

## **Gupta period**

### **Part III**

## **ART AND ARCHITECTURE**

- ❖ Peacock type coin was issued by Kumaragupta I. In reverse side – Kartikeya.



- ❖ A decay urban centre – silk producing techniques was learner by Chinese to Eastern Rome – thus
- ❖ declined silk production in India.
- ❖ Huna invasion – Roman trade was also adversely affected.
- ❖ Climatic change was another cause – lack of rain – Deforestation – fertility of soil decreased.
- ❖ Agricultural production – indication of surplus and trade relations emerged.
- ❖ Maritime trade – continued but in small scale.
- ❖ Romila Thapar – only certain centres declined. Different reasons for the decline – vary according to
- ❖ region.
- ❖ Judiciary- Narada and Katyana smriti – elaborate about the judicial system of Gupta Empire.
- ❖ Judgement based on Dharmashastra.
- ❖ King appointed the judges.
- ❖ King participated in court.
- ❖ Caste based punishment. Kartikeyana smriti has mentioned about it
- ❖ Fa Hien – most of them are vegetarians.
- ❖ Hinduism reached its zenith.
- ❖ Vaishnavism and Shaivate are indicated in the seals.

- ❖ Vishnu – Shiva legends pictures are inscribed in seals from Bhita and symbols like linga, trishula, bull.
- ❖ Gupta kings were the ardent worshippers of Vishnu.
- ❖ Royal prashasties, coins, seals – proclaim the sectarian affiliations of kings.
- ❖ Guptas themselves proclaimed as Bhagavatas – worshippers of Vasudeva Krishna.
- ❖ They assumed high sounding titles like – Paramadeva - to denote their religious influence.
- ❖ An image of Vishnu – as Sarangin or the wielder of the bow or horn – is said to have installed according to the Bhitari inscription of Skandagupta.
- ❖ Dasavatara Temple – indicates different incarnation of Vishnu.



- ❖ There is a wrong notation – flourishing of Vaishnavism and Shaivism caused the decline of Jainism and Buddhism.
- ❖ Fa Hien – note the popularity of Mahayana Buddhism in India.
- ❖ Nalanda University – received patronage from the Guptas.
- ❖ Ajanta and Ellora received – patronage from the Vakatakas – most of Vakatakas describe them as the devotees of Shiva.



ELLORA CAVE

- ❖ In the art and architecture field – the age of Guptas is often referred as the classical age of ancient India.
- ❖ **J. C. Harle** – points to the remarkable degree of uniformity in temples, stone sculpture, terracotta art all over the empire.
- ❖ He suggests that the period can be divided into three phases –
  - The early Gupta periods
  - The Gupta period proper
  - Late Gupta period – second quarter of the fifth century CE.
- ❖ According to Harle – the period between early and later Gupta period produces some of the world's finest art.

Scholars who studied Gupta art
Joanna Williams
Hermann Goetz

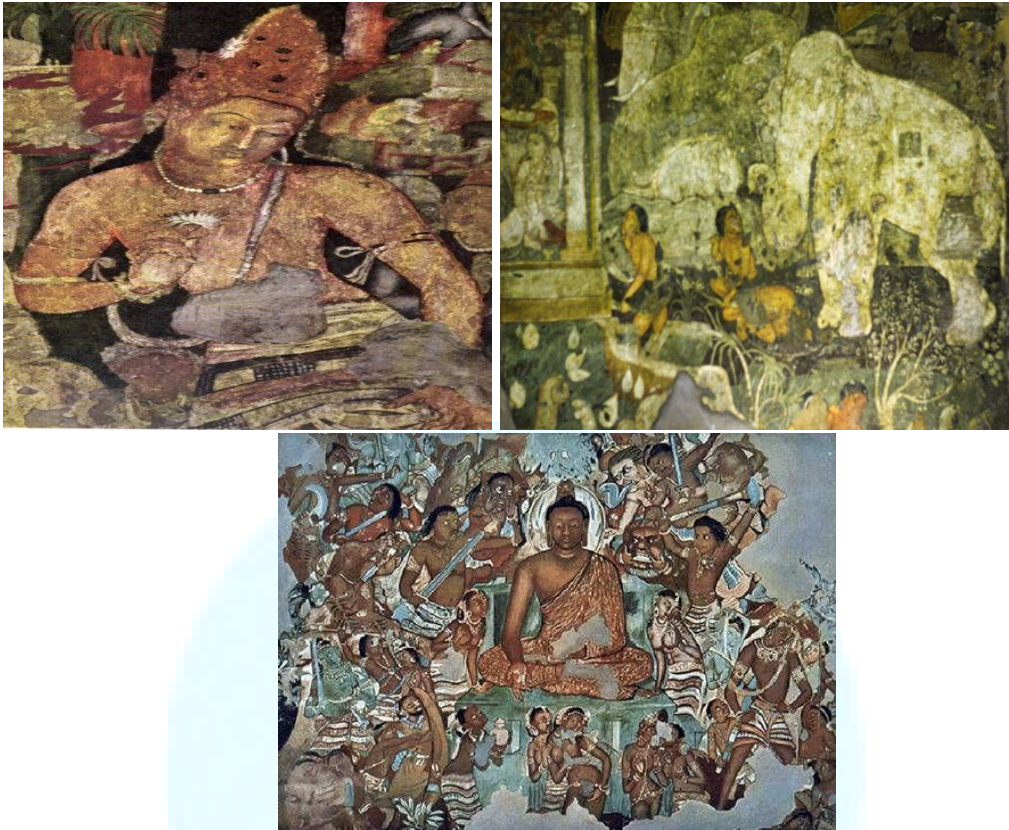
- ❖ **Walter Spink** – studied about the art and architectural contribution of Vakatakas.
- ❖ During this period – a life size copper image of the Buddha of more than six feet was excavated – from Sultanganj and Nalanda in Bihar.



- ❖ Beautiful images of Buddha were fashioned at Sarnath and Mathura.



- ❖ Buddhist art reached its peak – example – paintings in Ajanta Cave: depict the various events in the life of Gautama Buddha – colours are not even faded until now – religious motivated forms of architecture, paintings, sculptures.

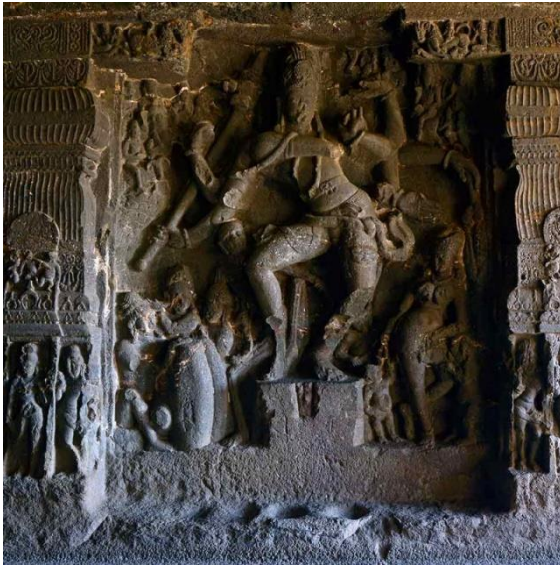


- ❖ A good specimen of tone sculpture is well known erect Buddha from Sarnath.
- ❖ Puranic images – most impressive is the Great Boar – Varaha at the entrance

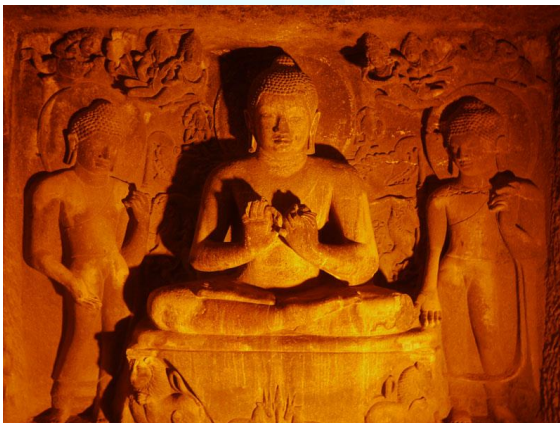


of a cave at Udayagiri. –

- ❖ Images of Vishnu varies – some of them combined and forms of the Varaha avatara, some shows Vishnu in human forms.
- ❖ At Udayagiri – all caves except one Jaina cave all others depict Hindu deities.
- ❖ Most of the sculptures are carved outside the caves.
- ❖ These include- four armed standing Vishnu, an eka-mukha-linga, prathiharas or doorkeepers and Durga Mahishasuramardini.



- ❖ Mathura – major centre of sculpture.
- ❖ **Sarnath Buddha** – considered as greatest works of art produced in the entire history of ancient India – **two standing figures** and **one seated Buddha figure** – renowned for their beauty.
- ❖ Seated Buddha figure – show in a meditative padmasana pose.



- ❖
- ❖ The **Buddha images in Sarnath** differ from the **Buddha images at Mathura** - The **robs** has no folds.



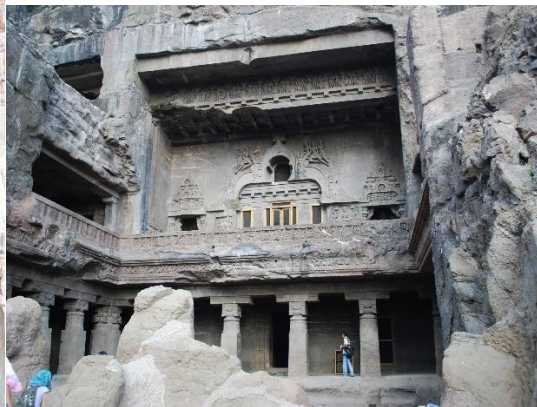
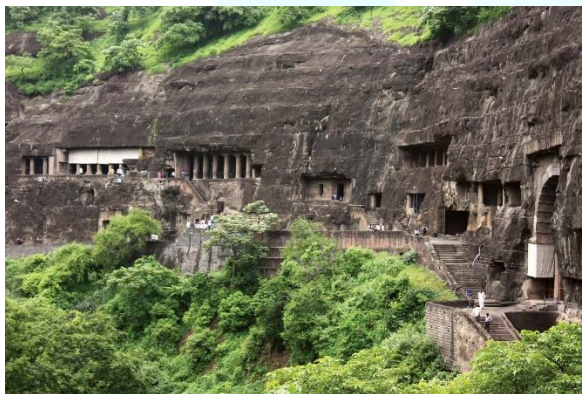


- ❖ Terracotta art – found at many places – Kaushambi, Rajghat, Bhita, Mathura – represent: animals, ordinary people, Gods and Goddesses such as Durga, Karttikeya, Surya.



## ARCHITECTURE

- ❖ Architecture – most stunning achievement – rock cut Buddhist caves – particularly at Ajanta and Ellora.



AJANTA CAVE

- ❖ The other notable rock cut caves – found at **Bagh (Madhya Pradesh)** and **Udayagiri caves (Odisha)**.
- ❖ Caves were once a monastery.
- ❖ Buddhist rock cut caves were the inspiration for later **Vaishnava and Shaiva rock cut temples – Ellora, Elephanta and Auragabad**.
- ❖ Free cut temples.
- ❖ The structural temples have following attributes:
  - Flat roofed square temple.
  - Flat roofed square temple with Vimana or secondary Storey.



- Square temple with a curvilinear tower or Shikara.
  - Rectangular temple.
  - Circular temple.
- ❖ The **early temples** were –
  - Small
  - roof was flat
  - temple walls were plain
  - doorways were often intricately
  - profusely carved.
- ❖ **Later temples** – those of late fifth and sixth century –
  - Temples built on a raised platform.
  - Shikhara.
  - Sculptural decorations at main doorway.
  - Carving or painting of the conch and lotus on door jambs.

- ❖ Many **Buddhist stupas** were constructed at – **Samat (Uttar Pradesh), Ratnagiri (Odisha), Mirpur Khas (Sind)**.
- ❖ **Nagaraka style** in North India and **Dravidian style of Architecture** in the South India.

## SANSKRIT LITERATURE

- ❖ Period around 300 – 600 CE
- ❖ Described as classical age of Sanskrit literature.
- ❖ Guptas made Sanskrit their official language.
- ❖ Their epigraphical records were written in Sanskrit.
- ❖ Last phase of the Smriti literature.
- ❖ Smritis – religious text covering wide range of subjects like – ethics, politics, culture, art.
- ❖ Gupta period also saw the development of Sanskrit grammar.

<b>Main works on Sanskrit grammar.</b>
<b>Panini – Ashtadhyayi</b>
<b>Patanjali – Mahabhashya:</b> Bhartrihari wrote a commentary.
<b>Amarasimha – Amarakosa:</b> a thesaurus or dictionary in Sanskrit.
<b>Chandrogomia – Chandravakyakaranam:</b> a Buddhist scholar wrote grammar.

- ❖ **Puranas –**
  - Puranas were composed.
  - they are legendary works.
  - **Recorded by the Brahmins.**
  - Originally **composed by the bards or professional story tellers.**
  - Now – **rewritten in classical Sanskrit.**
  - **Eighteen puranas** are listed.
  - Well known few puranas are:

<b>Brahma Purana</b>	<b>Bhavishya Purana</b>
<b>Padma Purana</b>	<b>Matsya Purana</b>
<b>Vishnu Purana</b>	<b>Shrimad Bhagavat Purana</b>
<b>Skanda Purana</b>	<b>Agni Purana</b>
<b>Markendeya Purana</b>	<b>Shiva Maha Purana</b>



## E ▶ ENTRI

- ❖ **Ramayana and Mahabharata** – completed by 300 CE.
  - ❖ **Natya Shastra of Bharata** – a foundational treatise on dance, drama and poetry.
  - ❖ **The Panchatantra** – stories presented as narrated by the sage named **Vishnusharman** to educate three princesses.
  - ❖ **Earlier phase** – Buddhist works in **Pali and Prakrit languages** but in later period – **Sanskrit** came to be used.
  - ❖ **Arya Deva and Arya Asanga** – most notable writers.
  - ❖ **First regular Buddhist work – on logic** was written by **Vasubandhu**.
  - ❖ **Sanskrit** came to be the **medium of Jaina literature**.
  - ❖ **Vimala Sari** – produced a **Jaina version of Ramayana** – called: **The Paumacariyam**.
  - ❖ **Siddhasena Divakara** – wrote the Jaina books on logic.
  
  - ❖ **Bhasa** – an important poet in the early phase of the Gupta period.
  - ❖ He wrote **thirteen plays**.
  - ❖ He wrote in **Sanskrit**, but his dramas contain a **substantial amount of Prakrit**.
  - ❖ He was an author of the drama called – **Dradiracharudatta**.
  - ❖ This play was later refashioned as **Mrichchhakatika** or the **Little Clay Cart** by the **Shudraka**.
  - ❖ The play deals with – the love affair of a poor brahmana trader with a beautiful courtesan.
  - ❖ Bhasa uses the term **Yavanika** – it's a **Greek term** for the curtain.
  - ❖ Major works –
    - **Madhyamavyayoga**
    - **Dutab- Ghatotkacha**
    - **Dutavakya**
    - **Balacharita**
- |  |
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| Bharavi wrote <i>Kriatarjuniya</i>         |
| Bhatti wrote <i>Ravanavadha</i>            |
| Mentha wrote a drama <i>Hayagrivavadha</i> |
| Bhamasha wrote <i>Kavyalankara</i>         |
| Dandin wrote <i>Kavyadarsha</i>            |
- 
- ❖ **Samudra Gupta** himself established his fame as **Kaviraja**.
  - ❖ **Navaratna** formed in his court.
  - ❖ **Vishakadatta** – **Mudraraksasa** and **Devichandraguptam**.
  
  - ❖ **Kalidasa**
    - C. 350 – 450 CE.
    - Most brilliant playwrights

<b>Drams</b>
Abhinjanashakuntala - love story of King Dushyanta and Shakuntala. Earliest Indian work translated into European languages.
Malvikagnimitra
Vikramorvasiya

<b>Poems</b>
Raghuvamsha
Kumarasambhava
Megaduta

- ❖ The **plays** produced in Gupta period have certain common features:  
 Firstly, they **all were comedies** and no tragedy.  
 Secondly, **characters of higher and lower classes do not speak same language.**  
**Women and Shudras featuring in Prakrit language whereas, higher classes featuring in Sanskrit language.**

Bhavabhuti wrote Malai- Madhava
Magha wrote Shishupalavadha
Varahamihira wrote Brihat Samhita, Pancha Siddhantika and Brihat Jataka

S R Goyal – <i>Upper Ganga Valley</i> – describe the political history of Guptas.
Chandragupta II – Chakravikrama type of coin.
Dukatas – land grant institution task of implementing gifts.
Silver coins made by – Chandragupta II, Kumaragupta I, Skandagupta, Buddhagupta.