Nandi*, is also the emblem of reproductive energy. The basic and most common object of worship in Shiva shrines and Temples is the phallus or *lingam*, a carved vertical oval stone. This form of the god can be traced back to the primitive stone symbols as early as the neolithic period; and among the Bronze Age finds at Mohenjo-Daro the *lingam* occurs side by side with other important sym-

bols similar to those employed in later Hindu iconography. The *lingam* denotes the male creative energy of Shiva, which is frequently combined with the primary symbol of female creative energy, the *yoni*. The latter forms the base of the image with the former rising from its centre.

Shiva is also represented as the cosmic dancer in South Indian bronzes dating between the tenth and twelfth centuries. In his dancing manifestation he embodies in himself and manifests eternal energy in its five activities (*panch kriya*): (1) creation (*shristi*); (2) maintenance (*sthiti*); (3) destruction (*sanghar*); (4) concealment (*tirobhava*); i.e. the veiling of true behind the masks or garbs of apparition as a display of *maya* (greedy instinct); (5) favour (*anugrah*), i.e. acceptance of the devotee.

Parvati (literally mountaineer) is the daughter of Himachal Mountain (Himalaya) and the consort of Shiva. She is the mother of the universe (*Jagadamba*) and hence is symbolized by *yoni*. The combination of the *lingam* and the *yoni* in Shiva shrines represents the eternal creative essence of the supreme being. For her fair (*gaur*) complexion she is known as Gaura and as an ideal of feminine beauty she is called Uma. For giving protection against evil to devotees, Parvati is worshipped as Durga, which is derived from the word *durg*, meaning a fort. Her vehicle is a lion, which symbolizes power or force against evil. The principal Hindu deities are believed to possess a two-fold nature or character, one quiescent, the other active. The active character, called *Shakti*, is personified as Shiva's wife or as the female half of Shiva's divine essence, and is represented on his left side in the form of the female breast. As such, Parvati is the female manifestation or *shakti* or energy of god Shiva.

Ganesh, or Gana Pati, is represented as having an elephant head (*gajanan*), is pot-bellied (*lambodar*), has a complexion of vermilion colour (*sindoor barna*) and has only one tusk (*ek danta*); the other one having been broken during a fight with his brother Kartikeya. His ears are like winnowing scoops (*surp karn*). He has four arms, one holding a broken-edged axe (*khanda parasu*), the edge having been broken in war. In another hand he holds a *modak*, a ball of sweets, and he has a black rat as his vehicle. He is a wise and auspicious god and is the son of Shiva and Parvati. He is lord of the troops of mischievous and malignant imps who are supposed to cause obstacles and difficulties, and he is, therefore, invoked at the commencement of all undertakings. He is believed to be the remover of all obstacles and the bestower of success, hence no Hindu rite or ceremony starts without first worshipping Ganesh. His elephant head is supposed to typify a combination of wisdom and sagacity. His two wives are Riddhi and Siddhi, who personify objects of human attainment.

According to the Purana's story of Ganesh's birth, once Mother Parvati was relaxing inside the female apartment in Kailash, while Her female attendants were massaging her limbs with a thick paste (*ubtan*). As the pieces of the paste fell down from her body she collected and shaped them into the image of a male child. Since she is the mother of the universe and the personification of Shiva's energy, how could her creation be without life. The child at once rose and bowed before his mother, asking for orders. The mother commanded him to stand at the gate and not to allow anybody to enter till she had finished her bath. At that moment Shiva appeared, but was checked by this child from entering the female apartment. Shiva then ordered his attendants to remove him from the gate, but they were all defeated in their attempt. Then, Shiva, in a fit of rage, severed the head of the child from its body with one stroke of his trident. When Parvati saw this she became furious and cried out in anguish, 'My son'. When the gods of the lower region saw the mother of the universe in this state they were terrified lest some evil might befall the world. They all prayed to Shiva to restore the life of the child. Shiva, thereupon, ordered the head of the some newborn to be brought so that it might replace the severed one. At the time, however, only the head of a new born baby-elephant was available, so it was brought and grafted into the neck of the child, and that is how Lord Ganesh became *gajanan*, elephant-headed. The god bears the name Ganesh, which derives from *gana* and *ish*; that is to say, he is the *ish* (lord) of Shiva's *ganas* (attendants).

Kartikeya or Skanda, is the elder brother of Ganesh the son of Shiva and Parvati. He is the god of war and is the commander of the gods' army (*deva senapati*). His wife is Shasti Devi, a daughter of Brahma, the creator. Kartikeya is believed to be the destroyer of evil for he was given birth in order that he would kill the demon *Tarkasur* who was causing enormous destruction on the earth and, according to the boon he had received from Brahma, could be killed by none except an offspring of Shiva. Kartikeya is also called Shadanan (six-headed) because he sucked the milk of six women, called *kritikas*, at one time, for which he had to bear six mouths. The name Kartikeya is also derived from *kritika*. Kartikeya's vehicle is a peacock.

The Clay images of Ardha-Nareshwar : The Indian ideal of the relationship between man and woman has always been governed by the symbolism of the relation between the *purusha* and *prakriti*; the male and female divine principles in the universe. According to the *Sankhya* theory, *purusha* (the masculine principle) is the inactive and indifferent soul and *prakriti* (feminine principle) is the active, producing one, each distinct from the other yet uniting in the act of creation. Duality in unity is also the root principle of the *Jantra*. In keeping with this idea, the clay images of Shiva produced in Kumaon sometimes represent him as

Ardhanari, i.e., a being consisting of two halves, the male half on his right side and the female half on his left. Thus, Shiva as Ardha-Nareshwar is shown in his twin aspects of Shakti and Shakta to signify that man and wife form one body. On the occasion of *Hartali*, during the rainy season, the women make clay images of Ardha-Nareshwar, i.e., Shiva and Parvati as one body, and worship it in hopes that they and their husbands will remain *sohagini*; husband and wife as one throughout their lives. On this day they observe complete fast (*vrata*) and spend the whole night in singing devotional songs. The family priest who assists in this worship is presented with a *suhag pitari*, a box containing objects of adornment used by married women, such as a necklace of small thin black beads (*chareo*), black glass bangles, vermilion pots, oil, combs, ornaments, dyed red and yellow pieces of cloth and so-forth. The women of the household also prepare different models of ornaments with wheat flour which are fried in oil or ghee and are eaten by the members of the family on this occasion. Two other clay figures, *Gujari*, the milkwoman and the female clove beggar who are sometimes produced as attendants of gods and goddesses and are not meant to be worshipped and hence are not relevant in this context.

Nanda Devi : The image of Nanda Devi is not made of clay like the *dikaras* mentioned above. It is an anthropomorphic image of the goddess Nanda which is a ceremonial figure (*utsavamurti*) produced on the occasion of Nanda-Ashtami. This is a historic fair of Kumaon that takes place during the second week of September of each year. The fair is held with great enthusiasm in Almora, Naini Tal, Ranikhet, Bhowali and Kot-ki-Mai. The image of the goddess is made in a fairly large size about five feet in height with a large painted yellow face over which are prominently fixed wide and elongated white sparkling eyes. The materials used for making the image are the trunk of a banana tree, bamboo sticks, pieces of yellow, red and green cloth, golden ornaments and water colours and dyes. Nanda is one of the several names of the goddess Parvati or Durga, the daughter of the Himalaya and the consort of Shiva, who is supposed to reside on the peaks of the Himalaya. The word Nanda literally means 'giver of joy' and Devi means 'merciful or gracious one'. Three of the main Himalaya peaks have been named after the goddess Nanda : Nanda Devi, Nanda Kot and Nanda Ghunti. Nanda is also considered the war goddess (*ran-chandi*) of Kumaon where the main slogan is : 'Victory to Goddess Nanda' (*Nanda Devi Ki Jai*). She is the family goddess (*kul devi*) of the *rajas* of the Chand dynasty, who once ruled over Kumaon. The festival is said to have originated from the time of one of the famous Chand *rajas*, Baibahadar Chand, who was a contemporary of the Moghul emperor Jahangir. In Almora and Naini Tal there are temples dedicated to the goddess Nanda.

The worship of Nanda Devi is mainly the worship of *Shakti* (cosmic energy). The root *shak* signifies 'to be able' or 'to be possible'. Hence *Shakti* is power, ability, capacity, strength, energy and force. It is the active power of the deity personified as 'the world protecting one'. The worship of the image is accompanied by the performance of *havan* (sacrifice by fire) and the sacrifice of buffaloes and goats over a period of two days. At the time of the sacrifice, the varmillion *pithya* is applied to the forehead of the goat, a garland of flowers is put around its neck, then flowers are offered and water is sprinkled over its body. Afterwards the *mantras* are uttered into its ears, saying 'It is for the *yajna* that animals have been created and hence thou art being sacrificed for *yajna*. After this sacrifice thou wilt go to heaven and wilt become one with the supreme divine.'

The *khadga*, the weapon with which the animal is killed, is also worshipped. When the goat shakes its body on account of the water sprinkled over it, it is believed that the goddess has accepted the sacrifice, after which the animal is killed at one stroke of the *khadga* or *Khukari*, with the words: 'O animal, go thou to heaven,' and the rest of the slogan: '*Shri Nanda Devi Ki Jai*'. When the head is thus severed from the body the tail is thrust into the mouth so that the goat thus may not be able to appeal to god although this act signifies the offering of the whole body of the animal from head to tail to the goddess. Now-a-days, however, only the head is left at the sacrificial place as an offering since the body is taken away by the worshippers for eating. The head of the goat is placed on the left side of the goddess over a triangle drawn on the floor, and one lighted earthen lamp is put on the head. On the third or fourth day of the ceremony the image is taken in a procession through the main streets of the locality for its final departure (*visarjan*)¹ to the resting ground.

There is a folk legend attached to the origin of the Nanda Devi festival. It is said that once the two sisters of one of the Chand *rajas* of Kumaon, Nanda and Sunanda by name, were going to the temple to worship the mother goddess. On the way a demon (*raksha*) appeared in the shape of a buffalo and a goat and began to tease them. In order to save their lives, the two sisters hid themselves in the banana foliage nearby. Just as the demon was going to charge the two the mother goddess appeared on the scene and killed him, thereby saving their lives. As time went on, the two devotee sisters of the Chand *raja* were deified and worshipped as divine beings, in whose memory the annual festival is held. For their worship, two similar

image are made which are supposed to represent the two sisters, Nanda and Sunanda. On both sides of the images banana trees are placed. In accordance with common belief, goats and buffaloes are killed to signify the destruction of evil spirits. In some respects this story seems to be a local adaptation of the legend of the goddess Durga, who in a battle killed the buffalo-faced demon Mahisasur, the lord of the evil spirits.

Symbols

The symbols used in Indian art have a mystical appeal which can only be understood by a proper study of Indian philosophy, myths and religion. The symbols were invented by the Indian sages not for mystical rites, but as aids to devotion and by this token a means of realizing ultimate truth. The main symbols used in the Kumaoni *aipana* or *alpāna*, are the triangle, square, dot, circle, *swastika* and lotus and their various combinations. As regards interpretations of these symbols there is of course no unanimous view and one cannot always be definite in regard to their meaning. The same symbol may convey different meanings in different design configuration. However, the following explanations are generally accepted.

The *chatuskona* or square signifies totality. Any thing complete and self-contained is conceived as possessing all of its four quarters (*pada*), established firmly on its four legs like the sacred cow. As such, the idea of totality is associated with the number four. The square and the polygon are also conceived of as the symbols of space and of the earth.

The *swastika* is the Hindu cross, a symbol of blessedness and benediction. This symbol can be traced from Pre-Vedic times, not only in India, but all over the world. In India it is supposed to have originated from the *chakra* (discus) of the god Vishnu, the Preserver, symbolizing the 'eternal energy' that maintains the universe. According to another view it is believed to have come from the wheel pattern. In it, the infusion of *purusha* (energy) and *prakriti* (matter) is expressed in two opposite curvatures out of which all creation was possible. There is yet another view which considers its origin from the figure of the dancing Ganesh. As such it is a good omen, a sign of joy and happiness.

The *bindu* or point, dot or drop, is always placed in the centre of a diagram which represents the power point, the invisible elusive centre where no master can err and from which the entire diagram expands. It symbolizes the absolute, the infinite, the perfect potential universe or the *akash* (ether).

¹ For the worship of such an image the ceremonies of life giving (*prana pratishtha*), invocation (*avahan*) by which the deity is invoked to be present, and departure (*visarjan*), a bid to depart, are necessary. This means that the immanence of the deity in the object of worship is recognised, kept present and ultimately released from the mind of the worshipper. According to Kumaoni custom, the *visarjan* of the image should take place only on one of the three following days: Sunday, Wednesday or Friday, as these days are considered auspicious for sending the daughter from her father's house to that of her father-in-law.

A *brita* or circle is formed by the revolution of one point around another, indicating a whirling movement such as is found in the wind, and hence a circle is considered the symbol of *vayu* (wind). It is also taken as a sign of *byoma* (sky) and *nad* (sound).

The *trikona* or triangle is interpreted as a symbol of divine energy. It is sometimes used to symbolize the triune co-equality of the Hindu *trimurti*: Brahma, the Creator, Vishnu, the Preserver and Mahesh (Shiva), the Destroyer. The three points of the triangle are also supposed to represent the three great powers or energies (*mahashakti*) of these gods, known respectively as Mahasarasvati, Mahalakshmi and Mahakali, who are also their female counterparts. A downward pointing triangle is a female symbol corresponding to the *yonī* and is called *shakti*. The upward-pointing triangle is the male one representing the *lingam* and is called *vahni* (fire). Thus the *vahni* triangle denotes the male essence of the god and the *shakti* triangle the female essence of his consort. The two triangles interlaced signify the creative activity of the cosmic male and female energies. The triangle having its vertex downward is also taken as a symbol of water (*jal*) because water has a downward movement. The triangle with an upward vertex is taken to represent fire (*agni*) since the flames of the fire rise upward.

The *padma* or *kamala* (the lotus flower) represents the universe. Gods are often shown seated upon a lotus flower. A lotus is depicted having different numbers of stylized petals ranging from two, four, eight, sixteen or twenty-four and even up to as high as a thousand. The *meena* or fish is the symbol of prosperity and good fortune. It also symbolizes love; the flag of Kamdeva, the god of love, contains two fish. The *naga* or serpent is understood to stand for space, eternity, water energy, time and death. The *gaja* or elephant symbolizes wisdom and firmness of purpose. The *sagar* or ocean in the mythological sense means state of consciousness. The *kalasha* or pitcher filled with water in worship represents the presence of the divinity, serving in the place of a sacred image. For the period of worship the water is regarded as a seat (*pitha*) of the god.

PLATE NOTES

Plate 48.—This picture consists of two relief clay images called *dikaras*. On the left are Shiva and Parvati and on the right is Ganesh. Shiva is shown in a dancing pose with a serpent coiled around his neck and the river Ganga flowing down from his *jata* (matted hair). On his head is a Tibetan cap. On the right of Shiva is his *trishool* (trident), and his *damaru* (drum) is placed on the left side of Parvati, who is dressed in Kumaoni costume with a crown on her head. Ganesh with four arms, has a dish full of sweets on his right and his vehicle *vahan* (the black rat) on his left.

Plate 49.—These *dikaras* portray Shiva and Parvati with their arms entwined. Shiva has for his crown a

hooded cobra and a crescent moon. On his right is his *trishool* with the *damaru*. The figures have been made with coils of clay which are artistically twisted to give the desired shape. The costumes of Parvati are of actual cloth wrapped around the clay figure.

On the right are Ganesh and his consort Ridhi with their arms around each others' waist. Between the two is a dish full of *modakas* (sweet balls). Ganesh is supposed to be fond of these *modakas*.

Plate 50.—On the left, seated, is the figure of Parvati; in the middle are Shiva, his consort Parvati and their son Ganesh in group. On the right is the figure of Shiva alone, shown with folded hands around which a cobra is coiled. This figure of Shiva with his costume is after a Nepali model.

Plate 51.—The seated image of Shiva is seen with a cobra round his 'jata'. This is the simplest model of clay. In the middle Shiva has been shown seated on the skin of a leopard with his legs twisted in a posture called *Padmasan*. He has been shown in the form of a *Yogi* in meditation. A big cobra is coiled round his neck and body. On the extreme right is the figure of Parvati with cross arms and having a crown on her head. Her costumes are Kumaoni.

Plate 52.—In this plate the figure on the left is that of a *gujari* (milkwoman) carrying four pitchers full of milk on her head. In the centre are the images of Shiva with Parvati, with crowns of Tibetan design on their heads. Parvati is shown wearing a typical ceremonial Kumaoni *sari* called *rangwali pichhaura* and a golden nose-ring. The figure on the right is again that of Ganesh, here seated on a *morha*, a drum-shaped seat.

Plate 53.—The figure on the left is that of a 'female clove beggar' (*Long magne wali*). She is comical figure who is supposed to be visiting each house begging for cloves—a favourite spice used for the worship of the gods. In the centre are Shiva and Parvati with their hands thrown round the waist of each other. A big snake is shown coiling round their necks. On the head of Shiva is the figure of the holy Ganga. The figure on the left is that of Kartikeya, son of Shiva and Parvati riding on a peacock, which is his vehicle.

Plate 54.—The figure on the left here is that of Ganesh with the pot belly, with four arms, one tusk and ears resembling a winnowing scoop. On his right is the broken-edged axe and on his left his *trishool*. The figure in the centre is that of Ardha Nareshwar, that is to say Shiva and Parvati as one body. The right half of the figure represents Shiva holding a trident with his right hand and wearing a necklace of human skulls round his neck and a coil of matted hair on his head. On his forehead is shown his third eye. His vehicle, *Nandi*, the bull is shown seated on his right side. The left half of the figure represents a Parvati with a nose-ring and a necklace of gold. She is holding a lotus flower

with her left hand and her vehicle, the tiger, is shown seated by her side. The clay figure on the right is that of Shiva, who is here depicted wearing a beard, holding his *damaru* with his right hand and his trident with his left one. Emerging from his *jata* is the face of the Ganga. Shiva's body is here shown covered with a leopard skin.

Plate 55.—These are images of Nanda Devi. They are not made of clay, but are large images made of

cloth, cotton, bamboo sticks and banana trees. The goddesses Nanda and Sunanda are made having big eyes and a broad face decorated with designs round their faces in vermillion and rice paste. They are wearing gold nose-rings. Immediately below their lips are their busts, perfect round shapes. The body of the image is made of banana tree trunks. Round their waists they are wearing green skirts. On both sides of the image are banana trees.

SECTION V

Miscellaneous

The paintings of this category are very much similar to the *aipana* paintings, in respect of designs and techniques. But whereas the *aipana* paintings are generally drawn on the yards and floors of houses, the miscellaneous paintings are drawn on objects like door papers, ceremonial gates etc. Sometimes they are also drawn on stepped altars, crossings of four pathways etc. Besides the technique of production is also different. In *aipana* painting the figures are drawn with finger tips, but in the paintings belonging to the miscellaneous category the figures are drawn with brush.

PLATE NOTES

Plate 56.—Shri-Yantra.—This design is called 'Shri-Yantra' and is used for the worship of Devi (Mother goddess).

Plate 57.—Vedi Nava-Graha.—This design is made on the altar called *vedi*, a square-shaped raised platform, on the occasion of the *yajnopavita* or thread ceremony or the performance of any other *yajna*. A day before the investiture ceremony of the sacred cord the worship of the *nava graha* (nine planets) is performed. The ceremony is called *graha yajna*.

On the floor where the ceremony takes place, an altar of clay having three steps is made. On the top of this square-shaped altar the pattern of an eight-petalled lotus is made with dry-powdered earth colours. The red-coloured circle in the centre represents the sun (*graha ravi*). The yellow petal in the north stands for *Vrihaspati* (Jupiter); on the north-east is the deep yellow petal for *Budha* (Mercury) and on the east in white is *Shukra* (Venus). In the south-east is *Soma* (the moon), also represented in white. The petal in the south is the seat of *Bhauma* (Mars), indicated in red. In the south-west is *Rahu*, shown in black. In the west stands *Shani* (Saturn), also in black. In the north-west, finally, is the seat of *Ketu*, depicted in brown. The *grahas* which are indicated by black and brown colours are believed to cast bad effects on human destiny; those which are shown in red are supposed to be strong in their action. The yellow and white ones are considered to produce good effects. The worship of the nine *grahas* is done with a view to please them so that they may act favourably on the worshipper. There are twelve *rashis* or constellations in which the entire sky is divided and within which all these *grahas* move with mathematical precision. The Destiny of mankind is determined according to the position of a particular *graha* in relation to a particular *rashi* in which it stands or which it influences. The symbol used to represent these *grahas* are as follows: a circle for the sun, a

square for the moon, a triangle for Mars, an arrow for Mercury, a rectangle for Jupiter, a hexagonal star for Venus, a bow for Saturn, I for Rahu and a flag for Ketu.

Plate 58.—Dwar-Patra (a).—This design is meant for *Dwar-Patra* which literally means 'door paper', since it is drawn on a paper which is pasted above the door (*dwar*) of the house. The design consists of a lotus with many petals round a number of concentric circles signifying expansion and growth. Sometimes a picture of Ganesh or Shiva is also made in the centre. Round this circular pattern a Sanskrit *Mantra* is written which means *Agastya*, *Pulastya*, *Vaishampayana*, *Jaimini* and *Sumanta*, these five sages are the preventer of thunderbolt. By the grace of Jaimini and the other, there is no fear of the fall of lightning over the house where it (this *mantra*) is written at the door. The *Dwar-Patra* is prepared by the family priest who presents it to his *Yajmans* (devotees). It is pasted at the top of the door of the house on the occasion of *Ganga Dussehra*, which falls just before the rainy season, with the belief that it will protect the house from lightning or thunder-bolt.

Plate 59.—Dwar-Patra (b).—This is another design of *Dwar-Patra*. The explanation is given in Plate No. 58.

Plate 60.—Muwali.—This design is made for the decoration of the gate during any ceremonial occasion. The motif used in this design is called *Himachal*. The term *muwali* is derived from *muwal* meaning thereby gate or door.

Plate 61.—Syo.—This design is called *syo* and is executed on the ground at the crossing of four pathways. After the completion of an important ceremony such as *chhati* (sixth-day ceremony of child-birth), the naming ceremony, thread ceremony, marriage and so forth, the ladies go to a waterpool or spring for the immersion of the *pooja* remains and other articles. On their way back home, at the crossing of four pathways the *syo* is made on the ground and is worshipped. After its *pooja* a pice, a small coin, is put in the middle of the *syo* and the worshipper and other accompanying ladies pass one by one by crossing over it. The purpose of this ceremony is to ward off the evil spirit, which is believed to be thus left at the crossing to choose its own path.

Plate 62.—This coloured design known as the *chowki* of *dhuliargha* is drawn on a low wooden seat which is first painted yellow. On this the bridegroom stands at cow-dust time, when he is first received by

the father of the bride. This design is almost identical with the larger one executed on the ground with rice paste of which a detailed description has already been given. The wooden *chowki* is given as a present to the bridegroom after the ceremony is over.

Plate 63 to 73.—Author's Horoscope.—These are different parts of the author's horoscope, prepared by a well-known Kumaoni astrologer. The size of the horoscope is 13 feet and 10½ inches in length and 8½ inches in breadth. It is well illustrated in a traditional style.

APPENDIX I

PORTRAIT OF THE AUTHOR

Life Sketch—NATHU RAM UPRETI

Born in 1914 in a Brahmin family of Kumaon; son of Pt. Moti Ram, a resident of Ranikhet (Kumaon Hills) U.P., India. Received his early education in A. V. Mission School (now Ranikhet Intermediate College) Ranikhet. Passed his High School and Intermediate from Government Intermediate College, Almora; B.Ed. from Lucknow University and M.A. in History from Agra University. Served as Lecturer in History and as Vice-Principal in the Ranikhet Intermediate College, Ranikhet.

Painting has been his hobby since childhood and got no regular academic training in painting, but learnt it mostly by coming in contact with various artists, Indian as well as foreign, particularly Mr. E. H. Brewster, an American painter who settled in Almora. Joined the Allahabad School of Arts at Allahabad for sometime in 1944. First one-man-show of his paintings was organised by Shri B. D. Sanwal, I.C.S. at Lucknow under the auspices of the East and West Fraternity Association. His further one-man-shows were held under the auspices of Lucknow and Allahabad Univer-

sities. A good number of his paintings were purchased for Allahabad University and Lucknow Municipal Board Art galleries. For about last 10 years he has been working on the Folk Art of Kumaon and has made an exhaustive collection of the Kumaon Folk paintings, particularly the ritual decorations, alpanas etc. He has made numerous designs of the figures and patterns applied in the ceremonies which he describes. The first part of his work on the Kumaon Folk Art was published by the Département of Anthropology, Royal Tropical Institute, Amsterdam in 1957.

He is the founder member of the U.P. Artists' Association and was elected its Vice-President for the year 1960-61. He is the founder member of the Kumaon Cultural Association of which he is the General Secretary. He has also been the founder member of Ranikhet Rotary Club.

Besides painting he has been keenly interested in music, dance and drama.

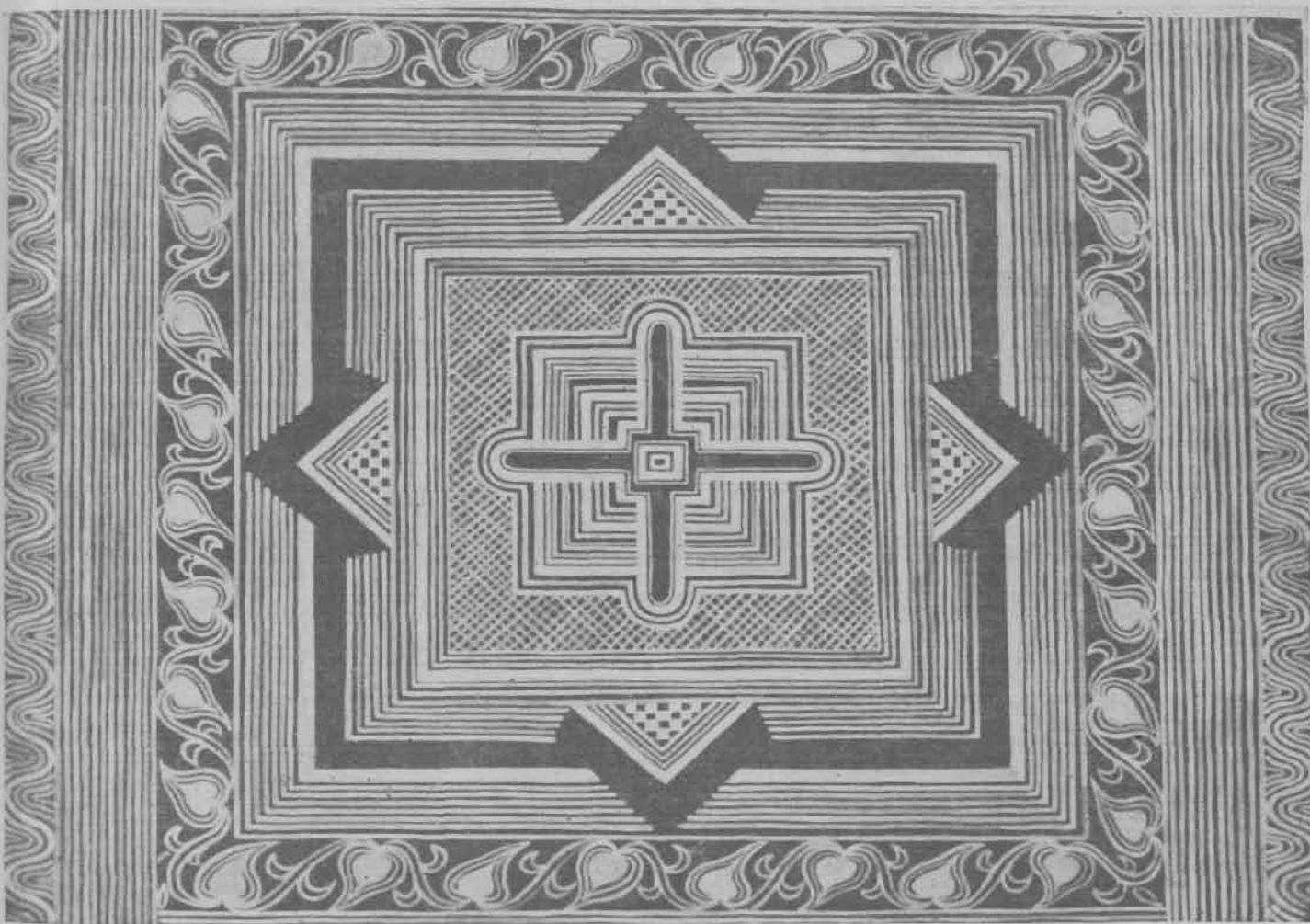
APPENDIX II

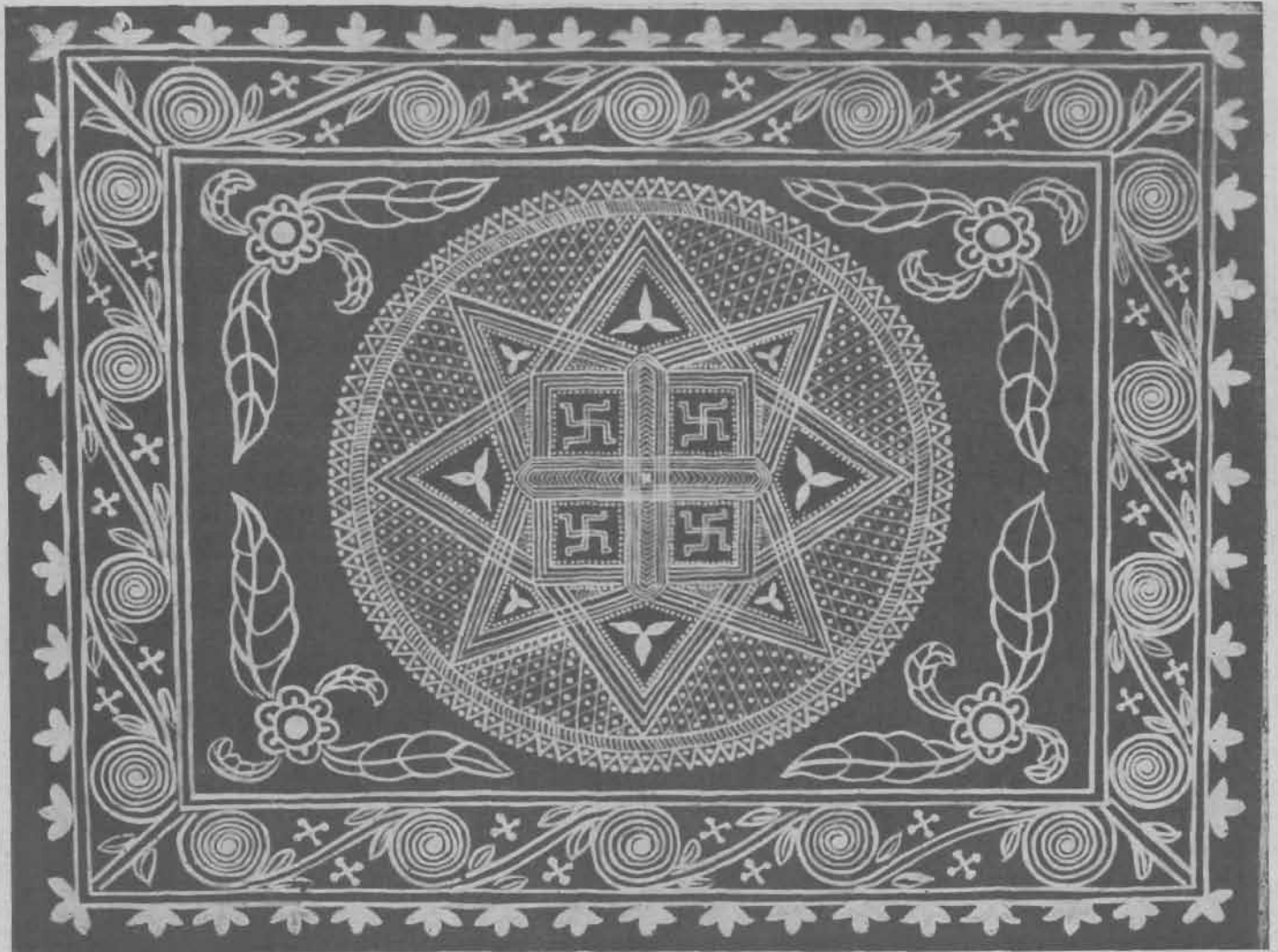
A statement indicating the basic similarities and differences among the five categories of the folk art of Kumaon

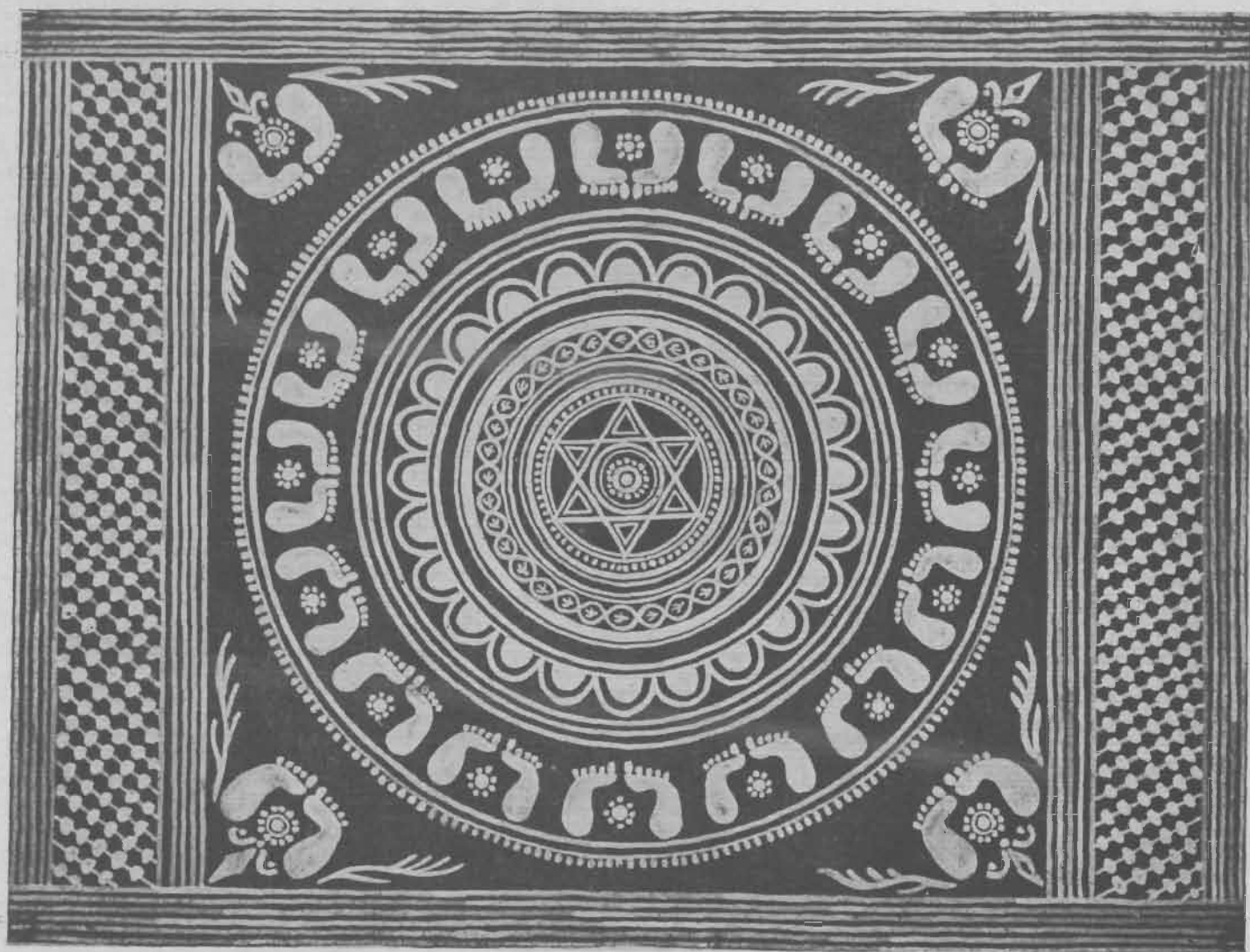
Classification 1	Where drawn 2	Raw materials 3	Tools 4	Technique 5	Designs 6
1. <i>Alpana</i> (floor decorations)	Courtyard, steps of the threshold, <i>puja</i> place, <i>tulsi</i> pot, around the mortar and grinding stones.	Surface is painted with sienna red clay. Designs are drawn with rice or wheat flour-dry or paste.	Finger tips	Drawn with the finger tips and the designs are drawn starting from the centre.	The central design is ceremonial representation of a deity or deity's symbols, and enclosed in decorative design frame, the designs are traditional—betel leaf, conch shell, lotus, etc.
2. <i>Bar Boond</i> (wall patterns).	—	Pigment earth colours.	Brush made by wrapping cotton on twigs.	The design is composed by dots and dash marks and ornamented with colour filling.	Not specified, but from illustrations it appears that they are decorative geometric designs only.
3. <i>Patta & Jyonti</i> (figure drawings).	Wall or sheet of paper later fixed on the wall.	Do.	Do.	The design is drawn by dot and lines; later the space is filled with colours.	Ritualistic and ceremonial designs. <i>Jyonti</i> has <i>jivamatrikas</i> .
4. <i>Dakaras</i> (Clay images)	Clay images produced on festive occasions.	Clay and pigment colours.	Do.	The image is first hand modelled and later hand painted.	Lord Shiva, Parvati, Ganesh, Kartikeya, etc.
5. Miscellaneous	Stepped altars, door papers, ceremonial gates, crossing of four pathways, low marriage wooden seat.	Do.	Do.	Do.	Ritualistic designs.

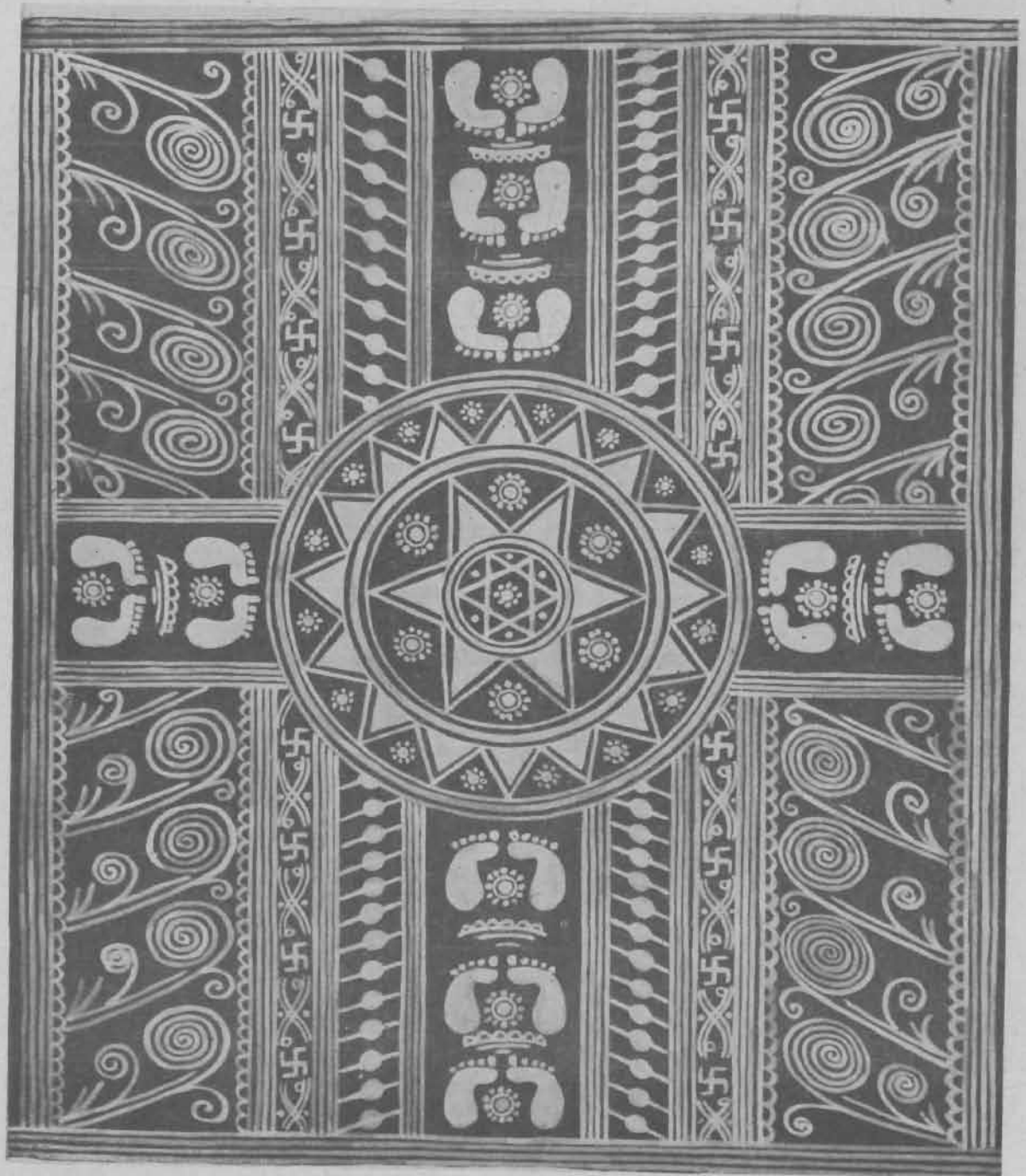
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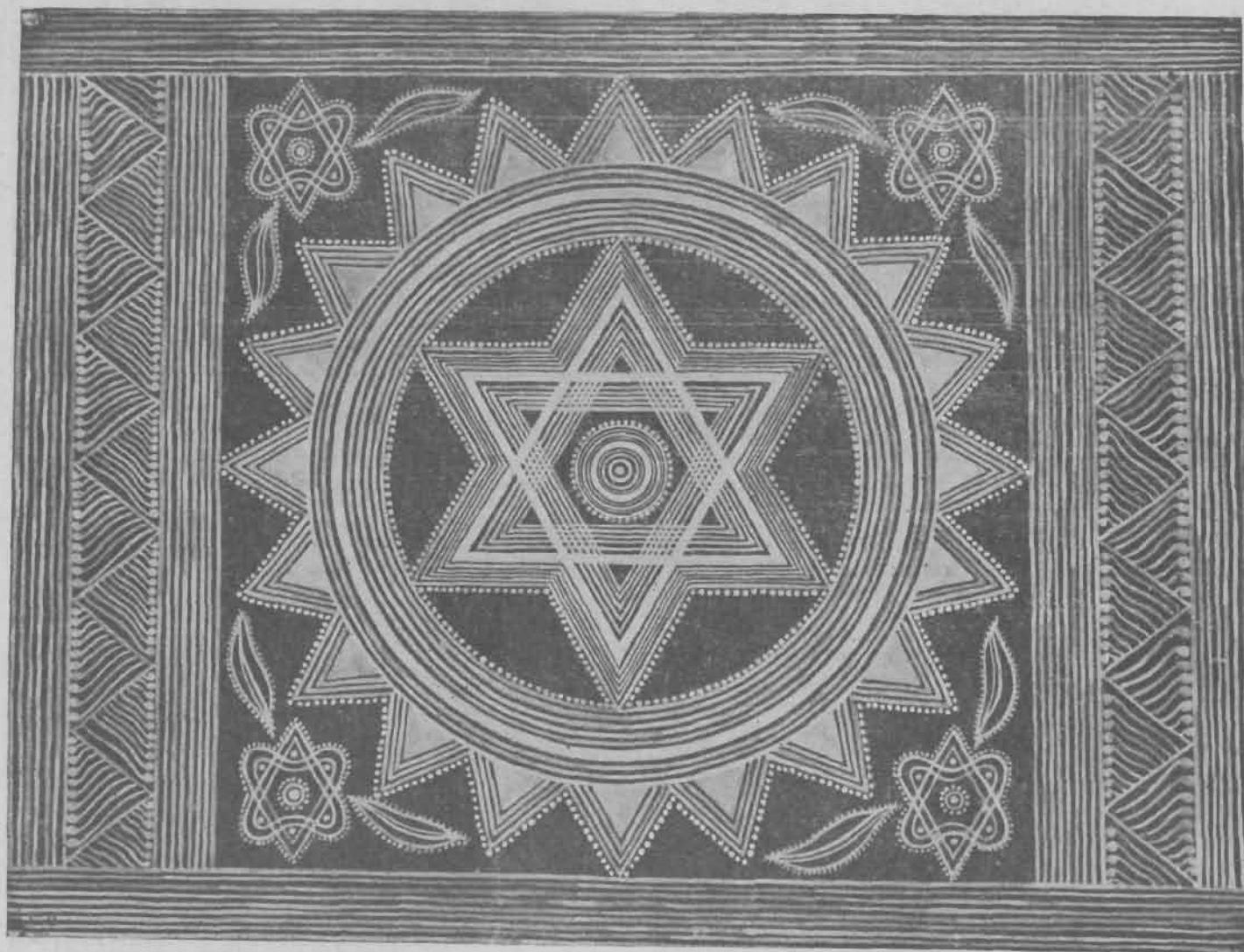
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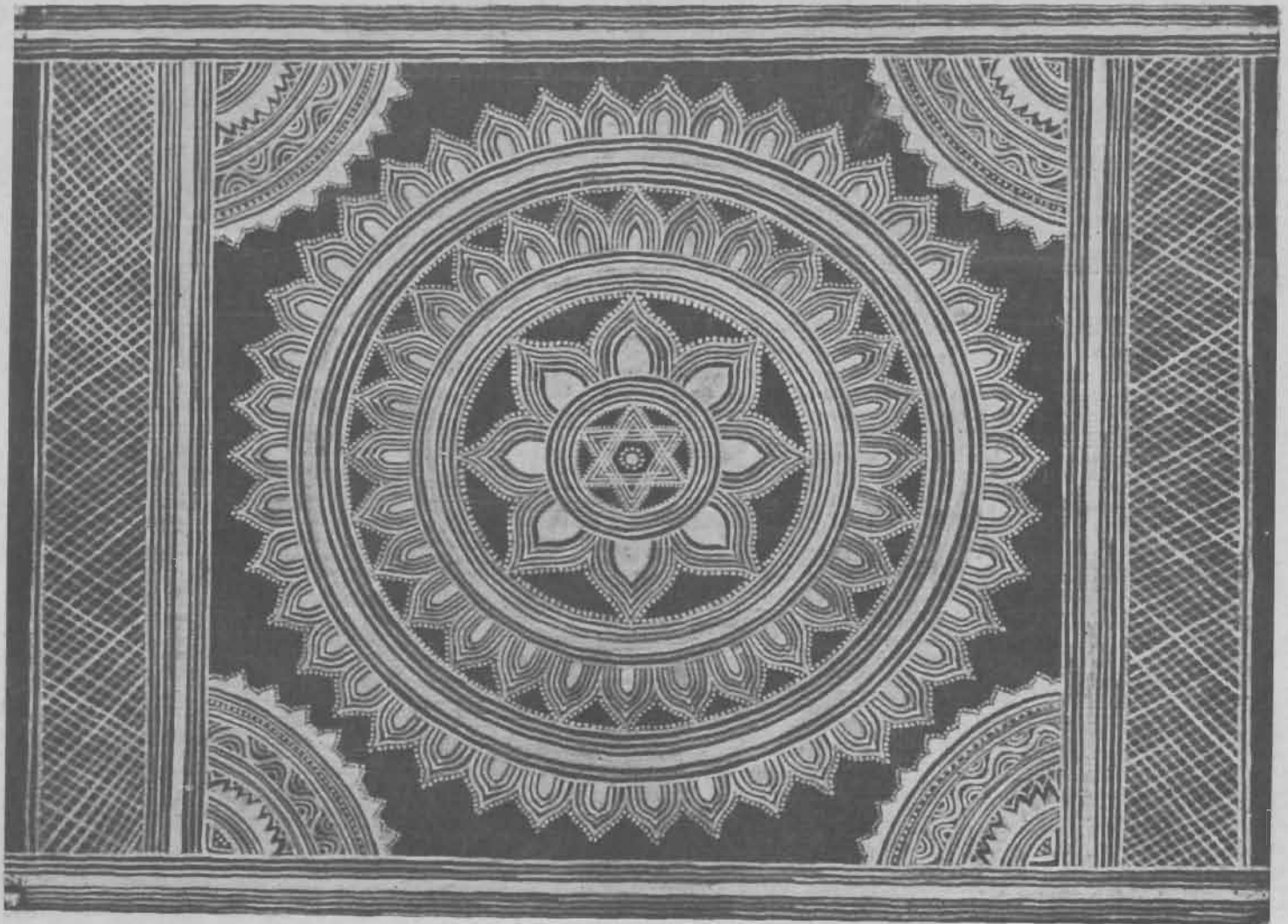




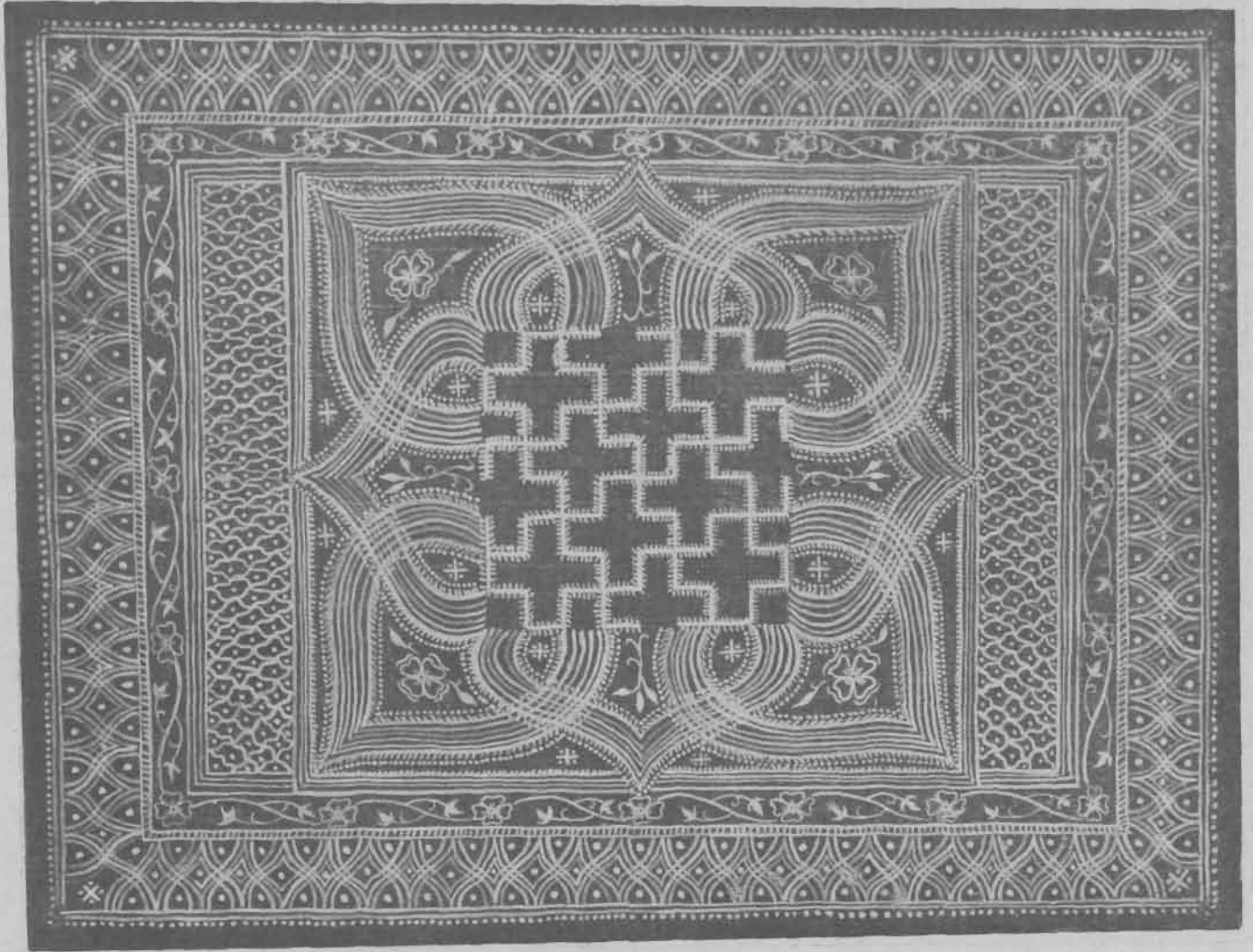


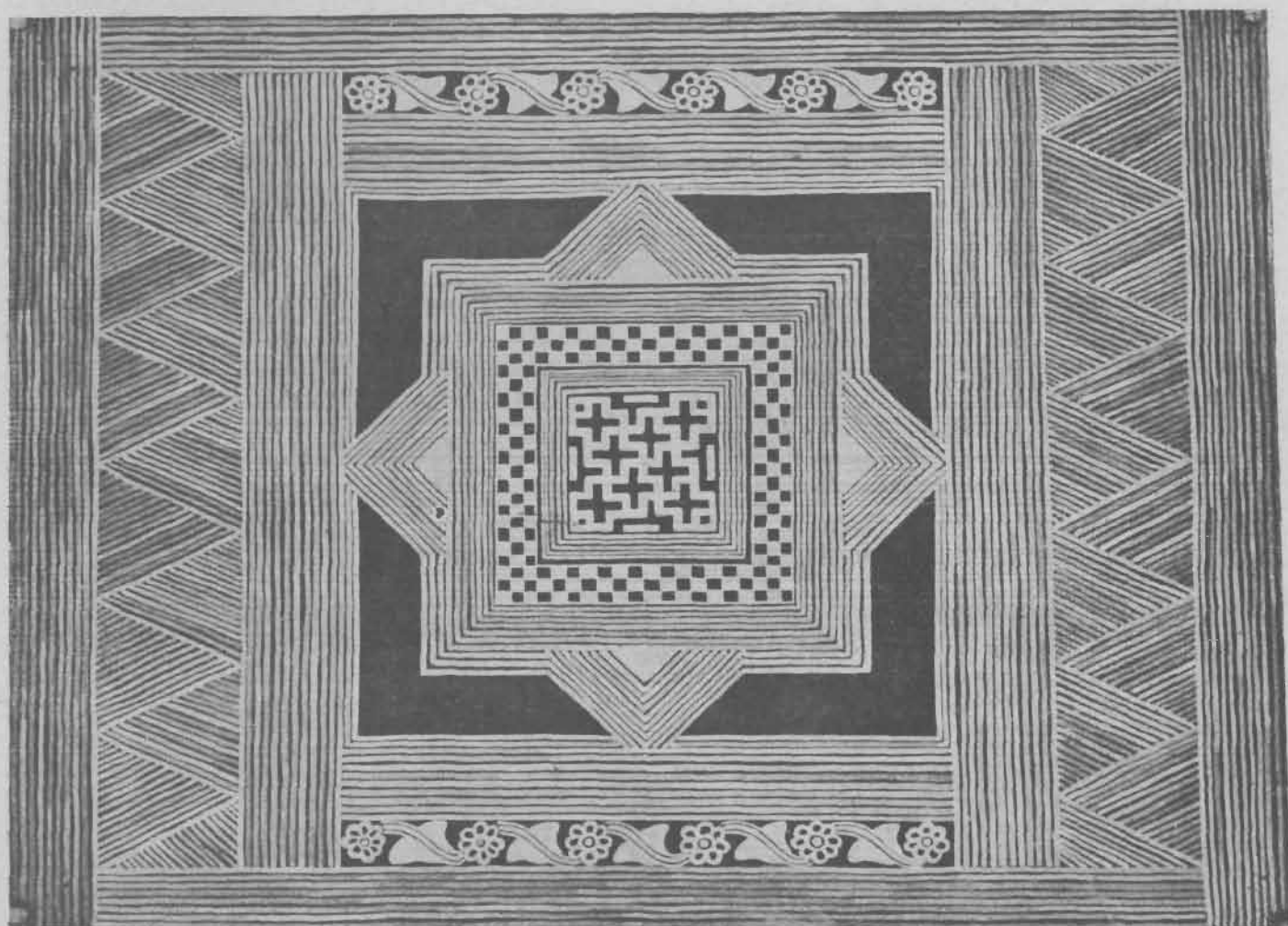


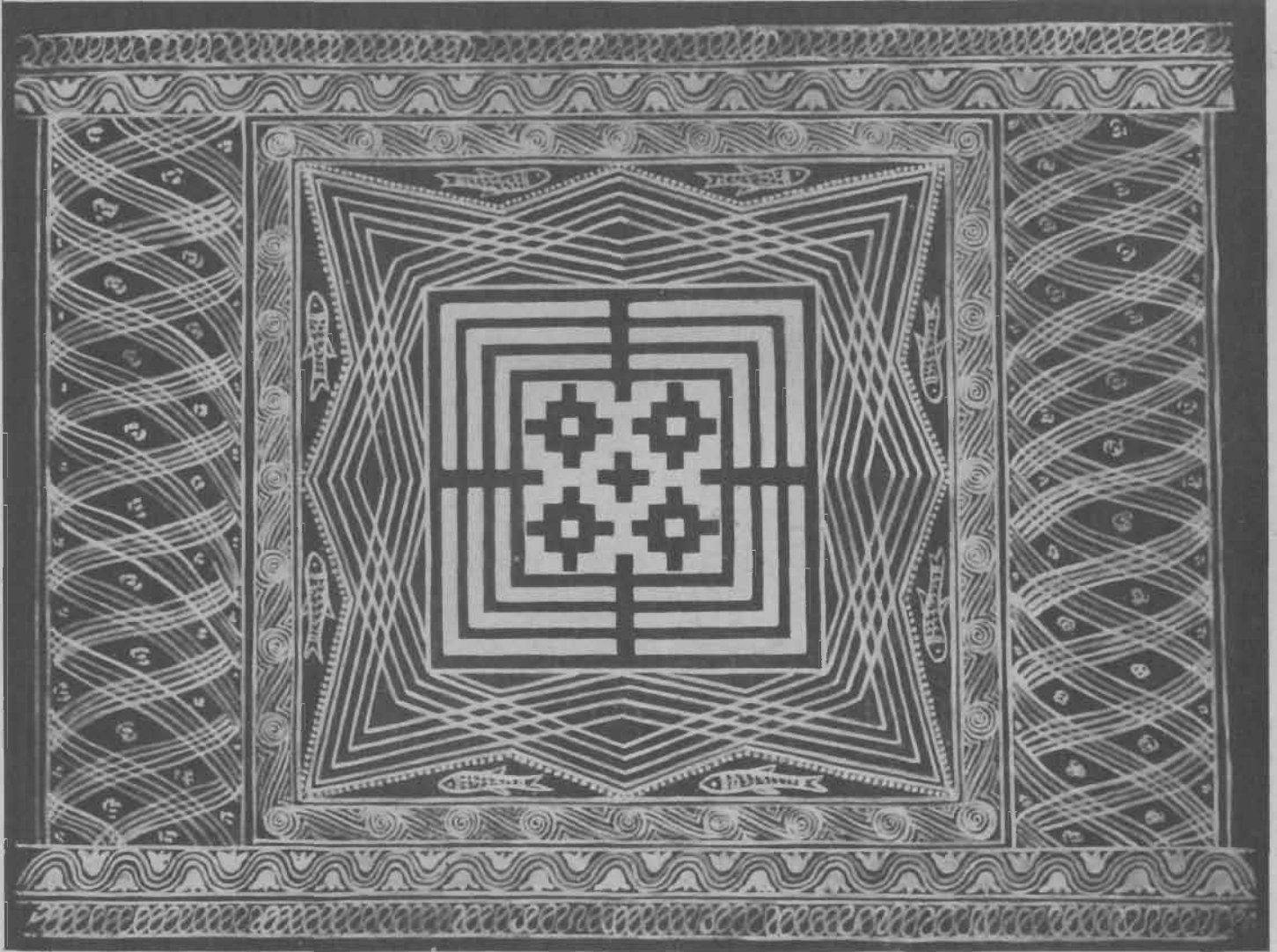


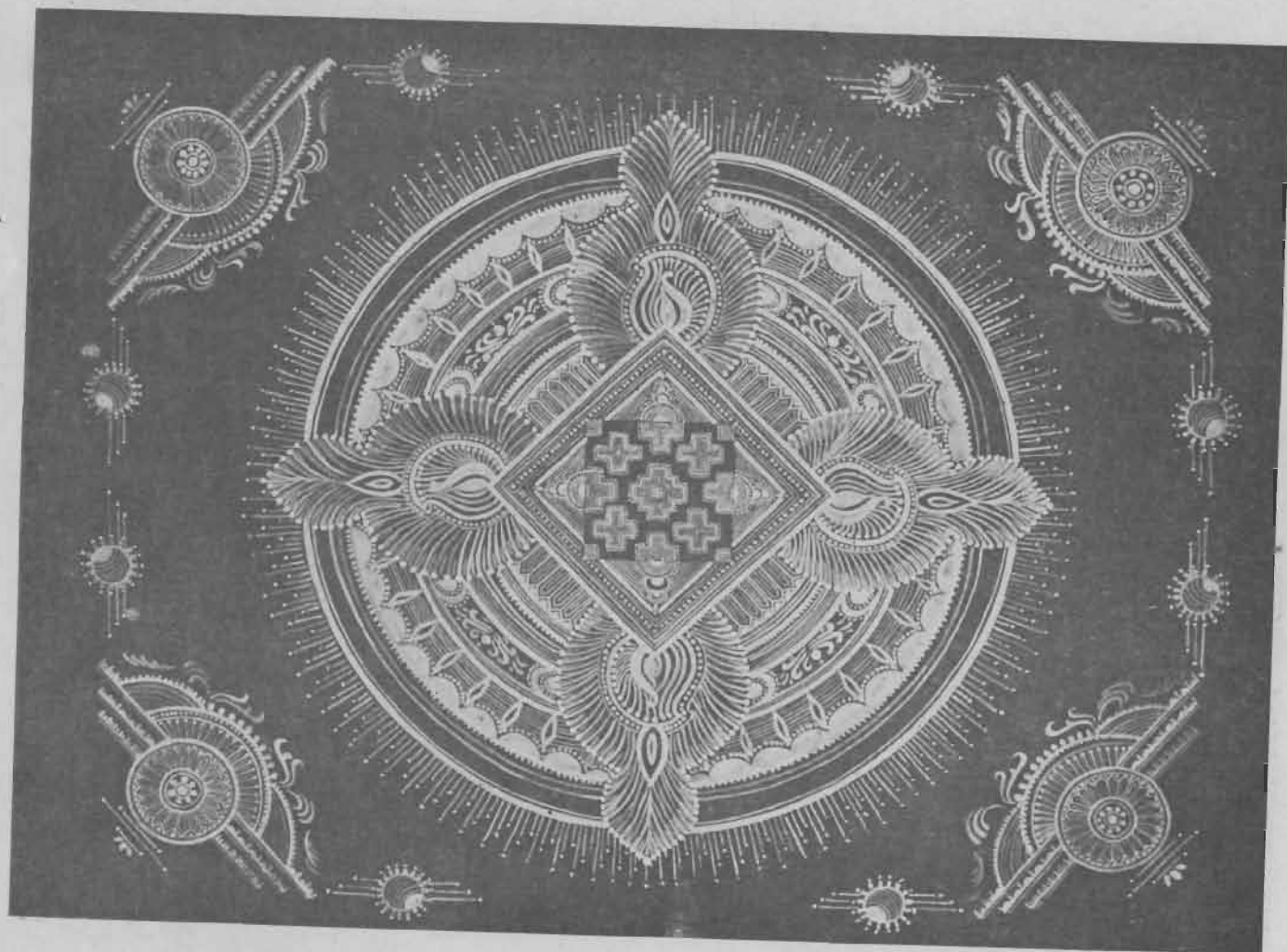


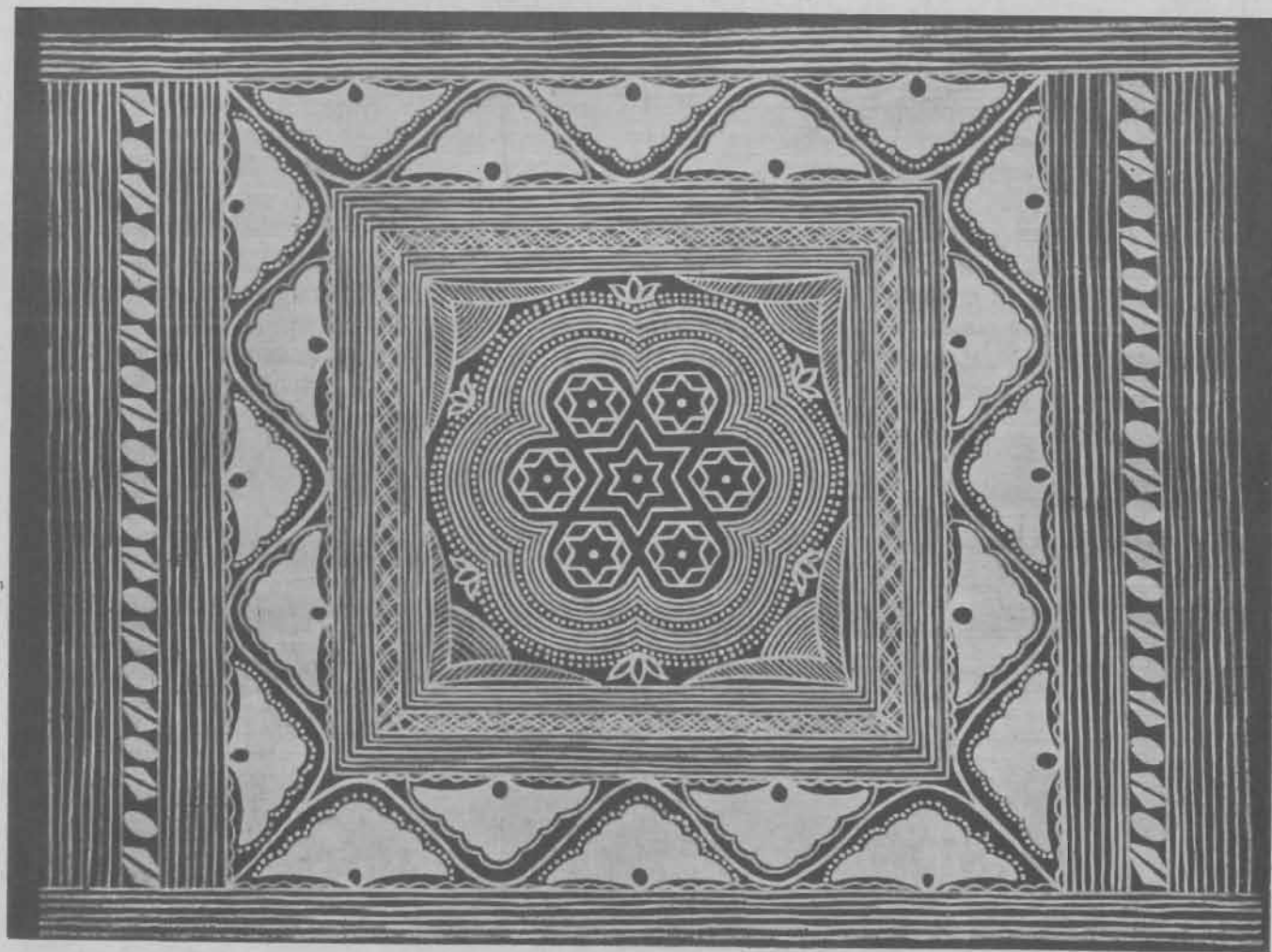


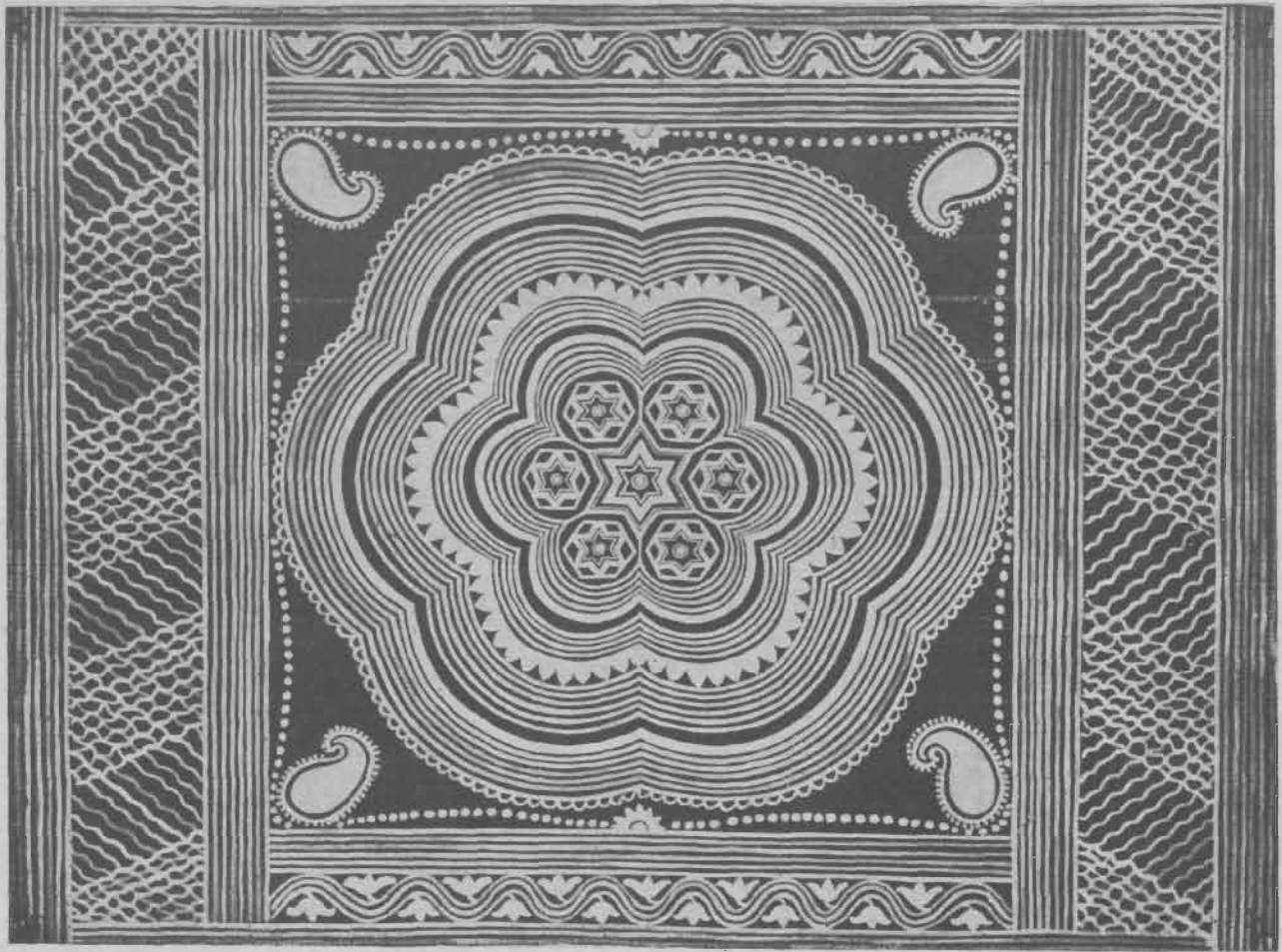


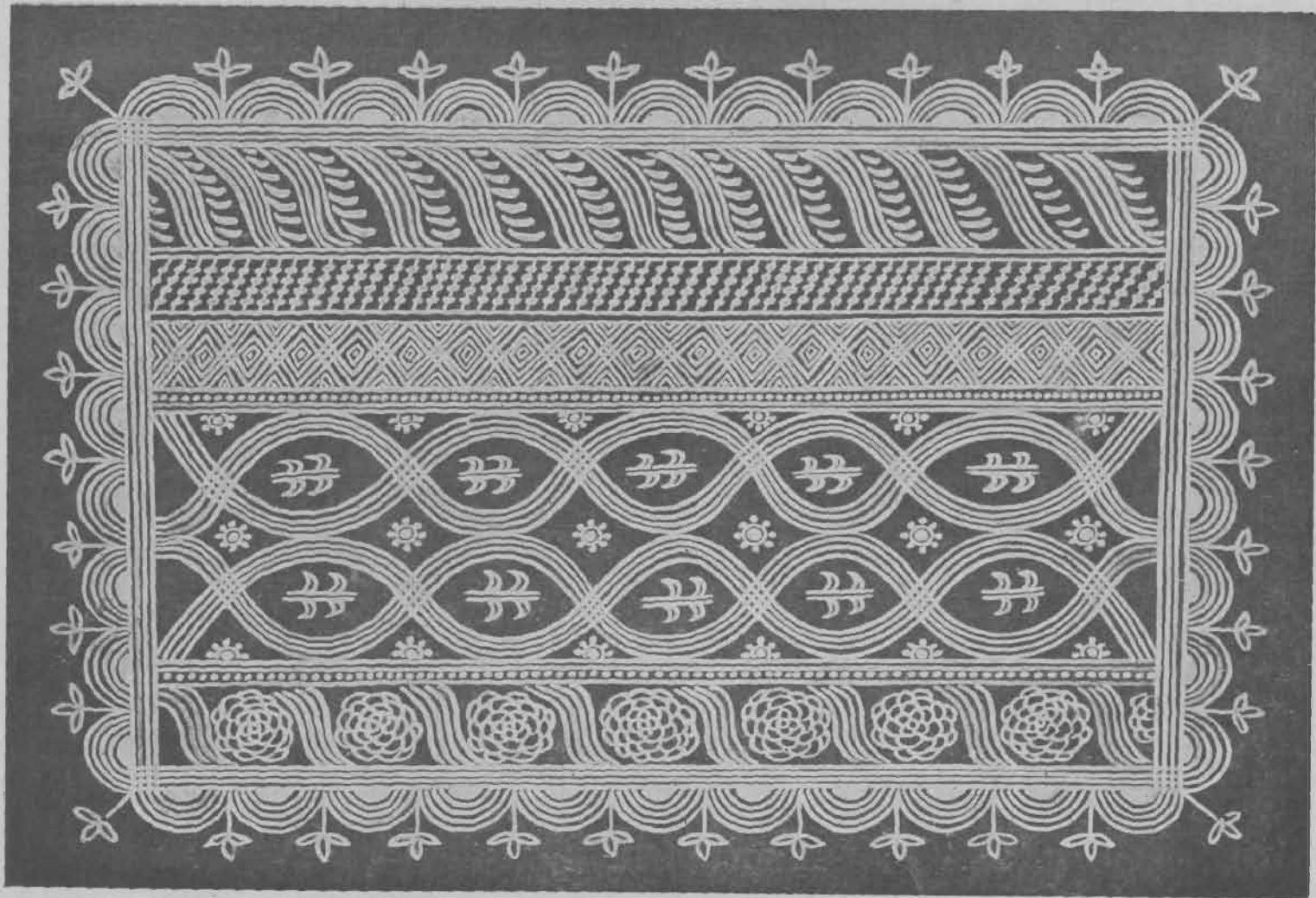


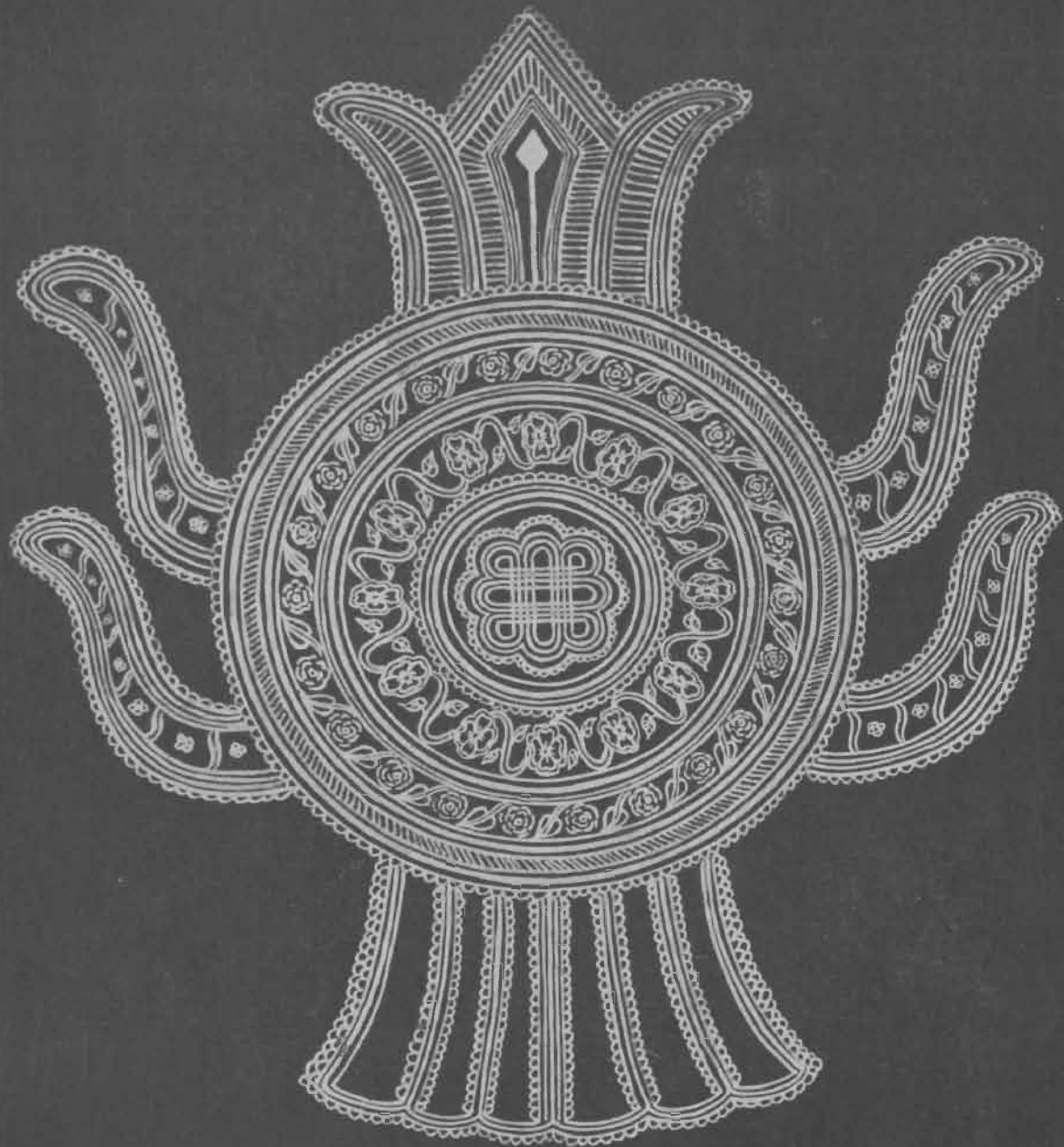


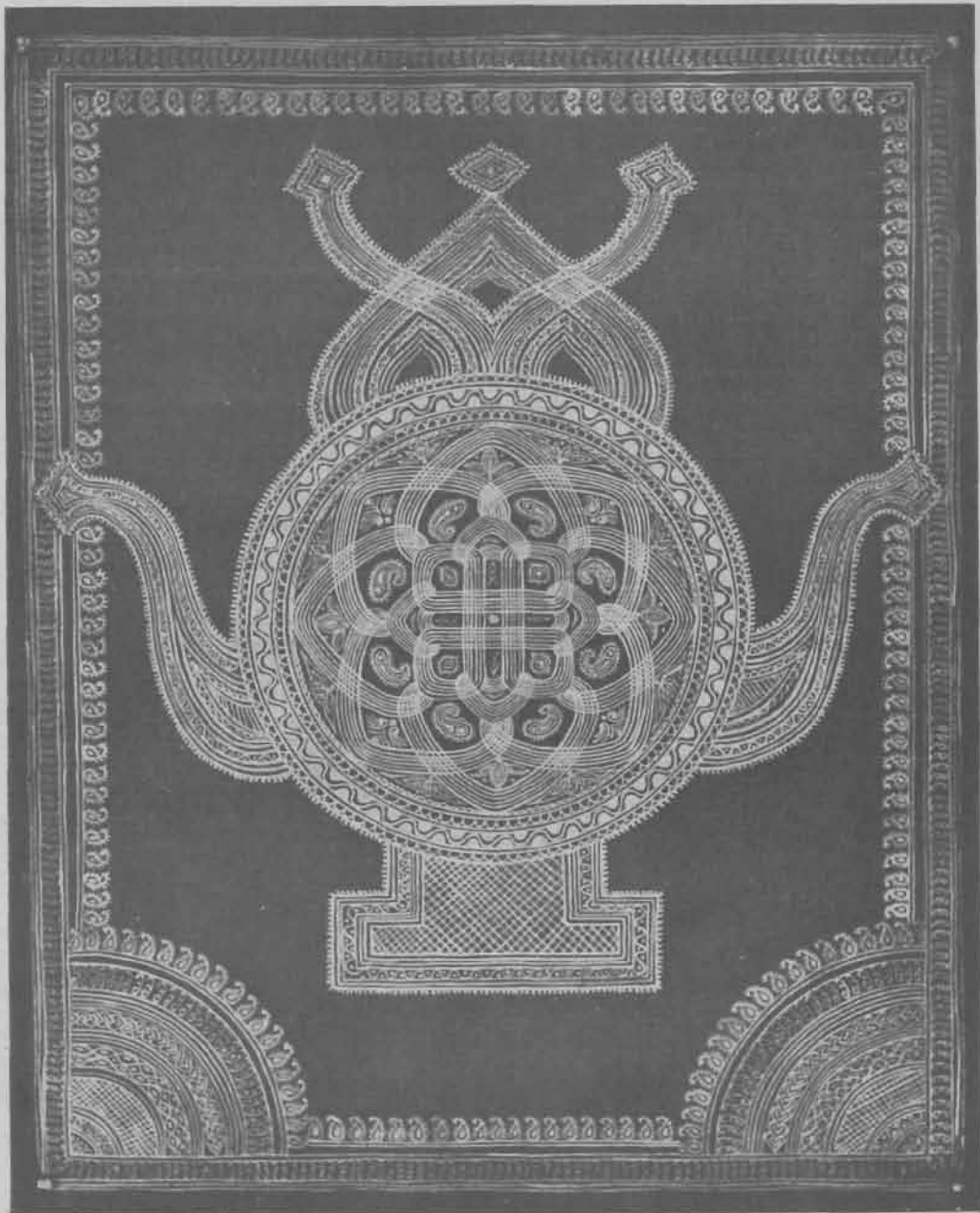


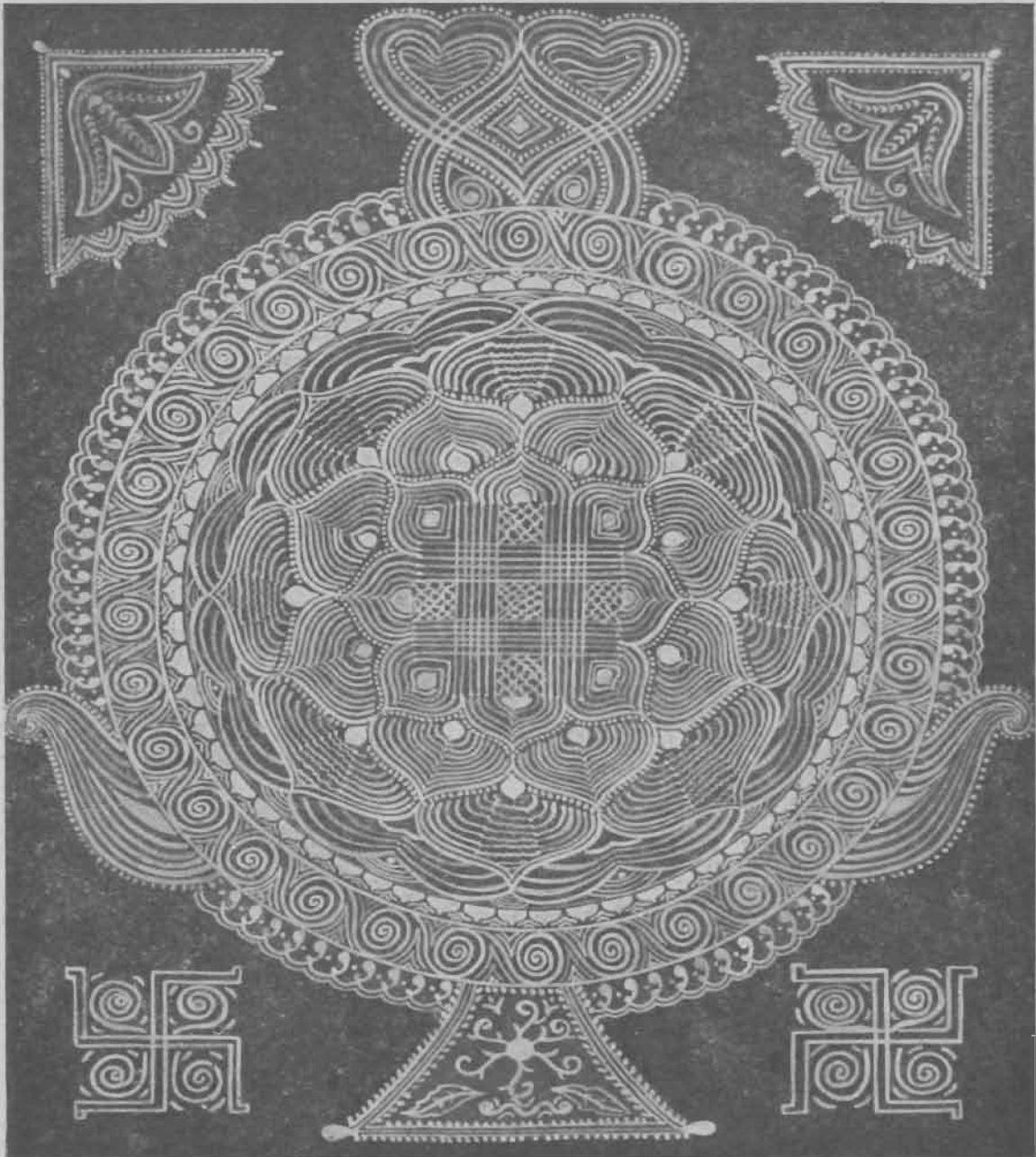


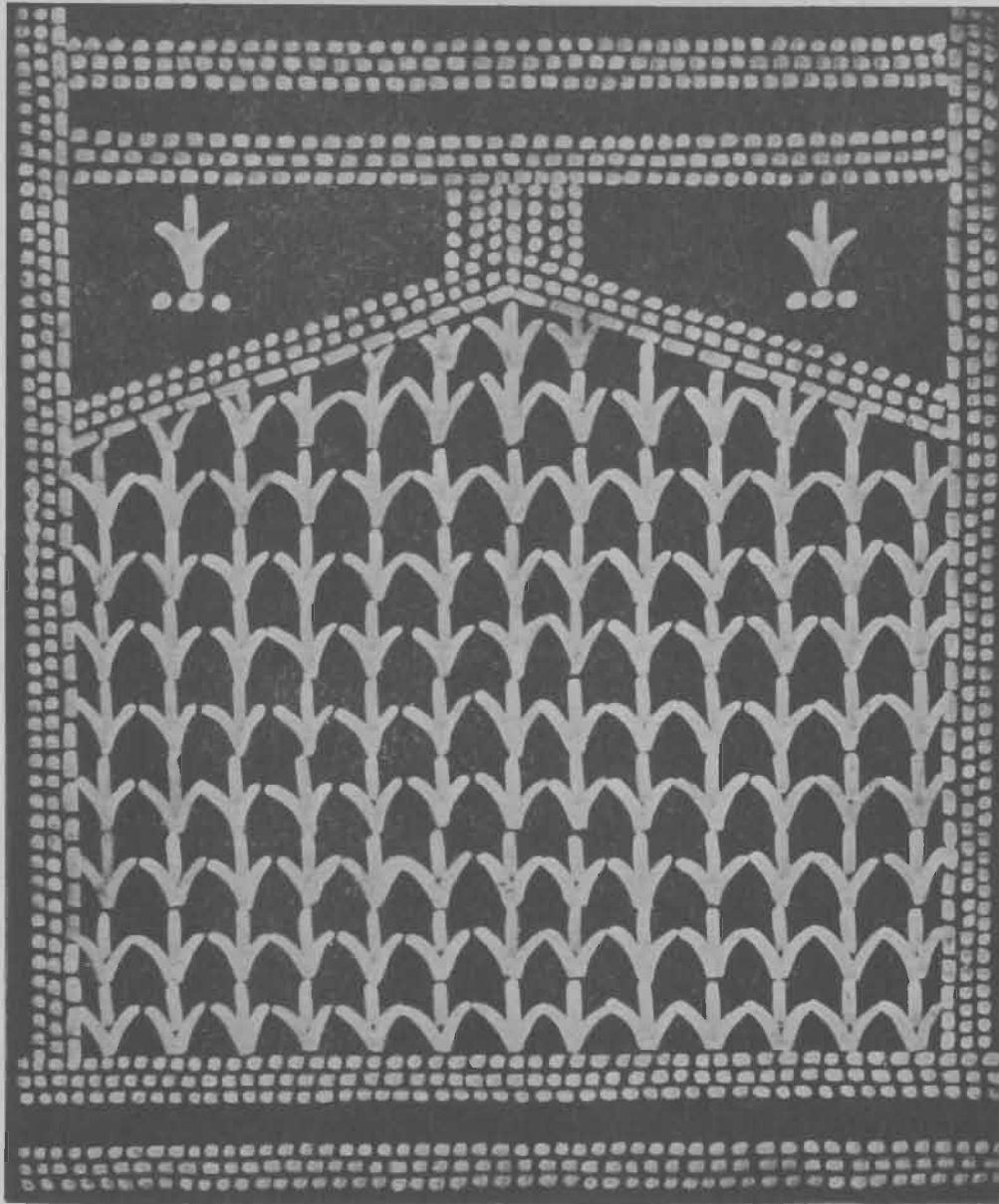


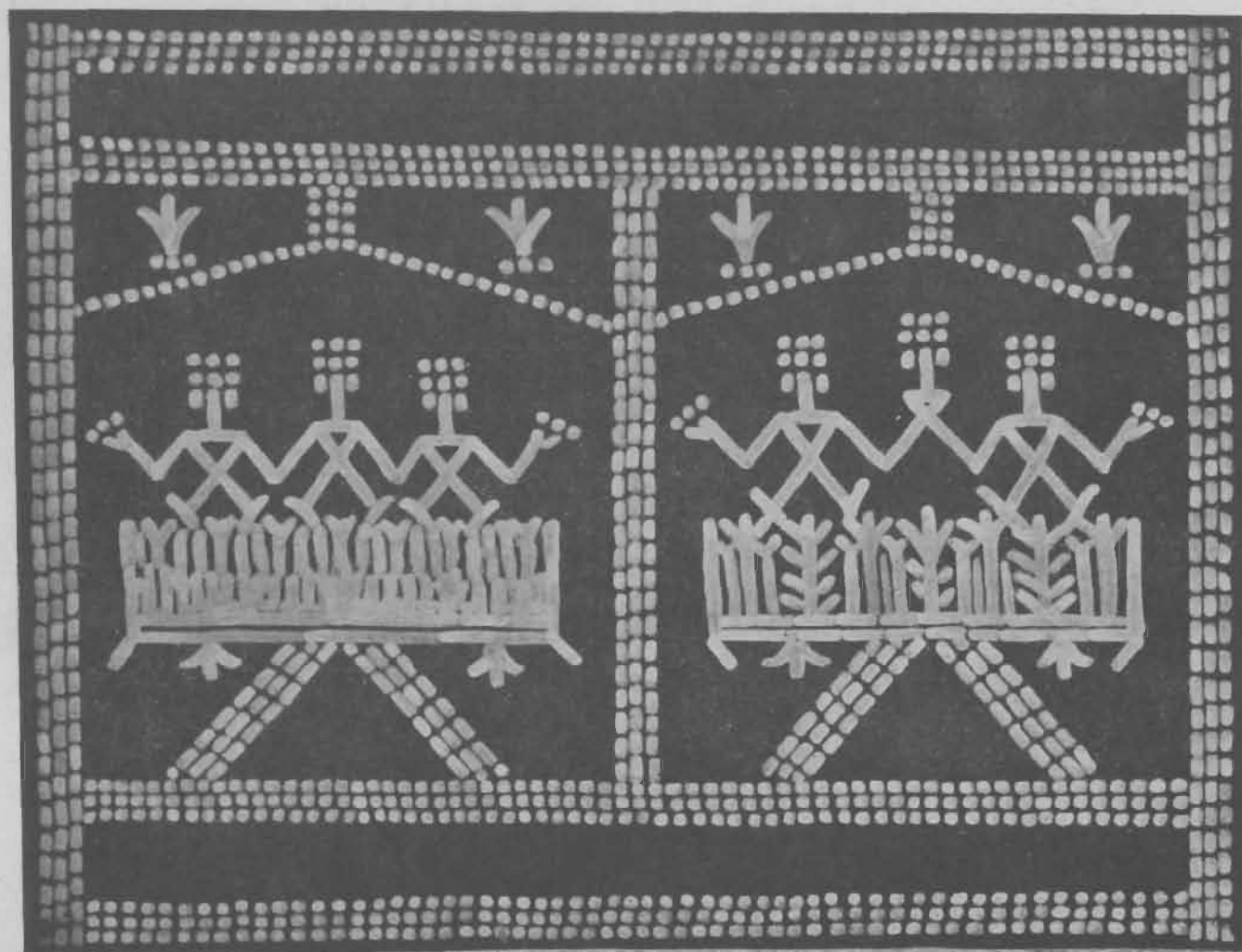


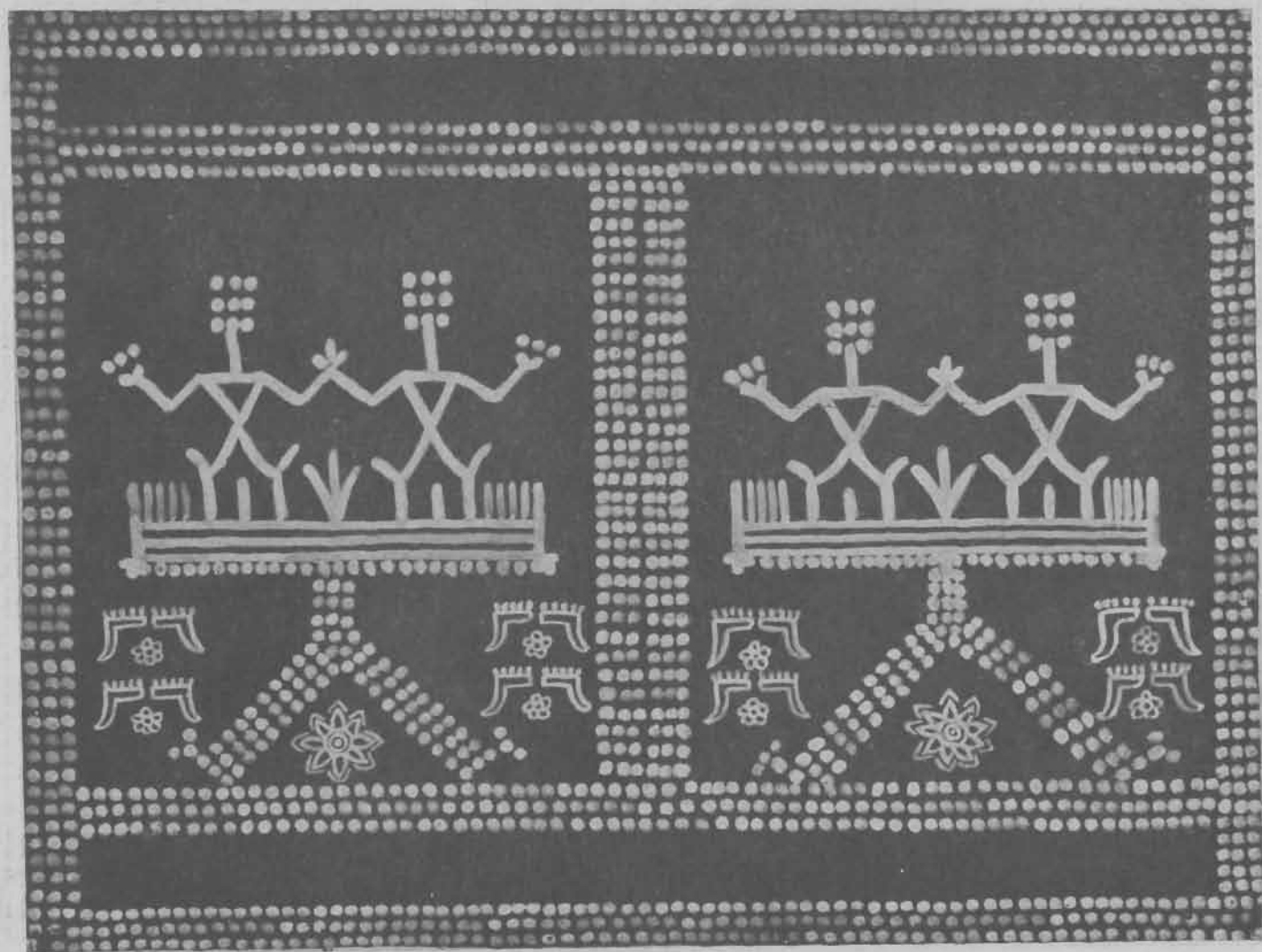




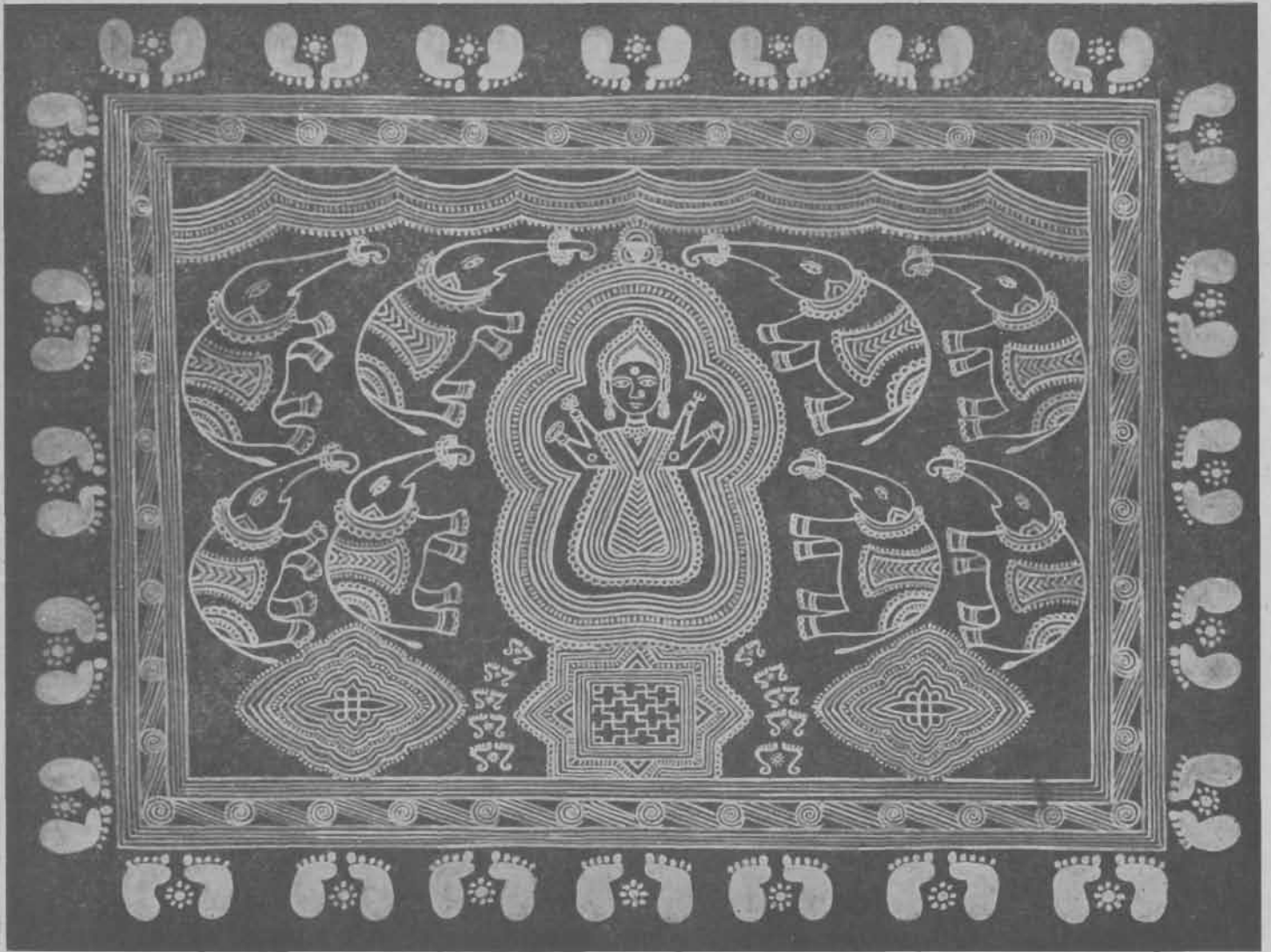


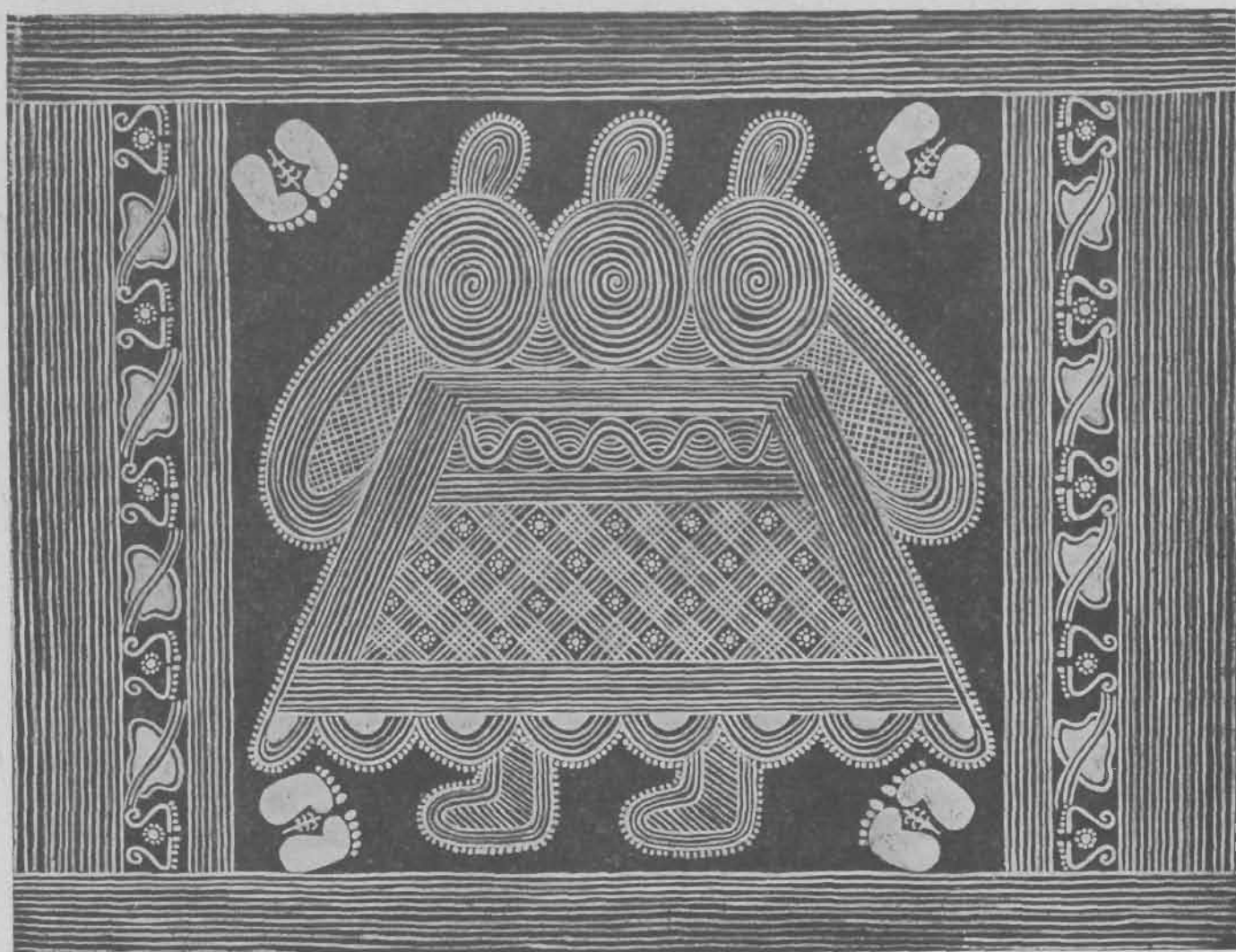


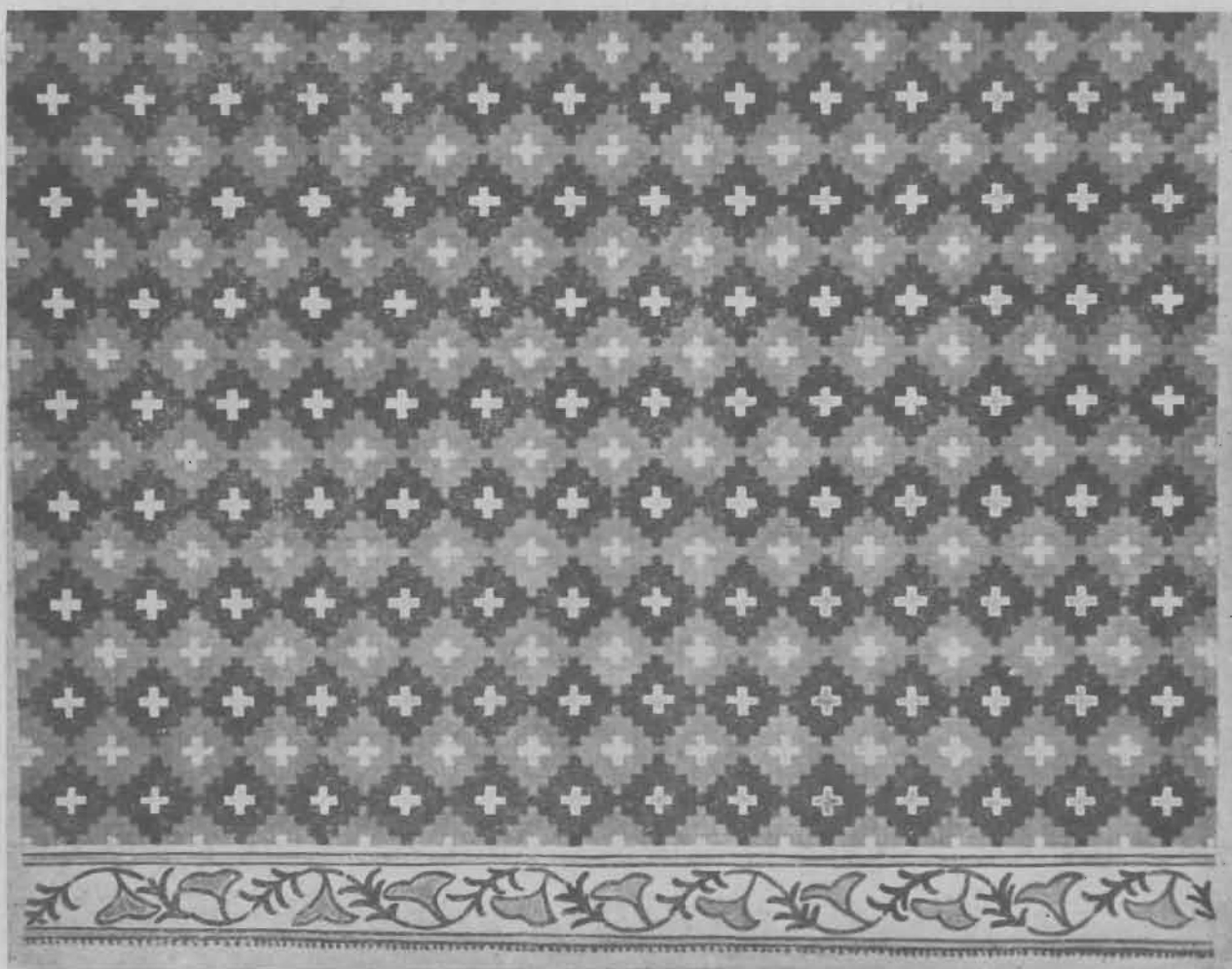


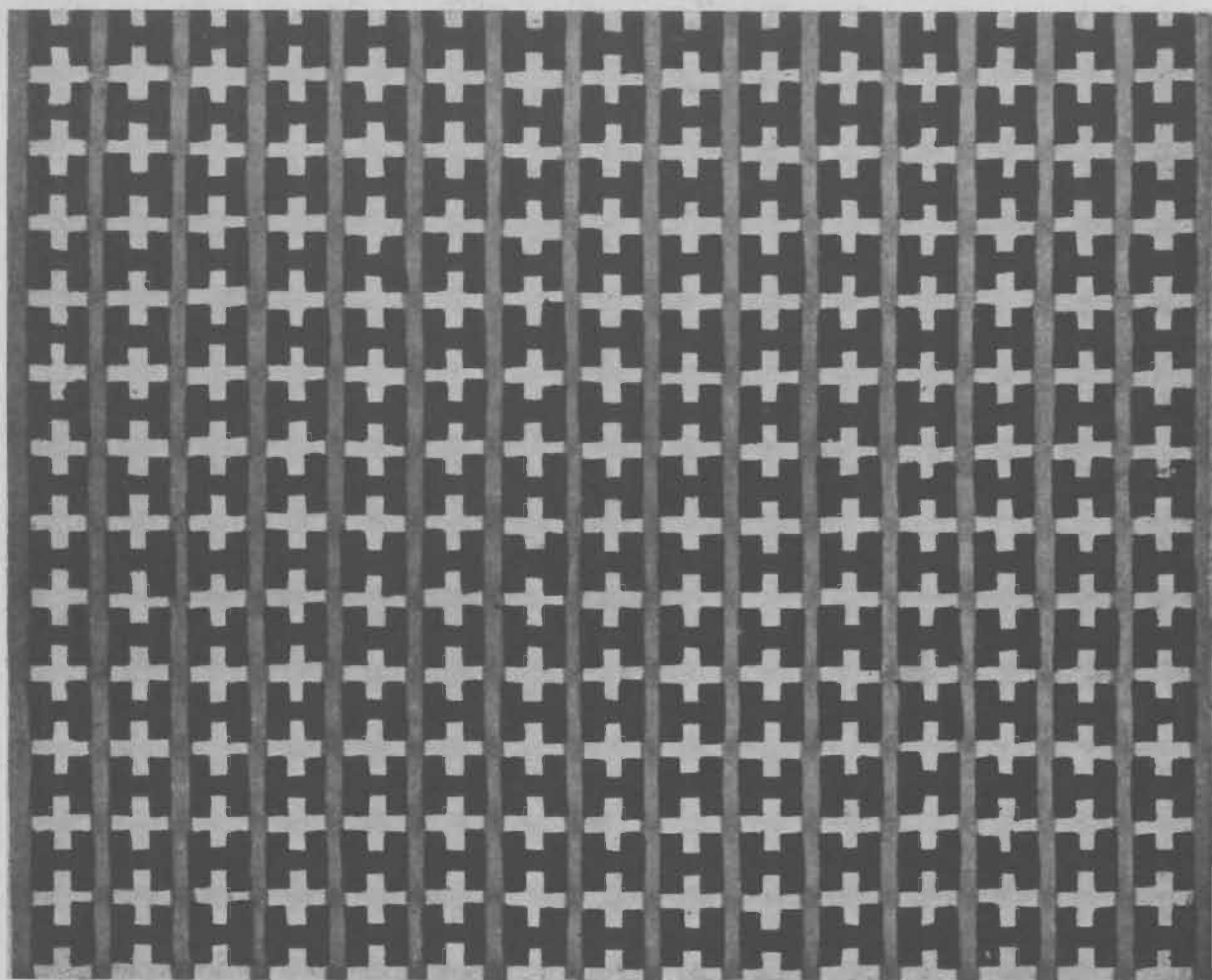


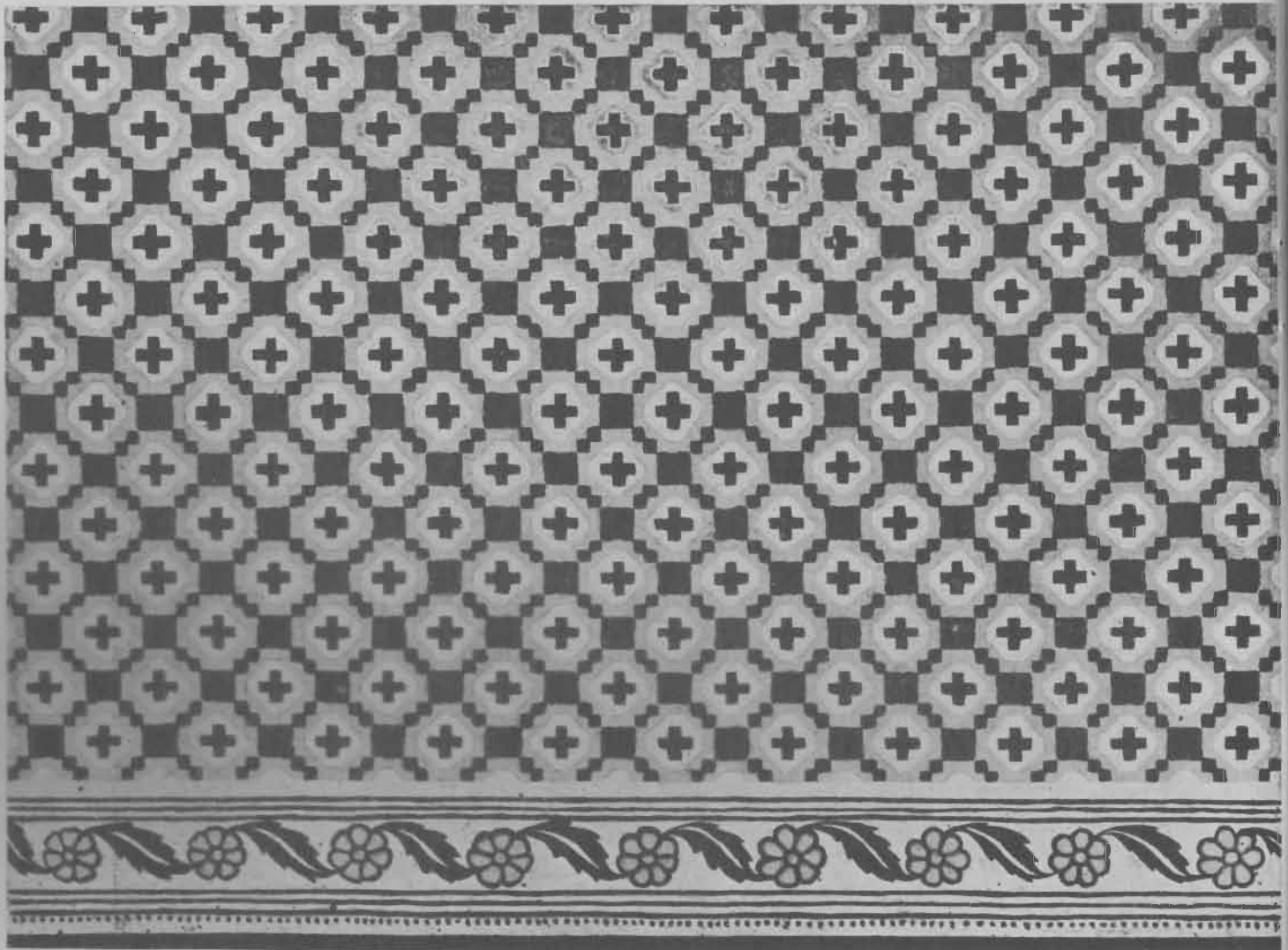


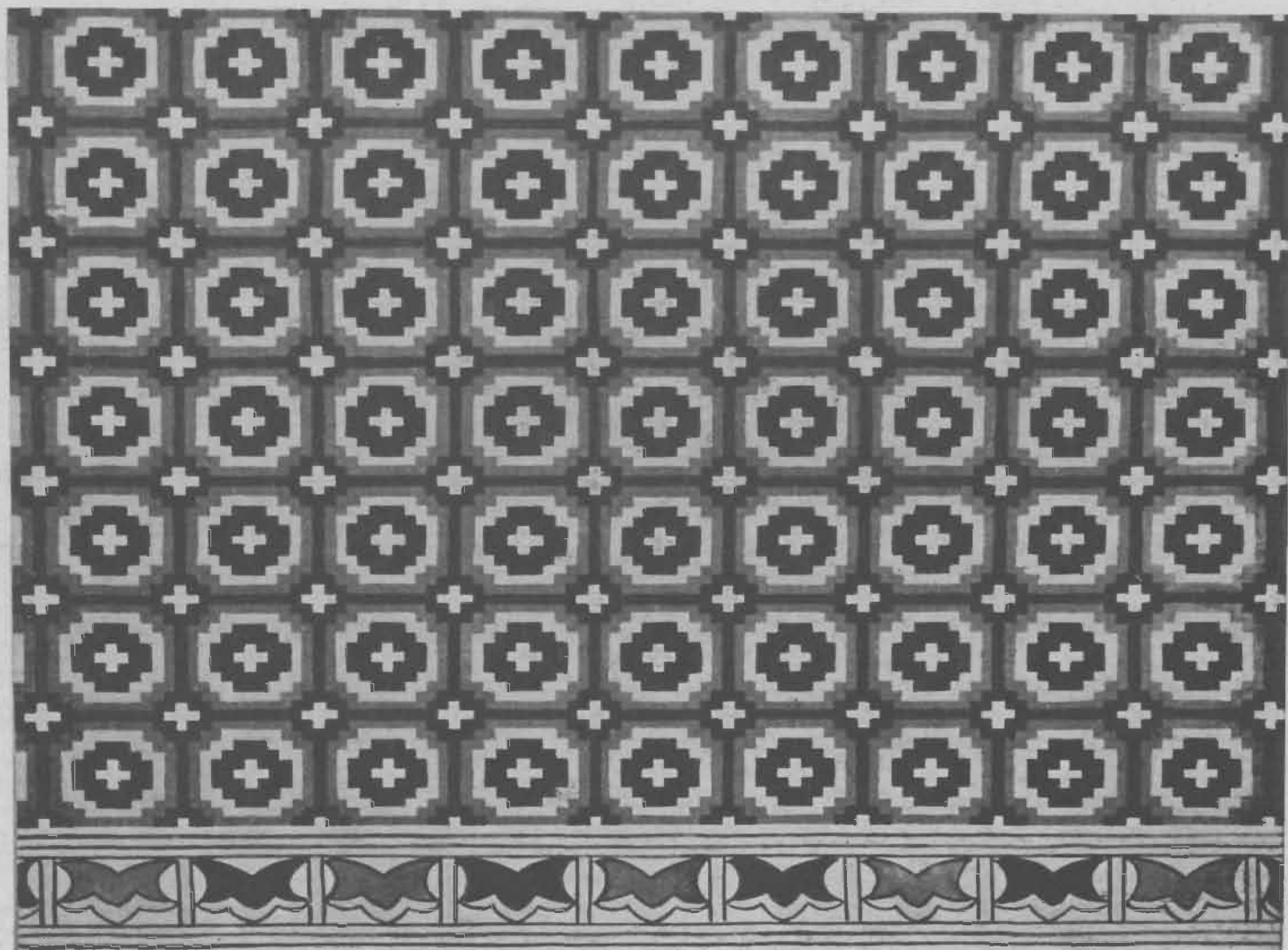


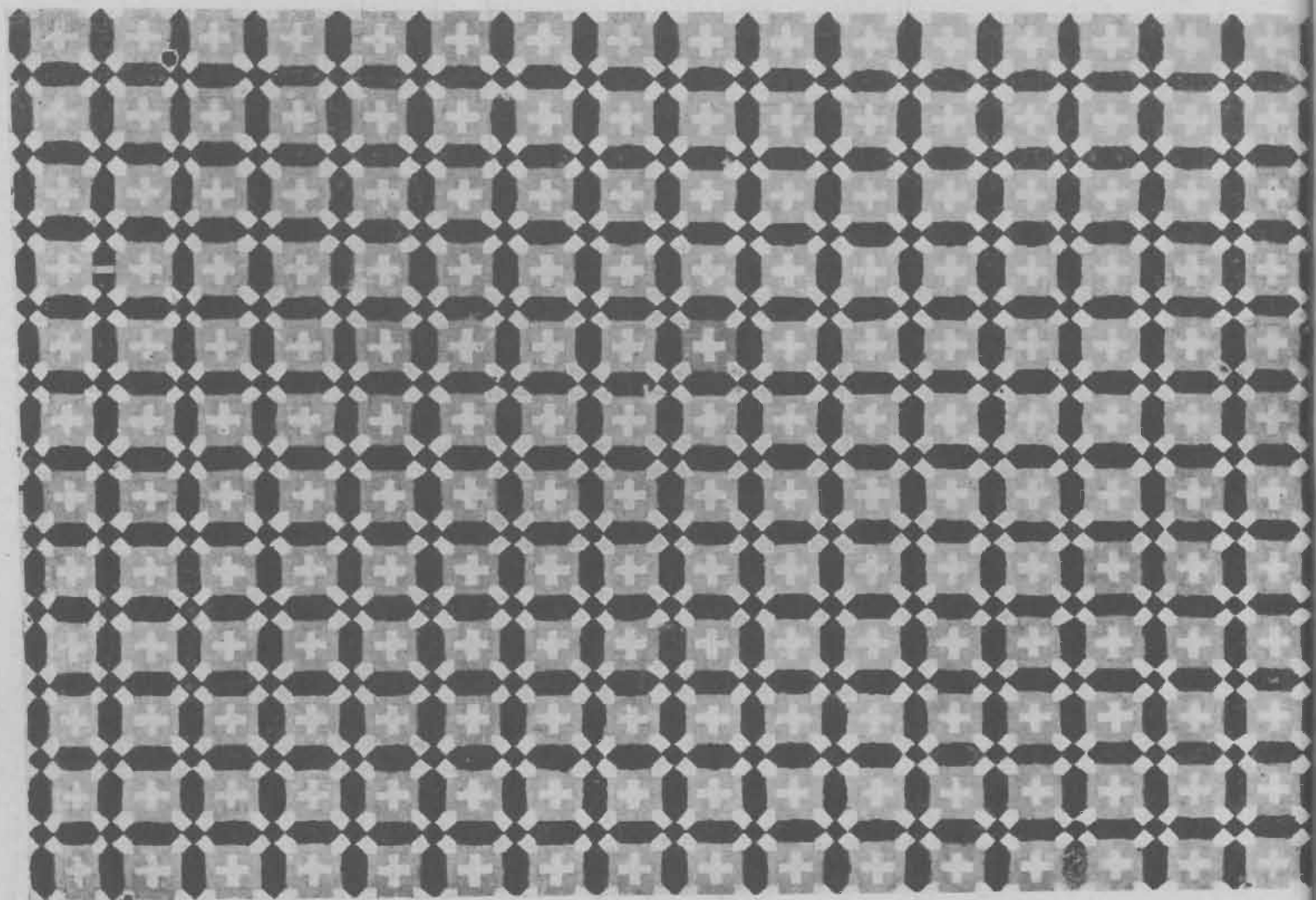


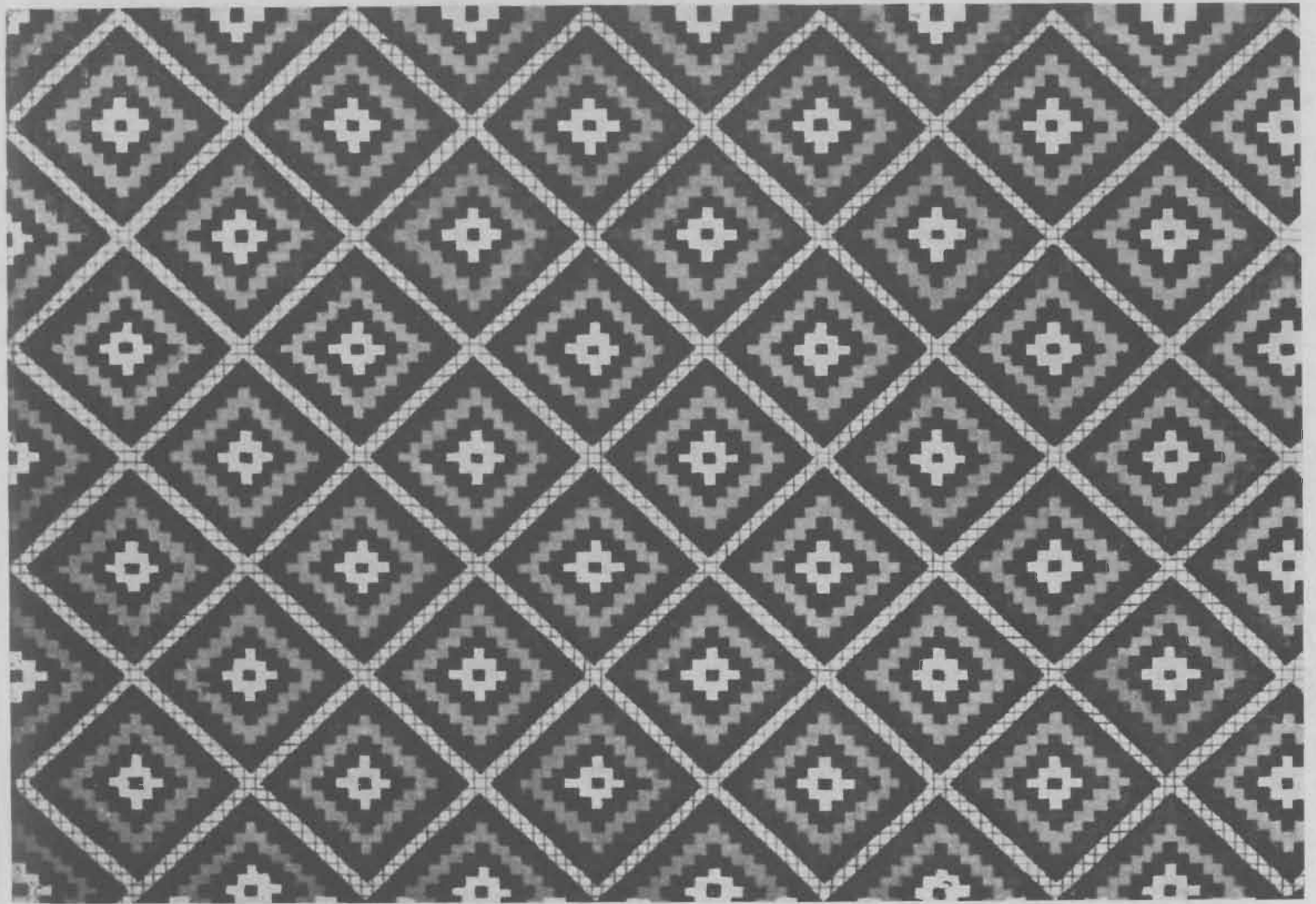


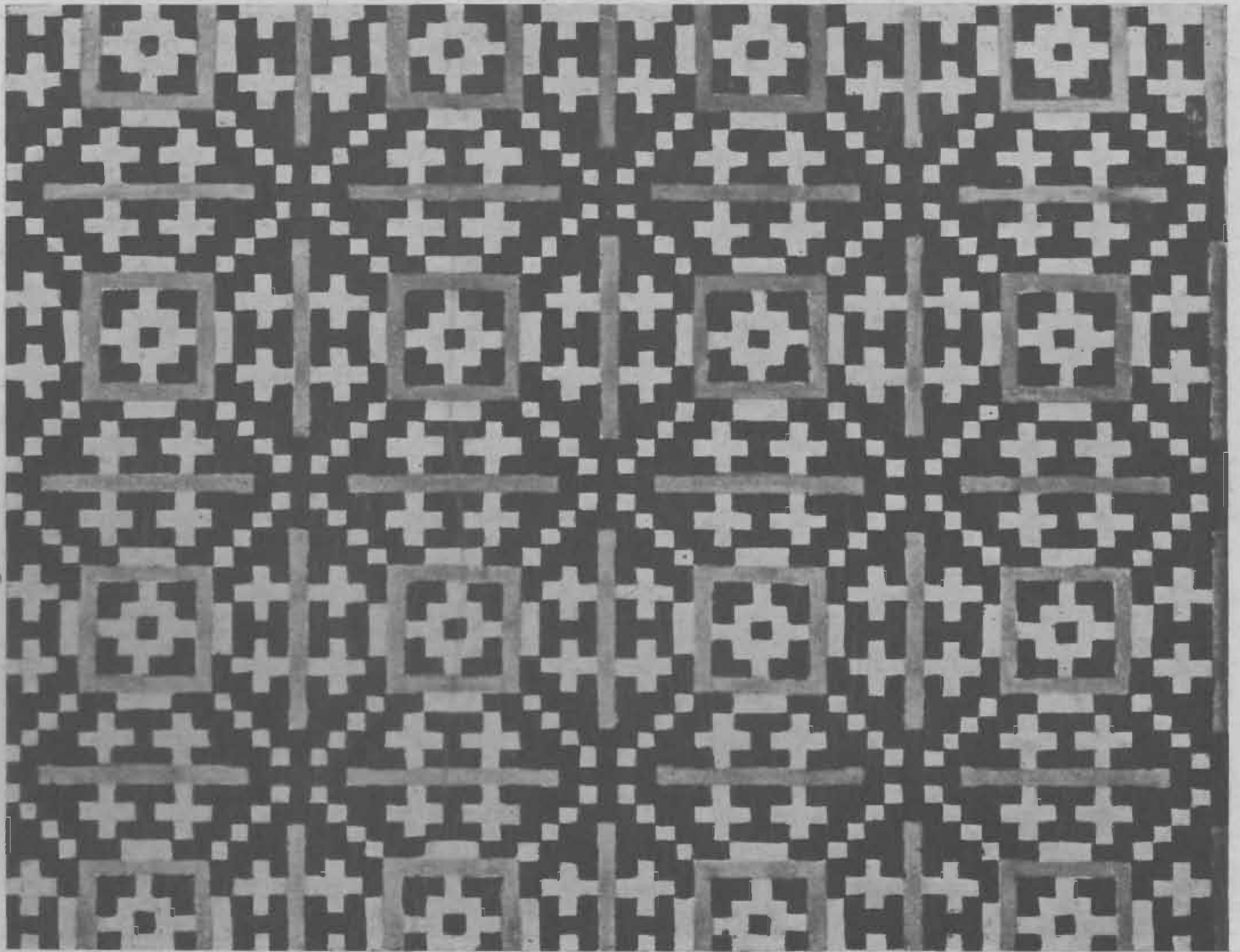


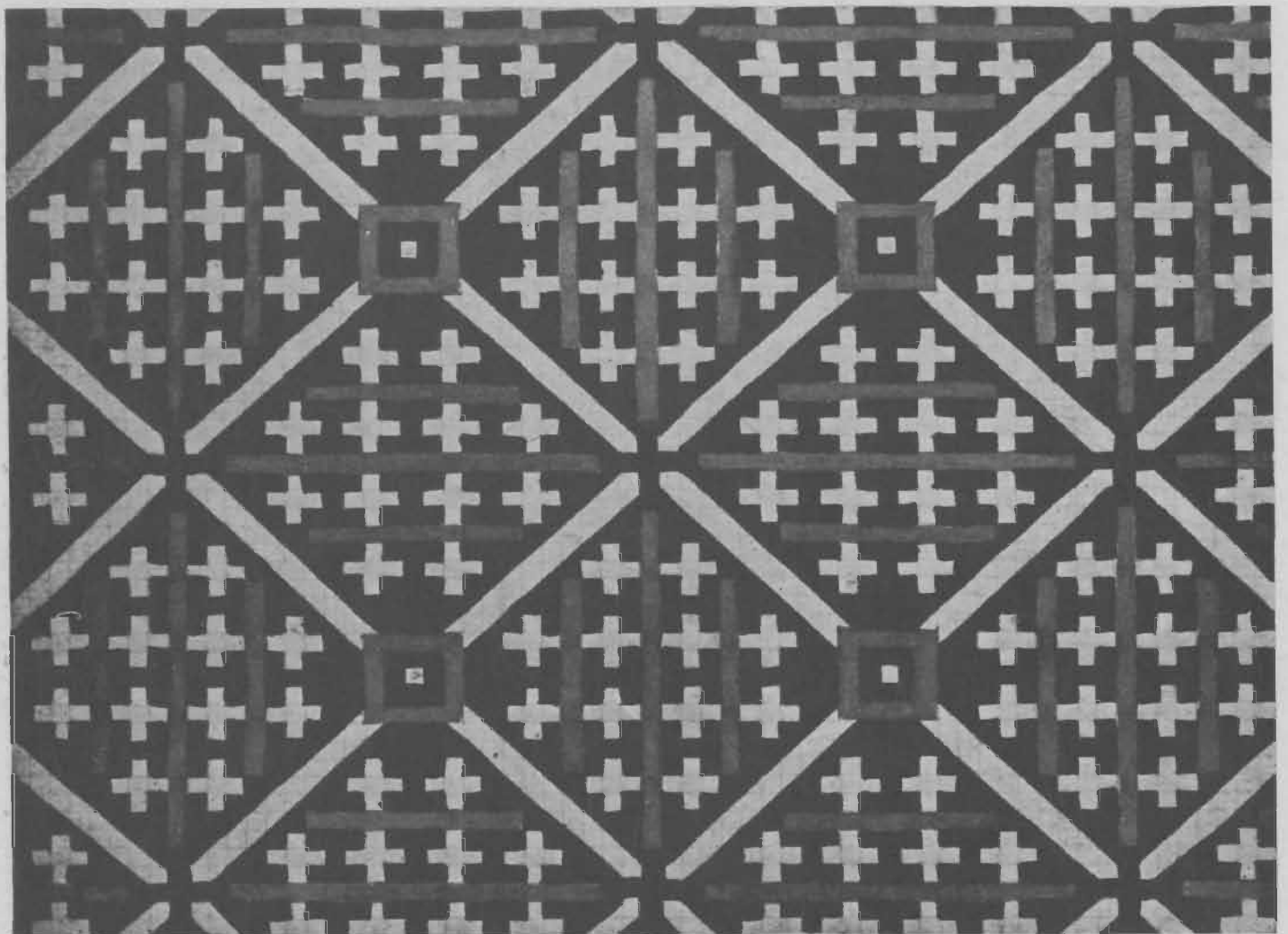


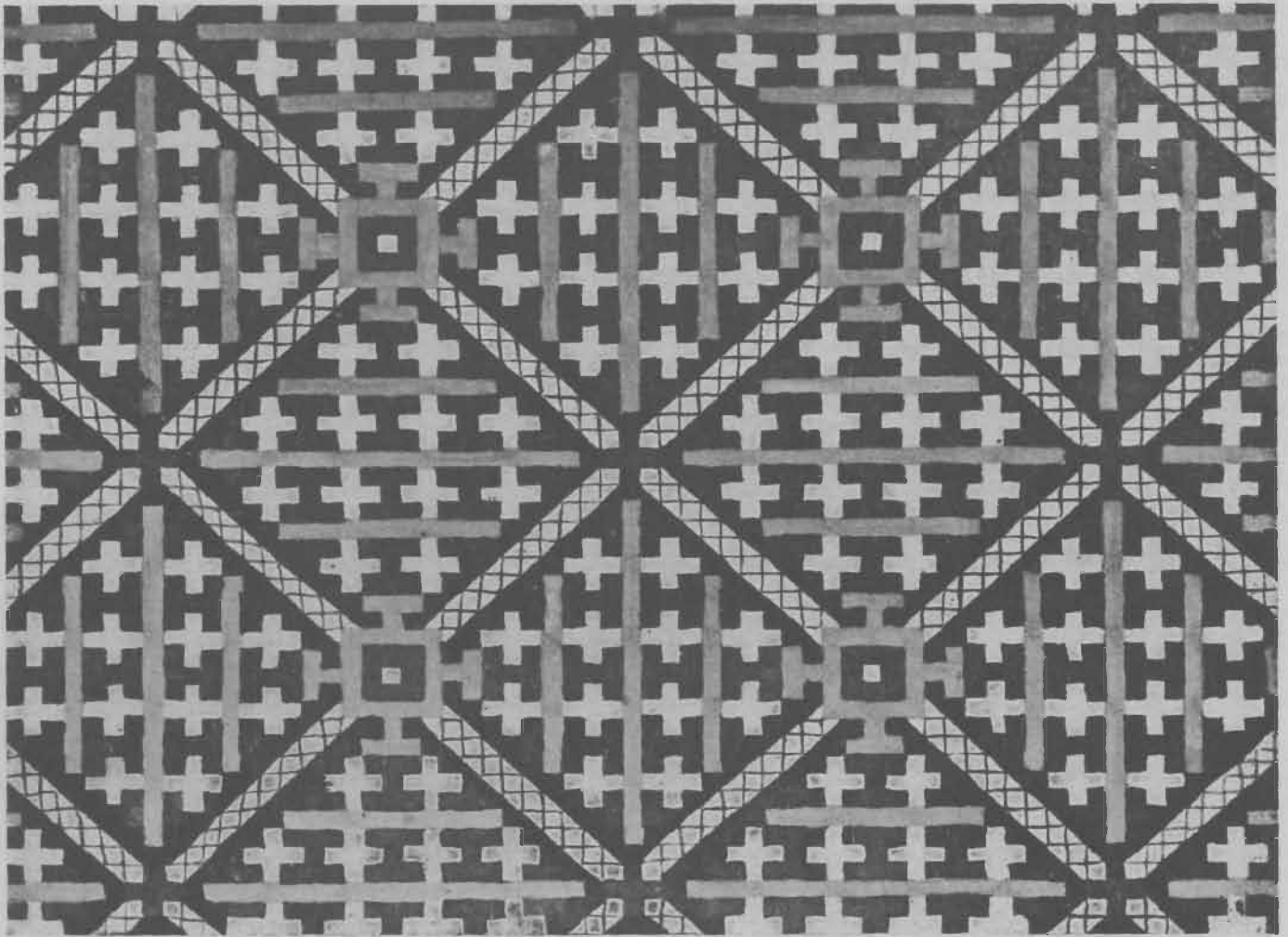


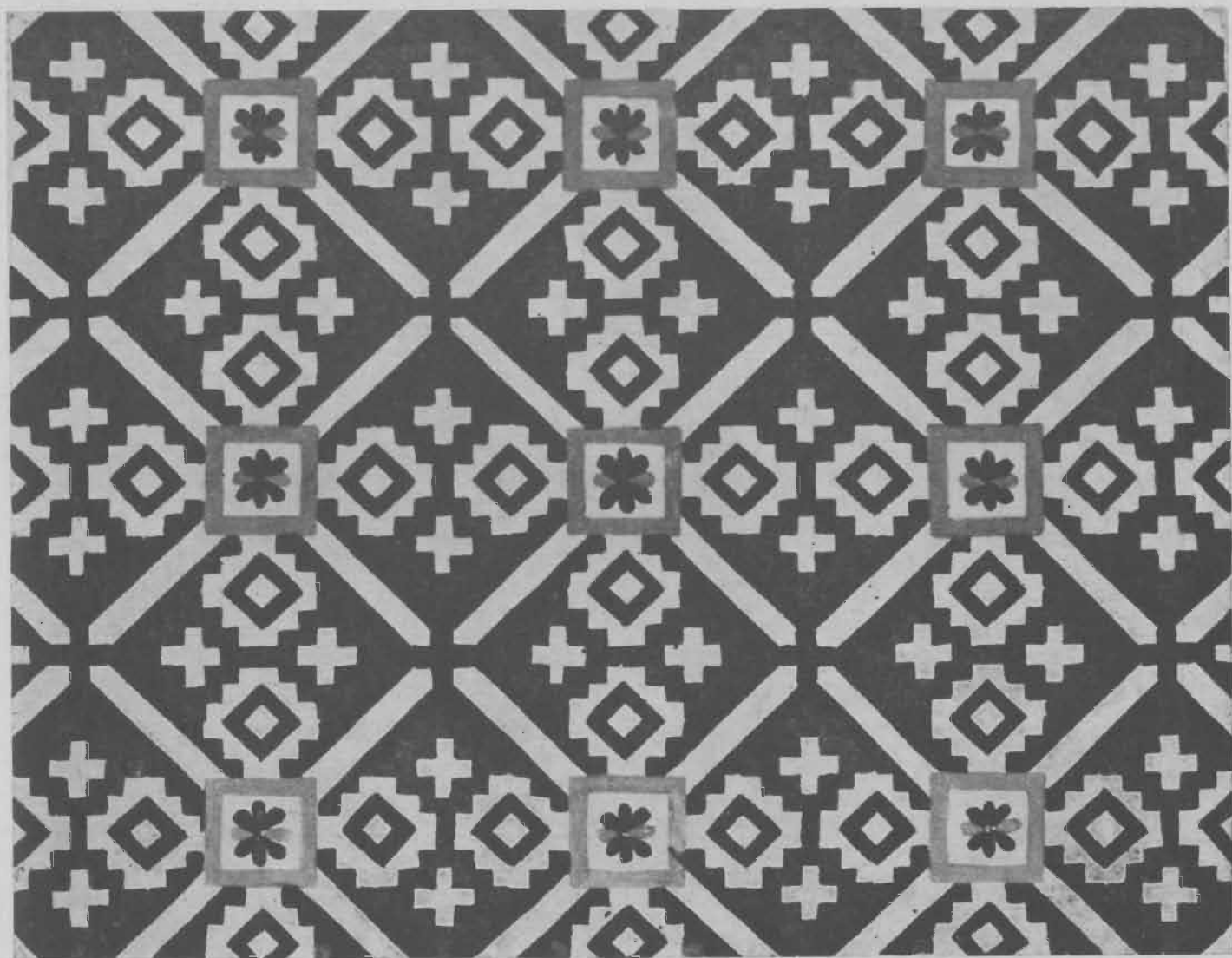


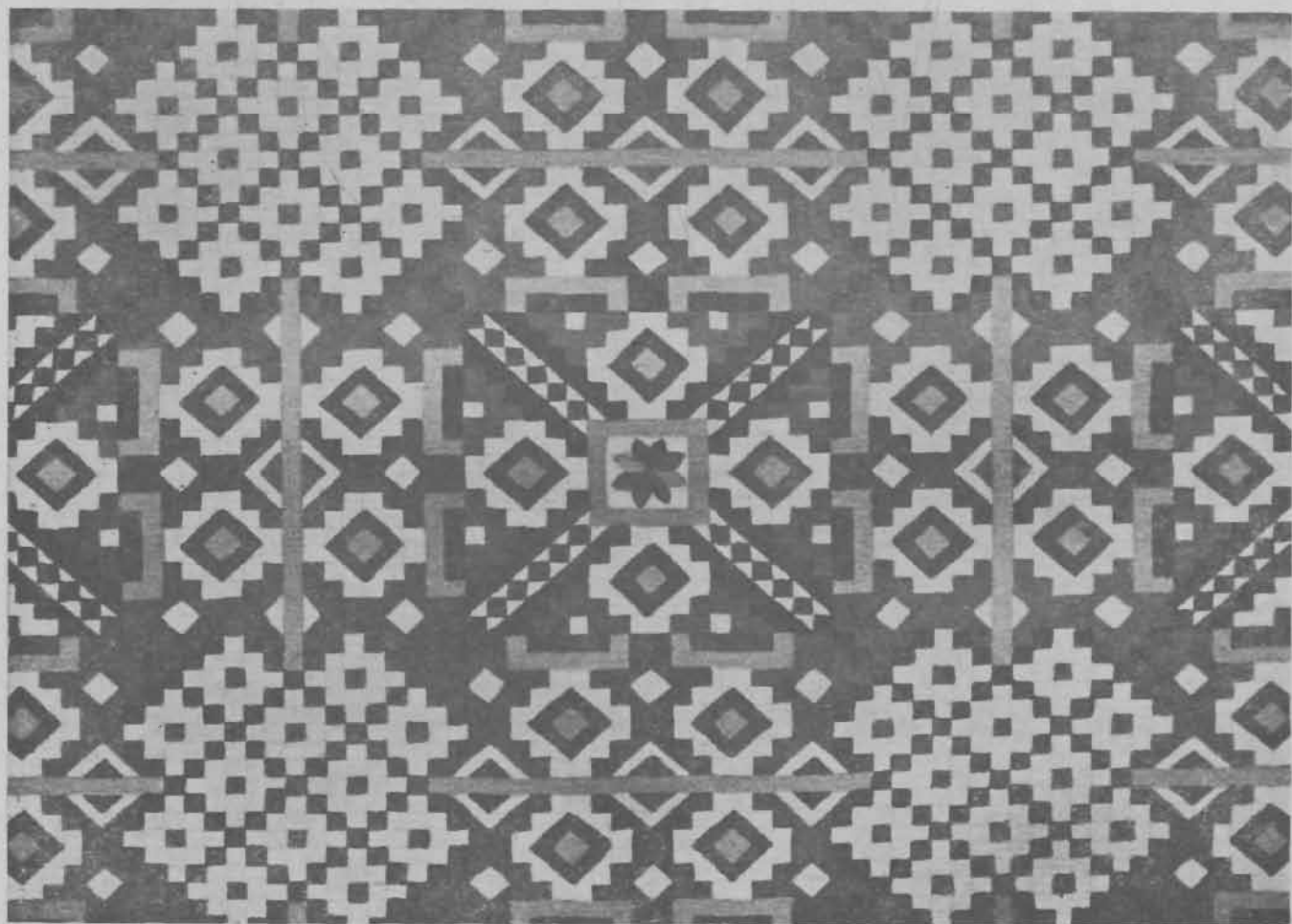


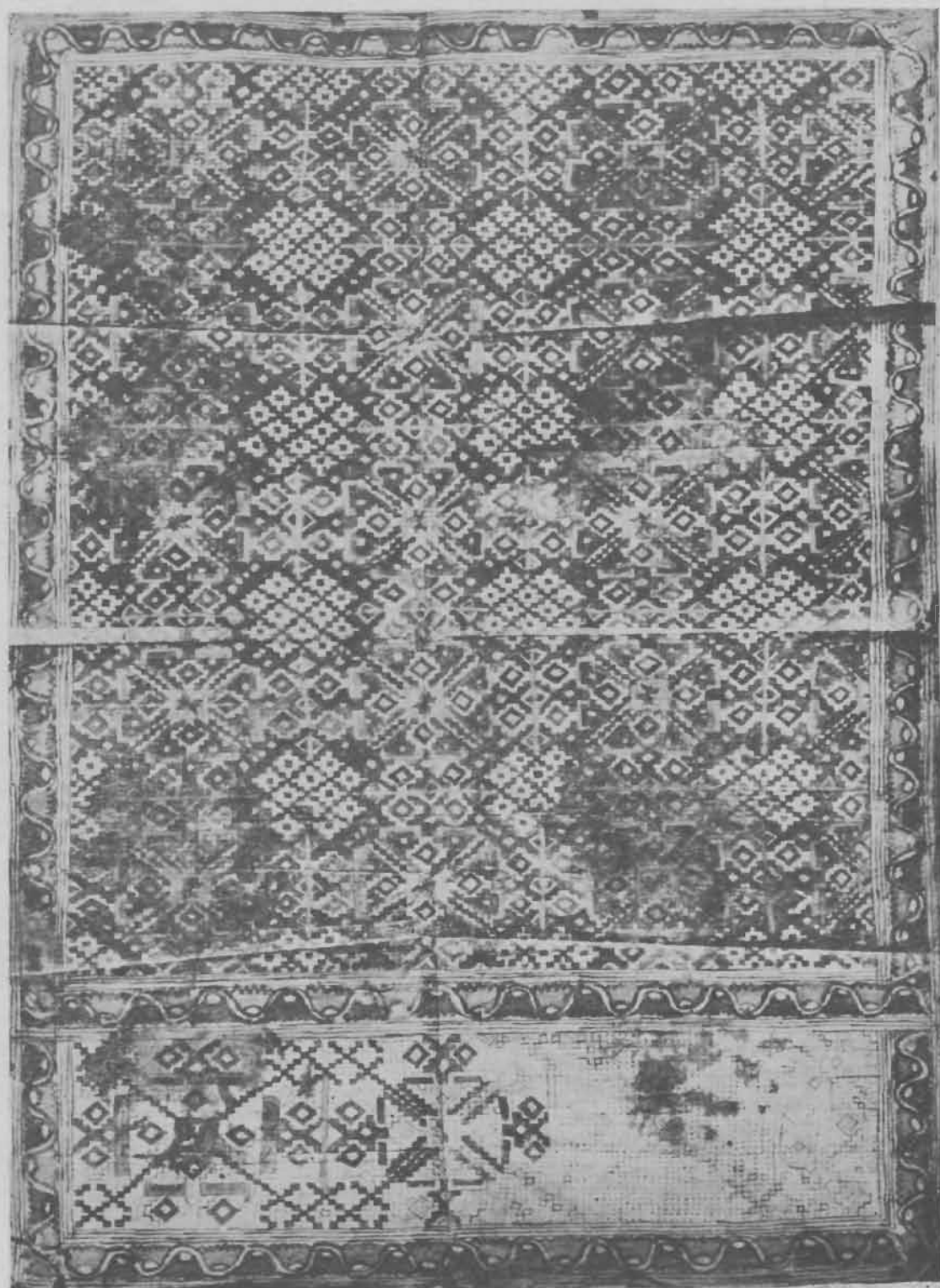


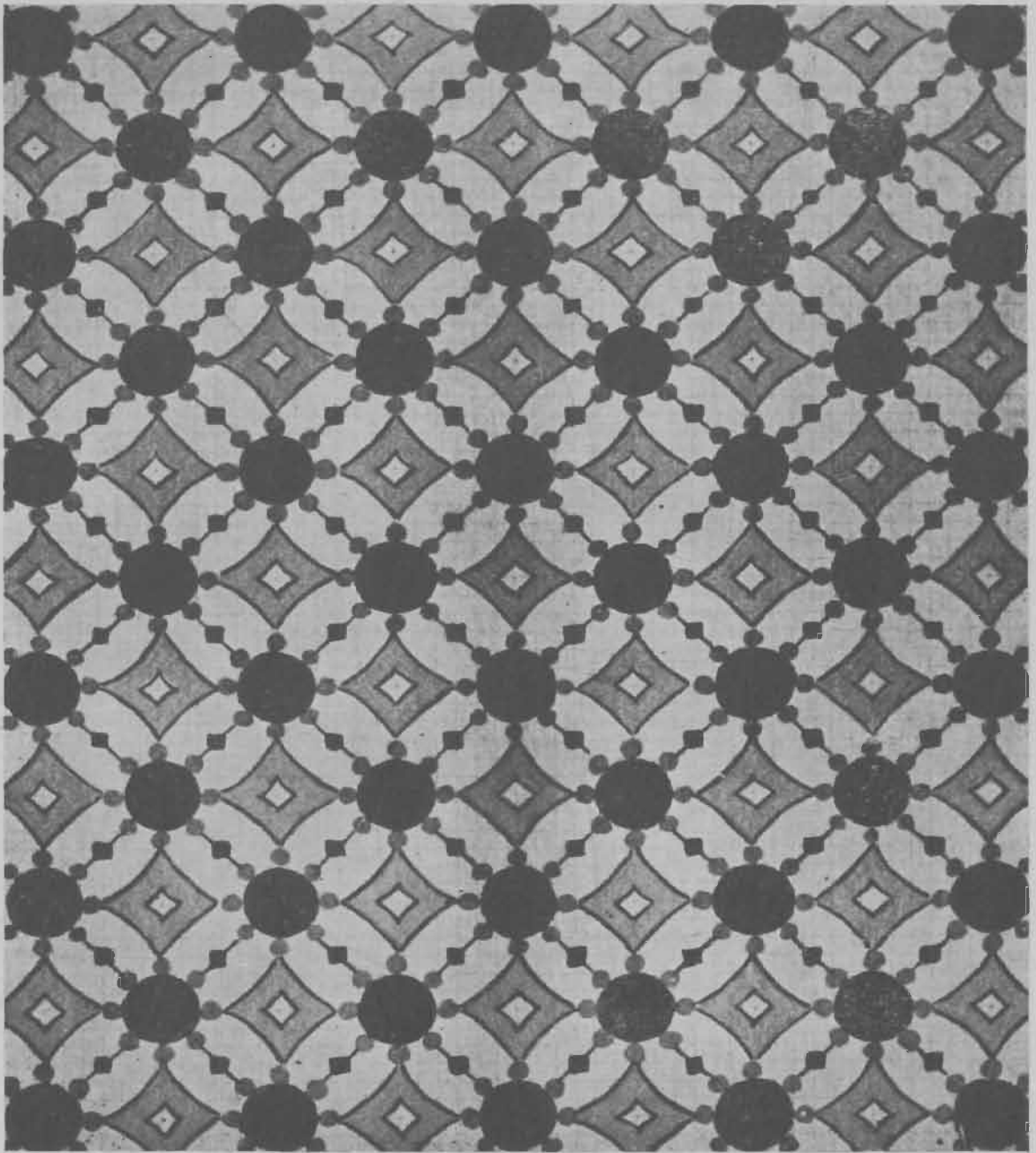


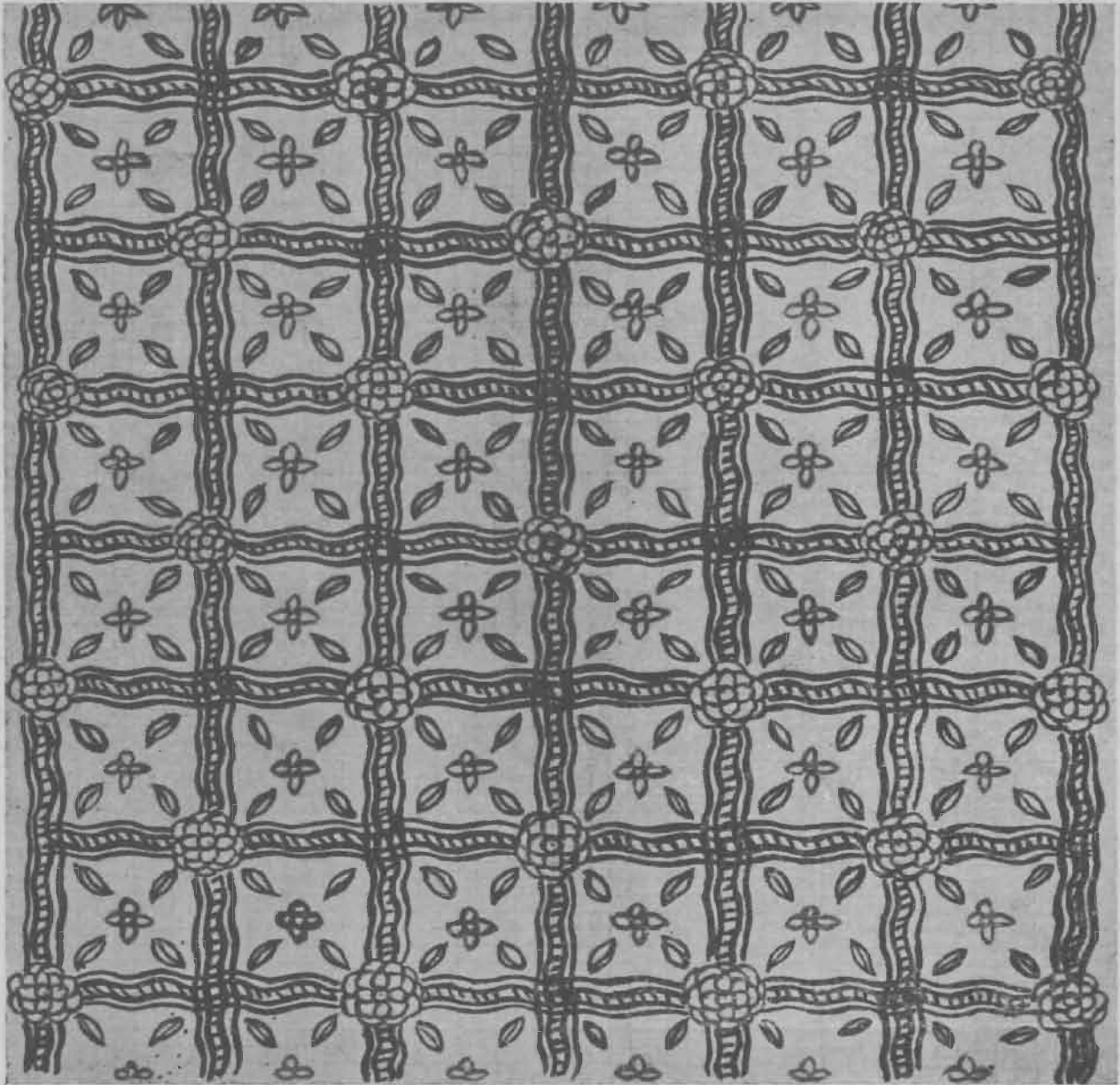


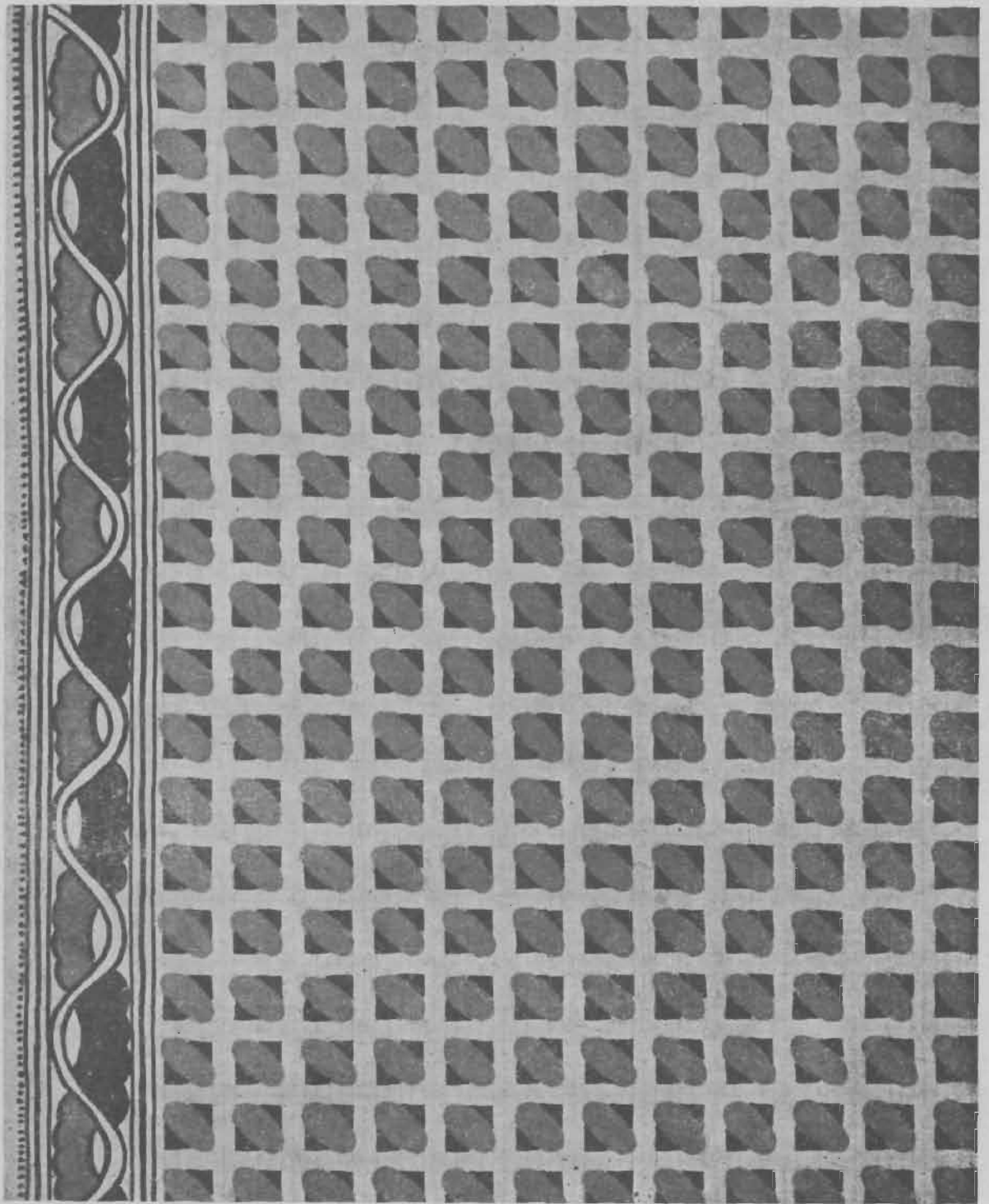


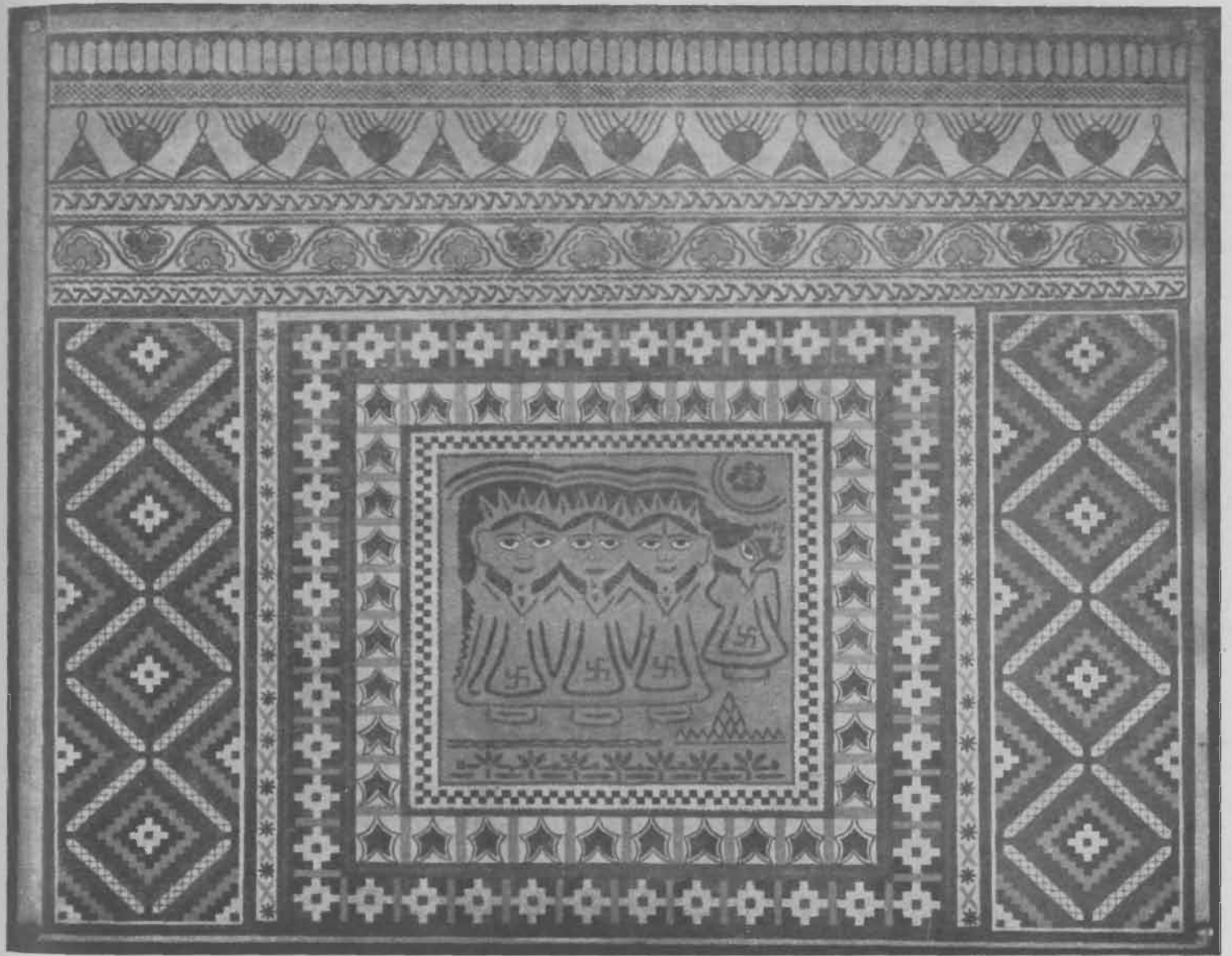




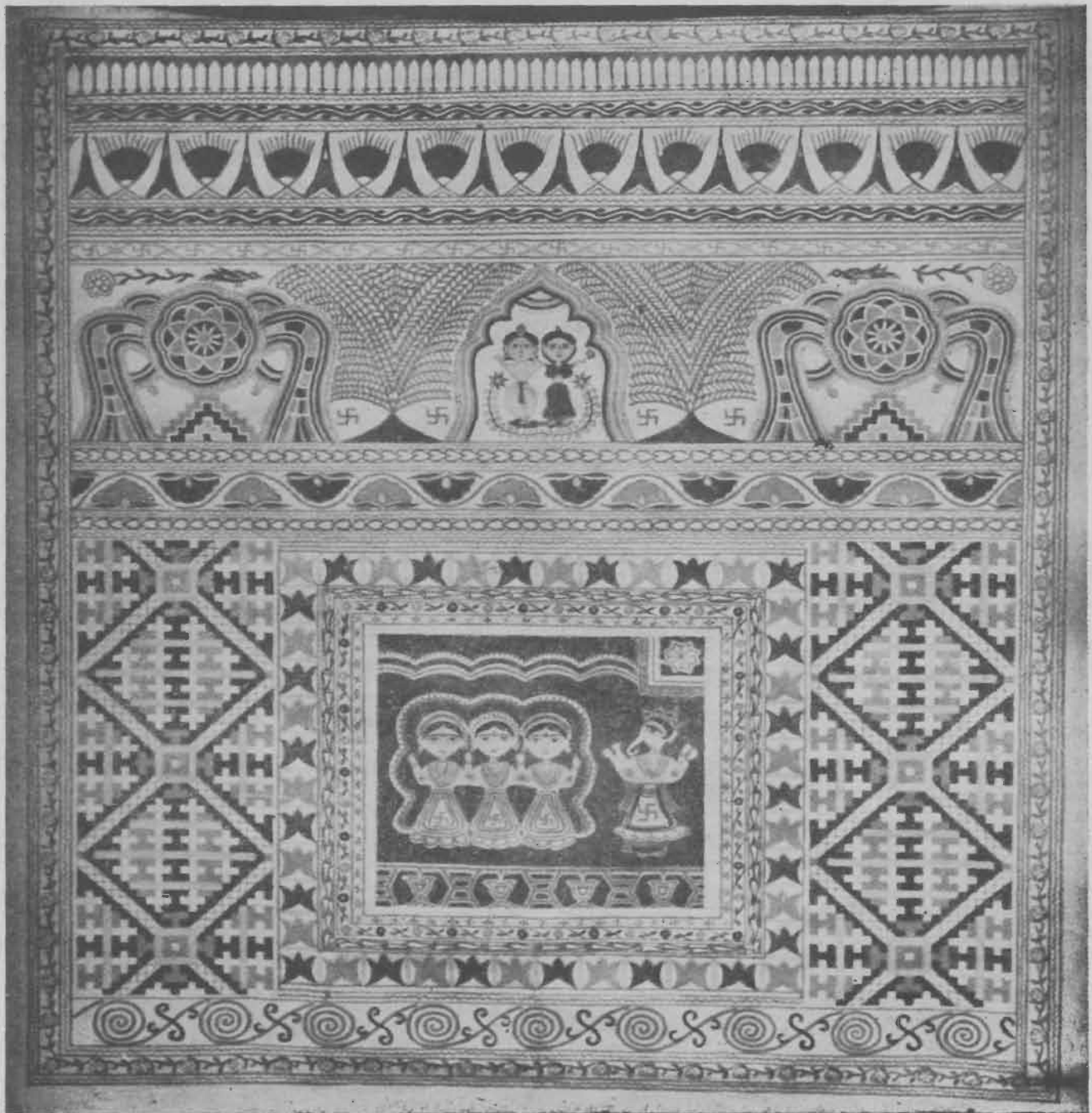


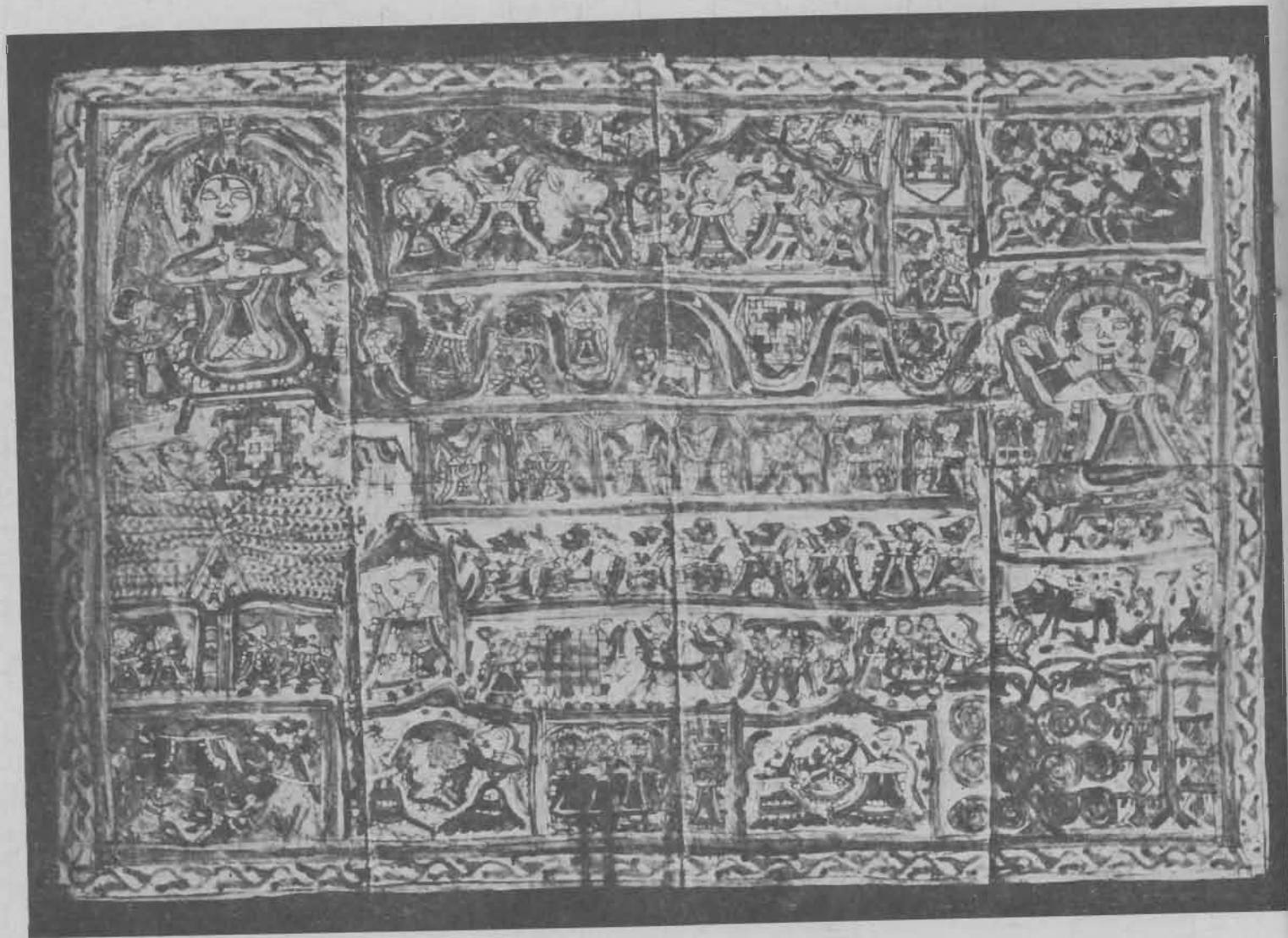


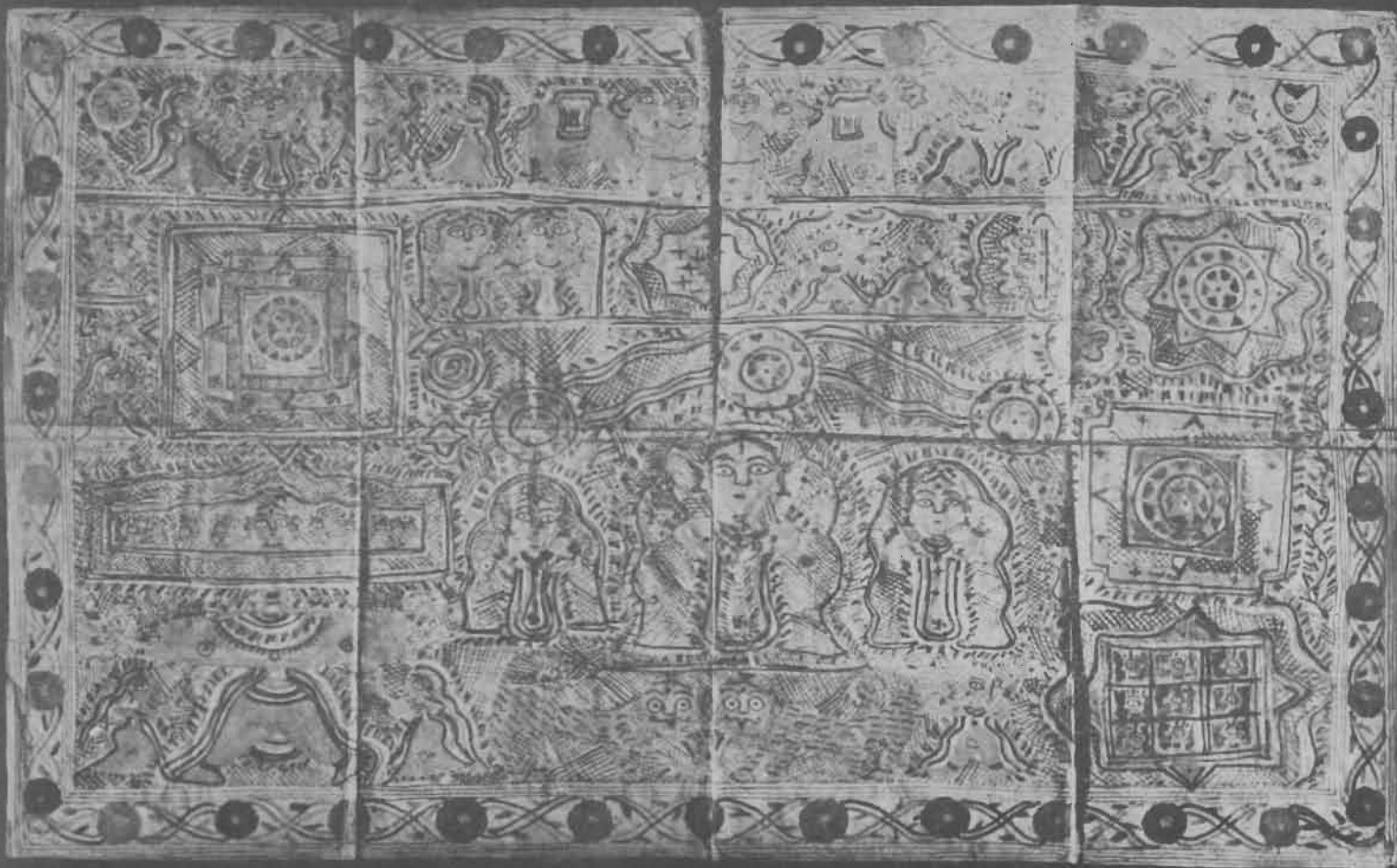


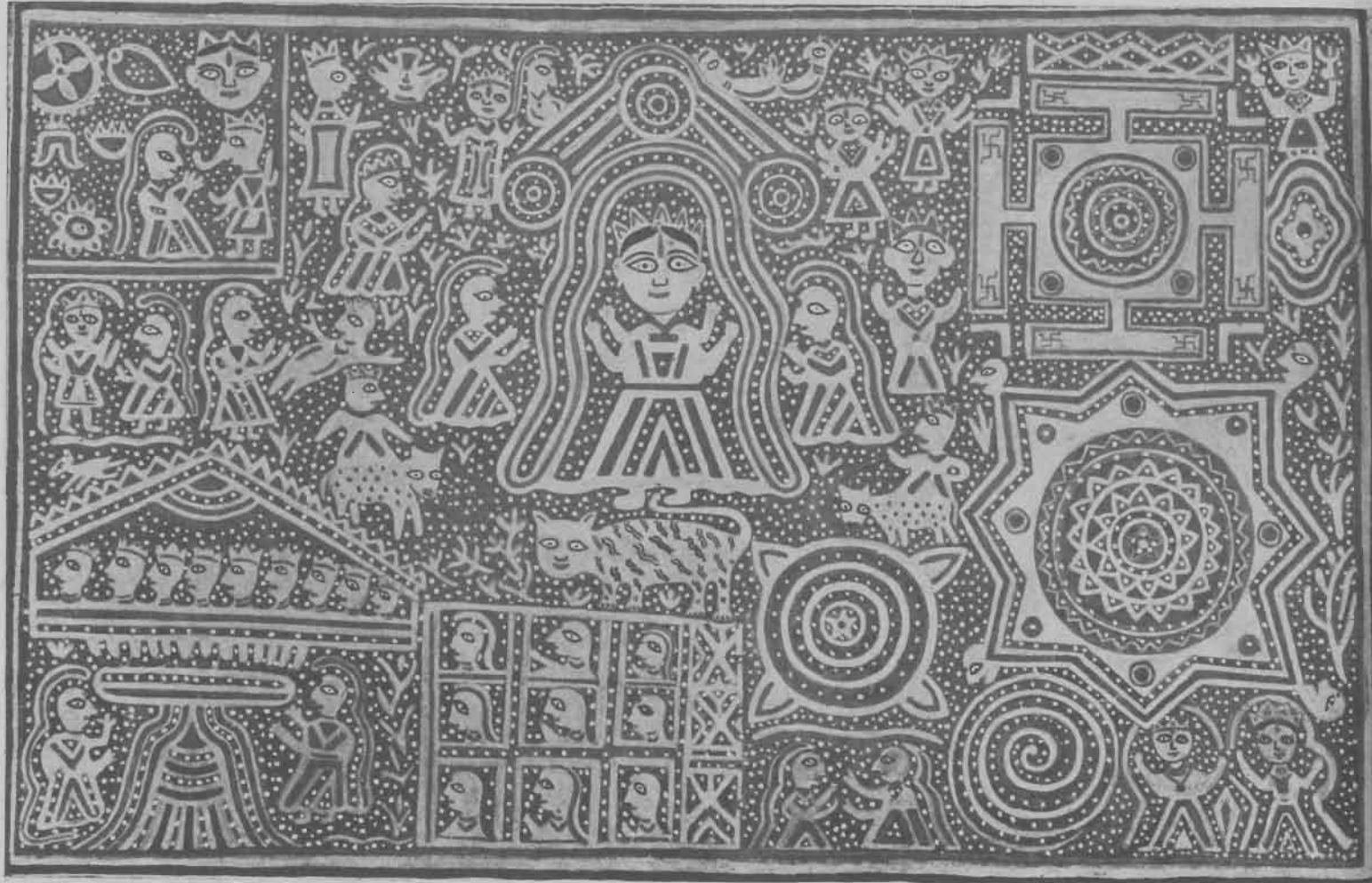


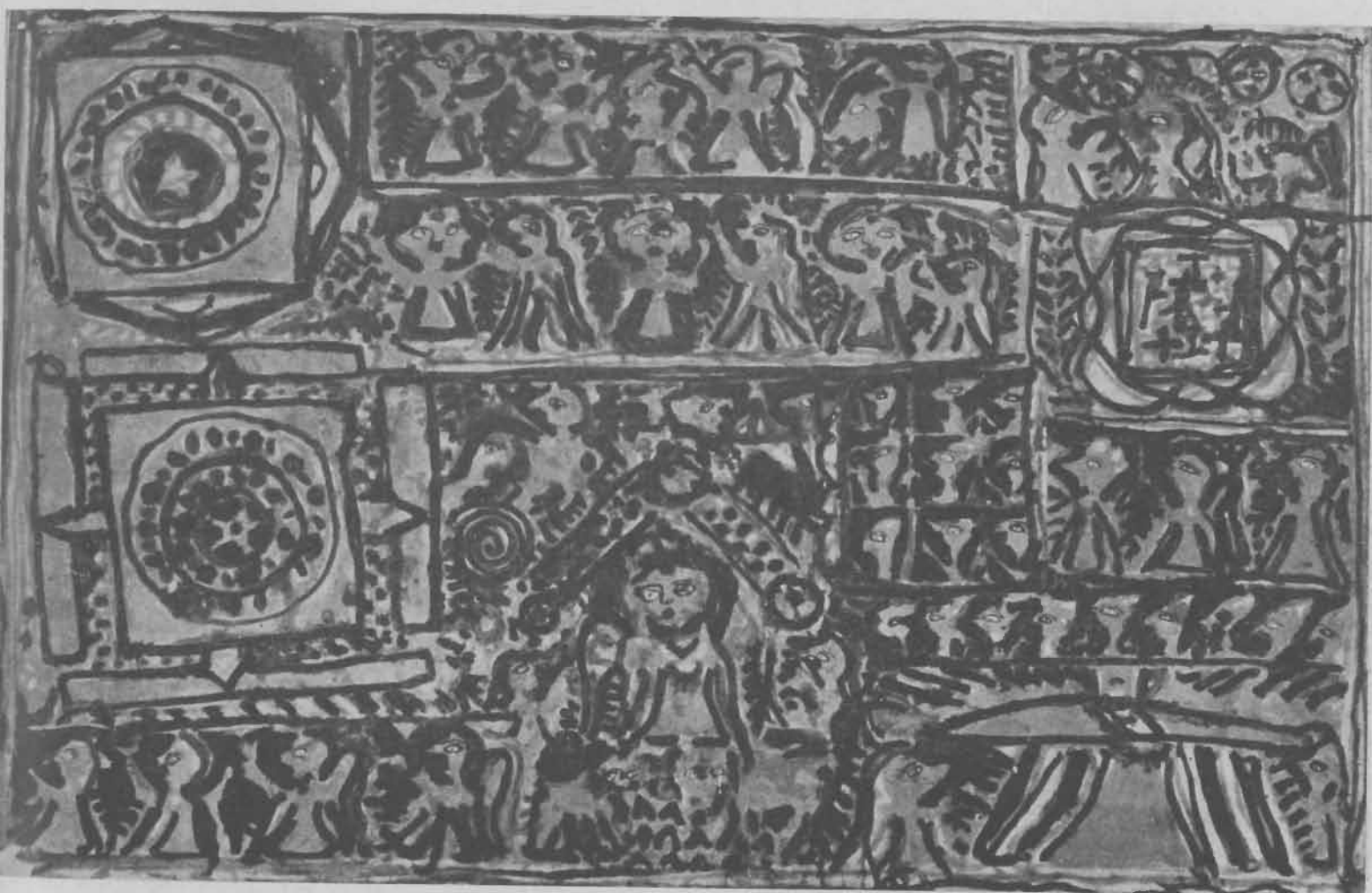








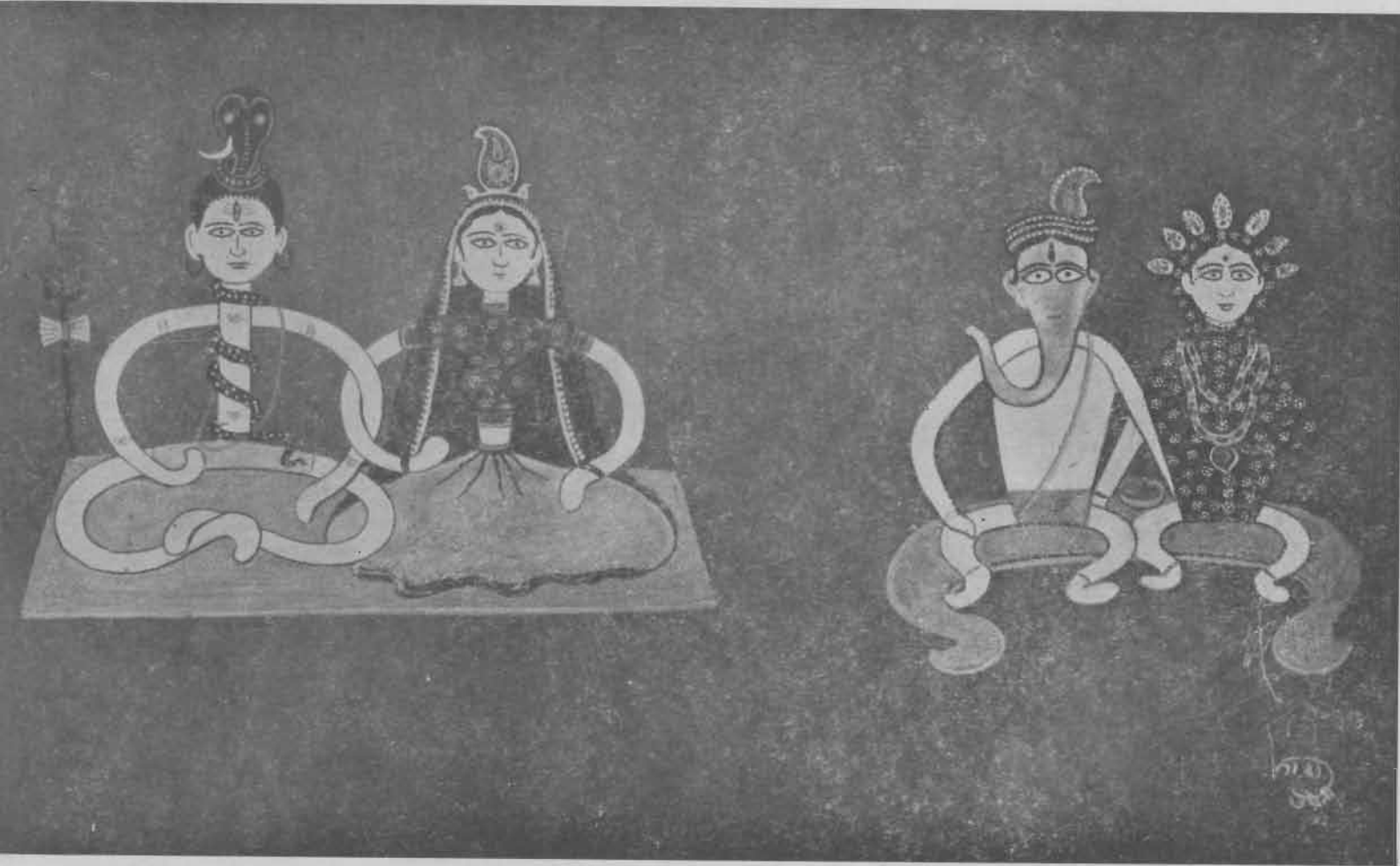






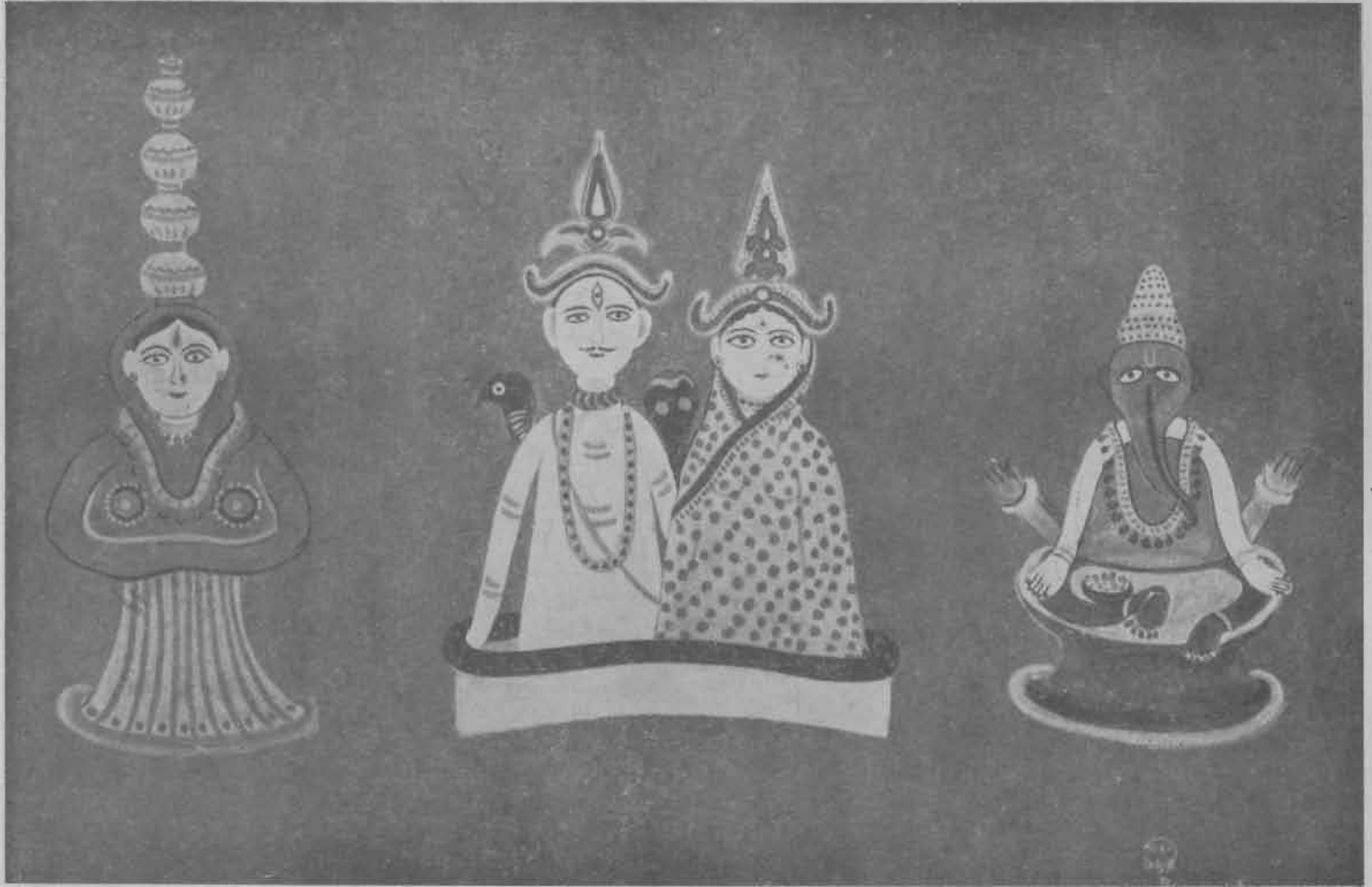






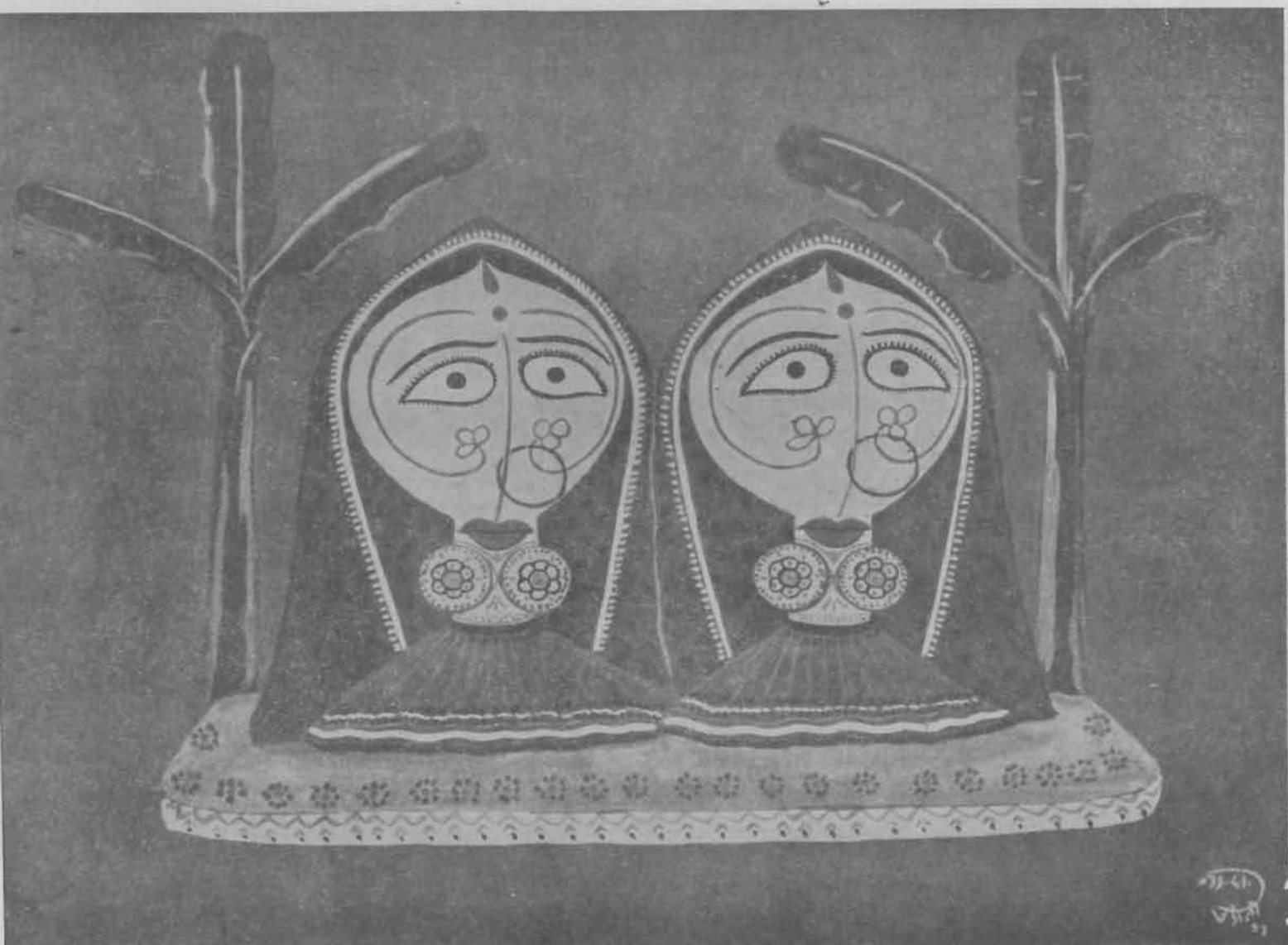


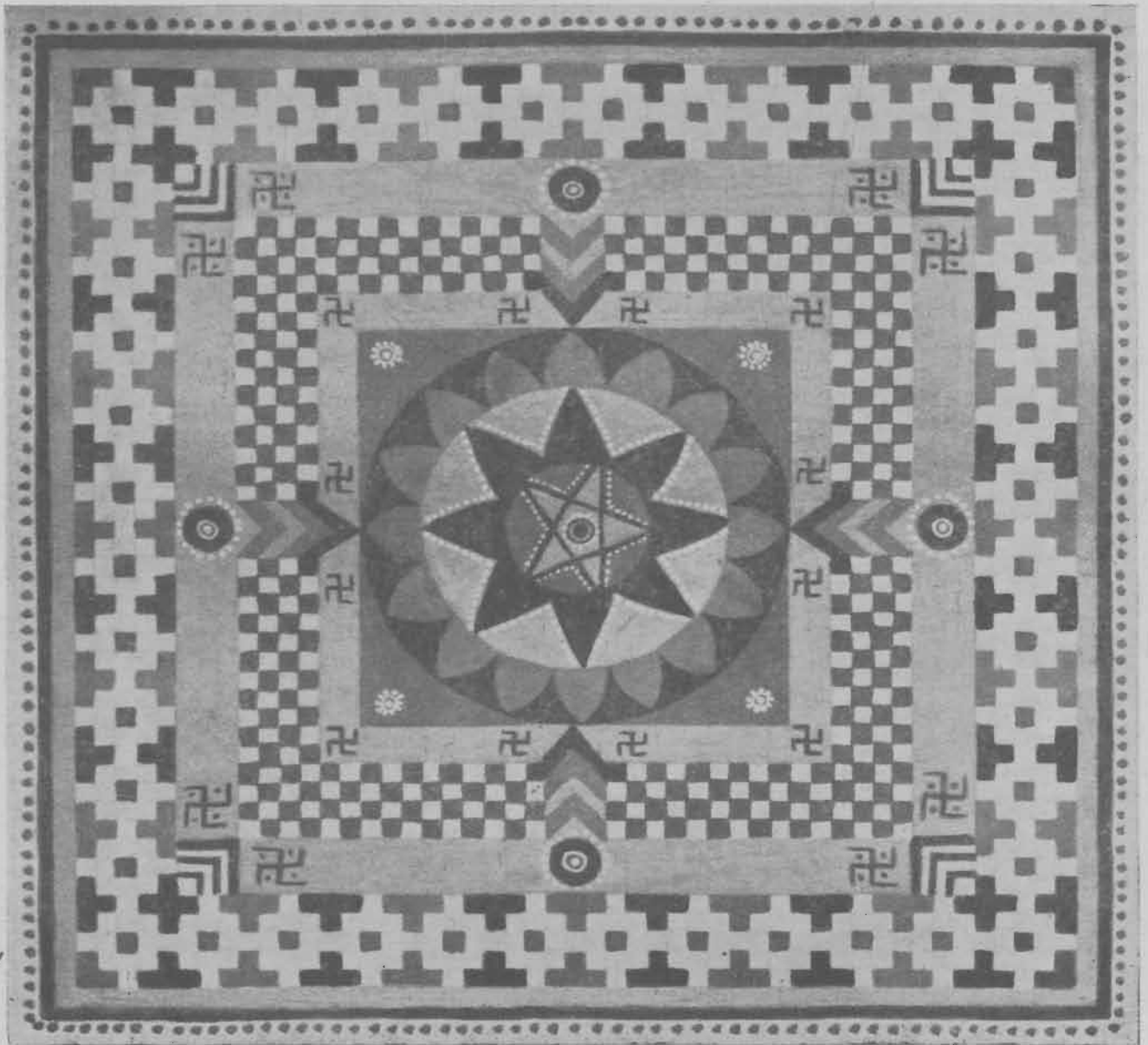


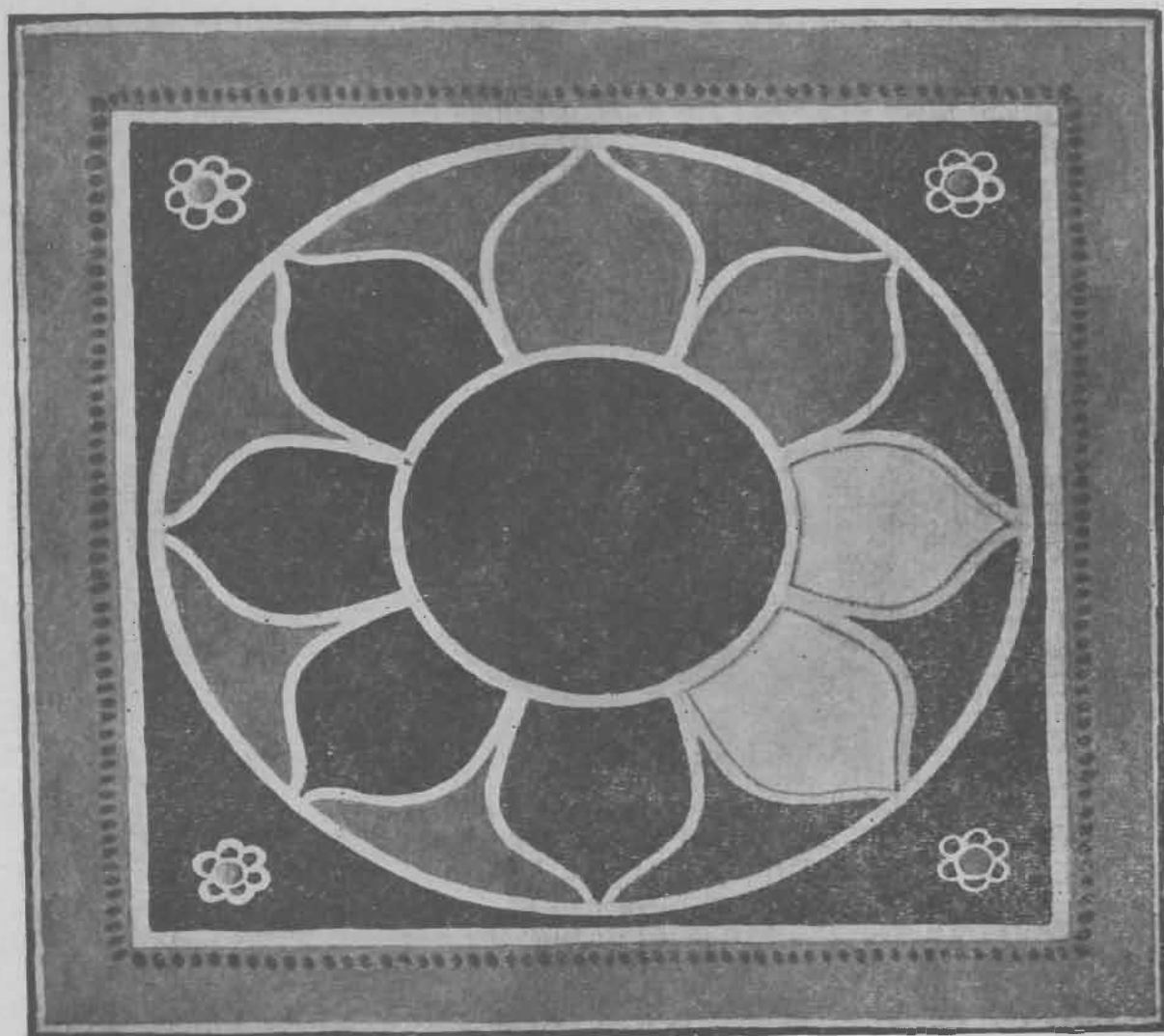


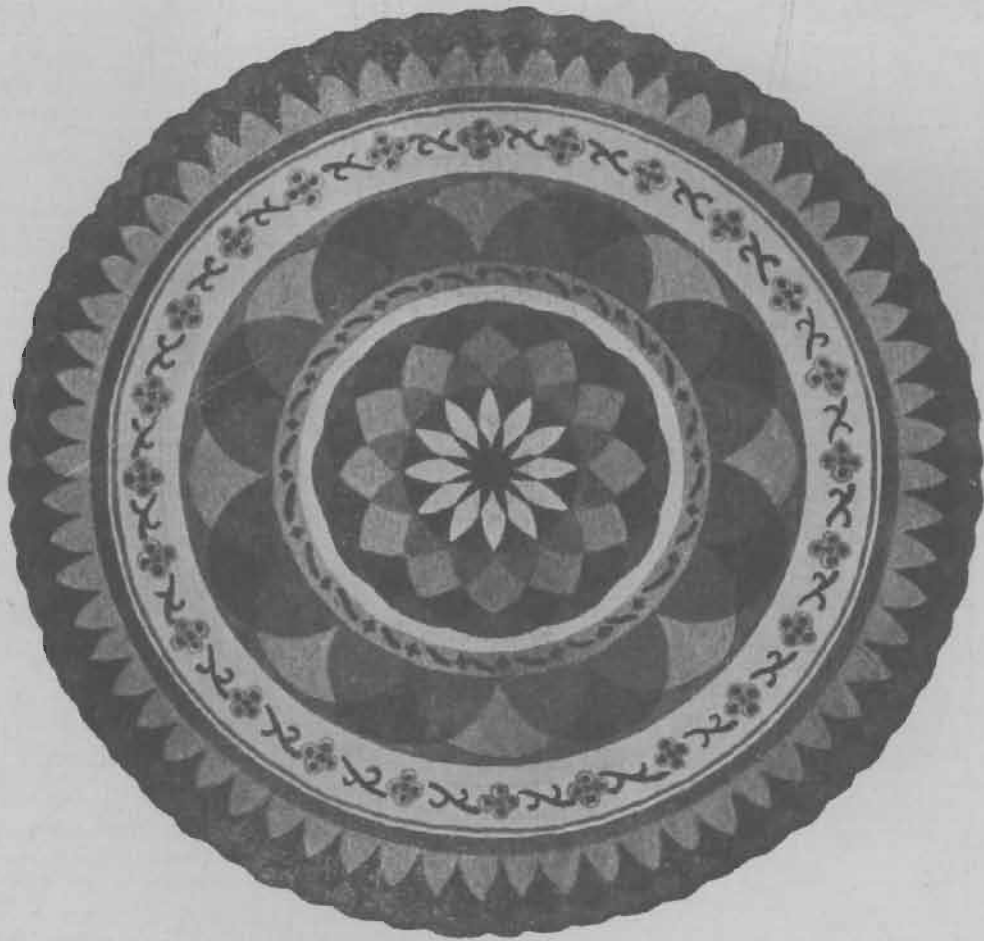


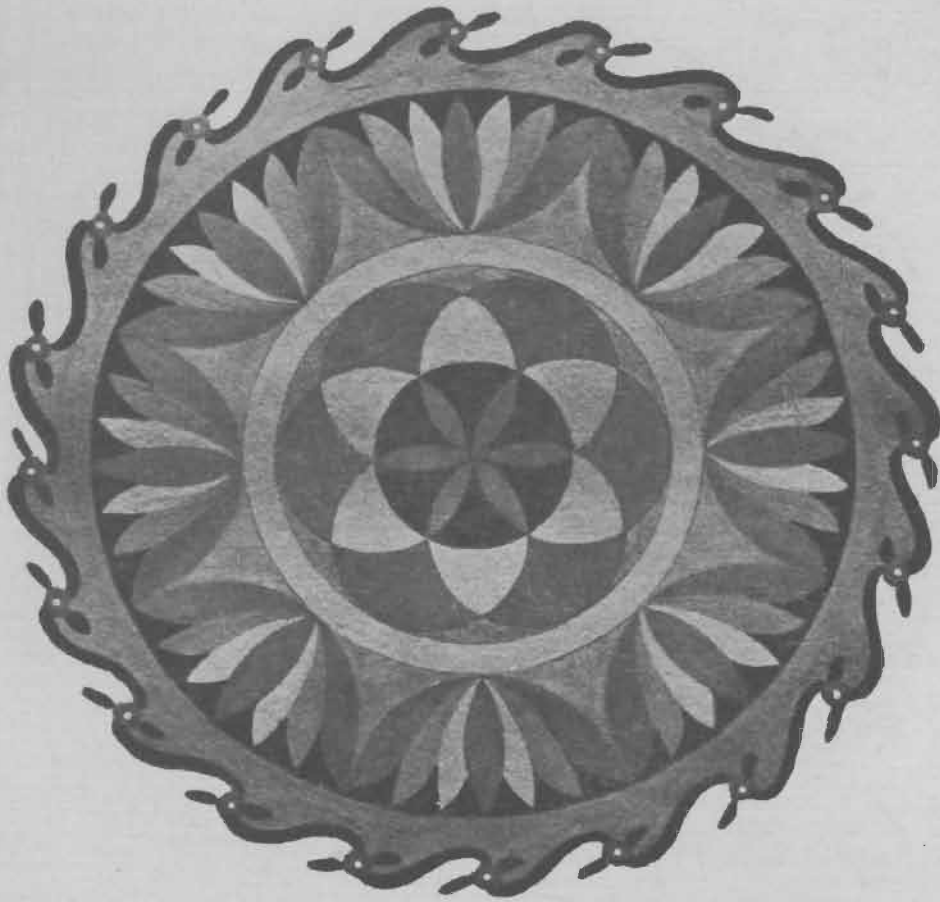


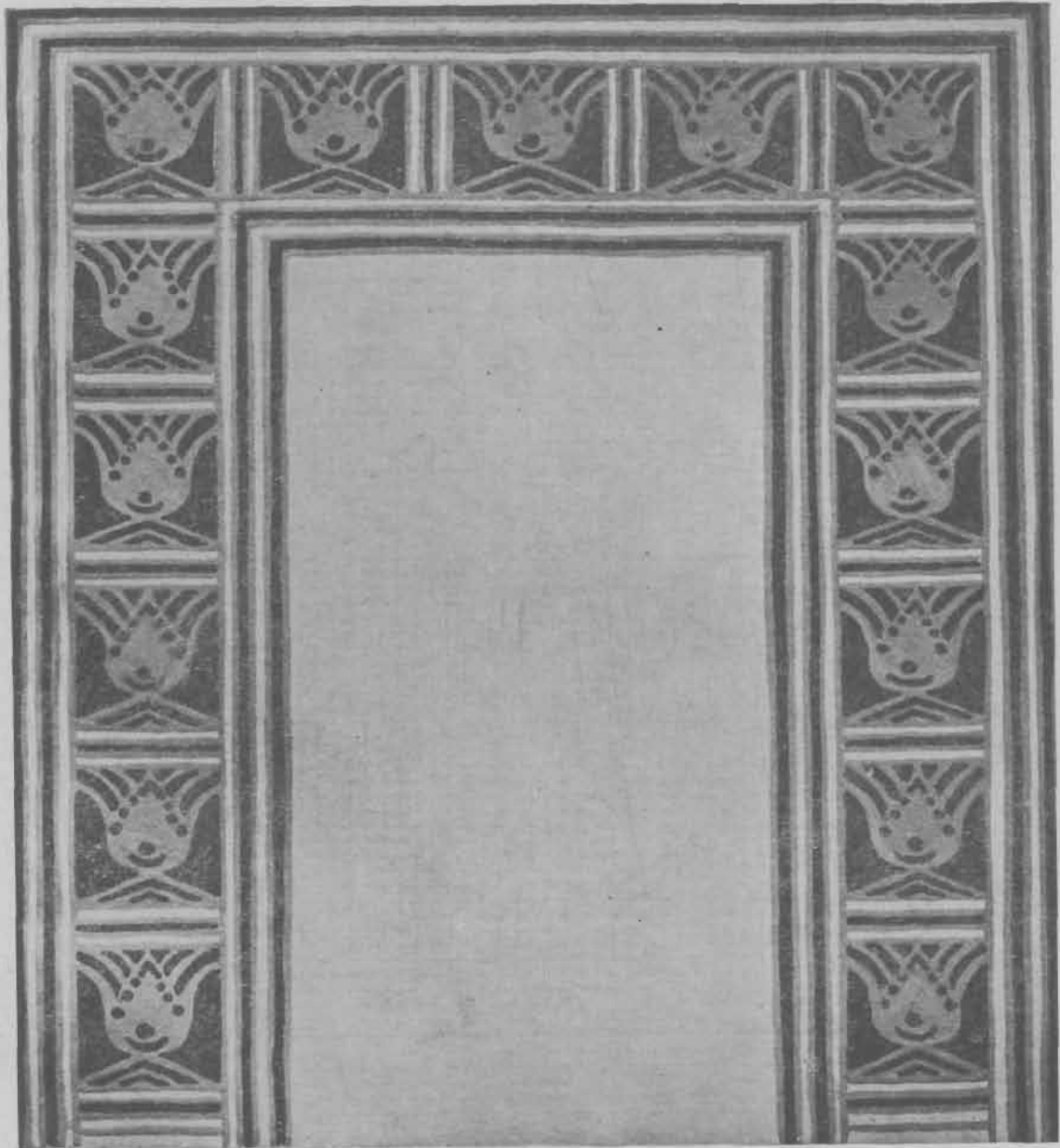


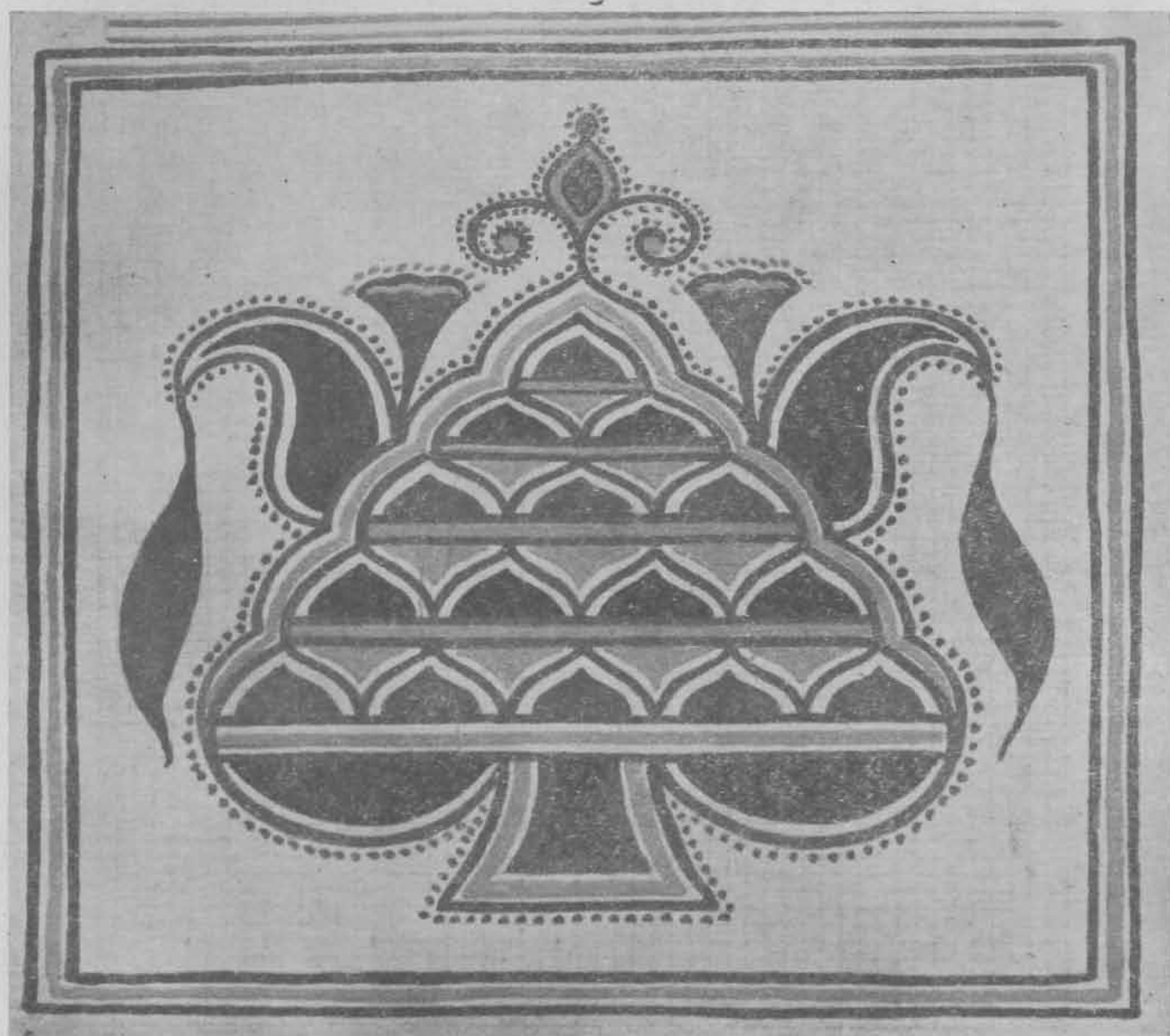








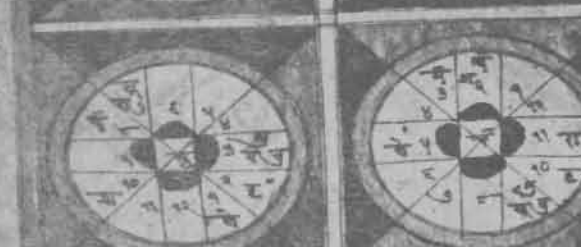
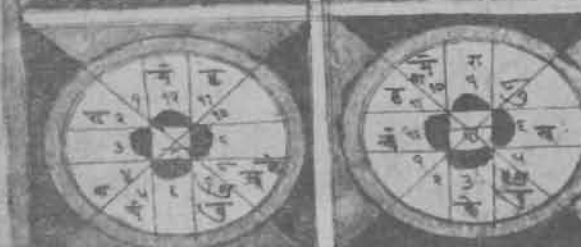
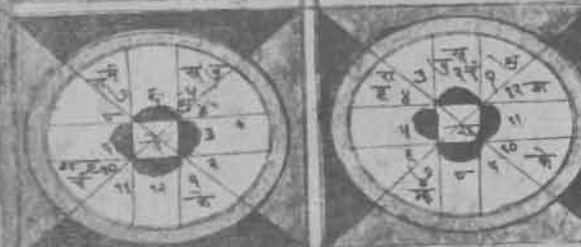
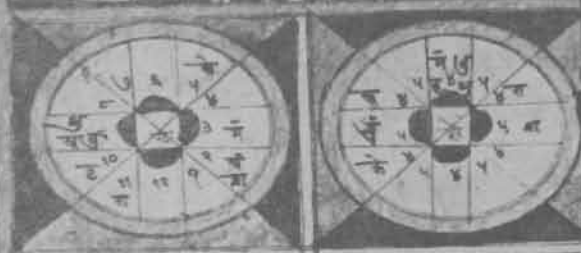




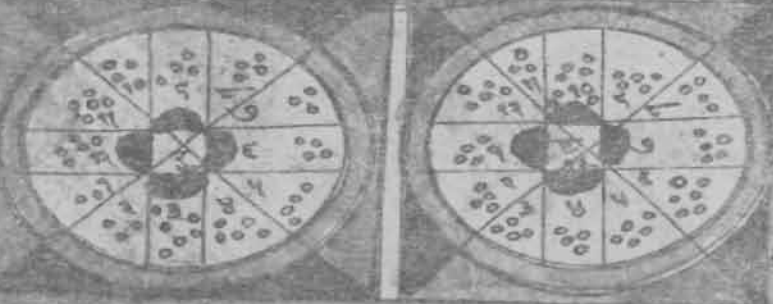
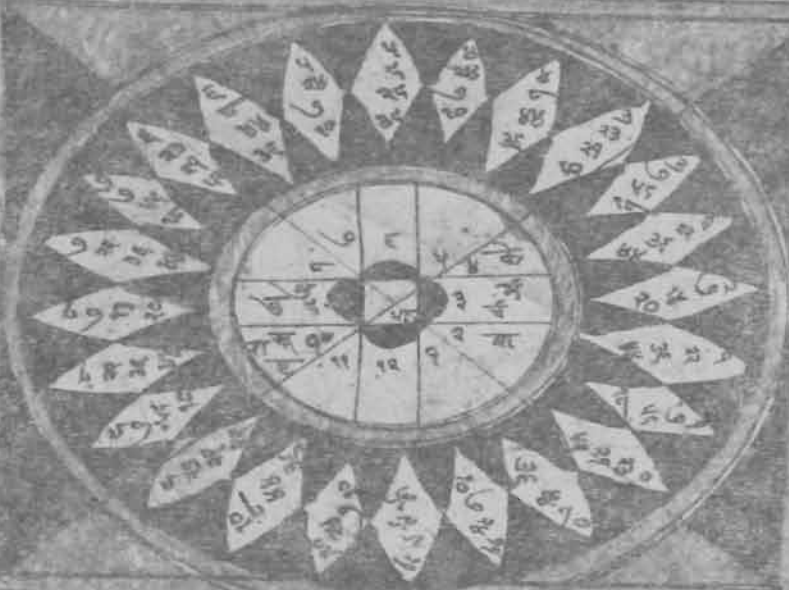




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 चित्रं मेरे शपथसाधने ॥ अथारवादि गृहाणां अष्टकुलुषिकायां कमेऽलि रच्यते



अथेष्टां पालानि शेषां तेषाम् यथा हरेर्निम्नयोर्हारावजसविताई कारायाः कवि
 यन्निचयः कृपा कमेऽलि क्रीतं वरुणकृपाभक्त विस्तारमया प्रणिष्ठायां कृपायां भा
 यं इत्येतानि प्रविष्टं चित्तोक्ते विस्तारम् ॥ अथारवादि गृहाणां अष्टकुलुषिकायां कमेऽलि रच्यते
 विष्टेष्टावाचिते तदाह्वयः शिवतत्त्वतो धर्मोऽस्तीत्युक्तं नारायणः
 हि हस्तीविषये तन्मे गणेशं प्रापेदं दुर्गा भवती बालकस्य बनेता स्मरतां तेषां
 चित्रं मेरे शपथसाधने ॥ अथारवादि गृहाणां अष्टकुलुषिकायां कमेऽलि रच्यते
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[illegible][illegible]

