



Study of the Golden Period (200 BC – 500 AD)

Art and Culture

Krishnakali Dasgupta

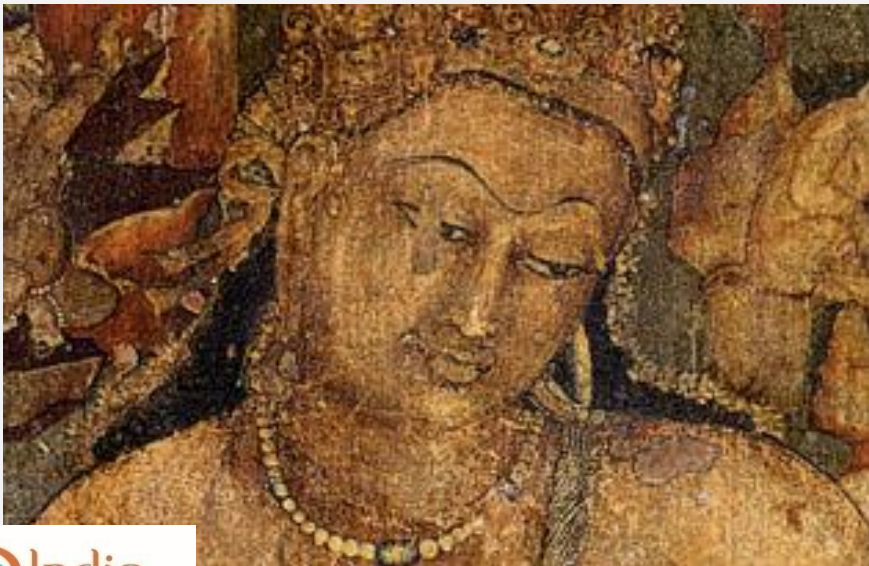
GOLDEN AGE : 200BC- 500 AD

- ART AND CULTURE



Terracotta plaque, female deity,
2nd-1st century BC, Chandraketugarh

Principal Thoughts : Urbanisation- Sophistication- Codification



Cave painting, Ajanta

Art and Culture

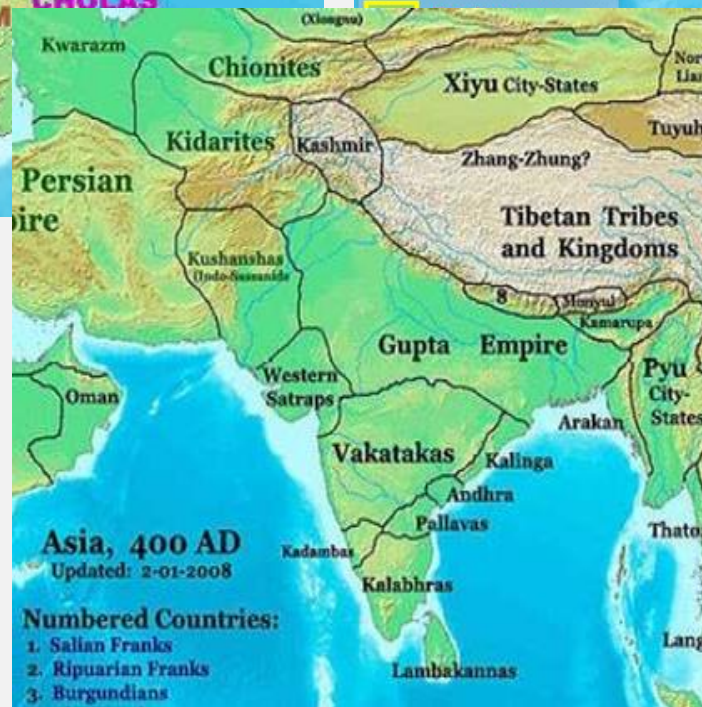
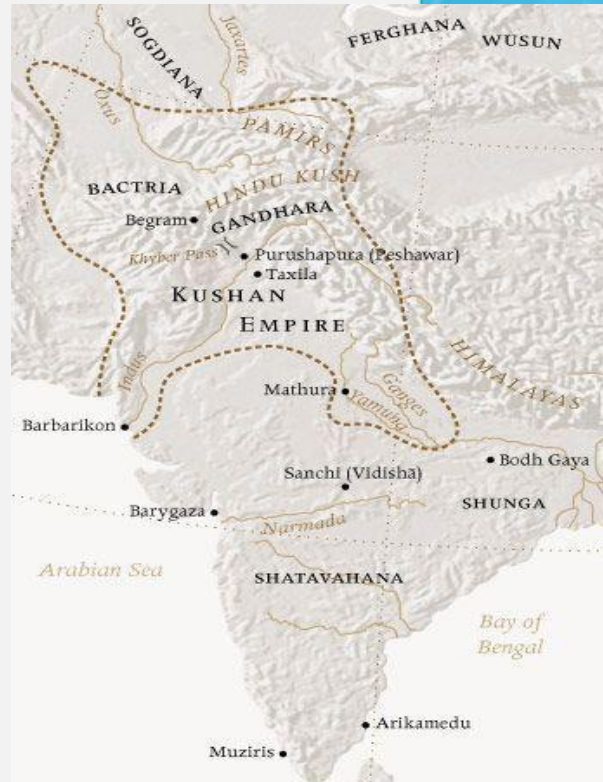
200BC – 400AD

30AD – 300AD



200BC - 80BC

100BC – 200AD



200AD – 600AD

URBANISATION

Proofs
Information
Type

URBANISATION

200BC-300CE – marked by urban prosperity

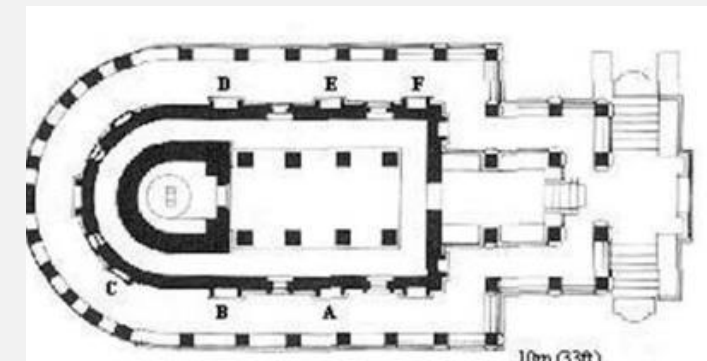
Excavations sites:

Pushkalavati- Bala Hisar,
Charsadda - Shaikhan mound
excavation :

- City with rectangular plan,
- parallel streets,
- blocks of houses
- Large circular structure (Stupa)
- Drains, refuse pits,
- House with courtyard+ rooms on 3 sides
- Room with fireplace in the middle



- Apsidal temples
- Elaborate brick tank complexes
- Fortifications + defense walls (brick)
- barns, granary
- Pillared halls
- Stupas, shrines



Sagala, Patala
Amluk Dara Stupa – Swat
valley

MAJOR FINDS AT THE CITY SITES : URBAN WEALTH AND WAY OF LIVING

- Houses – small and large
- Earlier stone rubble- mud mortar
 - Later mud brick –burnt black
 - Flooring-brick

- Pottery
- mainly red ware (incised, painted, stamped) + grey ware
 - Also black –slipped ware

- Household items, decorative items
- Terracotta (beads, votive tanks, skin rubbers figurines, crucibles, bangle fragments, ball, wheel
 - Glass (beads, bangles)
 - Bone hairpin, engraver, ivory dice
 - Semiprecious stones jewelry



Jewellery of Sunga Period

GUILDS – MERCHANTS + ARTISANS

Role of guilds : Commissioned

- Temples
- Sanchi gate
- Ajanta caves



The guilds : associations of merchants and craftsmen (same profession /same commodity)

Elected their head + framed their own rules- prices and quality etc. - regulate their business on the basis of mutual goodwill.

They also served as **bankers** and received deposits from the public on a prescribed fixed rate of interest.

‘Shreni’ or guilds : communities of merchants - ‘Sreshthi’. (Head)

‘Sārtha’ - signified mobile/caravan trading corporations of inter-regional traders. Leader- ‘Sārthavaha’.

Craft vocations organised into form of guilds, with each one under a headman called ‘Jyestha’.

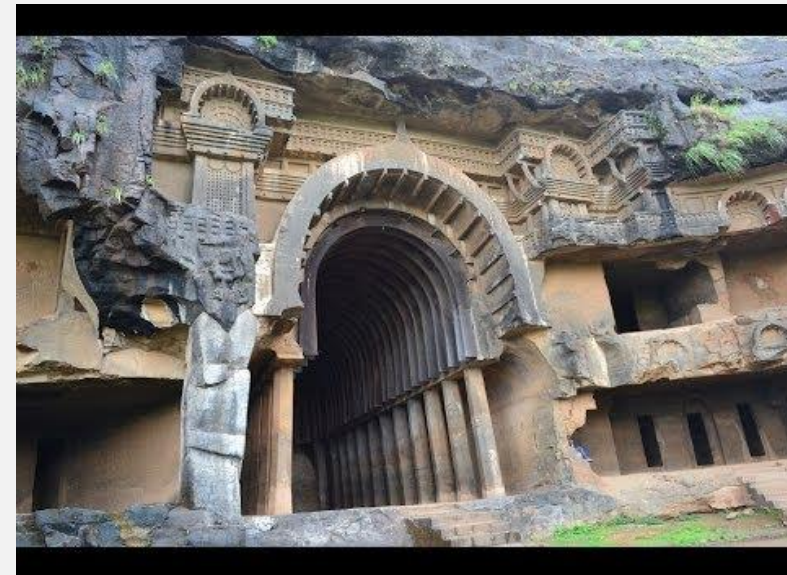
- weavers, bamboo workers, corn dealers, oil manufacturers, potters and others etc.

SOPHISTICATION

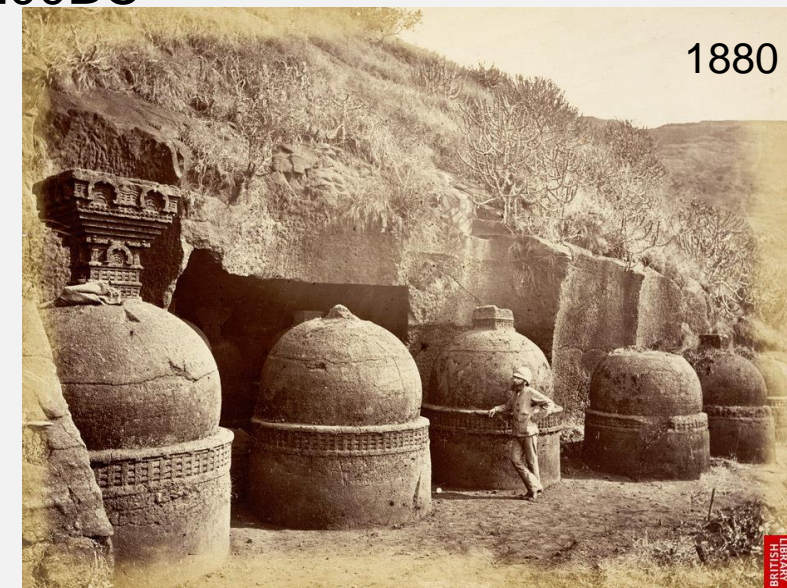
Architecture
Sculpture
Painting

Earliest forms of architecture – to survive (Previous – temples, palaces were wooden)

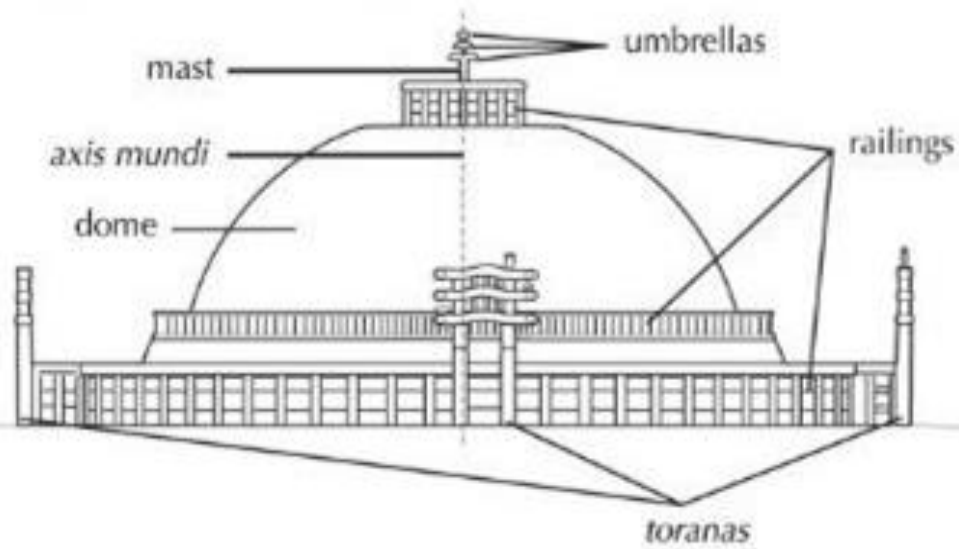
Sanchi Stupa (Brick) –Mauryan ~200BC Bharhut Stupa (stone) -125 BC Bhaja caves-Chaitya (Rock cut) -



Udaygiri & Khandagiri caves, (Kharavela) 200BC



1880



SANCHI



SUNGA

Brahmanical – supportive of Buddhism
 Enlargement of perimeter + stone casing + balcony –umbrella + stone railing

SATAVAHANAS

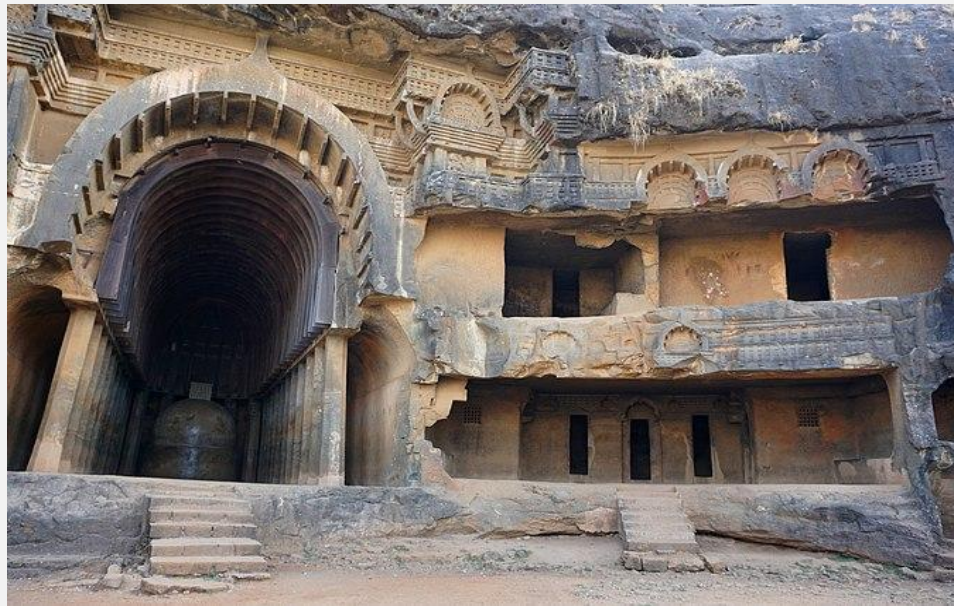
Added the toranas (4 gates)

Decoration : yakshas and yakshis (auspicious fertility spirits)

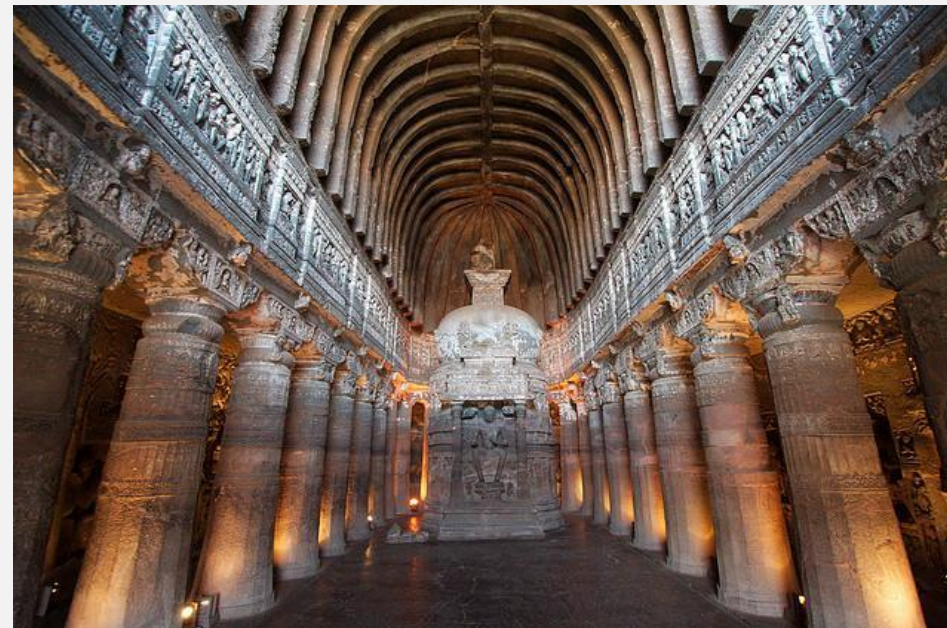
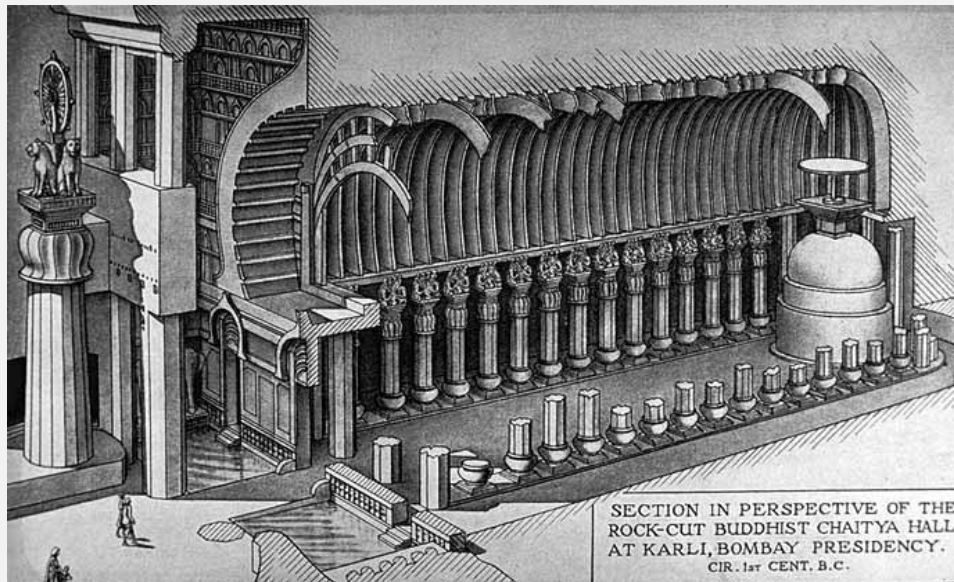
gateways : Jataka tales

Buddha Art and Culture -wheels, thrones, and footprints

CHAITYA CAVE , Bhaja, Lonavala (oldest Chaitya specimen)



Karli



Ajanta ,
Aurangabad

Massive
increase in
detailing -
facade

GUPTA ARCHITECTURE –ROCK CUT



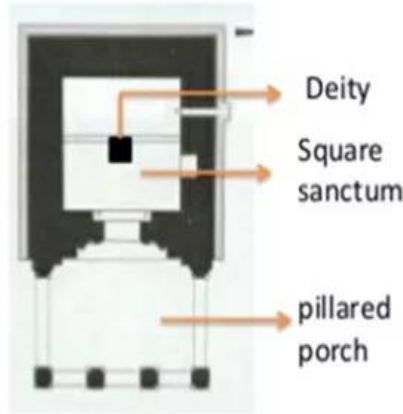
Cave 19, Ajanta



Maharashtra

- River Waghora draws a half-moon
- Rediscovered by British officers on a tiger hunt (1819)
- Named after nearby village Ajintha
- 29 caves (mainly Viharas, 5 chaitya halls)
- Cut out of granite
- Considered Gupta influence (Chaitya style)
- Largely supported by Guilds

GUPTA TEMPLES - Evolved from the earlier tradition of rock-cut shrines.



The place where deity is placed- **GARBHA GRIHA**

Ambulatory passage- **PRADAKSHNA PATH**



Dasavatara Temple , Deogarh

- Basic elements of the Indian temple - **square sanctum and pillared porch**
- Evolved Gupta temple - covered **processional path for circumambulation (Pradakshana Path)**. Formed part of the worship-ritual.
- Earlier temples had a **monolithic flat slab roof**.

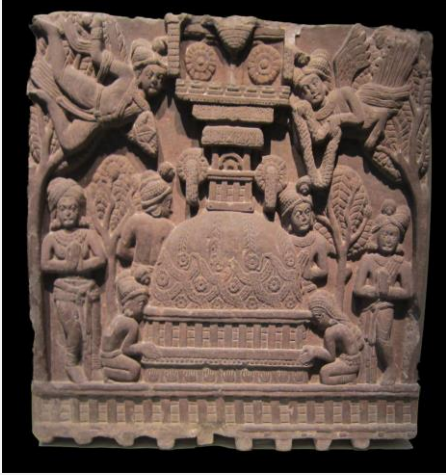
- Later temples in **brick and stone** - Adorned with towers (**Shikhara**)-topped with a ribbed disk ornamentation known as an *amalaka*.

IN GUPTA ARCHITECTURE THE **SQUARE** WAS CONSIDERED THE MOST PERFECT FORM; TEMPLES WERE DESIGNED TO BE APPRECIATED FROM ALL SIDES.

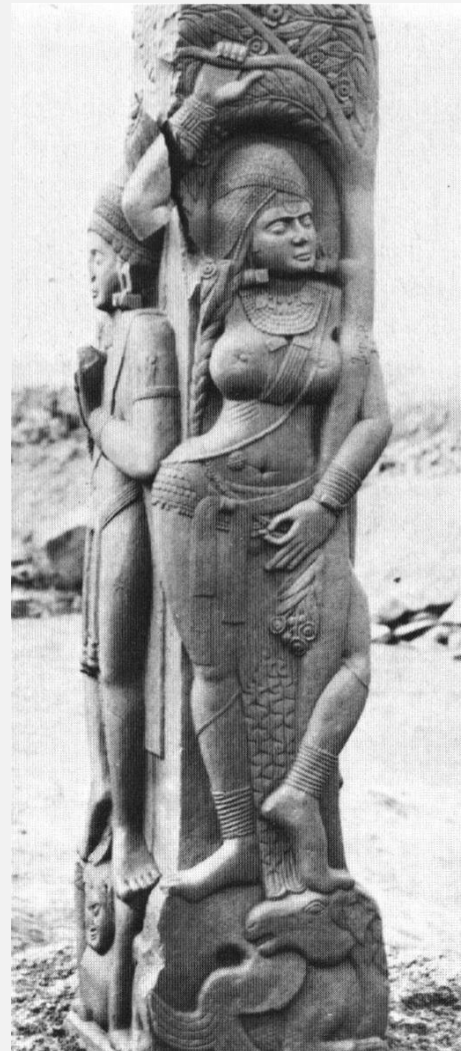
SCULPTURE & ICONOGRAPHY: BHARHUT

- Heavily decorated, Buddhist reliefs
- Aniconic phase – Dharmachakra , Bodhi tree
- Kupira Yaksha –Sudasana Yakshini

- Fertility spirits embodying nature
- Protector of life and wealth
- Donors
- Bharhut Yavana (Dvarpala)



Art and Culture

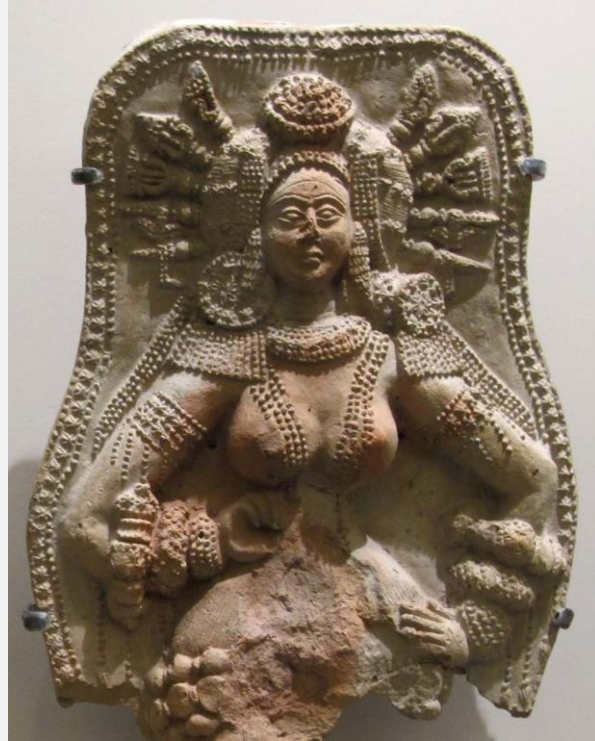


ICONOGRAPHY: CHANDRAKETUGARH (SUNGA)

- Terracotta (Northern Blackware)
- Coins (gold)
- beads of semi-precious stones
- stone sculptures
- bone, ivory and wooden artifacts.



Sri



Panchachuda



Sun God



Yaksha



Quality, artistic skill of artifacts indicate - elegant, refined urban centre of ancient India.



- Diaphanous clothing
- Heavy jewellery (pulse point focus) : Bangles,anklets and girdle (Mekhala)
- Heavy coiffure + Hair ornaments

ARTIST'S GUILD : MATHURA & GANDHARA SCHOOLS OF ART

- **1st century AD**, Gandhara and Mathura Schools of Art flourished during reign of Kushana emperor Kanishka.
- **Mathura School** - indigenous.
- Main center of production : **Mathura, Sarnath, Kosambi.**
- Peak during the **Gupta period** in 6th or 7th century.
- Mathura artisans - **experts in carving Yakshas, trees, human bodies and imaginary animals (female figures)**
- Remarkable feature of Mathura art : **Jina image** and Indigenous style of **Buddha's image**
- Mathura school of art: **formative art** for other forms of art styles.
- Transition from **symbolism to iconographic forms**



Spotted red sandstone

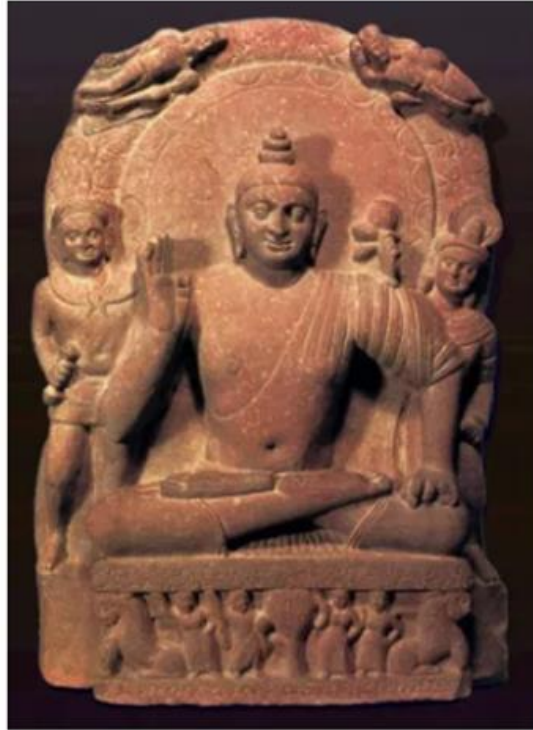
MATHURA SCHOOL – ASSIMILATION OF ALL RELIGIONS AND HUMAN PORTRAYAL



Lord Vishnu in Mathura School of Art Style



Jain sarvatobhadra



Buddha attended by 2 Bodhisattvas.
Mathura, 2nd century CE



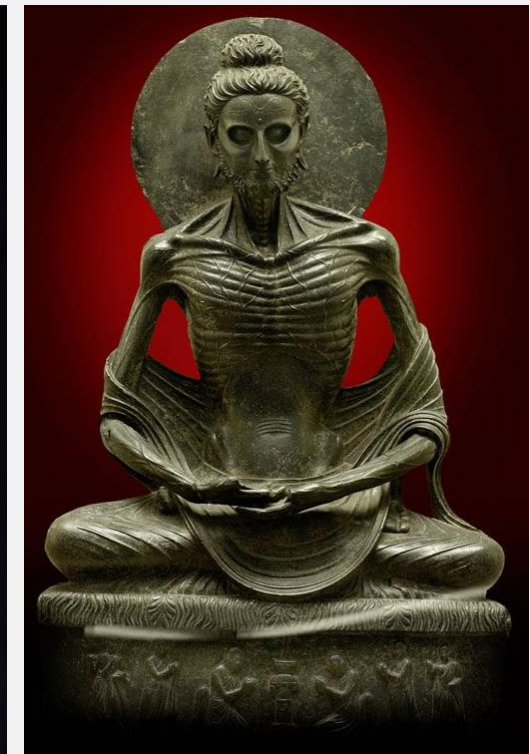
Buddha (Gupta period)



Kanishka

- Earliest Buddha – based on Yakshas
- Fleshy, bold, smiling figures
- Not anatomically correct
- Later Buddha – thinner + greater detail on surface
- Decorated halo

BUDDHA IMAGE : GANDHARA SCHOOL



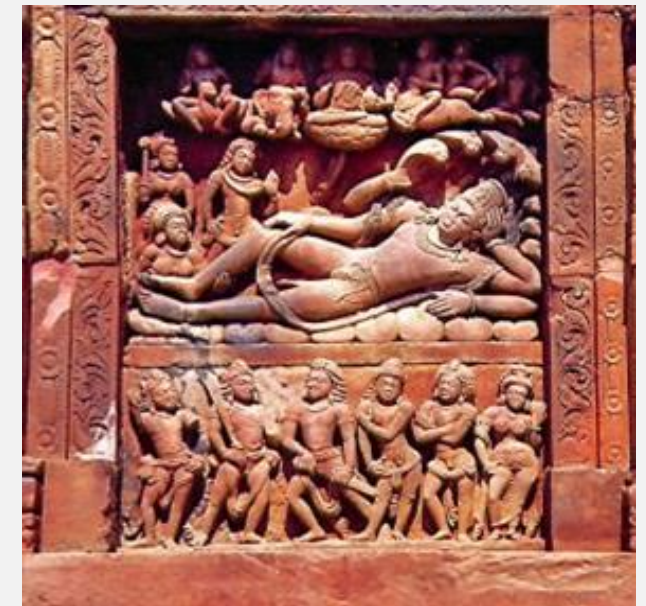
- 1st cent . AD and Mathura School- **Greco-Bactrian kingdom (Shakas & Kushanas)**

- Gandhara School focused chiefly on Mahayana Buddhism
 - –**stunning images of Buddha and Bodhisattvas.**
 - **Greco-Roman / Hellenistic influence – modeled on Greek Apollo.**
 - Constructed with **anatomical correctness, spatial depth, and foreshortening.**
 - **Stress on bodily features and external beauty. No decoration of the halo- but faces –deeply expressive. Lime, Stucco used, enabling immense gracefulness and fluency in sculpture.**
- **Grey sandstone, green phyllite and gray-blue mica schist.**

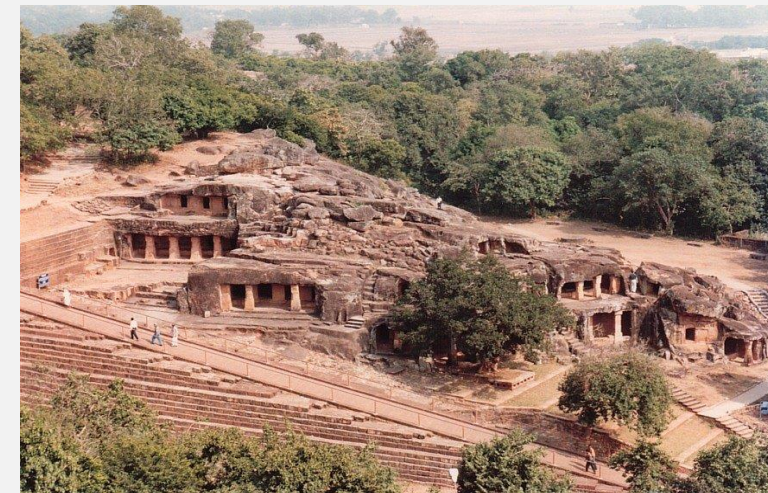
GUPTA SCULPTURE : Revival of the Hindu pantheon



The Varaha Panel



Dasavatara Temple,
Deogarh



Udaygiri Caves, Vidisha, M. P.

Art and Culture



Sagar



Skanda,
Kartikeya



Shiva Linga



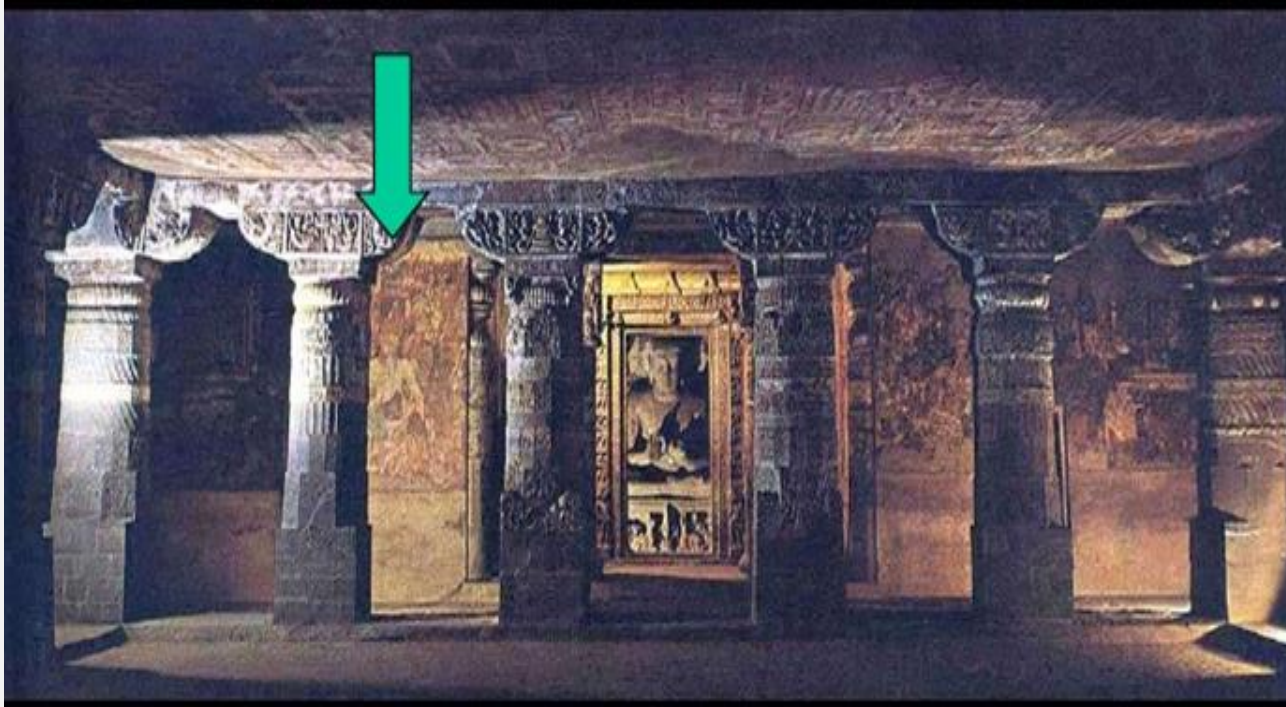
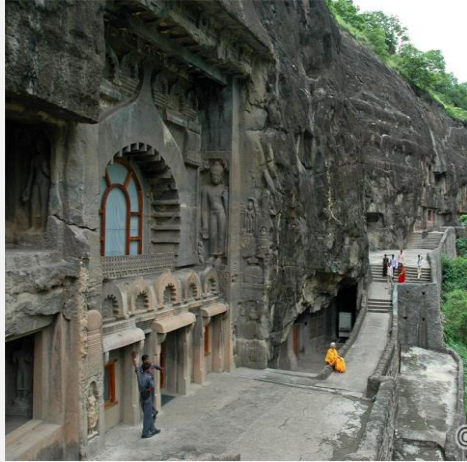
Shakti , Mahishasuramardini

Udaygiri Caves, Vidisha, M. P.



Ganesha relief

FRESCO PAINTING



AJANTA

Art and Culture

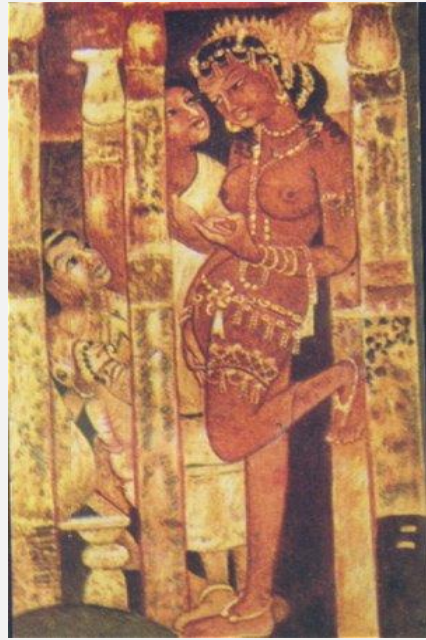
Sittanavasal Cave, TN



- Stories- Jataka tales (Mahajanaka Jataka)
- Single portraits (few)
- Painted from 1 central event-emanating in all directions
- Dry-frescoes (Murals)

Main colors :

- red ochre,
- yellow ochre
- brown ochre
- lamp black
- white
- lapis lazuli(imported from Northern India, central Asia and Persia)
- The green : mixing this lapis lazuli with Indian yellow ochre.



Fundamentally realistic & humanistic portrayal

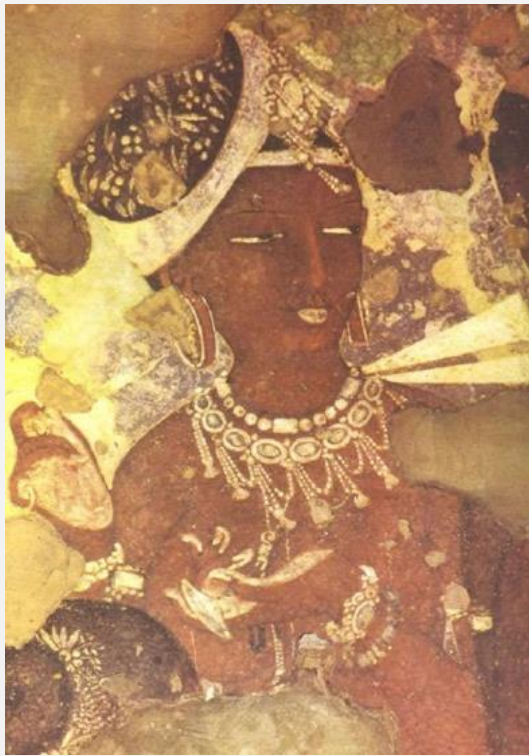


The Scene

- In the pictorial cycles, all the characters are bright and multi-coloured but are never repeated- a fundamental concept in Indian art.

Art and Culture

DEPICTION OF PEOPLE





King

The glorious tradition of *ikkat*, a resist-dye method, where yarn is dyed to produce a design, leading to today's Patola and Pochampalli, was initiated here.



Maha-janaka Jataka, Cave 1

TEXTILE AND EMBROIDERY



The girl sports an upper-garment with rows of geese printed on it

Gupta Empire Male Clothing

GUARD

CHAMBERLAIN

MINISTER

HORSE MAN

Gupta Empire Female Clothing

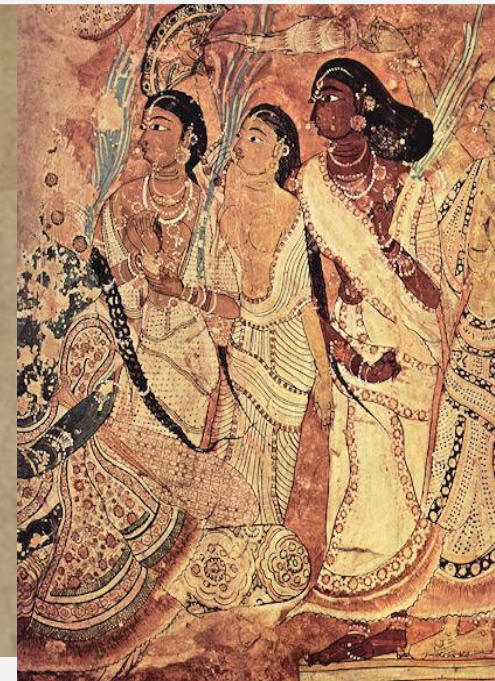
MAID SERVANT

COURT LADY

ATTENDANT

MAID SERVANT

DANCING GIRL





CODIFICATION

Recording culture and society

NATYASHASTRA (DRAMATURGY)

Lokadharmi-Realistic (dialogue based)



The roots of the text extend at least as far back as the *Natasutras*, (mid 1st millennium BCE)

mentioned in the text of Panini

- refer to the **existence of troupes of actors** (led by a chief actor), who performed **dramas on a stage.**
- Professional presentation of the **Kavya plays**
- Purpose of the plays : **Transference of Rasa** (essence of human life-emotion –philosophy)

Natyadharmi- Stylised Musical (Song and Dance)



PERFORMANCE OF LIFE -(NOT DIDACTIC / RELIGIOUS)



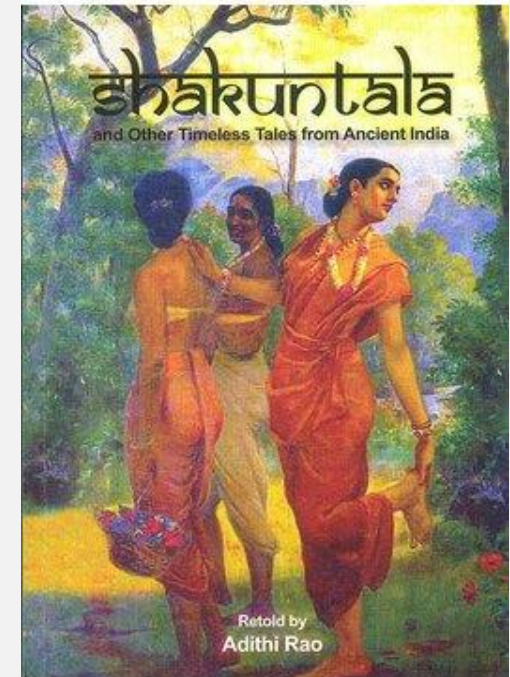
Kalidasa- Abhigyanashakuntalam
Sudraka – Mrichhakatikam
Bhasa- Svapna Vasavdattam
Vishakhadatta - Mudrarakshasa

Plethora of realistic characters :

Rife with court intrigues, political drama, comedy, romantic interlopes, (happiness and sadness)
Songs and entertainment
Fight sequences

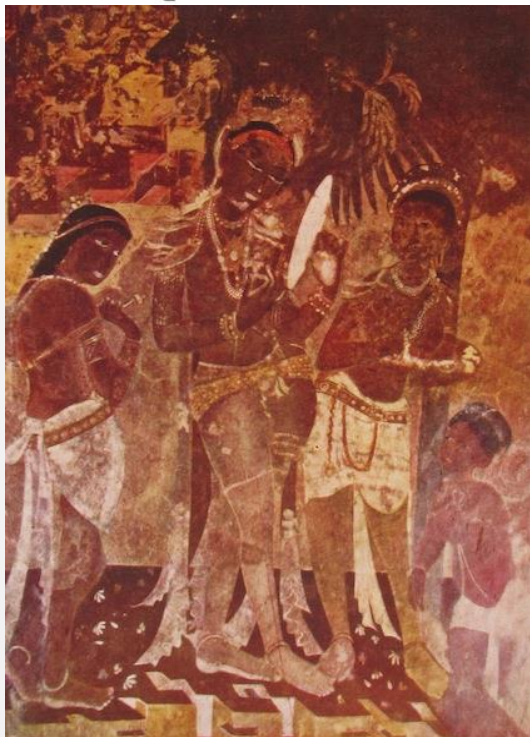
Subconscious effort :

- delineate geography (Chandragupta II path- Raghu's path in Raghuvamsa + Meghadutam
- Aesthetics of the time : types of marriage, rules of society (Abhigyan-Shakuntalam)





Karana úrdhvajānu n. 25



NATYASHASTRA – Aesthetics



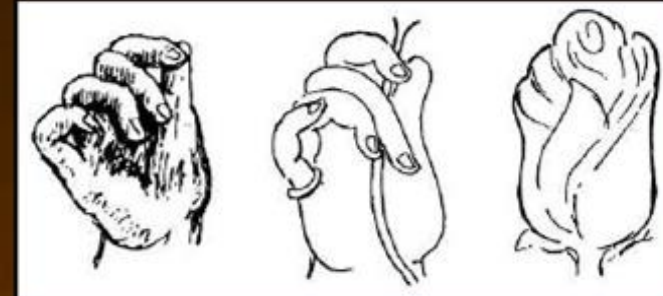
DANCERS AND MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS

SYMBOLISM

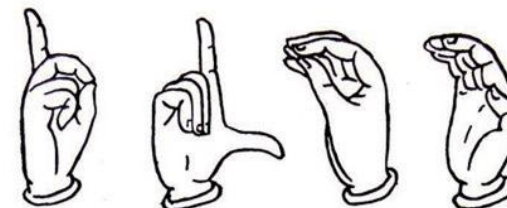


His shoulders are like massive domed head of an elephant, and arms like its tapered trunk

Bodhisattva Padma-pani
Cave 1

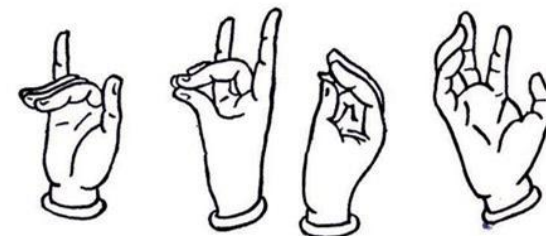


His hands are supple like flower-bud



Suchi Chandrakala Padmakosa Sarpasirsha

Suchi (aguja): Sombrilla, amedrentar y la rueda del alfarero. *Chandrakala* (luna): El río Ganges. *Padmakosa* (botón de loto): Movimiento circular, cualquier cosa redonda. *Sarpasirsha* (capucha de cobra): Pasta de sándalo.

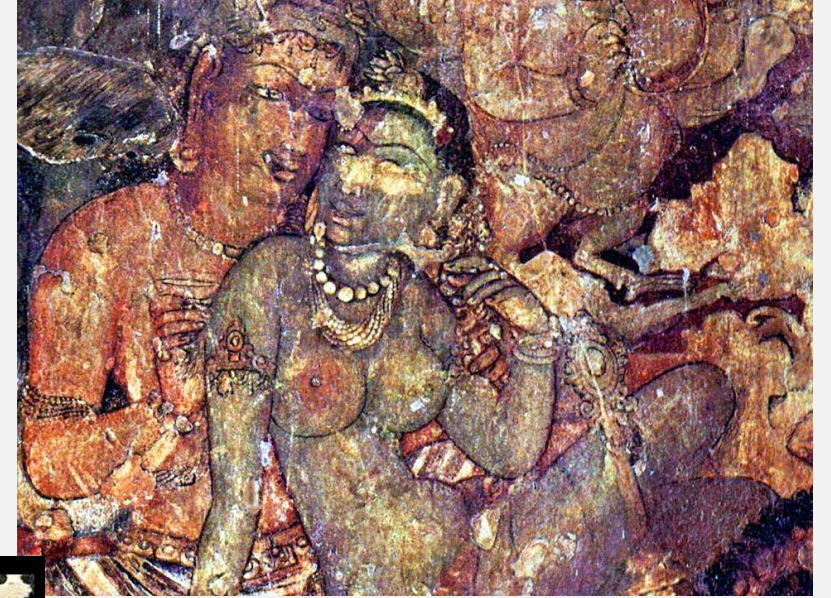


COMPOSITION & EXPRESSIONS



Golden Period

ENCODING RASA



Art and Culture



Badami cave temples

Transposition of NATYASHASTRA -

Drama /aesthetics is not restricted to the stage

Life is a play , a performance, a story

-encoded and retold over generations

Writing- Rhythm- Speech- Song- Music
Art- Sculpture- Architecture

- the cosmic dancer lies at the center of creation



Art and Culture



References :

- A wonder that was India – AL Basham
- The Art and Architecture of the Indian Subcontinent – JC Harle
- Ancient India – R.C. Majumdar
- A History of Ancient and Early Medieval India – Upinder Singh
- Foundations of Indian Culture (VolII) - GC Pande
- Cultural History of India – OM Prakash
- Ajanta: A cultural study – MK Dhavalikar
- The story of Civilisation – Will Durant
- Internet sources

THANK YOU!