

Indian and Southeast Asian Art

23

TIME PERIOD: FROM ANCIENT TIMES TO THE PRESENT

ENDURING UNDERSTANDING: South, East, and Southeast Asia have ancient artistic traditions.

Essential Knowledge:

- Ancient ceramics survive from China and India.
- Religious beliefs developed locally, but spread throughout Asia.
- Rich artistic traditions were exchanged throughout the great civilizations of Asia.

ENDURING UNDERSTANDING: Great religions were established in Asia.

Essential Knowledge:

- Ancient belief systems, called Indic, spread throughout the region, eventually developing into religions like Hinduism and Buddhism.
- Buddhism spread through East Asia. Chinese religions were influenced by Buddhism and stressed living in harmony with nature and one another. Daoism and Confucianism emphasized living ethically within society's boundaries.
- Buddhism is a visual art form, noted for its religious images and narratives.
- Islam, Christianity, and ancient European cultures play a role in Asian art.
- Architecture is best expressed by religious temples, shrines, and rock-cut caves.

ENDURING UNDERSTANDING: Asian art is a reflection of Asian aesthetics.

Essential Knowledge:

- Indian art is characterized by Buddhist temples and shrines.
- There is a wide range of materials used in this region.
- Uniquely Asian art forms include Buddhist and Hindu images and buildings.
- Indian painting was often done in miniatures for court patrons.

ENDURING UNDERSTANDING: Asian art spreads throughout the world through trade.

Essential Knowledge:

- The Silk Road was key to the spread of artistic styles.
- Asian art shows evidence of the interconnectivity of regional schools with the wider world.
- Asian art heavily influenced the art of Europe.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The fertile Indus and Ganges valleys were too great a temptation for outsiders, and thus the history of India has become a history of invasions and assimilations. But those who invaded came to stay, and so Indian life today is a layering of disparate populations to create a cosmopolitan culture. There are eighteen official languages in India—Hindi, the one foreigners think of as the national language, is spoken natively by only 20 percent of the population. Along with Hindus and Muslims, there are many concentrations of Jains, Buddhists, Christians, and Sikhs, as well as myriad tribal religions. Geographically, India has enormous range as well, from the world's tallest mountains to vast deserts and tropical forests. This is one of the most diverse countries on earth.

Patronage and Artistic Life

The arts play a critical role in Indian life. Most rulers have been extremely generous patrons, commissioning great buildings, sculptures, and murals to enhance civic and religious life, as well as their own glory. The interconnectiveness of the arts in India is crucial to understanding Indian artistic life. Monuments are conceived as a combination of the arts; the artists who work on them carry out their work at the behest of an artist who acts as a team leader with a single artistic vision. Thus, Indian monuments have a surprising uniformity of style. The design of religious art and architecture may have also been determined by a priest or other religious advisor, who ensured that proportions and iconography of monuments agreed with descriptions supplied in canonical texts and diagrams.

Much as in the European tradition, artists were trained as apprentices in workshops. The process was comprehensive; the artist learned everything from how to make a brush to how to create intricate miniatures or vast murals. Indians are highly organized in their approach to artistic training.

BUDDHIST PHILOSOPHY AND ART

Still practiced today as the dominant religion of Southeast Asia, Buddhism is a spiritual force that teaches individuals how to cope in a world full of misery. The central figure, Buddha (563–483 B.C.E.), who is not a god, rejected the worldly concerns of life at a royal court, and sought fulfillment traveling the countryside and living as an ascetic.

In Buddhism, life is believed to be full of suffering that is compounded by an endless cycle of birth and rebirth. The aim of every Buddhist is to end this cycle and achieve oneness with the supreme spirit, which involves a final release or extinguishing of the soul. This can only happen by accumulating spiritual merit through devotion to good works, charity, love of all beings, and religious fervor.

Buddhist art has a rich cultural iconography. Some of the most common symbols include:

- The Lion: a symbol of Buddha's royalty
- The Wheel: Buddha's law
- Lotus: a symbol of Buddha's pure nature. The lotus grows in swamps, but mud slides off its surface.
- Columns surrounded by a wheel: Buddha's teaching
- Empty Throne: Buddha, or a reminder of a Buddha's presence.

There is a surprising uniformity in the way in which Buddhas are depicted, given that they were produced over thousands of years and across thousands of miles. Typically Buddhas

have a compact pose with little negative space (Figure 23.1). They are often seated, although standing and lying down are occasional variations. When seated, a Buddha is usually posed in a lotus position with the balls of his feet turned straight up, and a wheel marking on the soles of the feet is prominently displayed.

The treatment of drapery varies from region to region. In Central India, Buddhist drapery is extremely tight-fitting, and resting on one shoulder with folds slanting diagonally down the chest. In Gandhara, a region that spreads across northwest India, Pakistan, and Afghanistan, Buddhist figures wear heavy robes that cover both shoulders, similar to a Roman toga, showing a Hellenistic influence.

Buddhas are generally frontal, symmetrical, and have a nimbus, or halo, around their heads. Helpers, called **bodhisattvas**, are usually near the Buddha, sometimes attached to the nimbus.

Buddhas' moods are many, but most have a detached, removed quality that suggests meditation. Buddhas' actions and feelings are revealed by hand gestures called **mudras**.

The head has a top knot, or **ushnisha**, and the hair has a series of tight-fitting curls. Extremely long ears dangle almost to his shoulders. A curl of hair called an **urna** appears between his brows. His rejection of courtly life explains his disdain for personal jewelry.

Beneath statues of Buddha there usually is a base or a **predella**, which can include donor figures and may have an illustration of one of his teachings or a story from his life.

Buddhist art also depicts distinctive figures called **yakshas** (males) and **yakshis** (females), which are nature spirits that appear frequently in Indian popular religion. Their appearance in Buddhist art indicates their incorporation into the Buddhist pantheon. The females often stand in an elaborate dance-like poses, almost nude, with their breasts prominently displayed. The depiction of yakshas accentuates male characteristics such as powerful shoulders and arms.

Buddha from Bamiyan, 400–800, destroyed 2001, cut rock with plaster and polychrome paint, Afghanistan (Figures 23.2a and 23.2b)

- Bamiyan at the western end of the silk route; trading and religious center
- Two huge standing Buddhas, one 175 feet tall, the other 115 feet tall
- First colossal Buddhas
- Niche shaped like a halo—or mandorla—around the body
- Smaller Buddha: Sakyamuni, the historical Buddha
- Larger Buddha: Vairocana, the universal Buddha
- Buddhas originally covered with pigment and gold
- Cave galleries weave through the cliff face; some painted with wall paintings and images of the seated Buddha
- Pilgrims can walk through the cave galleries into passageways that lead to the level of the Buddha's shoulders
- Models for later large-scale rock-cut images in China
- Destroyed by the Taliban in an act of iconoclasm in March 2001

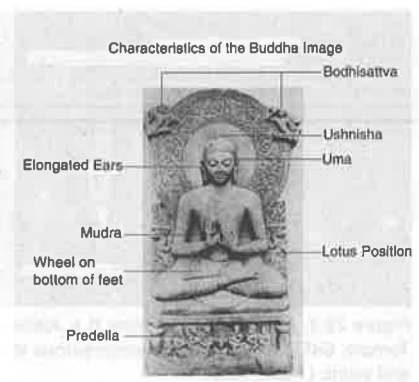


Figure 23.1: Principal characteristics of the Buddha



Figure 23.2a: Buddha from Bamiyan, 400–800, destroyed 2001, cut rock with plaster and polychrome paint, Afghanistan



Figure 23.2b: Buddha from Bamiyan, oblique view



Figure 23.3: Jowo Rinpoche from the Jokhang Temple, 641, gilt metal with semiprecious stones and paint, Lhasa, Tibet

Jowo Rinpoche from the Jokhang Temple, 641, gilt metal with semiprecious stones and paint, Lhasa, Tibet (Figure 23.3)

- Enshrined in the Jokhang Temple; Tibet's earliest and foremost Buddhist temple
- Temple founded in 647 by the first ruler of a unified Tibet
- *Jowo* means "lord," *khang* means "house"
- Statue thought to have been blessed by the Buddha himself; believed to have been crafted in India during his lifetime
- Depiction of Buddha Sakyamuni as a young man, around the age of twelve
- Disappeared in 1960s during China's "Cultural Revolution"
- In 1983 lower part found in a rubbish heap; upper part in Beijing; restored in 2003
- **Cross-Cultural Comparisons: Sacred Images**
 - Moai (Figure 28.11)
 - *Apollo from Veii* (Figure 5.5)
 - *Reliquary of Sainte-Foy* (Figure 11.6c)

BUDDHIST ARCHITECTURE

The principal place of early Buddhist worship is the **stupa**, a mound-shaped shrine that has no interior. A stupa is a reliquary; worshippers gain spiritual merit through being in close proximity to its contents. A staircase leads the worshipper from the base to the drum. Buddhists pray while walking in a clockwise or easterly direction, that is, the direction of the sun's course. Because of its distinctive shape, that of a giant hemisphere, and because one walks and prays with the sun, the stupa has cosmic symbolism. It is also conceived as being a symbol of

Mt. Meru, the mountain that lies at the center of the world in Buddhist cosmology and serves as an axis connecting the earth and the heavens.

Stupas, like one at **Sanchi** (Figure 23.4a), have a central mast of three umbrellas at the top of the monument, each umbrella symbolizing the three jewels of Buddhism: The Buddha, the Law, and the Community of Monks. The square enclosure around the umbrellas symbolizes a sacred tree surrounded by a fence.

Four **toranas**, at the cardinal points of the compass, act as elaborate gateways to the structure.



Figure 23.4a: Great Stupa, 3rd century B.C.E.–1st century C.E., stone masonry, sandstone on dome, Sanchi, Madhya Pradesh, India

Great Stupa, third century B.C.E.–first century C.E., stone masonry, sandstone on dome, Sanchi, Madhya Pradesh, India (Figures 23.4a–23.4e)

- A Buddhist shrine, mound shaped, and faced with dressed stone
- Three umbrellas at the top representing Buddha, Buddha's Law, and Monastic Orders
- Railing at crest of mound surrounds the umbrellas, symbolically a sacred tree
- Double stairway at south end leads from base to drum where there is a walkway for circumambulation
- Originally painted white



Figure 23.4b: Interior ambulatory



Figure 23.4c: North Gate, or Torana

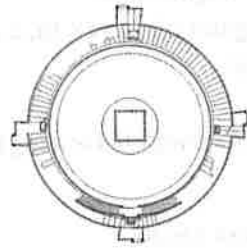


Figure 23.4d: Great Stupa plan

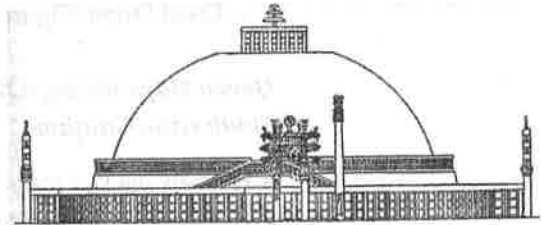


Figure 23.4e: Great Stupa elevation

- Hemispherical dome is a replication of the dome of heaven
- Four toranas grace entrances, at cardinal points of the compass
- Torana: richly carved scenes on architraves; Buddha does not appear himself, but is symbolized by an empty throne or a tree under which he meditated; some of these reliefs may also represent the sacred sites where Shakyamuni Buddha visited or taught; horror vacui of composition; high-relief sculptures
- 600 donors have inscriptions carved into the stupa revealing the project was funded by women as well as men; common people as well as monks
- **Cross-Cultural Comparisons: Integration of Sculpture and Architecture**
 - Angkor Wat (Figures 3.8a, 3.8b, 3.8c, 3.8d)
 - Parthenon (Figures 4.5, 4.6b)
 - Mortuary Temple of Hatshepsut (Figure 3.9a)

Borobudur, c. 750–842, volcanic stone masonry, Java, Indonesia (Figures 23.5a, 23.5b, and 23.5c)

- Massive Buddhist monument contains 504 life-size Buddhas, 1,460 narrative relief sculptures on 1,300 panels 8,200 feet long; there are 1,500 stupas and one million carved blocks of stone
- Iconographically complex and intricate; many levels of meaning; may reflect Buddhist cosmology
- Meant to be walked around (circumambulated) on each terrace; six concentric square terraces topped by three circular tiers with a great stupa at the summit
- Pyramidal in form, aligned with the four cardinal points of the compass
- Lower stories represent the world of desire and negative impulses; middle areas represent the world of forms, people have to control these negative impulses; the top story is the world of formulas, where the physical world and worldly desire are expunged
- A place of pilgrimage
- Five terraces of identical stepped square plan
- 72 openwork Buddhas each with a preaching mudra
- On top an enclosed stupa
- Rubble faced with carved volcanic stone



Figure 23.5a: Borobudur Temple, c. 750–842, volcanic stone masonry, Java, Indonesia



Figure 23.5b: Borobudur Temple: Queen Maya Riding a Horse Carriage Retreating to Lumbini to Give Birth to Prince Siddhartha Gautama



Figure 23.5c: Borobudur Temple, Buddha

■ Cross-Cultural Comparisons: Pyramid-Shaped Monuments

- Great Pyramids of Gizeh (Figure 3.6a)
- White Temple on Its Ziggurat (Figures 2.1a, 2.1b)
- Great Stupa (Figure 23.4a)

Queen Maya Riding a Horse Carriage Retreating to Lumbini to Give Birth to Prince Siddhartha Gautama

- Densely packed scene; horror vacui
- Queen majestic and at rest before giving birth
- She is brought to the city in a great ceremonial procession
- Ready to give birth to her son, Prince Siddhartha Gautama, the Buddha
- **Cross-Cultural Comparisons: Relief Sculpture**
 - Plaque of the Ergastines (Figure 4.5)
 - Wall Plaque from Oba's Palace (Figure 27.3)
 - Anthropomorphic Stele (Figure 1.2)

HINDU PHILOSOPHY AND ART

To outsiders, Hinduism is a bewildering religion with myriad sects, each devoted to the worship of one of its many gods. The complexity and multiplicity of the practices and beliefs associated with Hinduism are evident in the name of the religion, which is an umbrella term meaning, “the religions of Hindustan (India).” Folk beliefs exist side by side with sophisticated philosophical schools. But all forms of Hinduism concentrate on the infinite variety of the divine, whether it is expressed in the gods, in nature, or in other human beings. Those who proclaim to be orthodox Hindus accept the Vedic texts as divine in origin, and many maintain aspects of the Vedic social hierarchy, which assigns a caste of ritual specialists, known as Brahmins, to officiate between the gods and humankind.

As in the case of Buddhism, every Hindu is to lead a good life through prayer, good deeds, and religious devotion, because only in that way can he or she break the cycle of reincarnation. **Shiva** is one of the principal Hindu deities, who periodically dances the world to destruction and rebirth. Other important deities include Brahma, the creator god; Vishnu, the preserver god; and the great goddesses who are manifest as peaceful consorts, like Lakshmi and Parvati.

HINDU SCULPTURE

Temple sculpture is a complete integration with the architecture to which it is attached—sometimes the buildings are thought of as a giant work of sculpture. Pairs of divine couples, known as **mithuna**, appear upon the exterior and doorways of some temples. Sexual allusions dominate and are expressed with candor, but not obscenity. Hindu sculptures accentuate sinuous curves and the lines of the body. Dance poses are common. Temple surfaces are also ornamented with organic and geometric designs, including lateral bands that depict subjects such as lotus flowers, temple bells, and strings of pearls.

Images placed in the “womb” of the temple are idols in that they are invoked with the essence of divinity that the figure represents. To touch the image is to touch the god himself or herself; few can do this. Instead the image is treated with the utmost respect and deference, and is occasionally exposed to public viewing. Worshippers experience the divine through actively seeing the invoked image, an experience known as **darshan** and performing **puja**, a ritual offering to the deity, which is mediated by temple priests.

Shiva as Lord of Dance (Nataraja) with a nimbus, c. eleventh century C.E., cast bronze, Musée Guimet, Paris (Figure 23.6)

- Vigorously dancing with one foot on a dwarf, the Demon of Ignorance; often depicted in a flaming nimbus
- Flying locks of hair terminate in rearing cobra heads
- One hand sounds the drum that he dances to, another has a flame
- Shiva has four hands
- Epicene quality
- Periodically destroys the universe so it can be reborn again
- He unfolds the universe out of the drum held in one of his right hands; he preserves it by uplifting his other right hand in a gesture indicating “do not be afraid”
- Shiva has a third vertical eye barely suggested between his other two eyes. He once burned the god Kama with this eye.
- **Cross-Cultural Comparisons: Sacred Images**
 - Bernini, *Ecstasy of Saint Teresa* (Figures 17.4a, 17.4b)
 - Saint Luke from the *Lindisfarne Gospels* (Figure 10.2b)
 - Great Buddha from Todai-ji (Figure 25.1b)



Figure 23.6: Shiva as Lord of Dance (Nataraja), with a nimbus, c. 11th century c.e., cast bronze, Musée Guimet, Paris

HINDU ARCHITECTURE

The Hindu temple is not a hall for congregational worship; instead it is the residence of a god. The temples are solidly built with small interior rooms, just enough space for a few priests and individual worshippers. At the center is a tiny interior cella that is called the “Womb of the World” where the sacred statue invoked with the main deity is placed. Although Indians knew the arch, they preferred corbelled-vaulting techniques to create a cavelike look on the inside. Thick walls protect the deity from outside forces. An antechamber, where ceremonies are prepared, precedes the cella, and a hypostyle hall is visible from the outside where congregants can participate. Hindu temples are constructed amid a temple complex that includes subsidiary buildings.

In northern India, temples have a more vertical character, with large towers setting the decorative scheme, and other subsidiary towers imitating the shape but at various scales. Placed on high pedestals, temples have a sense of grandeur as they command the countryside. Major temples form “temple cities” in south India, where layers of concentric gated walls surround a network of temples, shrines, pillared halls, and colonnades. The Hindu temples found in Cambodia are based upon a pyramidal plan with a central shrine surrounded by subshrines and enclosed walls.

Temple exteriors are covered with sculpture, almost in a feverish frenzy to crowd every blank spot on the surface.

Lakshmana Temple, 930–950, sandstone, Khajuraho, India (Figures 23.7a, 23.7b, 23.7c, 23.7d)

- Placed on a high pedestal
- A series of shapes that build to become a large tower; complicated intertwining of similar forms
- In the center is the “embryo” room containing the shrine, very small, only space enough for the priest



Figure 23.7a: Lakshmana Temple, 930–950, sandstone, Khajuraho, India



Figure 23.7b: Detail of façade of Lakshmana Temple



Figure 23.7c: Detail of Lakshmana Temple

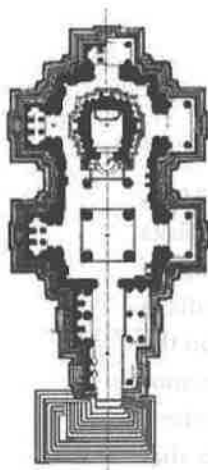


Figure 23.7d: Plan of Lakshmana Temple

- Corbelled roofs have a beehive quality
- Hindu temple grouped with a series of other temples in Khajuraho
- Made of ashlar masonry
- Bands of horizontal moldings unite the temple
- Made of fine sandstone
- Compact proportions
- Sandhara: an inner ambulatory
- East/west axis: receives direct rays from the rising sun
- Sculpture has a harmonious integration with the architecture
- Figures are sensuous with revealing clothing
- Erotic poses symbolize regeneration
- **Cross-Cultural Comparisons: Ashlar Masonry**
 - Parthenon (Figure 4.16b)
 - Persepolis (Figures 2.6a, 2.6b)
 - Petra (Figures 6.9a, 6.9b, 6.9c)



Figure 23.8a: Angkor Wat, c. 800–1400, stone masonry, sandstone, Cambodia

Angkor, the temple of Angkor Wat, and the city of Angkor Thom, c. 800–1400, stone masonry, sandstone, Cambodia (Figures 23.8a–23.8e)

- Capital of medieval Cambodia built by Suryavarman II
- Main pyramid is surrounded by four corner towers; temple–mountain
- Corbelled gallery roofs
- Dedicated to Vishnu, most sculptures represent Vishnu's incarnations
- Horror vacui of sculptural reliefs
- Sculpture in rhythmic dance poses; repetition of shapes
- Complex built by successive kings installing various deities in the complex
- Complex has a mixed Buddhist/Hindu character
- Kings often identified themselves with the gods they installed

- Influenced by Indian use of corbelled vaulting
- Mountain-like towers symbolize the five peaks of Mount Meru, a sacred mountain said to be the center of the spiritual and physical universe in both Buddhism and Hinduism
- **Cross-Cultural Comparisons: Water and Art**
 - Versailles Gardens (Figure 17.3e)
 - Kusama, *Narcissus Garden* (Figures 22.25a, 22.25b)
 - Alhambra (Figure 9.15b)
- **Churning of the Ocean of Milk**
 - Story from Hindu religion
 - Churning of the Ocean of the Stars to obtain Amrita, the nectar of immortal life
 - Both the gods (the devas) and the devils (asuras) churn the ocean to guarantee themselves immortality
 - To churn the ocean they used the Serpent King, Vasuki
 - A bas-relief at Angkor Wat depicts devas and asuras churning the Ocean of Milk
 - Vishnu wraps a serpent around Mount Mandara; the mountain rotates around the sea and churns it
- **Jayavarman VII**, Khmer King, reigned c.1181–1218
 - Most famous and powerful Khmer monarch
 - Heavily influenced by his two wives, who were sisters. He married one after the other's death
 - Patron of Angkor Thom
 - Devoted to Buddhism, although his monuments show a mixture of Buddhist and Hindu iconography
- **Cross-Cultural Comparisons: Gardens**
 - Versailles Gardens (Figure 17.3e)
 - Ryoan-ji (Figures 25.2a, 25.2b, 25.2c)
 - Kusama, *Narcissus Garden* (Figures 22.25a, 22.25b)



Figure 23.8b: South Gate of Angkor Thom



Figure 23.8c: Churning of the Ocean of Milk



Figure 23.8d: Jayavarman VII as Buddha

PAINTING

Indians excel at painting miniatures, illustrations done with watercolor on paper, used either to illuminate books or as individual leaves kept in an album. One of the most famous schools of Indian painting is the Rajput School, which enjoyed illustrating Hindu myths and legends, especially the life of Krishna. Care is also lavished on individual portraits, which were done with immediacy and freshness.

As in most Indian art, compositions tend to be both crowded and colorful. Perspective is tilted upward so that the surface of objects, like tables or rugs, can be seen in their entirety. Floral patterns contribute to the richness of expression. Figures are painted with great delicacy and generally seem small compared to the landscape around them. They have a doll-like character that adds to the fairy-tale-like nature of the stories being illustrated.

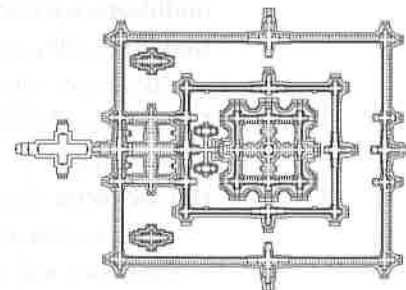


Figure 23.8e: Angkor Wat plan

Characteristics of Indian painting include a heightened and intense use of color, with black lines outlining figures. Humans have a wide range of emotion; figures often gesticulate wildly. Nature is seen as friendly and restorative. Few names of Indian artists have come down to us; the works are generally anonymous, even among the greatest masters.



Figure 23.9: Bichitr, *Jahangir Preferring a Sufi Shaikh to Kings*, c. 1620, watercolor, gold, and ink on paper, Freer Gallery of Art, Washington D.C.

Bichitr, *Jahangir Preferring a Sufi Shaikh to Kings*, c. 1620, watercolor, gold, and ink on paper, Freer Gallery of Art, Washington D.C. (Figure 23.9)

- Jahangir had many artists follow him wherever he went; wanted everything recorded
- He sought to bring together things from distant lands
- Seated on an hourglass throne; sands of time run out; Jahangir near the end
- Surrounded by a halo of the sun and moon; Jahangir is the source of all light
- Cross-cultural influences: sits on a Renaissance carpet; figures of small cherubs copied from European paintings
- Artist in lower left corner; symbolically signs his name on the footstool beneath Jahangir
- Artist holds a miniature with two horses and an elephant—perhaps gifts from his patron
- James I of England in lower left corner
- Ottoman sultan (not a real portrait)
- Holy Man is handed a book by Jahangir, or perhaps the Holy Man is handing Jahangir the book; Holy men placed above and ranks higher than all others

- Quotation says: “Though outwardly shahs stand before him, he fixes his gazes on dervishes.”
- **Cross-Cultural Comparisons: Works that Show Western Influence**
 - Cotsiogo, *Hide Painting of a Sun Dance* (Figure 26.13)
 - Cabrera, *Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz* (Figure 18.6)
 - Lindauer, *Tamati Waka Nene* (Figure 28.7)

VOCABULARY

Ashlar masonry: carefully cut and grooved stones that support a building without the use of concrete or other kinds of masonry (Figure 23.7a)

Bas-relief: a very shallow relief sculpture (Figure 23.5b)

Bodhisattva: a deity who refrains from entering nirvana to help others

Buddha: a fully enlightened being. There are many Buddhas, the most famous of whom is Sakyamuni, also known as Gautama or Siddhartha (Figure 23.5c)

Darshan: in Hinduism, the ability of a worshipper to see a deity and the deity to see the worshipper

Horror vacui: (Latin, meaning “fear of empty spaces”), a type of artwork in which the entire surface is filled with objects, people, designs, and ornaments in a crowded and sometimes congested way (Figure 23.5b)

Iconoclasm: the destruction of religious images that are seen as heresy (Figure 23.3)

Mandorla: (Italian for “almond”), an almond-shaped circle of light around the figure of Christ or Buddha (Figure 23.2)

Mithuna: in India, the mating of males and females in a ritualistic, symbolic, or physical sense (Figure 23.7b)

Mudra: a symbolic hand gesture in Hindu and Buddhist art (Figure 23.1)

Nirvana: an afterlife in which reincarnation ends and the soul becomes one with the supreme spirit

Puja: a Hindu prayer ritual

Sakyamuni: the historical Buddha, named after the town of Sakya, Buddha’s birthplace (Figure 23.3)

Shiva: the Hindu god of creation and destruction (Figure 23.6)

Stupa: a dome-shaped Buddhist shrine (Figure 23.4a)

Torana: a gateway near a stupa that has two upright posts and three horizontal lintels. They are usually elaborately carved (Figure 23.4a)

Urna: a circle of hair on the brows of a deity, sometimes represented as focal point (Figure 23.1)

Ushnisha: a protrusion at the top of the head, or the top knot of a Buddha (Figure 23.1)

Vairocana: the universal Buddha, a source of enlightenment; also known as the Supreme Buddha who represents “emptiness,” that is, freedom from earthly matters to help achieve salvation (Figure 23.2a)

Vishnu: the Hindu god worshipped as the protector and preserver of the world (Figure 23.8c)

Wat: a Buddhist monastery or temple in Cambodia (Figure 23.8a)

Yakshi (masculine: **yaksha**): female and male figures of fertility in Buddhist and Hindu art

SUMMARY

The diversity of the Indian subcontinent is reflected in the wide range of artistic expression one finds there. Indians typically unify the arts, so that one large monument is realized as a single creative expression involving painting, sculpture, and architecture.

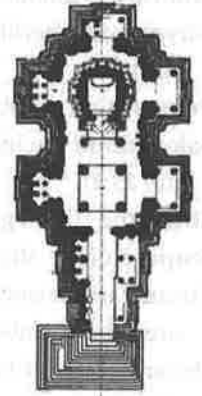
Buddhist images dominate early Indian art. Buddha himself is often depicted in a meditative state, with his various mudras revealing his inner thoughts. Hindu sculptures feature a myriad of gods, with Shiva as the most dominant. Both Buddhist and Hindu temples are mound-shaped, the Buddhist works being a large, solid hemisphere, and the Hindu a sculpted mountain with a small interior.

Both Hindu and Buddhist art are marked by horror vacui, forms piled one atop the other in crowded compositions.

PRACTICE EXERCISES

Multiple-Choice

Questions 1–3 refer to these images.



1. The Lakshmana temple is a Hindu temple that has a narrow interior because
 - (A) it is only for the high priests to enter and address the god inside
 - (B) vaulting techniques were unknown
 - (C) the narrow passageway symbolizes the journey to salvation
 - (D) the interior darkness symbolizes the evil in the world
 2. The outside is addressed with erotic sculptures that connote
 - (A) inspiration
 - (B) regeneration
 - (C) subjugation
 - (D) intolerance
 3. The highly carved exterior is similar to the complex at
 - (A) Borobudur, Java
 - (B) Persepolis, Iran
 - (C) Todai-ji, Japan
 - (D) Ryoan-ji, Japan
-
4. In Bichitr's *Jahangir Preferring a Sufi Shaikh to Kings*, the artist shows the influence of European art in all of the following details EXCEPT the use of
 - (A) baby angels
 - (B) a foreign king
 - (C) a self-portrait of the artist
 - (D) a Renaissance-type carpet

5. The Bamiyan Buddhas were destroyed in 2001 in an act of

- (A) iconography
- (B) impluvium
- (C) isocephalism
- (D) iconoclasm

Short Essay

This is the Great Stupa in Sanchi, India, dated between 300 B.C.E. AND 100 C.E.



With what religion is this monument associated?

Using specific examples, explain the symbolism of the features of the monument.

How was the worshipper intended to use this monument for practicing his or her faith?

ANSWER KEY

1. **A** 2. **B** 3. **A** 4. **C** 5. **D**

ANSWERS EXPLAINED

Multiple-Choice

1. **(A)** The interiors of these temples are quite small, so only high priests were permitted to enter into the presence of the god inside.
2. **(B)** The erotic sculptures are done with frankness to symbolize regeneration. They are not done to be lurid or sinful.
3. **(A)** Borobudur has many sculptures, both in relief and free standing, wrapped around its exterior.
4. **(C)** All of these choices are things that appear in the painting, but the self-portrait is the only one that is not just from Europe but could also be Indian.
5. **(D)** Iconoclasm is defined as the destruction of images. The Bamiyan Buddhas were blown up because they were considered false idols.

Short-Essay Rubric

Question	Points	Key Points in a Good Response
With what religion is this monument associated?	1	Buddhism
Using specific examples, explain the symbolism of the features of the monument.	2	<p>Answers could include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Three umbrellas at the top representing Buddha, Buddha's Law, and Monastic Orders ■ Railing at crest of mound surrounds the umbrellas, symbolically a sacred tree ■ Double stairway at south end leads from base to drum, where there is a walkway for circumambulation ■ Hemispherical dome is a replication of the dome of heaven ■ Four toranas, at cardinal points of the compass, grace entrances ■ <i>Torana</i>: richly carved scenes on architraves; Buddha does not appear himself but is symbolized by an empty throne or a tree under which he meditated; some of these reliefs may also represent the sacred sites where Sakyamuni Buddha visited or taught
How was the worshipper intended to use this monument for practicing his or her faith?	2	<p>Answers could include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ A stupa is a reliquary, and worshippers gain spiritual merit through being in proximity to its contents. ■ A staircase leads the worshipper from the base to the drum. ■ Buddhists pray while walking in a clockwise or easterly direction, which is the direction of the sun's course. ■ Because of its distinctive shape, that of a giant hemisphere, and because one walks and prays with the sun, the stupa has cosmic symbolism. ■ The stupa is also conceived as being a symbol of Mt. Meru, the mountain that lies at the center of the world in Buddhist cosmology and serves as an axis connecting the earth and the heavens.