

# BUDDHISM + INDIAN HINDU ART

Religions developed:

**Hinduism:** Many different sects of Hinduism. Belief in the infinite variety of the divine: nature, gods, humans. Orthodox Hindus accept the Vedic (ancient Sanskrit) texts as divine. Vedic texts assign Brahmins (a caste of ritual specialists). Enlightenment, or reaching Nirvana, ends the cycle, through good deeds and living a devotional life to charities, religious fervor, and love of all.

**Buddism:** Teaches individuals how to cope in the world full of misery. Buddha, Siddhartha, when he was a prince first, rejected worldly concerns and courtly life and decided to live in the country. Believes in reincarnation, a cycle of birth and rebirth. Enlightenment, or reaching Nirvana, ends the cycle, through good deeds and living a devotional life to charities, religious fervor, and love of all.

**Jainism:** Teaches that the way to liberation and bliss is to live a life of harmlessness and renunciation. The aim of Jain life is to achieve liberation of the soul.



What is the FUNCTION of this art work?

Gardner's Art through the Ages: A Concise Global History, Chapter 17, 18, 19

## CONTEXT

The arts of South and Southeast Asia represent some of the **world's oldest, most diverse, and most sophisticated visual traditions**. Many of the world's **great religious and philosophic traditions developed** in these regions with **distinctive religious art forms** to support the beliefs and practices. **India's ancient worldview** that dominated South Asia:

- a: differentiated earthly and cosmic realms of existence,
- b: recognized certain sites or beings as sacred,
- c: understood time and life as cyclic.

The religions developed - **Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism, Sikhism** - sought **spiritual development, release, or divine union** through **religious methodologies and social practices**. Adding to **India's worldview** were **preexisting animistic and popular beliefs from Southeast Asia** from India's attempts at colonization. **Religious practices are iconic, and figural imagery of divinities and revered teachers** plays a prominent role. South and Southeast Asia also **supported foreign cultures and religions including Greco-Roman, Christianity, and Islamic cultures** from West and Central Asia. **Islamic influence is strong in India, Malasia, and Indonesia**, due to partial control of Islamic sultanates from 1000 - 2000 CE. Today, South and Southeast Asia have the **world's largest Muslim population**. **Architecture is frequently religious in function**. Temples intended to **house deities or shrines** were **constructed of rock cut**. Rock cut caves containing Buddhist imagery, shrines, stupas, and monastic spaces span from India through Central Asia to China. **Islamic architecture takes two major forms: secular** (forts & palaces) and **religious** (mosques & tombs). Islamic **mosques are decorated with non-figural imagery**, including calligraphy and vegetal forms. **All mosques have a Qibla wall** facing Mecca, with a **Mihrab**, a focus for prayer. Artistic and architectural traditions are deeply rooted in Asian aesthetics and cultural practices. **Painting styles** in India favor **contour drawing of forms over modeling**, and **calligraphy** was an important art form in Islamic art in architecture, decorative objects, ceramic tiles, and manuscripts. **Practice of Asian religions necessitated the development of novel art and architecture forms to support them**. The cultures were interconnected through trade and politics and **trade greatly affecting development of art and culture** by way of the **Silk Route and maritime networks**. These routes were vital for the transmission of cultural ideas and practices.

## ARTWORKS

### Buddist Art works:

**Afghanistan: 182. Buddha**

**Tibet: 184. Jowo Rinpoche, enshrined in the Jokhang Temple**

**India: 192. Great Stupa at Sanchi**

- plan and elevation
- North Gate
- ambulatory

**China: 195. Longmen caves**

**Indonesia: 198. Borobudur Temple**

### Hindi Art works:

**India: 200. Lakshmana Temple**

- relief detail, lion detail
- temple plan

**202. Shiva as Lord of Dance**

**Cambodia: 199. Angkor, the temple of Angkor Wat**

- the city of Angkor Thom
- stone masonry
- south gate of Angkor Thom
- temple plan

\* Churning of the Ocean Milk Relief

\* Jayavarman VII as Buddha

## INDIAN CONCEPTS

pluralism: unity in diversity

all life is sacred

polytheism: the belief in many gods

the belief in the connectedness of life

the honoring of the caste system

the belief that the obsession of the senses and

material life will be the ruin of the spiritual life

honoring your ancestors and their traditions

belief that the attachment to materialism and the senses is the root of all unhappiness

## VOCABULARY

aniconic

samsara

circumambulation

bodhisattva

dharma

mandala

karma

ascetic

nirvana

yakshis/yakshas

torana

chalya

stupa

yasti

Shiva

Vishnu

axis mundi

Buddhism

Hinduism

shikhara

womb chamber

Brahma

primordial human being

final

amalaka