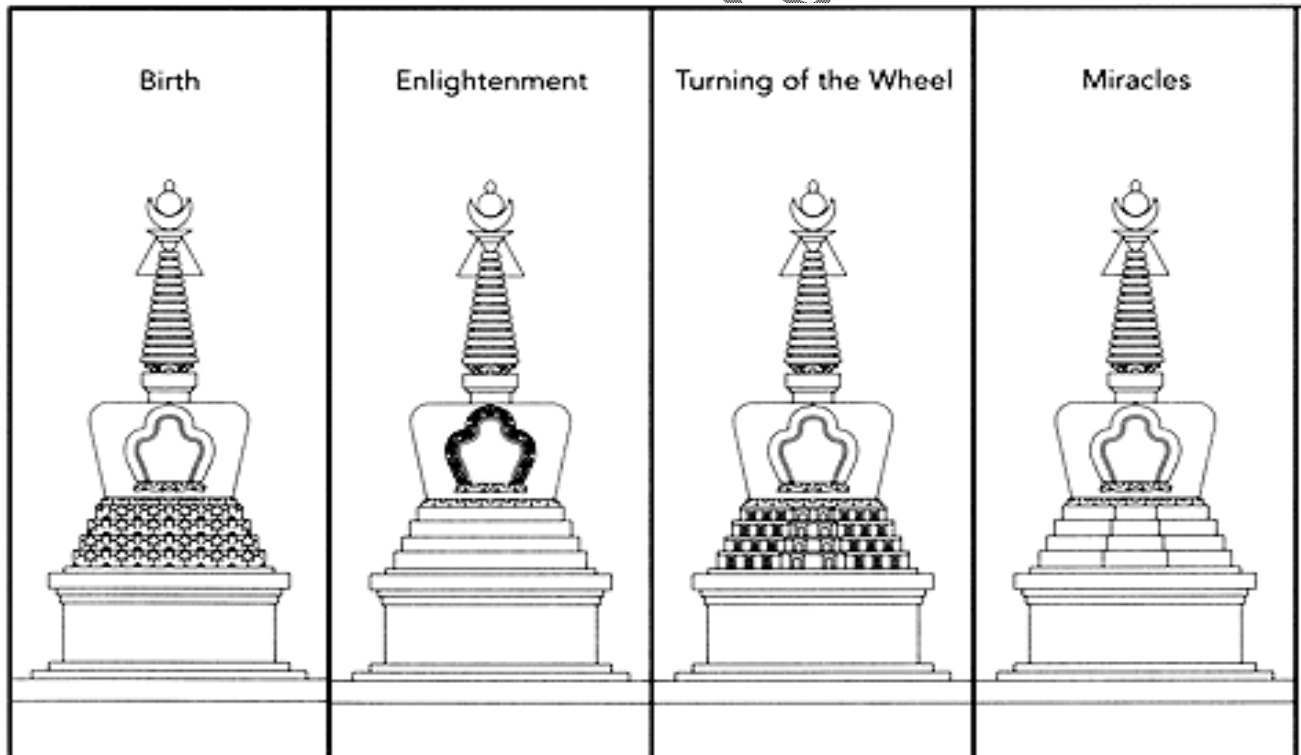


Plan of Stupa-1, Sanchi



Chapter 3 ARTS OF THE MAURYAN PERIOD

- **SIXTH** century BCE marks the beginning of new religious and social movements in the Gangetic valley in the form of **Buddhism and Jainism** which were part of the *shraman* tradition.
- Opposed the *varna and jati systems* of the Hindu religion.
- Worship of *Yakshas* and **mothergoddesses** were prevalent during that time. So, multiple forms of worship existed.

Pillars, Sculptures and Rock-cut Architecture

- **Mauryan pillars** are different from the **Achamenian pillars**. The **Mauryan pillars** are **rock-cut pillars** thus **displaying the carver's skills**, whereas the **Achamenian pillars** are **constructed in pieces** by a mason.
- The top portion of the pillar was carved with capital figures like the **bull, the lion, the elephant**, etc.
- All the capital figures are vigorous (**जोरदार**) and carved (**नक्काशीदार**) standing on a square or circular abacus. Abacuses (**शीर्ष फलक**) are decorated with stylised lotuses. Some of the existing pillars with capital figures were found at **Basarah-Bakhira, Lauriya- Nandangarh, Rampurva, Sankisa and Sarnath**.
- The Mauryan pillar capital found at **Sarnath** popularly known as the **Lion Capital** is the finest example of Mauryan sculptural tradition. It is also our **national emblem**. It is carved with considerable care—voluminous roaring lion figures firmly standing on a circular abacus which is carved with the figures of **a horse, a bull, a lion and an elephant** in vigorous movement, executed with precision, showing considerable mastery in the sculptural techniques. This pillar capital symbolising **Dharmachakrapravartana (the first sermon by the Buddha)** has become a standard symbol of this great historical event in the life of the Buddha.
- Large statues of **Yakshas and Yakinis** are found at many places like **Patna, Vidisha and Mathura**.
- Terracotta figurines show a very different delineation of the body as compared to the sculptures. Depiction of a monumental **rock-cut elephant** at **Dhuli in Orissa** shows modelling in round with linear rhythm. It also has Ashokan rock-edict. All these examples are remarkable in their execution of figure representation.
- The rock-cut cave carved at **Barabar hills** near **Gaya** in Bihar is known as the **Lomus Rishi cave**.
- The facade of the cave is decorated with the semicircular **chaitya** arch as the entrance. The elephant frieze carved in high relief (**उभडी हुईनक्काशी**) on the **chaitya** arch shows considerable movement. The interior hall of this cave is rectangular with a circular chamber at the back. The entrance is located on the side wall of the hall. The **cave was patronised** by **Ashoka** for the **Ajivika sect**.
- It is important to note that the **stupas** were constructed over the relics of the Buddha at **Rajagraha, Vaishali, Kapilavastu, Allakappa, Ramagrama, Vethadipa, Pava,**

Kushinagar and **Pippalvina**. The **textual tradition** also mentions construction of various other *stupas* on the relics ([अवशेष](#)) of the Buddha at several places including **Avanti** and **Gandhara** which are outside the **Gangetic valley**.

- *Stupa, vihara and chaitya* are part of **Buddhist and Jaina** monastic complexes but the **largest number belongs to the Buddhist religion**.
- A *stupa* in the **third century BCE** is at **Bairat in Rajasthan**. It is a very **grand stupa** having a **circular mound** with a **circumambulatory path**. The great *stupa* at **Sanchi** was built with bricks during the time of Ashoka and later it was covered with stone and many new additions were made.
- There are very few inscriptions mentioning the names of artisans such as **Kanha at Pitalkhora** and his **disciple Balaka at Kondane caves**. Artisans' categories like **stone carvers, goldsmiths, stone-polishers, carpenters**, etc. are also mentioned in the inscription.
- The first sermon or the *Dhammachakrapravartana* by the Buddha at Sarnath, the **capital** was **built by Ashoka**. The capital originally consisted of **five component parts**: (i) the **shaft** ([पतला डंडा](#)) (which is broken in many parts now), (ii) a lotus bell base, (iii) a drum on the bell base **with four animals** proceeding **clockwise**, (iv) the figures of four majestic addorsed lions, and (v) the crowning element, *Dharamchakra*, a **large wheel**, was also a part of this pillar.
- The abacus has the depiction of a *chakra* (**wheel**) having twenty-four spokes in all the four directions and **a bull, a horse, an elephant and a lion** between every *chakra* is finely carved. The motif of the *chakra* becomes significant as a representation of the *Dhammachakra* in the entire Buddhist art.
- The life-size standing image of a **Yakshini** holding a *chauri* (**flywhisk**) from **Didargunj** near modern Patna is another good example of the sculptural tradition of the Mauryan Period.
- The *chauri* is held in the right hand whereas the left hand is broken. The image shows **Sophistication** ([बनावट](#)) **in the treatment of form and medium**. The sculptor's sensitivity towards the round muscular body is clearly visible.
- The *stupa* consists of a cylindrical drum and a circular *anda* with a **harmika and chhatra** on the top which remain consistent throughout with minor variations and changes in shape and size. Apart from the circumambulatory path, gateways were added. Thus, with the elaborations in *stupa* architecture, there was ample space for the architects and sculptors to plan elaborations and to carve out images.

- The *Jataka* stories, were depicted on the railings and *torans* of the *stupas*.
- Main events associated with the Buddha's life which were frequently depicted were events related to the **birth, renunciation, enlightenment, dhammachakrapravartana,** and *mahaparinibbana* (death).

Chapter 4

POST-MAURYAN TRENDS IN INDIAN ART AND ARCHITECTURE

- FROM the second century BCE onwards, various rulers **established their control over** the vast **Mauryan Empire: the Shungas, Kanvas, Kushanas and Guptas** in the **north** and parts of **central India; The Satvahanas, Ikshavakus, Abhiras, Vakataks** in **southern and western India.**
- Second century BCE also marked **the rise of the main Brahmanical sects** such as the **Vaishnavas and the Shaivas.** There are numerous sites dating back to the second century BCE in India. Some of the prominent examples of the finest sculpture are found at **Vidisha, Bharhut (Madhya Pradesh), Bodhgaya (Bihar), Jaggayyapeta (Andhra Pradesh), Mathura (Uttar Pradesh), Khandagiri-Udaigiri (Odisha), Bhaja near Pune and Pavani near Nagpur (Maharashtra).**

Bharhut (located in the Satna district of Madhya Pradesh)

- Bharhut sculptures are tall like the images of *Yaksha* and *Yakhshini* in the Mauryan period.
- In the relief panels depicting narratives, illusion of three dimensionality is shown with tilted perspective.
- Narrative reliefs at Bharhut show how artisans used the **pictorial language** very effectively to **communicate stories.** In one such narrative, showing **Queen Mayadevi's (mother of Siddhartha Gautam)** dream, a descending **elephant** is shown. The queen is shown reclining on the bed whereas an elephant is shown on the top heading towards the womb of Queen Mayadevi. On the other hand, the depiction of a **Jataka story** is very simple—narrated by clubbing the events according to the geographical location of the story like the depiction of **Ruru Jataka** where the **Boddhisattva deer** is rescuing a man on his back. The other event in the same picture frame depicts the King standing with his army and about to shoot an arrow at the deer, and the man who was rescued by the deer is also shown along with the king pointing a finger at the deer. According to the story, the man promised the deer after his rescue that he would not disclose his identity to anybody. But when the king makes a proclamation of reward for disclosing the identity of the deer, he turns hostile and takes the king to the same jungle where he had seen the deer.
- One main characteristic in all the male images of first–second centuries BCE is the **knotted headgear.**

Mathura, Sarnath and Gandhara Schools

- The first century CE onwards **Gandhara (now in Pakistan)**, **Mathura in northern India** and **Vengi in Andhra Pradesh** emerged as important centres of art production. **Buddha** in the symbolic form got a **human form in Mathura and Gandhara**. The sculptural tradition in **Gandhara** had the confluence (**संगम**) of Bactria, Parthia and the local Gandhara tradition.
- The Buddha image at **Mathura is modelled** on the lines of earlier **Yaksha** images whereas in **Gandhara** it has **Hellenistic features**.
- Images of **Vaishnava (mainly Vishnu and his various forms)** and **Shaiva (mainly the lingas and mukhalingas)** faiths are also found at Mathura but Buddhist images are found in large numbers.
- It may be noted that the images of Vishnu and Shiva are represented by their *ayudhas* (weapons).
- Many Buddha images in **Sarnath have plain transparent drapery (पर्दा)** covering both **shoulders**, and the **halo (प्रभामंडल)** around the head has **very little ornamentation (जेवर, अलंकार)** whereas the **Mathura Buddha** images continue to depict **folds of the drapery** in the Buddha images and the **halo around the head** is profusely decorated.

Early Temples

- The shrines of the temples were of **three kinds**—(i) *sandhara* type (without *pradikshinapatha*), (ii) *nirandhara* type (with *pradakshinapatha*), and (iii) *sarvatobhadra* (which can be accessed from all sides). Some of the important temple sites of this period are Deogarh in Uttar Pradesh, Eran, Nachna-Kuthara and Udaygiri near Vidisha in Madhya Pradesh.
- The **important stupa** sites **outside the Gangetic valley** are **Devnimori in Gujarat**.

Buddhist Monuments of South India

- **Vengi in Andhra Pradesh** has many *stupa* sites like **Jagayyapetta, Amaravati, Bhattiprolu, Nagarjunkonda, Goli**, etc. **Amaravati** has a *mahachaitya*.
- Amaravati Stupa also has *pradakshinapatha* enclosed within a *vedika* on which many narrative sculptures are depicted.
- Guntapalle is a rock-cut cave site near Eluru.
- In Karnataka, Sannati is the largest *stupa* site excavated so far.
- Along with the images of the Buddha, other Buddhist images of Boddhisattvas like Avalokiteshvara, Padmapani, Vajrapani, Amitabha, and Maitreya Buddha started getting sculpted.
- The rise of **Vajrayana** Buddhism many Boddhisattva images were added as a part of the personified representations of certain **virtues or qualities as propagated** by the Buddhist religious principles for the welfare of the masses.

Cave Tradition in Western India

- Three architectural types were executed—(i) apsidal vaultroof *chaitya* halls (found at Ajanta, Pitalkhora, Bhaja); (ii) apsidal vault-roof pillarless hall (found at Thana-Nadsur); and (iii) flat-roofed quadrangular hall with a circular chamber at the back (found at Kondivite).

Ajanta

@ Aurangabad District of Maharashtra, twenty-nine caves. It has four *chaitya* caves.

- The **second and the first** century BCE (Cave Nos. 10 and 9) and the later phase, i.e., the **fifth Century CE** (Cave Nos. 19 and 26). It has large *chaityaviharas* and is decorated with sculptures and paintings.
- Cave No. 26 is very big and the entire interior hall is carved with a variety of Buddha images, the biggest one being the *Mahaparinibbana* image. The rest of the caves are *vihara-chaitya* caves.
- patrons at Ajanta were Varahadeva (patron of Cave No. 16), the prime minister of the Vakataka king, Harishena; Upendragupta (patron of Cave Nos. 17–20) the local king of the region and feudatory of the Vakataka king, Harishena; Buddhahadra (patron of Cave No. 26); and Mathuradasa (patron of Cave No. 4).
- The themes of the paintings are the events from the **life of the Buddha**, the *Jatakas* and the *Avadanas*. Some paintings such as *Simhala Avadana*, *Mahajanaka Jataka* and *Vidharpundita Jataka* cover the entire wall of the cave.
- The images of Padmapani and Vajrapani are very common in Ajanta.

Ellora

- @located in Aurangabad District is Ellora.
- Buddhist, Brahmanical and Jain caves. the fifth century CE onwards to the eleventh century CE.
- There are twelve Buddhist caves having many images belonging to Vajrayana Buddhism like Tara, Mahamayuri, Akshobhya, Avalokiteshwara, Maitrya, Amitabha, etc. Buddhist caves are big in size and are of single, double and triple storeys.
- Ajanta also has excavated double-storeyed caves but at **Ellora**, the **triple storey** is a unique achievement.
- The **only double-storey cave** of the Brahmanical faith is Cave No. 14.
- He Brahmanical cave Nos. 13–28 have many sculptures. Many caves are dedicated to Shaivism, but the images of both Shiva and Vishnu and their various forms according to Puranic narrative are depicted. Among the Shaivite themes, Ravana shaking Mount Kailash, Andhakasurvadha, Kalyanasundara are profusely depicted whereas among the Vaishnavite themes, the different *avatars* of Vishnu are depicted.
- Cave No. 16 is known as Kailash leni. A rock-cut temple has been carved out of a single rock, a unique achievement of the artisans.

Elephanta Caves and Other Sites

- **The** Elephanta Caves located near Mumbai, were originally a Buddhist site which was later dominated by the Shaivite faith. It is contemporary with Ellora, and its sculptures show slenderness in the body, with stark light and dark effects. The other noteworthy cave site is **Bagh located near** Indore in **Madhya Pradesh**.
- rock-cut caves continued in the **Deccan** and they are found not only in **Maharashtra** but also in **Karnataka**, mainly at **Badami and Aiholi**, executed under the patronage of the **Chalukyas**; in **Andhra Pradesh** in the area of Vijayawada; and in **Tamil Nadu**, mainly at **Mahabalipuram**, under the patronage of the **Pallavas**.

Cave Tradition in Eastern India

- Buddhist caves have also been excavated in eastern India, mainly in the coastal region of Andhra Pradesh, and in Odisha.
- The Guntapalle *chaitya* cave is circular with a *stupa* in the circular hall and a *chaitya* arch carved at the entrance.
- The cave is relatively small when compared to the caves in western India.

SEATED BUDDHA, KATRA MOUND, MATHURA

- A large number of images dating back to the Kushana Period is from Mathura.
- The image of the Buddha from the Katra mound belongs to the second century CE. It represents the Buddha with two Bodhisattva attendants. The Buddha is seated in *padmasana* (cross-folded legs) and the right hand is in the *abhayamudra*, raised a little above the shoulder level whereas the left hand is placed on the left thigh. The *ushanisha*, i.e., hair knot, is shown with a vertically raised projection.
- Mathura sculptures from this period are made with light volume having fleshy body. The shoulders are broad. The *sanghati* (garment) covers only one shoulder and has been made prominently visible covering the left hand whereas while covering the torso, the independent volume of the garment is reduced to the body torso. The Buddha is seated on a lion throne.
- The attendant figures are identified as the Padmapani and Vajrapani Bodhisattvas as one holds a lotus and the other a *vajra* (thunderbolt).
- They wear crowns and are on either side of the Buddha. The halo around the head of the Buddha is very large and is decorated with simple geometric motifs. There are two flying figures placed diagonally above the halo. They bear a lot of movement in the picture space.
- It may be noted that there are numerous examples of sculptures from the Kushana Period at Mathura, but this image is representative and is important for the understanding of the development of the Buddha image in the subsequent periods.

BUDDHA HEAD, TAXILA

- The Buddha head from Taxila in the Gandhara region, now in Pakistan, dates back to the second century CE and belongs to the Kushana Period.
- The image shows hybridised pictorial conventions that developed during the Gandhara period. It has Greco-Roman elements in the treatment of sculpture. The Buddha head has typical Hellenistic elements that have grown over a period of time. The curly hair of the Buddha is thick having a covered layer of sharp and linear strokes over the head.

SEATED BUDDHA, SARNATH

- It has been made in **Chunar sandstone**. The Buddha is shown seated on a throne in the *padmasana*. It represents *dharmachakrapravartana* as can be seen from the figures on the throne. The panel below the throne depicts a *chakra* (wheel) in the centre and a deer on either side with his disciples. Thus, it is the representation of the historical event of *dharmachakrapravartana* or the preaching of the *dhamma*.
- The hands are shown in *dharmachakrapravartana mudra* placed just below the chest. The neck is slightly elongated with two incised lines indicating folds. The *ushanisha* has circular curled hairs. The aim of the sculptors in ancient India had always been to represent the Buddha as a great human being who achieved *nibbana* (i.e., cessation of anger and hate).

PADMAPANI BODDHISATTVA AJANTA CAVE NO. 1

- This painting on the back wall of the interior hall before the shrine-antechamber in Cave No. 1 at Ajanta dates back to the late fifth century CE. The Bodhisattva is holding a *padma* (lotus), has large shoulders, and has three bents in the body creating a movement in the picture space.

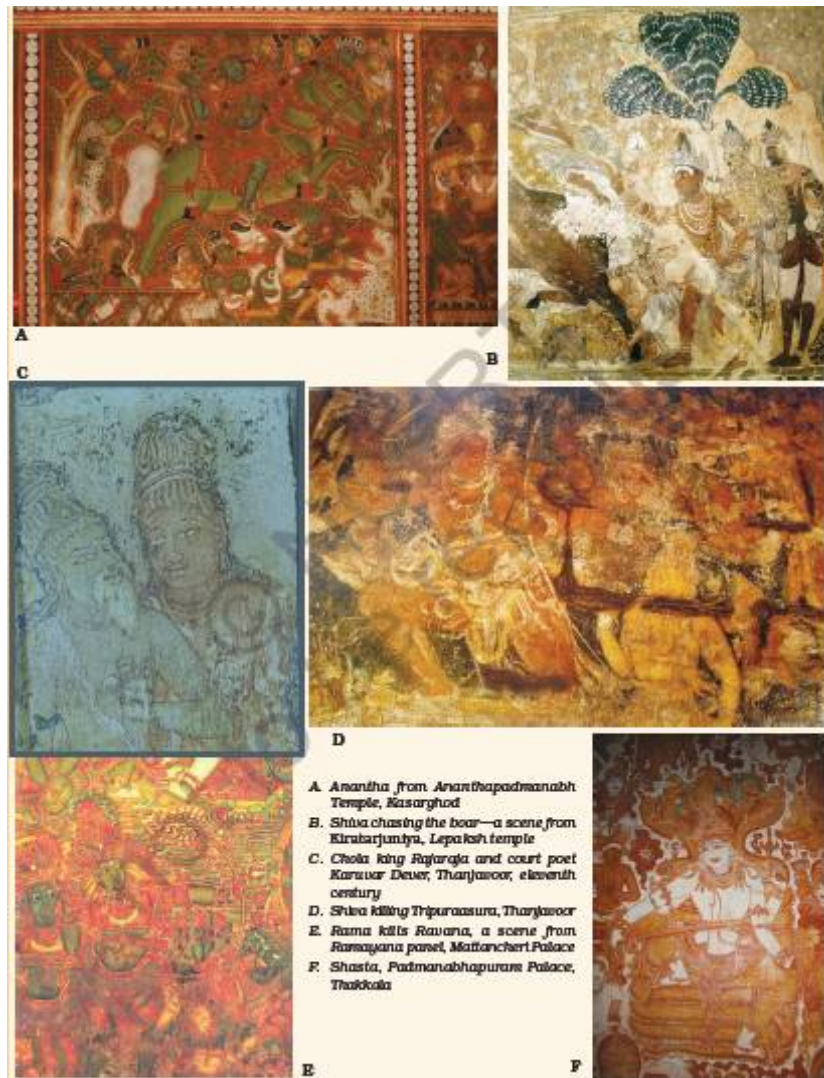
MARA VIJAYA, AJANTA CAVE NO. 26

- The theme of **Mara Vijaya** has been painted in the **caves of Ajanta**. This is the only sculptural representation sculpted on the right wall of Cave No. 26. It is sculpted near the colossal (बिराट, पर्वताकार) Buddha image of *Mahaparinibbana*. The panel shows the image of the Buddha in the centre surrounded by **Mara's army along with his daughter**. The event is **part of the enlightenment**. It is a personification of the commotion of mind which the Buddha went through at the time of enlightenment. **Mara represents desire**. According to the narrative, there is a dialogue between the Buddha and Mara, and *the Buddha is shown with his right hand indicating towards earth as a witness to his generosity (उदारता)*.

MAHESHMURTI, ELEPHANTA

- The image of **Maheshmurti** at **Elephanta** dates back to the early sixth century CE. It is located in the main cave shrine. In the tradition of western Deccan sculpting it is one of the best examples of **qualitative achievement in sculpting images in rockcut caves**. The image is large in size. The central head is the main Shiva figure whereas the other two visible heads are of **Bharava and Uma**.

MURAL TRADITIONS OF INDIA



A. Anantha from Ananthapadmanabh Temple, Kasarghod
B. Shiva chasing the boar—a scene from Kiratarjuniya, Lepaksh temple
C. Chola king Rajaraja and court poet Karuvar Dever, Thanjavoor, eleventh century
D. Shiva killing Tripuraasura, Thanjavoor
E. Rama kills Ravana, a scene from Ramayana panel, Mattancheri Palace
F. Shasta, Padmanabhapuram Palace, Thakkala

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