



ARULMIGU PALANIANDAVR ARTS COLLEGE FOR WOMEN

(Autonomous)

(Re-Accredited with 'B⁺⁺' Grade by NAAC 3rd Cycle)

Run by Arulmigu Dhandayuthapani Swamy Thirukoil, H.R & C.E Dept. Government of Tamil Nadu

A Government Aided College - Affiliated to Mother Teresa Women's University, Kodaikanal

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LEARNING RESOURCES

ART AND ARCHITECTURE

PREPARED

BY

PG & RESEARCH DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY



Descriptive Answers

Indian art dates back to the 3rd millennium BC. According to history records, the origin of Indian art can be traced to prehistoric settlements. Historians and those who study art will agree that Indian art forms and the Indian traditional artwork have borrowed influences from multiple sources. Taking a trip down memory lane, it is good to note that dynasties from various religions ruled India. Additionally, India is a land of diversity. Thus, the various Indian art forms have religious influences in their artwork. It is no surprise that the various famous Indian paintings have either a mild or heavy religious influence. Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism, Sikhism and Islam have influenced artwork labelled famous Indian paintings.

Indian art forms

A variety of art forms, including painting, sculpture, pottery, and textile arts such as woven silk, are Indian art forms. In the 3rd millennium BC, the entire Indian subcontinent included the present-day countries, including Pakistan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Nepal, and a section of eastern Afghanistan. The various Indian traditional artwork has a strong sense of design, which is appreciated even in the modern era. Several famous Indian paintings and many Indian art forms have stood the test of time.

Take, for example, the sculpture works. Sculpture work was primarily done on metals and stone. Several sculpture pieces that reflect Indian traditional artwork have stood the test of time, despite being exposed to a range of climatic conditions, which are still famous today. Also equally famous and talked about are the famous Indian paintings. Tanjore art, a part of the south Indian traditional paintings, is globally famous.



Superior painting tools and techniques were developed and used by Indus Valley civilization artists

It is interesting to note that the ancient paintings' subject and theme were very minimal and basic. The ancient rock paintings and the murals are proof of this. However, during the Indus valley civilization, when the natives of the land were believed to have progressed leaps and bounds, Indian art forms and traditional Indian artwork also developed. Superior painting tools and techniques were developed and used. According to history records, the artists of the Indus valley civilization would paint what they saw. From landscapes to hunting parties to people dancing, sunrise and sunset, the artisans of the Indus valley civilization painted them all. It is believed that artists began painting and sculpting their deities during this time. Some of the famous Indian paintings date back to this bygone era.

Indian traditional artwork began to draw influence from religion and region

In the eras that followed and in the contemporary era, Indian traditional artwork and the various Indian art forms drew influences from their region of origin and religion. This is precisely why famous Indian paintings can be classified based on the region from where they originated. Few of the famous Indian paintings do have religious influence.



Paintings hold a special place in the history of Indian traditional artwork

Paintings hold a special place in Indian traditional artwork. The history of the different paintings is educational, and it makes an interesting read. Initially, the artists of the prehistoric era used tools that were available to them back then. Artists used tools like wooden sticks made of raw materials like tree branches. Additionally, bones and animal hair were also used to make paintbrushes. Paintings were done in caves then. Blood, charcoal mixed with oil, extracted from roots and leaves doubled up as paint.

As time progressed, so did the painting techniques and styles

As time progressed, so did the Indian traditional artwork, especially the traditional paintings of India. The paintings of the Mughal era were done on paper. Artists used fine paint brushes and pens. Pattachitra is a famous cloth-based scroll form of painting. Palm leaves were also used to paint. Images of gods and goddesses were painted on palm leaves. It required skilled hands to do so. Very fine paintbrushes and permanent colors were used.

Tanjore art and Tanjore paintings are famous globally

Tanjore art, a part of south Indian traditional paintings, is popular worldwide. Tanjore paintings are famous Indian paintings that use a foil made of gold, precious and semi-precious stones. Tanjore art is done on media like walls, wooden panels, glass and paper. Tanjore paintings are usually done on a canvas mounted on a wooden plank. Some Tanjore artwork also could be made of mica and ivory.

Classifying famous Indian paintings based on theme and techniques

By classifying the Indian paintings based on themes and techniques, we understand famous Indian paintings. Here's looking at a famous Indian traditional artwork from the south and one from north India.



Madhubani paintings

Of all the traditional paintings of India, the Madhubani paintings hold a special place, so much so that several Madhubani paintings are regarded as famous Indian paintings. The Madhubani traditional paintings of India originated from the Mithila region in Bihar, so the famous Indian paintings of this form are also known as Mithila paintings. The form of painting is still practiced in the pockets of Bihar.


Interesting facts about Mithila paintings or the Madhubani paintings

- If observations made by historians are to be believed, Madhubani paintings came into being when Lord Rama and Sita tied a nuptial knot.
- In a bid to prevent trees from being felled, artists in the Madhubani painting style painted images of gods and goddesses on trees. In 2012 the BBC newspaper published a story on the initiative.
- Initially, Madhubani paintings were done on mud walls of homes. They are created on canvases, cushions, paper, or even clothes in the modern-day. Madhubani artwork has made it to utensils and even bangles.
- Divinities were, are and will continue to be the theme of this Indian traditional artwork.



Tanjore paintings

A mention of south Indian traditional paintings is incomplete without describing the Tanjore paintings from the Tanjore art. Tanjore paintings have made it to the list of famous Indian paintings. These south Indian traditional paintings and the form of classical south Indian painting style are believed to have been inaugurated from the town of Thanjavur, which is known as Tanjore. The Indian traditional artwork thrived in 1600 AD when the Nayakas of



Thanjavur were ruled by the Vijayanagara Rayas, who encouraged art, primarily classical dance and music, besides encouraging vernacular literature and paintings.

Why have Tanjore paintings made it to the list of famous Indian paintings?

Bright, rich, vivid colors, simple iconic composition, glittering gold foils that are neatly placed on delicate but extensive gesso work and usage of glass beads and pieces or very rarely precious and semi-precious gems, a Tanjore painting has it all. In the ancient days, Tanjore art decorated the palaces of the kings, and in the modern-day, Tanjore south Indian traditional paintings can be found in the homes and offices of people.

How are Tanjore paintings made?

In the past and even today, a Tanjore painting can be made in almost any size, depending on the choice of subject and patron.

Tanjore painting, a form of Tanjore art, is made on a canvas mounted on wood. The canvas is a cloth neatly mounted on a plank of wood. Special glue is used to keep together the wood and canvas.

Once the glue is dried, the painting is ready to be created. Next, the artist begins to trace the image on the canvas. A stencil is used for the process. A unique binding medium creates the gesso work after the subject(s) are drawn on the canvas. Selected areas are highlighted using 22-carat gold foil. Precious and semi-precious stones are also used. Tanjore paintings always use bright hues.

Quick facts about Tanjore art and Tanjore paintings

- Tanjore painting is the only form of painting that uses gesso. A section of the portion of the subjects in the painting is elevated.
- The Government Museum, Chennai and the Thanjavur Art Gallery, Thanjavur, are home to one of the finest collections of Thanjavur paintings. The paintings depict the Maratha kings of Thanjavur and the like.
- In the past, artists' used natural elements to add color to the Tanjore paintings. However, in the modern day, artists use paints laced with chemicals as this doubles up as a cost-effective solution.

- Tanjore paintings are known to portray subjects in a typical composition. The figures are primarily round-shaped, and the eyes are almond-shaped. The primary subject occupies a significant portion of the painting.
- A few museums in England have an extensive collection of Thanjavur paintings on display. 17th century Thanjavur paintings can be found at the National Museum of Copenhagen.
- Tanjore art, one of the most famous Indian art forms, has stood the test of time.

Where to purchase a Tanjore painting?

If you wish to purchase and own one of the famous Indian paintings, you can purchase a Tanjore painting. There are many places where you can purchase one. We recommend purchasing your most cherished Tanjore painting from Mangala Tanjore Paintings. The art gallery located in Coimbatore has a range of Tanjore paintings, and at the art gallery, there is one for everyone. If you wish to gift a Tanjore artwork to your family or friend, you can have it delivered to their doorstep. If you cannot visit the art gallery in person, you can visit their website to purchase.

Prehistoric art

In the history of art, **prehistoric art** is all art produced in preliterate, prehistorical cultures beginning somewhere in very late geological history, and generally continuing until that culture either develops writing or other methods of record-keeping, or makes significant contact with another culture that has, and that makes some record of major historical events. At this point ancient art begins, for the older literate cultures. The end-date for what is covered by the term thus varies greatly between different parts of the world.

Prehistoric art



Prehistoric painting of rhinoceroses in the Chauvet Cave, France, dated circa 35,000 BP



The Venus of Brassempouy, dated circa 25,000 BP. France

The earliest human artifacts showing evidence of workmanship with an artistic purpose are the subject of some debate. It is clear that such workmanship existed 40,000 years ago in the Upper Paleolithic era, although it is quite possible that it began earlier. In September 2018, scientists reported the discovery of the earliest known drawing by *Homo sapiens*, which is estimated to be 73,000 years old, much earlier than the 43,000 years old artifacts understood to be the earliest known modern human drawings found previously. Engraved shells created by *Homo erectus* dating as far back as 500,000 years ago[3] have been found, although experts disagree on whether these engravings can be properly classified as 'art'. From the Upper Paleolithic through to the Mesolithic, cave paintings and portable art such as figurines and beads predominated, with decorative figured workings also seen on some utilitarian objects. In the Neolithic evidence of early pottery appeared, as did sculpture and the construction of megaliths. Early rock art also first appeared during this period. The advent of metalworking in the Bronze Age brought additional media available for use in making art, an increase in stylistic diversity, and the creation of objects that did not have any obvious function other than art. It also saw the development in some areas of artisans, a class of people specializing in the production of art, as well as early writing systems. By the Iron Age, civilizations with writing had arisen from Ancient Egypt to Ancient China. Many indigenous peoples from around the world continued to produce artistic works distinctive to their geographic area and culture, until exploration and commerce brought record-keeping methods to them. Some cultures, notably the Maya civilization, independently developed writing during the time they flourished, which was then later lost. These cultures may be classified as prehistoric, especially if their writing systems have not been deciphered.

Paleolithic era

Pseudodon shell DUB1006-fL with the earliest known geometric engravings, supposedly, made by *Homo erectus*; ca. 500,000 BP; from Trinil (Java); Naturalis Biodiversity Center (Netherlands)

The earliest undisputed art originated with the *Homo sapiens* Aurignacian archaeological culture in the Upper Paleolithic. However, there is some evidence that the preference for the aesthetic emerged in the Middle Paleolithic, from 100,000 to 50,000 years ago. Some archaeologists have interpreted certain Middle Paleolithic artifacts as early examples of artistic expression. The symmetry of artifacts, evidence of attention to the detail of tool shape, has led some investigators to conceive of Acheulean hand axes and especially laurel points as having been produced with a degree of artistic expression.

Similarly, a zigzag engraving supposedly made with a shark tooth on a freshwater Pseudodon shell DUB1006-fL around 500,000 years ago (i.e. well into the Lower Paleolithic), associated with *Homo erectus*, could be the earliest evidence of artistic activity, but the actual intent behind this geometric ornament is not known.



Claimed "Oldest known drawing by human hands", discovered in Blombos Cave in South Africa. Estimated to be 73,000 years old.

There are other claims of Middle Paleolithic sculpture, dubbed the "Venus of Tan-Tan" (before 300 kya)[8] and the "Venus of Berekhat Ram" (250 kya). In 2002 in Blombos cave, situated in South Africa, stones were discovered engraved with grid or cross-hatch patterns, dated to some 70,000 years ago. This suggested to some researchers that early *Homo sapiens* were capable of abstraction and production of abstract art or symbolic art. Several archaeologists including Richard Klein are hesitant to accept the Blombos caves as the first example of actual art.

In September 2018 the discovery in South Africa of the earliest known drawing by *Homo sapiens* was announced, which is estimated to be 73,000 years old, much earlier than the 43,000 years old artifacts understood to be the earliest known modern human drawings found previously. The drawing shows a crosshatched pattern made up of nine fine lines. The sudden termination of all of the lines on the fragment edges indicate that the pattern originally extended

over a larger surface. It is also estimated that the pattern was most likely more complex and structured in its entirety than shown on the discovered area. Initially, when this drawing was found, there was much debate. To prove that this drawing was created by Homo Sapiens, French team members who specialized in chemical analysis of pigments, reproduced the same lines using a variety of techniques. They concluded that the lines making up the drawing were intentional and were most likely made with ochre. This discovery adds further dimensions to understanding the behavior and cognition of early homo sapiens.

Neanderthals may have made art. Painted designs in the caves of La Pasiega (Cantabria), a handstencil in Maltravieso (Extremadura), and red-painted speleothems in Ardales (Andalusia) are dated to 64,800 years ago, predating by at least 20,000 years the arrival of modern humans in Europe. In July 2021, scientists reported the discovery of a bone carving, one of the world's oldest works of art, made by Neanderthals about 51,000 years ago.

Upper Paleolithic Edit

Main article: Art of the Upper Paleolithic



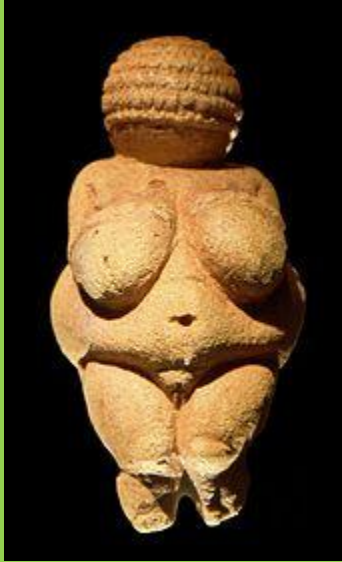
* (Left) Probably the oldest known painting, from the cave of Lubang Jeriji Saléh on the Indonesian island of Borneo, c. 40,000 BC

- (Right) Giant deer bone of Einhornhöhle, Germany, c. 49,000 BC

In November 2018, scientists reported the discovery of the oldest known figurative art painting, over 40,000 (perhaps as old as 52,000) years old, of an unknown animal, in the cave of Lubang Jeriji Saléh on the Indonesian island of Borneo, while in 2020 a Megaloceros bone was found

in the Harz mountains in Germany, on which specimens of Homo neanderthalensis carved ornaments 51,000 years ago.

The oldest undisputed works of figurative art were found in the Schwäbische Alb, Baden-Württemberg, Germany. The earliest of these, the Venus figurine known as the Venus of Hohle Fels and the Lion-man figurine, date to some 40,000 years ago.



The Venus of Willendorf

Further depictional art from the Upper Palaeolithic period (broadly 40,000 to 10,000 years ago) includes cave painting (e.g., those at Chauvet, Altamira, Pech Merle, Arcy-sur-Cure and Lascaux) and portable art: Venus figurines like the Venus of Willendorf, as well as animal carvings like the Swimming Reindeer, Wolverine pendant of Les Eyzies, and several of the objects known as bâtons de commandement.

Paintings in Pettakere cave on the Indonesian island of Sulawesi are up to 40,000 years old, a similar date to the oldest European cave art, which may suggest an older common origin for this type of art, perhaps in Africa.

Monumental open-air art in Europe from this period includes the rock-art at Côa Valley and Mazouco in Portugal, Domingo García and Siega Verde in Spain, and Rocher gravé de Fornols [fr] in France. A cave at Turobong in South Korea containing human remains has been found to contain carved deer bones and depictions of deer that may be as much as 40,000 years old. Petroglyphs of deer or reindeer found at Sokchang-ri may also date to the Upper Paleolithic. Potsherds in a style reminiscent of early Japanese work have been found at Kosan-ri on Jeju island, which, due to lower sea levels at the time, would have been accessible from Japan. The oldest petroglyphs are dated to approximately the Mesolithic and late Upper Paleolithic boundary, about 10,000 to 12,000 years ago. The earliest undisputed African rock art dates back about 10,000 years. The first naturalistic paintings of humans found in Africa date back about 8,000 years apparently originating in the Nile River valley, spread as far west as Mali about 10,000 years ago. Noted sites containing early art

include Tassili n'Ajjer in southern Algeria, Tadrart Acacus in Libya (A Unesco World Heritage site), and the Tibesti Mountains in northern Chad. Rock carvings at the Wonderwerk Cave in South Africa have been dated to this age. Contentious dates as far back as 29,000 years have been obtained at a site in Tanzania. A site at the Apollo 11 Cave complex in Namibia has been dated to 27,000 years.

Göbekli Tepe in Turkey has circles of massive T-shaped stone pillars dating back to the 10th–8th millennium BCE; the world's oldest known megaliths. Many of the pillars are decorated with abstract, enigmatic pictograms and carved animal reliefs.

Asia



The Dancing Girl of the Indus Valley civilization

Asia was the cradle for several significant civilizations, most notably those of China and South Asia. The prehistory of eastern Asia is especially interesting, as the relatively early introduction of writing and historical record-keeping in China has a notable impact on the immediately surrounding cultures and geographic areas. Little of the very rich traditions of the art of Mesopotamia counts as prehistoric, as writing was introduced so early there, but neighbouring cultures such as Urartu, Luristan and Persia had significant and complex artistic traditions.

Indian sub-continent Edit

The earliest Indian paintings were the rock paintings of prehistoric times, the petroglyphs as found in places like the Rock Shelters of Bhimbetka, and some of them are dated to c. 8,000 BC. The Indus Valley civilization produced

fine small stamp seals and sculptures, and may have been literate, but after its collapse there are relatively few artistic remains until the literate period, probably as perishable materials were used.

AzerbaijanEdit

The Gobustan National Park reserve located at the south-east of the Greater Caucasus Mountains in Azerbaijan, 60 km away from Baku date back more than 12 thousand years ago. The reserve has more than 6,000 rock carvings depicting mostly hunting scenes, human and animal figures. There are also longship illustrations similar to Viking ships. Gobustan is also characterized by its natural musical stone called Gavaldash (tambourine stone).

ChinaEdit



Two bronze heads from Sanxingdui, covered with gold leaf

Prehistoric artwork such as painted pottery in Neolithic China can be traced back to the Yangshao culture and Longshan culture of the Yellow River valley. During China's Bronze Age, Chinese of the ancient Shang Dynasty and Zhou Dynasty produced multitudes of Chinese ritual bronzes, which are elaborate versions of ordinary vessels and other objects used in rituals of ancestor veneration, decorated with taotie motifs and by the late Shang Chinese bronze inscriptions. Discoveries in 1987 in Sanxingdui in central China revealed a previously unknown pre-literate Bronze Age culture whose artefacts included spectacular very large bronze figures (example left), and which appeared culturally very different from the contemporary late Shang, which has always formed part of the account of the continuous tradition of Chinese culture.

Japan

According to archeological evidence, the Jōmon people in ancient Japan were among the first to develop pottery, dated from the 11th millennium BCE. With

growing sophistication, the Jōmon created patterns by impressing the wet clay with braided or unbraided cord and sticks.

Korea

See also: [Prehistoric Korea](#) and [List of archaeological periods \(Korea\)](#)



A Korean Neolithic pot found in Busan, 3500

BCE

The earliest examples of Korean art consist of Stone Age works dating from 3000 BCE. These mainly consist of votive sculptures, although petroglyphs have also been recently rediscovered. Rock arts, elaborate stone tools, and potteries were also prevalent.

This early period was followed by the art styles of various Korean kingdoms and dynasties. In these periods, artists often adopted Chinese style in their artworks. However, Koreans not only adopted but also modified Chinese culture with a native preference for simple elegance, purity of nature and spontaneity. This filtering of Chinese styles later influenced Japanese artistic traditions, due to cultural and geographical circumstances.

The prehistory of Korea ends with the founding of the Three Kingdoms of Korea, which are documented in the Samguk Sagi, a 12th-century CE text written in Classical Chinese (the written language of the literati in traditional Korea), as beginning in the 1st century BCE; some mention of earlier history is also made in Chinese texts, like the 3rd-century CE Sanguo Zhi.

Jeulmun period

Clearer evidence of culture emerges in the late Neolithic, known in Korea as the Jeulmun pottery period, with pottery similar to that found in the adjacent regions of China, decorated with Z-shaped patterns. The earliest Neolithic sites with pottery remains, for example Osan-ri, date to 6000–4500 BCE. This pottery is characterized by comb patterning, with the pot frequently having a pointed base. Ornaments from this time include masks made of shell, with

notable finds at Tongsam-dong, Osan-ri, and Sinam-ri. Hand-shaped clay figurines have been found at Nongpo-dong.

Mumun period



Large Middle Mumun (c. 800 BCE) storage vessel unearthed from a pit-house in or near Daepyeong

During the Mumun pottery period, roughly between 1500 BCE and 300 BCE, agriculture expanded, and evidence of larger-scale political structures became apparent, as villages grew and some burials became more elaborate. Megalithic tombs and dolmens throughout Korea date to this time. The pottery of the time is in a distinctive undecorated style. Many of these changes in style may have occurred due to immigration of new peoples from the north, although this is a subject of debate. At a number of sites in southern Korea there are rock art panels that are thought to date from this period, mainly for stylistic reasons.

While the exact date of the introduction of bronzework into Korea is also a matter of debate, it is clear that bronze was being worked by about 700 BCE. Finds include stylistically distinctive daggers, mirrors, and belt buckles, with evidence by the 1st century BCE of a widespread, locally distinctive, bronzeworking culture.

Protohistoric Korea[Edit](#)



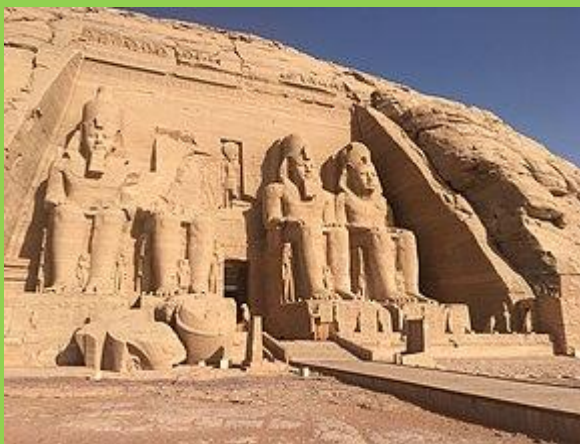
Goguryeo tomb mural

The time between 300 BCE and the founding and stabilization of the Three Kingdoms around 300 CE is characterized artistically and archaeologically by increasing trade with China and Japan, something that Chinese histories of the time corroborate. The expansionist Chinese invaded and established commanderies in northern Korea as early as the 1st century BCE; they were driven out by the 4th century CE. The remains of some of these, especially that of Lelang, near modern Pyongyang, have yielded many artifacts in a typical Han style.

Chinese histories also record the beginnings of iron works in Korea in the 1st century BCE. Stoneware and kiln-fired pottery also appears to date from this time, although there is controversy over the dates. Pottery of distinctly Japanese origin is found in Korea, and metalwork of Korean origin is found in northeastern China.

Rock-cut architecture

Rock-cut architecture is the creation of structures, buildings, and sculptures by excavating solid rock where it naturally occurs. Intensely laborious when using ancient tools and methods, rock-cut architecture was presumably combined with quarrying the rock for use elsewhere. Though, in India and China, the terms *cave* and *cavern* are often applied to this form of man-made architecture, caves and caverns that began in natural form are not considered to be rock-cut architecture even if extensively modified. Although rock-cut structures differ from traditionally built structures in many ways, many rock-cut structures are made to replicate the facade or interior of traditional architectural forms. Interiors were usually carved out by starting at the roof of the planned space and then working downward. This technique prevents stones falling on workers below. The three main uses of rock-cut architecture were temples (like those in India), tombs, and cave dwellings (like those in Cappadocia).



The Great Temple of Abu Simbel (ca. 1280 BCE), one of the earliest known examples of rock-cut architecture.

A related term, monolithic architecture, refers to free-standing structures made of a single piece of material. Monolithic architecture is often rock-cut, as in

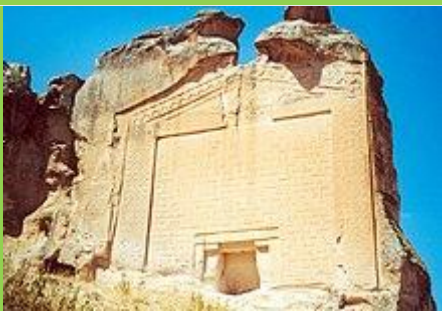
the Ellora Kailasanathar Temple, but monolithic structures may also be cast of artificial material, such as concrete. The largest monolithic statue in the world, the Gommateshwara statue of Bahubali at Shravanabelagola in the Indian state of Karnataka, was carved in 983 CE from a single block of granite.



The Kailasa temple, part of the Ellora Caves

Some rock-cut architecture is excavated entirely in chambers under the surface of relatively level rock. This is especially common in rock-cut tombs. Excavations instead made into the side of a cliff or steep slope can feature an impressive facade, as in Lycian tombs, Petra, and the Ajanta Caves. The most laborious and imposing rock-cut architecture is the excavation of tall free-standing monolithic structures entirely below the surface level of the surrounding rock, in a large excavated hole around the structure. Ellora in India and the Zagwe-built Lalibela in Ethiopia provide some of the most famous examples of such structures. Many parts of the world feature rock reliefs, relief sculptures carved into rock faces, often outside caves.

History



The Midas Monument, a Phrygian rock-cut tomb dedicated to Midas (700 BCE).

Ancient monuments of rock-cut architecture are widespread in several regions of world. A small number of Neolithic tombs in Europe, such as the c. 3,000 B.C. Dwarfie Stone on the Orkney island of Hoy, were cut directly from the rock, rather than constructed from stone blocks.

Alteration of naturally formed caverns, although distinct from completely carved structures in the strict sense, date back to the neolithic period on several Mediterranean islands e.g. Malta (Hypogeum of Hal-Saflieni), Sardinia (Anghelu Ruju, built between 3,000 and 1,500 BCE) and others.



Lycian tombs cut into the cliffs along the river in Dalyan, Turkey (4th century BCE).

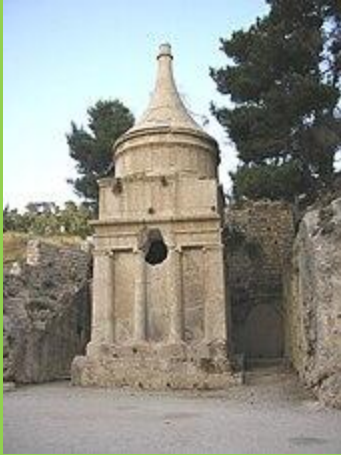


Lycian rock-cut tomb with ogival barrel-vaulted roof, 4th century BCE.

During the Bronze Age, Nubian ancestors of the Kingdom of Kush built speos between 3700 and 3250 BCE. This greatly influenced the architecture of the New Kingdom. Large-scale rock-cut structures were built in Ancient Egypt. Among these monuments was the Great Temple of Ramesses II, known as Abu Simbel, located along the Nile in Nubia, near the borders of Sudan about 300 kilometers from Aswan in Egypt. It dates from about the 19th Dynasty (ca. 1280 BCE), and consists of a monumentally scaled facade carved out of the cliff and a set of interior chambers that form its sanctuary.

In the 8th century, the Phrygians started some of the earliest rock-cut monuments, such as the Midas monument (700 BCE), dedicated to the famous Phrygian king Midas.

In the 5th century BCE, the Lycians, who inhabited southern Anatolia (now Turkey) built hundreds of rock-cut tombs of a similar type, but smaller in scale. Excellent examples are to be found near Dalyan, a town in Muğla Province, along the sheer cliffs that face a river. Since these served as tombs rather than as religious sites, the interiors were usually small and unassuming. The ancient Etruscans of central Italy also left an important legacy of rock-cut architecture, mostly tombs, as those near the cities of Tarquinia and Vulci.



Tomb of Absalom (Kidron Valley), with rock-cut lower half

The creation of rock-cut tombs in ancient Israel began in the 8th-century BCE and continued through the Byzantine period. The Tomb of Absalom was constructed in the 1st century CE in the Kidron Valley of Jerusalem.



Lomas Rishi, one of the first rock-cut caves in India, 250 BCE.

Rock-cut architecture occupies a particularly important place in the history of Indian Architecture. The earliest instances of Indian rock-cut architecture, the Barabar caves, date from about the 3rd to the 2nd century BCE. They were built by the Buddhist monks and consisted mostly of multi-storey buildings carved into the mountain face to contain living and sleeping quarters, kitchens, and monastic spaces. Some of these monastic caves had shrines in them to the Buddha, bodhisattvas and saints. As time progressed, the interiors became more elaborate and systematized; surfaces were often decorated with paintings, such as those at Ajanta. At the beginning of the 7th century Hindu rock-cut temples began to be constructed at Ellora. Unlike most previous examples of rock-cut architecture which consisted of a facade plus an interior, these temples were complete three-dimensional buildings created by carving away the hillside. They required several generations of planning and coordination to complete. Other major examples of rock-cut architecture in India are at Ajanta and Pataleshwar.



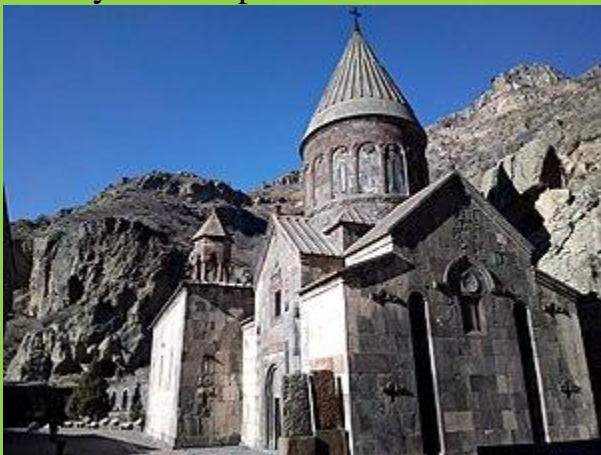
Al Khazneh or the Treasury at Petra

Artisans in the Nabataean city of Petra, in modern Jordan, extended the Western Asian tradition, carving their temples and tombs into the yellowish-orange rock that defines the canyons and gullies of the region. These structures, dating from 1st century BCE to about 2nd century CE, are particularly important in the history of architecture given their experimental forms. Here too, because the structures served as tombs, the interiors were rather perfunctory. In Petra one even finds a theater where the seats are cut out of the rock.



Mount Longmen as seen from Manshui Bridge to the southeast.

The technological skills associated with making these complex structures moved into China along the trade routes. The Longmen Grottoes, the Mogao Caves, and the Yungang Grottoes consist of hundreds of caves many with statues of Buddha in them. Most were built between 460 and 525 CE. There are extensive rock-cut buildings, including houses and churches in Cappadocia, Turkey. They were built over a span of hundreds of years prior to the 5th century CE. Emphasis here was more on the interiors than the exteriors.



The Geghard monastery, 13th century.

Another extensive site of rock-cut architecture is in Lalibela, a town in northern Ethiopia. The area contains numerous Orthodox churches in three dimensions, as at Ellora, that were carved out of the rock. These structures, which date from the 12th and 13th centuries CE and which are the last significant examples of this architectural form, ranks as among the most



magnificent examples of rock-cut architecture in the world, with both interior and exterior brought to fruition.

Art

Ancient rock cut tombs, temples and monasteries often have been adorned with frescoes and reliefs. The high resistance of natural cliff, skilled use of plaster and constant microclimate often have helped to preserve this art in better condition than in conventional buildings. Such exceptional examples are the ancient and early medieval frescoes in such locations as Bamyan Caves in Afghanistan with the most ancient known oil paintings in the world from 8th century CE, Ajanta Caves in India with well preserved tempera paintings from 2nd century BCE, Christian frescoes on Churches of Göreme, Turkey and numerous other monuments in Asia, Europe and Africa.

Cave Architecture

Cave architecture in ancient India holds a significant place in the country's rich cultural heritage. These caves, carved out of rock formations, served as places of worship, meditation, and artistic expression. They showcase the remarkable skills and creativity of ancient Indian craftsmen and architects. With intricate carvings, sculptures, and paintings, cave architecture in ancient India provides a glimpse into the religious, social, and artistic aspects of the bygone eras. From the famous Ajanta and Ellora Caves to the lesser-known cave complexes nationwide. These architectural marvels continue to captivate and inspire visitors with their timeless beauty and historical importance.


The cave Architecture is important from the perspective of the UPSC IAS Examination, which falls under the General Studies Paper 1, particularly in the Art and Culture section and Ancient Indian History.

You can also enrol and prepare for History topics through Testbook's flagship UPSC History Coaching Program.

Check out the article on Manipuri Dance for more information on classical dances.

Origin of Cave Architecture in India

People in India have seen caves as sacred places since long ago. Early caves were natural ones used by local people for worship and shelter. Evidence shows caves were used since 6000 BC. Early art shows designs carved on big rocks. When Buddhist monks came, they used natural caves to live in during rain. They also used caves as temples to follow their religion. Over time, people dug



caves out of big rocks more. Caves were more durable than wood. Dug caves became bigger and more beautiful designs.

The first dug caves were in western Deccan region. Most were Buddhist temples and monk homes from 100 BC to 170 AD. Many Jain temples were also early examples. The Barabar caves in Bihar are India's oldest caves in India surviving dug caves. Art from around 300 BC during the Maurya Empire can be seen there. Some other early temple caves are in Maharashtra. Examples include Bhaja Caves from 200 BC, Bedse Caves from 100 BC, Karla Caves from 200 BC to 500 AD, Kanheri Caves from 100 BC to 1000 AD and some Ajanta Caves from 200 BC to 480 or 650 AD.

Types of Cave Architecture

Cave architecture has a long and rich history in India, dating back to the 2nd century BC. Caves carved out of stone cliffs served as dwellings, places of meditation and worship. Indian cave temples reflect the country's religious diversity and the different traditions used in caves in unique ways. The main types of cave architecture are:

Buddhist Caves in India

The Buddhists built the earliest cave temples in India from the 2nd century BC to the 5th century AD. They served as monasteries for Buddhist monks and centres of worship. The Ajanta caves in Maharashtra and the Ellora caves containing Buddhist, Hindu and Jain rock-cut structures are prime examples of Buddhist cave architecture.

Hindu Caves

Hindu groups began adapting the Buddhist cave tradition for their temples from the 5th century onwards. The Elephanta cave temples near Mumbai and the Badami cave temples in Karnataka are notable examples of rock-cut Hindu temples featuring sculptures of Hindu gods.

Jain Caves

Jain cave temples built from the 5th to 10th century AD exhibit the distinctive Jain style of sculpture and architecture. belonging The Kankaliya caves and Udaigiri caves in Madhya Pradesh are known for their intricately carved Jain Tirthankaras and temple structures within caves.

Buddhist And Jain Architecture

Buddhism and Jainism introduced the art of rock-cut caves such as the Ajanta and Ellora caves. Other than these well-known examples, It also produced other works of art that are still famous world over.

This article will highlight some of them by NCERT notes on important topics for the UPSC civil services exam preparation. These notes will also be useful for other competitive exams like banking PO, SSC, state public services exams and so on

Buddhist Architecture


Along with Hindu art and architecture, Buddhist temple building and artwork also went on along with other religions.

- Ellora has Buddhist, Jain and Hindu monuments.
- **Bodh Gaya** (or Bodhgaya)
 - Most important Buddhist site because Prince Siddhartha achieved enlightenment here to become Gautama Buddha.
 - The Bodhi Tree is important.
 - The **Mahabodhi Temple** at Bodhgaya:
 - The first shrine situated at the base of the Bodhi tree was probably built by Emperor Ashoka.
 - The vedika around the shrine is post-Mauryan built during 100 BC.
 - Many sculptures in the niches in the temple belong to the Pala Period (8th century CE).
 - The temple itself was constructed during the colonial period.
 - It is a 7th-century design. It is neither nagara or Dravida in style.

Nalanda University

It was a monastic university.

- It is a Mahavihara since it is a complex of many monasteries.

- 
- Only a small portion of the place has been studied as most of it lies buried under present civilisation and impossible to excavate.
 - The records of the Chinese traveller Xuan Zang (Hsuan-Tsang) gives a huge amount of information about Nalanda.
 - As per the records, the foundation of the learning centre was laid down by Kumaragupta I, the Gupta king in the 5th century CE. Later kings added to the original centre.
 - Evidence for all three Buddhist doctrines of Theravada, Mahayana and Vajrayana taught here.
 - Monks came from China, Tibet and Central Asia in the north; and from Sri Lanka, Burma, Thailand, and other countries in Southeast Asia.
 - Nalanda was a centre for art production and Buddhist sculptures and manuscripts were taken from here by monks to their countries. So, art in Nalanda had a profound impact on art in all the Buddhist countries.
 - The Nalanda School of sculpture was influenced by Buddhist Gupta art of Sarnath, the local Bihar tradition and Central India. This synthesis emerged during the 9th century.
 - Features of **Nalanda School of sculpture**:
 - Sculptures have an ordered appearance with little effect of crowding.
 - They are depicted in three-dimensional forms.
 - Delicate ornamentations.
 - Back slabs of the sculptures are detailed.
 - Nalanda bronzes: dating from the 7th and 8th centuries to the 12th century; outnumber the metal images from entire eastern India.
 - Initially depict Mahayana Buddhist deities like standing Buddhas, bodhisattvas like Manjusri Kumara, Naga-Nagarjuna and Avalokiteshvara seated on a lotus.
 - In the late 11th and 12th centuries, Nalanda became an important tantric centre. Then, Vajrayana deities dominated such Vajrashastra (a form of Saraswati), Avalokiteshvara, Khasarpana, etc.
 - Many Brahmanical images have also been found at Nalanda. Many such images are still worshipped at nearby villages.

Buddhist sites: Sirpur in Chhattisgarh (550 – 800 CE); Lalitagiri, Vajragiri and Ratnagiri in Odisha.

Nagapattinam in Tamil Nadu was also a Buddhist centre until the Chola Period. A reason could be that it was a port-town and there were trade activities with Sri Lanka which was and continues to be predominantly Buddhist.

Jain architecture

- Jain temples are found all over India except in the hills.
- Oldest Jain pilgrimage sites are in Bihar.
- In the Deccan: Ellora and Aihole.
- In central India: Khajuraho, Deogarh, Chanderi and Gwalior.
- Karnataka has many Jain shrines.

Statue of Gomateshwara: Granite statue of Lord Bahubali commissioned by Camundaraya, the prime minister of the Ganga kings; located at Shravanabelagola; 18m or 57 feet high; world's tallest monolithic free-standing structure.

Gujarat and Rajasthan have a rich Jain heritage continuing to this day. Jain bronze images found from Akola (near Baroda) belong to the late 5th – late 7th century CE; made using the lost-wax process; the images have been inlaid with silver and copper for embellishments. Jain bronze sculptures are also found from Chausa (Bihar), Hansi (Haryana) and many places in Karnataka and Tamil Nadu. Jain Temples at Mount Abu, Rajasthan. Constructed by Vimal Shah. Also called Dilwara temples. Built between the 11th and 13th centuries. Every ceiling has unique patterns. Richly sculptured on white marble. The exteriors are simple but the interiors are finely carved and exquisitely decorated. Mauryan Rock.

Mauryan Rock-Cut Architecture (4th and 2nd Century BC)

During their reign, the Mauryans were also patrons of several rock-cut architectures. The majority of these were Buddhist in nature. The rock-cut cave in the **Barabar Hills** is an excellent example of Mauryan rock-cut construction.

Lomus Rishi Cave, Barabar Hills

It is a rock-cut cave in the Barabar Hills near Gaya, Bihar. The semicircular Chaitya (worship place) arch, which serves as the cave's entrance, is carved into the cave's face. On the chaitya, there is an elephant frieze carved in

great relief. The cave's inner hall is rectangular in shape, with a circular chamber at the back. The entrance is positioned on the hall's sidewall.



Lomus Rishi Cave, Barabar Hills

It was patronized by Asoka for the Ajeevika Sect.

Stupas, Chaityas and Viharas

Chaityas were meeting places for the purpose of debate, whereas **Viharas** were for living. Early Chaityas and Viharas were made of wood, but later stone-cut Chaityas and Viharas were built. A stupa is a **Buddhist memorial structure** that generally houses precious relics linked with the Buddha or other saints. We have various inscriptional evidence from the second century B.C. onwards naming benefactors for building the Stupas, Chaityas and Viharas and, in some cases, their profession. had followed a largely communal structure, with relatively few examples of royal patronage. Gahapatis (householders, regular farmers, etc.) and monarchs are among the patrons. The guild's contributions are also acknowledged in various places. The names of artists such as Kanha at Pitalkhora and his student Balaka at Kondane caves are only mentioned in a few inscriptions. Stone carvers, goldsmiths, carpenters, and other types of artisans are listed in the inscriptions. Traders kept track of their donations and where they came from.

Stupas were extensively created in the next century (mostly the 2nd century B.C.) with various improvements such as the enclosure of the circulatory route with railings and sculptural ornamentation.



Stupa

A cylindrical drum and a circular and with a **harmika and chhatra** on top made up the stupa, which remained stable throughout with minimal alterations in shape and size. Later times saw the addition of gateways.

Depiction of Buddha in Chaityas

Buddha is symbolically symbolized in the early era with footprints, stupas, lotus throne, chakra, and other symbols. The narrative gradually became an element of the process. On the railings and torans of the stupas, incidents from Buddha's life, the **Jataka tales**, and so on were painted. Birth, renunciation, enlightenment, dharmachakrapravartana (first sermon), and mahaparinirvana were the major episodes in the Buddha's life that were commonly represented (death). **Chhadanta Jataka, Ruru Jataka, Sibi Jataka, Vidur Jataka, Vessantara Jataka, and Shama Jataka** are among the Jataka stories that are widely presented.

Stupa,

Buddhist commemorative monument usually housing sacred relics associated with the Buddha or other saintly persons. The hemispherical form of the stupa appears to have derived from pre-Buddhist burial mounds in India. As most characteristically seen at Sanchi in the Great Stupa (2nd–1st century BC), the monument consists of a circular base supporting a massive solid dome (the *anda*, “egg,” or *garbha*, “womb”) from which projects an umbrella. The whole of the Great Stupa is encircled by a railing and four gateways, which are richly decorated with relief sculpture depicting *Jataka* tales, events in the life of the Buddha, and popular mythological figures.



Stupa III and its single gateway, Sanchi, Madhya Pradesh state, India.

The Indian conception of the stupa spread throughout the Buddhist world and evolved into such different-looking monuments as the bell-shaped *dagaba* ("heart of *garbha*") of Ceylon (Sri Lanka), the terraced temple of Borobudur in Java, the variations in Tibet, and the multistoried pagodas of China, Korea, and Japan. The basic symbolism, in which the central relic is identified with the sacred person or concept commemorated and also with the building itself, is retained. Worship of a stupa consists in walking around the monument in the clockwise direction. Even when the stupa is sheltered by a building, it is always a freestanding monument.

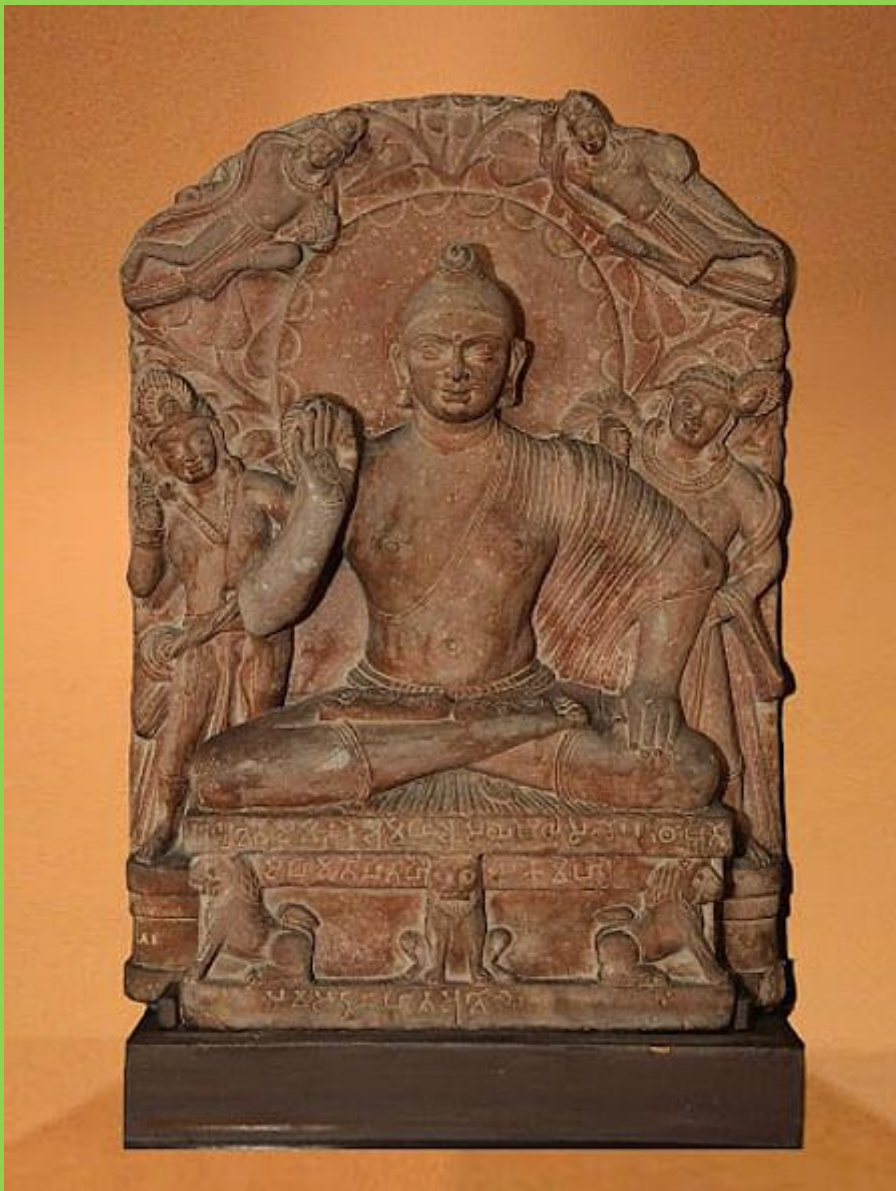


Buddhist stupas were originally built to house the earthly remains of the historical Buddha and his associates and are almost invariably found at sites sacred to Buddhism. The concept of a relic was afterward extended to include sacred texts. Miniature stupas and pagodas are also used by Buddhists throughout Asia as votive offerings. Stupas were also built by adherents of Jainism to commemorate their saints.

Mathura school of art

The **Mathura School of Art** flourished mostly during the reign of Kushana ruler Kanishka in the first century AD. Mathura School grew up on its own. Mathura was the traditional centre of output for this school, with Sarnath and Kosambi also playing key roles. **Spotted red sandstone** was utilised in the construction of this school. During the **Gupta period**, in the **6th or 7th century**, this art achieved its pinnacle. The representations of Buddha, Bodhisattvas, Vishnu, Shiva, Yakshas, Yakshinis, Jinas, and others found in the

Mathura school depict the **city's life** and assimilation character as a result of **Brahmanism, Jainism, and Buddhism's religious fervour**. Mathura art was notable for its Jina image and indigenous style of Buddha's image. In the artwork, the Mathura School used a lot of **symbolism**. **Avayudhas** were used to depict the Hindu gods. Shiva, for example, is represented by linga and mukhalinga. Similarly, the halo around Buddha's **head is bigger** and adorned with geometrical patterns than in the Gandhara School. **Padmapani holds a lotus** and **Vajrapani holds a thunderbolt**, and Buddha is encircled by two **Bodhisattvas**.



Mathura school of art

Salient features of Mathura Art

Buddha image - Buddha was never represented in a human form at any of Sanchi, Bharhut, or Gaya prior to the founding of this school.

Themes - Only symbols, such as two footprints or a wheel, were used to represent Buddha. Mathura artists continued to depict symbols at first, but the human figure of Buddha gradually emerged as a separate school of art.

This depiction of the human Buddha was based on **Yaksha representations**.

Early depictions of the Buddha and Bodhisattva are plump, joyful beings with no spirituality. They have a blocky appearance and a smooth, close-fitting robe that is virtually entirely free of wrinkles.

Patrons - The Mathura statues are related to earlier **yaksa** (male nature deity) figures, with a strong resemblance to the early Kushn period's massive standing Buddha representations.

Features of sculpture - The overall impact of them, as well as the more traditional seated Buddhas, is one of great force. The **shoulders are broad**, the **chest expands**, and the legs are planted firmly with feet split apart.

Images were more sensuous and flashier in the second century AD, with increasing rotundness. By the third century AD, the extreme **fleshiness** had subsided, and the surface features had become more **polished**.

The **shaved head**, the protuberance on the top of the head indicated by a tiered spiral, a round smiling face, the right arm raised in **abhaya-mudra** (reassurance gesture), the left arm akimbo or resting on the thigh, the drapery closely moulding the body and arranged in folds over the left arm, leaving the right shoulder bare, and the presence of the lion throne rather than the lotus throne are

The halo around Buddha's head was lavishly adorned.

The Mathura school etched out both the sitting and standing postures of **Buddha and Bodhisattvas**. The Sravasti Sarnath and Kaushambi Standing Buddhas are the best examples of Buddha images under this style. The later evolution of Buddha's Human form was linked to human beauty and heroic values.

Type of sandstone - **Spotted red sandstone** was utilized in the construction of this school.

Vaishnava and Shiva images - At Mathura, pictures of the Vaishnava and Shaiva faiths can also be seen, but Buddhist ones predominate.

Women's position in Mathura's art - The woman was at the center of the painting, and there are few works of Indian art that can match the gorgeous feminine figures created by the Mathura artists in terms of beauty, delicacy, and appeal.

Amaravati School of Art Historical Background

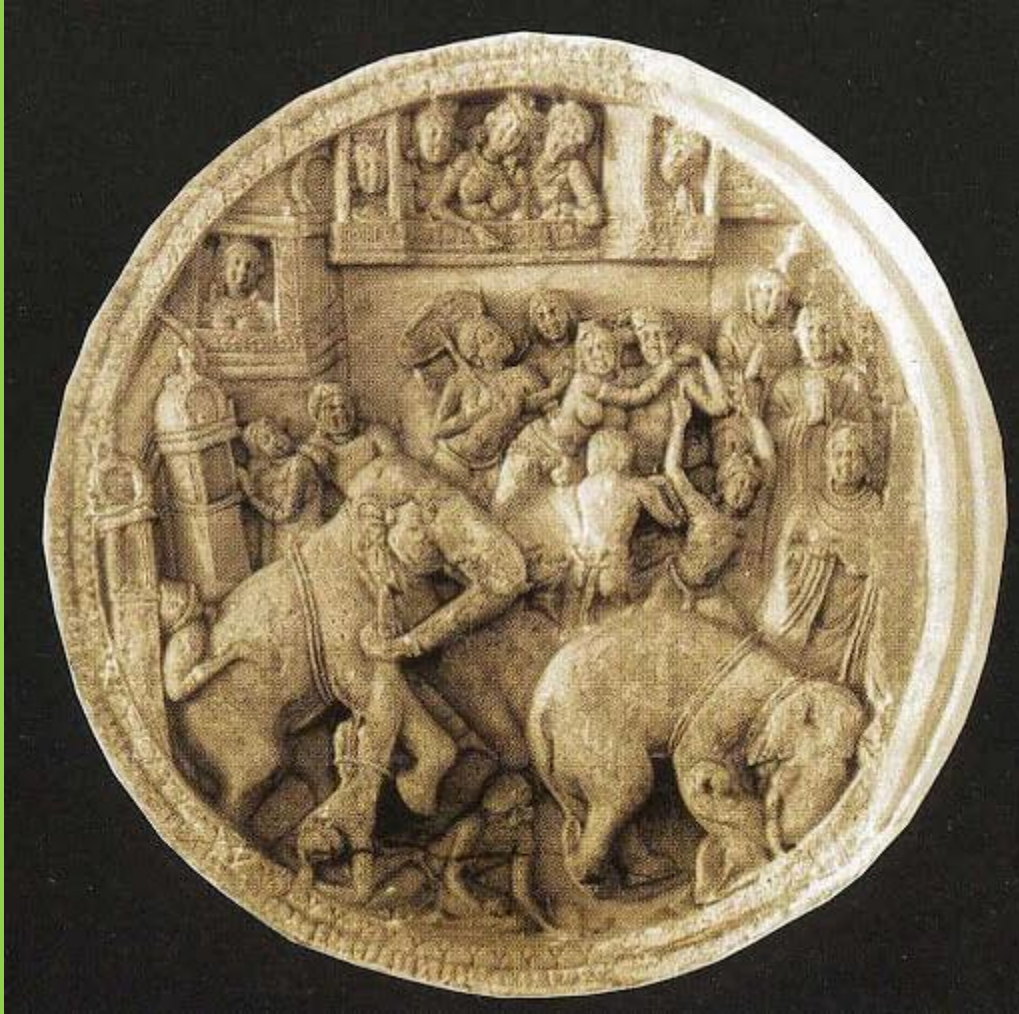
The Amaravati style of art developed and flourished in India for approximately six centuries, from **200 to 100 BC**, with no outside influences.

- This school of sculpture flourished in the **second century BC**, especially in the second half.
- Images of a more secular nature were also created. These take the shape of female images, trees, animals, and birds, among other things. **Satavahanas were the first patrons of this school.**

Major Features

Amravati School of Art – Major Features

- The '**narrative art**' is a prominent feature of the Amaravati school
- The **medallions** were carved in such a way that they depicted a natural occurrence.
- One medallion, for example, displays an entire story about the **Buddha taming an elephant.**
- The Amravati stupas are made of striking **white marble.**
- In human, animal, and floral forms, Amaravati sculptures have a sense of movement and vitality, as well as profound and serene naturalism.
- Amravati, Nagarjunikonda, Goli, Ghantasala, and Vengi are notable locales where this style flourished.
- There is a symbolic picture of Buddha's life, yet he is also personified in two or three places.
- The **Amaravati Stupa**, like the Sanchi Stupa, has a **Pradakshina Patha** contained by a vedika on which various narrative stories from the life of
- Buddha and bodhisattva predominate, but their structural anatomy is more intricate.
- This style included both religious and secular images.
- Pallava and Chola buildings evolved from this style later.



Amaravati school of art

Other Relevant Links

[Mathura school of art](#)

Significance

- **Influence - Indigenous, with no foreign influence**
- **Patrons** - The **Satavahanas** were the first to patronize it, followed by the **Ikshvakus** and other groups (feudatories, administrators, and merchants).
- The Amaravati school of art developed between the lower valleys of the **Krishna and Godavari rivers in Andhra Pradesh**.
- **Theme** - In human, animal, and floral forms, **Amaravati sculptures** have a sense of movement and vitality, as well as profound and serene naturalism.
- This style included both religious and secular images. Pallava and Chola buildings evolved from this style later. **Features of the sculpture** - The 'narrative art' is a prominent feature of the Amaravati school.

- The medallions were carved in such a way that they depicted a natural occurrence.
- One medallion, for example, displays an entire story about the **Buddha taming an elephant**.
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- There is a **symbolic picture** of Buddha's life, yet he is also personified in two or three places.
- **Other features** - The Amaravati Stupa, like the Sanchi Stupa, has a **pradakshina patha** contained by a vedika on which various narrative stories from the life of **Buddha and bodhisattva** predominate, but its structural anatomy is more intricate.

Gandhara School of Art

The Gandhara School of art had also developed in first century AD along with Mathura School during reign of Kushana emperor Kanishka. Both Shakas and Kushanas were patrons of Gandhara School, which is known for the *first sculptural representations of the Buddha in human form*. The art of the Gandhara school was *primarily Mahayana and shows Greco-Roman influence*.

Salient Features

Gandhara School was based on Greco-Roman norms encapsulating foreign techniques and an alien spirit. It is also known as **Graeco-Buddhist School of art**. The foreign influence is evident from the sculptures of Buddha in which they bear resemblance to the Greek sculptures. Grey sandstone (Blue-grey Mica schist to be precise) is used in Gandhara School of Art.

Examples of Gandhara Art

The Bamyán Buddha of Afghanistan were the example of the Gandhara School. The other materials used were Mud, Lime, Stucco. However, Marble was NOT used in Gandhara art. Terracotta was used rarely. **Bimaran Casket** has yielded the earliest specimen of the Gandhara Art.

Major Centres

Jalalabad, Hadda, Bamaran, Begram & Taxila were the main centers where art pieces of Gandhara School have been found.

The Buddha image of Gandhara Art

The Gandharan Buddha image was inspired by *Hellenistic realism*, influenced by Persian, Scythian, and Parthian models. In contrast with Mathura School, the Gandhara School images are known for their **anatomical accuracy**,

spatial depth, and foreshortening. In this art, Buddha's curls were altered into wavy hair. The head of the Buddha matched very much with Greek God Apollo.

Buddha in Gandhara School



The Various Mudras of Buddha in Gandhara Art

In all the Buddha depicted in the Gandhara Art is shown making four types of hand gestures and this is a remarkable feature in this art. The gestures are as follows:

- Abahayamudra : Don't fear
- Dhyanamudra : meditation
- Dharmachakramudra: a preaching mudra
- Bhumisparshamudra: Touching the earth.

Greek & Roman Influence on Gandhara Art

Gandharan sculptures show strong Greek influences in the depiction of a 'man-god' and of wavy hair, sandals and extensive drapery. The depiction of Buddha as a 'man-god' in Gandharan sculpture is believed to be inspired from Greek mythology. Some examples of Gandharan art depict both Buddha and the Greek god, Hercules. Stucco plaster, which was commonly observed in Greek art, was widely used in Gandharan artwork for the decoration of monastic and cult buildings. The Roman and Greek Influences in Gandhara Buddha are enumerated as follows:

Roman influence

- **Artistic interpretation:** The legendary interpretation of Buddha is sometimes presented through roman motifs like triton.
- **Artistic techniques:** In artistic interpretation; Buddha of Gandhara is sometimes presented through roman art techniques using vine scroll; cherub wearing Garland

- **Anthropomorphic tradition:** The tradition of representation of Buddha in human form is inspired from roman anthropomorphic tradition .
- **Dresses:** The outer robe of Buddha of Gandhara like kaaya; antarvasa resembles to attire of roman gods.
Greek influences
- **Greek god as protector:** In many images of Buddha in Gandhara ; he is seen under the protection of Greek god Hercules.
- **Vajrapani:** Vajrapani found in the right hand of future Buddha is told as transformed symbol of Hercules who is seen as protector of Buddha.
- **Greek architectural influence:** Some images of Buddha in Gandhara are presented in Greek architectural environment bearing the affinity of Corinthian.
- **Artistic beauty:** The Apollo like face of Buddha; natural realism; wavy hair as seen in images of Buddha in Gandhara resembles to Hellenistic tradition.
- **Intellectual affinity:** The halo and bun of Gandhara Buddha signifies intellectual imbibitions of Buddha from Greek

However, Gandharan sculpture owes as much to Roman art as it does to Grecian art. Even though the iconography of Gandharan sculpture was Indian in nature, it also incorporated motifs and techniques from Classical Roman art. Some of the features of Classical Roman art observed in Gandharan sculptures are vine scrolls, cherubs with garlands, tritons and centaurs. Additionally, the Gandharan sculptors drew from the anthropomorphic traditions of Roman religion. The depiction of Buddha in Gandharan art is reminiscent of sculptures depicting a young Apollo. The draping of the robes on Buddha was also very similar to the drapery on Roman imperial statues.

Comparison of Gandhara and Mathura Buddha

In the Gandhara school Buddha portrayed had Hellenistic features whereas in the Mathura school the Buddha was modelled on earlier Yaksha images. The Gandhara School had also roman as well as Greek influences and assimilated Archimedean, Parthian and Bactrian. The Buddha has curly hair and there are linear strokes over the head. The forehead plane has protruding eyeballs, eyes are half closed and the face and cheeks are not round like the images found in other parts of India. The ears are elongated especially the earlobes.

Overall the image is very expressive and calmness remains the centre point of attraction in Gandhara style of Buddha. An example of Buddha in Gandhara style is the Buddha head at Taxila which is in the Gandhara region.

However, there are certain drawbacks of Gandhara school portrayal of the Buddha. The Buddha image of Gandhara school has been claimed to be an original contribution but its aesthetic quality is indifferent and it lacks the vigour and independence of expression that characterise the free standing Bodhisattvas of Mathura. The Indian elements derived from the ideal yogi type,

namely the lotus seat and the meditative gaze could not be properly assimilated, and the schematic folded drapery, heavy ornamentation and very often the moustaches betray a taste lacking in refinement.

In the Mathura art, Buddha image have fleshy body and the shoulders are broad. The Sanghati (garment) covers only one shoulder. Buddha is accompanied by attendant figures like Padmapani and Valrapani Bodhisattvas. The Buddha image is accompanied by Halo around his head which is very large. With respect to the face of Buddha, it is round with fleshy cheeks.

Mauryan Art and Architecture

Mauryan art and architecture flourished between 4th and 2nd century. The dynasty lasted from 322 BCE to 185 BCE. Art and Architecture of Mauryan Empire was characterized by the construction of pillars, stupas, and viharas. The pillars were made of sandstone. It was one of the signature features of Mauryan Art and architecture. They featured inscriptions of Emperor Ashoka's edicts. The stupas were large dome-shaped structures used as Buddhist shrines. The viharas were residential buildings for Buddhist monks. Mauryan art was predominantly represented through sculpture. The period is noted for the development of the art of stone carving.

Background of Mauryan Art and Architecture

The Mauryan Empire was founded by Chandragupta Maurya in 321 BC. In Indian history, it was a significant time. The period between the Harappans and the Mauryas saw a decline in buildings made up of stones.

- During the Mauryan rule, a new phase of cultural history emerged.
- Monumental stone sculpture and architecture became prominent.
 - This made an important period in Indian cultural history.
- Under the reign of Ashoka, art and architecture reached their zenith.
 - The focus was on court art.

- The adoption of Buddhism by Ashoka promoted the creation of distinctive sculptural and architectural styles.
- This led to the creation of Stupas, Pillars, Caves, Palaces, and Potter.
- These artistic and architectural works were connected to the lives, activities, and patronage of ordinary people.
- Stupas were important religious structures.
 - They housed relics of the Buddha and were places of worship.
- Pillars were created as memorials, and edicts of Ashoka were inscribed on them.
- Caves were used for meditation and worship.
- They had intricate carvings and sculptures adorning their interiors.
- Palaces were grand structures that were home to the king and the royal family.
- They often had gardens and courtyards.
- Potters played an important role during the Mauryan period.
 - They created various types of pottery, including terracotta figurines and utensils.
- The period was a time of great artistic and architectural achievement.
- There was a focus on Buddhist themes and the patronage of ordinary people.

Buy

Mauryan Court Art (Court Initiative)

The palaces of the Mauryan period were adorned with gilded pillars. These pillars featured golden vines and silver birds. The palaces were surrounded by high walls with battlements, water ditches, and lotus and plant adornments.

- Several palaces from the Mauryan period are notable.
 - Examples include Chandragupta Maurya's palace, Ashoka's palace at Kumrahar, and the Mauryan capital at Pataliputra.
 - Wood was the primary building material used in their construction.
- The Mauryan palaces drew heavy influence from Persian architecture.
 - Specifically, they were inspired by the Achaemenid palaces in Persepolis.
- The Mauryan palaces received high praise from historians of the time.
- Megasthenes, a Greek historian, praised them highly.
- Additionally, the Chinese traveler Fa Hien referred to them as magnificent monuments.
- The palaces were considered remarkable creations during the Mauryan Empire.

Mauryan Pillars

Let us have a look at the difference between Mauryan Pillars and Achaemenid Pillars:

Characteristics	Mauryan Pillars	Persian (Achaemenid) Pillars
Purpose	The spread of Buddhist doctrine and imperial decrees was the primary goal of the Mauryan pillars.	The Achaemenid pillars typically formed a part of a larger architectural design.
Material	Mauryan pillars were usually made of chunar sandstone.	Persian/Achaemenid pillars were built of separate segments of stones that were aggregated one above the other.
Language	A few of the Ashoka pillar edicts were written in Greek or Aramaic, but the majority were written in Pali and Prakrit.	The Persian Pillar Inscriptions were written in Old Persian. Old Persian was a language used by the Achaemenid Empire in the 5th century B.C.
Architecture	Shaft, capital, abacus, and capital figure are the four main components of Mauryan pillars. The capital was either bell-shaped or lotus-shaped, and the shaft was a long base made of a single stone or monolith. The abacus, a circular or rectangular base, was located above the capital. Animals like a bull, lion, elephant, etc. were frequently carved as capital figures and stood atop square or circular abacuses.	Persian/Achaemenid pillars featured elaborate capitals with figures such as winged bulls, and lions, along with a fluted/ridged surface.
Ornamentation	The Persian pillar is not shaped like the Mauryan lotus.	The ornamentation on Persian pillars is unknown.
Independence	The Ashokan pillars were straightforward, standalone structures.	The majority of the Persian/Achaemenid pillars were a part of a larger architectural design.

Apart from being different to each other, the Mauryan and Achaemenian Pillars had few similarities:

- Both Achaemenid and Mauryan pillars used polished stones and shared certain sculpture themes, like the lotus.

- Persian pillars are where Maurya got the idea to engrave declarations on them that were connected to court orders and Buddhist teachings.
- The inscriptions on Mauryan pillars begin in the third person and then move to the first person.

Ashoka's Pillar Edicts and Inscriptions

Ashoka was a Mauryan emperor. He left behind a legacy. It consisted of Pillar Edicts and Inscriptions. They shed light on his principles and policies. These sources are significant for the history. They provide valuable insights into ancient India. They reveal the social, cultural, and religious ethos.

- Ashoka's 7 pillar edicts are located at various places.
 - These places include Topra, Meerut, and Kausambhi.
 - They can also be found in Rampurva, Champaran, and Mehrauli.
 - The edicts deal with several principles.
 - They offer protection to the people.
 - They define the concept of Dhamma.
 - They abolish sins and prescribe duties for Rajukas.
 - They also outline the Dhamma policy.
- The Minor Pillar Inscriptions are also significant.
 - The Rummindei Pillar Inscription is one of them.
 - It mentions Ashoka's visit to Lumbini.
 - It also exempts Lumbini from tax.
 - The Nigalisagar Pillar Inscription is another example. It is located in Nepal.
 - This inscription mentions that Ashoka increased the height of Buddha Konakamana's stupa.
- The Major Pillar Inscriptions are also important.
 - The Sarnath Lion Capital is among them. It is located near Varanasi.
 - Ashoka had it built in commemoration of Buddha's first sermon.
 - The Vaishali Pillar in Bihar is another example. It has a single lion. However, there is no inscription on it.
 - The Allahabad pillar in Uttar Pradesh is also significant.

Ashoka's Pillar Edicts and Inscriptions are essential sources. They offer valuable information about his reign. They also provide insights into his policies. Their significance lies in the fact that they shed light on ancient Indian history. They are an essential source for the study of that period.

Mauryan Stupa

The table below describes characteristics of Mauryan Stupas:

Characteristics	Description
Components	Stupas were made up of four main parts: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Anda: a cylindrical drum, a hemispherical mound. ○ Harmika, ○ Chhatra: a central pillar, that supported a triple umbrella form
Materials	The stupa's outer surface was made of burnt bricks covered in a layer of plaster and medhi, while the inner core was constructed from unbaked brick. Wooden sculptures were frequently used to decorate the torana gateway.
Famous Examples	The Sanchi Stupa, located in Madhya Pradesh, is one of the famous Ashokan stupas. The Piprahwa Stupa in Uttar Pradesh is the oldest known stupa. Other famous stupas include those in Rajagiri, Vaishali, Kapilavastu, Allakappa, Ramagrama, Vethapida, Kushinagar, and Pippalivana.
Religious Significance	Stupas served as important religious structures. They were used as monuments to the Buddha and as sites for religious pilgrimage. Stupas were believed to enshrine relics associated with the Buddha and other important figures in Buddhism.
Current Status	Today, stupas remain important cultural and historical landmarks in India. They attract visitors from around the world. Many have undergone restoration and conservation efforts to preserve their historical and religious significance.

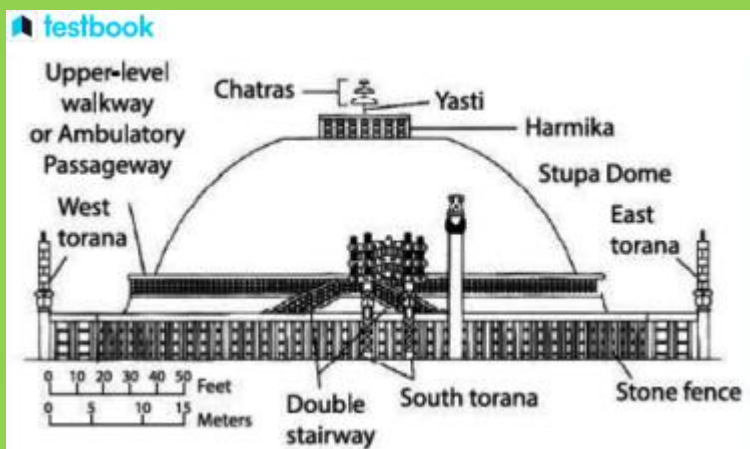


Fig: Mauryan Stupa

Check out this article on [Temple Style Architecture](#) for the UPSC Exam!

Mauryan Palaces

Mauryan palaces were predominantly constructed with wood. Both Chandragupta Maurya and Ashoka had wooden palaces.

- Kumrahar, located in modern Patna, is famous for its Mauryan palaces.
- Some of the most notable Mauryan palaces can be found there.
- The palaces featured intricate carvings and designs.
- The Mauryan rulers used their palaces for various purposes.
 - These purposes included governance, administration, and entertaining guests.
- Although some Mauryan palaces have been lost to time.
 - These remaining palaces provide a glimpse into the wealth and grandeur of the Mauryan Empire.
- They offer valuable insights into ancient Indian architecture and design.

Mauryan other Popular Arts

Some of the popular arts of the Mauryan period are as follows.

Mauryan Sculptures

During the Mauryan era, sculptures were renowned for their polished surfaces and intricate designs.

- The Didarganj Yakshini statue is a prime example of this style.
- This statue depicts a life-sized Yakshini figure.
- The Yakshini was worshiped as a religious symbol by the Mauryans.
- The statue is a testament to the exceptional artistry and skill of Mauryan sculptors.
- It demonstrates their ability to create stunning and meaningful works of art.

Rock-cut architecture

Ashoka was a significant patron of rock-cut architecture during his reign. He supported the creation of Mauryan Age Sculptures, primarily for Buddhists and Jain monks.

- These sculptures were carved out of rock.

- The interior walls of the caves were highly polished.
- The decorative gateways of the caves were remarkable.
- The Lomas Rishi Cave at the Barabar hills is an excellent example of Mauryan art and architecture.
- This cave was constructed under Ashoka's guidance for the Ajeevika sect.
- The frontage of the cave exhibits a semicircular Chaitya arc.
- The interior of the cave is rectangular, with a circular chamber at the back.

Mauryan Terracottas

Terracotta art was widespread during the Mauryan period. Numerous terracotta figures and sculptures have been excavated from various sites.

- These sites include Bulandibagh, Patliputra, and Taxila.
- Among the discoveries was a sculpture of a dancing woman from Bulandibagh.
- Patliputra and Taxila also yielded additional terracotta representations.
- The style of Mauryan terracotta art exhibits the influence of Greek culture.
- The art form displays Greek-inspired features and techniques.
- Terracotta decorations, toys, and structures were popular subjects in Mauryan terracotta art.

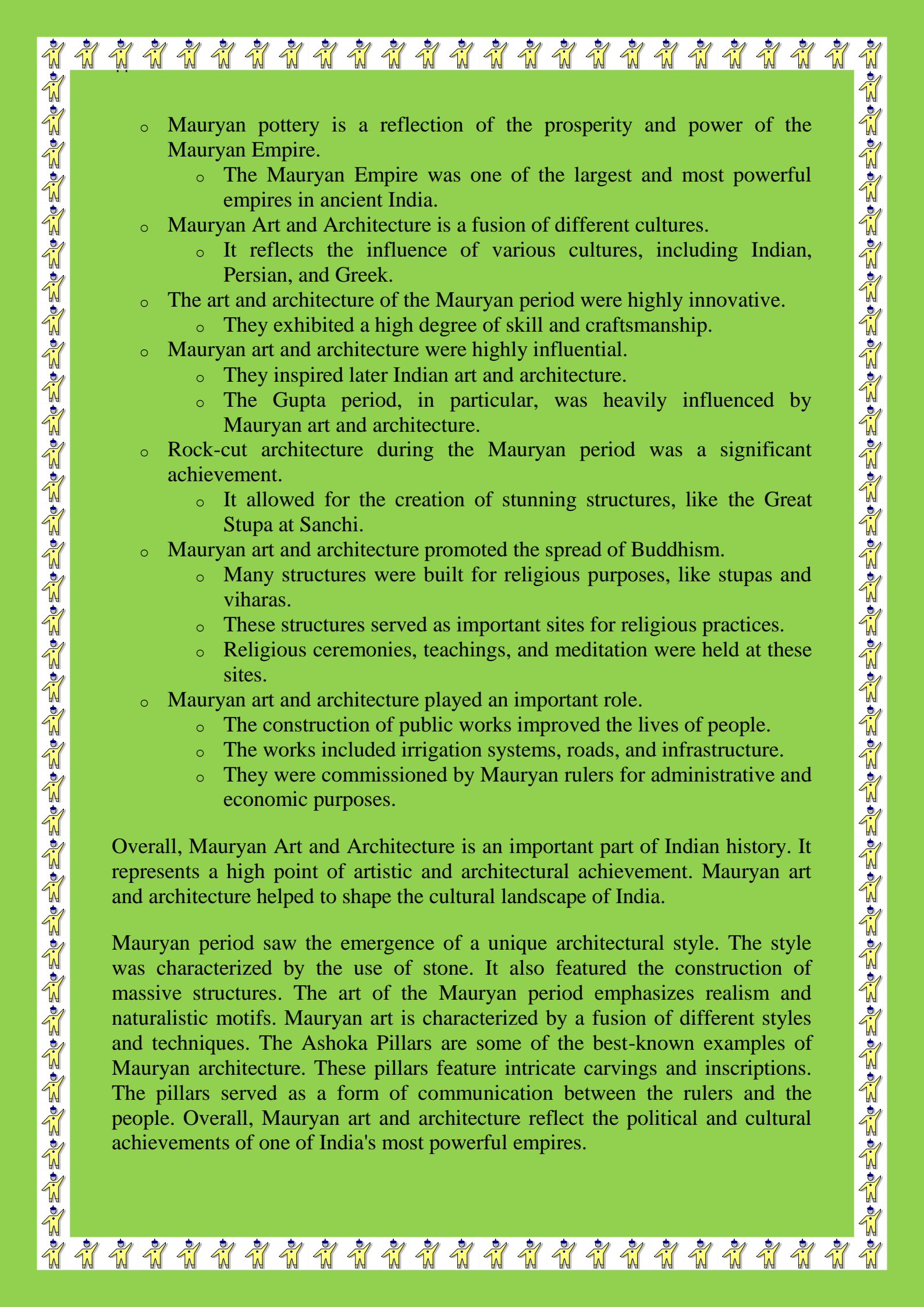
Mauryan Pottery

Mauryan-era pottery has been primarily discovered in northern India.

- Patliputra is a significant location for the discovery of this pottery.
- The pottery is characterized by a glossy, black color.
- It is commonly referred to as Northern Black Polished Ware.
- This type of pottery was widespread during the Mauryan period.
- It was used for various purposes, including storage, cooking, and serving.
- It provides valuable insights into the daily life and customs of the people of that period.

Significance of Mauryan Art and Architecture

Mauryan Art and Architecture is significant in Indian history for several reasons:

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- Mauryan pottery is a reflection of the prosperity and power of the Mauryan Empire.
 - The Mauryan Empire was one of the largest and most powerful empires in ancient India.
 - Mauryan Art and Architecture is a fusion of different cultures.
 - It reflects the influence of various cultures, including Indian, Persian, and Greek.
 - The art and architecture of the Mauryan period were highly innovative.
 - They exhibited a high degree of skill and craftsmanship.
 - Mauryan art and architecture were highly influential.
 - They inspired later Indian art and architecture.
 - The Gupta period, in particular, was heavily influenced by Mauryan art and architecture.
 - Rock-cut architecture during the Mauryan period was a significant achievement.
 - It allowed for the creation of stunning structures, like the Great Stupa at Sanchi.
 - Mauryan art and architecture promoted the spread of Buddhism.
 - Many structures were built for religious purposes, like stupas and viharas.
 - These structures served as important sites for religious practices.
 - Religious ceremonies, teachings, and meditation were held at these sites.
 - Mauryan art and architecture played an important role.
 - The construction of public works improved the lives of people.
 - The works included irrigation systems, roads, and infrastructure.
 - They were commissioned by Mauryan rulers for administrative and economic purposes.

Overall, Mauryan Art and Architecture is an important part of Indian history. It represents a high point of artistic and architectural achievement. Mauryan art and architecture helped to shape the cultural landscape of India.

Mauryan period saw the emergence of a unique architectural style. The style was characterized by the use of stone. It also featured the construction of massive structures. The art of the Mauryan period emphasizes realism and naturalistic motifs. Mauryan art is characterized by a fusion of different styles and techniques. The Ashoka Pillars are some of the best-known examples of Mauryan architecture. These pillars feature intricate carvings and inscriptions. The pillars served as a form of communication between the rulers and the people. Overall, Mauryan art and architecture reflect the political and cultural achievements of one of India's most powerful empires.

