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Alakh Pandey

Every chapter consists of 'Points to Ponder,' where our leaders raise thinking points for the students to go beyond the confines of the book. The students are expected to think about and find out possible answers to these points. The Caricatures used are inspired by Alakh Pandey Sir and Sumit Rewri Sir.



Sumit Rewri



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Introduction

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Figure 1.1: Map showing prehistoric sites

Prehistoric Cave Paintings

- ❖ Prehistoric cave paintings, dating back to the **Upper Palaeolithic era**, have been discovered in various parts of the world.
- ❖ In India, the first rock paintings were found in 1867-68, by Archaeologist **Archibold Carlleyle**, 12 year before the discovery of **Altamira in Spain**.
- ❖ Archaeologists like **Carlleyle, Cockburn, Anderson, Mitra, and Ghosh** unearthed numerous sites with rock paintings in regions such as Madhya Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh, Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Bihar, and Uttarakhand.
- ❖ These **paintings featured** stick-like human figures, animals like long-snouted creatures, foxes, and multi-legged lizards, as well as geometric patterns in white, black, and red ochre.
- ❖ Some scenes even depicted **hand-linked dancing human figures**, and there was evidence of **super-imposed paintings**, with black, red ochre, and white layers.
- ❖ Additionally, engravings on **slabs** were discovered in Kashmir, while **granite rocks** in Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh showcased various types of paintings in white, red ochre, or a combination of both, providing a fascinating glimpse into the artistic expressions of prehistoric humans.



Figure 1.2: Prehistoric rock painting

Do You Know?

The prehistoric period in the early development of human beings is commonly known as the Old Stone Age or the Palaeolithic Age.

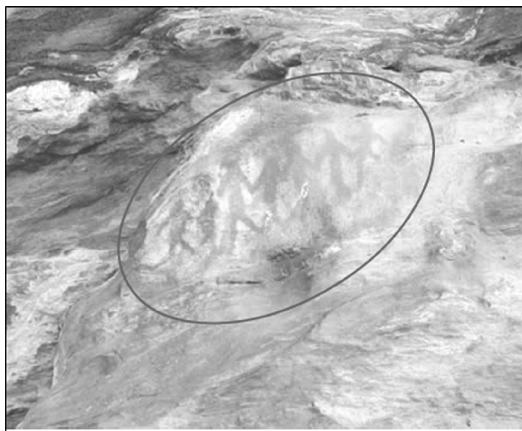


Figure 1.3: Hand-linked dancing figures, Lakhudiyar, Uttarakhand



Figure 1.4: Wavy lines, Lakhudiyar, Uttarakhand

Bhimbetka's Ancient Rock Art

- ❖ The **rock art at Bhimbetka**, located in the Vindhya hills of Madhya Pradesh and their Kaimurean extensions into Uttar Pradesh, spans late historical, early historical, and Neolithic periods.
- ❖ These rock shelters feature a **diverse range of subjects**, including bulls, elephants, sambhars, gazelles, sheep, goats, horses, stylized humans, tridents, and occasionally, vegetal motifs.

- ❖ The richest collection of paintings is found in the **Vindhyan ranges** due to their abundance of Palaeolithic and Mesolithic remains, forests, wild plants, fruits, streams, and creeks—a perfect habitat for Stone Age people.
- ❖ Bhimbetka boasts approximately **eight hundred rock shelters**, with **five hundred of them adorned with paintings**.
- ❖ Discovered in 1957–58 by archaeologist **V.S. Wakankar**, these caves offer a glimpse into various aspects of ancient life, from everyday events to sacred and royal images.
- ❖ Themes include **hunting, dancing, music, horse and elephant riders, animal fights, honey collection, body decoration, and household scenes**.
- ❖ The rock art at Bhimbetka is categorized into seven historical periods, with the first three being Upper Palaeolithic (Period I), Mesolithic (Period II), and Chalcolithic (Period III).
- ❖ The art provides valuable insights into the culture and evolution of ancient civilizations in the region.

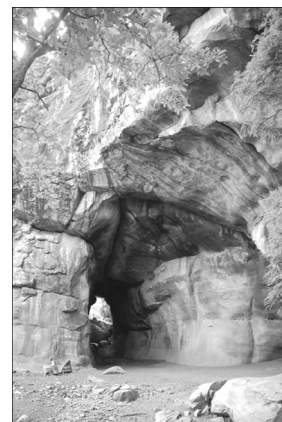


Figure 1.5: Cave entrance, Bhimbetka, Madhya Pradesh

Upper Palaeolithic Art at Bhimbetka

- ❖ During the Upper Palaeolithic period at Bhimbetka, the paintings are characterized by **linear representations in green and dark red colors**.
- ❖ These ancient artworks depict large animal figures like **bison, elephants, tigers, rhinos, and boars**, alongside **stick-like human figures**.
- ❖ While some paintings are **wash paintings**, the majority are filled with intricate **geometric patterns**.
- ❖ The green paintings typically feature **dancers**, while the red ones **portray hunters**.
- ❖ These artworks provide valuable insights into the **artistic expressions** and possibly the **rituals** of early humans during this period in history.



Figure 1.6: Animal figures of the Upper Palaeolithic phase

Mesolithic Art at Bhimbetka

- ❖ The Mesolithic period, represented by Period II at Bhimbetka, unveils a rich collection of paintings, albeit **smaller in size** compared to earlier periods.
- ❖ **Hunting scenes** dominate this phase, portraying people hunting in groups with weapons like **barbed spears, pointed sticks, arrows, and bows** (Refer to Figure 1.9)
- ❖ Some depictions feature **primitive traps and snares** used for catching animals.
- ❖ These hunters are often shown wearing **simple clothing and ornaments**, while some sport elaborate **head-dresses or masks**.

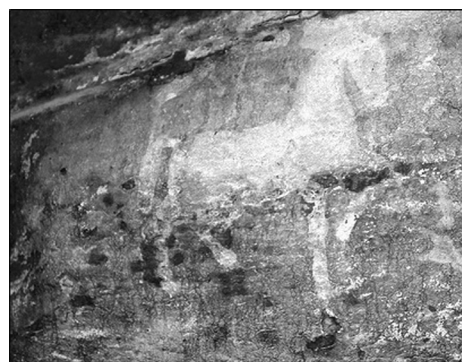


Figure 1.7: One of the few images showing only one animal, Bhimbetka

- ❖ The artwork showcases a variety of animals, including **elephants, bison, tigers, boars, deer, antelope, leopards, panthers, rhinoceroses, fish, frogs, lizards, squirrels, and occasional birds.**
- ❖ The Mesolithic artists demonstrated a fascination with animals, depicting them both as **predators and prey.**
- ❖ While animals were rendered in a naturalistic style, human figures were stylized.
- ❖ **Women** were depicted both **clothed and in the nude**, with representations of individuals of all ages, including children engaged in playful activities.
- ❖ **Community dances, fruit gathering, honey collection, food preparation, and family scenes** were common themes.
- ❖ Many rock-shelters feature **handprints, fist prints, and fingertip dots** as well.
- ❖ The artists at Bhimbetka employed a wide range of colors, with **white and red** being their favorites.
- ❖ These colors were derived from minerals like **haematite for red and chalcedony for green**, white may have been made from **limestone.**
- ❖ The paints were created by grinding these minerals into powder, which was mixed with water and possibly a binding agent like animal fat or tree resin. Brushes were fashioned from plant fibers.
- ❖ Remarkably, these colors have endured for thousands of years, likely due to chemical reactions with the rock surfaces, providing a remarkable glimpse into the artistic skills of ancient civilizations.



Figure 1.8: Painting showing a man being hunted by a beast, Bhimbetka

Hunting Scene



Figure 1.9: Hunting scenes predominate in Mesolithic paintings. This is one such scene where a group of people are shown hunting a bison. Some injured men are depicted lying scattered on the ground. These paintings show mastery in the skill of drawing these forms.

Dancing Scene



Figure 1.10: In this picture hand-linked figures in dancing mode are shown. In fact, this is a recurrent theme. It also recalls the dancing scene from the Lakhudiyar rock painting found in Uttarakhand.

Ancient Stories on Stones at Bhimbetka

- ❖ The artists at Bhimbetka crafted their paintings on the walls and ceilings of rock shelters.
- ❖ Some paintings were discovered in living spaces, while others were found in places with potential **religious significance**, often positioned in **high or uncomfortable locations**, possibly to be visible from a distance.
- ❖ Despite the challenges they faced, these ancient paintings exude a remarkable pictorial quality. They depict scenes from the **artists' natural environment**, showcasing **adventurous and joyous human figures and majestic, youthful animals**.
- ❖ These primitive artists had a passion for **storytelling**, portraying both **humans and animals in dramatic struggles for survival**.
- ❖ Some scenes show hunting, with injured men lying on the ground, while others depict animals in the throes of death and men dancing—a display of human dominance over nature.
- ❖ Notably, many rock art sites reveal **new paintings painted over older ones**, sometimes with up to **20 layers** of paintings at Bhimbetka.
- ❖ The reasons for this practice are speculative but could include dissatisfaction with previous work, the sacred or special significance of certain paintings or places, or multiple generations using the same locations over time.
- ❖ These prehistoric paintings offer valuable insights into the **lives, food habits, daily activities, and thought processes** of early human beings.
- ❖ They serve as witnesses to the evolution of human civilization, along with the numerous artifacts like weapons, tools, ceramics, and bones found in the region.
- ❖ Above all, these rock paintings stand as a priceless legacy left behind by the primitive humans of that era.

Painting on Rocks

This practice of painting is common among primitive people today as well. They engrave or paint on rocks as part of the rituals they perform at birth, at death, at coming of age, and at the time of marriage. They dance, masked, during hunting rites to help them kill animals that are difficult to find or kill.

POINTS TO PONDER

The prehistoric paintings in India are found across the country from central India to peninsular and western India. It is amusing that even though the location varies and maybe the civilisation also, the topics of paintings were similar- animals, hunting, tribal celebrations and daily activities. Why do you think similarities existed? Do you think the ideas traversed or was it just coincident?



Conclusion

In conclusion, the ancient rock paintings of Bhimbetka, spanning various historical periods, offer a captivating glimpse into the lives and minds of our distant ancestors. These remarkable artworks, created under challenging conditions with limited tools and materials, reveal the artists' deep connection to their environment and passion for storytelling. Through scenes of hunting, survival, and the intricate portrayal of both humans and animals, these paintings convey a sense of adventure, dominance over nature, and an enduring appreciation for the world around them. These rock paintings serve as proof of the evolving human civilization, shedding light on early societies' lifestyles, food habits, daily activities, and, most importantly, their thought processes.



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Glossary:

- **Rock Shelters:** Caves or natural formations in rocks where prehistoric paintings were discovered.
- **Mesolithic Period:** An era during which many of the Bhimbetka paintings were created, characterized by smaller-sized artworks depicting hunting scenes and various aspects of daily life.
- **Stylized Human Figures:** Simplified representations of humans, often with distinctive features.
- **Superimposition:** The practice of creating new paintings on top of existing ones.
- **Sacred Significance:** Suggesting a religious or spiritual importance attached to certain paintings or locations.
- **Prehistoric Period:** A time in history before the advent of written records, during which these paintings were created.
- **Artifacts:** Objects made or used by ancient humans, such as weapons, tools, ceramics, and bones, which provide insights into their daily lives.
- **Evolution of Human Civilization:** The gradual development and progress of human societies over time, reflected in the archaeological findings at Bhimbetka.





Later Mural Traditions

Bibliography: This Chapter encompasses the summary of **Chapter 5 of Class XI** (An Introduction to Indian Art Part-I).

Introduction

The Later Mural Traditions represent a diverse array of artistic expressions that graced temples, palaces, and other sacred places from the medieval era onward. This chapter embarks on a captivating journey through these intricate and visually stunning art forms that flourished in various regions of India during the later periods of its history.

After **Ajanta**, there are not many places with paintings that have survived to give us important clues about the painting tradition. It's worth mentioning that sculptures were also covered with plaster and painted. The tradition of cave excavations continued in other locations, where both sculpting and painting were carried out at the same time.



Anantha from Ananthapadmanabh Temple, Kasarghoda



Shiva killing Tripuraasura, Thanjavoor

Figure 2.1



Rama kills Ravana, a scene from Ramayana panel, Mattancheri Palace



Shasta, Padmanabhapuram Palace, Thakkala

Figure 2.2



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Badami

- ❖ Badami in Karnataka was the capital of the early **Chalukyan dynasty** around 543–598 CE. With the decline of the **Vakataka rule**, the **Chalukyas** established their power in the Deccan.
- ❖ The Chalukya king, **Mangalesha** (the younger son of the Chalukya king, **Pulakesi I**), sponsored the excavation of the Badami caves, known as the **Vishnu Cave**.
- ❖ The inscription in **Cave No. 4** mentions the date 578–579 CE, describes the beauty of the cave, and includes the dedication of the image of Vishnu. Therefore, the cave is popularly known as the Vishnu Cave.
- ❖ Only a fragment of the painting has survived on the vaulted roof of the front **mandapa**. The paintings in this cave, an extension of the Ajanta tradition, depict palace scenes featuring Kirtivarman, son of Pulakesi I. The artistry, characterized by sinuous lines and fluid forms, reflects the artists' maturity in the sixth century CE.
- ❖ The faces in the paintings resemble Ajanta's style, showcasing the skilled **use of simple lines to create volume**. Notably, the surviving fragment on the vaulted roof portrays scenes of palace life, including a dance, with detailed depictions of the king, queen, and divine figures.



Figure 2.3: Queen and attendants, Badami

Murals under the Pallava, Pandava and Chola Kings

Pallava

- ❖ In the southern regions of Tamil Nadu, the tradition of painting flourished during the rule of Pallava, Pandya, and Chola dynasties.
- ❖ The **Pallava kings**, succeeding the Chalukya kings, were notable arts patrons. **Mahendravarman I**, in the seventh century, built temples in Panamalai, Mandagapattu, and Kanchipuram, showcasing a keen interest in art.
- ❖ The inscription at **Mandagapattu** mentions Mahendravarman I with numerous titles such as Vichitrachitta (curious-minded), Chitrakarapuli (tiger among artists), Chaityakari (temple builder), which shows his interest in art activities.



Figure 2.4: Sittanvasal—early Pandya period, Ninth century CE

- ❖ The **Panamalai figure** of a female divinity is drawn gracefully.
- ❖ Paintings at the **Kanchipuram temple** were patronised by the Pallava king, Rajsimha. Only traces of paintings that depict **Somaskanda** remain. Faces are round and large. Lines are rhythmic with increased ornamentation when compared with the paintings of an earlier period. The depiction of the torso still remains like the earlier sculptural tradition but is elongated.

Pandyas

- ❖ When the Pandyas came to power, they continued the patronage of art, exemplified by the **Tirumalaipuram caves and Jaina caves at Sittanavasal**. A few fragmented layers of paintings can be seen in Tirumalaipuram.
- ❖ In Sittanavasal, the **paintings are visible on the ceilings of shrines, in verandas, and on the brackets**.
- ❖ The paintings in these locations, such as dancing figures of celestial nymphs (on the pillars of the veranda), exhibit firm contours (painted in vermillion red on a lighter background), vibrant colors, and skilled artistic imagination. The body is rendered in yellow with subtle modelling.
- ❖ This tradition of **elongated eyes** observed in these paintings continued in subsequent artworks in the Deccan and South India.



Figure 2.5: Devi—Seventh century CE, Panamalai

Cholas

- ❖ During the Chola reign (ninth to thirteenth centuries), the **tradition of temple construction** and embellishment persisted.
- ❖ The eleventh century marked the zenith of Chola power, leading to masterpieces like the **Brihadeswara temple** in Thanjavur, **Gangaikonda Cholapuram**, and **Darasuram** in Tamil Nadu, were built during the reigns of Rajaraja Chola, his son, Rajendra Chola and Rajaraja Chola II, respectively.
- ❖ Chola paintings are seen in **Nartamalai**, particularly in Brihadeswara temple. Notably, the paintings were uncovered in two layers, with the upper layer from the Nayak period in the sixteenth century revealing the great tradition of Chola painting.
- ❖ The paintings at **Brihadeswara Temple** showcase the stylistic maturity of Chola artists, reflecting a predetermined flow of **sinuous lines, supple modelling of figures**, and **elongation of physiognomic features**. These elements represent both the perfection achieved by Chola artists during their period and a phase of transition.
- ❖ These artworks portray diverse themes, including Rajaraja and his mentor Kuruvar, dancing figures, and various aspects of Lord Shiva, Shiva in Kailash, **Shiva as Tripurantaka**, **Shiva as Nataraja**, a portrait of the patron Rajaraja and his mentor Kuruvar, dancing figures, etc.



Figure 2.6: Chola king Rajaraja and court poet Karuvar Dever, Thanjavoor, Eleventh century

Vijayanagara Murals

Transition to Vijayanagara Paintings

- ❖ As the Chola dynasty declined in the thirteenth century, the Vijayanagara Dynasty (fourteenth to sixteenth centuries) rose to power. **Hampi** served as its capital, capturing the region from Hampi to Trichy.
- ❖ The paintings at **Tiruparakunram**, near Trichy, done in the fourteenth century represent the early phase of the Vijayanagara style.
- ❖ In Hampi, the **Virupaksha temple** has paintings on the ceiling of its mandapa narrating events from dynastic history and episodes from the **Ramayana and the Mahabharata**. Among the important panels are the ones that show **Vidyaranya**, the spiritual teacher of **Bukkaraya Harsha**, being carried in a **palanquin** in a procession and the incarnations of Vishnu. The faces of the figures are shown in profile, with **large frontal eyes**. The figures have **narrow waists**.
- ❖ In Lepakshi, near Hindupur, in present-day Andhra Pradesh, there are glorious examples of Vijayanagara paintings on the walls of the Shiva temple.

Vijayanagara Artistic Conventions

- ❖ Vijayanagara painters evolved a distinct pictorial language characterized by **profiled faces, two-dimensional depictions of figures and objects, still but fluid lines**, and **compositions in rectilinear compartments**.
- ❖ These conventions influenced artists in various centers in South India, extending into the Nayaka Period.

Nayaka Paintings

- ❖ The Nayaka dynasty, in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, continued the artistic tradition in Thiruparakunram, Sreerangam, and Tiruvarur in Tamil Nadu.
- ❖ Thiruparakunram features paintings from both the fourteenth and seventeenth centuries, depicting scenes from the life of **Vardhaman Mahavira**.

Themes in Nayaka Paintings

- ❖ Nayaka paintings depict episodes from the **Mahabharata and the Ramayana**, along with scenes from **Krishna-leela**.
- ❖ Various temples, such as Tiruvarur, Chidambaram, and Chengam, showcase panels narrating stories related to Shiva, Vishnu, and the Ramayana.
- ❖ In Chidambaram, there are panels of paintings narrating stories related to Shiva and Vishnu— **Shiva as Bhikshatana Murti**, **Vishnu as Mohini**, etc.



Figure 2.7: Dakshinamurty, Vijayanagar, Lepakshi



Figure 2.8: Shiva chasing the boar—a scene from Kiratarjuniya, Lepakshi temple



Figure 2.9: Ladies attending Parvati, Virbhadr Temple, Lepakshi

Continuity and Modifications in Nayaka Style

- ❖ Nayaka paintings, considered **an extension of the Vijayanagara style**, exhibit minor regional modifications and incorporations.
- ❖ After the 1905 figures, mostly in profile, are set against **flat backgrounds**. **Male figures are depicted slim-waisted**, with **less heavy abdomens** compared to Vijayanagara paintings.
- ❖ The artists maintain a tradition of infusing movement and dynamism into the depicted space, as seen in the **painting of Nataraja** at Tiruvalanjuli.

Kerala Murals

Evolution of Kerala Mural Painting

- ❖ During the 16th to 18th centuries, Kerala painters developed a distinctive pictorial language and technique, **incorporating elements from Nayaka and Vijayanagara schools**.
- ❖ They drew inspiration from local traditions like **Kathakali and kalam ezhuthu (ritual floor painting of Kerala)**, utilizing vibrant colors and achieving **three-dimensional representation of human figures**.

Themes and Sources

- ❖ Kerala mural paintings, found on **shrine and temple walls**, as well as **inside palaces**, exhibit unique thematic elements.
- ❖ Narrations predominantly focus on episodes from **Hindu mythology popular in Kerala**.
- ❖ Artists drew from oral traditions and local versions of the **Ramayana** and the **Mahabharata** for their painted narratives.

Prominent Sites of Kerala Mural Painting

- ❖ Over sixty sites showcase mural paintings in Kerala, including notable locations like **Pundareekapuram Krishna temple, Panayanarkavu, Thirukodithanam, Triprayar Sri Rama temple, and Trissur Vadakkunathan temple**.
- ❖ These sites capture the mature phase of Kerala's mural painting tradition.



Figure 2.10: Venugopal, Sri Rama Temple, Triprayar



Figure 2.11: Krishna playing flute, accompanied by Gopikas, Krishna temple, Pundareekapuram

Continuity in Contemporary Murals

- ❖ Even today, mural painting is prevalent on the interior and exterior walls of houses in villages across the country.
- ❖ Women often engage in creating these paintings during ceremonies, festivals, or as part of routine wall cleaning and decoration.
- ❖ Traditional mural forms are observed in different regions, such as **pithoro in parts of Rajasthan and Gujarat, Mithila painting in northern Bihar, warli paintings in Maharashtra, and various wall paintings in villages of Odisha, Bengal, Madhya Pradesh, and Chhattisgarh.**

POINTS TO PONDER

The later mural paintings have unique painting traditions, techniques and themes. They have a wide diversity, as expressed in paintings of Badami, Vijayanagara and the Sangam-Tamil culture. Can you list out how these paintings differed from the paintings of prehistoric times and those of contemporary north India?



Conclusion

Mural paintings in India boast a rich and enduring history, dating from the 2nd century BC to the 8th-10th century AD. The exquisite frescoes found in iconic locations such as the Ajanta and Ellora caves, Bagh caves, Sittanvasal, and other sites provide invaluable evidence of this ancient artistic tradition. These murals, adorning the walls of caves and palaces, represent a remarkable fusion of artistic brilliance and cultural expression. From the natural caves and rock-cut chambers to the intricate details of the Ajanta, Bagh, and Ellora Caves, the murals showcase the diverse themes and styles that flourished during this period. These artworks not only serve as visual archives of historical narratives but also stand as a testament to the enduring creativity and artistic mastery of ancient Indian civilizations.

Glossary:

- **Mural Painting:** A form of artistic expression where large-scale paintings are created directly on walls or ceilings, often using various pigments and techniques.
- **Fresco Technique:** A mural painting method involving the application of pigments on wet plaster, allowing the colors to become an integral part of the surface as they dry.
- **Temple Frescoes:** Mural paintings found on the inner walls of temples, often depicting religious narratives, deities, and mythological stories.





Indian Schools of Paintings

Bibliography: This chapter encompasses the summary of **Chapter 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6 of Class XII** (An Introduction to Indian Art-II)

Introduction

Indian painting has a rich tapestry that has evolved over time. Before the British era, it was rooted in traditions, from temple art to detailed manuscripts. The British introduced the Company School of Painting, blending European observation with Indian styles. As photography emerged, artists like Raja Ravi Varma combined European techniques with Indian themes. The Bengal School of Art, led by Abanindranath Tagore, sought inspiration from Indian heritage. Nandalal Bose's 'Haripura Posters' celebrated the common man, while Gaganendranath Tagore and others embraced modern styles like Cubism. Artists like Jamini Roy bridged folk art with contemporary themes. This journey showcases India's ability to merge traditions with evolving global influences.

Vishnudharmottara Purana's Contribution to Indian Art

- ❖ The third Khanda of the **Vishnudharmottara Purana**, a fifth-century text, includes the chapter **Chitrasutra**, a significant source of Indian art, especially painting.
- ❖ This text introduces the art of image-making known as "**Pratima Lakshana**", which outlines the canons of painting.
- ❖ It also discusses techniques, tools, materials, surfaces (like walls), perception, perspective, and the three-dimensionality of human figures.
- ❖ **Different Limbs in Painting:** **Roopbheda** focuses on looks and appearance, **Pramana** emphasizes measurements, proportion and structure, **Bhava** focuses on expressions, **Lavanya Yojana** focuses on aesthetic composition, **Sadrishya** focuses on the resemblance, **Varnika Bhanga** focuses on the use of brushes and colors.
- ❖ Through the centuries, Artists have adhered to these canons, making them foundational to various styles and schools of Indian painting.

In this chapter, we will discuss in detail the various types of paintings.

Medieval Miniature Paintings

- ❖ Paintings from the medieval era are commonly termed "**miniature paintings**" due to their smaller size.
- ❖ These were handheld artworks meant for close observation because of their intricate details.
- ❖ They were never meant to be displayed on walls, unlike mural paintings that adorned the walls of affluent homes.



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Manuscript Illustrations

- ❖ A significant portion of these paintings served as illustrations for manuscripts. (Refer to Figure 3.1)
- ❖ These paintings visually translate poetic verses from epics and various canonical, literary, bardic, or musical texts. Verses were typically handwritten either at the top of the painting or behind it.
- ❖ Paintings were systematically grouped in thematic sets, such as the **Ramayana, Bhagavata Purana, Mahabharata, Gita Govinda, Ragamala**, etc.
- ❖ Each set was wrapped in cloth and stored in the libraries of kings or patrons.
- ❖ **Colophon Page:** The most crucial page in a set, containing details about the patron, artist, scribe, date, and place of work. Unfortunately, many colophon pages have been lost over time.

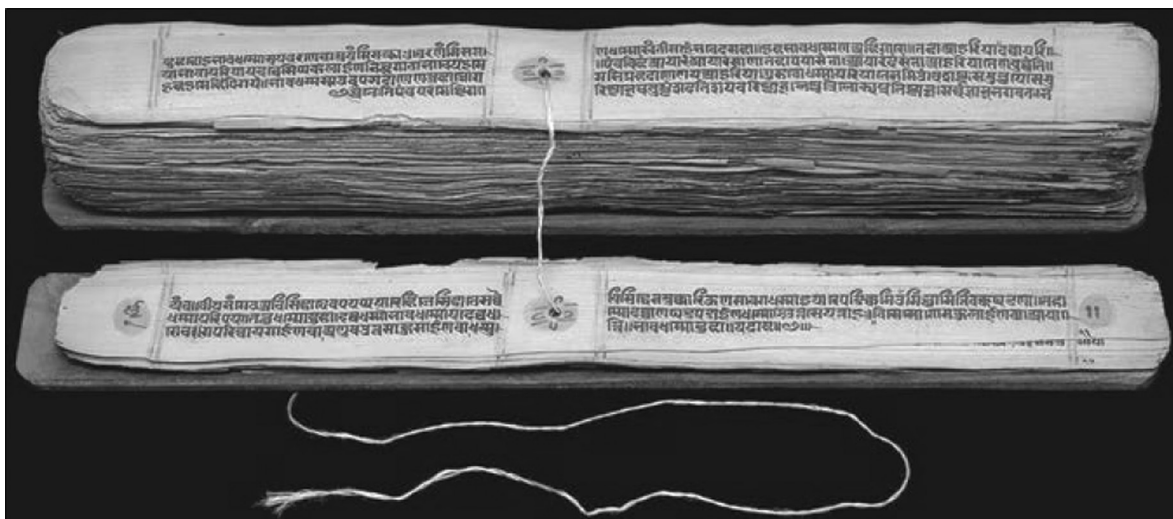


Figure 3.1: Sravakapratikramasutra-curni of Vijayasimha Mewar, written by Kamalchandra, 1260

Challenges in Reconstructing Painting History

- ❖ Many paintings have faced damage due to mishandling, fire, humidity, and other calamities.
- ❖ Paintings were often gifted or traded, leading to their dispersal across various regions. For example, a Mewar painting could be found with the Bundi king, and vice versa.
- ❖ Many paintings are undated, leading to gaps in chronological records.
- ❖ Loose folios have been separated from their original sets and now reside in various museums and private collections.
- ❖ These dispersed paintings occasionally resurface, challenging established timelines and requiring scholars to adjust historical chronologies.
- ❖ Updated sets are often assigned hypothetical timeframes based on style and circumstantial evidence.

Western Indian School of Painting

- ❖ The Western Indian School of Painting primarily thrived in western India, with **Gujarat** as its main hub. Other centers included **southern Rajasthan and western parts of Central India**.
- ❖ Significant ports in Gujarat facilitated trade routes, empowering merchants, traders, and local chieftains as influential patrons of art, owing to the prosperity of trading.

Jain School of Painting

- ❖ The Jain community, predominantly merchants, became notable patrons of Jain-themed art, leading to the birth of the Jain School of Painting within the Western Indian School.
- ❖ Jain paintings saw growth due to the concept of “**shaastradaan**” (donation of books). Donating illustrated paintings to monastery **libraries** or “**bhandars**” (repositories) was seen as a noble act of charity, righteousness and gratitude..

Prominent Jain Texts for Artistic Interpretation

- ❖ **Kalpasutra:** It depicts events from the lives of the **24 Tirthankaras**, focusing on **five key incidents** - conception, birth, renunciation, enlightenment, the first sermon, and salvation. (Refer to Figure 3.2)



Figure 3.2: Birth of Mahavir, Kalpasutra, fifteenth century, Jain Bhandar, Rajasthan

- ❖ **Kalakacharyakatha:** It tells the adventurous tale of **Acharya Kalaka** on a quest to rescue his abducted sister from an evil king.
- ❖ **Uttaradhyana Sutra:** It outlines Mahavir’s teachings on the conduct monks should adopt.
- ❖ **Sangrahani Sutra:** A 12th-century cosmological text detailing the universe’s structure and space mapping
- ❖ The Jain community produced multiple copies of these texts, either with minimal or abundant illustrations.
- ❖ A typical folio is split into sections for text and painting, secured together with strings passing through a central hole, and shielded with wooden covers called “**patlis**”.
- ❖ Initially, Jain paintings were on palm leaves until the 14th century, when paper was introduced. The earliest palm leaf manuscript from western India dates back to the 11th century.
- ❖ Due to space constraints on palm leaves, early paintings mainly adorned the “patlis”, evolving into a unique style emphasizing bright colours, textile patterns, and schematic depictions.

Mahavir’s mother Trishala, dreamed about 14 objects when she conceived Mahavir. They are- an elephant, a bull, a tiger, goddess Shri, a kalash, a palanquin, a pond, a rivulet, fire, banners, garlands, heap of jewels, the Sun and the moon. She consulted an astrologer to interpret her dream and was told that she would give birth to a son, who would either become a sovereign king or a great saint and teacher.

Evolution and Styles in Jain Painting

- ❖ A period from **1350 to 1450 marks Jain paintings’** creative zenith, transitioning from strict iconic depictions to more diverse and intricate artwork, such as landscapes, figures, and musicians, adorned lavishly with gold and lapis lazuli.

- ❖ Apart from canonical texts, other artworks like **Tirthipatas, Mandalas, and secular tales** were also popular within the Jain community.

Indigenous Style of Painting

- ❖ Beyond Jain paintings, a parallel painting tradition emerged in the late 15th and 16th centuries among the **feudal lords**, wealthy citizens, and others, capturing secular, religious, and literary themes.
- ❖ This style signifies the native painting tradition before the Rajasthani court styles and Mughal influences merged.
- ❖ Works during this phase, representing subjects like **Mahapurana, Chaurapanchasika (Refer to Figure 3.3), Bhagavata Purana, and Gita Govinda**, characterize this indigenous style, occasionally termed pre-Mughal or pre-Rajasthani.

Kalaka is seen on the lower right and his captive sister is depicted towards the top left. The donkey with magical powers is spewing arrows at Kalaka's army of kings. The evil king presides from the inside the circular fort.



Figure 3.3: Chaurapanchasika, Gujarat, fifteenth century

Sultanate School of Painting

- ❖ Post the late 12th century, regions in north, east, and west India came under the rule of the Sultanate dynasties from Central Asia, introducing Persian, Turkic, and Afghan influences.
- ❖ Collaborations between Central Asian artists and local artisans birthed the Sultanate School of Painting, more a **'style'** than a **'school'**, merging indigenous and Persian elements.
- ❖ **"Nimatnama" (Book of Delicacies) from Mandu during Nasir Shah Khalji's reign (1500-1510 CE)** stands out as a prime example, detailing recipes, hunting techniques, and instructions on medicine and cosmetics. (Refer to Figure 3.4)



Figure 3.4: Nimatnama, Mandu, 1550, British Library, London

Pala School of Painting

- ❖ The Pala School of Painting originates from the illustrated manuscripts of the **Palas of eastern India** during the eleventh and twelfth centuries.
- ❖ The Pala period (750 CE to mid-twelfth century) marked the final prominent phase of **Buddhist art in India**.

Centers of Art and Learning during the Pala Period

- ❖ Renowned monasteries, including **Nalanda and Vikramsila**, emerged as pivotal centers for Buddhist learning, art, and the illustration of manuscripts with Buddhist themes and images of Vajrayana Bhuddhist Dities on palm leaves.
- ❖ These institutions also hosted workshops dedicated to casting bronze images.
- ❖ Students and pilgrims from regions like **Southeast Asia** visited these monasteries for education and spiritual teachings.
- ❖ They often returned home with Pala Buddhist art specimens, such as bronze artifacts and illustrated manuscripts, facilitating the spread of Pala art to locations like **Nepal, Tibet, Burma, Sri Lanka, and Java**.

Characteristics of Pala Paintings

- ❖ Pala paintings are **distinct from Jain paintings, defined by their flowing, sinuous lines and subdued colour tones**.
- ❖ The Pala sculptural styles at monasteries shared similarities with their painterly images, reminiscent of the art at Ajanta.
- ❖ A prime example of a Pala Buddhist palm leaf manuscript is the “**Astasahasrika Prajnaparamita**” (found in Bodleian Library, Oxford), also known as the ‘**Perfection of Wisdom**’ (Refer to Figure 3.5). This masterpiece, created at the Nalanda monastery during King Ramapala’s reign in the eleventh century, boasts six illustrated pages and wooden covers adorned with paintings on both sides.



Figure 3.5: Lokeshvar, Astasahasrika Prajnaparamita, Pala, 1050, National Museum, New Delhi

Decline of Pala Paintings

- ❖ Pala art ended in the first half of the thirteenth century when Muslim invaders targeted and destroyed the monasteries.

The Rajasthani Schools of Painting

- ❖ The term '**Rajasthani Schools of Painting**' refers to the painting styles that flourished in the princely states and regions, primarily in modern-day Rajasthan and parts of Madhya Pradesh.
- ❖ These regions include **Mewar, Bundi, Kota, Jaipur, Bikaner, Kishangarh, Jodhpur (Marwar), Malwa, and Sirohi**, among others, mainly from the sixteenth to the early nineteenth centuries.

Origin

- ❖ In 1916, scholar **Anand Coomaraswamy** introduced the term '**Rajput Paintings**' to categorise these artworks since most patrons and rulers of these areas were Rajputs.
- ❖ This nomenclature was to distinguish this style from the renowned Mughal School of Painting.
- ❖ Regions such as Malwa and the Pahari Schools from the Himalayan region were also encompassed under '**Rajput Schools**'.
- ❖ The term was used to signify the indigenous painting tradition before the Mughal conquest.
- ❖ Modern studies have moved away from using '**Rajput Schools**', preferring specific categories like '**Rajasthani**' and '**Pahari**'.

Distinguishing Features of the Rajasthani Style

- ❖ Despite being geographically close, the painting styles across these kingdoms showcased significant diversity in terms of:
 - ❖ **Execution** such as fine or bold;
 - ❖ **Colour preferences** range from brilliant to gentle hues;
 - ❖ **Compositional elements** focus on variations in the depiction of architecture, figures, nature, and storytelling techniques;
 - ❖ **Naturalism** emphasize on styles that have an affinity for naturalistic depictions, while others emphasized extreme mannerism.

Materials and Techniques

- ❖ Paintings were crafted on "**waslis**", which are layered, thin sheets of handmade papers glued together for the desired thickness.
- ❖ The outline was first sketched in black or brown on the wasli, followed by colours.
- ❖ Colour pigments were primarily derived from minerals and precious metals like gold and silver, mixed with glue as a binding medium.
- ❖ Brushes were made using **camel and squirrel hair**. Once finished, paintings were burnished with agate to give them a consistent shine and attractive radiance.

Painting Process

- ❖ The master artist handled composition and initial drawings. Pupils or specialists in colouring, portraiture, architecture, landscape, and animals would contribute.
- ❖ The master artist would apply the final touches. A scribe would then write the verse in the designated space.

Themes of Rajasthani Paintings

- ❖ By the sixteenth century, **Vaishnavism**, particularly the cults of Rama and Krishna, had gained prominence in many parts of western, northern, and central India due to the widespread **Bhakti movement**.
- ❖ Krishna was revered not only as God but also as the epitome of an ideal lover, representing both sensuous and mystical love.
- ❖ This union of divine and human love was best represented by Krishna and Radha.

Key Texts and their Themes

- ❖ **Gita Govinda**: Composed by **Jayadeva** in the twelfth century, this **Sanskrit poem** embodies the “**shringara rasa**”, showcasing the ethereal love between Radha and Krishna. (Refer to Figure 3.6)

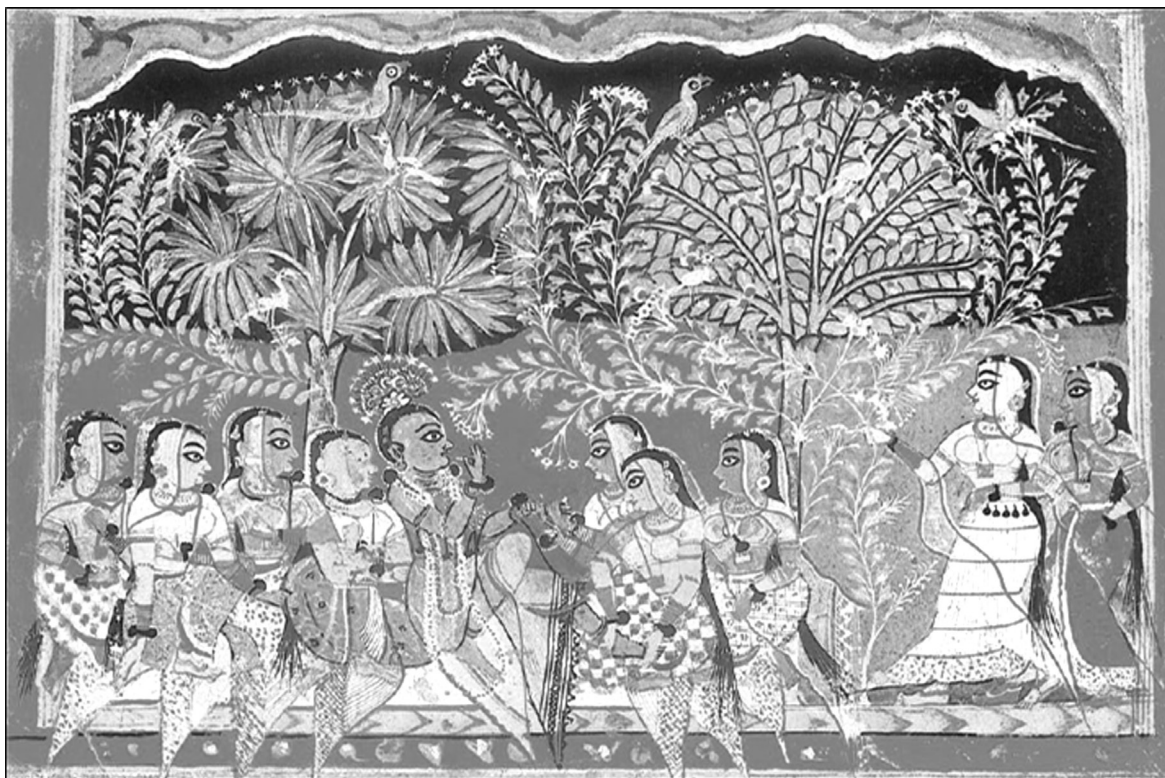


Figure 3.6: Krishna and gopis in the forest, Gita Govinda, Mewar, 1550

- ❖ **Rasamanjari**: Authored by **Bhanu Datta** in the fourteenth century, this **Sanskrit** treatise on rasa classifies heroes and heroines based on age, appearance, and emotional states. While Krishna is not explicitly mentioned, he is often portrayed by painters as the quintessential lover.
- ❖ **Rasikapriya**: Penned by **Keshav Das** in 1591, this work delves into the diverse emotional states between lovers, symbolized by Radha and Krishna.

- ❖ **Kavipriya:** Another masterpiece by **Keshav Das**, this text **pays tribute to Rai Parbin**, a renowned courtesan of **Orchha**, and vividly describes the emotions associated with different seasons and festivals.
- ❖ **Bihari Satsai:** Comprising 700 verses, this work by **Bihari Lal** from around 1662 offers moralistic aphorisms and has been extensively painted in the **Mewar and Pahari Schools**.
- ❖ **Ragamala Paintings:** These artworks visually interpret various ragas and raginis, translating musical melodies into vivid paintings.

Ragas are traditionally envisioned in divine or human form in romantic or devotional contexts by musicians and poets. Each *raga* is associated with a specific mood, time of the day and season. *Ragamala* paintings are arranged in albums invariably containing 36 or 42 folios, organised in the format of families. Each family is headed by a male *raga*, with six female consorts called *raginis*. The six main ragas are *Bhairava*, *Malkos*, *Hindol*, *Dipak*, *Megha* and *Shri*.

Other Popular Themes in Paintings

- ❖ Romantic tales like **Dhola-Maru**, **Sohni-Mahiwal**, **Mrigavati**, and more.
- ❖ Sacred texts include the **Ramayana**, **Bhagavata Purana**, **Mahabharata**, and **Devi Mahatmya**.
- ❖ Real-life depictions of court scenes, historical moments, hunting expeditions, wars, picnics, rituals, portraits, and city views.

POINTS TO PONDER

How do you think the distinctive features, materials, techniques, and collaborative processes of Rajasthani miniature paintings contribute to the evolution of artistic styles and themes in this region, specially in context of the representation of divinity, love, and cultural movements like Bhakti?



Malwa School of Painting

- ❖ The Malwa School of Painting thrived from 1600 to 1700 CE and stands as a hallmark of the Hindu Rajput courts. It presents a unique blend, bridging the styles of **Jain manuscripts** and **Chaurpanchashika** manuscript paintings.
- ❖ **Themes:** Malwa Paintings had taken themes from the Ramayana, the Bhagavata Purana, the Amaru Shataka, the Rasikapriya, the Ragamala, and the Baramasa.
- ❖ **Notable Artworks:** Early-dated artworks from this school include an illustrated poetic text by **Amaru Shataka** from 1652 CE and a **Ragamala** painting by **Madho Das** (Refer to Figure 3.7) dated 1680 CE.

Geographical Extent

- ❖ Contrary to the distinct geographical origins of Rajasthani schools, the Malwa School lacks a clear center of origin.
- ❖ It is believed to span across a vast territory in Central India, with occasional mentions of places like **Mandu**, **Nusrat Garh**, and **Nursing Sahar**.
- ❖ A significant collection of Malwa paintings has been discovered in the Datia Palace, suggesting **Bundelkhand** as a potential hub for this art form.

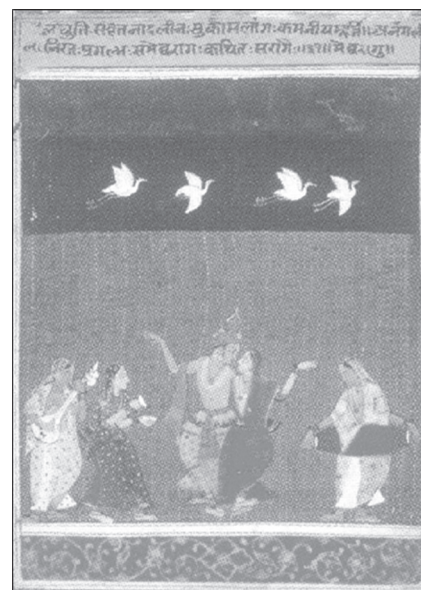
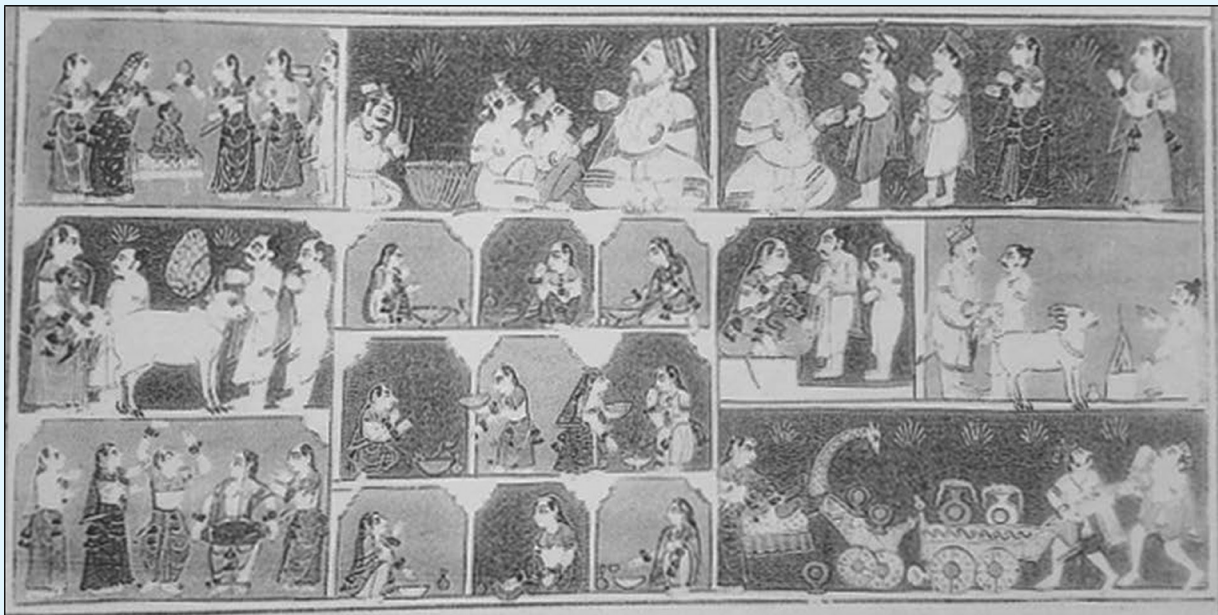


Figure 3.7: Raga Megha, Madho Das, Malwa, 1680

- ❖ However, the mural paintings in Datia Palace display a clear Mughal influence, which starkly contrasts the indigenous, two-dimensional style seen in the Malwa School's paper works.
- ❖ The lack of mention of patron kings and their portraits in these artworks hints at the possibility that Datia rulers might have purchased them from itinerant artists.

Mewar School of Painting

- ❖ Mewar, in Rajasthan, is postulated as a pivotal early center of Rajasthani painting. Wars with the Mughals likely eradicated many early Mewar painting examples. The Mewar School's genesis is often linked to a set of Ragamala paintings from 1605 by Nisardin.
- ❖ The reign of **Jagat Singh I (1628–1652)** marked a transformative era for Mewar paintings.
- ❖ Notable artists during this period included **Sahibdin and Manohar. Jagannath**, another distinguished artist, painted the Bihari Satsai in 1719.



Bhagvata Purana

This artwork from the National Museum, New Delhi, dated 1680-1690, illustrates scenes from the **Bhagvata Purana**, showcasing various episodes from Lord Krishna's life. Rendered in the **Malwa style**, the painting uses compartmentalized spaces to detail multiple events. Highlights include celebrations at Nanda and Yashoda's home after Krishna's birth, with singing, dancing, and charitable activities, notably cow donations. Amidst the festivities, women protect Krishna from the evil eye, culminating in the central scene where Krishna defeats the cart demon, Shakatasura, with a mere kick.

Distinctive Features and Themes

- ❖ Sahibdin's major works encompass the **Ragamala, Rasikapriya, Bhagavata Purana**, and a part of the **Ramayana** titled **Yuddha Kanda**.
- ❖ **Sahibdin's Yuddha Kanda**, a segment of the Ramayana, introduced a unique pictorial technique of oblique aerial perspective, particularly for portraying war scenes. (Refer to Figure 3.8)



Figure 3.8: Yuddha Kanda of Ramayana, Sahibdin, Mewar, 1652

- ❖ Sahibdin's major works encompass the **Ragamala**, **Rasikapriya**, **Bhagavata Purana**, and a part of the **Ramayana** titled **Yuddha Kanda**.
- ❖ **Manohar's** prominent contribution was the **Bal Kanda** of the Ramayana from 1649.
- ❖ By the 18th century, **Mewar** painting shifted focus from textual representations to depicting royal activities.
- ❖ Common themes included portraiture, court scenes, hunting expeditions, festivals, and daily activities of the royalty.
- ❖ A folio showcases **Maharana Jagat Singh II (1734-1752)** touring the countryside, highlighting the intricate narrative and expansive panoramic view of the landscape.
- ❖ Mewar artists preferred a bright colour palette, predominantly featuring reds and yellows.

POINTS TO PONDER

The Malwa School of Painting, with its unique blend of influences and diverse themes, contributed to the artistic landscape of the Hindu Rajput courts. However it lacked a clear geographical origin. What do you think were the factors that may have led to the absence of a clear geographical origin for this school?



Bundi School of Painting

- ❖ Bundi School of Painting witnessed its zenith in the **17th century**, known for its impeccable color perception and design.
- ❖ The early phase of Bundi painting is epitomized by the **"Bundi Ragamala"** from 1591, painted during the reign of **Bhoj Singh (1585-1607)**. (Refer to Figure 3.9)
- ❖ The school thrived, notably under rulers **Rao Chhattar Sal (1631-1659)** and **Rao Bhao Singh (1659-1682)**, with significant contributions from artists like Sahibdin and Manohar.
- ❖ Later, despite facing political turbulence, **Budh Singh** continued to champion the art form. His son, **Umed Singh (1749-1771)**, brought meticulous detailing to the paintings.

Nathdwara: A New Center of Art

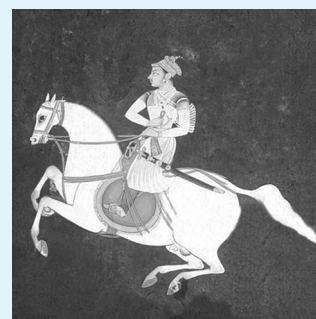
Located near Udaipur, Nathdwara emerged as a painting school in the late 17th century. Large Pichhwais (backdrops) were crafted on cloth for the deity, Shrinathji, during festive occasions.



Figure 3.9: Raga Dipak, Chunar Ragamala, Bundi, 1519, Bharat Kala Bhavan, Varanasi

Raja Aniruddha Singh Hara

During Aniruddha Singh's reign (1682-1702), a notable equestrian portrait was created by the artist Tulchi Ram in 1680. This painting, housed in the National Museum, New Delhi, captures the essence of speed and motion. It depicts a horse galloping so high that the ground beneath is invisible, transforming a static portrait into a dynamic narrative. While the back of the painting mentions the names of Tulchi Ram and Prince Aniruddha Singh, the front bears the name of Bharat Singh. This has led to some debate among scholars about the true identity of the figure in the portrait, with most believing it portrays a young Aniruddha Singh before his coronation.



Key Features and Iconic Works

- ❖ The paintings of the 18th century adopted **Deccani aesthetics** with a preference for vivid colours.
- ❖ Rulers such as **Bishen Singh and Ram Singh** showcased an inclination towards hunting, resulting in numerous hunting-themed artworks.
- ❖ Mural paintings depicting royal processions and Krishna's tales adorned the **chitrashalain** of the Bundi palace during Ram Singh's reign.

Did You Know?

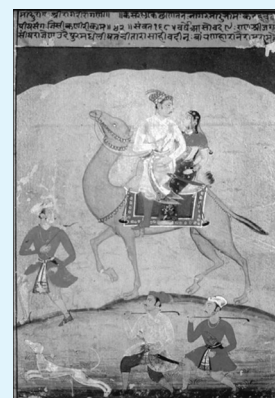
The Bundi Ragamala, one of the earliest works, had Persian inscriptions and was crafted by artists Shaykh Hasan, Shaykh Ali, and Shaykh Hatim, who were students of the famed Mughal court artists.

Characteristics of Bundi (and Kota) paintings:

- ❖ Rich depiction of nature, encompassing diverse flora, fauna, and water bodies.
- ❖ Unique portraits and unparalleled drawings of elephants.
- ❖ The specific standard for feminine beauty such as petite women with round faces, sharp features, and a **'pinched'** waist.
- ❖ An iconic painting, Raga Dipak, illustrates a night-time setting with a couple in a warmly lit chamber, emphasising the artistic process where painting was prioritized over inscriptions.
- ❖ **Themes and Influences:** **Baramasa**, a depiction of the 12 months based on **Keshav Das's** writings, remains a popular theme in Bundi paintings.

Maru Ragini

The Ragamala painting series from **Mewar** holds a special place, especially the "Maru Ragini", housed in the National Museum, New Delhi. This painting has an inscription that tells us it was created in 1628 by the artist **Sahibdin in Udaipur**, under the patronage of **Rana Shri Jagat Singh**. Interestingly, the inscription equates the act of painting with writing, emphasizing the story the artist aims to tell. The story itself is captivating; it's about **Dhola and Maru**, a prince and princess from folklore. They face numerous challenges before they can be together. In this particular artwork, the two are making their escape on a camel, a nod to their enduring love and determination.



Kota School of Painting

- ❖ The Kota School of Painting emerged from the illustrious tradition of the Bundi School, with a unique emphasis on vivid hunting scenes.
- ❖ Historically, Bundi and Kota were unified territories until 1625.
- ❖ **Emperor Jahangir**, appreciating **Madhu Singh's valour**, separated Kota from Bundi as a reward.
- ❖ Painting in Kota commenced around the 1660s, during the reign of **Jagat Singh (1658–1683)**.

Stylistic Evolution and Distinctiveness

- ❖ Initially, distinguishing between Bundi and Kota paintings was challenging, as Kota borrowed heavily from Bundi's artistic repertoire.
- ❖ However, over time, Kota paintings displayed a distinctive non-conformity, especially in figural and architectural representations.
- ❖ By **Ram Singh I's reign (1686–1708)** (Refer to Figure 3.10), the variety of subjects in Kota paintings had significantly expanded.
- ❖ Kota artists pioneered landscape-centric compositions, making landscape the primary subject.



Figure 3.10: Maharaja Ram Singh I of Kota hunting lions at Mukundgarh, 1695

Prominent Influences and Characteristics

- ❖ **Umed Singh's reign (1770–1819)** is particularly notable. Ascending the throne at a young age, he was primarily engaged in hunting, under the influence of his regent, **Zalim Singh**.
- ❖ This obsession with wildlife and hunting is prominently reflected in the paintings from his period, often serving as records of his hunting expeditions.
- ❖ Even the women of the court actively participated in these **hunting-themed** social rituals.

Key features of Kota paintings

Spontaneity in execution, calligraphic detailing, distinct shading techniques, notably the double-lid eye representation, mastery in depicting animals and combat scenarios etc

Bikaner School of Painting

- ❖ **Rao Bika Rathore** founded **Bikaner** (Refer to Figure 3.11), a key Rajasthani kingdom, in **1488**.
- ❖ Under **Anup Singh's rule (1669–1698)**, Bikaner housed a library rich in manuscripts and paintings.
- ❖ Due to prolonged ties with the Mughals, Bikaner's painting style imbibed Mughal grace and a subdued colour palette.

Influential Artists and their Contributions

- ❖ Inscriptional evidence suggests numerous Mughal atelier master artists visited and contributed to Bikaner's art during the 17th century.
- ❖ **Ustad Ali Raza**, a master from Delhi, was employed by **Karan Singh**. His works mark the inception of the **Bikaner School**, dating back to circa 1650.
- ❖ In Anup Singh's era, master artist **Ruknuddin's** works blended indigenous, **Deccani**, and **Mughal styles**.
- ❖ He illustrated significant texts, including the **Ramayana**, **Rasikapriya**, and **Durga Satpsati**.
- ❖ Other notable painters in his atelier included **Ibrahim**, **Nathu**, **Sahibdin**, and **Isa**.

The 'Mandi' System and Artistic Practices

- ❖ Bikaner had a tradition of establishing studios called "**Mandis**" where artists worked under a master artist's guidance. There were known master artists like Ruknuddin, Ibrahim, and Nathu managed several of these studios.
- ❖ Once a painting was finished, details of the master artist and date were inscribed on the artwork. Often, even if pupils painted the work, the master artist's name was inscribed, implying that the master might have added final touches. This process was termed "**gudarayi**" or "**lift**".
- ❖ Studios also performed "**marammat**" (repairs) and created "**nakals**" (copies) of older artworks.

Traits of the Bikaner School

- ❖ A unique Bikaner practice was to include portraits of artists, often with inscriptions detailing their lineage. Such artists were titled "**Ustas**" or "**Ustad**".
- ❖ **Ruknuddin's** works were notable for their soft colour hues.
- ❖ **Ibrahim's** creations carried a dreamy aura, with delicate figures and well-defined faces.
- ❖ Ibrahim's studio was particularly prolific, with various sets like **Baramasa**, **Ragamala**, and **Rasikapriya** to its credit.

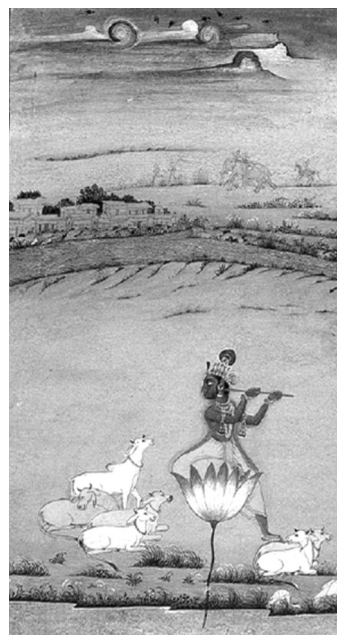


Figure 3.11: Krishna playing Flute surrounded by Cows, Bikaner, 1777

Legacy of Bikaner School of Painting

The Bikaner School stands out as one of the most well-documented painting schools. "**Bahis**", the royal diaries, alongside numerous inscriptions on Bikaner artworks, offer a rich record of the school's history. Inscriptions, primarily in Marwari and occasionally Persian, provide data on artists, dates, production locations, and commissioning occasions.

Krishna Swinging and Radha in Sad Mood

Artist and Date: Created by Nuruddin in 1683, an artist from the Bikaner court.

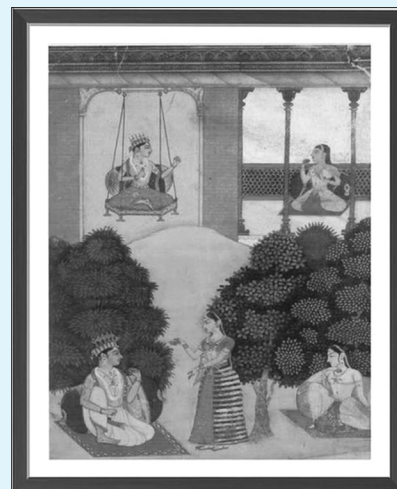
Composition: The painting is divided into two sections:

Top: Krishna with a Gopi, swinging indoors.

Bottom: A desolate Radha outdoors under a tree, followed by a remorseful Krishna.

Narrative: Radha learns of Krishna's time with a Gopi and retreats in sorrow. Their friend attempts to mediate between the estranged lovers.

Location: The artwork is displayed at the National Museum in New Delhi.



Kishangarh School of Painting

- ❖ Kishangarh paintings are among the most stylised Rajasthani miniatures.
- ❖ They're known for their refined elegance and unique facial depiction such as arched eyebrows, lotus petal-shaped eyes with a pinkish tinge, drooping eyelids, sharp slender nose, thin lips etc.

Historical Origins and Evolution

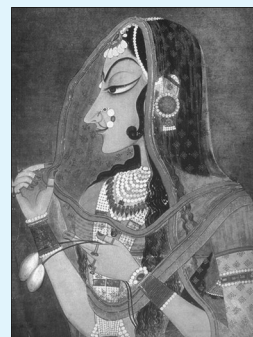
- ❖ **Kishan Singh established Kishangarh** in 1609 after branching off from the **Jodhpur** monarchy.
- ❖ By the mid-seventeenth century, under **Man Singh's** patronage (1658–1706), a distinctive artistic style began to emerge in the Kishangarh court.
- ❖ This style was characterised by: an inclination to elongate human forms, a fondness for the colour green, a preference for panoramic landscapes.

Bani Thani

- Bani Thani was a singer known for her unparalleled beauty and elegance.
- She was an attendant of Raj Singh's wife and was skilled as a poetess, singer, and dancer.
- Sawant Singh, who wrote poetry as Nagari Das, was deeply enamored with Bani Thani.
- She served as his muse for poems celebrating Radha and Krishna's love.
- He eventually abdicated the throne in 1757 and moved to Vrindavan with Bani Thani.

Artistic Representation

- Bani Thani's distinct facial features inspired an unique **Kishangarh painting** style.
- Artist Nihal Chand is credited for creating this style, often depicting Sawant Singh and Bani Thanis Krishna and Radha.
- Key features of Bani Thani's depiction: Curved eyes, Sharp eyebrows, Pointed nose, Thin lips, Unique hair curl spiralling down the cheek.
- The iconic painting of Bani Thani as Radhanis housed at the National Museum in New Delhi.



Religious Influence

- ❖ **Raj Singh's (1706–1748)** initiation into the **Pushtimargiya** cult of **Vallabhacharya** paved the way for **Krishna Lila** themes to become the primary focus of **Kishangarh art**.
- ❖ These themes, especially those centered on the divine lovers **Radha and Krishna**, became deeply personal for Kishangarh's rulers.

Notable Artists and their Contributions

- ❖ **Nihal Chand** (Refer to Figure 3.12) stands out as the most celebrated artist, working primarily for **Sawant Singh between 1735 and 1757**.



Figure 3.12: Krishna and Radha in a pavilion, Nihal Chand, Kishangarh, 1750

- ❖ **Nihal Chand's** compositions centered on Sawant Singh's poetry, which often depicted Radha and Krishna as divine lovers. These paintings portrayed:
 - ❖ The lovers set against courtly backgrounds;
 - ❖ A vast, detailed panoramic landscape setting making the figures appear diminutive in comparison;
 - ❖ A vibrant use of accentuated colours.

Jodhpur School of Painting

- ❖ While the Mughal influence since the sixteenth century brought about changes in portraiture and court scenes, the indigenous folkish style of Jodhpur resisted this influence, maintaining its strong presence in many illustrated sets of paintings. (Refer to Figure 3.13)



Figure 3.13: Dhola and Maru, Jodhpur, 1810

- ❖ One of the early notable sets was a **Ragamala** painted by **Virji in Pali** in **1623**.

Maharaja Jaswant Singh (1638–1678)

- ❖ He initiated a prolific era in the mid-seventeenth century:
- ❖ Began the trend of documentary painting, which continued until the advent of photography in the 19th century.
- ❖ Due to his inclination towards the **Vallabha cult of Shrinathji**, Krishna-related themes were predominant, with **Bhagvata Purana** being the most prominent.

Ajit Singh (1679–1724)

- ❖ Ascended the throne after a 25-year war against Aurangzeb, led by the legendary warrior **Veer Durgadas Rathore**.
- ❖ Durgadas's heroic feats were celebrated in poems and court paintings, with equestrian portraits becoming popular.

Chaugan Players

It is a painting showcasing a princess engaged in the game of **Polo (Chaugan)** alongside her companions.

Artist

- Crafted by the artist **Dana**, showing Jodhpur painting style during Man Singh's reign.
- The painting boasts a confluence of various artistic traditions:
 - **Mughal Influence:** Recognizable in the portrayal of women.
 - **Deccani Influence:** Manifested in the depiction of horses.
 - **Bundi and Kishangarh Influences:** Evident in the facial features of the subjects.
 - **Indigenous Preference:** The flat green backdrop highlights the local fondness for unembellished surfaces.



Inscription and Date

An inscription on the top of the painting reads “**Beautiful maidens on horsebacks, playing**”. The artwork was created in 1810.

Location

National Museum in New Delhi.

Man Singh (1803–1843)

- ❖ Notable works from this period include the **Ramayana (1804)**, **Dhola-Maru**, **Panchatantra (1804)**, and **Shiva Purana**.
- ❖ Ramayana paintings are particularly interesting for depicting Rama’s Ayodhya as Jodhpur, offering insights into the city’s architecture, bazaars, and cultural life of the time.
- ❖ Man Singh was a follower of the **Nath Sampradaya**, and paintings of him with **Nath gurus**, as well as a set of **Nath Charita (1824)**, were produced.
- ❖ **Inscription:** Inscriptions on Marwar paintings were generally limited until the nineteenth century, occasionally providing dates, artist names, or places of painting.

Jaipur School of Painting

- ❖ The Jaipur School of Painting **originated in Amer**, which was in close proximity to the Mughal capitals, Agra and Delhi. (Refer to Figure 3.14)

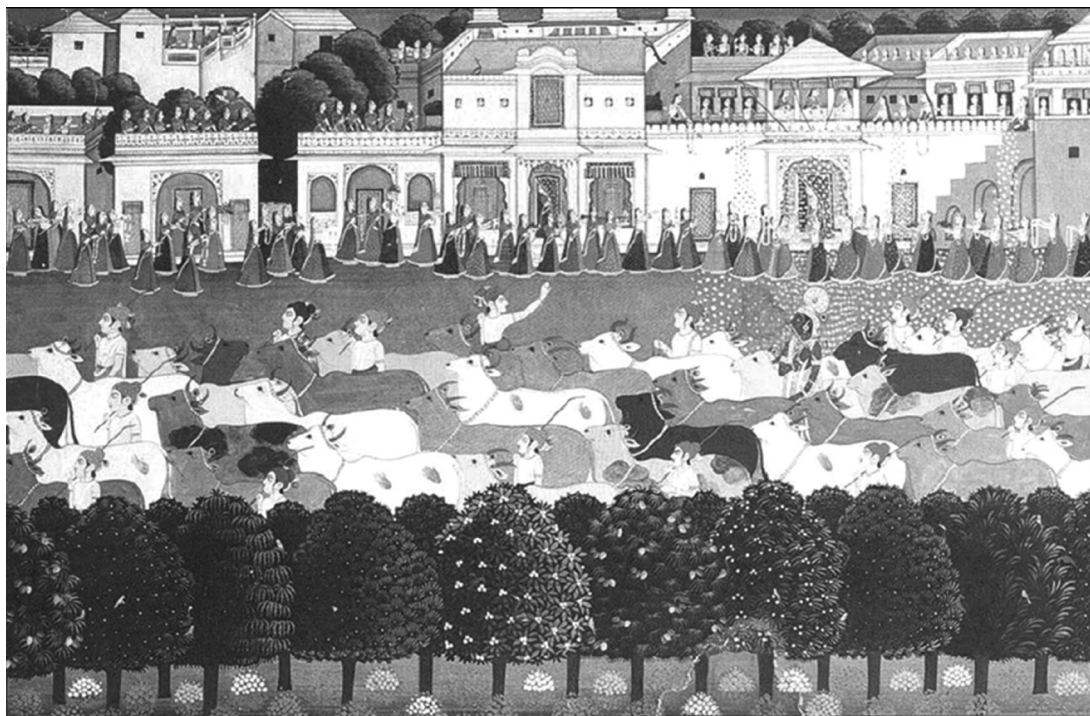


Figure 3.14: The Hour of Godhuli, Jaipur, 1780, National Museum, New Delhi

- ❖ Due to the proximity and cordial relations with the Mughal emperors, such as Raja Bharmal (1548-1575) married his daughter to Akbar and his son, Bhagwant Das (1575-1592), was a close friend of Akbar, and Bhagwant’s son, Man Singh, was Akbar’s trusted general. So Amer experienced strong Mughal aesthetic influences.

Evolution under Prominent Rulers

❖ **Sawai Jai Singh (1699–1743)**

- ❖ He established the city of Jaipur in 1727, shifting from Amer. During his reign, the Jaipur School thrived and became a distinct entity.
- ❖ He brought Mughal painters from Delhi to be part of his atelier. He reorganised the **Suratkhana**, the place for creating and storing paintings.
- ❖ He commissioned many paintings on Radha and Krishna themes. His sets based on **Rasikapriya, Gita Govinda, Baramasa, and Ragamala** were popular, often depicting the king as the hero.
- ❖ Portrait painting flourished with notable painters, like Sahibram and Muhammad Shah.

Rama meets Members of his Family at Chitrakut

- Painted between 1740 and 1750, this artwork portrays a continuous narrative from the Ramayana.
- Depicts a rural setting with plain huts (parna kutir) in woods on foothills.
- The narrative flows from left to right.

Story Depicted

- Bharat, after **Dashratha's** death, visits Rama in exile to persuade his return.
- The three mothers and the princes' wives approach Rama, Lakshmana, and Sita.
- Emotional moments between Rama and his mothers, particularly Kaushalya.
- Rama's profound grief upon hearing about Dashratha's death.
- Conversations between the mothers, Sita, and the sages.
- Each character is labeled.
- An inscribed verse describes the story.



Location

National Museum, New Delhi.

- ❖ **Sawai Ishwari Singh (1743–1750):** He continued the patronage of the arts. He commissioned paintings capturing leisure activities such as hunts and elephant rides.
- ❖ **Sawai Madho Singh (1750–1767):** He focused on documenting court life incidents in paintings.
- ❖ **Sawai Pratap Singh (1779–1803):**
 - ❖ He marked a turning point where the dominant Mughal influence began to wane. He introduced a unique Jaipur style, blending Mughal and indigenous aesthetics.
 - ❖ He employed around 50 artists. Being a scholar, poet, and Krishna devotee, he revitalised various literary and religious painting themes.

Features of Jodhpur School of Painting

- ❖ In the 18th century, many paintings were reproduced using tracing and pouncing methods.
- ❖ By the early 19th century, there was an extensive use of gold in paintings.
- ❖ The Jaipur School favoured larger format paintings, even producing life-size portraits.

The Mughal School of Miniature Painting

- ❖ A miniature painting style that originated in the northern Indian subcontinent between the sixteenth and mid-nineteenth centuries.
- ❖ They are recognised for their refined techniques and diverse subjects, influenced by and found resonance in other Indian painting styles.
- ❖ Holds a definitive position in the Indian school of paintings due to its rich amalgamation of styles and themes.
- ❖ The Mughals were ardent patrons of various arts. Each Mughal ruler contributed uniquely, elevating art forms like calligraphy, painting, architecture, and bookmaking.
- ❖ To fully comprehend Mughal Painting, one must consider the Mughal dynasty's political history and genealogy.

Influences on Mughal Painting

- ❖ The arts of the Mughal era reflect a fusion of foreign and local influences. Such as the amalgamation of **indigenous, Persian, and European styles**.
- ❖ The peak era of Mughal painting showcased a blend of Islamic, Hindu, and European aesthetics. The artworks surpassed traditional Indian and Iranian paintings of the same era due to the convergence of various tastes, philosophies, and faiths.
- ❖ Mughal courts formalised arts with workshops and Iranian artists, leading to a blend of Indo-Iranian styles. Mughal art thrived due to the collaboration of Indian and Iranian artists.

Historical Roots

- ❖ The tradition of art in India has deep historical roots. The Mughal style was a result of interactions with pre-existing art schools in India and Persia.
- ❖ The style did not emerge in isolation but was influenced by various art forms and schools. Both Indian and Mughal painting styles coexisted, assimilating influences and talents.
- ❖ Mughal patrons played an important role in the proliferation of the Mughal painting style, with their distinct artistic preferences and sensibilities.

Now we will discuss the contribution of different rulers in Mughal paintings.

The Mughal atelier consisted of calligraphers, painters, gilders and binders. Paintings recorded and documented significant events, personalities and interests of the emperors. These were meant to be seen by the royals only. The paintings were made to suit the sensitivity of the royals or were often made as intellectual stimulation. The paintings were part of manuscripts and albums.

Did You Know?

- The pre-Mughal and parallel indigenous schools of paintings in India had their strong distinct style, aesthetics and purpose.
- The indigenous Indian style emphasised on flat perspective, strong use of lines, vivid colour palette, and bold modelling of figures and architecture.
- The Mughal style offered subtlety and finesse, portrayed almost three-dimensional figures and created optical reality.
- The royal court scenes, portraits, and depiction of accurate flora and fauna were some of the favourite themes of the Mughal artists.
- Thus, the Mughal painting ushered in a new style and sophistication to the Indian arts of that time.

POINTS TO PONDER

The Mughal style of miniature painting, with its fusion of various artistic influences and cultural backgrounds, reflect the broader historical and political context of the Mughal dynasty. What role do you think Mughal patrons and the collaboration of Indian and Iranian artists play in the development and evolution of this distinctive painting style?



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Babur

- ❖ **Emergence in India:** In 1526, Babur, hailing from present-day Uzbekistan, introduced a blend of Persian and Central Asian cultural and aesthetic flavours to India. (Refer to Figure 3.15)
- ❖ **Versatile Patronage:** Apart from his military conquests, Babur showed a dynamic appreciation for arts, be it architecture, gardening, manuscript creation, or painting.
- ❖ **Baburnama's Insights:** His autobiography, **Baburnama**, provides a detailed account of his political journey intertwined with his deep-rooted passion for the arts.
- ❖ **Artists and their Traits:** Artists like **Bihzad**, known for his sophisticated compositions, and **Shah Muzaffar** recognised for his portrayal of hairstyles, found notable mentions in his memoirs.

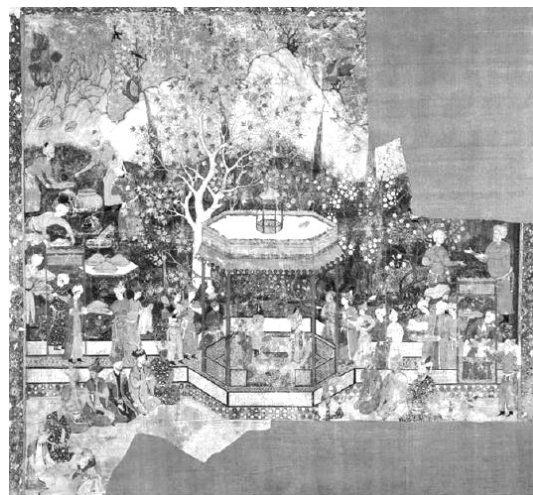


Figure 3.15: Princes of the House of Timur, Abd us Samad, 1545-50, British Museum, London

Humayun

- ❖ **Exile and Influence:** After facing political setbacks, Humayun's sojourn in the **Safavid Persian** court enriched his artistic vision.
- ❖ **Incorporation of Persian Artists:** He was amazed by the Safavid artist traditions, so he invited master artists like **Mir Sayyid Ali** and **Abd Us Samad** to foster the Mughal art scene.
- ❖ **Foundations:** He laid the groundwork for a painting workshop called **Nigaar Khana** and initiated the project '**Hamza Nama**', an illustrious narrative of Hamza's adventures.

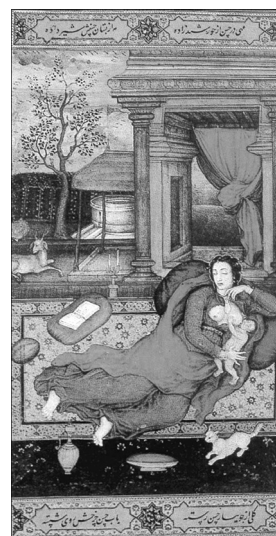


Figure 3.16: Madonna and Child, Basawan, 1590

Akbar

- ❖ **Cultural Integration:** Akbar's reign is marked by efforts to amalgamate various cultural elements.
- ❖ **Monumental Projects:** He commissioned Persian translations and illustrations of revered Sanskrit texts, notably the **Mahabharata** (dubbed **Razm Nama**) and the **Ramayana**.
- ❖ **European Touch:** The European influence, especially after contacts with the Portuguese, started reflecting in Mughal paintings.
- ❖ **Varied Themes:** Akbar's era witnessed paintings spanning from royal court scenes to intricate illustrations of Hindu mythologies and Persian tales.

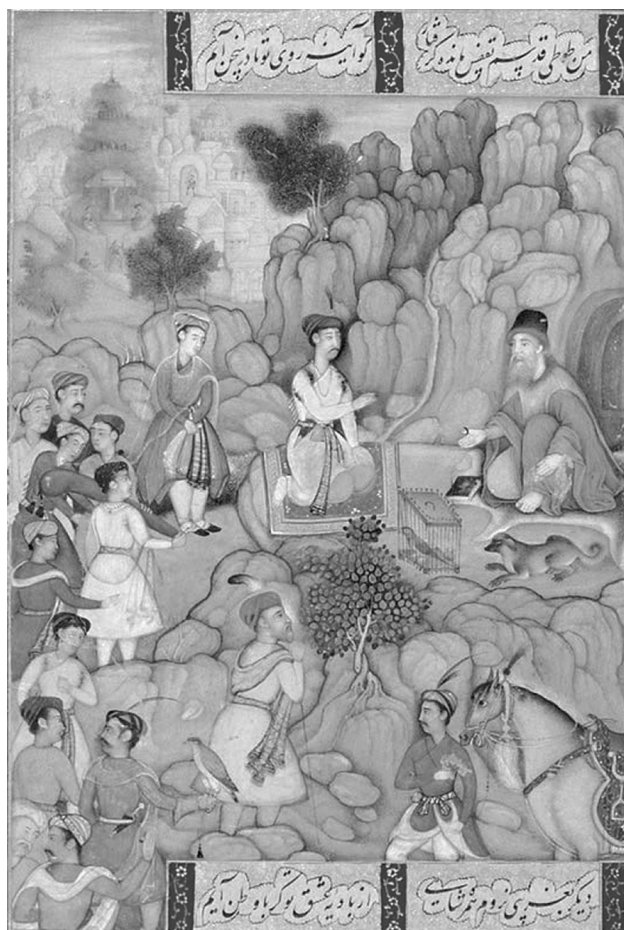


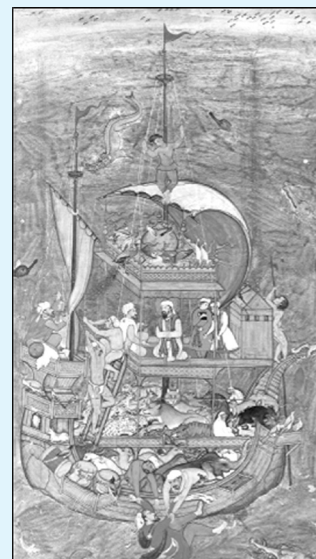
Figure 3.17: A Prince and a Hermit, folio from Diwan of Amir Shahi, 1595

Noah's Ark

- The painting "Noah's Ark" is from a dispersed Divan-i Hafiz painted manuscript, dated 1590.
- The artwork is credited to Miskin, a master artist in Emperor Akbar's imperial atelier.
- The painting showcases a subdued colour palette, predominantly using pure white with subtle shades of red, blue, and yellow.
- The depiction of water in the artwork is notably convincing.
- It employs a vertical perspective, adding dramatic energy to the scene.

Narrative of the Painting

- The central figure is Prophet Noah, situated in the ark.
- The ark carries animals in pairs, symbolizing the preservation of species after the Divine flood.
- This flood was sent by God as a punishment for human transgressions.
- A crucial action within the painting is the sons of Noah throwing out Iblis, the devil, who intended to destroy the ark.
- This exquisite piece is housed in the Freer Gallery of Art, Smithsonian Institution, Washington D.C., USA.



Jahangir

- ❖ **Aesthetic Transition:** Jahangir shifted the artistic focus towards intricate details and **naturalism**.
- ❖ **Artists and Their Mastery:** He employed eminent painters like **Aqa Riza, Abul Hasan, and later, Bichitra**, each bringing their unique styles to the court.
- ❖ **European Infusions:** Paintings with Christian themes and those influenced by European elements became prominent. Iconic works like **Jahangir's Dream** (Refer to Figure 3.18) depict political fantasies with European motifs.
- ❖ **Muraqqas:** He popularized the trend of creating albums of individual paintings, which were richly illuminated.



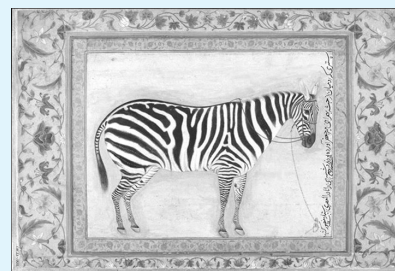
Figure 3.18: Jahangir's Dream, Abul Hasan, 1618–1622

Zebra

- A zebra from Ethiopia, acquired by the nobleman **Mir Ja'far**, was presented to the Mughal emperor Jahangir.
- This unique animal had initially been brought to India by the Turks.

Jahangir's Documentation

- Jahangir annotated the painting in Persian, describing the zebra as a mule from Ethiopia brought by the Turks.
- The esteemed artist, "**Wonder of the Age**" (Nadir ul asr) **Ustad Mansur** was commissioned to capture the zebra's likeness.
- In Jahangir's chronicle, the "**Jahangirnama**", it's recorded that the zebra was gifted to him during the Nowruz celebrations in March 1621.
- Jahangir contemplated gifting the zebra to Shah Abbas of Iran, a ruler with whom he frequently exchanged exceptional presents, encompassing both fauna and flora.
- This tradition of exchanging gifts was evident in the previous presentation of a falcon from Shah Abbas to Jahangir.
- The zebra, with its distinctive stripes, not only intrigued the Mughal court but also became a testament to the flourishing art and diplomatic exchanges during the Mughal era.



Shah Jahan

- ❖ **Artistic Philosophy:** Shah Jahan's reign emphasized majestic beauty in Mughal art.
- ❖ **Padshahnama:** This magnum opus under his reign is a testament to the glorious days of Indian miniature painting, showcasing royal and historical subjects.
- ❖ **European Inspirations:** The Mughal School under Shah Jahan was both an influencer and an admirer of European artists, with **Rembrandt** being a noteworthy admirer of Mughal artistry.

Dara Shikoh

- ❖ **Keen Interests:** As a prince deeply invested in **Sufi mysticism and Vedantic** thought, Dara's art patronage reflected his diverse intellectual pursuits. (Refer to Figure 3.19)
- ❖ **Memorable Artworks:** Paintings like *Dara Shikoh with Sages in a Garden* immortalise him amidst scholarly conversations.

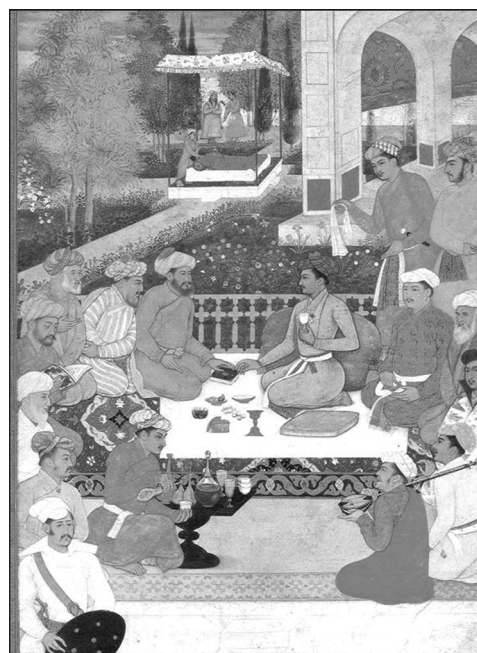
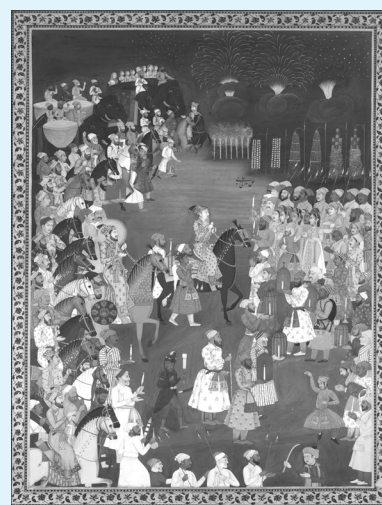


Figure 3.19: *Dara Shikoh with Sages in a Garden*, Bichitra, early seventeenth century. Chester Beatty Library, Dublin.

The Marriage Procession of Dara Shikoh

- The painting was crafted by the artist **Haji Madni**.
- It dates back to the era of Shah Jahan, the Mughal emperor famed for constructing the **Taj Mahal in Agra**.
- The artwork depicts the grandeur of the marriage procession of Dara Shikoh, Shah Jahan's eldest son.
- Dara Shikoh is illustrated riding a brown stallion, adorned with the traditional sehra.
- Accompanying him is his father, Shah Jahan, who is distinguishably portrayed with a radiant nimbus around his head, mounted on a white horse.
- The painting captures the essence of Mughal celebrations:
 - Musical performances.
 - Dance routines.
 - Exchange of gifts.
 - Spectacular fireworks.
- The artist, Haji Madni, meticulously detailed the opulence and magnificence of the procession, encapsulating the grandiosity of the event.
- This masterpiece is preserved and showcased at the National Museum in New Delhi, India.



Aurangzeb

- ❖ **Emperor's Focus:** Aurangzeb's primary interest lay in political and military conquests, yet the flame of Mughal artistry continued to burn. His focus was on the expansion of the Mughal empire and its unification under his leadership. Aurangzeb did not put in as much effort to elevate the production of the Mughal atelier.

- ❖ **Artistic Continuation:** Despite the subdued emphasis, the royal workshop persisted in producing poignant artworks, reflecting the legacy of the Mughals.

Later Mughal Painting

Decline in Royal Patronage

- ❖ **Artist Exodus:** As fervent support for arts dwindled in the central Mughal empire, adept artists sought refuge in provincial courts.
- ❖ **Provincial Imitation:** These provincial Mughal rulers, inspired by the grandeur of the central Mughal court, aimed to encapsulate their own dynasty's splendour through paintings.

Contributions of Later Emperors

- ❖ **Noteworthy Patrons:** Despite the decline, emperors like **Muhammad Shah Rangila**, **Shah Alam II**, and **Bahadur Shah Zafar** continued to support the arts, although not with the same vigor.
- ❖ **Bahadur Shah Zafar's Significance:** A painting of Bahadur Shah Zafar from 1838 stands out, marking him not just as the last Mughal emperor but also as a distinguished poet, scholar, and art aficionado. His exile to Burma by the British after the Indian Revolt of 1857 symbolised the end of the Mughal era. (Refer to Figure 3.20)

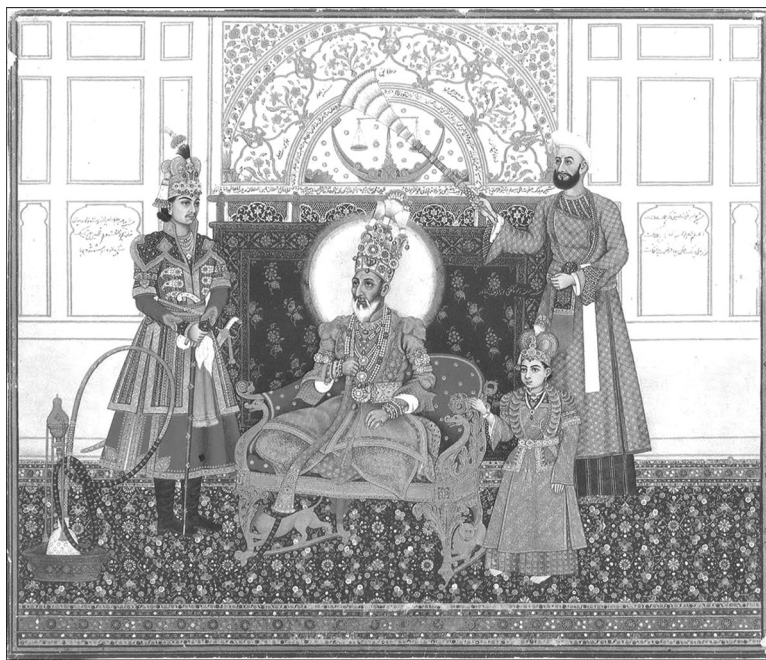


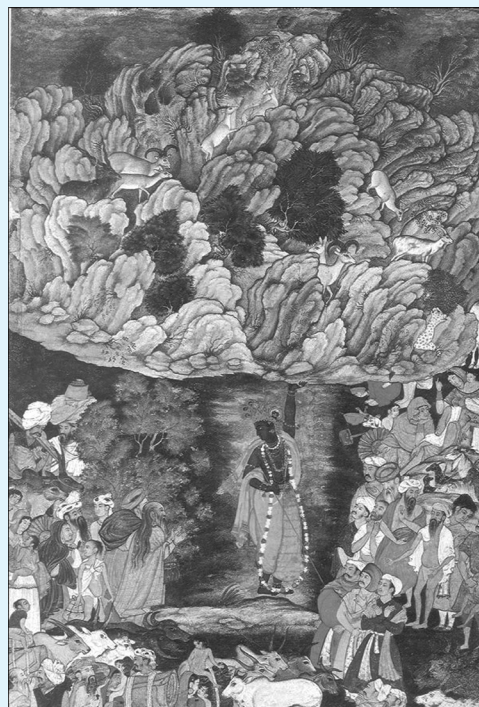
Figure 3.20: Bahadur Shah Zafar, 1838, Fogg Museum of Art, Cambridge, U.K.

Artistic Evolution in a Changing Political Landscape

- ❖ **Shift in Artistic Paradigm:** The rising threat of English dominance and political unrest across regional kingdoms reshaped India's artistic milieu.
- ❖ **Adapting to New Patrons:** Artists recalibrated their works to cater to evolving patrons and their preferences, thereby adapting to the shifting landscape of subject matters and visual aesthetics.
- ❖ **Convergence with Other Styles:** The once-dominant Mughal miniature style began to merge with other prevailing styles, eventually leading to the emergence of the Provincial and Company School of Art.

“Krishna Lifts Mount Govardhan”

- The painting titled “Krishna Lifts Mount Govardhan” comes from a dispersed Harivamsa Purana and is dated between 1585–90.
- The artwork is attributed to the artist Miskin.
- It currently resides in the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, USA.
- Harivamsa Purana and its Mughal Connection.
- The Harivamsa Purana is among several Sanskrit manuscripts translated into Persian under Mughal patronage.
- Badauni, a prominent scholar and noble at Akbar’s court, was entrusted with translating this specific volume on Lord Krishna into Persian.
- It’s worth noting the contrast between **Badauni’s orthodox religious** views and the more liberal perspectives of Abul Fazl, another renowned scholar in Akbar’s court.
- The central figure in the painting is Hari, or Lord Krishna.
- **The artwork depicts the iconic scene where Krishna lifts the Mount Govardhan.**
- This heroic act was done to shield the villagers, their livestock, and all creatures living on the mountain from a torrential downpour unleashed by the deity Indra.
- Krishna uses the mountain as an enormous umbrella, providing refuge for the entire village beneath it.

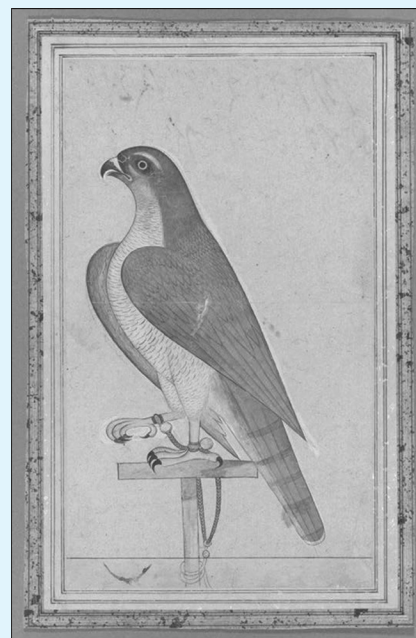


“Falcon on a Bird Rest”

- The painting titled “Falcon on a Bird Rest” is the creation of the renowned Mughal artist **Ustad Mansur**.
- Ustad Mansur was honored with the title “**Nadir-al-Asr**” by **Emperor Jahangir**.
- The artwork is currently housed in the Cleveland Museum of Art, Ohio, USA.
- Emperor Jahangir had a keen interest in falcons and often added exquisite specimens to his collection.
- His passion extended to having these magnificent birds painted, with the images subsequently incorporated into his official biography, the “**Jahangirnama**”.

A Memorable Falcon Episode

- Jahangir recounted a notable incident involving a falcon gifted by the **Persian emperor, Shah Abbas**.
- Tragically, this falcon was attacked and killed by a cat.
- Following the falcon’s death, Jahangir expressed his wish for his court painters to immortalize the bird in art, ensuring its memory would endure for future generations.
- Ustad Mansur’s “Falcon on a Bird Rest” from 1615 stands as a testament to the Mughal Empire’s rich artistic heritage and Jahangir’s deep appreciation for both art and falconry.



The Deccani Schools of Painting

Origins and Recognition

- ❖ The history of Deccani's paintings spans from the late sixteenth century until the 1680s, when the Mughals annexed the Deccan.
- ❖ This art form persisted into the nineteenth century, especially under the **Asafiya dynasty**, and also in the provincial courts of Rajas and Nawabs in the **State of Hyderabad** under the Nizam's rule.
- ❖ For a long time, Deccani painting was categorised under Indo-Persian art, with influences perceived as Middle Eastern, Safavid, Persian, Turkish, and Mughal.
- ❖ While its distinctiveness was acknowledged by art historians, it took time for the style to gain recognition as an independent school of art.
- ❖ The Deccani style was backed by rulers who had their own political and cultural visions and who fostered artists and art that mirrored their individual sensibilities and governance needs.
- ❖ Portraiture and depiction of historical and religious figures, while prevalent in the Deccani style, were also common in contemporary art schools.
- ❖ **Mughal portraiture shared similarities with Safavid and Ottoman Schools of Painting.**
- ❖ Unique documentary-style portraits were a hallmark not only of Mughal art in India but also of broader Asian Islamic art.

POINTS TO PONDER

Do you think the challenges associated with reconstructing the history of medieval miniature paintings, including issues related to damage, dispersal, and the absence of dates, impact our understanding of the evolution of artistic styles and the cultural contexts in which these paintings were created?



Deccani Style

- ❖ The southern plateau region of India, **beyond the Vindhya mountain range**, witnessed the flourishing of a distinctive school of painting in the 16th and 17th centuries.
- ❖ Prominent kingdoms that cultivated this art form included **Bijapur, Golconda, and Ahmadnagar**.

Key features of Deccani paintings

- ❖ Rich in sensuality with vibrant colours that resonated with regional aesthetics.
- ❖ The dense composition that exuded romance, expressed in natural and vivid idioms.

Ahmadnagar School of Painting

- ❖ The Ahmednagar School of Painting traces its earliest origins to a volume of poems celebrating the reign of **Hussain Nizam Shah I of Ahmadnagar (1553–1565)**. (Refer to Figure 3.21)



Figure 3.21: Tarif-i-Hussain Shahi: King sitting on the Throne, Ahmadnagar, 1565–1569, Bharata Itihasa samshodaka Mandala, poona

- ❖ This volume comprises 12 miniatures, primarily illustrating battle scenes.
- ❖ While many of the battle scene miniatures may not captivate artistic attention, the illustrations portraying the queen and her matrimonial ceremonies stand out due to vibrant colours and graceful and sensuous lines.
- ❖ These artworks evoke the pre-Mughal painting traditions prevalent in northern regions like Malwa and Ahmedabad.

Fashion and Costume Details

- ❖ The women depicted in the Ahmadnagar paintings as a modified northern attire comprising a choli (bodice), and long braided pigtails adorned with tassels, and wrap a long scarf around their bodies, a distinctly southern style also observed in the Lepakshi frescoes.

Colour Palette and Influences

- ❖ The colors employed in these paintings diverge from the northern manuscripts, predominantly drawn from the Mughal atelier, as they exhibit richer and more vivid hues.
- ❖ The Deccani paintings share these colour attributes such as the elevated circular horizon, the opulent gold sky, and the Unique Landscape Idiom.
- ❖ The Ahmednagar School and other Deccani kingdoms owe a significant artistic debt to Persia, especially in their representation of landscapes.

Characteristic Features

- ❖ The women's attire, prominently displayed in a series of Ragamala paintings, epitomized the sixteenth-century Deccan Schools of Painting:
- ❖ Hair fashioned into a bun at the nape.
- ❖ Landscapes devoid of horizons are replaced by neutral grounds adorned with stylized plants or symmetrically patterned architectural domes.
- ❖ Most of these artistic elements, barring the hairstyle, carry imprints of either north India or Persia.

Bijapur School of Painting

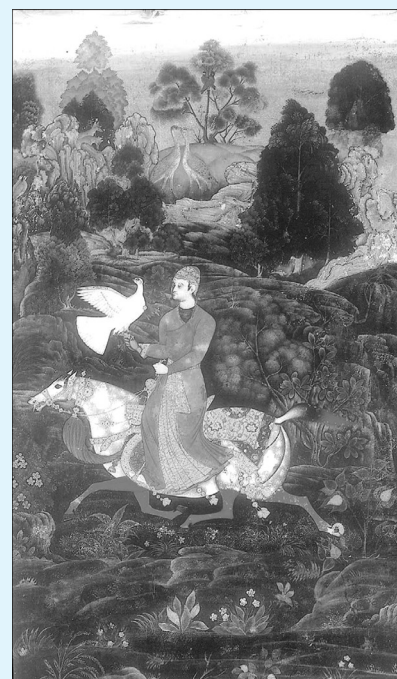
- ❖ The Bijapur School is renowned for the richly illustrated encyclopedia, **Nujum al-Ulum (1570)**.
- ❖ The volume comprises 876 miniatures. Themes range from depicting weapons and utensils to constellations.
- ❖ **Characteristics:** Female figures in the miniatures portrayed in South Indian attire, Exude elegance, resembling figures from Ragamala paintings.
- ❖ The school thrived under the patronage of **Ali Adil Shah I (1558–1580)**, **Ibrahim II (1580–1627)**, who was also an Indian music enthusiast and penned **Nauras-nama**.
- ❖ Bijapur's artistry was **influenced by its ties with Turkey**, evident in the astronomical illustrations in **Nujum al-Ulum**, possibly inspired by Ottoman Turkish manuscripts.
 - ❖ The Ragamala paintings are predominantly Indian, with traces of the Lepakshi style.
 - ❖ They encapsulate the opulent aesthetics of the Adil Shah court with vibrant colouring and dynamic compositions.

Sultan Ibrahim Adil Shah II hawking

- The artwork encapsulates tremendous energy and exquisite sensibility, showcasing Sultan Ibrahim Adil Shah II riding a vibrant horse.

Key Visual Features

- The horse is depicted with brilliant red limbs and tail, making it a focal point.
- Sultan Ibrahim Adil Shah II's flowing garment adds to the painting's dynamic movement.
- A deep forest backdrop with varying shades of green – from dark dense foliage to emerald and cobalt blue – complements the foreground.
- Cranes in the background and a sunlit golden-blue sky amplify the painting's depth and aesthetic.
- The white hawk and the sultan's delicately rendered faces share the limelight, anchoring the viewer's attention.
- The artwork exhibits clear Persian influences, especially in the portrayal of the horse and the rocky terrains.
- Native inspiration is evident in the dense foreground landscape and the unique plant representations.
- The galloping horse infuses the painting with kinetic energy, visually invigorating the entire landscape and captivating the viewer.



The Throne of Prosperity

- ❖ A symbolic representation showcasing a seven-tiered auspicious throne (Refer to figure 3.22)
- ❖ Each level is supported by varying entities, from elephants, tigers, and peacocks, to primitive tribes.
- ❖ The foundational designs are reminiscent of:
 - ❖ **Gujarati homes** have wood-carved doorways and facades.
 - ❖ **Deccani temples.**
- ❖ The colour scheme and arabesques reflect the Islamic Persian tradition.
- ❖ Distinctive features include Deccani foliage set against a deep blue sky and stylized plants that resemble margin decorations in early sixteenth-century Gujarati manuscripts.

Yogini

- ❖ The Yogini, an embodiment of spiritual discipline and renunciation, is an uncommon and extraordinary subject.
- ❖ While the artist remains unidentified, the artwork stands out for:
 - ❖ Its vertical composition.
 - ❖ The Yogini's engagement with a myna bird, suggests a dialogue.

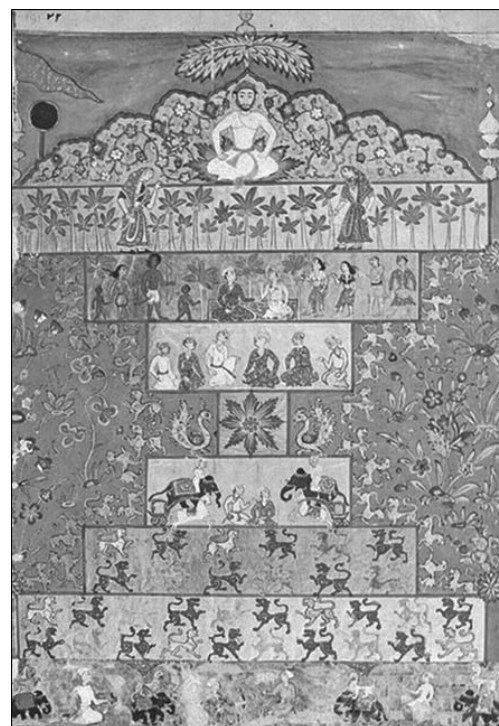


Figure 3.22: Nujum al-Ulum: The Throne of Prosperity, Bijapur, 1570, The Chester Beatty Library, Dublin, Ireland.

- ✧ Rich adornments and a distinct hair bun that accentuates her stature.
- ✧ Flowing scarves and surrounding flora enhance the visual appeal.

Golconda School of Painting

- ❖ Golconda became an autonomous state in 1512 and by the late sixteenth century emerged as the wealthiest Deccan kingdom.
- ❖ **Factors contributing to its prosperity:**
 - ✧ Trade from ports along the east coast, exporting iron and cotton to South East Asia.
 - ✧ Extensive commerce with Persia, especially painted cottons became sought-after in Europe.
 - ✧ Discovery of diamonds in the early seventeenth century.

Characteristics

- ❖ A noticeable feature in Golconda's art is the **gold jewellery adorned by both genders.**
- ❖ The school's artistry gained popularity when Dutch merchants transported sultan portraits to Europe in the late seventeenth century.
- ❖ These portraits referenced royal paintings and were likely created for the **bazaar.**
- ❖ Early Golconda paintings, from around 1635–1650, were grand, often eight feet tall, intended as wall hangings, and typically showcased figures within architectural backdrops.

Works

- ❖ The earliest recognised Golconda artworks are five miniatures from the **Diwan of Hafiz (1463).**
 - ✧ These depict courtly scenes with a young ruler, characterised by his long Deccani sword.
 - ✧ These paintings are rich in gold, often against a deep blue sky, and feature entertainment in the form of dancing girls.
 - ✧ The paintings notably **lack Mughal influence**, evident in their use of the colour purple and occasionally blue-toned animals, such as blue foxes.
- ❖ A portrait of Muhammad **Qutb Shah (1611–1626)** (Refer to figure 3.23) displays the sultan in traditional Golconda attire.
 - ✧ This artwork combines the **strict symmetry** of earlier works with evident Mughal influences, particularly in the detailed drapery.
 - ✧ A manuscript of a Sufi poem, embellished with over 20 miniatures, exhibits lavish use of gold.
 - ✧ Distinctive elements include skies painted in gold and blue bands, costumes reflecting trends under Ibrahim II of Bijapur, and uniquely coloured Deccani trees.

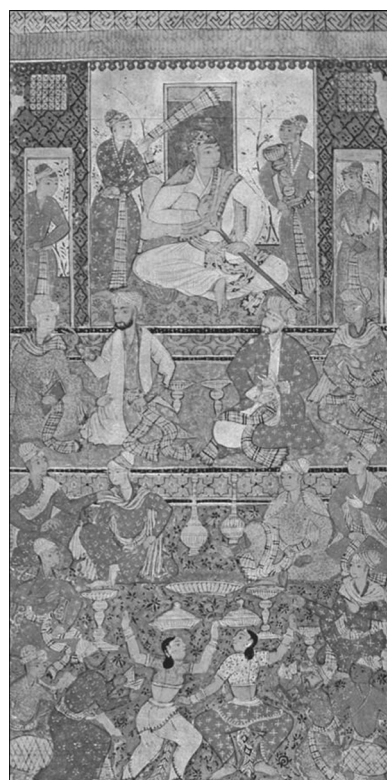
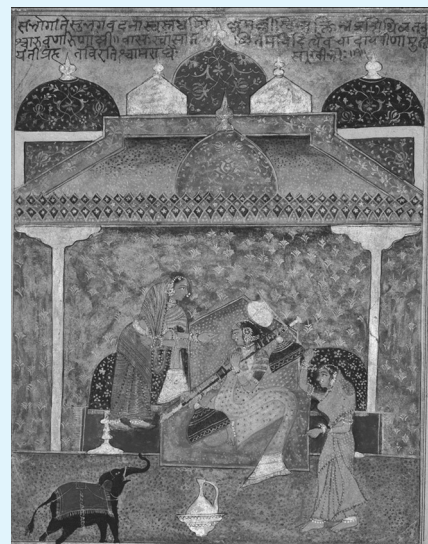


Figure 3.23: Dancing before Muhammad Quli Qutb Shah, Golconda, 1590. British Museum, London, U.K.

Ragini Pathamsika of Raga Hindola

- The painting titled “Ragini Pathamsika of Raga Hindola” belongs to the renowned Ragamala family of Indian musical modes.
- Dated to approximately 1590–95, it resides in the collection of the National Museum, New Delhi.
- Some scholars attribute its origin to Bijapur, a significant Deccani state.
- The artwork reflects the peak of painting artistry in the Deccani states, evolving in parallel with the Mughal School of Painting.
- Persian influences are evident, particularly in the arabesque decorations adorning the two domes at the painting's top.
- These domes are interspersed with Devanagari script letters.
 - The painting showcases three elegantly attired and adorned women:
 - The central woman plays an Indian instrument, likely the veena.
 - The other two women on the flanks seem to be rhythmically swaying, possibly accompanying the central musician.
 - Vibrant colors, with red as the primary hue complemented by green, bring the scene to life.
 - Figures exhibit a stylised form with formulaic details, accentuated by pronounced dark lines. This style can also be observed in the ancient Ajanta mural paintings.
 - A notable element is a small, dark elephant in the painting's left corner, its raised trunk symbolising a warm welcome. This elephant, though diminutive in size, adds visual intrigue and disrupts the architectural composition.



Composite Horse

- The painting, titled “Composite Horse,” is a fusion of various artistic elements.
- The artwork ingeniously intertwines human figures to form the majestic shape of a galloping horse against a detailed backdrop.
- The painting incorporates:
 - Flying cranes and lions, symbolizing majesty and grace.
 - Chinese-inspired clouds, adding an ethereal touch.
 - Large-leafed plants, enhancing the surrealism.
- Despite the floating, airy essence of the composition, two rocky formations at the bottom corners ground the scene, providing a solid foundation.
- This juxtaposition creates a dislocation in the viewer's sense of space, elevating the painting's intrigue.



Color Palette

- The artwork employs a restrained color scheme.
- Dominant shades of brown with hints of blue provide a harmonious visual experience.

Sultan Abdullah Qutb Shah

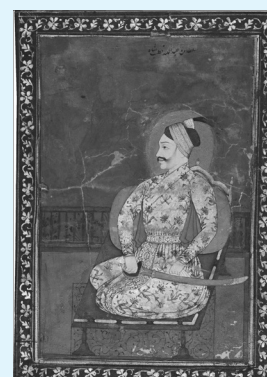
- The portrait of Sultan Abdullah Qutb Shah resides in the collection of the National Museum, New Delhi, India.
- A Persian inscription adorns the top of the painting.

About Sultan Abdullah Qutb Shah

- He was a proficient ruler of the renowned Deccani state of Bijapur.
- Under his reign, Bijapur became a hub that magnetized scholars and artists globally.

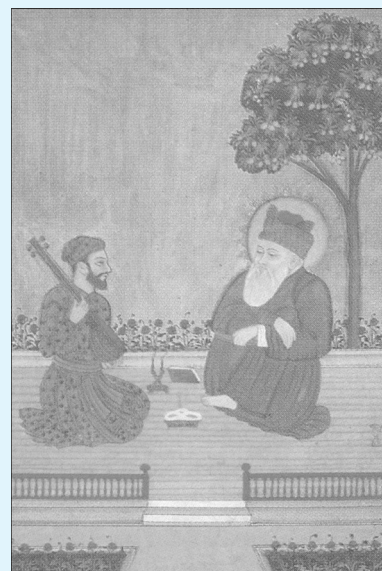
Artistic Depiction

- The painting portrays Sultan Abdullah Qutb Shah in a regal pose on his throne.
- He holds a sword in one hand, a potent emblem of his political dominion.
- A halo surrounds his head, indicating his divine status.



Hazrat Nizamuddin Auliya and Amir Khusrau

- The painting is housed in the National Museum, New Delhi.
- Originates from Hyderabad, Deccan.
- Represents a notable event from the thirteenth century.
- Hazrat Nizamuddin Auliya: A venerated Sufi saint.
- Hazrat Amir Khusrau: His disciple, a distinguished Indian poet, and scholar.
- Hazrat Nizamuddin Auliya is portrayed listening to the music played by Hazrat Amir Khusrau.



Contemporary Relevance

- The dargah (shrine) of Hazrat Nizamuddin Auliya in New Delhi continues to resonate with Khusrau's qawwali in honor of his pir (spiritual guide).
- Devotees globally visit to experience this enduring cultural tradition.

Artistic Perspective

- The artwork is candid and elementary.
- Lacks the intricate artistry characteristic of court paintings.
- Yet, its simplicity captures a beloved Indian theme, making it endearing.

Chand Bibi playing Polo

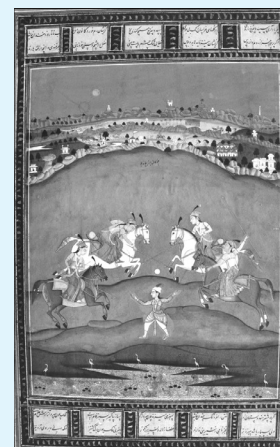
- The painting is preserved in the National Museum, New Delhi, India.

Subject

- **Chand Bibi:** The Queen of Bijapur, a thriving and culturally rich Deccani state.
- Resisted Emperor Akbar's Mughal efforts to annex Bijapur.
- Celebrated as a capable and respected ruler.

Scene Depiction

- Chand Bibi is portrayed playing chaugan.
- Chaugan is also known as the equestrian polo game.
- Polo was a favoured royal sport during her era.



The Pahari Schools of Painting

- ❖ **Pahari** translates to 'hilly or mountainous' in origin. Pahari paintings originated in towns located in the western Himalayas between the 17th and 19th centuries.

Centers of Origin

Key centers include Basohli, Guler, Kangra, Kullu, Chamba, Mankot, Nurpur, Mandi, Bilaspur, Jammu, and others. (Refer to figure 3.24)

Evolution of Style

- ❖ Began in Basohli with a vibrant, flamboyant style.
- ❖ Evolved into the sophisticated Kangra School via the Guler or pre-Kangra phase.

Challenges in Classification

- ❖ Unlike Mughal, Deccani, and Rajasthani schools, Pahari paintings pose challenges to territorial categorization.
- ❖ While individual centers exhibited specific artistic features, they did not evolve into independent schools with unique styles.
- ❖ Dated materials and inscriptions are scarce, hindering precise categorization.

Influences and Emergence

- ❖ Uncertain origins exist, though theories suggest influences from Mughal and Rajasthani painting styles.
- ❖ Basohli style is considered the earliest prevalent pictorial language.
- ❖ **B. N. Goswamy's research** suggests that the Pahari style evolved from the simplicity of Basohli to the poetic lyricism of Kangra, driven mainly by the artistic family of Pandit Seu (Shiv).
- ❖ Goswamy argues for considering families as style bearers rather than regions, given the fluid political boundaries.
- ❖ By the mid-18th century, the style had transitioned through the pre-Kangra phase to mature into the Kangra style.
- ❖ This transformation is attributed to the influx of new painting styles, possibly introduced by rulers, traders, or artists.

Stylistic Features

- ❖ Compositions are often showcased from a relative viewpoint.
- ❖ Themes portrayed the daily lives of kings, introduced a new prototype for the female form, and created an idealised face.
- ❖ The evolution led to the mature Kangra phase, characterised by its refined naturalism.

Basohli School of Painting

- ❖ Basohli School is an art form from the hill states, most prominently recognised in Basohli.
- ❖ Kirpal Pal, the prince who ruled from 1678 to 1695, cultivated a unique and splendid style in Basohli.

Features

- ❖ Strong use of primary colours, particularly warm yellows, stylized representation of vegetation.
- ❖ Use of raised white paint for pearls in ornaments Unique use of shiny green particles from beetle wings to mimic emeralds in jewellery.
- ❖ Elegance and vibrant palette are reminiscent of the **Chaurpanchashika** paintings of Western India.

Popular Themes and Artists

- ❖ The most cherished theme was **"Rasamanjari"** by **Bhanu Datta**. In 1694-95, a series was created by **Devida**, a tarkhan, for his patron, **Kirpal Pal**.

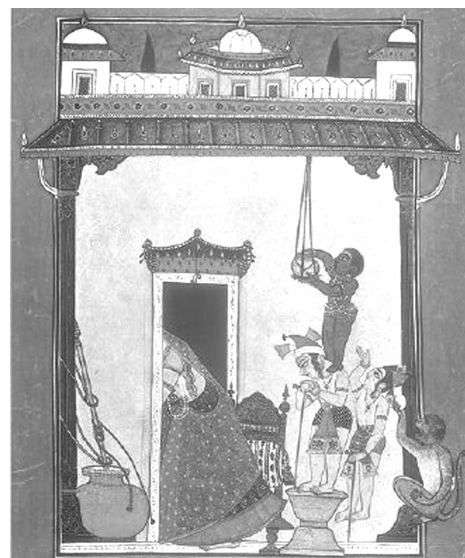


Figure 3.24: Krishna steals butter, Bhagvata Purana, 1750, N.C. Mehta Collection, Ahmedabad, Gujarat, India

- ❖ Other themes included **Bhagvata Purana and Ragamala**. Portraits of kings, their consorts, courtiers, and other significant figures were also popular.
- ❖ The style expanded to other hill states like **Chamba and Kullu**, leading to local variations.

Evolution and Expansion

- ❖ From the 1690s to 1730s, a new style emerged known as the **Guler-Kangra** phase.
- ❖ This phase was marked by experimentation, which eventually led to the formation of the Kangra style.
- ❖ Originating in Basohli, the art form spread to Mankot, Nurpur, Kullu, Mandi, Bilaspur, Chamba, Guler, and Kangra.

Influence of the Ramayana

- ❖ The Sanskrit epic, Ramayana, was a favourite text for hill artists in Basohli and Kullu. (Refer to figure 3.25)
- ❖ A specific set of paintings, named after '**Shangri**', a place associated with the Kullu royal family, showcased the influence of Basohli and Bilaspur styles.
- ❖ Paintings depict scenes like Rama's exile, his acts of charity, and the emotional turmoil of the characters.
- ❖ Another painting illustrates Rama and Lakshmana's journey with **Sage Vishvamitra**, where the depiction of animals adds depth and intrigue to the narrative.



Figure 3.25: Rama gives away his possessions, Ayodhya Kanda, Shangri Ramayana, 1690–1700, Los Angeles County Museum of Art, USA

Guler School

- ❖ **Guler School** represents a significant shift from the Basohli style, marking the beginning of the **Guler-Kangra phase** in Pahari painting.

Historical Context

- ❖ The transformation began in the early 18th century in Guler, under the patronage of **Raja Govardhan Chand (1744–1773)**.
- ❖ Guler had a longstanding painting tradition, with evidence suggesting artists worked there during the reigns of **Dalip Singh (1695–1743)** and his son **Bishan Singh**, predating the Guler-Kangra phase.

Prominent Artists and their Contributions

- ❖ The artist **Pandit Seu** and his sons, **Manak (or Manaku)** and **Nainsukh**, played pivotal roles in this transformation around 1730–40.
- ❖ **Manak's Notable Work:** A set of **Gita Govinda** painted in 1730, that retained certain Basohli-style elements.

- ❖ **Nainsukh's Distinction:** Renowned for his unique portraiture, especially of his patron, **Balwant Singh of Jasrota** (Refer to figure 3.26). His works captured Balwant Singh in various activities, showcasing a detailed visual record. His palette was marked by delicate pastel shades and bold expanses of white or grey.

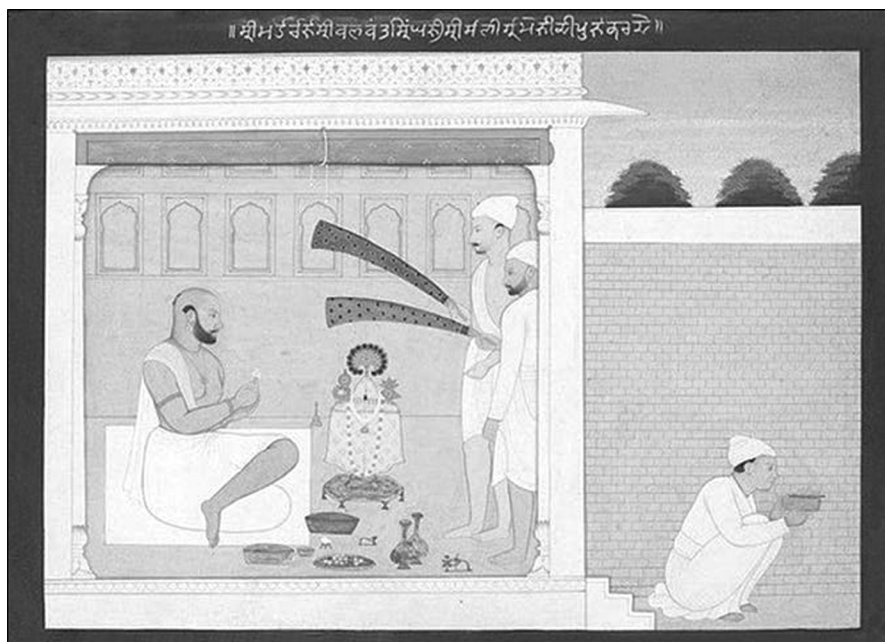


Figure 3.26: Balwant Singh in prayer, Nainsukh, 1750, Victoria and Albert Museum, London, UK

Artistic Evolution

- ❖ This new style was more refined, elegant, and subdued compared to the bold vitality of Basohli.
- ❖ By the 1780s, the matured version of this style transitioned into the Kangra School, though Basohli's influence persisted in places like **Chamba and Kullu**.

Patrons and Their Influence

- ❖ Manaku painted numerous portraits of his enthusiastic patron, **Raja Govardhan Chand**, and his family.
- ❖ **Raja Prakash Chand**, Govardhan Chand's successor, was also an art enthusiast. He had the sons of **Manaku and Nainsukh**, namely **Khushala, Fattu, and Gaudhu**, as artists in his court.

Kangra School

- ❖ The Kangra School thrived under the esteemed patronage of **Raja Sansar Chand (1775–1823)**, an important figure in the region's art history.
- ❖ Amidst financial struggles, Prakash Chand of Guler's leading artist, Manaku, and his sons found refuge and patronage under Raja Sansar Chand, enriching the Kangra art landscape.
- ❖ Kangra's rich history is rooted in the Katoch dynasty's reign, which was interrupted when Jahangir took control in the 17th century. The resurgence came after the post-Mughal decline, initiated by Raja Ghamand Chand.
- ❖ **Prominent Art Centers:** **Tira Sujanpur**, on the banks of the **Beas River**, rose as a notable center for art under **Ghamand Chand** and later became the epicentre under **Sansar Chand**. Other significant centers included Alampur and Nadaun, both located beside the Beas River.

- ❖ **Characteristics:** Profound poetic and lyrical essence, serene beauty intertwined with delicate execution, unique portrayal of the female face, especially the straight nose in line with the forehead, which became popular around the 1790s. (Refer to figure 3.27)

Popular Themes and Artists

- ❖ Renowned themes encompassed religious and cultural tales from the **Bhagvata Purana, Gita Govinda, Nala Damayanti, Bihari Satsai, Ragamala, and Baramasa.**
- ❖ **Fattu, Purkhu, and Khushala** stand out as notable painters, leaving enduring legacies in the Kangra style.
- ❖ The royal court and its activities, especially those of Raja Sansar Chand, were frequent subjects, capturing the essence of the era.

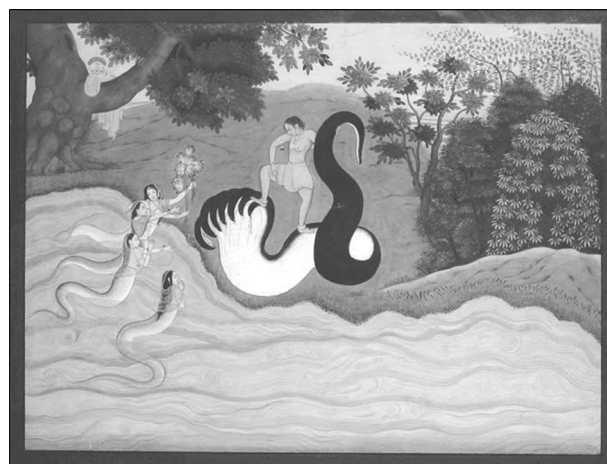


Figure 3.27: Kaliya Mardana, Bhagvata Purana, Kangra, 1785, National museum, New Delhi India

Influences, Expansion, and Challenges

- ❖ The art of the Kangra School proliferated extensively under Sansar Chand, reaching regions from Tira Sujampur to Garhwal and even extending to Kashmir.
- ❖ However, the **Gurkha invasion** around 1805 severely hampered artistic endeavours until their expulsion in 1809 with **Ranjit Singh's** intervention. Despite this, post-1805, the artistic brilliance couldn't match its previous zenith.

Achievements

- ❖ Among the myriad of artistic creations, the **Bhagvata Purana** series stands tall, especially the depiction from **Rasa Panchdhyayi**, which vividly illustrates the gopis' profound love for Krishna.
- ❖ The depiction of **Ashta Nayikas**, or the eight heroines in diverse emotional states, embodies the intricacy and depth of Pahari paintings.

Local Styles and Influences

- ❖ The **Basohli style**, which predated Kangra, saw offshoots and adaptations in numerous regions like **Chamba, Kullu, Nurpur, Mankot, Jasrota, Mandi, Bilaspur, and Jammu**, each adding their own distinct characteristics. (Refer to figure 3.28)
- ❖ For instance, Kullu carved its identity with distinctive facial features in its figures and the prevalent use of grey and terracotta red hues. The renowned **Shangri Ramayana** set, believed to have multiple artistic contributors due to varying styles, was born in the Kullu Valley in the late 17th century.
- ❖ **The Nurpur** artists blended the vibrancy of Basohli colours with the finesse of Kangra figures.

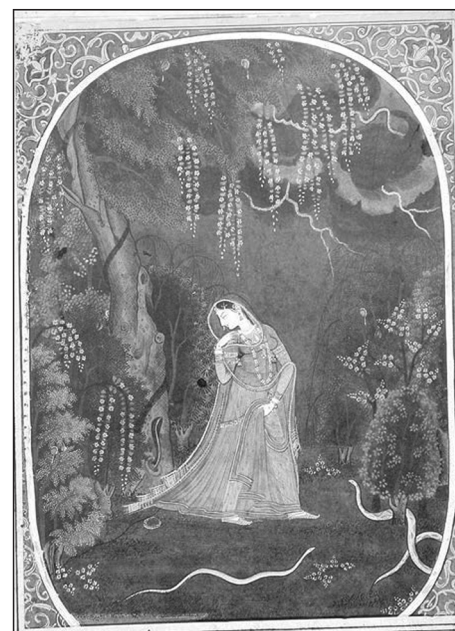


Figure 3.28: Abhisarika Nayika, Kangra, 1810-20, Government Museum And Art and Gallery, Chandigarh, India

- ❖ Due to marital alliances between Basohli and Mankot, some Basohli artists transitioned to Mankot, leading to a fusion school of painting.
- ❖ **Jasrota** had the influential patronage of Balwant Singh, with many of his portraits being the handiwork of his court artist, Nainsukh. This led to a bridge between the simplistic Basohli style and a more sophisticated one, often referred to as the Guler-Kangra style.

Awaiting Krishna and the Hesitant Radha

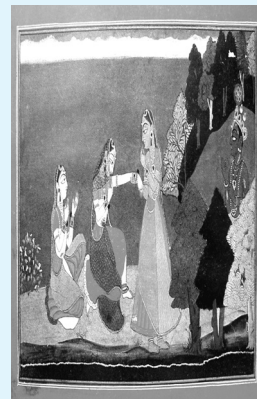
- Pandit Seu had two significant sons: Manak (Manaku) and Nainsukh, who transitioned Pahari painting from the Basohli to Kangra phase.

Guler-Kangra Phase Highlights

- This era experienced substantial artistic evolution.
- Manaku's work on Gita Govinda stands out, detailing Radha and Krishna's divine love.

Artistic Depiction of Gita Govinda

- The story captures Radha's hesitation and Krishna's anticipation of their union.
- Inscriptions on the painting narrate Radha's journey from shyness to embracing her love for Krishna.



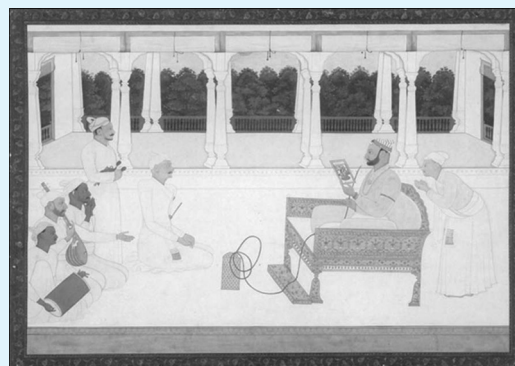
- ❖ **Mandi**, governed by rulers devoted to Vishnu and Shiva, naturally saw an influx of both **Krishna Lila** themes and **Shaivite** subjects.
- ❖ In **Garhwal**, **Molaram** stands out as an artist deeply influenced by the Kangra style, particularly from the Sansar Chand era.

Inter-regional Variations and Legacy

- ❖ While the Kangra School began its journey in the 1780s, variations of the Basohli style continued to influence regions like Chamba, Kullu, Nurpur, and more.
- ❖ **Nainsukh**, with his distinctive style, bridged Basohli simplicity with newfound sophistication, giving birth to the Guler-Kangra style.
- ❖ As the art moved and evolved, regions like **Mandi**, influenced by their rulers' devotion to **Vishnu and Shiva**, brought in new thematic dimensions.
- ❖ **Molaram of the Garhwal School** and the influences to **Sansar Chand's Kangra style** signify the widespread impact and adaptation of Kangra art.

Balwant Singh looking at a Painting with Nainsukh

- The painting portrays Prince Balwant Singh of Jasrota engrossed in examining a painting.
- The figure differentially standing behind the prince is believed to be the artist, Nainsukh.
- This is a rare instance where Nainsukh has included himself alongside his patron in his artwork.
- The scene is set in the palace with a verdant backdrop, possibly during early evening.
- The painting exudes calmness, symbolizing the prince's peaceful disposition.

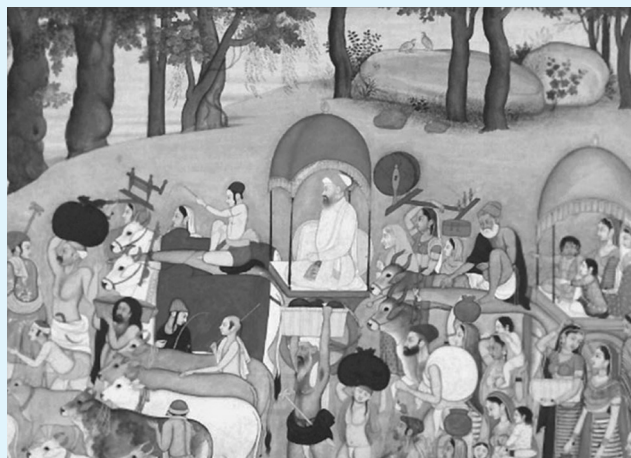


Additional Details

- Balwant Singh is depicted enjoying his hukka during a leisurely break.
- Musicians subtly placed in the painting's perimeter are hinting at a serene musical background.
- The focus of Prince's attention is a painting portraying Krishna.

Nanda, Yashoda and Krishna

The painting in question illustrates a scene from the Bhagavata Purana, depicting Nanda and his family, including Krishna and Balaram, as they travel to Vrindavan. The story behind the painting involves their decision to leave Gokul due to the presence of troublesome demons bothering Krishna. In the painting, Nanda leads the group on a bullock cart, followed by another cart with Krishna, Balaram, Yashoda, and Rohini. Accompanying them are men, women, and children carrying household items. The artwork is notable for its detailed and expressive portrayal of the characters, with observers noting the tilt of their heads during conversation, the fatigue evident in their downcast eyes due to carrying heavy loads, and the taut stretching of arms as they hold items on their heads. The Kangra painters responsible for this work are known for their keen observation of the natural landscape, which they represent realistically, and the painting has a composition that resembles a photograph, adding to its sense of naturalism.



The Company Paintings and Cultural Nationalism

- ❖ Company painting refers to the style that emerged when local Indian artists adapted their traditional techniques to cater to the tastes and interests of British colonial officials during the 18th century.
- ❖ Pre-colonial Indian art was diverse, seen in temple statues, miniature paintings, and village wall decorations. (Refer to Figure 3.29)
- ❖ The British, intrigued by India's unique customs, flora, and fauna, commissioned paintings for documentation and appreciation.
- ❖ It was created largely on **paper** by artists, some from former courts like **Murshidabad, Lucknow, or Delhi**.
- ❖ The shift from relying on memory and rule books (traditional art) to close observation (European art). It resulted in a blend of Indian and European art techniques.
- ❖ It was favored by the British in India. The albums of these paintings were highly sought-after in Britain.



Figure 3.29: Ghulam Ali Khan, Group of Courtesans, Company Painting, 1800–1825

The Bengal School

- ❖ The Bengal School of Art was an art movement and style that, although initiated in Calcutta, Bengal, extended its influence throughout India, reflecting nationalist sentiments in art.
- ❖ The movement began in Calcutta, the then center of British power. It was not confined to Bengal, influencing artists across India, including in Shantiniketan, the site of India's first national art school.

Key Figures

- ❖ Spearheaded by **Abanindranath Tagore (1871–1951)**, a prominent figure in the nationalist (Swadeshi) movement.
- ❖ Supported by **E.B. Havell (1861–1934)**, the British administrator and principal of the Calcutta School of Art.

Inspirations

- ❖ Both Tagore and Havell criticised the colonial art schools and their promotion of European tastes.
- ❖ It aimed to foster an art form that was distinctly Indian in both style and subject matter.
- ❖ They drew inspiration from traditional Indian art forms like Mughal and Pahari miniatures, rejecting the influences of the Company School of Painting and the European academic style prevalent in colonial art schools.

Abanindranath Tagore and E.B. Havell

- ❖ The year **1896** is important for Indian visual arts, marked by the collaboration of **E.B. Havell and Abanindranath Tagore**.
- ❖ Their primary mission was to **Indianise** art education, which began in earnest at the Government Art School in Calcutta, now known as the **Government College of Art and Craft, Kolkata**.
- ❖ Unlike other art schools in cities like Lahore, Bombay, and Madras, which emphasised crafts, Calcutta's institution leaned towards fine arts.
- ❖ Havell and Tagore reimagined the curriculum, embedding techniques and themes from Indian art traditions.
- ❖ Abanindranath's **"Journey's End"** epitomises the influence of Mughal and Pahari miniatures, showcasing his aspiration for a distinctive Indian style in painting.

Raja Ravi Varma

- Raja Ravi Varma was a self-taught artist from the **Travancore Court** in Kerala, known for his **fusion of European academic realism with Indian mythological and historical themes**.

Evolution of Art in India

- The popularity of Company Painting declined with the advent of photography in the mid-19th century.
- British art schools promoted the academic style of oil painting, blending European mediums with Indian subjects.

Raja Ravi Varma's Contribution

- He learned by imitating European paintings found in Indian palaces. (Refer to Figure 3.30)
- He successfully depicted scenes from epics like the Ramayana and Mahabharata using academic realism.
- His works gained immense popularity, reproduced as oleographs for sale and became widespread as calendar images.



Figure 3.30: Raja Ravi Varma, Krishna, envoy, 1906

Impact on Nationalism

- Towards the end of the 19th century, as nationalism surged in India, Raja Ravi Varma's style faced criticism for being too **"westernised"** for Indian subjects.
- This led to the emergence of the Bengal School of Art in the early 20th century, reflecting nationalist sentiments in art.

Recovering India's Artistic Language

- ❖ Art historian **Partha Mitter** noted that Abanindranath's first-generation students were committed to reviving the **"lost language"** of Indian art.
- ❖ To reinforce the notion that modern Indians could draw from their rich artistic past, Abanindranath played a pivotal role in the **Indian Society of Oriental Art journal**.

Swadeshi Values and the Birth of the Bengal School of Art

- ❖ Abanindranath emerged as a chief proponent of Swadeshi values in Indian art.
- ❖ His vision culminated in the establishment of the Bengal School of Art, laying the foundation for modern Indian painting.
- ❖ The innovative direction set by Abanindranath was embraced by subsequent artists, including **Kshitindranath Majumdar** (with works like "Rasa-Lila") and **M.R. Chughtai** (famed for "Radhika").

Rasa-Lila

- A watercolour piece portraying the divine moments of Sri Krishna.
- Created by Kshitindranath Majumdar, an early student of Abanindranath Tagore.
- Features rustic, slender figures in idyllic settings with delicate watercolors.
- The painting depicts Krishna dancing with Radha and sakhis amidst a village backdrop inspired by Bhagvata Purana and Gita Govinda.
- Notable for its simple, flowing lines and the portrayal of humans and God on an equal footing, reflecting Majumdar's Bhakti Marga influence.



Radhika

- A wash and tempera painting on paper.
- **Abdul Rehman Chughtai (1899 –1975)**, a descendant of the chief architect of iconic structures like the Taj Mahal, was influenced by renowned Indian artists like Abanindranath Tagore.
- The artwork blends the wash technique with calligraphic lines, reminiscent of Mughal manuscripts and Persian paintings.
- Radhika is depicted in a melancholic setting, walking away from a lamp, drawing inspiration from Hindu mythology.
- Chughtai's style showcases elements from Indo-Islamic, Rajput, and Mughal narratives, and has similarities with Chinese and Japanese masterworks.
- The painting exudes a poetic charm, characteristic of Chughtai's other works like Gloomy Radhika and Musician Lady.



Shantiniketan: Early Modernism

- ❖ **Kala Bhavana** was India's first national art school, established as part of the **Visva-Bharati University in Shantiniketan** and founded by poet and philosopher **Rabindranath Tagore**.
- ❖ **Nandalal Bose**, a disciple of Abanindranath Tagore, headed the painting department at Kala Bhavana.
- ❖ He cultivated an Indian artistic style by drawing inspiration from folk art forms prevalent in Shantiniketan and emphasising the language of art.
- ❖ His integration of art into education was evident in his woodcut illustrations for Bengali primers.

Nandalal Bose's Contribution to Nationalism

- ❖ **Mahatma Gandhi** commissioned Bose to create art panels for the **1937 Congress session in Haripura**, known as the '**Haripura Posters**'. (Refer to figure 3.31).
- ❖ These posters portrayed everyday rural individuals — musicians, farmers, women — engaged in diverse activities, symbolising their contribution to nation-building, the tiller of the soil as the famous painting.
- ❖ They resonated with Gandhi's vision of inclusive nation-building through art.

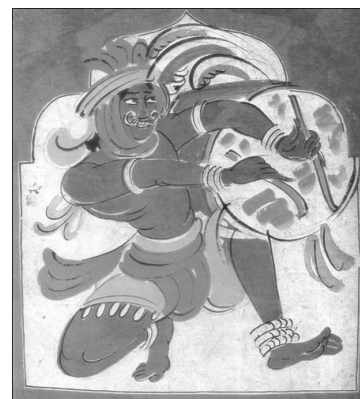


Figure 3.31: Nandalal Bose, Dhaki, Haripura Posters, 1937

Tiller of the Soil

- "Tiller of the Soil" was crafted in 1938 for the Haripura Congress.
- It depicts a farmer ploughing, symbolizing the essence of village life.
- Bose employed a style reminiscent of folk art, specifically the patuas or scroll painters.
- The piece echoes Mahatma Gandhi's vision of the village's central role in India.
- Beyond being mere art, the panel places the common man at the forefront of nation-building, showcasing Bose's alignment with Gandhi's philosophy.



Jamini Roy

- ❖ Jamini Roy, after his academic training, embraced the vibrant and simplistic style of village folk art.
- ❖ His artworks, emphasising themes of **women, children, and rural life**, were designed for broad accessibility and replication.

Continued Struggle between Indian and European Art

- ❖ The British Raj's art policy mirrored the ongoing tension between Indian and European artistic sensibilities.
- ❖ While students from the **Bombay School of Art**, mentored by **Principal Gladstone Solomon in realism**, were tasked with mural decorations for Lutyen's Delhi, artists from the Bengal School were assigned to adorn the Indian House in London, albeit under stringent British oversight.

Legacy of Kala Bhavana

- Kala Bhavana emerged as a hub for nurturing artists with a nationalist vision.
- Many of its alumni, like **K. Venkatappa** from South India, spread its teachings across the country. (Refer to figure 3.32)
- The institution aimed to democratise art, targeting a broad audience beyond just the elite class.



Figure 3.32: K. Venkatappa Painting

Pan-Asianism and Modernism

- ❖ The colonial art policy created a rift between proponents of the European academic style and advocates of the Indian style.
- ❖ Post the 1905 Partition of Bengal, the Swadeshi movement reached its zenith, influencing art perspectives. **Ananda Coomaraswamy**, a notable art historian, penned articles on Swadeshi in art.
- ❖ **Kakuzo Okakura, a Japanese nationalist** visiting Rabindranath Tagore in Calcutta, introduced ideas of **pan-Asianism**, aiming to unite India with other eastern nations against Western imperialism.
- ❖ Two Japanese artists who accompanied Okakura to Calcutta went on to teach the wash technique of painting in Shantiniketan, offering an alternative to Western oil painting.

Introduction of Modern European Art to India

- ❖ 1922 stands out as the year when an exhibition featuring works by artists like **Paul Klee and Kandinsky from the Bauhaus School in Germany** was showcased in Calcutta.
- ❖ They **rejected academic realism**; these artists introduced abstract art elements like squares, circles, and colour patches to India, offering the nation its first direct exposure to such modern art.

Gaganendranath Tagore

- ❖ Gaganendranath Tagore, Abanindranath Tagore's sibling, was influenced by the modern Western art style.
- ❖ His paintings demonstrated the **Cubist style**, using geometric patterns to depict building interiors.
- ❖ Additionally, he was known for his caricatures that humorously critiqued affluent Bengalis who blindly embraced European lifestyles.

Modernism in Indian Painting

Perspectives on Modernism in Painting

- ❖ **Benoy Sarkar**, a Bengali intellectual, aligned with Anglicists, perceived European modernism as authentic and the Bengal School of Art as regressive.
- ❖ Conversely, **E. B. Havell**, an Englishman, championed a return to native art as the path to genuine modern Indian art. His collaboration with Abanindranath Tagore is seen in this light.
- ❖ Amrita Sher-Gil exemplifies the melding of Western and Indian art perspectives.
- ❖ Drawing inspiration from styles showcased in the Bauhaus exhibition, she portrayed Indian scenarios. (Refer to figure 3.33)

Modern Art in India: Colonialism vs. Nationalism

- ❖ Modern Indian art is shaped by the tension between colonial and nationalist influences.
- ❖ Colonialism introduced novel art institutions: art schools, galleries, magazines, and societies.

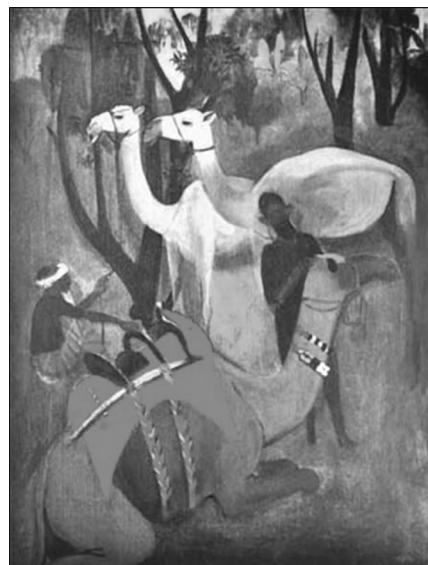
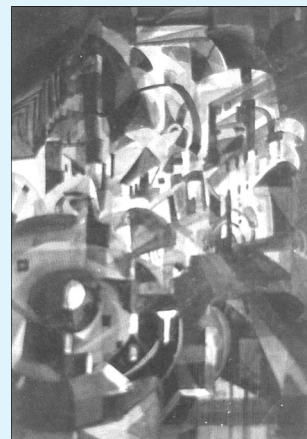


Figure 3.33: Amrita Sher-Gil, Camels, 1941.

- ❖ Nationalist artists, while adapting to these novelties, emphasised a distinctly Indian flair in art, occasionally embracing a broader Asian identity.
- ❖ The clash between internationalism (borrowing ideas from the West) and indigeneity (staying true to native legacies and traditions) would persistently influence the trajectory of modern Indian art.

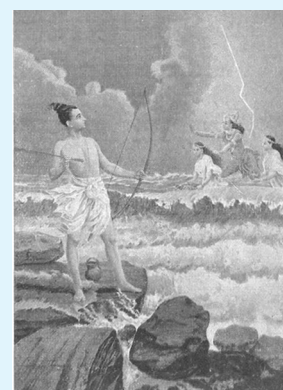
City in the Night

- A watercolour painting from 1922, showcasing the artist's unique adaptation of Cubism.
- **Gaganendranath Tagore (1869-1938)**, an early adopter of Cubism in India, melded its formal geometry with suggestive human outlines.
- The painting externalizes inner turbulence using Cubism's multifaceted shapes and jagged edges.
- Imaginary cities, such as Dwarka and Swarnapuri, are portrayed through prismatic colors and fragmented luminosity, evoking the mountainous landscapes of these cities.
- Notable features include zigzag planes and artificial stage lighting, hinting at the painter's association with theatrical productions, especially those of his uncle, Rabindranath Tagore.
- Elements like corridors, pillars, doors, and staircases are layered on a single plane, creating a captivating, magical world.



Rama Vanquishing the Pride of the Ocean

- Raja Ravi Varma was pioneering in utilizing oil paint for mythological themes and mastered lithographic reproduction.
- The painting portrays a pivotal scene from the Valmiki Ramayana:
 - Rama, needing a bridge to Lanka, prays to the Ocean God, Varuna.
 - When unheeded, an angered Rama prepares to shoot a fiery arrow at the ocean.
 - Varuna promptly emerges to pacify Rama.
- This intense, momentous depiction is characteristic of Varma's style, capturing major moments in an epic sequence.
- Other notable works by Varma include "Release of Ahalya", "Rama Breaking the Sacred Bow of Shiva", and "The Coronation of Rama", each narrating different chapters of the Ramayana.



Woman with Child

- Jamini Roy, renowned as the pioneer of the folk renaissance in India, sought to craft a distinct modern Indian identity.
- In the 1920s, he ventured to Bengal's countryside to immerse himself in folk paintings and absorb the artisans' expressive line work.
 - The painting showcases a mother and child, characterized by:
 - Bold simplifications and pronounced outlines.
 - Vibrant colors like dull yellow against a brick-red backdrop, reminiscent of the terracotta relief from his native Bankura.
 - Two-dimensional style, reminiscent of pat paintings.
- Roy's artistry evolved from monochrome brush drawings to a palette of seven fundamental colors derived from organic materials.
- He crafted his canvases using home-spun fabric, diverging from traditional pat materials.
- Roy's embrace of village community themes served as both an artistic resistance to colonial influence and a means to elevate local symbols to national significance.



Journey's End

- **Abanindranath Tagore**, esteemed as a pioneer of Indian art modernism, rejuvenated Indian and oriental painting traditions.
- He innovated the wash painting technique, known for its soft, misty, and impressionistic landscapes.
- The painting showcases:
 - A fallen camel set against a red dusk backdrop, symbolizing the conclusion of a journey paralleled with day's end.
 - Fine lines and delicate tones vividly capture the camel's features, and its sensory texture adds depth to the painting's interpretation.
- Abanindranath skillfully intertwined symbolic aesthetics with literary references in his works.
- Other notable paintings by him include "The Forest," "Coming of Night," and a 45-piece series based on "The Arabian Nights."



Conclusion

India's rich tapestry of art traces back to the evocative Mughal miniatures and the intricate details of Rajasthani paintings. These ancient styles, with their emphasis on grandeur and detailing, laid the foundation for artists like Raja Ravi Varma to merge Indian themes with European techniques. The Bengal School of Art later ignited a nationalistic spirit, emphasising a return to indigenous styles. Modern stalwarts like Jamini Roy and Gaganendranath Tagore further innovated within these traditions. Across eras, Indian art has brilliantly merged the past with the present, ensuring its timeless appeal and cultural significance.

Glossary:

- **Company Painting:** A style that emerged during British colonial rule in India, where Indian artists adapted their traditional methods to cater to the tastes of the British. The style often documented the local people, flora, fauna, and customs.
- **Raja Ravi Varma:** A notable Indian painter who combined European academic art techniques with Indian subjects, especially scenes from the Ramayana and Mahabharata.
- **Bengal School of Art:** An art movement and style originating in Calcutta during the Swadeshi movement. It emphasized Indian styles and subjects, drawing inspiration from Mughal and Pahari miniatures.
- **Abanindranath Tagore:** An important figure in the Bengal School of Art, who, along with E.B. Havell, promoted a return to traditional Indian art styles.
- **Shantiniketan:** The location of India's first national art school, founded as part of Visva-Bharati University by Rabindranath Tagore.
- **Pan-Asianism:** A cultural and political movement seeking to unite the countries of Asia against Western imperialism.
- **Cubism:** An early 20th-century art style that fragmented the subject into geometric shapes, offering multiple perspectives simultaneously.
- **Ragamala Paintings:** Miniature paintings depicting various Indian musical modes called "ragas".
- **Puranic Theme:** Themes derived from ancient Indian texts known as the Puranas, which contain stories of deities, legends, and traditions.
- **Wash Technique:** A painting method involving the application of diluted paint in a manner that gives a translucent and smooth appearance.
- **Gouache:** A method of painting using opaque pigments ground in water and thickened with a glue-like substance.
- **Equestrian Portrait:** A portrait showcasing the subject on horseback.





Folk Painting

Bibliography: This chapter encompasses the summary of **Chapter 8 of Class XII** (An Introduction to Indian Art, Part II)

Introduction

Our country has always been a repository of indigenous knowledge, which has been transferred from one generation to another. Artists in each generation have created the best works out of available materials and technology. Many scholars named these art forms as **minor arts, utility art, folk art, tribal art, people's art, ritual art, crafts**, and so on. **Examples:** Prehistoric cave paintings or works of pottery, terracotta, bronze, ivory, etc., of the Indus period. In India, post-Independence, a revival of the handicraft industry took place. The art and craft traditions of India showcase the tangible heritage of the country with a history of more than five thousand years.

Painting of India

- ❖ Paintings are the aesthetic expression which is made to decorate walls and floors and do many more artistic things to fulfill daily needs.
- ❖ They are made on pots and dresses, jewellery and ritual or votive sculptures. There is symbolism, specific use of motifs, materials, colours and methods of making.

POINTS TO PONDER

The folk painting culture in India is very diverse in its technique, colors and themes. It has reflected the traditional culture of various tribes and localities. Do you think these folk paintings were also influenced by major painting traditions of the time? Also have they been able to retain their uniqueness?



Types of Paintings

During ancient times, there were many types of paintings developed in various regions. Among the many popular traditions of painting, Mithila or Madhubani painting of Bihar, Warli painting of Maharashtra, Pithoro painting of North Gujarat and western Madhya Pradesh, Pabuji ki Phad from Rajasthan, Pichhwai of Nathdwara in Rajasthan, Gond and Sawara Paintings of Madhya Pradesh, Pata Chitra of Orissa and Bengal, etc., are a few examples.

Here, a few of them have been discussed in detail.

Mithila Painting

- ❖ It derives its name from Mithila, the ancient Videha and birthplace of Sita. It is also called the **Madhubani painting**. It is a widely recognised folk art tradition. The origin of this art form dates back to the time of Princess Sita getting married to Lord Rama.
- ❖ These paintings, characterised by **bright colours**, are largely painted in **three areas** of the house – central or outer courtyards, the eastern part of the house, which is the dwelling place



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of Kuladevi, usually, Kali, and a room in the southern part of the house, which houses the most significant images.

- ❖ In the inner verandah, where the family shrine – **devasthan** or **gosain ghar** is located, **griha devatas** and **kula devatas** are painted.
- ❖ The most extraordinary and colourful painting, however, is done in the part of the house known as the **kohbar ghar** or **inner room**, where magnificent representations of kohbar, a lotus with a stalk in full bloom having metaphoric and tantric connotation, along with images of gods and goddesses, are painted on the freshly plastered walls of the room.
- ❖ Themes that are painted are episodes from the Bhagavata Purana, and the Ramayana, stories of Shiva-Parvati, Durga, Kali and Rasa-Lila of Radha and Krishna.
- ❖ Mithila artists **do not like empty spaces**. They fill in the entire space decoratively with elements from nature like birds, flowers, animals, fish, snakes, the sun and the moon, which often have symbolic intent, signifying love, passion, fertility, eternity, well-being, and prosperity. (Refer to Figure 4.1).



Figure 4.1: Mithila Paintings

Warli Painting

- ❖ This painting is done by the Warli community, who inhabit **Northern Maharashtra** around the north Sahyadri range. Married women play a central role in creating their most important painting called **Chowk**, to mark special occasions.
- ❖ It is closely associated with the rituals of marriage, fertility, harvest and the new season of sowing, Chowk is dominated by the **figure of the mother goddess, Palaghat**, who is chiefly worshipped as the goddess of fertility and represents the corn goddess, **Kansari**.
- ❖ She is enclosed in a small square frame decorated with '**pointed**' chevrons along the outer edges that symbolise **Hariyali Deva, i.e., the God of Plants**.
- ❖ Her escort and guardian are visualised as a headless warrior, riding a horse or standing beside her with five shoots of corn springing from his neck, and hence, called **Panch Sirya Devata (five-headed god)**. He also symbolises the guardian of the fields, Khetrapal.
- ❖ The central motif of Palaghat is surrounded by **scenes of everyday life**, portraying acts of hunting, fishing, farming, dancing, mythological stories of animals, where the tiger is conspicuously visible, scenes of buses plying, and the busy urban life of Mumbai as people from Warli see around them. (Refer to Figure 4.2).



Figure 4.2: Warli Painting

- ❖ These paintings are traditionally **painted with rice flour** on the earth-coloured walls of their homes. These paintings **avert diseases**, propitiate the dead, and fulfill the demands of spirits. A bamboo stick, chewed at the end, is used as the paintbrush.

Gond Painting

- ❖ Paintings of Gonds of Mandla and its surrounding regions have recently been transformed into a colourful depiction of animals, humans and flora.
- ❖ The votive paintings are **geometric drawings** done on the walls of huts, portraying Krishna with his cows surrounded by gopis with pots on their heads to which young girls and boys make offerings. (Refer to Figure 4.3).



Figure 4.3: Gond Painting

Pithoro Painting

- ❖ This painting was painted by Rathva Bhils of the **Panchmahal region in Gujarat** and **Jhabua** in the neighboring state of **Madhya Pradesh**. These paintings are done on the walls of houses to mark special or **Thanksgiving occasions**.
- ❖ These are large wall paintings, representing rows of numerous and magnificently coloured deities **depicted as horse riders**.
- ❖ The rows of horse-riding deities represent the cosmography of the Rathvas. The uppermost section with riders represents the **world of gods, heavenly bodies, and mythical creatures**.
- ❖ An **ornate wavy line** separates this section from the lower region, where the wedding procession of Pithoro is depicted with minor deities, kings, goddesses of destiny, archetypal farmers, domestic animals, and so on, which represent the earth. (Refer to Figure 4.4).



Figure 4.4: Pithoro Painting

Pata Painting

It is generally done on fabric, palm leaf or paper, scroll painting is another example of an art form practised in different parts of the country, especially, in **Gujarat and Rajasthan in the West** and **Odisha and West Bengal in the East**. It is also known as **Pata**, **Pachedi**, **Phad**, etc.

Do You Know?

Patuas, also called **chitrakars**, belong to communities largely settled around Midnapore, Birbhum and Bankura regions of West Bengal, parts of Bihar and Jharkhand.

Bengal Patas

- ❖ It comprises the practice of painting **on cloth (pata) and storytelling** in regions of West Bengal. It is the most receptive **oral tradition**, constantly seeking new themes and formulating novel responses to major incidents in the world.
- ❖ The vertically painted pata becomes a prop used by a **patua (performer)** for performance.
- ❖ Handling the pata is their **hereditary profession**. They travel around villages, displaying the paintings and singing the narratives that are painted. Performances happen in the common spaces of the village. The patua narrates **three to four stories** each time. After the performance, the patua is given alms or gifts in cash or kind. (Refer to Figure 4.5).



Figure 4.5: Bengal Patas

Puri Patas or Paintings

- ❖ It acquired its recognition from the **temple city of Puri** in Odisha. It largely comprises the pata (initially, done on palm leaf and cloth but now done on paper as well).
- ❖ **Theme of Puri Patas**
 - ✧ Daily and festival **veshas (attires)** of Jagannath, such as **Balabhadra and Subhadra**.
 - ✧ **Rasa paintings, Ansara patti** (this substitutes the icons in the Garbhagriha when they are removed for cleaning and fresh colouring is done after Snanayatra);
 - ✧ **Jatri patti** for pilgrims to take away as memorabilia and put them in personal temples at home.
 - ✧ Episodes from the myths of Jagannath, such as the **Kanchi Kaveri Pata**,
 - ✧ **Thia-badhia pata**, is a combination of aerial and lateral views of the temple with the icons and temples around or depiction of festivals around it. (Refer to Figure 4.6).

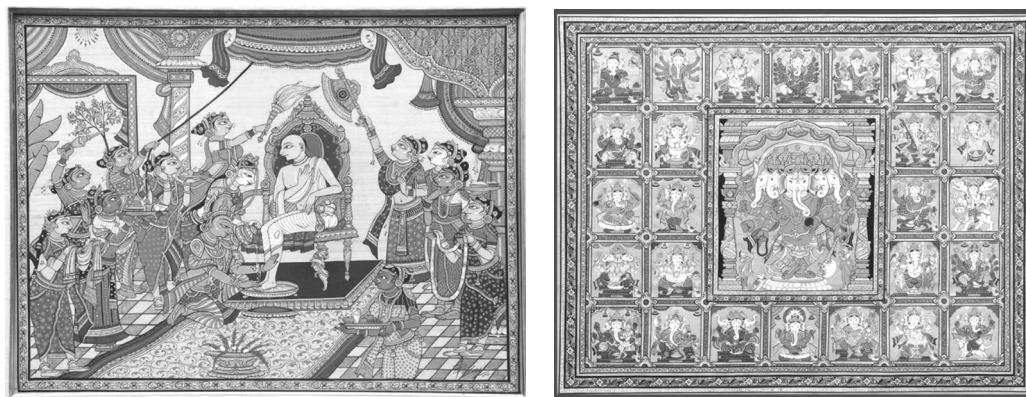


Figure 4.6: Puri Patas

Pattachitra Paintings

- ❖ These paintings are done on small strips of cotton cloth, which is prepared by coating the cloth with soft white stone powder and glue made from tamarind seeds.
- ❖ There is a practice of making the **borders first**. A sketch of the figures is, then, made directly with a brush and flat colors are applied. Colours, such as white, black, yellow and red are usually used.
- ❖ After completion, the painting is held over charcoal fire and lacquer is applied to the surface to

make it water resistant and lend it a sheen.

- ❖ The colours are **organic and locally procured**. For example, black is obtained from lamp black, yellow and red from haritali and hingal stone, respectively, and white from powdered conch shells.
- ❖ Palm manuscripts are illustrated on a palm variety called **Khar-taad**. Paintings on these are **not painted with brush** but incised by a steel stylus, and then, filled in with ink, and sometimes, tinted with paint.

Phads Paintings

- ❖ Phads are long, horizontal cloth scrolls painted to honour folk deities of pastoral communities inhabiting the region around **Bhilwara in Rajasthan**.
- ❖ These were designated by the **broad term bhomia**, these heroes are honored, worshiped and remembered for their acts of martyrdom.
- ❖ Illustrating the valorous tales of these **bhomias**, the phads are carried by **bhopas**, the itinerant bards, who travel the territory, displaying them while narrating tales and singing devotional songs associated with these hero deities in night-long storytelling performances.
- ❖ A lamp is held against the phad to illuminate the that are being spoken about. The bhopa and his companion perform to the accompaniment of musical instruments, such as ravanahattha and veena, and employ the Khyal style of singing.
- ❖ Through the **phads and phad banchan**, the community remembers the hero as a martyr and keeps his story alive. Phads, however, are **not painted by the bhopas**.
- ❖ They have traditionally been painted by a caste called '**Joshis**' who have been painters in the courts of the kings of Rajasthan. These painters specialised in court-patronised **miniature paintings**. Hence, the association of skilled practitioners, bard musicians and court artists places phads higher than other similar cultural traditions. (Refer to figure 4.7).

Do You Know?

For communities of **Bhilwara in Rajasthan**, livestock is very important and so they worship gods who are deified cattle heroes, who are brave men who sacrificed their lives while protecting the community's cattle from robbers.



Figure 4.7: Phad Painting

Sculptural Traditions

These refer to the popular traditions of making sculptures in clay (terracotta), metal and stone. There are numerous such traditions across the country. Some of them are:

Dhokra Casting

- ❖ Dhokra or metal sculptures made from **lost wax or cire perdue technique** is one of the most prominent metal crafts of Bastar, Chhattisgarh, parts of Madhya Pradesh, Odisha and Midnapore in West Bengal.
- ❖ Dhokra casting is an elaborate process. It involves the casting of bronze through the lost wax method. Black soil from the riverbank is mixed with rice husk and kneaded with water. The core figure or mould is made from this. On drying, it is covered with a second layer of cow dung mixed with clay.
- ❖ Resin collected from the saal tree is, then heated in a clay pot till it becomes liquid, which is

Additional Information

The metal craftsmen of Bastar are called **ghadwa**. In popular etymology, the term 'ghadwa' means the act of shaping and creating.

then added with mustard oil

- ❖ The boiling liquid is then allowed to solidify but remains soft and malleable. It is, then, taken apart in small pieces, heated slightly over low-burning coal and stretched into fine **threads or coils**.
- ❖ Such threads are joined together to form **strips**. The dried clay form is, then, overlaid with these resin strips or coils and all decorative details and eyes, nose, etc., are added to the figures.
- ❖ The clay form is, then, covered with layers, first of fine clay, then, with a mixture of clay and cow dung, and finally, with clay obtained from ant hills mixed with rice husk.
- ❖ The molten metal was then poured into the space once occupied by resin, which would by now have evaporated. The molds are allowed to cool and the clay layer is hammered away to reveal the metal image. (Refer to Figure 4.8).



Figure 4.8: Dhokra Casting

Terracotta

- ❖ Usually made by potters, terracotta pieces are **votives**, or offered to local deities or used during rituals and festivals.
- ❖ They are made from **local clay** found on riverbanks or ponds. The terracotta pieces are baked for durability.
- ❖ Whether it is Manipur or Assam in the North-East, Kuchchha in Western India, Hills in the North, Tamil Nadu in the South, Gangetic plains or Central India, there is a variety of terracotta made by people of different regions.
- ❖ They are moulded, modeled by hand or made on a potter's wheel, coloured or decorated.
- ❖ Their forms and purposes are often similar. They are either the images of **gods or goddesses**. (Refer to Figure 4.9).

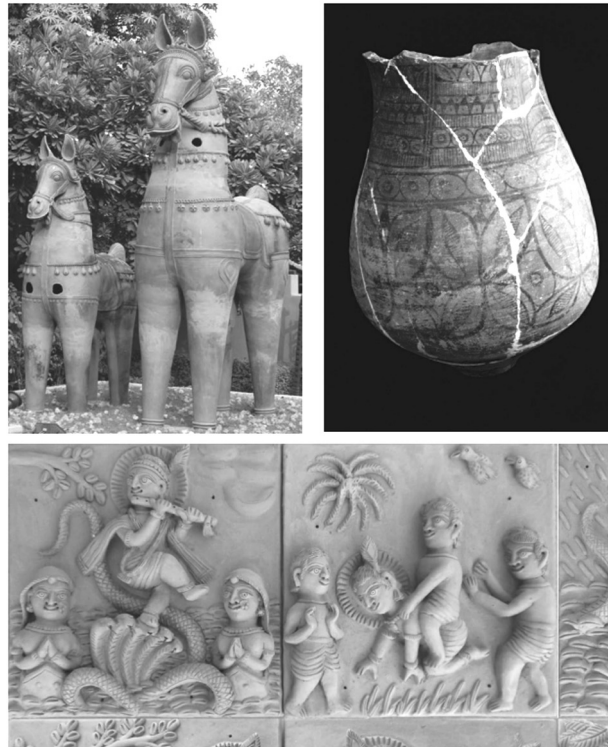


Figure 4.9: Terracotta Art

Conclusion

Folk painting in India is a vibrant and diverse artistic tradition that reflects the country's rich cultural heritage and the creativity of its people. These paintings, rooted in local customs, myths, and traditions, serve as windows into the diverse cultures and stories that make up India. From the intricate Madhubani paintings of Bihar to the colorful Warli art of Maharashtra, these folk paintings have not only preserved age-old traditions but also evolved to adapt to contemporary times.

Glossary:

- **Mithila Painting:** Also known as Madhubani painting, these paintings are characterised by bright colours, no empty spaces and filling in the entire space decoratively with elements from nature like birds, flowers, animals, fish, and snakes. It is a practice of the Mithila (Bihar) region.
- **Warli Painting:** This painting is done by the Warli community who inhabit **Northern Maharashtra** around the north Sahyadri range. Married women play a central role in creating their most important painting, Chowk.
- **Gond Painting:** This painting is done by Gonds of Madhya Pradesh. They have a rich tradition with their chiefs ruling over Central India and they worshipped nature.
- **Pithoro painting:** Painted by Rathva Bhils of the **Panchmahal region in Gujarat** and **Jhabua** in the neighbouring State of **Madhya Pradesh**, these paintings are done on the walls of houses to mark special or **thanksgiving occasions**.
- **Pata Painting:** This painting is done on fabric, palm leaf or paper, scroll painting and is practised in areas of Gujarat and Rajasthan in the West and Odisha (Puri pata) and West Bengal in the East (Benal Patas).
- **Phad Painting:** Phads are long, horizontal, cloth scrolls painted to honour folk deities (cattle heroes) of pastoral communities inhabiting the region around Bhilwara in Rajasthan.
- **Dhokra Casting:** These are metal sculptures made from **lost wax or cire perdue technique** in areas of Chhattisgarh, Madhya Pradesh, Odisha and West Bengal.
- **Terracotta:** They are made from **local clay**, terracotta pieces are **votives** offered to local deities or used during rituals and festivals.
- **Sfumato:** The technique of allowing tones and colour to shade gradually in one another, producing softened outlines or hazy forms.
- **Mural:** An artwork done directly on a wall, ceiling or any other large two-dimensional surface. It is one of the oldest formats of art, dating back to the pre-historic caves.
- **Linocut:** A relief printing process that uses a thin layer of linoleum (can also be mounted on a wooden block) and is easy to cut as it is a soft medium.
- **Folio:** An individual leaf of paper or parchment, either loose as one of the series or forming part of a volume, which is numbered on the front side only.





Modern Indian Art

Bibliography: This chapter encompasses the summary of **Chapter 7** of Class XII (An Introduction to Indian Art Part-II) of NCERT.

Introduction

In the 19th century, British colonial perceptions labeled fine arts as European and questioned the artistic sensibilities of Indians. Art schools were established in major Indian cities, promoting traditional crafts and Victorian-influenced academic art. **The Bengal School of Art**, nurtured by **Abanindranath Tagore** and **E.B. Havell**, emerged as a prime example of nationalist art against this colonial bias. **Kala Bhavana**, India's first nationalist art school, was founded in 1919 as part of Visva-Bharati University in shantiniketan, conceptualised by Rabindranath Tagore. In the backdrop of World War I, Indian artists were influenced by modern European art through magazines, leading to a shift towards abstraction and the belief that art could create its own world through forms, lines, and color patches.

Tracing the Modern Indian Art

- ❖ Modern Indian art has evolved through different dynamic shifts and influences over the years, marked by distinct artistic changes.
- ❖ It found its nascent voice during the **nationalist struggle of the 1930s**, when artists sought to express the spirit of a nation striving for independence.
- ❖ During this era, figurative art emerged as a potent means of storytelling, drawing from indigenous traditions and folklore to narrate the Indian experience.
- ❖ The art world witnessed a transition towards **figurative art and modern art in the 1980s**, where Indian artists explored diverse styles, narratives, and mediums, breaking away from traditional constraints.
- ❖ Further, the 1990s ushered in the **era of new media art**, as technology opened up fresh avenues for artistic exploration. Today, modern Indian art continues to thrive, reflecting the dynamism and diversity of the nation's cultural landscape.
- ❖ This journey through time reveals how Indian art has continually adapted, reflecting the ever-changing cultural, social, and technological landscape of the nation.

POINTS TO PONDER

How do you think the fusion of Indian and Western artistic influences during the nationalist struggle contributed to the development of a unique and distinctly modern Indian art, also can you list out how this art reflects the socio-cultural and political dynamics of the time?



We will analyze this artistic evolution of Modern Indian Art in detail.



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Emergence During Nationalist Struggle

- ❖ Modern art in India was undoubtedly influenced by the West but exhibited significant differences.
- ❖ It arrived in India during British colonial rule, with artists like **Gaganendranath**, Amrita Sher-Gil, and Jamini Roy being considered modern as early as the 1930s.
- ❖ In contrast to Europe, where modern art arose in rebellion against academic realism, Indian modernity was intertwined with colonialism and cultural nationalism.
- ❖ Artists like **F. N. Souza** and **J. Swaminathan** rebelled against art institutions and identified with Western avant-garde artists.
- ❖ Modernity and colonialism were closely linked in India, giving rise to **cultural nationalism** and the **idea of swadeshi in art**.
- ❖ Modern Indian artists carefully selected elements from Western art rather than blindly imitating it.
- ❖ The roots of nationalism in Indian art can be traced to the Bengal School under Abanindranath Tagore's leadership and later took a unique form at Kala Bhavana, Shantiniketan, where artists like Nandalal Bose drew inspiration from traditional Indian art forms.
- ❖ However, it was artists like **Gaganendranath Tagore, Rabindranath Tagore, Jamini Roy, Amrita Sher-Gil, Ramkinker Baij, and Benode Behari Mukherjee** who infused a distinctly modern attitude into Indian art.



Figure 5.1: Gaganendranath Tagore, A Cubist City, 1925. Victoria Memorial Hall, Kolkata, India

Artistic Journeys in Early 20th Century India

- ❖ **Gaganendranath Tagore:** He developed a unique style influenced by **Cubism**, featuring mysterious halls and rooms with vertical, horizontal, and diagonal lines, distinct from Pablo Picasso's geometrical facets.
- ❖ **Rabindranath Tagore:** Late to visual art, Tagore created patterns out of doodles and developed a unique, **calligraphic style** out of crossed out words from his poems, incorporating human faces and landscapes with a limited palette. His palette was limited with black, yellow ochre, reds and browns. He created a small visual world, which often drew inspiration from Mughal and Pahari miniatures along with Ajanta frescoes.
- ❖ **Nandalal Bose (1921-1922):** He was influenced by **nationalism**, and allowed artistic exploration at **Kala Bhavana**. His training under Abanindranath Tagore made him familiar with nationalism in art.
- ❖ Bose's students, **Benode Behari Mukherjee** and **Ramkinker Baij** developed their own styles, capturing their environment, **Santhal tribe**, and medieval saints in their works, departing from the elegant Bengal School style.
- ❖ **Benode Behari's** mural "**Medieval Saints**" in Shantiniketan highlights the humane teachings of saints like **Tulsi Das** and **Kabir**. Rather than making paintings around well-known epics like Ramayana and Mahabharata, Benode Behari Mukherjee was drawn to the lives of medieval saints.



Figure 5.2: Rabindranath Tagore, Doodle, 1920. Visva-Bharati University, Shantiniketan, West Bengal, India

- ❖ **Ramkinkar Baij:** His art celebrated **nature and everyday experiences**, with sculptures like the **Santhal Family** reflecting the daily life of a Santhal family using modern materials. His style contrasted with earlier sculptors like **D. P. Roy Choudhury**, who employed academic realism to celebrate the labour of the working classes, **The Triumph of Labour**.
- ❖ **Jamini Roy:** Influenced by folk art and modern European masters, used simple colours and rural themes, differentiating himself with personal signatures. Like village artists, he also **made his own colours from vegetables and minerals**.
- ❖ **Amrita Sher-Gil (1913-1941):** She was trained in Paris, combining Indian and European art influences, leaving behind a remarkable body of work that impacted the next generation of Indian modernists. Her art fused Indian themes with European modernism, contributing significantly to modern Indian art. After deciding to make India her base, she worked to develop art with Indian themes and images.



Figure 5.3: Jamini Roy, Black Horse, 1940. NGMA, New Delhi, India

Modern Ideologies and Political Art in India

- ❖ Following Amrita Sher-Gil's death and the Bengal famine during World War II, artists in Calcutta formed the **Calcutta Group** under the leadership of **Prodosh Das Gupta**. These artists include **Nirode Mazumdar, Paritosh Sen, Gopal Ghose and Rathin Moitra**.
- ❖ They sought **universal and contemporary art**, distancing themselves from the sentimentalism of the Bengal School of Art.
- ❖ The group simplified their visual expressions, emphasizing elements like **material, surface, forms, colors, shades, and textures**.
- ❖ Many of these artists were drawn to **socialism and Marxism** due to the poverty and social issues they witnessed.
- ❖ **Chittoprasad** and **Somnath Hore**, political artists, used printmaking to depict the plight of the poor, with Chittoprasad's works on the Bengal Famine published as "**Hungry Bengal**," causing annoyance to the British authorities.
- ❖ Chittoprasad's **etchings, linocuts and lithographs** showed the deplorable condition of the poor. It is not surprising that he was asked by the Communist Party of India to travel to villages worst affected by the Bengal Famine and make sketches.



Figure 5.4: Prodosh Das Gupta, Twins Bronze, 1973. NGMA, New Delhi, India



Figure 5.5: Chittoprasad, Hungry Bengal, 1943. Delhi Art Gallery, New Delhi, India

The Progressive Artists' Group of Bombay and the Multifaceted Indian Art

- ❖ After witnessing independence from British rule, young artists sought political and artistic freedom.
- ❖ In Bombay, The Progressives, led by **Francis Newton Souza** and including artists like **M. F. Husain, K. H. Ara, S. A. Bakre, H. A. Gade, and S. H. Raza** emerged in 1946.
- ❖ Souza challenged conventional art school norms, focusing on experimental works, particularly exaggerated nude portrayals of women.
- ❖ M.F. Husain aimed to make **modern art relatable to an Indian context**, using Western expressionist techniques with vibrant Indian colors and drawing inspiration from Indian mythology, religious themes, miniature paintings, village crafts, and folk toys.
- ❖ His ability to blend modern style with Indian themes established him as a representative figure of Indian modern art on the global stage, exemplified by his depiction of **Mother Teresa in a modern artistic context**.

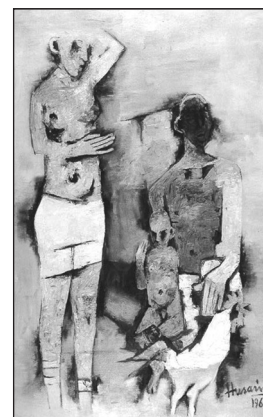


Figure 5.6: M.F. Husain, Farmer's Family, 1940. NGMA, New Delhi, India

Abstraction – A New Trend

- ❖ In the realm of Indian modern art, while M.F. Husain remained primarily a figurative artist, **S.H. Raza** transitioned towards abstraction, particularly focusing on landscapes and utilizing a wide range of colors.
- ❖ Raza's abstract works drew from **mandala and yantra designs** and incorporated the **bindu** as a **symbol of oneness** from Indian philosophy.
- ❖ Later, artists like **Gaitonde, K.K. Hebbar, S. Chavda, Akbar Padamsee, Tyeb Mehta, and Krishen Khanna** would move between abstraction and figurative styles.
- ❖ Abstraction also found prominence among sculptors like **Piloo Pochkhanawala** and printmakers like Krishna Reddy, who emphasized the significance of materials in their creations.
- ❖ The appeal of abstraction extended across various art forms, including painting, printmaking, and sculpture, during the 1960s and 1970s.
- ❖ In South India, **K.C.S. Paniker** pioneered abstraction and showcased its historical roots by incorporating motifs from Tamil and Sanskrit scripts, floor decorations, and rural crafts, demonstrating the longstanding presence of abstraction in Indian art.

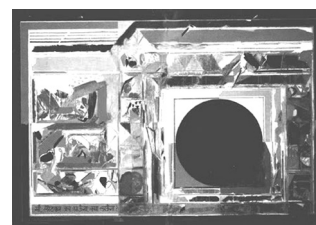


Figure 5.7: S.H. Raza, Ma, 1972. Bombay, India

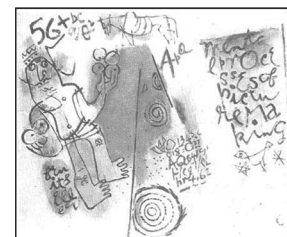


Figure 5.8: K.C.S. Paniker, The Dog, 1973. NGMA, New Delhi, India

Quest for Distinct Indian Art

- ❖ By the late 1970s, a tension between internationalism (embracing Western modern trends) and indigenous art emerged in Indian modern art.
- ❖ Artists like **Amarnath Sehgal** and **Mrinalini Mukherjee** found a balance between abstraction and figurative elements in their works.
- ❖ Concerns about imitating Western art led to a quest for establishing a distinct Indian artistic identity.

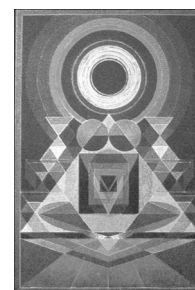


Figure 5.9: G.R. Santosh, Untitled, 1970. NGMA, New Delhi, India

- ❖ **Biren De, G.R. Santosh, and K.C.S. Paniker** turned to local artistic traditions, creating what became known as **Neo-Tantric art**, characterized by geometrical designs inspired by **meditation diagrams**.
- ❖ This style found success in the West and India, combining Indian influences with abstraction.
- ❖ **Eclecticism**, borrowing from various sources, became a notable feature of Indian modernists, including **Ram Kumar, Satish Gujral, A. Ramachandran, and Meera Mukherjee**.
- ❖ Artists began writing manifestos to articulate their artistic aims. With **Group 1890**, led by J. Swaminathan, emphasized the importance of texture and surface in their works.
- ❖ This movement influenced the **Cholamandalam School** near Madras and left a lasting impact on subsequent generations of artists.

The New Figurative Art and Modern Art from the 1980s

- ❖ Since the 1970s, many Indian artists turned to recognizable figures and stories, reflecting their concerns about social issues following the Indo-Pakistan war in 1971 and the birth of Bangladesh.
- ❖ Artists like **K.G. Subramanyan, Gulam Mohammed Sheikh, Bhupen Khakar, Jogen Chowdhury, Bikash Bhattacharjee, and Ganesh Pyne** used storytelling in their paintings to address social problems.
- ❖ They drew inspiration from old miniature paintings, calendars, and folk art to make their stories accessible to a wider audience.
- ❖ Printmakers like **Jyoti Bhatt, Laxma Goud, and Anupam Sud Jyoti Bhatt (Devi), Laxma Goud (Man Women, Tree) and Anupam Sud (of Walls)** depicted conflicts between men and women and social inequality through their work.
- ❖ Artists like **Arpita Singh, Nalini Malani, and Sudhir Patwardhan** focused on the challenges faced by urban dwellers and sought to understand the world from the **perspective of the oppressed**.
- ❖ In the 1980s, the **Baroda Art School** witnessed a significant shift as artists began to engage with their immediate surroundings and address social and political concerns. They **combined fact with fiction, autobiography with fantasy**, and drew inspiration from various art historical styles.
- ❖ **Gulam Mohammed Sheikh**, for example, painted the bustling streets of Baroda while invoking the atmosphere of a medieval town in Sienna, Italy, using the style of Italian painters like the Lorenzetti brothers.
- ❖ This period marked a heightened awareness among artists of their role as citizens in a democracy, resulting in a diverse and socially engaged artistic production.



Figure 5.10: G.M. Sheikh, *City for Sale*, 1984. Victoria and Albert Museum, London, U.K.

Do You Know?

The subject matter in painting and sculpture was largely drawn from rural India. This was the case even with the Bombay Progressives and the Calcutta group during the 1940s and 1950s. City and urban life rarely appeared in the works of Indian artists. Perhaps it was felt that real India lives in villages. The Indian artists of the 1940s and 1950s rarely looked at their immediate cultural milieu.

POINTS TO PONDER

Do you think the fusion of various artistic influences and a growing social awareness in the 1980s led to a more engaged and socially conscious group of Indian artists, and can you think of examples where their works addressed pressing issues in society?





Figure 5.11: K.G. Subramanyan, Three Mythological Goddesses, 1988.
Kala Bhavana, Santiniketan, West Bengal, India

The Public Role of Indian Artists

- ❖ K.G. Subramanyan, a founding member of the Baroda Art School with roots in Shantiniketan, learned about the public role of art from his teachers, **Benode Behari Mukherjee** and **Ramkinker Baij**.
- ❖ He has drawn mural art on large public buildings, aiming to make art accessible to everyone.
- ❖ He adopted the technique of **sand casting** from Rajasthani artists, creating **large-scale relief sculptures**.
- ❖ Subramanyan's work included a famous **mural on the outer wall of Kala Bhavana**, emphasizing art's presence in public spaces.
- ❖ The concept of public art extended to the exhibition "**Place for People**" in 1981, featuring artists like **Bhupen Khakhar**, **Gulam Mohammed Sheikh**, **Vivan Sundaram**, **Nalini Malani**, **Sudhir Patwardan**, and **Jogen Chowdhury**.
- ❖ This exhibition, shown in Delhi and Bombay, highlighted the **role of art critics** like **Geeta Kapur** in interpreting the artists' intentions.
- ❖ Khakhar and the Baroda narrative painters celebrated popular art forms visible in everyday life, from trucks and auto rickshaws to small shops.
- ❖ In Mumbai, younger painters drew inspiration from popular images on calendars, advertisements, and film hoardings, even using photographic images on canvas.
- ❖ This style relied on **double meanings and experimental techniques**, often emulating the appearance of photographs but conveying deeper messages.



Figure 5.12: Bhupen Khakhar, Janata Watch Repairing, 1972. Private Collection, India

New Media Art: From 1990s

- ❖ The **liberalization** of the Indian economy in the 1990s brought the impact of **globalization**, along with social and political issues, to the forefront, particularly in big cities.
- ❖ Artists sought new ways to react to these changing times. Traditional mediums like **easel painting and sculpture** gave way to video and photography, which allowed for wider dissemination of their work.
- ❖ However, the most contemporary art form became **installation**, offering an **immersive experience that engaged multiple senses**.
- ❖ Installation artists like **Nalini Malani and Vivan Sundaram** from major cities tackled thought-provoking subjects.
- ❖ Photography, often seen as a rival to painting, inspired the **development of photorealism**, used by artists like **Atul Dodiya**.
- ❖ Younger artists such as **T.V. Santosh and Shibu Natesan** used this technique to comment on **societal changes and technological advancements**.
- ❖ Photography and video also **documented marginalized individuals and environmental concerns**, championed by artists like **Sheba Chachi, Ravi Agarwal, and Atul Bhalla**.
- ❖ Contemporary art in India continues to evolve, with artists and curators experimenting with technology and redefining the role of art to better understand the world.
- ❖ Art galleries, both private and public, can be found in major cities, and artists use a wide range of media, including digital paintings.
- ❖ Social media has played a significant role in shaping local art scenes, making it crucial for visual arts students to explore local artists' work, visit galleries, and understand their contributions to society.

POINTS TO PONDER

The transition to new media art in India is driven by economic liberalization and globalization. Can you think of various newly influenced themes and subjects that contemporary artists have explored? And what role do you think technology plays in this transformation?



Impactful Modern Indian Artworks

The Lives of Medieval Saints

- ❖ **Benode Behari Mukherjee** created the mural **"The Lives of Medieval Saints"** in Hindi Bhavana, Shantiniketan, around the time of India's independence in 1946-1947.
- ❖ This mural, covering nearly 23 meters of the upper half of three room walls, is a stunning example of the **fresco buono technique**.
- ❖ Despite his poor eyesight, Mukherjee sketched directly on the walls without preliminary compositional sketches.
- ❖ The mural depicts the lives of medieval saints and reflects the **syncretic and tolerant tradition** of Indian life, as **inspired by Bhakti poets like Ramanuja, Kabir, Tulsidas, and Surdas**.
- ❖ The artwork is characterized by a modern style, with each figure composed of minimal lines.
- ❖ Yet, there is a rhythmic network of lines connecting each figure, resembling a **woven tapestry**, a craft often associated with the saints depicted.
- ❖ Benode Behari Mukherjee was one of the early artists in modern India to recognize the potential of murals as a form of public art.

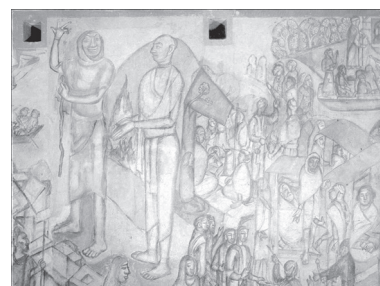


Figure 5.13: The Lives of Medieval Saints

Mother Teresa

- ❖ This painting by **M.F. Husain**, created in the 1980s, pays tribute to the saintly figure, Mother Teresa, in the artist's distinctive style that represents a new language of modern Indian art.
- ❖ The painting features the figure of Mother Teresa several times, each time **holding a baby with a strong focus on her hands**.
- ❖ In the center, Mother Teresa is seated, cradling a grown-up man on her lap in a horizontal position, reminiscent of **Michelangelo's Pieta**.
- ❖ Husain's art combines elements of traditional European art, such as the Pieta, with modern flat shapes that resemble paper cutouts.
- ❖ The artist does not aim for a realistic depiction of Mother Teresa's life but instead provides suggestive imagery.
- ❖ Viewers are invited to **interpret the narrative through the clues left by the artist**.
- ❖ The presence of a kneeling woman in the scene hints at the **story's setting** in India and conveys the theme of **healing and caring for the helpless**.



Figure 5.14: Mother Teresa

Haldi Grinder

- ❖ Created in 1940, **Amrita Sher-Gil's** painting titled '**Haldi Grinder**' reflects her quest for inspiration in **India's serene rural settings**.
- ❖ The artwork portrays Indian women engaged in the traditional activity of grinding dry turmeric and is executed in an Indian style.
- ❖ Sher-Gil employs vibrant, rich pigments to capture the essence of the scene.
- ❖ Despite her European modern art training, Sher-Gil draws parallels between North Indian miniature traditions and the work of the artist she admires, **Paul Gauguin**.
- ❖ This influence is evident in her **use of close-knit, bright colour patches** that define figures through color contrast rather than outlines, akin to the style seen in **Basohli's paintings** from North India.
- ❖ In 'Haldi Grinder,' both the women and trees are depicted as flat shapes, and Sher-Gil consciously **avoids creating depth in the landscape**.
- ❖ Instead, she **embraces a semi-abstract pattern**, showcasing her identity as a modern artist deeply rooted in Indian artistic traditions.



Figure 5.15: Haldi Grinder

Fairy Tales from Purvapalli

- ❖ Created in 1986 by **K.G. Subramanyan**, "**Purvapalli**" is a painting that reflects the work of a prolific artist, scholar, teacher, and art historian.
- ❖ Subramanyan draws inspiration from various art traditions found in India and around the world.
- ❖ The title of the artwork refers to **his home** in Purvapalli, Shantiniketan, a place that seems to serve as the launching point for his imaginative journey across the globe.

- ❖ In this imaginative landscape, **humans coexist with birds, animals, and peculiar trees that bear feathers instead of leaves.**
- ❖ Subramanyan's painting style is **sketchy**, featuring quick brush strokes and an **earthy palette of ochres, greens, and browns.**
- ❖ The male and female figures depicted at the top of the painting evoke **elements of urban folk art**, reminiscent of the **Kalighat paintings** popular in Colonial Calcutta during the late nineteenth century.
- ❖ Additionally, the arrangement of figures on top of one another creates a **flat space**, characteristic of modern art.
- ❖ "Purvapalli" embodies Subramanyan's **unique blend of diverse art traditions**, showcasing his imaginative and artistic prowess.



Figure 5.16: Fairy Tales from Purvapalli

Whirlpool

- ❖ Created in 1963 by the celebrated Indian printmaker **Krishna Reddy**, "Whirlpool" is a remarkable print that showcases an intricate composition **predominantly in shades of blue.**
- ❖ The artwork employs a new technique in printmaking called "**viscosity printing**," which Reddy co-developed with renowned printmaker **Stanley William Hayter** in the renowned studio known as 'Atelier 17.'
- ❖ In viscosity printing, different colors are applied to the same metal printing plate, with each color mixed with **linseed oil** in varying concentrations to ensure that colours do not run into each other.
- ❖ This technique mimics the behavior of water and oil, making it apt for the subject matter of the print, which revolves around **water currents.**
- ❖ It is a celebrated print held in the collection of the **Metropolitan Museum of Art** in New York, USA.



Figure 5.17: Whirlpool

Children

- ❖ This graphic print on paper, created by **Somnath Hore (1921–2006)** in 1958, is a **monochromatic etching with aquatint.**
- ❖ Hore's experience during the Bengal Famine of 1943 deeply influenced his artistry. During this period, he produced sketches and drawings **depicting the suffering and plight of famine victims**, including peasants, destitute individuals, and various portraits.
- ❖ His early works consisted of **precise and lifelike depictions of these subjects**, following representational contours and tonal techniques.
- ❖ In this particular etching, Hore drew inspiration from the **memories of children** affected by the 1943 famine.
- ❖ The composition is tightly knit, featuring five standing figures devoid of any background, perspective, or contextual surroundings.
- ❖ The figures appear to be **engrossed in their own thoughts and conversations.**



Figure 5.18: Children

- ❖ These linear figures exhibit skeletal torsos, resembling enlarged malaria spleens and ribcage for thoraxes.
- ❖ Each figure supports a substantial skull with a small face, and their entire bodies rest on slender, stick-like legs.
- ❖ The pronounced lines, etching every rib of the thorax and cheekbone, evoke the **impression of deep, gashing wounds**.
- ❖ This emphasis on the bone structure just beneath the skin effectively conveys the **devastating impact of malnutrition** on these individuals.
- ❖ Hore's artwork imparts a narrative quality to the composition **without relying on situational context or visual data**, adhering to a reductionist and simplification approach.
- ❖ The children depicted in this artwork represent the most vulnerable segment of society.
- ❖ Some of Hore's other notable works include **"Peasants' Meeting," "Wounded Animal," "The Child," "Mother with Child," "Mourners,"** and **"The Unclad Beggar Family."**

Devi

- ❖ Created in 1970, this etching on paper is the work of **Jyoti Bhatt** (born 1934), who received inspiration from his mentor **K.G. Subramanyan**.
- ❖ Bhatt's artistic journey encompassed the realms of painting, printmaking, and photography, and he developed a unique artistic language rooted in folk traditions and popular practices.
- ❖ His artworks masterfully fuse diverse visual elements into a composite narrative.
- ❖ They strike a delicate **balance between traditional heritage and modernity**, where the vibrancy of the past forms seamlessly translates into the dynamics of contemporary art.
- ❖ In this particular print, Bhatt reimagines and recontextualizes the pictorial image of Devi (the Goddess) alongside a linear drawing of a woman's frontal face, folk motifs, and patterns.
- ❖ The central placement of the Devi's portrait lends it an iconic status within the composition.
- ❖ The two-dimensionality of the words and motifs surrounding the portrait **conveys the essence of Tantric philosophy**, invoking the power of self-evolution and self-involution.
- ❖ This philosophy perceives reality as the intertwined interplay of **dynamic and static principles embodied in Shakti**.
- ❖ Jyoti Bhatt also made other notable artworks such as **"Kalpvruksha," "Self-Portrait," "Forgotten Monuments," "Sita's Parrot," "Still Life with Two Lamps," "Scattered Image under the Warm Sky," "Tirthankara,"** and more.



Figure 5.19: Devi

Of Walls

- ❖ This etching, created in 1982, is the result of **Anupam Sud's** artistic endeavour.
- ❖ Crafted from a **zinc plate and printed onto paper**, Sud's work showcases her dedication to printmaking, honed during her studies at the Slade School of Fine Art, University College, London, in the early 1970s.
- ❖ Upon returning to India, she felt a strong pull towards capturing the country's everyday reality.



Figure 5.20: Of walls

- ❖ Sud's artistic pursuits delved into the profound social issues affecting **marginalized communities** in Indian society.
- ❖ Her work often served as a medium for exploring and understanding these issues in an artistic context.
- ❖ In this particular piece, she employs a unique technique that involves hollowing out the face, creating a visually intriguing form of a woman.
- ❖ The absence of a face in the portrayal lends the figure a **contemplative and somber expression**.
- ❖ The artwork portrays a solitary woman seated on the pavement, positioned before a crumbling wall. In the foreground, only the lower part of a destitute man sleeping on the ground is visible.
- ❖ This contrast between the clothed woman and the sleeping man intensifies the overall sadness of the print.

Rural South Indian Man-Woman

- ❖ This etching print on paper was created by **Laxma Goud** in 2017. Goud, renowned for his exceptional draftsmanship and printmaking skills, pursued studies in mural painting and printmaking at M. S. University in Baroda.
- ❖ He was profoundly influenced by his mentor, **K.G. Subramanyan**, who was known for his innovative explorations of narrative modes and figural elements drawn from a rich tapestry of visual traditions, including **classical, folk, and popular cultures**.
- ❖ Goud seeks to **erase rigid boundaries between major and minor art forms**, infusing them with a linguistic essence.
- ❖ This approach has enabled him to traverse across various artistic mediums, including **glass painting, terracotta, and bronze sculpture**.
- ❖ In this particular etching, Goud portrays human figures against a backdrop of trees, drawing inspiration from his **childhood memories deeply immersed in nature**.
- ❖ The artwork combines detailed contours, a realistic portrayal of peasants, and a subtle stylization that imparts a puppet-like quality to the depicted figures.
- ❖ Executed primarily through lines and infused with color, this print reflects Goud's artistic vision. Among his other notable creations are artworks such as "**Woman**," "**Man**," "**Landscape of Turkey**," "**Untitled**," and "**Xiyan China**."



Figure 5.21: Rural Indian Man-Woman

Triumph of Labour

- ❖ This large-scale outdoor sculpture, crafted in bronze, is the work of **Debi Prasad Roy Chowdhury** (1899–1975). It was unveiled at Marina Beach in Chennai on the eve of Republic Day in 1959.
- ❖ The sculpture depicts four men engaged in the formidable task of relocating a massive rock, symbolizing the **paramount role of human labor in the nation's development**.
- ❖ These indomitable men are depicted grappling with nature's challenges with unwavering determination and raw power.
- ❖ The sculpture captures the essence of human labour in the face of the natural elements, a subject that resonates with the romantic ideals of the 19th century.

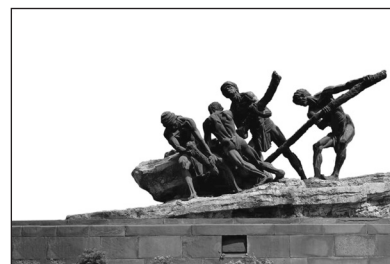


Figure 5.22: Triumph of labour

- ❖ Chowdhury had a profound fascination with the **robust musculature of his laborers**, intricately rendering their bones, veins, and flesh.
- ❖ He masterfully portrays the sheer physical exertion required to dislodge an immovable boulder.
- ❖ The arrangement of the human figures in the sculpture creates viewers' curiosity, inviting them to explore it from all angles.
- ❖ Placed atop a substantial pedestal, this depiction of collective labour replaces the conventional portraits of kings or British dignitaries, highlighting the significance of shared effort in the nation's progress.

Santhal Family

- ❖ This open-air, large-scale sculpture was created by **Ramkinker Baij** in 1937.
- ❖ It is crafted from a **metal armature and cement mixed with pebbles**, and it is prominently displayed within the compound of Kala Bhavana, India's inaugural national art school located in Shantiniketan.
- ❖ The sculpture portrays a Santhal man carrying his children in a double basket affixed to a pole, with his wife and dog walking alongside him.
- ❖ It likely depicts a family engaged in migration, transporting their modest belongings from one place to another.
- ❖ For the artist, residing amidst rural surroundings, such scenes were part of everyday life. However, he chose to elevate this ordinary sight to a monumental status.
- ❖ One notable aspect of this sculpture is that it is **created in the round, allowing viewers to observe it from all angles**.
- ❖ Placed on a low pedestal, it imparts a sense of shared space, drawing viewers into its realm.
- ❖ This work holds historical significance as it is considered **India's first public modernist sculpture**.
- ❖ An additional noteworthy feature is its **accessibility**, as it is situated outside Kala Bhavana, eliminating the need for a museum visit to appreciate it.
- ❖ Unlike traditional mediums like marble, wood, or stone, Ramkinker Baij chose to use cement for this sculpture, symbolizing modernization.



Figure 5.23: Santhal Family

Cries Un-Heard

- ❖ This bronze sculpture, crafted by **Amarnath Sahgal** in 1958, primarily employs abstraction.
- ❖ In this artwork, three figures are portrayed with **stick-like forms arranged in flat, rhythmic planes**.
- ❖ Despite the abstract style, viewers can readily interpret them as a family comprising a husband, wife, and child.
- ❖ These figures are depicted with **outstretched arms, appearing to cry out for help** in vain.
- ❖ Through the sculptural medium, their **helplessness**, conveyed through their hand gestures, is transformed into a lasting form.
- ❖ This sculpture can be seen from a socialist perspective, where the artist pays tribute to the countless destitute families in dire need of assistance, whose pleas often go unanswered.

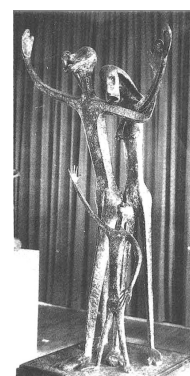


Figure 5.24: Cries Un-heard

- ❖ Notably, the socialist poet **Mulk Raj Anand** penned a moving commentary on this artwork.
- ❖ It is now housed in the collection of the **National Gallery of Modern Art** in New Delhi.

Ganesha

- ❖ This **oxidized copper sculpture** was created by **P.V. Janakiram** in 1970 and is currently part of the NGMA collection in Delhi.
- ❖ Janakiram employed sheets of copper to craft this pictorial sculpture in the form of **freestanding figures**.
- ❖ He adorned the surface of these figures with intricate **linear elements**. These lines serve dual purposes, **functioning as both facial features and decorative motifs**, inviting viewers to engage in intimate contemplation.
- ❖ Janakiram drew inspiration from the ancient temple sculptures of South India, evident in the frontal portrayal of Ganesha, a prominent figure in indigenous cave and temple art.
- ❖ In this sculpture, Ganesha is depicted playing the **vina**, a musical instrument.
- ❖ The attention to detail in the sculpture and the skillful combination of materials reflect Janakiram's meticulous craftsmanship.
- ❖ Furthermore, Janakiram experimented with the concept of "**open-endedness**" often found in indigenous craftsmanship.
- ❖ Ganesha embodies his **deep understanding of traditional imagery**, where he transformed intricate linear details into an overarching form.
- ❖ Rather than emphasizing three-dimensionality, the sculpture is conceived in terms of **linear silhouettes**, creating a **sense of rhythm and growth through lyrical stylization**.
- ❖ Overall, it represents a harmonious **blend of folk and traditional craftsmanship**.



Figure 5.25: Ganesha

Vanshri

- ❖ This artwork, titled "Vanshri", or '**Goddess of the Woods**,' was created by **Mrinalini Mukherjee** in 1994.
- ❖ What makes this sculpture unique is the unusual material Mukherjee used to craft it: **hemp fiber**.
- ❖ She began experimenting with this medium in the early 1970s, and her mastery of it is evident in the intricate and complex shape she has woven and **knotted together using jute fiber**.
- ❖ For many years, her works in this style were often **dismissed as crafts rather than fine art**.
- ❖ However, in recent times, her fiber works have garnered significant attention and acclaim for their originality and bold imaginative expression.
- ❖ In "Vanshri," Mukherjee transforms this ordinary material into a monumental form.
- ❖ If you closely examine the figure's body, you'll notice its distinctive features—a face with an introspective expression, protruding lips, and, above all, a powerful presence of natural divinity.



Figure 5.26: Vanshri

Conclusion

In conclusion, modern Indian art has evolved through a dynamic interplay of tradition, colonialism, and contemporary influences. Pioneers like Rabindranath Tagore and Amrita Sher-Gil laid the foundation in the early 20th century, followed by artists like M.F. Husain and K.G. Subramanyan who explored diverse mediums and themes, blending Western modernism with indigenous traditions. From social commentary in the 1970s to the embrace of new media in the 1990s, Indian artists continually adapt to reflect societal, political, and cultural contexts. Sculptors like Debi Prasad Roy Chowdhury, Ramkinker Baij, and Amarnath Sehgal crafted powerful sculptures celebrating labour and human resilience. Modern Indian art remains a captivating narrative of creativity and adaptation. The evolution of modern Indian art is a testament to its dynamism and diversity.

Glossary:

- **Modern Indian Art:** A term referring to the artistic movements and developments in visual art in India from the late 19th century to the present, often marked by a blend of indigenous traditions with Western modernism.
- **Bengal School:** An art movement founded by Abanindranath Tagore in the late 19th century, emphasizing the revival of Indian art traditions.
- **Syncretic:** The blending or fusion of different cultural or religious elements into a harmonious whole.
- **Mural:** A large artwork or painting typically applied directly to a wall or ceiling, often with a narrative or decorative purpose.
- **Viscosity Printing:** A printmaking technique developed by artists like Krishna Reddy and Stanley William Hayter, involving the application of different colors on a single metal plate with varying viscosity to prevent color blending.
- **Tantric Philosophy:** A set of spiritual practices and beliefs that originated in South Asia, often associated with the worship of deities and the pursuit of enlightenment.
- **Socialist Art:** Artworks that promote socialist or communist ideals, often focusing on themes of labour, social justice, and the struggles of the working class.
- **Oxidized Copper:** Copper that has undergone a chemical process resulting in a darkened or greenish patina, often used for artistic and decorative purposes.
- **Linear Silhouettes:** A two-dimensional representation of the outline or contour of an object or figure, often used for stylization in art.
- **Hemp-Fiber:** A material derived from the hemp plant, often used in textiles and, in this context, sculpture.
- **Fibre Art:** An art form that uses natural or synthetic fibers, such as jute or hemp, to create sculptures, textiles, or other forms of art.
- **Contemporary Art:** Art produced in the present day or in recent times, often reflecting current societal, cultural, and technological influences.
- **Interplay:** The interaction or dynamic exchange between different elements, often seen in the fusion of traditional and modern influences in art.
- **Resilience:** The ability to withstand adversity and recover from challenges, often celebrated in art as a symbol of human strength and determination.





Arts of the Indus Valley

Bibliography: This Chapter encompasses the summary of **Chapter 2** of Class XI (An Introduction to Indian Art Part-I).

Introduction

The arts of the Indus Valley Civilisation, flourishing in the second half of the third millennium BCE, reveal a rich tapestry of creativity. Across sites like Harappa and Mohenjo Daro, artists expressed their fine sensibilities and vivid imagination through **sculptures, seals, pottery, jewellery**, and meticulous **terracotta figures**. Notably, their realistic portrayal of human and animal forms showcased unique anatomical details. Beyond art, these cities stand as early marvels of **civic planning**, with gridlike arrangements of **houses, markets**, and **public facilities**. The **advanced drainage system** further underscores the sophistication of these ancient societies, with key sites extending from Pakistan's **Harappa** and **Mohenjodaro** to India's **Lothal and Dholavira** (Gujarat), **Rakhigarhi** (Haryana), **Ropar** (Punjab), and **Kalibangan** (Rajasthan).

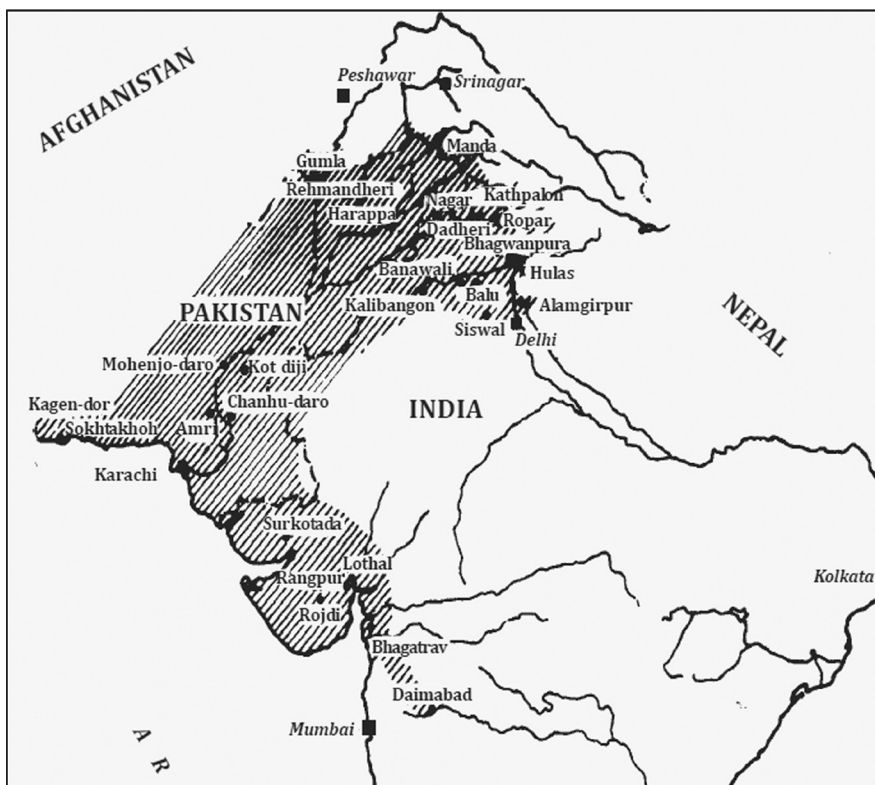


Figure 6.1: Map of Indus Valley Sites



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Stone Statues

- ❖ The statues discovered in Harappan sites, though not abundant, are characterised by refinement.
- ❖ Notably, stone statues from Harappa and Mohenjodaro exemplify exceptional **three-dimensional craftsmanship**.
- ❖ Among these, a **red sandstone torso** (Figure 6.3) and a **soapstone bust of a bearded man** (Figure 6.2), likely interpreted as a **priest**, stand out.

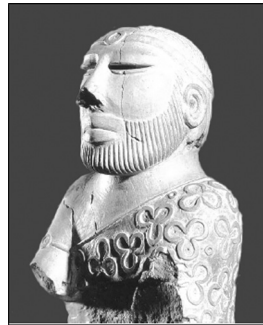


Figure 6.2: Bust of a Bearded Priest



Figure 6.3: Male Torso

- ❖ The priestly figure is draped in a shawl adorned with trefoil patterns, displaying elongated, half-closed eyes indicative of meditative concentration.
- ❖ **Detailed facial features** include a well-formed nose, an average-sized mouth with a close-cut moustache and short beard, and distinctive double-shell-like ears with a hole in the middle.
- ❖ The hair is neatly parted, and a plain woven fillet encircles the head, while accessories like an armlet and necklace are evident.

In this **red sandstone figure**, there are socket **holes in the neck and shoulders** for the attachment of head and arms. The frontal posture of the torso has been consciously adopted. The **shoulders are well baked** and the abdomen is slightly prominent.

Bronze Casting

- ❖ The Harappans were prolific in the art of bronze-casting, employing the **'lost wax' technique**.
- ❖ This involved covering wax figures with clay, heating to remove the wax, creating a hollow mold filled with molten metal, and ultimately revealing the cast bronze object.
- ❖ Noteworthy in bronze are **human and animal figures**, exemplified by the famous **'Dancing Girl'** (Figure 6.4) statue. Bronze animals, including a **buffalo and a goat**, showcase artistic merit.



One of the best known artefacts from the Indus Valley is this approximately **four-high-inches copper figure** of a dancing girl. Found in **Mohenjodaro**, this exquisite casting depicts a girl whose long hair is tied in a bun. Bangles cover her left arm, a bracelet and an amulet or bangle adorn her right arm, and a cowry shell necklace is seen around her neck. Her right hand is on her hip and her left hand is clasped in a traditional Indian dance gesture. She has large eyes and a flat nose. This figure is full of expression and a bodily vigour and conveys a lot of information.

Figure 6.4: Dancing Girl

- ❖ Bronze casting was widespread across major Indus Valley Civilisation centers, with examples like the **copper dog** and **bird** from Lothal and the **bronze bull** (Figure 6.5) from Kalibangan.



This bronze figure of a bull from Mohenjodaro deserves mention. The massiveness of the bull and the fury of the charge are eloquently expressed. The animal is shown standing with his head turned to the right and with a cord around the neck.

Figure 6.5: Bull

- ❖ This tradition persisted in late Harappan and Chalcolithic sites like Daimabad, where metalcast sculptures of human and animal figures continued the rich legacy of figure sculpture.

Terracotta

- ❖ Terracotta images crafted by the Indus Valley people, while comparatively crude in representing the human form, **exhibit realism**, especially in Gujarat sites and Kalibangan.
- ❖ Notable among these figures are representations of the **mother goddess** (Refer to Figure 6.6).



The mother goddess figures are usually crude-standing female figures adorned with necklaces hanging over prominent breasts and **wearing a loincloth and a girdle**. The fan-shaped headdress with a cuplike projection on each side is a distinct decorative feature of the mother goddess figures of the Indus Valley. The pellet eyes and beaked nose of the figures are very crude, and the **mouth is indicated by a slit**.

Figure 6.6: Mother Goddess

- ❖ The terracotta collection also includes figurines of **bearded males with coiled hair**, characterized by a rigidly upright posture, slightly parted legs, and arms parallel to the body—a repetition suggesting their deity status.
- ❖ Additionally, a terracotta mask depicting a **horned deity** has been discovered.
- ❖ Beyond figurines, terracotta artifacts encompass **toy carts** with wheels, whistles, rattles, birds, animals, gamesmen, and discs, showcasing the **diversity of artistic expression** in this medium (Refer to Figure 6.7).



Figure 6.7: Terracotta Toys

Seals

- ❖ Archaeologists have unearthed thousands of seals, primarily **made of steatite** and occasionally of other materials like **agate, chert, copper, faience, and terracotta**.



Figure 6.8: Unicorn Seals

- ❖ These seals feature intricate depictions of animals such as the **unicorn bull, rhinoceros, tiger, elephant, bison, goat, and buffalo**, showcasing remarkable **realism** and **varied moods**.
- ❖ Primarily used for commercial purposes, these seals also served as amulets, potentially acting as identity cards for their owners.
- ❖ The **standard Harappan seal was a 2 × 2 square-inch plaque made of steatite**, engraved with a yet-to-be-deciphered pictographic script.
- ❖ Some seals, discovered in ivory, exhibit a wide range of motifs, often featuring animals like bulls, elephants, tigers, goats, and monsters, along with trees or human figures.
- ❖ Notably, **the Pashupati Seal** (Refer to Figure 6.9), depicting a cross-legged human figure surrounded by animals, stands out.



This seal depicts a human figure seated cross-legged. An elephant and a tiger are depicted to the right side of the seated figure, while on the left a rhinoceros and a buffalo are seen. In addition to these animals two antelopes are shown below the seat.

Figure 6.9: Pashupati Seal/Female Deity

- ❖ Copper tablets, featuring animal or human figures on one side and inscriptions on the other (or both sides), have also been found.
- ❖ Dated between 2500 and 1900 BCE, these tablets, considered amulets, display carefully cut figures and signs associated with the portrayed animals.

Pottery

- ❖ The extensive pottery findings from excavation sites provide insights into the progressive evolution of design motifs, shapes, and styles in the Indus Valley.
- ❖ Predominantly wheelmade, the pottery consists mainly of **fine wares**, with a minority being handmade.
- ❖ **Plain pottery**, more common than painted ware, is typically **red clay with or without a fine red or grey slip**, featuring knobbed ware adorned with rows of knobs.

- ❖ Black-painted ware involves a red slip base with geometric and animal designs executed in glossy black paint.



Found in Mohenjodaro, this jar is **made on a potter's wheel with clay**. The shape was manipulated by the pressure of the crafty fingers of the potter. After baking the clay model, it was **painted with black colour**. **High polishing** was done as a finishing touch. The motifs are of vegetal and geometric forms. Designs are simple but with a tendency towards abstraction.

Figure 6.10: Painted Earthen Jar

- ❖ **Polychrome pottery** is rare and mainly comprises small vases, displays **geometric patterns** in red, black, green, and occasionally white and yellow. Incised ware is infrequent, with incised decoration limited to the bases of pans and the dishes of offering stands.
- ❖ **Perforated pottery** (refer to Figure 6.11), likely used for straining beverages, features a large hole at the bottom and small holes throughout the wall.

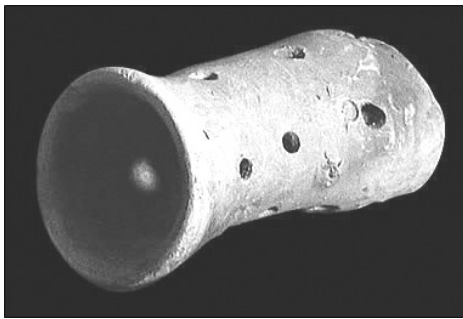


Figure 6.11: (A) Perforated pot and (B) Pottery

- ❖ **Household pottery** comes in diverse shapes and sizes, favouring graceful curves over straight and angular forms. Notably, miniature vessels, often less than half an inch in height, showcase remarkable craftsmanship, evoking admiration.

Beads and Ornaments

- ❖ Harappan men and women adorned themselves with a diverse array of ornaments **crafted from materials** such as precious **metals, gemstones, bone, and baked clay**.
- ❖ Both sexes commonly wore **necklaces, fillets, armlets, and finger rings**, while women additionally adorned girdles, earrings, and anklets.
- ❖ Discoveries at Mohenjo Daro and Lothal revealed **hoards of well-crafted jewellery**, including gold and semi-precious stone necklaces, copper bracelets, gold earrings and head ornaments, faience pendants and buttons, and beads made of steatite and gemstones.



Figure 6.12: Beadwork and Jewellery items

- ❖ Notably, a cemetery in Farmana, Haryana, revealed **bodies buried with ornaments**.
- ❖ The **bead industry**, evident in Chanhudaro and Lothal factories, produced beads from various materials, showcasing technical skill and diverse shapes.
- ❖ Naturalistic models of animals, especially monkeys and squirrels, served as pinheads and beads.
- ❖ **Spindles and spindle whorls** found in Indus Valley houses indicate widespread spinning of cotton and wool.
- ❖ **Fashion consciousness** was evident in different hairstyles, beard popularity, and the use of cinnabar, face paint, lipstick, and collyrium.
- ❖ Stone structural remains at Dholavira showcased the **use of stone in construction**.
- ❖ The skilled artists and craftsmen of the Indus Valley excelled in various crafts, including **metal casting, stone carving, pottery making and painting, and terracotta image creation** with simplified motifs of animals, plants, and birds.

Conclusion

The Indus Valley Civilisation emerges as a beacon of ancient artistic and technological prowess. From the refined sculptures in stone and bronze to, intricate seals revealing commercial and amuletic purposes to the diverse pottery styles showcasing an evolution of design, the civilization's artistic legacy is rich and varied. The adornments and jewellery, crafted with precision from various materials, reflect not just a sense of fashion but also societal complexity. Additionally, the expertise in bead production, naturalistic animal models, and the widespread practice of spinning testify to the civilization's multifaceted skills. The Indus Valley stands as a testament to a sophisticated and culturally vibrant ancient society.

Glossary:

- **Seals:** Small artefacts with engraved symbols, used for trade and identification.
- **Terracotta:** Fired clay artefacts, including figurines and pottery, found abundantly.
- **Harrapan Script:** Undeciphered writing system on seals, a mystery to scholars.
- **Terracotta Figurines:** Clay sculptures depicting humans and animals, showcasing artistic skill.
- **Stone Sculptures:** Carved artefacts, often depicting deities, animals, or daily life.
- **Stylized Animals:** Artistic representations of animals with symbolic significance in the Indus culture.
- **Beaded Jewellery:** Intricately crafted ornaments using materials like clay, shell, and metal.
- **Pottery:** Wheel-thrown and handcrafted vessels, adorned with unique geometric patterns.
- **Bronze Artefacts:** Metalwork showcasing advanced metallurgical techniques of the Indus people.
- **Mother Goddess Figurines:** Depictions of a fertility goddess, emphasising reverence for feminine aspects.





Arts of the Mauryan Period

Bibliography: This chapter encompasses the summary of **Chapter 3 of Class XI** (An Introduction to Indian Art-I)

Introduction

Around the 6th century BCE, the Gangetic Valley buzzed with fresh ideas. New religions like Buddhism and Jainism sprang up, challenging traditional Hindu beliefs. These religions, part of the shraman movement, took a stand against certain Hindu practices. Meanwhile, Magadha grew as a powerhouse, paving the way for the Mauryas. By the 3rd century BCE, the Mauryan king Ashoka was in the limelight, championing Buddhism. But it wasn't just about big empires and new religions. People had diverse ways to connect with the divine, like worshipping Yakshas and mother-goddesses. As Buddhism gained steam, it absorbed some of these local beliefs, showcasing the rich tapestry of ancient Indian spirituality.

Pillars

- ❖ Pillars are vertical structural members in architecture and building construction. They can be made of a single piece of stone or wood, or built up of units, such as bricks.
- ❖ Pillars, usually made of chunar sandstone, are a symbol of the state. It assumed great significance throughout the entire Mauryan Empire.
- ❖ **Objectives:** To propagate the Buddhist ideology and court orders in the entire Mauryan Empire.



Figure 7.1: A Mauryan Pillar capital and abacus with stylised lotus

Difference between Mauryan and Achaemenian

Pillar construction dates back to the Achaemenian empire. Table 7.1 shows the difference between Mauryan vs. Achaemenian pillars:

Table 7.1: Mauryan vs. Achaemenian Pillars

Mauryan Pillars	Achaemenian Pillars
They originated in India. They used a rock-cut design, carved from single blocks of stone. The pillars displayed intricate carving skills. They were predominantly in the northern regions of the Mauryan Empire. Many Mauryan pillars, like the Lion Capital, are heavily polished.	They originated in Persia (Modern-day Iran). They were predominantly found in Achaemenian Empire.



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Many mauryan pillars were engraved with inscriptions. Capital figures like bull, lion, elephant, etc. The Lion Capital symbolises the Dhammachakrapravartana. The abacus design was mainly square or circular abacuses decorated with stylized lotuses.

They were assembled piece by piece by masons. It was most likely a masonry construction.

- ❖ All the figures on the pillars were vigorously carved, standing proudly on either square or circular abacuses adorned with stylized lotuses.
- ❖ Renowned examples of such pillars have been unearthed at locations including Basarah-Bakhira, Lauriya-Nandangarh in Bihar, and Sankisa and Sarnath in Uttar Pradesh.

The Sarnath Lion Capital

- ❖ The Mauryan pillar capital found at Sarnath, Varanasi, popularly known as the Lion Capital, is the finest example of Mauryan architecture. It is also our national emblem.
- ❖ It was commissioned by Ashoka, it commemorates Buddha's first sermon, known as **Dhammachakrapravartana**.

Components of the Capital

- ❖ Originally, the capital had five main parts: The shaft (currently fragmented), a lotus bell base, a drum with four animals in a clockwise arrangement, four grand lions facing away from each other, and the crowning Dharmachakra (a large wheel). This wheel is now damaged and showcased in the site museum at Sarnath.
- ❖ The National Emblem of Independent India features the capital, excluding the wheel and the lotus base.
- ❖ Currently, the lion capital is housed in the archaeological museum at Sarnath. (Refer to figure 7.2)
- ❖ **Lions:** They are impressively large and monumental. They have strong facial features and lifelike details. They have a heavily polished surface, which is typical of Mauryan art. They have curly, protruding manes and well-defined muscles.

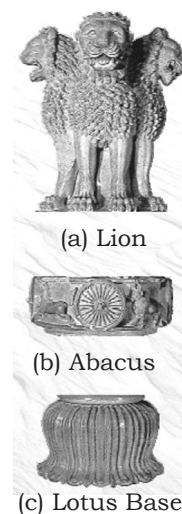


Figure 7.2: The Sarnath Capital

Comparison and Legacy

- ❖ A similar lion capital was found at Sanchi, though it is deteriorated.
- ❖ The lion-capital-pillar motif persisted in subsequent periods, showcasing its lasting influence.

Sculptures

- ❖ The Mauryan period, during the 3rd century BCE, was renowned for its monumental sculptures, including impressive representations of Yakshas, Yakshinis, and various animals.
- ❖ A significant number of these statues, especially those of Yakshas and Yakshinis, have been discovered in places like Patna, Vidisha, and Mathura.

Do You Know?

- **Abacus:** It features a **chakra** (wheel) with 24 spokes in each direction. It is accompanied by a finely carved **bull, horse, elephant, and lion** between every chakra. The chakra motif is pivotal in Buddhist art as a symbol of Dhammachakra. In the abacus, each animal, despite limited space, exudes a sense of movement.
- **Lotus Base:** Each petal is crafted with attention to its natural density. It is supported by a beautifully sculpted inverted lotus capital.

Yaksha and Yakshini Sculpture and its influence

- ❖ Large statues of Yakshas and Yakshinis are found in many places like Patna, Vidisha and Mathura. These monumental images are mostly in the standing position.
- ❖ Yaksha and Yakshini sculptures found in different parts of India demonstrate their popularity and their visible influence in Buddhist and Jaina monuments.
- ❖ The prominent statues of yaksha and yakshini were found in **Patna, Vidisha, and Mathura**, with a standout Yakshi figure from **Didarganj, Patna**.
- ❖ One of the finest examples is a Yakshi figure from Didarganj, Patna, which is tall and well-built. It shows sensitivity towards depicting the human physique. The image has a polished surface. (Refer to figure 7.3)



Figure 7.3: Yaksha, Parkham

The Didarganj Yakshini

- ❖ The life-sized Yakshini from Didarganj, near contemporary Patna, stands as a testament to the Mauryan sculptural excellence. The statue is showcased in the Patna Museum.
- ❖ It is crafted from sandstone, boasts a polished surface and embodies a free-standing sculpture in the round.

Artistic Features

- ❖ The figure holds a chauri (flywhisk) in her right hand; the left is unfortunately broken.
- ❖ The face features round, plump cheeks with sharp eyes, nose, and lips.
- ❖ The sculptor's expertise shines in the depiction of a muscular body and a relatively small neck.
- ❖ Necklace beads hang gracefully to the belly, and the garment's tight fit accentuates a protruding belly. (Refer to Figure 7.4)

POINTS TO PONDER

The Buddhist architecture that developed during the Mauryan period was hugely symbolic in the sense that they lacked the images of Buddha. However it changed over a period of time. Can you think of reasons why the symbolism and narratives in Buddhist art evolved over time, and how did these artistic changes reflect the development of Buddhism itself?



Figure 7.4: Didarganj Yakshini

Bodily Features and Ornaments

- ❖ The hairs are neatly tied in a knot. The bareback contrasts with the drapery covering the legs.
- ❖ The chauri's incised lines continue onto the statue's back, showcasing continuity in design.
- ❖ The lower garment clings to the legs, producing a semi-transparent effect. The middle band of the garment cascades down to the feet. A thick bell ornament embellishes her feet.

Rock-cut Architecture

- ❖ Apart from the traditionally built stupas and viharas, the art of carving rock-cut caves flourished during this period.

Rock-cut Marvels: Lomus Rishi Cave

- Located near Gaya in Bihar's Barabar Hills.
- Features a **semicircular chaitya arch** entrance and a high-relief elephant frieze.
- Donated by Ashoka for the **Ajivika sect**, setting a precedent for future Buddhist caves.



- ❖ Noteworthy examples from the third century BCE have been found across India, underscoring the widespread popularity of Yaksha worship.
- ❖ One of the most distinguished rock-cut caves is the Lomus Rishi cave, located near the Barabar hills close to Gaya in Bihar.
- ❖ **Rock-cut elephant at Dhauli**, Odisha, exemplifies Ashoka's influence and artistic finesse.
- ❖ Stupa, vihara and chaitya are part of Buddhist and Jaina monastic complexes but the largest number belongs to the Buddhist religion.
- ❖ Their construction proliferated due to Buddhism's and Jainism's popularity.
- ❖ Notable stupas housed Buddha's relics, such as **Rajagraha, Vaishali, and Kushinagar**.
- ❖ The great stupa at Sanchi symbolises this tradition, initially built during Ashoka's reign and later expanded.

Patronage and Artistry

- ❖ It is a second-century BCE inscription that reveals a diverse range of donors, from lay people to kings.
- ❖ Few inscriptions mention artisans, like **Kanha at Pitalkhora** and **Balaka at Kondane** caves in Maharashtra.
- ❖ Craftsmen categories, including stone carvers and goldsmiths, are also cited.
- ❖ Monuments often reflect collective efforts, with specific sections attributed to individual patrons.
- ❖ Traders, while donating, made a point to record their places of origin.

Stupa Architecture

- ❖ By the subsequent century, stupas saw enhancements.
- ❖ They started building enclosed **circumambulatory paths with railings** and decorative sculptures.
- ❖ Though many stupas existed, the second century BCE marked significant expansions and additions.

- ❖ Stupas typically had a cylindrical drum, a circular **anda**, and a **harmika** with a **chhatra** on top. Minor variations arose in shape and size over time.
- ❖ **Gateways** became a new addition to stupas, allowing architects and sculptors more creative freedom.

Early Symbolic Depictions of Buddha

- ❖ In Buddhism's initial phase, Buddha's representation was symbolic. The symbols included **footprints, stupas, lotus thrones, and chakras**. These symbols either signified worship, reverence, or historical events from Buddha's life.

Narratives in Buddhist Art

- ❖ As Buddhism evolved, storytelling became integral. The events from **Buddha's life and Jataka tales** found their way onto stupa railings and torans. The narrative styles incorporated includes synoptic, continuous, and episodic narratives.

Prominent themes in Buddhist art

- ❖ The key events from Buddha's life were **birth, renunciation, enlightenment, dhammachakrapravartana, and mahaparinibbana**.
- ❖ Popular Jataka stories depicted include Chhadanta Jataka, Vidurpundita Jataka, Ruru Jataka, Sibi Jataka, Vessantara Jataka, and Shama Jataka.

Conclusion

The discussion centered around the rich heritage of ancient Indian history, with a specific focus on the Mauryan period's architectural and sculptural achievements. The evolution of Buddhist art and architecture was evident, transitioning from symbolic to narrative depictions in stupa design. Iconic artefacts such as the Sarnath Lion Capital and the Didargunj Yakshini highlighted the era's collective patronage and deep symbolism, underscoring the intricacy of India's ancient cultural legacy.

Glossary:

- **Gangetic Valley:** A region in northern India through which the Ganges River flows. It has been a significant cultural and historical center for millennia.
- **Buddhism and Jainism:** Ancient Indian religious and philosophical traditions that emerged around the 6th century BCE.
- **Shraman Tradition:** Ascetic traditions from ancient India, which include Buddhism and Jainism.
- **Magadha:** An ancient kingdom in India, which later became part of the Mauryan Empire.
- **Mauryan Dynasty:** A significant ancient Indian empire that existed from the 4th to 2nd centuries BCE, with rulers like Ashoka.
- **Yaksha and Yakshini:** Deities associated with nature, worshipped in ancient India, and later incorporated into Buddhist and Jain traditions.
- **Stupas and Viharas:** Buddhist architectural structures. Stupas are mound-like structures containing relics, while Viharas are monastic centers.
- **Achaemenian Empire:** An ancient Persian empire known for its architectural pillars.
- **Ashoka:** A prominent Mauryan emperor who embraced and patronized Buddhism.

- **Lion Capital:** A sculptural relic from the Mauryan period, discovered at Sarnath, which later became the National Emblem of India.
- **Dhammachakrapravartana:** Refers to Buddha's first sermon and the setting in motion of the Wheel of Dharma.
- **Jataka Stories:** Tales that narrate the previous births of the Buddha, illustrating moral lessons.
- **Chauri (flywhisk):** A ceremonial whisk, often seen in statues as a symbol of royal or divine authority.





Post-Mauryan Trends in Indian Art and Architecture

Bibliography: This chapter encompasses the summary of **Chapter 4 - Post-Mauryan Trends in Indian Art and Architecture of Class XI** (An Introduction to Indian Art Part-I)

Introduction

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, and Vakatakas** in southern and western India. Incidentally, the period of the second century BCE also marked the rise of the main Brahmanical sects, such as the Vaishnavas and the Shaivas. Examples of the finest sculptures 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).

Sculptures in Northern India

Bharhut Sculptures

- ❖ Bharhut sculptures are tall, like the images of **Yaksha and Yakshini** in the Mauryan period. The modeling of the sculptural volume is in low relief maintaining linearity. In the relief panels depicting narratives, the illusion of **three-dimensionality** is shown with a **tilted perspective**.
- ❖ At Bharhut, narrative panels are shown with fewer characters but as time progresses, apart from the main character in the story, others also start appearing in the picture space.
- ❖ At times more than one event at one geographical place is clubbed in the picture space or only a single main event is depicted in the pictorial space. Availability of the **space is utilized** to the maximum by the sculptors.

Physical Feature of Bharhut Sculpture

- ❖ Folded hands in the narratives as well as single figures of the Yakshas and Yakshinis are shown flat clinging to the chest. But in some cases, especially in later times, the hands are shown with the natural projection against the chest.
- ❖ Due to shallow carving of the picture surface, projection of hands and feet was not possible, hence, the **folded hands** and awkward position of the feet.



Figure 8.1: Yakshini, Bharhut



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- ❖ There is a general stiffness in the body and arms. But gradually, such visual appearance was modified by making images with deep carvings, pronounced volume and a very naturalistic representation of human and animal bodies. **For Example, Sculptures at Bharhut, Bodhgaya, Sanchi Stupa-2, and Jagayyapetta.**

Narrative of Jataka Story

- ❖ Narrative reliefs at Bharhut show how artisans used the pictorial language very effectively to communicate stories. (Refer to Figure 8.2).



Figure 8.2: Jataka Panel and Queen Maya's dream, Bharhut

- ❖ 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 Bodhisattva 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.
- ❖ One main characteristic in all the male images of the first and second centuries BCE is the **knotted headgear**. In many sculptures, it is very consistent. (Refer to figure 8.2).
- ❖ One such Jataka story is also shown as **Queen Mayadevi's (mother of Siddhartha Gautam) dream**, with a descending elephant. The queen is shown reclining on the bed whereas an elephant is shown on the top heading towards the womb of Queen Mayadevi. (Refer to Figure 8.2).
- ❖ Such Jataka stories became **part of stupa decoration**. Interestingly, with the rise in the construction of stupas in various parts of the country, regional stylistic variations also began to emerge. Some of the sculptures found at Bharhut are displayed in the Indian Museum in Kolkata.

Sanchi Sculpture

The next phase of sculptural development happened at **Sanchi, Mathura, and Vengi in Andhra Pradesh (Guntur District)** and is noteworthy.

Physical Feature of Sanchi Sculpture

- ❖ The stupa at Sanchi has an upper as well as lower **pradakshinapatha or circumambulatory path**. It has four beautifully decorated **toranas** depicting various events from the life of the Buddha and the Jatakas.
- ❖ Depiction of posture gets naturalistic and there is **no stiffness** in the body. Heads have a considerable projection in the picture space. Rigidity in the contours gets reduced and images are given movement. The narration gets elaborated.
- ❖ Carving techniques appear **more advanced** than Bharhut. Symbols continue to be used to represent the Buddha. (Refer to figure 8.3).

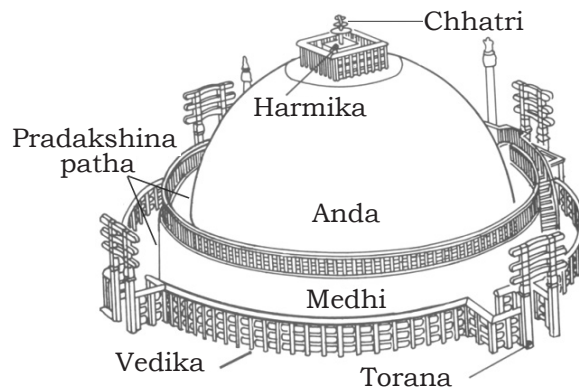


Figure 8.3: Stupa and Stone Carving, Sanchi

Narrative of Sanchi

- ❖ At Sanchi Stupa, narratives get more elaborated; however, the depiction of the dream episode remains very simple showing the reclining image of the queen and the elephant at the top.
- ❖ The historical narratives such as the siege of Kushinara, Buddha's visit to Kapilavastu, visit of Ashoka to the Ramgrama Stupa are carved with considerable details.
- ❖ In Mathura, images of this period bear the same quality but are different in the depiction of facial characteristics.

School of Sculptures

Mathura, Sarnath and Gandhara were three schools of sculpture.

Emergence of School of Sculptures:

- ❖ **First century CE** onwards: Gandhara (now in Pakistan), Mathura in northern India and Vengi in Andhra Pradesh emerged as important centres of art production.
- ❖ **Second century CE:** Images in Mathura got sensual, rotundity increased, and they became fleshier.
- ❖ **Fourth century CE:** In the late fourth century CE, the massiveness and fleshiness are reduced further and the flesh becomes more tightened, the volume of the drapery also gets reduced.
- ❖ **Fifth and sixth centuries CE:** The drapery is integrated into the sculptural mass. In this period, two important schools of sculpture in northern India are worth noting. (Refer to Figure 8.4).



Figure 8.4: Meditating Buddha, Gandhar (3rd-4th C.) and Bodhisattva, Gandhar (5th-6th C.)

- ✧ The traditional center, Mathura, remained the main art production site whereas Sarnath and Kosambi also emerged as important centres of art production.
- ✧ Many Buddha images in Sarnath have plain transparent drapery covering both shoulders, and the **halo around the head** has very little ornamentation 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**.
- ✧ Among the important stupa sites outside the Gangetic Valley is **Devnimori in Gujarat**.

Fusion of Different Traditions

- ✧ Buddha in the symbolic form got a **human form in Mathura and Gandhara**. The sculptural tradition in Gandhara had the **confluence of Bactria, Parthia and the local Gandhara traditions**.
- ✧ The local sculptural tradition at Mathura became so strong that the tradition spread to other parts of northern India. The best example in this regard is the stupa sculptures found at **Sanghol in Punjab**. (Refer to Figure 8.5).



Figure 8.5: Part of railing, Sangol

Feature of Sculpture

- ✧ The Buddha image at Mathura is modeled on the lines of earlier Yaksha images whereas in Gandhara it has **Hellenistic features**. Early Jain Teerthankar images and portraits of kings, especially the **headless Kanishka** are also found in Mathura.
- ✧ 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)**.
- ✧ There is boldness in carving the large images, the volume of the images is projected out of the picture plane, the **faces are round and smiling**, and heaviness in the sculptural volume is reduced to relaxed flesh. They are clearly visible and they cover the left shoulder.
- ✧ Images of the Buddha, Yakshas, Yakshinis, Shaivite and Vaishnavite deities and portrait statues are profusely sculpted.

POINTS TO PONDER

We saw a significant rise in various styles of art and sculpture in terms of Mathura style, Gandhar style etc. How do you think the geographical locations of Mathura, Sarnath, and Gandhara influence the evolution of sculptural styles and traditions in ancient India, and what role did cultural influences play in shaping these schools of sculpture?



Early Temples

- ✧ While the construction of stupas continued, Brahmanical temples and images of gods also started being constructed. Often temples were decorated with the images of gods.
- ✧ Myths mentioned in the Puranas became part of the narrative representation of the Brahmanical religion. Each temple had a **principal image of a god**.
- ✧ **The shrines of the temples were of three kinds:**
 - ✧ **Sandhara type** (without pradikshinapatha),
 - ✧ **Nirandhara type** (with pradakshinapatha), and
 - ✧ **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. (Refer to Figure 8.6).



Figure 8.6: Shiva temple, Nachna-Kuthara, Madhya Pradesh, fifth century CE

- ❖ These temples are simple structures consisting of a veranda, a hall and a shrine at the rear.
- ❖ Among the important stupa sites outside the Gangetic Valley is Devnimori in Gujarat. In the subsequent centuries, sculptures had little variations while slender images with transparent drapery remained a dominant aesthetic sensibility.

Buddhist Monuments of South India

Vengi in Andhra Pradesh has many stupa sites like Jagayyapetta, Amaravati, Bhattiprolu, Nagarjunkonda, Goli, etc.

Amaravati Stupa

Amaravati has a **mahachaitya** and many sculptures which are now preserved in many museums around the world.

Feature of Amravati Stupa

- ❖ Like the Sanchi Stupa, the Amaravati Stupa also has **pradakshinapatha** enclosed within a **vedika** on which many narrative sculptures are depicted.

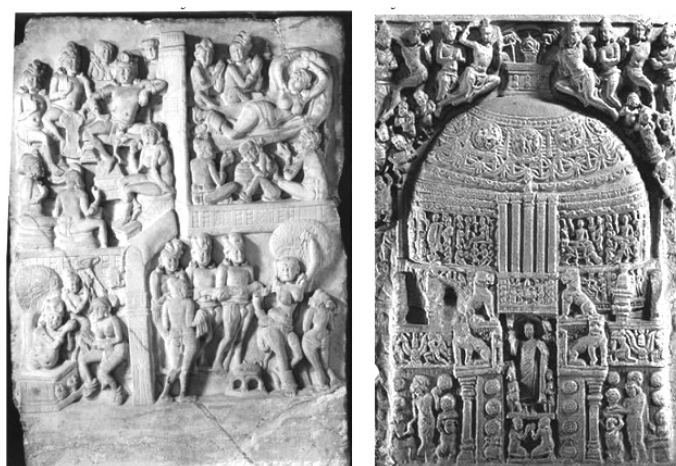


Figure 8.7: Carving on outer wall of Stupa, Amaravati, and Stupa drum slab, Amravati, second century CE

- ❖ The Torana of the Amaravati Stupa has disappeared over a period of time. Events from the life of the Buddha and the Jataka stories are depicted.
- ❖ Like Sanchi, the **early phase is devoid of Buddha images** but during the later phase, in the second and third centuries CE, the Buddha images are carved on the **drum slabs** and at many other places. (Refer to Figure 8.7).
- ❖ Sculptural form in this area is characterized by intense emotions. Figures are **slender**, have a lot of movement, bodies are shown with **three bents (i.e. tribhanga)**, and the sculptural composition is more complex than at Sanchi.

Narrative of Amaravati Stupa

- ❖ Narratives are profusely depicted which include events from the life of the Buddha and the Jataka stories.
- ❖ The animated movement in the figures was reduced in the sculptures of Nagarjunkonda and Goli in the third century CE. Even within the relatively low relief volume than in the Amaravati sculptures, artists at Nagarjunkonda and Goli managed to create the effect of **protruding surfaces of the body** which is suggestive in nature and looks very integral. (Refer to Figure 8.8).



Figure 8.8: Panel, Nagarjunkonda

Others Buddhist Site

- ❖ Independent Buddha images are also found at Amaravati, Nagarjunkonda and Guntapalle in Andhra Pradesh.
- ❖ **Guntapalle is a rock-cut cave** site near Eluru. Small apsidal and circular **chaitya halls** have been excavated belonging to the second century BCE.
- ❖ The other important site where rock-cut stupas have been excavated is **Anakapalle near Vishakhapatnam**.
- ❖ In Karnataka, **Sannati** in Gulbarga district is the **largest stupa site** excavated so far.
- ❖ Along with the images of the Buddha, other Buddhist images of **Bodhisattvas like Avalokiteshvara, Padmapani, Vajrapani, Amitabha, and Maitreya Buddha** started getting sculpted.

However, with the rise of Vajrayana Buddhism, many Bodhisattva images were added as 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

*In western India, many Buddhist caves dating back to the second century BCE onwards have been excavated. There are mainly **three architectural** caves:*

- ❖ **Apsidal vault-roof chaitya halls** found at Ajanta, Pitalkhora, Bhaja;
- ❖ **Apsidal vault-roof pillarless hall** found at Thana-Nadsur in Maharashtra;
- ❖ **Flat-roofed quadrangular hall** with a circular chamber at the back (found at Kondivite in Maharashtra).

Features of Western Cave

- ❖ The front of the chaitya hall is **dominated by** the motif of a **semi-circular chaitya arch** with an open front that has a wooden facade and, in **some cases, there is no dominating chaitya arch** window, such as found at **Kondivite**. In all the chaitya caves a **stupa at the back is common**.
- ❖ In the first century BCE, the standard plan of the apsidal vault-roof variety where the hall becomes **rectangular**, like at **Ajanta Cave No. 9** with a stone-screen wall as a facade. It is also found at Bedsa, Nashik, Karla and Kanheri.

Viharas: They resting places for monks, having a quadrangular plan.

Chaitya: A small chamber, usually at the back, are the prayer halls.

Karla Cave

In Karla, the **biggest rock-cut chaitya hall** was excavated.

Feature of Karla Chaitya Hall

- ❖ The cave consists of an open courtyard with two pillars, a stone screen wall to protect from rain, a veranda, a stone-screen wall as a facade, an apsidal vault-roof chaitya hall with pillars, and a stupa at the back.
- ❖ **Karla Chaitya Hall** is decorated with human and animal figures. They are heavy in their execution and move in the picture space. (Refer to Figure 8.9).
- ❖ The **quadrangular flat-roofed** variety became the most preferred design.

POINTS TO PONDER

Can you think of reasons why the use of specific architectural features, like the chaitya arches and stupa placement, might have been significant in Western Indian Buddhist caves and how they may have influenced the experience of worship for the devotees?

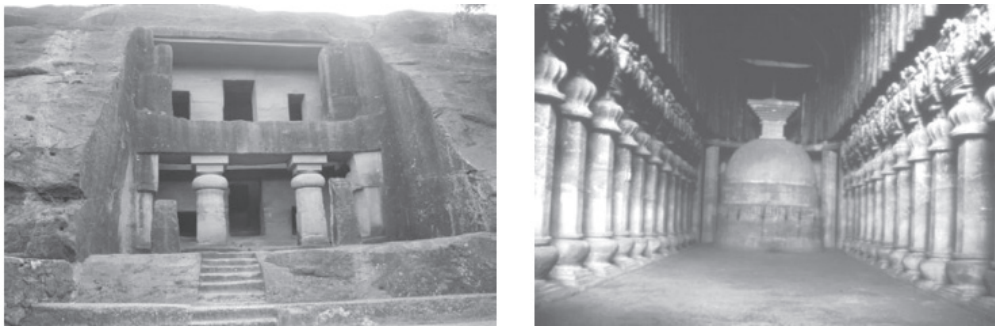


Figure 8.9: Unfinished Chaitya Cave, Kanheri, and Chaitya Hall, Karla

Viharas

- ❖ The viharas are excavated at all the cave sites. The plan of the viharas consists of a **veranda, a hall and cells around the walls of the hall**.
- ❖ Many of the early vihara caves are carved with interior decorative motifs like **chaitya arches** and **vedica designs** over the cell doors of the cave.
- ❖ **Facade design** in Nashik Caves 3, 10, and 17 became a distinct achievement. Kalyanasundara Murti at Nashik were excavated with front pillars carved with **ghata-base and ghata-capital** with human figures. (Refer to Figure 8.10).



Figure 8.10: Nashik Cave No. 3

- ❖ One such vihara cave was also excavated at Junnar in Maharashtra, which is popularly known as **Ganeshleni** because an image of Ganesha belonging to a later period was installed in it.
- ❖ Junnar has the largest cave excavations— more than two hundred caves around the hills of the town— whereas Kanheri in Mumbai has a hundred and eight excavated caves.
- ❖ The most important sites are Ajanta, Pitalkhora, Ellora, Nashik, Bhaja, Junnar, Karla, and Kanheri.

Ajanta Caves

- ❖ It is located in the **Aurangabad District of Maharashtra** State. Ajanta has **twenty-nine** caves. It has **four chaitya caves** datable to the earlier phase, i.e., the second and the first century BCE (Cave 10 and 9) and the later phase, i.e., the fifth century CE (Cave 19 and 26).
- ❖ It has large **chaitya viharas** and are decorated with sculptures and paintings.
- ❖ Cave number 10, 9, 12 and 13 belong to the early phase, Cave number 11, 15 and 6 upper and lower, and Cave No. 7 belong to the phase earlier than the late fifth century CE. The rest of the caves belong to the late fifth century CE to the early sixth century CE.
- ❖ The Chaitya Cave number 19 and 26 are **elaborately carved**. Their facade is decorated with **Buddha and, Bodhisattva images**. They are of the **apsidal-vault-roof variety**.
- ❖ Cave number 26 is very big and the entire interior hall is carved with a variety of Buddha images, the biggest one being the **Mahaparinibbana image**.
- ❖ Many paintings have survived in Cave Nos. 1, 2, 16 and 17. (Refer to Figure 8.11).

Do You Know?

Ajanta is the only surviving example of painting of the first century BCE and the fifth century CE.



Figure 8.11: Sculptural panel in the veranda of Cave No. 2, Ajanta

Patrons kings of Ajanta

- ❖ **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; Buddhabhadra (patron of Cave No. 26); and Mathuradasa (patron of Cave No. 4).

Painting in Ajanta cave

- ❖ Paintings have a lot of typological variations. Lines are clearly defined and are very rhythmic. Body colour gets merged with the outer line creating the effect of volume. **The figures are heavy like the sculptures of western India.**
- ❖ **Phase of Paintings**
 - ✧ **The first phase of painting:** Paintings in Cave number 9 and 10 belong to the first century BCE. The figures are broad with heavy proportions and arranged in the picture space in a linear way in Cave number 9. Lines are sharp. **Colours are limited.** Figures in these caves are painted with **considerable naturalism and there is no overstylisation.**
 - ✧ **The second phase of paintings:** Can be studied from the images of the Buddha painted on the walls and pillars of Cave number 10 and 9 (Refer to figure 8.10). These Buddha figures are different from the figures painted in the fifth century CE.

- ✧ **Next stage of development:** It is observed mainly in the paintings of Cave Nos. 16, 17, 1, and 2. However, it does not mean that pictures had not been painted in other caves. In fact, in almost all the finished excavations, pictures have been painted but very few have survived. Paintings have typological variations in these caves. (Refer to Figure 8.12).



Figure 8.12: Painting of the Buddha, Yashodhara and Rahul, Cave No. 17, Ajanta, and Apsara, Cave No. 17, Ajanta

Features of Paintings

- ❖ The paintings of Cave number 1 and 2 are very orderly and naturalistic, well integrated with the sculptures in the caves. Half-closed, elongated eyes are employed.
- ❖ Naturalistic postures and unexaggerated facial features are used as exceptional types. 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.
- ❖ It is worth noting that Chaddanta Jataka was painted in the early Cave No. 10 with many details and events grouped according to their geographical locations. Events that happened in the jungle and events that happened in the palace are separated by their locations.
- ❖ In Cave No. 10, Chaddanta faithfully follows the Pali text whereas the one painted in **Cave No. 17** is very different.
- ❖ The other important paintings are the famous **Padmapani and Vajrapani** in Cave No. 1. However, it may be observed that the images of Padmapani and Vajrapani are very common in Ajanta but the best preserved paintings are in Cave No. 1.
- ❖ It may also be observed that various **skin colors** are used in the paintings such as brown, yellowish brown, greenish, yellow ochre, etc., which represent a multicolored population. Attempts are also made to give highlights in the figural compositions.
- ❖ Some figures in Cave No. 2 have affiliation with the **Vengi sculptures** and at the same time, the influence of the **Vidarbha sculptural tradition** is also observed in the delineation of some sculptures. The subsequent development of the painting tradition has been discussed in the next chapter.

Ellora Caves

- ❖ Ellora cave site is located in **Aurangabad** District in Maharashtra. It is located a hundred kilometres from Ajanta and has **thirty-four Buddhist, Brahmanical and Jain caves**.

Fusion of Religions

- ❖ It is a unique art-historical site in the country as it has monasteries associated with the **three religions** dating from the fifth century CE onwards to the eleventh century CE.
- ❖ It is also unique in terms of **stylistic eclecticism**, i.e., the confluence of many styles at one place. The caves of Ellora and Aurangabad show the ongoing differences between the two religions—**Buddhism and Brahmanical**.
- ❖ 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.

Features of Ellora Cave

- ❖ Their pillars are massive. **Ajanta also has excavated double-storeyed caves but at Ellora, the triple-storey is a unique achievement.** The shrine Buddha images are big in size; they are generally guarded by the images of **Padmapani and Vajrapani**.
- ❖ On the other hand, the **only double-storey cave of the Brahmanical faith is Cave No. 14.** Pillar designs grow from the Buddhist caves and when they reach the Jain caves belonging to the ninth century CE, they become very ornate and the decorative forms gain heavy protrusion.
- ❖ The 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, and Kalyanasundara** are profusely depicted, whereas among the Vaishnavite themes, the different avatars of Vishnu are depicted. (Refer to Figure 8.13).
- ❖ The images are heavy and show considerable sophistication in the handling of sculptural volume. Various guilds at Ellora came from different places like Vidarbha, Karnataka and Tamil Nadu and carved the sculptures.
- ❖ Cave No. 16 is known as **Kailash Leni** (Refer to Figure 8.14). The plan of Cave No. 29 is almost like that of the main cave at Elephanta.



Figure 8.13: Gajasur Shiva, Cave No.15, Ellora

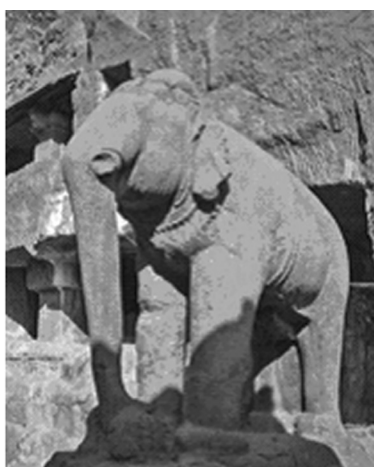


Figure 8.14: Courtyard, Kailash Temple, Cave No.16, Ellora, and Seated Buddha, Chaitya Hall, Cave No. 10, Ellora

Bagh Caves

- ❖ It consists of Buddhist mural paintings and is located 97 km from the Dhar district of Madhya Pradesh.
- ❖ These rock-cut cave monuments are **not natural** but carved over a period of time in ancient India, mostly during the **Satvahana period**.
- ❖ The Bagh caves, like those at Ajanta, were excavated by master craftsmen **on a perpendicular sandstone** rock face of a hill across the seasonal stream of Baghani.
- ❖ Out of the original nine caves, only five have survived, all of which are viharas or resting places for monks, having a quadrangular plan.
- ❖ The most significant of the five caves is Cave No. 4, commonly known as the **Rang Mahal, meaning the Palace of Colours**, where paintings on the wall and ceilings are still visible.
- ❖ Over the plaster, lime-priming was done, on which paintings were made. Some of the most beautiful paintings were on the walls of the portico of Cave 4.

Elephanta Caves and Other Sites

- ❖ The Elephanta Caves, located near Mumbai, are dominated by the Shaivite faith. It is **contemporary with Ellora**, and its sculptures show slenderness in the body, with stark light and dark effects. (Refer to Figure 8.14).
- ❖ The tradition of rock-cut caves continued in the Deccan and they are found not only in Maharashtra but also in Karnataka, mainly at Badami and Aihole, 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**.
- ❖ They show a parallel tradition with the religious lithic sculptures as well as the independent local tradition.
- ❖ Many terracotta figures of various sizes are found, which shows their popularity. They are toys, religious figurines as well, and figurines made for healing purposes as part of the belief systems.

Cave Tradition in Eastern India

Like in western India, Buddhist caves have also been excavated in eastern India, mainly in the coastal region of Andhra Pradesh, and in Odisha.

Guntapalle Caves (Andhra Pradesh)

The caves have been excavated in the hills along with the structured monasteries. Perhaps it is among the unique sites where the **structured stupas, viharas and caves** are excavated in one place.

Features of Guntapalle Caves

- ❖ 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. A number of vihara caves have been excavated.
- ❖ The main vihara caves, despite the small dimensions, have been decorated with chaitya arches on the exterior. They are rectangular with a vaulted roof and are carved **single-storeyed or double-storeyed** without a large central hall.

Other Sites in Andhra

Apart from Guntapalle, the other important cave site is **Rampaerrampallam**, which has very moderately small excavations but there are rock-cut stupas on the hillock.

At Anakapalli in Vishakhapatnam, caves were excavated and a huge rock-cut stupa was carved out of the hillock during the fourth-fifth centuries CE. It is a unique site, as it has **the biggest rock-cut stupas** in the country. Many votive rock-cut stupas all around the hillock have also been excavated.

- ❖ These excavations date back to the second century BCE. There are some excavations which were added in the subsequent centuries but all are of the vihara type.

Udaygiri-Khandagiri caves (Odisha)

- ❖ These caves are scattered and have inscriptions of **Kharavela Jain kings**. According to the inscriptions, the caves were meant for Jain monks.
- ❖ There are numerous **single-cell excavations**. Some have been carved in huge independent boulders and given the shape of animals.
- ❖ The big caves include a cave with a pillared veranda with cells at the back. The upper part of the cells is decorated with a series of chaitya arches and narratives that still continue in the folklores of the region.

Feature of Udaygiri-Khandagiri caves

- ❖ The figures in this cave are **voluminous, move freely in the picture space**, and are an excellent example of qualitative carving. Some caves in this complex were excavated later, sometime in the eighth–ninth centuries CE. (Refer to Figure 8. 15).

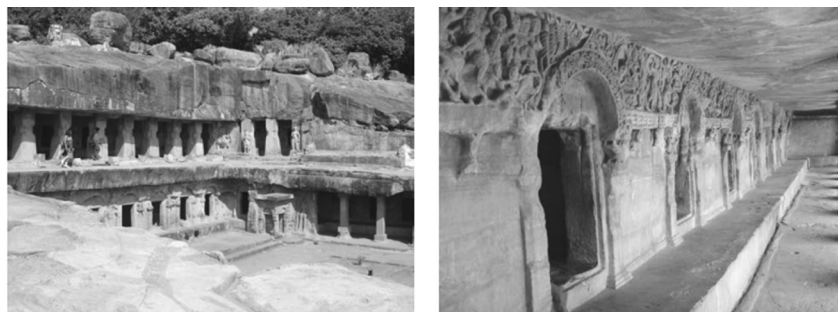


Figure 8.15: Udaigiri-Khandagiri caves near Bhubaneswar and Details of the veranda, Udaigiri-Khandagiri.

Some Famous Examples of Post-Mauryan Art & Architecture

Sanchi Stupa

- ❖ Sanchi, about 50 km from Bhopal, the capital of Madhya Pradesh, is a world heritage site. Along with other relatively small stupas, **there are three main stupas** at Sanchi. (Refer to Figure 8.16).
 - ❖ Stupa-1 is presumed to have the relics of the Buddha.
 - ❖ Stupa-2, the relics of ten **famous arhats** belonging to three different generations. Their names are found on the relic casket.
 - ❖ Stupa-3 has the relics of Sariputta and Mahamougalayana.
- ❖ Stupa-1, known for the carvings on its gateways, is one of the finest examples of stupa architecture.
- ❖ Originally the stupa was covered with stone, vedica and the torana (gateways).
- ❖ The Ashokan lion capital pillar with an inscription is found on the southern side of the stupa.



Figure 8.16: Sanchi Stupa

- ❖ The **pradakshinapath** around the stupa is covered with the vedica.
- ❖ Buddha is shown symbolically as an empty throne, feet, chhatra, stupas, etc. Toranas are constructed in all four directions.
- ❖ The figures at Sanchi, despite being small in dimension, show considerable mastery of sculpting. Their physiognomic treatment of the body shows both depth and dimension which are very naturalistic.
- ❖ There are guardian images on pillars and the **shalbhanjika** (i.e., the lady holding the branch of a tree) sculptures are remarkable in their treatment of volume.
- ❖ Each **torana consists of two vertical pillars and three horizontal bars** on the top. Each horizontal bar is decorated with different sculptural themes on the front as well as at the back. (Refer to Figure 8.17).

POINTS TO PONDER

The artistic and architectural developments during the Post-Mauryan period were more evolved and sophisticated. Can you list out how the Post-Mauryan features were different from the Mauryan architecture?

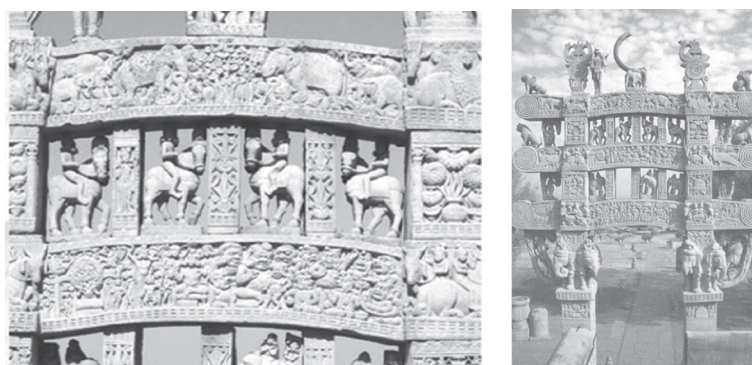


Figure 8.17: Sanchi stupa (Pillars and Torans)

Seated Buddha, Katra Mound, Mathura

- ❖ A large number of images dating back to the **Kushana Period** are 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 abhaya mudra, raised a little above the shoulder level, whereas the left hand is placed on the left thigh. (Refer to Figure 8.18).
- ❖ The **ushanisha, i.e., hair knot**, is shown with a vertically raised projection. Mathura sculptures from this period are made with a light volume having a 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's torso.
- ❖ The Buddha is seated on a lion's throne. The attendant figures are identified as the images of the **Padmapani and Vajrapani Bodhisattvas**, as one holds a lotus and the other a vajra (thunderbolt).



Figure 8.18: Seated Buddha

- ❖ 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.
- ❖ The face is **round with fleshy cheeks**. The bulge of the belly is sculpted with controlled musculature.
- ❖ 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's 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.
- ❖ The forehead plane is large, having protruding eyeballs, the eyes are half-closed and the face and cheeks are not round like the images found in other parts of India.
- ❖ There is a certain amount of heaviness in the figures of the Gandhara region. The ears are elongated especially the earlobes. The treatment of the form bears linearity and the outlines are sharp.
- ❖ The interplay of light and dark is given considerable attention by using the curving and protruding planes of the eye socket and the planes of the nose. The **expression of calmness** is the central point of attraction. The modeling of the face enhances the naturalism of **three-dimensionality**. (Refer to figure 8.19).
- ❖ Assimilating various traits of **Acamenian, Parthian and Bactrian traditions** into the local tradition is the hallmark of the Gandhara style.
- ❖ It may also be observed that the north-western part of India, which is now Pakistan, always had continuous habitation from proto-historic times.
- ❖ It continued in the historical period as well. A large number of images have been found in the Gandhara region. They consist of narratives of the life of the Buddha, narrations from the Jataka stories, and Buddha and Boddhisattva images.

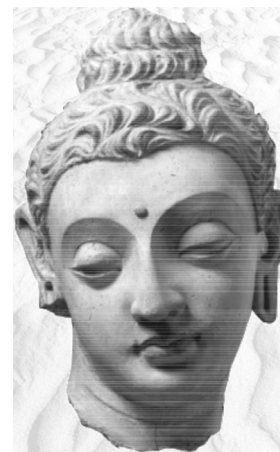


Figure 8.19: Buddha Head, Taxila

Seated Buddha, Sarnath

- ❖ This image of the Buddha from **Sarnath belonging to the late fifth century CE** is housed in the site museum at Sarnath. It has been made in Chunar sandstone.
- ❖ The Buddha is shown seated on a throne in the **padmasana** which represents **dhammachakrapravartana** 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.
- ❖ This Buddha image is a fine example of the **Sarnath school of sculpture**. The body is slender and well-proportioned but slightly elongated. The outlines are delicate, very rhythmic. Folded legs are expanded in order to create a visual balance in the picture space.

- ❖ Drapery clings to the body and is transparent to create the effect of integrated volume. The face is round, the eyes are half-closed, the lower lip is protruding, and the **roundness of the cheeks** has **reduced** as compared to the earlier images from the Kushana Period at Mathura.
- ❖ The hands are shown in dhammachakrapravartana mudra placed just below the chest. The neck is slightly elongated with two incised lines indicating folds.
- ❖ The **ushanisha has circular curled hair**. 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).
- ❖ The central part of the **halo is plain** without any decoration. It makes the halo visually impressive. Decoration in the halo and the back of the throne indicates the artisan's sensitivity.
- ❖ **Transparent drapery** becomes part of the physical body. Such refinement comes over a period of time, and these features continued in subsequent periods. (Refer to Figure 8.20).

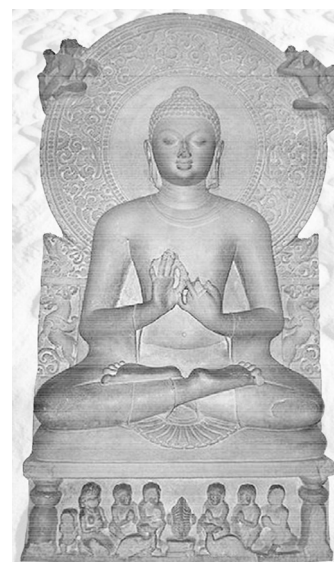


Figure 8.20: Seated Buddha, Mathura

Padmapani Bodhisattva 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. The modeling is soft. Outlines are merged with the body volume creating the effect of three dimensionality.
- ❖ The head is **slightly bent to the left**. The eyes are half-closed and are slightly elongated. The nose is sharp and straight.
- ❖ Light colour all over the projected planes of the face is aimed at creating an effect of three-dimensionality. The beaded necklace too has similar features.
- ❖ **Broad and expanded shoulders** create heaviness in the body. The torso is relatively round. Lines are delicate, and rhythmic, and define the contours of the body. The right hand is holding **a lotus and the left hand is extended in space**. (Refer to Figure 8.21).
- ❖ The Bodhisattva is surrounded by small figures. The foreshortened right hand of the Bodhisattva makes the image more solid, and effectively dense.
- ❖ Each and every part of the body is given equal attention.
- ❖ On the other side of the image, **Vajrapani Bodhisattva** has been painted. He holds a vajra in his right hand and wears a crown. This image also bears the same pictorial qualities as the Padmapani.
- ❖ Cave No. 1 has many interesting paintings of Buddhist themes such as **Mahajanak Jataka, Umag Jataka**, etc. The Mahajanak Jataka is painted on the entire wall side and is the biggest narrative painting. (Refer to Figure 8.22).



Figure 8.21: Padmapani Bodhisattva, Ajanta



Figure 8.22: Mahajanak Jataka, Ajanta Cave No. 1

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 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 that the Buddha went through at the time of enlightenment. (Refer to Figure 8.23).
- ❖ 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 pointing towards the earth as a witness to his generosity.

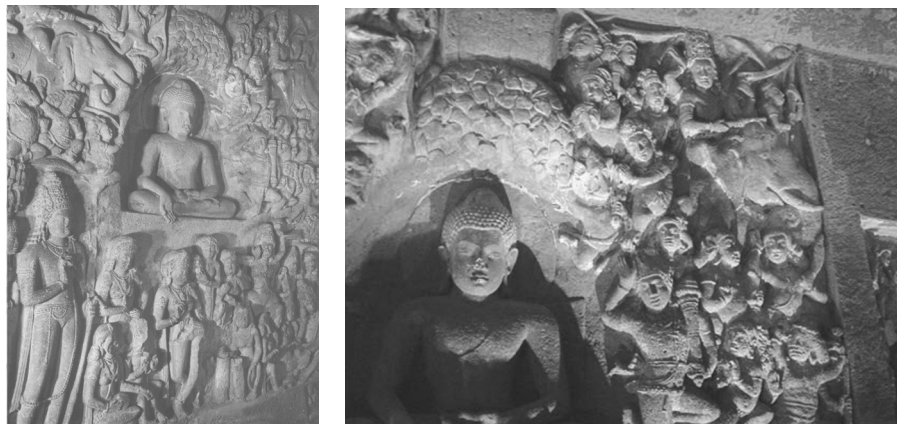


Figure 8.23: Mara Vijaya, Ajanta Cave

- ❖ The image of Mara is shown contemplating how to disturb Siddhartha, the name of the Buddha before enlightenment. The army of Mara is shown marching towards the Buddha in the first half of the panel, whereas the lower half of the panel shows the departing army of Mara giving him adorations. (Refer to Figure 8.23).
- ❖ The centrally placed Buddha **is in padmasana**, and a tree at the back is shown by dense leaves.
- ❖ This is the largest sculptural panel at Ajanta. Though there are several big images in the caves of Ajanta, especially located in the shrine antechamber as well as the facade walls, such a complex arrangement of figures is unique.

Maheshmurti, Elephanta

- ❖ The image of Maheshmurti at Elephanta dates back to the early **sixth century CE**. It is located in the main cave shrine. It is one of the best examples of qualitative achievement in sculpting images in rock-cut caves.
- ❖ The image is large in size. The **central head is the main Shiva figure** whereas the other two visible heads are of **Bhairava and Uma**.
- ❖ The central face is in high relief, having a round face, thick lips and heavy eyelids. The lower lip is prominently protruded, showing a very different characteristic.
- ❖ The face of Shiva-Bhairava is clearly shown in profile in anger, with bulging eyes and a moustache.

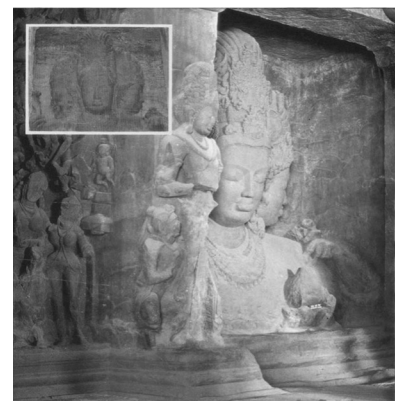


Figure 8.24: Maheshmurti at Elephanta

- ❖ The other face showing **feminine characters** is of Uma, who is the consort of Shiva.
- ❖ One of the Shilpa texts mentions **five integrated faces** of Shiva and this image, despite being shown with only three faces, is considered as of the same variety and the top and back faces are deemed as invisible.
- ❖ Each face has a different crown as per its iconographic prescription. This sculpture has been sculpted on the south wall of the cave along with the **sculpture of Ardhanarishwara** and the Gangadhara panel.
- ❖ Elephanta sculptures are known for their remarkable qualities of surface smoothness, elongation and rhythmic movement. Their composition is very complex. The iconographic arrangement of this cave is replicated in Cave No. 29 at Ellora. (Refer to Figure 8.24).

Mural Traditions of India

- ❖ Anantha from Ananthapadmanabh Temple. (Refer to Figure 8.25), Kasarghod.
- ❖ Shiva chasing the boar—a scene from Kiratarjuniya, Lepakshi temple. (Refer to Figure 8.26).
- ❖ Chola king Rajaraja and court poet Karuvar Dever, Thanjavoor, eleventh century. (Refer to Figure 8.27).
- ❖ Shiva killing Tripuraasura, Thanjavoor. (Refer to Figure 8.28).
- ❖ Rama kills Ravana, a scene from Ramayana panel, Mattancheri Palace. (Refer to Figure 8.29).
- ❖ Shasta, Padmanabhapuram Palace, Thakkala. (Refer to Figure 8.30).

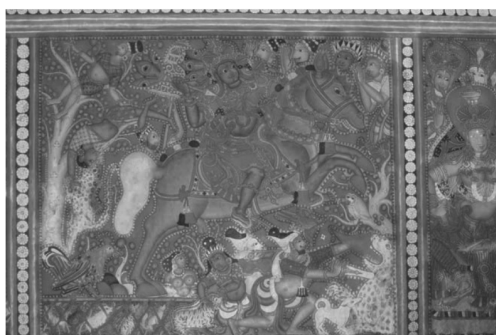


Figure 8.25: Anantha from Ananthapadmanabh Temple, Kasarghod



Figure 8.26: Shiva chasing the boar—a scene from Kiratarjuniya, Lepakshi temple



Figure 8.27: Chola king Rajaraja and court poet Karuvar Dever, Thanjavoor, eleventh century



Figure 8.28: Shiva killing Tripuraasura, Thanjavoor



Figure 8.29: Rama kills Ravana, a scene from Ramayana panel, Mattancheri Palace



Figure 8.30: Shasta, Padmanabhapuram Palace, Thakkala

Conclusion

The Post-Mauryan period in India witnessed a fascinating evolution in art and architecture. During this era, artistic styles and architectural techniques evolved, **blending indigenous traditions with foreign influences**, particularly from the **Hellenistic world** and Central Asia. Notable developments include the rise of the Shunga dynasty, the elaborate rock-cut caves of the Western Ghats, and the stupa-centric architecture exemplified by the **Great Stupa at Sanchi, Ajanta and Ellora caves** etc. These artistic achievements not only reflect the religious and cultural diversity of ancient India but also mark an important chapter in the country's rich artistic heritage.

Glossary:

- **Bharhut sculptures:** They are images like that of Yaksha and Yakhshini in the Mauryan period.
- **Sanchi Stupa and Sculpture:** It is a UNESCO world heritage site located in Madhya Pradesh. There are **three main stupas** at Sanchi consisting of relics of - Buddha, ten famous arhats and Sariputta and Mahamougalayana.
- **Amaravati Stupa:** Amaravati stupa (in Guntur district) was built during the rule of the Satavahanas. It is a ruined Buddhist stupa in the village of Amaravathi, Palnadu district, Andhra Pradesh.
- **Ajanta Cave:** Ajanta is a series of rock-cut caves in the Sahyadri ranges (Western Ghats) on the Waghora River near Aurangabad in Maharashtra. There are a total of 29 caves.
- **Ellora Cave:** It is located nearly 100 Km away from Ajanta caves in the Sahyadri range of Maharashtra. It is a group of 34 caves - 17 Brahmanical, 12 Buddhist and 5 Jain.
- **Bagh Cave:** The Bagh Caves are a collection of nine rock-cut monuments, located on the southern slopes of the Vindhya near Bagh, Dhar district, Madhya Pradesh, India.
- **Elephanta cave:** Rock-cut caves dominated by the Shaivite faith built during the mid-5th and 6th centuries AD on Elephanta near Mumbai in Western India. It is also a UNESCO World Heritage site.
- **Udaygiri-Khandagiri Cave:** Udayagiri and Khandagiri Caves were created during the reign of Kalinga King Kharavela in the first and second centuries BC, near modern-day Bhubaneswar. There are both man-made and natural caves in the cave complex.





Temple Architecture and Sculpture

Bibliography: This Chapter encompasses the summary of **Chapter 6** and **Chapter 7** of Class XI NCERT (An Introduction to Indian Art Part-I).

Introduction

The architecture of Indian temples and the art of bronze sculpture hold a special place in the rich heritage of Indian art and culture. Indian temple architecture is a testament to the nation's deep-rooted spiritual and architectural traditions. These sacred structures, known for their intricate designs and spiritual significance, reflect the diverse cultural and regional influences that have shaped India over the centuries. Along with them, Bronze sculpture showcases the exceptional skill of Indian artisans in crafting intricate and lifelike sculptures, often depicting deities, legends, and mythological stories. These sculptures, cast using the lost wax technique, are renowned for their artistic finesse and religious symbolism. In this chapter, we will analyze the beauty and significance of these art forms, shedding light on their historical evolution, cultural significance, and enduring legacy in the modern world.

POINTS TO PONDER

Temples have been important structures and places in Indian society. They have evolved over time and have drawn inspiration from the existing society itself. Can you think about how the strategic placement and iconography of deities in temples reflect the local, social, and cultural contexts of different regions and periods in ancient India?



Figure 9.1: Temple architecture in India



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Early Temples

During this period, alongside the ongoing construction of stupas, Brahmanical temples and divine images gained prominence. Temples were often adorned with depictions of gods, incorporating myths from the Puranas into the narrative representation of Brahmanical religion. Each temple featured a principal deity image. The temple shrines came in three types—

1. **Sandhara (without pradikshinapatha)**
2. **Nirandhara(with pradakshinapatha)**
3. **Sarvatobhadra (accessible from all sides).**

Notable temple sites from this era include Deogarh in Uttar Pradesh, Eran, Nachna-Kuthara (Refer to Figure 9.2), and Udaygiri near Vidisha in Madhya Pradesh. These temples, characterized by simplicity, typically comprised a veranda, a hall, and a shrine at the rear.

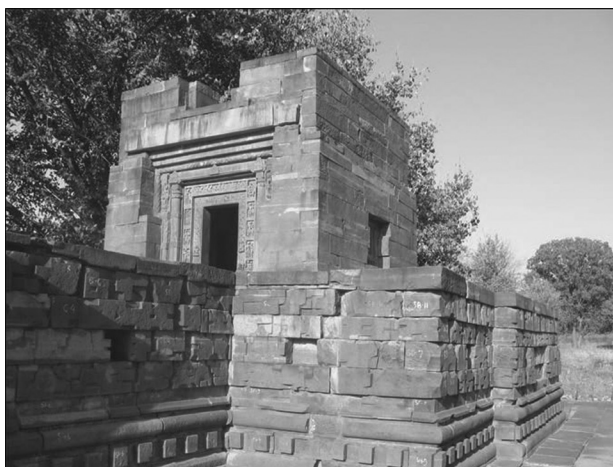


Figure 9.2: Shiva temple, Nachna-Kuthara, Madhya Pradesh, fifth century CE (Chatur Mukhlinga, Nachna- Kuthara (Inset))

The Basic Form of the Hindu Temple

- ❖ **Sanctum (Garbhagriha):** The sanctum, initially a small cubicle with a single entrance, evolved into a larger chamber over time. It is designed to house the main icon, which becomes the focal point of significant ritual attention.
- ❖ **Entrance (Mandapa):** The entrance to the temple, whether a portico or collonaded hall, serves as a space for accommodating a large number of worshippers.
- ❖ **Architectural Elements:** In freestanding temples, a mountain-like spire is featured, taking the form of a curving **Shikhara** in North India and a pyramidal tower known as a **vimana** in South India.
- ❖ **Vahan and Dhvaj:** Positioned axially before the sanctum, the vahan represents the mount or vehicle of the main deity, accompanied by a standard pillar or Dhvaj.

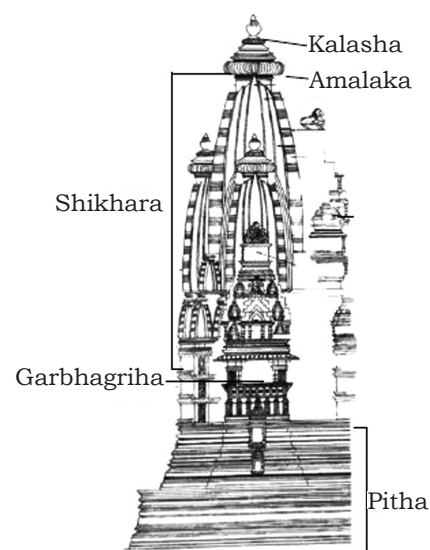


Figure 9.3: Nagara temple

Temple Orders

- ❖ **Nagara (North) and Dravida (South):** Two distinct orders of temples prevail—Nagara (Refer to Figure 9.3) in the north and Dravida in the south. They differ in architectural features and spire shapes, which we will study about in later parts of the chapter.
- ❖ **Vesara Style:** Some scholars recognize the Vesara style, as an independent form resulting from the selective integration of Nagara and Dravida elements.

Sculpture, Iconography and Ornamentation

Iconography in Art History

- ❖ The **study of images of deities** is a facet of art history known as ‘iconography.’ This field involves the identification of images based on specific symbols and mythologies associated with them.
- ❖ While the fundamental myth and meaning of a deity may endure for centuries, its specific usage in a particular location often responds to local, social, political, or geographical contexts.

Regional Variations in Iconography

- ❖ Every region and period has produced **distinct styles of deity images**, showcasing regional variations in iconography.
- ❖ Temples, integral to this artistic expression, are adorned with elaborate sculptures and ornaments that form a fundamental part of their conception.

Strategic Placement in Temples

- ❖ The placement of deity images within a temple is carefully planned.
- ❖ For instance, in **Nagara temples**, river goddesses (Ganga and Yamuna) are commonly found at the entrance of a garbhagriha. **Dravida temples** feature dvarapalas (doorkeepers) guarding gateways or gopurams.
- ❖ Erotic images (mithunas), the nine auspicious planets (navagrahas), and yakshas are strategically placed at entrances for protective purposes.

Outer Wall Depictions

- ❖ Various forms or aspects of the main divinity adorn the outer walls of sanctums.
- ❖ **Ashtadikpalas**, representing the deities of directions, face the eight key directions on the outer walls of the sanctum and/or the temple.

Subsidiary Shrines

- ❖ Subsidiary shrines around the main temple are dedicated to the family or incarnations of the main deity, adding layers of significance to the temple complex.

Ornamental Elements in Temples

- ❖ Distinct elements of ornamentation, such as **gavaksha**, **vyala/yali**, **kalpa-lata**, **amalaka**, **kalasha**, are used in specific ways and places within a temple, contributing to its overall aesthetic and symbolic richness.

This diverse iconography not only serves as artistic expression but also reflects the intricate interplay of cultural, social, and geographical influences over time. As temples grew more complex, additive geometry was employed. This involved adding rhythmically projecting, symmetrical walls and niches without deviating from the fundamental shrine plan. This structural evolution can be seen in changes that occurred within different variations of Nagara and Dravida temples.

Let's study in detail about sub-styles within Nagara and Dravida orders.



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The Nagara or North Indian Temple Style

- ❖ The prevalent style of temple architecture in **northern India** is known as nagara.
- ❖ Northern temples are often constructed on a **stone platform with steps leading up to it**.
- ❖ Unlike South India, there is typically an **absence of elaborate boundary walls or gateways**. (Refer to Figure 9.4)
- ❖ The temple architecture's form is influenced by ancient building forms existing before the fifth century CE.
- ❖ The Valabhi type of Shikhara, for instance, finds **similarities with the ground plan of Buddhist rock-cut chaitya caves**.
- ❖ This evolution in Nagara temple architecture showcases the dynamic development and diversification of styles in response to regional and temporal influences.

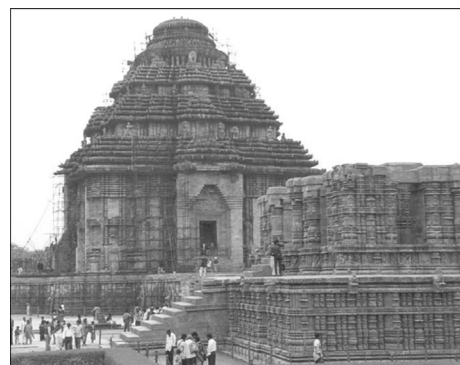


Figure 9.4: Sun Temple, Konark

Evolution of Temple Towers (Shikhara)

- ❖ Early temples had a single tower (shikhara), but later ones featured multiple towers.
- ❖ The garbhagriha (sanctum) is always situated directly under the tallest tower or shikhara.
- ❖ Multiple types of shikhara evolved over time.

Latina Type Shikhara

- ❖ This is a simple shikhara, famously known as the '**latina**' or '**rekha-prasada**' type.
- ❖ It has a **square base and walls that curve or slope inward**, culminating in a point at the top.
- ❖ It is often considered as a basic form of shikhara.
- ❖ Latina buildings evolved to support many smaller towers, clustered together like rising mountain peaks.

Phamsana Type Shikhara

- ❖ Phamsana buildings are **broadier and shorter than latina ones**.
- ❖ Their roofs consist of several slabs gently rising to a single point, presenting a different profile compared to the sharply rising towers of the latina type.
- ❖ In many North Indian temples, phamsana design is applied to mandapas (halls), while the main garbhagriha is housed in a latina building.

Valabhi Type Building

- ❖ The Valabhi type is characterized by **rectangular buildings with a roof rising into a vaulted chamber**.
- ❖ The edge of the vaulted chamber is rounded, resembling **ancient bamboo or wooden wagons**.
- ❖ Often referred to as '**wagon-vaulted buildings**.'

Variations in the shape of the shikhara lead to different subdivisions of Nagara temples.

Central India

- ❖ Ancient temples in Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, and Rajasthan share common traits.
- ❖ Gupta Period shrines in Madhya Pradesh, notably at **Udaigiri and Sanchi**, are made of sandstone.

- ❖ Early Gupta temples are relatively modest with **four pillars supporting a mandapa and garbhagriha**.
- ❖ The two surviving temples, one in Udaigiri near Vidisha and the other in Sanchi near the stupa represent a significant architectural development, featuring a flat roof and indicating shared design elements in Hindu and Buddhist temple construction.

Deogarh Temple Architecture

- ❖ Deogarh in Uttar Pradesh, dating to the early sixth century CE, exemplifies late Gupta Period temple architecture.
- ❖ Deogarh temple follows the **panchayatana** (a total number of five shrines, hence the name, panchayatana) style with a **main shrine** (built on a rectangular plinth) and **four subsidiary shrines** (at the four corners).
- ❖ The **curvilinear shikhara** (curving latina or **Rekha-prasada** type of shikhara) indicates an early example of the classic **nagara style**.
- ❖ This **west-facing temple** has a grand doorway featuring **sculptures of Ganga and Yamuna**.
- ❖ The temple's depictions of Vishnu in various forms led to the misconception that it was a **Dasavatara** temple (Refer to figure 9.5) with our subsidiary shrines housing Vishnu's avatars.
- ❖ However, the original dedication of these shrines remains unknown, while main reliefs of Vishnu, such as **Sheshashayana** (Refer to Figure 9.5), **Nara-Narayan**, and **Gajendramoksha**, adorn the west-facing temple walls.

Sheshashayana is the form of Vishnu where he is shown reclining on the sheshanaga called Ananta.

Nara-Narayan shows the discussion between the human soul and the eternal divine.

Gajendramoksha is the story of achieving moksha, symbolically communicated by Vishnu's suppression of an asura who had taken the form of an elephant.



Figure 9.5: Dashavtara Vishnu temple, Deogarh, fifth century CE (Sheshashayana Vishnu)

Development in Khajuraho Temples

- ❖ Temples at Khajuraho, constructed by **Chandela Kings** in the tenth century, show significant evolution (refer Figures 6, 7 and 8).
- ❖ **Lakshmana temple** (dedicated to Vishnu) (Refer to Figure 9.7), built in 954 CE, by the Chandela king, Dhanga, displays a **curved pyramidal fashion in shikharas** and prominent **amalaka** (a horizontal fluted disc) and **kalash** (or vase).
- ❖ All Nagara temples from this period feature the standard crowning elements of amalaka and kalash, and distinctively, this temple exhibits projecting **balconies and verandahs**, setting it apart from Deogarh.

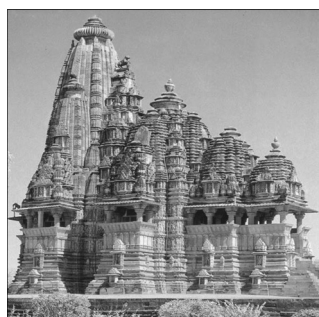


Figure 9.6: Vishwanatha temple, Khajuraho

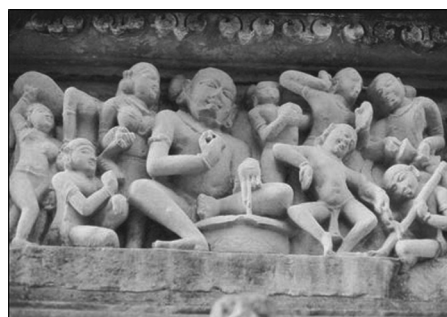


Figure 9.7: Dance class, Lakshmana Temple, Khajuraho

Khajuraho's Sculpture Style

- ❖ **Kandariya Mahadeo** temple (Refer to Figure 9.8) in Khajuraho epitomizes Central Indian temple architecture during the medieval period.
- ❖ Sculptures at Khajuraho are highly stylized, often in full relief with sharp features like noses, chins, and slanting eyes.
- ❖ **Erotic sculptures**, including **Mithun** (embracing couple) sculptures, are considered auspicious and are integral to the temples.

Diversity in Khajuraho Temples

- ❖ Khajuraho has numerous **Hindu temples, Jain temples, and a Chausanth Yogini temple**; most of them devoted to Hindu gods.
- ❖ **Chausanth Yogini** temple predates the tenth century and is dedicated to goddesses associated with **Tantric worship**.
- ❖ Temples in Khajuraho showcase the coexistence of spiritual and erotic expressions in Hindu temple art.
- ❖ Built between the **seventh and tenth centuries**, a number of temples dedicated to the cult of yoginis are scattered across Madhya Pradesh, Odisha, and extending as far south as Tamil Nadu.



Figure 9.8: Kandariya Mahadeo temple, Khajuraho

West India

- ❖ Temples in north-western India, spanning Gujarat, Rajasthan, and western Madhya Pradesh, showcase a **variety of stones**.
- ❖ Sandstone is common, while grey to black basalt appears in tenth to twelfth-century temple sculptures.
- ❖ Soft **white marble**, manipulatable and exuberant, is seen in **Jain temples in Mount Abu** (tenth to twelfth century) and the fifteenth-century temple at Ranakpur.

Art-Historical Site: Samlaji in Gujarat

- ❖ Samlaji in Gujarat is a significant art-historical site, blending earlier regional traditions with a post-Gupta style.
- ❖ **Grey schist sculptures** in the region, dating between the sixth and eighth centuries CE, showcase a distinctive style influenced by the mix of traditions.

Surya Kund and Sun Temple at Modhera

- ❖ The Sun temple at Modhera (refer Figure 9.9), built in 1026 CE by **Raja Bhimdev I** of the Solanki Dynasty, is a prominent eleventh-century structure.



Figure 9.9: Sun temple, Modhera, Gujarat

- ❖ A massive rectangular stepped tank, Surya Kund (refer Figure 9.8), is situated in front of the temple, showcasing the **influence of water bodies** in sacred architecture.
- ❖ The temple tank, measuring a hundred square meters, features **108 miniature shrines** carved between its steps.
- ❖ The **sabha mandapa**, open on all sides, follows the fashion of western and central Indian temples in the early eleventh century.
- ❖ The temple's intricate carving and sculpture work reflect the influence of **Gujarat's wood carving** tradition (evident in the lavish carving and sculptures, showcasing a blend of artistic styles).
- ❖ The central small shrine, facing east, remains plain to allow the sun to shine directly into it during the equinoxes.
- ❖ Proximity to water bodies, such as tanks, rivers, or ponds, becomes integral to temple architecture in the region.
- ❖ The deliberate plainness of the central shrine highlights the solar alignment during equinoxes, emphasizing the temple's connection with celestial events.

East India

- ❖ The history of temple architecture in the North-East, Bengal, and Odisha reveals distinct styles.
- ❖ The history of architecture in the North-East and Bengal is complex due to renovations, with later brick or concrete temples now surviving.
- ❖ **Terracotta** was a prevalent medium, **molding plaques** depicting Buddhist and Hindu deities until the seventh century in Bengal.
- ❖ **Assam and Bengal** showcase significant regional schools through sculptures, reflecting diverse influences and developments.

Assam's Architectural Evolution

- ❖ In Assam, a sixth-century sculpted door frame from **DaParvatia**, a small village near Tezpur reflects Gupta influences.
- ❖ A post-Gupta style persisted until the tenth century, followed by the emergence of a distinct Assamese style by the twelfth to fourteenth centuries.

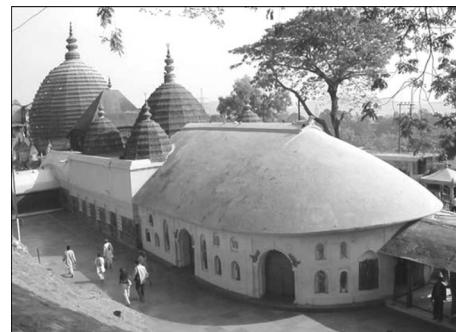


Figure 9.10: Kamakhya Temple, Assam

- ❖ The **Ahom style**, influenced by **Tais** from Upper Burma and **Pala style** from Bengal, is evident in the seventeenth-century Kamakhya temple (a Shakti Peeth dedicated to Goddess Kamakhya) (refer Figure 9.10) in Guwahati.

Evolution of Styles in Bengal

- ❖ Bengal's temple styles vary from the **Pala style** (ninth to eleventh centuries) to the **Sena style** (eleventh to thirteenth centuries).
- ❖ Pala rulers, patrons of Buddhist monastic sites, influenced the local **Vanga style** in temples, such as the **Siddheshvara Mahadeva temple in Barakar**, evolving into loftier forms in subsequent centuries. Characterized by a tall curving shikhara crowned by a large amalaka, it shares similarities with contemporary temples in Odisha.
- ❖ **Terracotta brick temples** in Bengal (Refer to Figure 9.11), influenced by local vernacular traditions and Islamic architecture, proliferated in the seventeenth century.
- ❖ Temples submerged in **Telkupi**, Purulia District, showcased architectural styles aware of prevalent nagara sub-types in North India.
- ❖ The black-to-grey basalt and chlorite stone pillars, along with arched niches in these temples, significantly influenced the earliest Bengal sultanate buildings at **Gaur and Pandua**.
- ❖ Local vernacular building traditions played a key role, especially the shape of the curving or sloping side of the bamboo roof seen in **Bengali huts**.
- ❖ This distinctive feature, known as the **Bangla roof**, later found **adoption in Mughal buildings**, becoming a recognizable architectural element across North India.
- ❖ During the Mughal period and beyond, scores of terracotta brick temples were constructed across Bengal and Bangladesh.
- ❖ The architectural influence also extends to incorporating forms of arches and domes taken from Islamic architecture.
- ❖ Prominent locations for these temples include **Vishnupur** (refer to figure 9.11), **Bankura**, **Burdwan**, and **Birbhum**, with most dating to the seventeenth century.

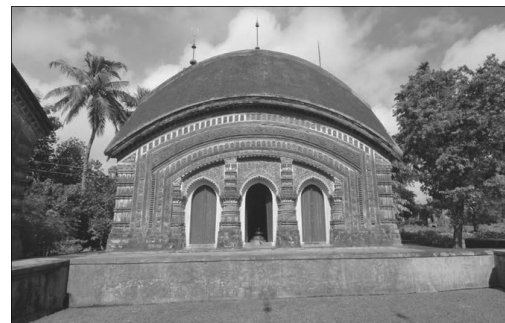


Figure 9.11: Terracotta temple, Vishnupur

Architectural Features in Odisha

- ❖ Odisha's temples, classified into **rekhapida**, **pidhadeul**, and **khakra** orders, form a distinct sub-style within the nagara order.
- ❖ Most of the main temple sites are located in ancient Kalinga—modern Puri District (Refer to Figure 9.12), including Bhubaneswar or ancient Tribhuvaneshvara, Puri and Konark.
- ❖ Shikharas (called **deul**) in Odisha temples are **vertical until the top**, sharply curving inwards, with **square ground plans**.
- ❖ Deuls are preceded, as usual, by mandapas called **jagamohana** in Odisha.
- ❖ Odisha temples often include boundary walls, distinguishing them from other styles.

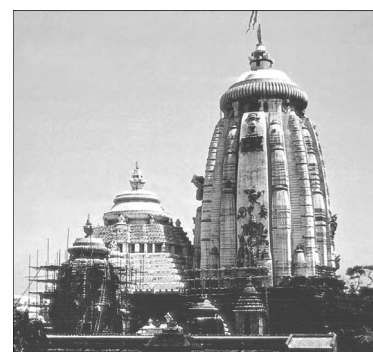


Figure 9.12: Jagannath temple, Puri

- ❖ The **Sun temple at Konark**, built around 1240, is a colossal creation with a colossal shikhara that reached 70 m before collapsing in the nineteenth century.
- ❖ The vast complex is within a quadrilateral precinct of which the **jagamohana** or the **dance-pavillion (mandapa)** has survived.
- ❖ The temple, resembling a chariot, has walls covered in detailed ornamental carvings, including twelve pairs of enormous wheels representing the **Sun god's chariot wheels**.
- ❖ A massive sculpture of Surya carved out of green stone and strategically placed images captured the sun's rays in the garbhagriha.

The Hills

- ❖ The hills of Kumaon, Garhwal, Himachal, and Kashmir gave rise to a distinctive form of architecture.
- ❖ Proximity to **Gandhara sites like Taxila and Peshawar** influenced Kashmir, blending with **Gupta** and **post-Gupta** traditions from Sarnath, Mathura, Gujarat, and Bengal.
- ❖ Frequent travels of Brahmin pundits and Buddhist monks contributed to the intermingling of **Buddhist and Hindu traditions in the hills**.



Figure 9.13: Temple complexes in Hills

Wooden Tradition in the Hills

- ❖ Hills maintained their own tradition of **wooden buildings with pitched roofs**.
- ❖ Temples often showcase a **blend of styles**, with the main garbhagriha and shikhara in rekha-prasada or latina style, while the **mandapa reflects an older form of wooden architecture**.
- ❖ Some temples adopt a **pagoda shape**, highlighting the uniqueness of hill architecture.

The Karkota Period in Kashmir

- ❖ The Karkota period in Kashmir, especially during the eighth and ninth centuries, is significant for temple architecture.
- ❖ **Pandrethan temple**, possibly dedicated to Shiva, exemplifies Kashmir's wooden building tradition, featuring a peaked roof slanting outward.
- ❖ Moderately ornamented, it deviates from post-Gupta aesthetics, emphasizing simplicity with a row of elephants and a **decorated doorway**.

Chamba Sculptures and Tradition Fusion

- ❖ Chamba exhibits an amalgamation of local traditions with a post-Gupta style, seen in sculptures like **Mahishasuramardini** and **Narasimha** at the **Lakshna-Devi Mandir**.
- ❖ Influenced by the metal sculpture tradition of Kashmir, these sculptures in yellow color possibly feature an alloy of zinc and copper.

- ❖ An inscription at the temple, built during the reign of **Meruvarman** in the seventh century, indicates its historical significance.

Nagara Architecture in Kumaon

- ❖ Temples at **Jageshwar** near Almora and Champavat near **Pithoragarh** in Kumaon represent classic examples of nagara architecture in the region.
- ❖ These temples showcase the regional adaptation of architectural styles, contributing to the rich heritage of hill architecture.

The Dravida or South Indian Temple Style

- ❖ Dravida temples, in contrast to nagara temples, are **enclosed within a compound wall**.
- ❖ The entrance wall **boasts a central gateway** known as a **gopuram**.
- ❖ The vimana, the main temple tower in Tamil Nadu, takes the form of a **geometrically rising stepped pyramid**, differing from the curving shikhara of North India.



Meenakshi temple, Madurai



Gangaikondacholapuram temple



Shore temple, Mahabalipuram

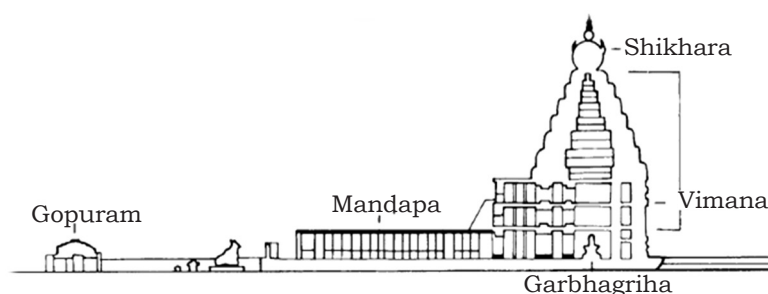


Figure 9.14: Dravida Temples

Distinctive Features

- ❖ In South Indian temples, the term 'shikhara' refers only to the crowning element, usually shaped like a **small stupika** or an **octagonal cupola** (equivalent to the amlak and kalasha of North Indian temples).
- ❖ Entrance sculptures typically **depict fierce dvarapalas** (door-keepers) guarding the temple.
- ❖ Temple complexes often include **large water reservoirs** or temple tanks.

Evolution of Temple Size

- ❖ Unlike North Indian temples with clusters of shikharas, South Indian temples often have the main temple with one of the smallest towers, indicating its historical significance.
- ❖ Over time, as towns expanded, new boundary walls with loftier gopurams were constructed around the temple.

- ❖ Examples like the **Srirangam temple** in Tiruchirapally showcase multiple concentric rectangular enclosure walls, each with **gopurams** of varying heights.

Urbanization and Administrative Centers

- ❖ Temples in Tamil Nadu, such as those in Kanchipuram, Thanjavur, Madurai, and Kumbakonam, became focal points of urban architecture.
- ❖ Temples transformed into rich administrative centers, exerting control over extensive land areas during the eighth to twelfth centuries.

Classification of Dravida Temples

- ❖ Dravida temples are categorized into five shapes:
 - ✧ Square (kuta or caturasra),
 - ✧ Rectangular (shala or ayatasra),
 - ✧ Elliptical (gaja-prishta or vrittayata),
 - ✧ Circular (vritta), and
 - ✧ Octagonal (ashtasra).
- ❖ The choice of temple plan and vimana shape is influenced by the iconographic nature of the consecrated deity.

Pallavas: Pioneers of South Indian Architecture

- ❖ The Pallavas, active from the second century CE in the Andhra region, migrated south to Tamil Nadu, leaving a significant architectural legacy.
- ❖ Initially, **rock-cut structures** attributed to Mahendravarman I coexisted with **structural buildings**, showcasing early mastery in both forms.
- ❖ Narasimhavarman I, also known as Mamalla, ascended the Pallava throne around 640 CE, expanding the empire and initiating building works at Mahabalipuram.
- ❖ The **shore temple** at **Mahabalipuram** (Refer to Figure 9.14), possibly built in the reign of Narasimhavarman II (Rajasimha), presents **three shrines—two to Shiva and one to Vishnu (Anantashayana)**.
- ❖ The compound includes evidence of a water tank, early gopuram, and **sculptures of Nandi**, though erosion has affected some carvings.

Chola Dynasty: Architectural Marvels

- ❖ The **Rajarajeswara or Brihadishvara temple** (Refer to Figure 9.15), completed around 1009 CE by Rajaraja Chola, stands as the largest and tallest Indian temple.
- ❖ Characterized by a massive pyramidal vimana rising 70 meters, it features a monolithic octagonal dome-shaped stupika.
- ❖ Two large gopurams with intricate sculptural programs were conceived along with the temple.
- ❖ Chola temples, including Rajarajeswara, surpassed their predecessors in scale.
- ❖ The temple's sanctum houses a **two-storeyed lingam of Shiva**.
- ❖ Elaborate mythological narratives adorn the walls, depicted through painted murals and sculptures.

POINTS TO PONDER

Indian temple architecture is broadly classified as Nagara style and Dravida style which developed in North and South of India respectively. Can you list out the differences in these two styles? Also have you heard about the Amaravati style of temple architecture?



- ❖ Stucco figures on the vimana, while possibly added during the Maratha Period, contribute to the temple's grandeur.



Figure 9.15: Brihadishvara Temple (Nandi), Thanjavur

Architecture in the Deccan: Development of Vesara and Other Regional Styles

- ❖ The temple architecture in the Deccan region, particularly in **Karnataka**, exhibits a blend of North and South Indian influences.
- ❖ Scholars acknowledge a hybridized style called **vesara**, which emerged around the mid-seventh century, distinct from the nagara and Dravida styles.

Rashtrakutas and the Kailashnath Temple

- ❖ In the late seventh or early eighth century, the Rashtrakutas took control of the Deccan, showcasing grand architecture at Ellora.
- ❖ The **Kailashnath temple at Ellora** (Refer to Figure 9.16), dedicated to Shiva (with a Nandi shrine and a gopuram-like gateway, surrounding cloisters, subsidiary shrines, staircases and an imposing tower or vimana rising to thirty metres), is a complete dravida building carved entirely from living rock.
- ❖ One portion of the monolithic hill was carved patiently to build the Kailashnath temple.
- ❖ Rashtrakuta sculptures at Ellora display dynamism, grandeur, and overwhelming energy.

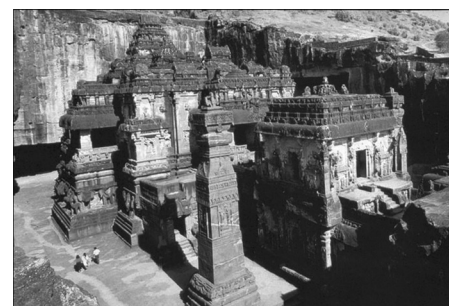


Figure 9.16: Kailashnath temple, Ellora

Chalukyan Legacy and Experimental Styles

- ❖ Pulakesin I founded the western Chalukya kingdom around Badami in 543 CE.
- ❖ The early western Chalukyas dominated most of the Deccan until the mid-eighth century, eventually succeeded by the Rashtrakutas.
- ❖ In Karnataka, the western Chalukyas blended various styles, leading to experimental hybrid **vesara architecture**.
- ❖ Early Chalukyan architectural activity included rock-cut caves, which evolved into structural temples (Refer to Figure 9.17).
- ❖ The **Ravana Phadi cave at Aihole** showcases a distinctive sculptural style, featuring a significant depiction of Nataraja surrounded by larger-than-life saptamatrikas, characterized by graceful, slim bodies and unique attire details.

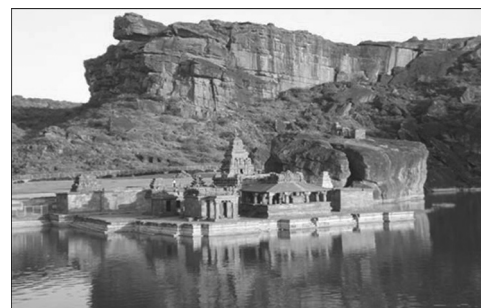


Figure 9.17: Temple, Badami

- ❖ Chalukyan buildings showcase a hybridization of styles, with the **Virupaksha temple at Pattadakal** being a notable example, exhibiting elaborate Dravida tradition.
- ❖ The **Papnath temple** at Pattadakal is dedicated to Lord Shiva and exemplifies the Dravida tradition.
- ❖ Eastern Chalukyan temples, like Mahakuta and Swarga Brahma temples, show the assimilation of northern styles from Odisha and Rajasthan.
- ❖ The **Durga temple at Aihole** (Refer to Figure 9.18) is unique with an early apsidal shrine reminiscent of Buddhist chaitya halls, surrounded by a later veranda with a stylistically nagara shikhara.
- ❖ The **Lad Khan temple at Aihole** in Karnataka is inspired by wooden-roofed hill temples but constructed entirely in stone.



Figure 9.18: (a) Durga temple, Aihole (b) Virupaksha temple, Pattadakal

Hoysalas and the Stellate-Plan Temples

- ❖ Hoysalas, succeeding the Cholas and Pandyas, became prominent patrons in South India.
- ❖ In the southern Deccan, approximately a hundred temples have been discovered, with the **Hoysaleswara temple** at Halebid, Karnataka, standing out among them.
- ❖ Constructed in 1150 CE by the Hoysala king using dark schist stone, it is one of the three most frequently discussed temples, alongside those at **Belur and Somnathpuram** (Refer to Figure 9.18).
- ❖ Temples at Belur, Halebidu, and Somnathpuram are characterized by **stellate-plan**, growing extremely complex with soapstone carvings, feature a unique vesara style, blending dravida and nagara elements.
- ❖ The **Halebidu temple**, dedicated to Shiva as Nataraja (refer to Figure 9.19), is a dual structure with a mandapa for music and dance, featuring intricate carvings of animals and deities.



Figure 9.18: (c) Somnathpuram temple



Figure 9.19: Nataraja, Halebidu

Vijayanagara Synthesis

- ❖ Founded in 1336 CE, Vijayanagara, the '**city of victory**,' drew international travelers like **Niccolo di Conti, Domingo Paes, Fernao Nuniz, Duarte Barbosa, and Abdur Razzaq Samarqandi**, who provided vivid accounts of the city.
- ❖ Additionally, Sanskrit and Telugu works attest to the vibrant literary tradition within this kingdom.
- ❖ Vijayanagara synthesized Dravida temple architecture with Islamic styles from neighboring sultanates.
- ❖ The ruins from the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries reflect a period of **cultural fusion**, wealth, and exploration.
- ❖ Vijayanagara's eclectic architecture embodies a synthesis of centuries-old traditions with occasional foreign influences.

Buddhist and Jain Architectural Developments

Pala Empire in Magadha

- ❖ The Gupta Empire's decline in the sixth century led to Rajput principalities in the west and the Pala Empire's rise in Magadha (Bihar and Bengal).
- ❖ Dharmapala, the second Pala ruler, established a powerful empire in the eighth century through victories over Rajput Pratiharas.
- ❖ Empire's wealth derived from agriculture in the fertile Ganges plain and international trade.

Bodhgaya and Mahabodhi Temple

- ❖ Bodhgaya, a pilgrimage site, holds significance as the place where Siddhartha achieved enlightenment.
- ❖ **Mahabodhi Temple at Bodhgaya** (Refer to Figure 9.20), initially built by King Ashoka, underwent modifications over time.
- ❖ The vedika around the shrine is said to be post-Mauryan, about 100 BCE.
- ❖ The current temple structure reflects the Colonial Period reconstruction of the original seventh-century design.
- ❖ The design of the temple is unusual. It is, strictly speaking, **neither Dravida nor Nagara**.
- ❖ It is narrow, like a Nagara temple, but it rises without curving, like a Dravida one.



Figure 9.20: Mahabodhi temple, Bodhgaya

Nalanda

- ❖ Nalanda, a **monastic university** (Refer to Figure 9.21), served as a center for Buddhist teachings, attracting scholars and pilgrims from various regions.
- ❖ It is a **mahavihara** as it is a complex of several monasteries of various sizes.
- ❖ Most information about Nalanda is derived from **Xuan Zang's (Hsuan-tsang)** records, indicating that Kumargupta I laid the monastery's foundation in the fifth century CE.

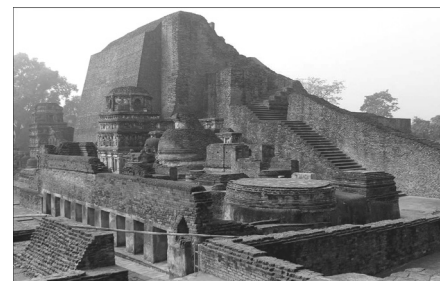


Figure 9.21: Nalanda University

- ❖ Subsequent monarchs developed it into a renowned university where all three Buddhist doctrines—**Theravada, Mahayana, and Vajrayana**—were taught.
- ❖ Monks from various regions, including China, Tibet, Central Asia, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Burma, and others, traveled to Nalanda for education, making it a prominent center for Buddhist learning.
- ❖ Sculptural art at Nalanda developed from Gupta traditions, showcasing a synthesis of local Bihar and central Indian influences.
- ❖ Nalanda sculptures, in **stucco, stone, and bronze**, depict Mahayana and Vajrayana deities, reflecting a shift in focus during the late eleventh and twelfth centuries.
- ❖ Nalanda sculptures, dating between the seventh and twelfth centuries, show distinctive facial features, **three-dimensional forms**, and detailed back slabs (Refer to Figure 9.22).



Sculptural details, Nalanda



Excavated site, Nalanda

Figure 9.22: Nalanda University

- ❖ The Nalanda bronzes, dating from the 7th to 12th centuries, form a significant collection of Pala Period metal sculptures, surpassing discoveries from other sites in eastern India.
- ❖ Initially influenced by **Sarnath and Mathura Gupta traditions**, these sculptures portray Mahayana Buddhist deities (such as standing Buddhas, bodhisattvas such as Manjusri Kumara, Avalokiteshvara seated on a lotus and Naga-Nagarjuna).
- ❖ In the late 11th and 12th centuries, Nalanda became a key tantric center, shifting focus to Vajrayana deities. **Crowned Buddha** depictions became common after the 10th century.
- ❖ Notably, Nalanda also features non-Sarnath-style Brahmanical images, some of which are still worshipped in nearby villages.
- ❖ **Sirpur in Chhattisgarh** (Refer to Figure 9.23) represents an early Odisha-style site with both Hindu and Buddhist shrines.
- ❖ Iconographic and stylistic elements in Buddhist sculptures at Sirpur are similar to those at Nalanda.
- ❖ **Nagapattinam**, a major Buddhist center until the Chola Period, reveals Chola influences in bronze and stone sculptures dating back to the tenth century.

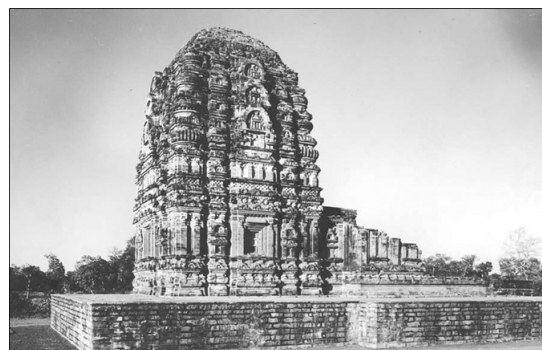


Figure 9.23: Lakshmana temple, Sirpur

Jain Architectural Legacy

- ❖ Jains, like Hindus, were prolific temple builders, with sacred sites found across India, except in the hills.
- ❖ Bihar hosts some of the oldest Jain pilgrimage sites, often associated with early Buddhist shrines.
- ❖ **Ellora and Aihole** in the Deccan feature architecturally significant Jain sites.
- ❖ Central Indian towns like **Deogarh, Khajuraho, Chanderi, and Gwalior** showcase exemplary Jain temples.
- ❖ Karnataka boasts a rich Jain heritage, with **Shravanabelagola** hosting the world's tallest monolithic free-standing structure—the statue of **Gomateshwara** (refer to Figure 9.24).
- ❖ **Jain temples at Mount Abu** (Refer to Figure 9.25), constructed by **Vimal Shah**, exhibit a simplistic exterior with rich sculptural decoration.
- ❖ **Shatrunjay Hills** near Palitana in Gujarat house an imposing cluster of Jain temples.

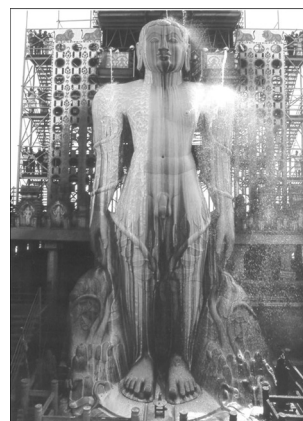


Figure 9.24: Lord Bahubali, Gomateshwara, Karnataka

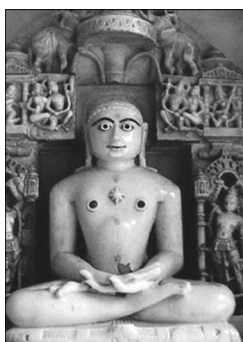


Figure 9.25: Jain Sculpture and Dilwara temple, Mount Abu

Challenges in Preservation

- ❖ Sculptures made of **silver and gold likely faced reuse** through melting.
- ❖ **Fragile sculptures** crafted from wood and ivory have perished over time.
- ❖ Many sculptures, including likely painted ones, faced challenges in **pigment preservation** over centuries.
- ❖ The rich tradition of painting during this period is evidenced by surviving murals in a few religious buildings.

Few Iconic Temple Architectures

Mahabalipuram

- ❖ Mahabalipuram is a coastal town with Pallava temples dating back to the seventh and eighth centuries.
- ❖ The **sculptural panel in Mahabalipuram is one of the world's largest and oldest**, measuring nearly 30 meters in length and 15 meters in height. (refer to Figure 9.26)
- ❖ Cleverly utilizing a natural cleft in the rock, sculptors created a water channel that flows down to a massive tank in front of the sculpted wall.

- ❖ Scholars offer **different interpretations of the panel**; some believe it represents the descent of the Ganga, while others associate it with Kiratarjuniya or Arjuna's penance, a work by the poet Bharvi.
- ❖ There is speculation that the entire tableau serves as a prashasti, praising the Pallava king, possibly seated in front of the sculpted backdrop.
- ❖ The relief prominently features a temple with ascetics and worshippers, along with an emaciated figure identified as either **Bhagirath or Arjuna engaged in penance**.
- ❖ **Shiva is depicted** with one hand in a boon-bestowing gesture, and a dwarf, possibly symbolizing the **powerful pashupata weapon**.
- ❖ The artistic style is characterized by slender, linear figures in animated movement, including naturalistically carved birds and animals, such as lifelike elephants.
- ❖ A **humorous element** is introduced with a cat standing on its hind legs, imitating Bhagirath or Arjuna, surrounded by rats—possibly a metaphor for undisturbed penance.
- ❖ The overall theme of the sculptural panel is richly detailed and symbolic, blending religious and poetic narratives, potentially serving as a tribute to the Pallava king.

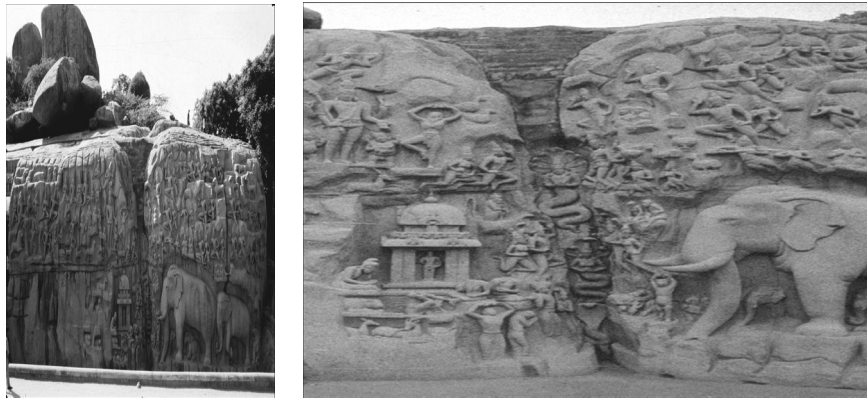


Figure 9.26: Sculptural panel in Mahabalipuram

Ravana Shaking Mount Kailasha

- ❖ Ravana shaking Mount Kailasha is depicted in **Ellora's Kailashnath temple (Cave No.16)**, dated to the eighth century.
- ❖ Colossal sculpture with **multi-faced, multi-armed Ravana** in the lower tier, showcasing ease in shaking the mount.
- ❖ **Three-dimensional space effect** achieved through detailed carvings of multiple hands.
- ❖ The upper half is divided into three frames, with the center featuring **Shiva and Parvati**; Parvati is portrayed with a dramatic light and shade effect, scared by the commotion.
- ❖ Pronounced volume in sculpture, attendant figures and gana (dwarf) figures in dynamic action.
- ❖ Celestial beings above Shiva and Parvati are frozen in movement.
- ❖ Protrusion of volume and recession in space are key features in Ellora cave images.
- ❖ Utilization of light and darkness to create full-round images, emphasizing slender torsos and slim arms.
- ❖ Attendant figures on the sides exhibit **angular frontality, contributing to structural harmony**.



Figure 9.27: Carvings on outer wall, Kailashnath temple, Ellora

Lakshmana Temple in Khajuraho

- ❖ Khajuraho temples, made of sandstone, were patronized by the **Chandella dynasty**.
- ❖ Lakshmana temple, representing the developed Chandella temple architecture, was completed in **954 CE by Yashovarman**.
- ❖ Temple plan is **panchayana** type with **ardhamandapa**, **mandapa**, **maha mandapa**, and garbhagriha with vimana.
- ❖ Constructed on a heavy plinth, each part has a separate roof rising backwards.
- ❖ Projected porches on halls' walls for light and ventilation are not accessible to visitors.
- ❖ Outer walls are adorned with sculptures, especially on garbhagriha and circumambulatory path.
- ❖ **Tall shikhara on garbhagriha**, known for **erotic sculptures**, many carved on the plinth wall.
- ❖ Tier arrangements on walls provide specific spaces for image placement.
- ❖ Interior halls were decorated profusely, entrance to garbhagriha was sculpted with voluminous pillars and lintels.
- ❖ **Chaturmukha Vishnu** image in the garbhagriha, four shrines in each corner, featuring Vishnu and Surya.
- ❖ Drapery and ornaments receive meticulous attention in the sculptures.

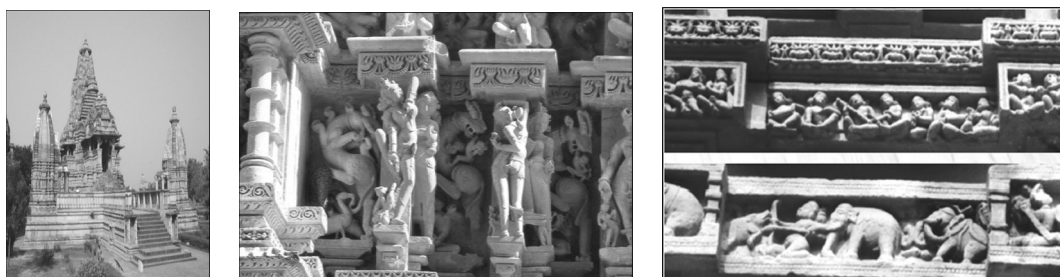


Figure 9.28: Lakshmana Temple

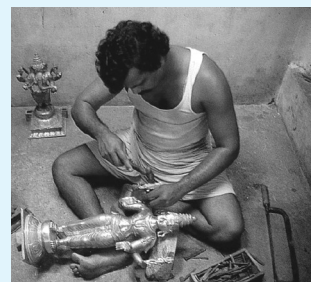
We have focussed on the dominant art styles and some of the most famous monuments from different parts of India in the medieval period. It is important to realise that the enormous artistic achievements that we have studied here would never have been possible if artists worked alone. These large projects would have brought architects, builders, sculptors and painters together. Apart from this, a large number of bronze sculptures have been found in the country. Let's learn about the bronze sculptures.

Indian Bronze Sculpture

- ❖ Indian sculptors demonstrated mastery in bronze medium and the **cire-perdu** or ‘lost-wax’ casting process.
- ❖ The knowledge of the ‘lost-wax’ process dates back to the Indus Valley Culture, along with the discovery of alloy-making using copper, zinc, and tin, resulting in bronze.
- ❖ Bronze sculptures and statuettes of Buddhist, Hindu, and Jain icons span from the second century to the sixteenth century.
- ❖ Beyond ritual worship, bronze was utilized for practical items such as utensils, showcasing the **versatility of the metal-casting process**.
- ❖ Present-day tribal communities continue to employ the ‘lost-wax’ process in their artistic expressions.

The Lost-wax Process

The lost-wax process is a technique used for **making objects of metal**, especially in Himachal Pradesh, Odisha, Bihar, Madhya Pradesh and West Bengal. In each region, a slightly different technique is used. The lost-wax process involves several different steps. First, a wax model of the image is made by hand of pure **beeswax** that has first been melted over an open fire, and then strained through a fine cloth into a basin of cold water. Here, it resolidifies immediately. It is then pressed through a **pichki or pharni** — which squeezes the wax into noodle-like shape.



These wax wires are then wound around to the shape of the entire image. The image is now covered with a thick **coating of paste, made of equal parts of clay, sand and cow-dung**. Into an opening on one side, a clay pot is fixed. In this molten metal is poured. The weight of the metal to be used is ten times that of wax. (The wax is weighed before starting the entire process.) This metal is largely scrap metal from broken pots and pans. While the molten metal is poured in the clay pot, the clay-plastered model is exposed to firing. As the wax inside melts, the metal flows down the channel and takes on the shape of the wax image. The firing process is carried out almost like a religious ritual and all the steps take place in dead silence. The image is later chiselled with files to smoothen it and give it a finish. Casting a bronze image is a painstaking task and demands a high degree of skill. Sometimes an alloy of five metals — gold, silver, copper, brass and lead — is used to cast bronze images.

Early Bronze Art

- ❖ The ‘**Dancing Girl**’ from Mohenjodaro, dating back to 2500 BCE, is perhaps the earliest bronze sculpture, characterized by simplified tubular forms.
- ❖ Similar **bronze statuettes from Daimabad (Maharashtra)** around 1500 BCE showcase unique representations, such as the ‘Chariot’ with elongated human figures and sturdy bulls.
- ❖ Jain Tirthankara images from Chausa, Bihar, dating to the Kushana Period in the second century CE, reveal the mastery of sculptors in modeling masculine physiques and simplifying muscles.
- ❖ Notable is the depiction of **Adinath or Vrishabh Nath** with long hairlocks, deviating from the usual short curly hair of Tirthankaras.
- ❖ Gujarat and Rajasthan, longstanding strongholds of Jainism, yielded significant Jain bronzes.
- ❖ A hoard of Jain bronzes found at Akota, near Baroda, dated between the end of the fifth and the end of the seventh century CE, exemplifies the intricacy achieved through the lost-wax process.



Figure 9.29: Kaliyadaman, Chola bronze, Tamil Nadu

Influence and Stylistic Features

- ❖ The **Akota hoard** established that bronze casting thrived in Gujarat or western India between the sixth and ninth centuries.
- ❖ **Jain Tirthankaras like Mahavira, Parshvanath, or Adinath** were common subjects, depicted in innovative formats, either single, combined in groups of three, or representing the full set of twenty-four Tirthankaras.
- ❖ Female images in bronze represented **Yakshinis or Shasanadevis** associated with prominent Tirthankaras.
- ❖ Stylistically, these bronzes from Akota reflected influences from both the Gupta and Vakataka period bronzes, showcasing a harmonious blend of artistic traditions.

Bronze Casting in Buddhist Centers

- ❖ During the rule of the Pala Dynasty in Bihar and Bengal (ninth century), a school of bronze casting emerged in Buddhist centers like Nalanda.
- ❖ Sculptors at Kurkihar near Nalanda successfully revived the classical style of the Gupta period, evident in bronzes like the four-armed Avalokitesvara.
- ❖ The growth of Vajrayana Buddhism is reflected in the popularity of images like **Tara, seated on a throne with a curvilinear lotus stalk and the right hand in abhaya mudra.**



Figure 9.30: Shiva Family, tenth century CE, Bihar

Bronze Sculptures in North India

- ❖ Many standing Buddha images with the right hand in abhaya mudra were cast in North India, specifically Uttar Pradesh and Bihar, during the Gupta and Post-Gupta periods (fifth to seventh centuries).
- ❖ The sculptors demonstrated mastery in depicting the sanghati, or monk's robe, showcasing refined classical styles.
- ❖ Bronze sculptures from **Dhanesar Khera, Uttar Pradesh**, exhibit **Mathura-style drapery folds**, while **Sarnath-style bronzes feature foldless drapery.**



Figure 9.31: Ganesh, Kashmir, seventh century CE

Bronze Art in Himachal Pradesh and Kashmir

- ❖ The eighth to tenth centuries witnessed the production of bronze images of Buddhist deities and Hindu gods/goddesses in Himachal Pradesh and Kashmir.
- ❖ Notably, the growth of different iconographies, including the worship of the **four-headed Vishnu, (Chaturanana or Vaikuntha Vishnu)** (Refer to Figure 9.32) showcased a distinct regional style. While the central face represents Vasudeva, the other two faces are those of **Narasimha and Varaha**.
- ❖ Dynamic bronze images from Himachal Pradesh depict the Narasimha avatar and **Mahishasuramardini Durga**, emphasizing dynamic and powerful portrayals.



Figure 9.32: Bronze sculpture, Himachal Pradesh

Bronze Sculptures in Central India

Vakataka bronze images from Phophnar, Maharashtra, during the Gupta period, show Amaravati style influences with unique draping styles.

Bronze Sculptures in South India

- ❖ South India, especially during the **Chola Period in Tamil Nadu** (tenth to twelfth centuries), witnessed the creation of beautiful and exquisite bronze statues.
- ❖ The widowed **Chola queen, Sembiyan Maha Devi**, was a distinguished patron during the tenth century. (Refer to Figure 9.33)



Figure 9.33: Devi, Chola bronze, Tamil Nadu



Figure 9.34: Nataraja, Chola period, twelfth century CE

- ❖ The iconography of Shiva in the eighth-century Pallava Period and the evolution of the dancing form of **Shiva as Nataraja** (Refer to Figure 9.34) fully developed during the Chola Period.
- ❖ The Thanjavur region showcased a wide range of Shiva iconography, including the ingeniously represented **Ardhanarisvara** murti depicting the **union of Shiva and Parvati**.
- ❖ The ninth-century **Kalyanasundara Murti** is highly remarkable for the manner in which Panigrahana (ceremony of marriage) is represented by two separate statuettes. Shiva, with his extended right hand, accepts Parvati's (the bride's) right hand, who is depicted with a bashful expression and taking a step forward.

Vijayanagar Period in Andhra Pradesh

- ❖ During the sixteenth century (Vijayanagar Period), sculptors experimented with portrait sculpture to preserve the likeness of royal patrons.
- ❖ Life-size standing portrait statues at **Tirupati depicted Krishnadevaraya with his queens**, showcasing both likeness and idealization in facial features and physical body modeling.
- ❖ The idealisation is further observed in the manner in which the physical body is modelled to appear imposing as well as graceful.
- ❖ The standing king and queens are depicted in praying posture, that is, both hands held in the **namaskara mudra**.



Figure 9.35: Among the Pallava Period bronzes of the eighth century is the icon of Shiva seated in ardhaparyanka asana (one leg kept dangling). The right hand is in the achamana mudra gesture, suggesting that he is about to drink poison.

Natraja

Shiva is associated with the end of the **cosmic world**, with which this dancing position is associated. In this Chola period bronze sculpture, he has been shown balancing himself on his right leg and suppressing the **apasmara**, the demon of ignorance or forgetfulness, with the foot of the same leg. At the same time, he raises his left leg in a **bhujangatrasita** stance, which represents tirobhava, that is kicking away the veil of maya or illusion from the devotee's mind. His four arms are outstretched and the main right hand is posed in abhaya hasta or the gesture suggesting. The upper right holds the damaru, his favourite musical instrument to keep on the beat tala. The upper left hand carries a flame while the main left hand is held in dola hasta and connects with the abhaya hasta of the right hand. His hair locks fly on both sides, touching the circular jvala mala, or the garland of flames, which surrounds the entire dancing figuration.



Conclusion

The diverse historical and architectural landscape of ancient Indian temples, their styles and features, and monasteries, from the Chola, Pala, Chalukyan and Hoysala periods to Nalanda and All the regions of India, reflects a process of cultural and religious evolution. The exploration of sites

highlights the dynamic intersections of art, and spirituality, providing glimpses into the vibrant civilizations that shaped the subcontinent during various epochs. From the early mastery of bronze casting techniques, evident in the 'Dancing Girl' from Mohenjodaro, to the refined classical styles of the Gupta and Post-Gupta periods in North India, the sculptures not only depict deities but also reflect the cultural nuances of their time. The versatility of bronze, used for both ritualistic purposes and daily utensils, underscores its significance in ancient Indian society. Thus, the journey through the rich heritage of Indian sculptural traditions spanning various regions and historical periods unveils a fascinating narrative of artistic evolution.

Glossary:

- **Mandapa:** Hall or pavilion in front of a temple, used for gatherings and rituals.
- **Shikhara:** Tower or spire, often the tallest part of a Hindu temple.
- **Garbhagriha:** Sanctum sanctorum, the innermost chamber of a temple housing the main deity.
- **Vimana:** Pyramid-shaped tower above the sanctum in Dravida-style temples.
- **Amalak:** Circular stone disk at the top of a temple's shikhara.
- **Kalash:** Decorative finial or pot-like structure often crowning the temple.
- **Nandi Pavilion:** Space housing a statue of Nandi, the sacred bull, usually positioned in front of the main temple.
- **Apsidal Shrine:** Semi-circular or apse-shaped shrine, resembling Buddhist chaitya halls.
- **Veranda:** Covered area or porch surrounding the main temple structure.
- **Colonnade:** An evenly spaced row of columns usually supporting the base of a roof structure.
- **Frieze:** Decorative band or horizontal sculpture on the exterior walls of a temple.
- **Vajrayana:** Tantric form of Buddhism, influencing iconography and sculptures in later periods.
- **Vajrasharada:** Tantric form of Saraswati, depicted in later bronze sculptures.
- **Theravada:** One of the earliest forms of Buddhism, influencing early Buddhist sculptures.
- **Mahayana Pantheon:** A diverse set of Buddhist deities and bodhisattvas, depicted in sculptures.
- **Bodhisattva:** Enlightened being on the path to Buddhahood, commonly portrayed in bronze.
- **Nataraja:** The iconic dancing form of Lord Shiva, is a common subject in bronze sculptures.
- **Linga:** Abstract representation of Lord Shiva, often depicted in bronze sculptures.
- **Khasarpana:** Deity often associated with fertility, represented in bronze sculptures.
- **Casting:** Process of creating bronze sculptures through the pouring of molten metal into molds.
- **Iconography:** Symbolic representation and interpretation of subjects in art, influencing bronze sculptures.





Some Aspects of Indo-Islamic Architecture

Bibliography: This chapter encompasses the summary of Chapter 8 of **Class XI** (An Introduction to Indian Art-I)

Introduction

Indo-Islamic architecture, a fusion of Indian and Islamic architectural styles, emerged prominently during the medieval period, reflecting the socio-political and cultural amalgamation of the two distinct civilizations. The study of this unique blend began in earnest during the 19th century, particularly under British colonial rule, when both British and Indian scholars began systematically documenting and exploring the vast array of architectural wonders.

Indo-Islamic architecture

- ❖ Islam arrived in India in the seventh and eighth centuries, it was brought by merchants, traders, holy men, and conquerors. By the 8th century CE, Islamic construction began in regions like Sindh and Gujarat. Large-scale building commenced in the early 13th century under the Delhi Sultanate following the Turkish conquest.
- ❖ **Fusion of Architectural Styles:** Muslim migrants integrated features of local Indian cultures with their own architectural practices. It resulted in a blend of structural techniques, shapes, and surface decorations, known as Indo-Saracenic or Indo-Islamic architecture.

Religious Influences on Architecture

- ❖ **Hindu Influence:** Hindus perceived multiple forms of god everywhere. It resulted in structures adorned with sculptures and paintings.
- ❖ **Muslim Influence:** Muslims believe in one god, with Muhammad as their Prophet. The Islamic prohibition on depicting living forms led to the development of **Arabesque method** (Ornamental design using intertwined flowing lines), **Geometrical patterns**, **Calligraphy** (Decorative handwriting or handwritten lettering on plaster and stone) etc.

POINTS TO PONDER

Do you think the fusion of Indian and Islamic architectural styles in Indo-Islamic architecture was primarily driven by artistic and aesthetic considerations, or did socio-political and cultural factors play a more significant role in shaping this unique blend?



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Architecture of Indo-Islamic Structures

- ❖ Over time, India witnessed the construction of various architectural structures catering to religious and secular needs.
- ❖ Key structures included daily **mosques, principal Jama Masjids, tombs, Sufi Islamic shrines** known as **Dargahs, tall Minars, Hammams or bathhouses, formal gardens, educational institutions called Madrasas**, resting places for travellers named Sarais or Caravansarais, and roadside distance markers termed Kos Minars.
- ❖ These edifices supplemented the already existing building types in the sub-continent.

Patrons of Architecture

Wealthy individuals, including rulers, nobles, their families, merchants, merchant guilds, the rural elite, and devotees of specific cults, primarily financed and influenced the major architectural ventures.

Factors determined Indo-Islamic Architecture

- ❖ While Indo-Islamic architecture did bear Saracenic, Persian, and Turkish influences, it was predominantly marked by Indian architectural and decorative forms.
- ❖ Factors such as the availability of materials, resource limitations, the skillset at hand, and the patrons' aesthetic preferences heavily influenced the design.
- ❖ Notably, despite the significant role of religion in medieval India, architectural elements were borrowed liberally, showcasing a blend of cultures and traditions.

Styles of Indo-Islamic Architecture

- ❖ Indo-Islamic architecture is traditionally segmented into specific styles for a nuanced understanding.
- ❖ **The Imperial Style** emerged during the Delhi Sultanate era.
- ❖ **The Provincial Style** is associated with regions like Mandu, Gujarat, Bengal, and Jaunpur.
- ❖ **The Mughal Style** is distinctively present in places such as Delhi, Agra, and Lahore.
- ❖ **The Deccani Style** is attributed to areas like Bijapur and Golconda.
- ❖ These categorizations allow for a clearer grasp of architectural specificities rather than placing them in fixed slots.

Architectural Influences

- ❖ Certain provincial styles in Indo-Islamic architecture, especially those from **Bengal and Jaunpur**, are recognised for their distinctiveness.
- ❖ Gujarat's architecture stands out due to its integration of **regional temple traditions**.
- ❖ Elements like ornamental gateways known as toranas, lintels in mihrabs, carvings of bell and chain motifs, and carved panels displaying trees are prevalent in tombs, mosques, and dargahs of the region.
- ❖ The 15th-century white marble dargah of **Shaikh Ahmad Khattu of Sarkhej in Gujarat** is a prime example of this provincial style and has profoundly influenced the design and decoration of Mughal tombs.

Decorative Forms in Indo-Islamic Architecture

- ❖ Indo-Islamic architectural decor is distinguished by a rich tapestry of designs and techniques that evolved through time. Techniques predominantly involved designing on plaster using methods such as **incision or stucco**, either leaving designs untouched or enhancing them with vibrant colours. Stone also became a canvas where motifs were either painted or carved.

- ❖ The motifs spanned a range of flowers, including those native to the subcontinent and foreign ones, especially from Iran.
- ❖ Notably, the lotus bud fringe was intricately positioned on the inner curves of the arches. Walls became canvases, displaying trees like **cypress and chinar**, and ornate flower vases. These complex floral motifs often mirrored those found on textiles and carpets.
- ❖ Between the 14th and 16th centuries, tiles became popular for decorating walls and domes, embracing hues of **blue, turquoise, green, and yellow**.
- ❖ **Decorative techniques, such as tessellation and pietra dura**, were introduced, sometimes even incorporating luxurious **lapis lazuli** into interior walls or canopies.
- ❖ Subsequently, the techniques of **tessellation (mosaic designs) and pietra dura** (Refer to figure 10.1) were used for surface decoration, particularly in the **dado panels** (Refer to figure 10.2) of the walls.



Figure 10.1: Pietra dura work, Agra



Figure 10.2: Dado panel on the wall, Agra

- ❖ Further enriching the decor were elements like **arabesque, calligraphy, diverse relief carvings**, and abundant use of lattice screens or jalis.
- ❖ **Trabeation** style includes the use of brackets, pillars, and lintels to support flat roofs or small domes.
- ❖ The design of arches transitioned over time, from simple structures to those ornate with trefoil by the 16th century.
- ❖ **Arcuate Form** includes **Voussoirs** (interlocking blocks used in constructing arches), **Keystone** (the central stone piece in an arch), Domes rested on pendentives and squinches, allowing for vast spaces free of pillars inside.
- ❖ Roofs often combine a central dome with surrounding smaller domes, pavilions, and minarets. The crowning touch to central domes was often an inverted lotus flower motif complemented by a metal or stone pinnacle.

Materials in Indo-Islamic Architecture

- ❖ In the field of Indo-Islamic architecture, the walls of buildings stood out for their significant thickness, primarily built using rubble masonry.
- ❖ These robust walls were then finely overlaid with **chunam**, which is limestone plaster, or adorned with dressed stone.
- ❖ The architecture saw the usage of a **rich palette of stones**, encompassing quartzite, sandstone, buff, and marble.
- ❖ Additionally, **polychrome tiles** were strategically used to elevate the aesthetics of the walls.

POINTS TO PONDER

How do you think the availability of local materials and the skills of artisans influenced the design and construction of Indo-Islamic architectural structures in medieval India, leading to a unique blend of Indian and Islamic architectural styles?



- ❖ By the onset of the 17th century, there was a marked transition to **brick construction**, conferring greater flexibility to the structures.
- ❖ This era also denoted a pronounced lean towards harnessing local materials.

Form of Indo-Islamic Architecture

Forts

- ❖ A Fort means any structure that is used or built for the purpose of defending a territory by repelling external attacks.
- ❖ During medieval times, monumental forts were not just architectural marvels but also signified the might and authority of a ruler.
- ❖ A fort's capture often meant the vanquishing of its ruler, causing a loss of sovereignty or a complete diminishment of power.
- ❖ These fortresses, representing the epitome of strategic and architectural genius, were often built on commanding heights, offering both a strategic vantage point and an awe-inspiring view.

Etymologically, the word “**fort**” is derived from the Latin root fortis or forte which means strong or firm. The indigenous word for “fort” is durg which is said to have been derived from the Sanskrit word durgam, meaning difficult.

Grand Forts of India

- ❖ **Chittorgarh:** Renowned as the largest fort in Asia and holds the record for the longest duration as a seat of power. It's rich with various structures, including victory **towers, or “stambhas”**, and numerous water bodies. Legends of heroism and valour are deeply interwoven with its history.
- ❖ **Golconda:** It is characterised by its concentric circle walls, requiring enemies to breach multiple barriers before accessing the core of the fort.
- ❖ **Daulatabad (formerly Devgiri):** Designed with multiple strategic elements like staggered entrances, making it hard for enemies to penetrate. It featured twin forts and a labyrinthine pathway designed to confound invaders. (Refer to figure 10.3)
- ❖ **Gwalior Fort:** Its sheer height made it nearly impregnable. Even Babur, the founder of the Mughal Empire, was said to be deeply impressed by its magnificence. (Refer to figure 10.4)
- ❖ Forts were not just defensive strongholds, but they were also residential and official complexes, designed to inspire awe and reverence. Intriguingly, within these palace complexes, there was a liberal absorption of various stylistic and decorative influences, showcasing the blend of cultures and architectural philosophies.



Figure 10.3: Daulatabad Fort

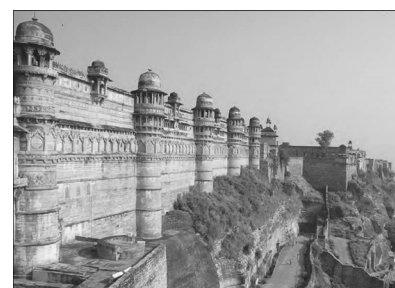


Figure 10.4: Gwalior Fort

Minars

- ❖ The minar is a mix of polygonal and circular shapes. It is largely built of red and buff sandstone with some use of marble in the upper storeys.
- ❖ While these towering structures served a religious function in broadcasting the **azaan, or call to prayer**, their imposing heights also echoed the might of the ruling class.

Minars

It is a derivatives of the term ‘stambha’ or tower, became distinctive features across the Indian sub-continent during mediaeval times.

Qutub Minar, Delhi

- ❖ The first floor was constructed by Qutbuddin Aybak in 1199, and the rest by Iltutmish around 1229. Over the years, it was damaged by lightning and earthquakes and repaired by Alauddin Khalji, Muhammad Tughluq, Firuz Shah Tughluq and Ibrahim Lodi. The Qutub Minar stands as a magnificent 234-foot-high tapering tower segmented into five storeys. (Refer to figure 10.5)
- ❖ Showcasing a blend of polygonal and cylindrical geometries, the structure predominantly uses red and buff sandstone, with marble accentuating the upper sections.
- ❖ Its renowned beauty is further accentuated by intricately adorned balconies and bands, where inscriptions intertwine gracefully with foliated patterns.
- ❖ Beyond its architectural marvel, the minar also commemorates the esteemed saint of Delhi, **Khwaja Qutbuddin Bakhtiyar Kaki**.



Figure 10.5: Qutub Minar, Delhi

Chand Minar, Daulatabad Fort

- ❖ Dating back to the 15th century, Chand Minar rivals in grandeur with a height of 210 feet, gracefully tapering over four storeys. (Refer to figure 10.6)
- ❖ Its current peach-colored façade was once embellished with chevron patterns formed by encaustic tile work and bold bands of Quranic verses.
- ❖ While its design might hint at Iranian influences, this towering edifice is the collaborative masterpiece of local craftsmen, along with architects from Delhi and Iran.



Figure 10.6: Chand Minar, Daulatabad

Tombs

Mediaeval India witnessed the grand tradition of constructing monumental tombs over the graves of esteemed rulers and royalty.

Prominent Tombs and their Significance

- ❖ Key tombs of this period include Ghyasuddin Tughlaq, Humayun, Abdur Rahim Khan-i-Khanan in Delhi, and Akbar and Itmaduddaula in Agra. (Refer to figure 10.7)
- ❖ **Conceptual Inspiration:** According to scholar Anthony Welch, the principal idea driving these tomb constructions pivoted around the promise of eternal paradise for the true believer during the Day of Judgement.



Figure 10.7: Tomb of Itmaduddaula, Agra

Design Elements Reflecting Paradise

- ❖ **Quranic Verses:** Initially, the walls of these tombs featured Quranic verses, symbolising religious reverence.
- ❖ **Paradisiacal Elements:** Over time, tombs incorporated elements evoking paradise. Notable examples like Humayun's tomb and the iconic Taj Mahal exemplify the charbagh style, where the tomb is surrounded by structured gardens or positioned near water bodies, often combining both elements.
- ❖ The intricate designs and expansive landscapes surrounding these tombs were not just spiritual symbols representing peace and happiness in the afterlife. They also functioned as testamentary edifices, radiating the might, grandeur, and legacy of the individuals interred within.

Sarais

- ❖ These were small **resting places**, with their straightforward square or rectangular designs, that encircled urban areas and punctuated the vastness of the subcontinent.
- ❖ Designed to cater to a wide array of individuals, from domestic and international travelers to pilgrims and merchants, they weren't just mere structures for accommodation. Their significance extended much beyond.
- ❖ These vibrant public spaces, brimming with people from various cultural backgrounds, became hubs of cross-cultural exchanges.
- ❖ The bustling nature of Sarais allowed people of different origins and cultures to mingle, leading to a blending of cultural norms. This emergence of shared or syncretic practices among the populace showcased the Sarais' pivotal role in shaping the cultural tapestry of the era.
- ❖ Through them, medieval India witnessed a harmonious confluence, fostering unity and mutual appreciation among its diverse inhabitants.

Structures for Common People

- ❖ Mediaeval Indian architecture witnessed a confluence of styles, techniques, and motifs.
- ❖ This fusion was not confined to grand royal structures but was prominently visible in spaces used by the non-royal sections of society.
- ❖ These included buildings for domestic usage, temples, mosques, khanqahs and dargahs, commemorative gateways, pavilions in buildings and gardens, bazaars, etc.

Jama Masjid

- ❖ Large mosques, or Jama Masjids, became central fixtures in the urban fabric of medieval India. More than just religious sites, these structures played multifaceted roles. (Refer to figure 10.8)

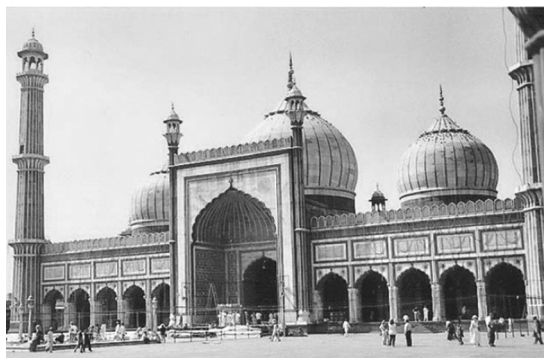


Figure 10.8: Jama Masjid Delhi

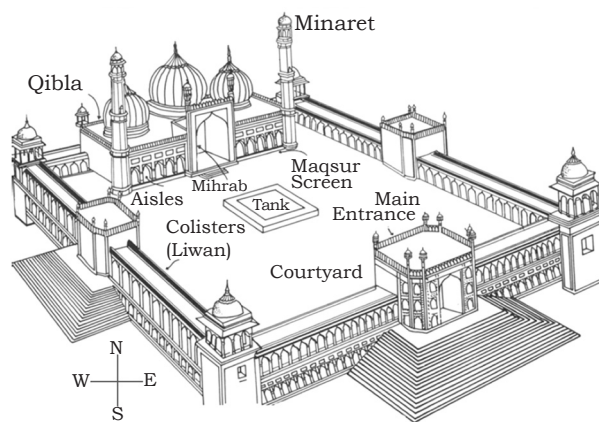


Figure 10.9: Plan of Jama Masjid

- ❖ Every Friday, they teemed with life as congregational prayers were held.
- ❖ Essential to these gatherings was the **Khutba**, where, apart from religious teachings, the ruler's laws were announced.
- ❖ Interestingly, a city typically has one Jama Masjid, making it a nexus of both religious and social activities.
- ❖ It was not only Muslims but also non-Muslims who thrived in the vibrant surroundings of the Jama Masjid, partaking in commercial and cultural exchanges.

- ❖ Architecturally, these mosques were expansive with open courtyards. On three sides, cloisters would frame the space, while the Qibla Liwan occupied the western side. (Refer to figure 10.9)
- ❖ It was here that the essential mihrab, indicating the direction of the sacred Kaaba in Mecca, was found, guiding worshippers during their prayers.

Some Examples of Indo-Islamic Architecture

Mandu

Mandu, which is about 2,000 feet above sea level, is a testament to India's rich architectural heritage. It strategically located the **Malwa Plateau** to the north and the verdant Narmada Valley to the south.

Historical Significance and Inhabitants

- ❖ Mandu witnessed varied cultural influences, with **Parmara Rajputs, Afghans, and Mughals** finding solace in its natural fortifications.
- ❖ It garnered immense fame as the capital of the **Ghauri Dynasty under Hoshang Shah**.
- ❖ The city is also steeped in romance, echoing tales of **Sultan Baz Bahadur and Rani Rupmati**, and was a preferred retreat for Mughals during monsoon.

Architectural Marvel

- ❖ Mandu stands as a prime representation of medieval provincial art and architecture. It beautifully amalgamates, official and residential palaces, pleasure pavilions, mosques, artificial reservoirs and baolis embattlements.
- ❖ Despite their monumentality, the structures, designed as arched pavilions, are airy and cool. The adept use of local stone and marble further emphasises Mandu's architectural affinity to its environment.

Structural Feature of Mandu

- ❖ **Royal Enclave:** A romantic collection of structures enveloping two artificial lakes.
- ❖ **Hindola Mahal:** Its buttressed design resembles a railway viaduct bridge. The sultan greeted his subjects here. (Refer to figure 10.10)
- ❖ **Jahaz Mahal:** A graceful 'ship-palace' crafted by Sultan **Ghiyasuddin Khilji**, featuring open pavilions and a terrace swimming pool. (Refer to figure 10.11)



Figure 10.10: Hindola Mahal



Figure 10.11: Jahaaz Mahal, Mandu

- ❖ **Rani Rupmati Pavilion:** It offers panoramic views of the Narmada Valley.
- ❖ **Baz Bahadur's Palace:** It encompasses a grand courtyard surrounded by halls and terraces.
- ❖ **Hoshang Shah's Tomb:** It exhibits Afghan robustness, complemented by delicate lattice work and toranas. (Refer to figure 10.12)

- ❖ **Jama Masjid:** Built for mass Friday prayers, it showcases red sandstone, an imposing gateway, and intricately carved brackets in the mimbar. (Refer to figure 10.13)

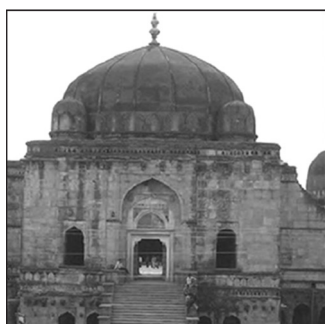


Figure 10.12: Hoshang Shah's tomb



Figure 10.13: Jama Masjid, Mandu

Legacy in the Architectural Narrative

- ❖ While Mandu's architecture closely mirrors Imperial Delhi, it uniquely interpolates robust Pathan aesthetics with intricate surface details. This balance contributes significantly to the discourse on Indo-Islamic architectural evolution.

Taj Mahal

- ❖ Taj Mahal was constructed by **Shah Jahan** in memory of his cherished wife, **Mumtaz Mahal**, the Taj Mahal is not only an emblem of enduring love but also signifies the zenith of Mughal architectural evolution in Agra, India. (Refer to figure 10.14)

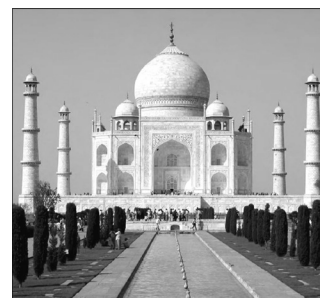


Figure 10.14: Taj Mahal

Aesthetics of the Taj Mahal

- ❖ Its structured, simplistic plan is coupled with an impressive elevation.
- ❖ Exceptional symmetry and perfect proportions create visual harmony.
- ❖ The ethereal luminance of the marble bestows upon it an otherworldly glow.
- ❖ The strategic backdrop of the encompassing garden (bagh) and the calm river.
- ❖ Its unique patina allows the monument to shimmer in varying hues at different times of the day and night.

Structural Design and Layout

- ❖ **Entrance:** Visitors are greeted by a monumental red sandstone gateway, through which the mausoleum is beautifully framed. (Refer to figure 10.15)
- ❖ **Chahar Bagh Setting:** The Taj is nestled within a meticulously designed garden split by paths and waterways, adorned with serene pools and lively fountains.
- ❖ **Riverside Placement:** Unlike typical central placements, the tomb benefits from its location at the garden's northern extremity, offering an unrivaled view of the river bank.

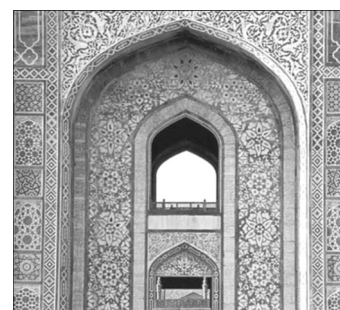


Figure 10.15: Entrance of Taj Mahal

Key Architectural Highlights

- ❖ **Minarets:** Cornering the terrace are four elegant minarets, each soaring to a height of 132 feet. (Refer to figure 10.16)
- ❖ **Dome and Cupolas:** The majestic central dome, surrounded by four smaller cupolas, crafts an enchanting skyline.
- ❖ **Balanced Proportions:** Every element, from the plinth, walls to the drum-dome, is in symmetrical harmony.
- ❖ **Complementary Structures:** A mosque made of red sandstone lies to the west, balanced by a parallel structure to the east, preserving the monument's symmetry.
- ❖ **Choice of Materials:** The pristine white marble, sourced from **Rajasthan's Makrana mines**, juxtaposes beautifully against the surrounding red sandstone structures.

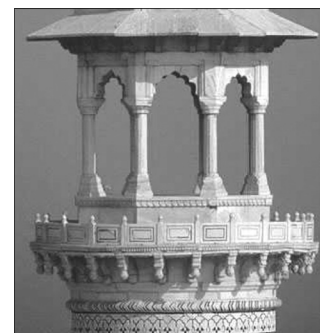


Figure 10.16: Minarets

Tomb's Design

- ❖ **Shape & Shadow Play:** The tomb exhibits a unique chamfered square formation, creating eight distinct sides. The deep arches and facets produce dynamic contrasts of light and shadow.
- ❖ **Measurements:** Both horizontal spans from floor to roof and vertically from roof to the pinnacle measure an identical 186 feet.

Interior Architecture

- ❖ **Spatial Layout:** Beneath lies a crypt, with an octagonal tomb chamber above. This is flanked by rooms at each angle, all interconnected via corridors.
- ❖ **Luminance:** The interior is bathed in natural light filtering through intricately carved and perforated jalis.
- ❖ **Spatial Grandeur:** A high ceiling, matching the façade's height, crafts a spacious feel, enhanced by the innovative double dome construction.

Masterful Decorations

- ❖ **Stone Artistry:** The walls are graced with exquisite stone carvings, both in pronounced and subtle relief. (Refer to figure 10.17)
- ❖ **Marble Mastery:** The structure flaunts intricate jali work and elegant volutes on its pillars.
- ❖ **Pietra Dura Technique:** Walls and tombstones are adorned with arabesques made from yellow marble, jade, and jasper. (Refer to figure 10.18)
- ❖ **Sacred Calligraphy:** The art of calligraphy, employing jasper inlaid into white marble, decorates the walls with Quranic verses. Beyond mere decoration, this calligraphy fosters a continuous spiritual connection with the divine. (Refer to figure 10.19)



Figure 10.17: Stone Artistry



Figure 10.18: Pietra Dura



Figure 10.19: Sacred Calligraphy

Gol Gumbad

- ❖ Gol Gumbad stands as an epitome of architectural magnificence from the **Adil Shahi Dynasty**, elegantly merging various medieval Indian styles and providing a unique space for both historical and architectural enthusiasts. (Refer to figure 10.20)
- ❖ Gumbad is situated in Bijapur in the Bijapur District of Karnataka.

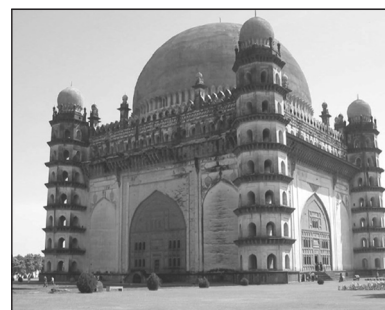


Figure 10.20: Gol Gumbad

Historical Context

- ❖ It was built as the burial place of Muhammad Adil Shah, the seventh Sultan of **the Adil Shahi Dynasty (1626–1656)**.
- ❖ This monumental edifice reflects the architectural legacy of the Adil Shahi Dynasty which ruled Bijapur between 1489 and 1686.

Architectural Splendour

- ❖ **Gumbad Complex:** Beyond the primary tomb, the complex is inclusive of a gateway, a **Naqqar Khana** (a ceremonial drum house), a mosque, and a sarai. All these are nestled within an expansive walled garden.

Structural Features

- ❖ Built using robust dark gray basalt combined with ornate plasterwork.
- ❖ The square building culminates in a grand dome, rising over 200 feet in total height, with walls each measuring 135 feet in length, 110 feet in height, and 10 feet in thickness.
- ❖ The dome alone, with its impressive diameter of 125 feet, covers a vast 18,337 sq. feet, making it the second-largest in the world.

Tomb's Inner Sanctum

- ❖ **Royal Resting Place:** The tomb chamber houses the memorials of the Sultan, his wives, and close relatives. However, their actual graves are discreetly located below in a basement chamber, accessible through stairs.
- ❖ **Structural Mastery:** Achieving the vast dome over a square base required ingenious techniques. Pendentives played a dual role, providing the dome with its shape and distributing its weight to the walls. This mastery was further emphasized by the innovative use of arch-nets and stellate squinches for spanning intersecting arches.

Acoustic and Aesthetic Innovations

- ❖ **Sound Dynamics:** The whispering gallery, an acoustic marvel along the dome's drum, can magnify and echo sounds repeatedly. (Refer to figure 10.21)
- ❖ **Elevated Design:** Four seven-storeyed octagonal spires, mimicking minarets, grace each corner of the Gumbad. These towers house staircases, providing access to the topmost section of the dome.
- ❖ **Visual Treats:** The drum of the dome is embellished with fine foliation. Additionally, the facade features a pronounced bracketed cornice, resting elegantly on corbels. (Refer to figure 10.22)



Figure 10.21: Whisper Gallery

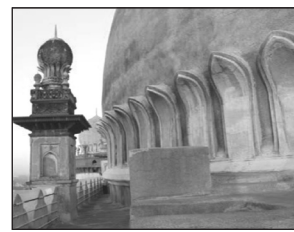


Figure 10.22: Drum of the Dome

Confluence of Architectural Styles

- ❖ Gumbad is a hallmark of Bijapur's monumentality, majesty, and grandeur; it seamlessly integrates elements from diverse architectural heritages.
- ❖ Timurid and Persian influences are evident in its domes, arches, and geometric emphasis.
- ❖ Local materials blend with popular embellishments from the Deccan.
- ❖ The corner towers draw parallels with turrets seen in renowned structures like Delhi's Qila-i Kuhna Masjid and the Purana Qila.

Conclusion

The rich history of Indo-Islamic architecture stands as a testament to India's composite cultural heritage. While Western and Far Eastern art histories have their distinct narratives, the Indo-Islamic architectural tradition in India uniquely intertwines the aesthetics and methodologies of two great civilizations. The rigorous documentation and exploration of this style not only highlight the magnificence of India's past but also underscore the importance of preserving and studying this blend of architectural genius in academic circles today.

Glossary:

- **Taj Mahal:** A white marble mausoleum built by the Mughal emperor Shah Jahan in Agra, India, in memory of his wife Mumtaz Mahal.
- **Chahar Bagh:** A Persian-style garden layout divided into four equal sections, symbolizing the Islamic concept of paradise.
- **Makrana:** A type of high-quality white marble sourced from mines in Rajasthan, used extensively in the Taj Mahal.
- **Pietra Dura:** A decorative art using cut and fitted, highly polished colored stones to create images, often used in Mughal architecture.
- **Gol Gumbad:** Located in Bijapur, Karnataka, it is the mausoleum of Muhammad Adil Shah and is notable for its massive dome.
- **Bijapur:** A city in the state of Karnataka, India, known for its medieval monuments, especially those from the Adil Shahi dynasty.
- **Pendentives:** Architectural devices in domed buildings that allow for a circular dome to be placed over a square room or space.
- **Squinches:** Architectural features used to transition from a square room below to a circular dome above.
- **Indo-Islamic Architecture:** An architectural style that combines elements from Indian and Islamic traditions, prominent during the medieval period in India.
- **Archaeological Explorations:** Systematic studies and investigations of ancient sites to discover more about historical cultures and civilizations.
- **Art-Historical Sites:** Sites that hold significant importance in the study of the history of art, including architecture, sculpture, and painting.
- **Icon:** A religious work of art, most commonly a painting, used in the context of our conversation to describe sculptures and paintings of religious significance.

