

**MONISM AND CLASSICAL INDIAN AESTHETICS WITH SPECIAL
REFERENCE TO ANANDA K. COOMARASWAMY'S AESTHETIC THEORY**

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Ananda.K.Coomaraswamy [1877-1947] was a cardinal figure in twentieth century art history and in the cultural confrontation between East and West. He was one of the great seminal minds in the world's intellectual history and the most distinguished and tireless exponent of Philosophia Perennis – the Universal Philosophy and the Message of East and West. This research project explored the most important and influential theme of Indian Philosophy and Aesthetics as Monistic Phenomenology, which is the core message of Coomaraswamy's writings. Monism is one of the most important and influential notions of Indian philosophy and culture. Monism was interpreted in various ways. Many of the historians and critics of Indian philosophy interpreted monism as an idealistic ideology, which has no social relevance in practical life. But monism should be understood in its proper sense to show its practical social relevance. Monism as the expression of classical Indian Aesthetics forms the basis of inter-subjective understanding and total vision of reality. Monistic Phenomenology is the core message of Indian philosophy, ethics, aesthetics and art. This practical understanding of monism is not only an ideology but also a phenomenological understanding of unity of all beings. Ananda K. Coomaraswamy interpreted these philosophical bases of Eastern culture to the West while introducing the classical West to the West. AKC's intellectual career started with *The Aims of Indian Art* and *Medieval Sinhalese Art* [1908] and ended with *Am I Brother's Keeper?* and *Time and Eternity* [1947]. His profound understanding and knowledge of the sources of many cultures of both East and West led him to explore the Perennial Philosophy, showing the illustrations from the classical literatures of various human cultures that their apparent diversity is in fact dialects of one and the same spiritual language.

Coomaraswamy wrote profusely and with meticulous scholarship on a wide range of subjects. His writings cover nearly a thousand items in all fields – Art history, Philosophy, Aesthetics, Anthropology, Sociology, Nationalism, Political Theory, Symbolism, Metaphysics Religion and Literature - and many of his writings deal with conflict between traditional and modern values. This paper deals with his views on Aesthetics with special reference to Monistic Phenomenology and classical Indian aesthetics. Phenomenological understanding of classical Indian aesthetics explores the common humanity and total human experience in Coomaraswamy's writings. According to Coomaraswamy, the essential contribution of India is her 'Indianness' and India's contribution to the world's civilization comes from her Philosophy that involves the unity of all beings as the common basis of Humanity. Coomaraswamy's writings in this field explore the significant social message and promote inter-cultural understanding.

