

The Art of South and Southeast Asia

**A Resource for
Educators**

The Metropolitan Museum of Art

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Front cover: *Krishna Battling the Horse Demon Keshi*, India (Uttar Pradesh). Gupta period, 5th century. Terracotta. H. 21 in. (53.3 cm). Purchase, Florence and Herbert Irving Gift, 1991 (1991.300)

Back cover: *The Goddess Durga Killing the Buffalo Demon Mahisha (Mahishasuramardini)*, Bangladesh or India (West Bengal). Pala period, 12th century. Argillite. H. 5⁵/₁₆ in. (13.5 cm). Purchase, Diana and Arthur G. Altschul Gift, 1993 (1993.7)

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Foreword

South and Southeast Asia has been the seat of great civilizations from time immemorial. From the Himalayan mountains to the vast island chains of the equator, from the Indian subcontinent to the Pacific, the peoples of this region have produced magnificent art for thousands of years. As an encyclopedic museum celebrating the finest human achievement in the visual arts, The Metropolitan Museum of Art presents these masterworks in the Florence and Herbert Irving Galleries and in the Islamic Galleries. *The Art of South and Southeast Asia: A Resource for Educators* assembles comprehensive materials for teaching and learning in the form of texts, slides, posters, and a CD-ROM. Included are examples of Buddhist and Hindu sculpture in stone and bronze, later Indian court art, miniature painting, and elegant personal possessions. These artworks demonstrate that the people who created and owned them keenly appreciated the things of this world—the luxury and fine craftsmanship that power can command—and at the same time probed deeply into spiritual and cosmic matters of great complexity.

This resource for educators contains both a summary of the history of South and Southeast Asia and background information about the major religions of the area—Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism, and Islam. You will also find descriptions of the style, function, and meaning of the art, and classroom activities that lead to art-making and writing projects. The suggested discussion points will help students understand what art reveals about South and Southeast Asian civilizations. Teachers and students can use these materials in the classroom, but we know that study and preparation are best rewarded by a visit to the Metropolitan Museum, or to another museum in your area.

We are fortunate indeed that these educational materials were made possible by The Miriam and Ira D. Wallach Foundation. Their generosity underscores their high commitment to Asian art, to students, and to teachers. We are deeply grateful for their support.

Philippe de Montebello
Director

Kent Lydecker
Associate Director for Education

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Because works of South and Southeast Asian Art are represented in the collections of three other curatorial areas, the involvement of those departments was very important. Daniel Walker, Patti Cadby Birch Curator, Department of Islamic Art, gave generously of his time and knowledge, as did Stuart W. Pyhrr, Arthur Ochs Sulzberger Curator in Charge, and Robert M. Carroll, armorer, both of the Department of Arms and Armor, and J. Kenneth Moore, Frederick P. Rose Curator in Charge of the Department of Musical Instruments.

Colleagues in Education were instrumental in the development of this project. We especially acknowledge the dedicated efforts of Edie Watts, whose many years of experience proved invaluable in making this resource. We are grateful to Christopher Noey, who at the very beginning of the project helped Edie clarify her ideas. Elizabeth Hammer-Munemura was a constant supporter, and Rebecca Arkenberg enthusiastically provided suggestions for the class activities and discussions section and wrote the lesson plan. Vivian Wick was responsible for the videography. Paul Caro and Vincent Falivene prepared the CD-ROM. Merantine Hens helped guide the text through its final stages. Throughout the process of putting the materials into a coherent and attractive format we relied on the good eye and common sense of Masha Turchinsky.

Bruce Schwarz and Barbara Bridgers of the Photograph Studio were friends indeed when extra work needed to be done at the last minute. Christine Hiebert of the Department of Design created a handsome layout and look for the various elements included in this resource. We also wish to thank Philomena Mariani, who skillfully edited and improved the manuscript for this volume.

Kent Lydecker

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I How to Use These Materials

How to Use These Materials

South Asia encompasses the modern nations of India, Bangladesh, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka. The subcontinent was the source of a great civilization which spread to Afghanistan in the northwest, to the Himalayan region (modern Nepal, Bhutan, and Tibet) in the northeast, and eastward to Southeast Asia, a vast area that includes Burma (now called Myanmar), Thailand, Cambodia, Laos, Vietnam, Malaysia, and Indonesia.

This study focuses on and introduces works of art selected from the rich South and Southeast Asian collections of the Metropolitan Museum of Art. Art is vital to understanding India's ancient, complex, and enduring civilization which for more than four thousand years has embraced change without losing identity. Through the arts one can trace the development of India's great belief systems, Buddhism and Hinduism, and their spread to Sri Lanka, the Himalayan regions, and mainland and island Southeast Asia.

Educators may adapt this resource for students of all ages, interests, and abilities. It contains a wealth of visual and written material to enrich art, social studies, and language arts curricula, and to make interdisciplinary connections. Mathematics classes can focus on the canons of proportion in the sculpture and the geometric order in Islamic design. Science students can increase their observation skills noting the metaphors and symbols in the arts that reflect the environment and worldviews of South and Southeast Asian peoples.

Goals for Students

- To understand that the arts of South and Southeast Asia are conceptual. They express ideas and beliefs about:
 - divine forces that control the universe
 - moral behavior
 - the search for spiritual peace
 - cycles of birth, death, and reincarnation
 - respect for all living beings
 - glorifying gods, kings, and emperors
- To discover that these ideas were communicated through a visual language of symbols and artistic conventions understood by people living in the time the art was made.
- To realize how important art is as a primary source for understanding civilizations.
- To become comfortable talking about art. As students describe what they see and share interpretations about the meaning of artworks, they will develop language and critical thinking skills.
- To understand that in a successful work of art, the content, form (i.e., line, color, shape, and arrangement), and materials together reinforce meaning and function. For example, finely crafted, luxurious materials with an emphasis on finish, detail, color, and pattern are ideal vehicles for praising a ruler's power, wealth, and elegant taste. Divine power and spiritual perfec-

tion are effectively expressed in idealized human bodies with serene facial expressions. Harmonious and balanced poses reinforce the idea of transcendent wisdom. To suggest divine energy, some deities are shown in active poses with fierce expressions.

- To understand that notions of the ideal human form differ from culture to culture.

Procedures for the Teacher

Review the table of contents and leaf through the materials to gain an overview. The historical summary and timeline contained in section II, and contextual materials on the art of South and Southeast Asia in section III provide the background information necessary to help your students describe, interpret, and enjoy the art.

Section IV, "The Visual Materials," includes descriptions for the fifty-three works of art referenced in this resource, along with suggestions for looking at, discussing, and comparing the images. References to artworks in the text (i.e., "image 1") correspond to the numbered entries in the visual materials section. Digital images of all the artworks are provided on the accompanying CD-ROM, and forty are included here in slide format. The works of art can be located in the slide packet or on the CD-ROM by the number assigned to each in the visual materials section. Themes for linking the visual materials are listed on pages 50–51.

This resource is designed to be flexible. Depending on the age and interests of the class, and the time available, you may use all or only parts of the suggested discussion and activities.

For Groups Planning to Visit The Metropolitan Museum of Art

The South and Southeast Asian galleries are located on the second floor and east mezzanine of the north wing, **with one exception**: the arts of Mughal India are in the Islamic galleries on the second floor of the south wing. Because of their sensitivity to light, the textiles and miniature paintings on view are rotated three or four times a year with similar works of art from the collections.

A few works of art from the Indus Valley civilization are displayed in the Ancient Near East galleries on the second floor in the south wing as well as in the South Asian galleries.

Examples of India's armor and hunting weapons are displayed in the Arms and Armor galleries on the first floor. A gallery of Indian and Southeast Asian musical instruments is located directly above the armor collection on the second floor.

II A Summary of South and Southeast Asian History

South Asia

The civilization of the Indian subcontinent is one of the oldest in the world. Its cultural continuities, and its powerful influence across most of Asia, can be traced from ancient times. India is the home of Hinduism, Buddhism, and the Jain religions. Its contributions to Southeast Asian cultures, transmitted through trade and commercial contact, transformed tribal societies of the region into a series of kingdoms in which Indian religions, cosmology, language, notions of kingship, and aesthetic forms flourished. As Buddhism spread to East Asia, Indian iconography and styles of art also had a profound impact on the cultures of Nepal, Tibet, China, and Korea.

South Asia is located at the southern extremity of the Eurasian continent (see the map on page 14). Its landmass is divided into three significant parts. The Northern Mountain rim contains the Himalayas, with twenty of the highest peaks in the world. They are flanked to the west by the Western Ranges bordering Afghanistan, and on the east by the Assam-Burma Ranges. The second physical feature of the subcontinent is the great Indo-Gangetic Plain, named after the Indus and Ganges rivers, which flow through a nearly level landform. South of the Indo-Gangetic Plain is a great uplifted landmass known as the Deccan Plateau, which extends to the southern tip of the subcontinent.

Although the subcontinent was partially isolated from the rest of Asia by the Himalayas, from early times traders pushed through the mountain passes of the Hindu Kush, westward to Asia and to the Mediterranean world beyond, and northeastward to China. India's history was greatly influenced by periodic invasions of peoples from the north and northwest through these same mountain passes. Each time, the invaders and their belief systems were eventually absorbed into the mainstream of Indian civilization, influencing and enriching it in the process. The vast subcontinent was rarely unified and, over the centuries, the many Indian kingdoms that flourished there developed independent aesthetic styles. Nonetheless, certain similarities in content and style can be seen throughout the subcontinent (see pages 24–35).

Rise of the Indus Valley—or Harappa—Civilization: ca. 2500 B.C.

Archaeologists once believed that civilization began in the subcontinent along the Indus River valley in what is now Pakistan. It is now known that this great civilization covered a much larger area, about as large as modern Europe (minus Russia), extending from northern Pakistan to the Arabian Sea and along the tributaries of the Indus River in western India and Pakistan. Excavated sites such as the cities of Harappa and Mohenjo-daro reveal a well-organized system of town planning based on a rectangular street grid. Houses, many two-storied, were provided with drains, washrooms, and latrines; civic and religious buildings, made of mudbrick, were located on walled citadels separated from residential areas. Archaeologists have also found evidence of writing on small stone stamp seals carved with images and a script that has yet to be deciphered (image 1). These seals may have been used to mark ownership of trade products. Mesopotamian and Iranian

image 1

cylinder seals unearthed in the ruins testify to extensive trade with western Asian cultures. The Indus Valley civilization collapsed for unknown reasons some time after 2000 B.C.

Formative Period: 1500–3rd century B.C.

No art or architecture from this period survives, perhaps because it was made with ephemeral materials such as wood and sun-dried brick. However, important philosophical and religious ideas were formulated during this time. The Aryans (meaning “the noble ones” in Sanskrit) began to migrate from Central Asia to the subcontinent about 1500 B.C. They spoke an ancient form of Sanskrit, which became the language of all the great Indic religions. Sanskrit is an Indo-European language related to ancient Greek, Latin, and the modern languages of Europe, including English. With superior weapons and horse-drawn chariots, the Aryans overpowered the indigenous peoples. Their great heritage was literary: the Vedas, hymns to their gods composed before 1000 B.C., contain a rich and complex body of religious and philosophical ideas; the Upanishads (ca. 800–450 B.C.) include philosophical musings about the nature of the divine and of the human soul. Handed down orally for centuries, these beliefs were adopted as the foundation of Hinduism at the beginning of the first millennium.

In the sixth century B.C., Buddhism was founded by the Buddha (born Siddhartha Gautama, ca. 563–483 B.C.) and Jainism by Mahavira (ca. 540–468 B.C.). These religions emerged at a time of great ferment, when philosophers and mystics advanced ideas about correcting the ills of Indian society, including the Brahmins’ exclusive access to the Vedic gods and the strictures of the caste system.

Caste is first mentioned in the Upanishads. Indian society was divided into three strata: a high caste of priests, or Brahmins, who performed all religious rituals; an intermediate caste of warriors (*kshatriyas*); and a lower caste of merchants (*vaishyas*). A fourth caste, defined in the early first millennium A.D., consisted of servants (*shudras*).

The Early Period: 3rd century B.C. – A.D. 1st century

Under the rule of the Mauryas (ca. 323–185 B.C.), the political and cultural life of North India was once again unified under a central authority. The Mauryan emperor Ashoka (272–231 B.C.), a great military leader, conquered a large part of India. As a reaction to the horrors of war, he converted to Buddhism. To bring the Buddha’s teachings to his people, Ashoka built stupas throughout his kingdom. He also introduced a system of writing, which had been absent in India since the collapse of the Indus Valley civilization. When the Mauryan dynasty came to an end in the second century B.C., India was once again divided into smaller kingdoms. However, Buddhism continued to spread, and with it the building of stone stupas and meeting halls.

The Early Buddhist Kingdoms: A.D. 1–early 4th century

In the first century A.D., the Kushans, nomadic warriors from Central Asia, conquered the ancient Gandharan region (which includes parts of modern Pakistan and Afghanistan) and much of northern India. Different styles of art emerged from the two Kushan capitals, one in the Peshawar area of Gandhara and the other at Mathura further southeast in India. The Gandharan style adapted forms from late Hellenistic and Roman art, perhaps a legacy of Alexander the Great's successors in the area, but largely because the major trade routes from the Roman Empire to India and China passed through the region, bringing peoples and ideas from the West (image 4). In contrast, the Mathuran style drew upon the indigenous traditions of India in portraying the human form in robust, rounded volumes symbolizing the fertility of nature. During this period, Buddhist architecture and sculpture proliferated and the iconography of Buddhist images was formulated (image 6).

image 4

image 6

In Andhra, on the southeastern coast of India, the Ikshvaku kingdom (1st–3rd century) prospered through the exchange of goods from local ports on the sea routes to Rome. There, as in Gandhara, Buddhist merchants and devotees financed the building of stupas decorated with narrative stone reliefs (image 5) depicting the Buddha in a distinctive fashion. Andhran Buddhist art influenced the art styles of Sri Lanka (image 9) and images of the Buddha in Andhran style have been found in Thailand, Vietnam, and Indonesia.

image 5

image 9

By the end of this period, Buddhism was spreading along the silk route to China and later to Korea and Japan. Along with written accounts of the Buddha's teachings (called sutras), monks and merchants carried small portable works of art—mainly sculptures of Buddhas, bodhisattvas, and shrines—which greatly influenced early Chinese and Central Asian Buddhist sculpture.

The Classical Age: early 4th–6th century

The Gupta emperors (4th–6th century) conquered and unified a large portion of northern India and, like the Mughals, created a powerful central state surrounded by kingdoms loyal to it. Under royal patronage, this period became India's classical age of literature, theater, and visual art. The aesthetic canons that came to dominate all the arts of later India were codified during this time. Sanskrit poetry and prose, including the work of the great dramatist Kalidasa, flourished, and the concept of zero was conceived which led to a more practical system of numbering. Arab traders adapted and further developed the concept, and from western Asia the system of "Arabic numerals" traveled to Europe.

The religions of India—Buddhism, Hinduism, and Jainism—flourished under the Guptas. For the first time, there was a great outpouring of Hindu sculpture and architecture, and the forms in which the great gods of Hinduism were portrayed began to be standardized. In the neighboring Vakataka kingdom (5th–7th century), in central India, artists influenced by Gupta aesthetics produced the extraordinary Buddhist rock-cut caves at Ajanta, with their remarkable sculpture and murals. The great power and extent of the Gupta Empire ensured that, even after it had dissolved, its artistic formula would survive in the art of subsequent Indian kingdoms.

Nepal's history had been linked to that of northern India for a long time. Ashoka had built a stupa there. As early as the fourth century, Hinduism and the Gupta style of art were also imported into Nepal. Buddhism and Hinduism continue to have a large following there today.

The Medieval Period: 7th–14th century

image 7

After the breakup of the Gupta dynasty, many smaller kingdoms emerged in both the north and south of the subcontinent. The Pala kingdom of eastern India (9th–12th century), which encompassed the majority of pilgrimage sites associated with the life of the Buddha, was a mecca for pilgrims from throughout Asia. Artists in Nepal, Tibet, Myanmar, and Indonesia were profoundly influenced by Pala artistic styles (image 7). In the state of Orissa just to the south, richly decorated temples were constructed throughout this period, culminating with the extraordinary carved stone temple of Konarak (early 13th century). The temple was dedicated to the Hindu god Surya, who was believed to cross the sky each day in a chariot drawn by seven horses. It is actually in the form of a massive chariot, complete with horses and twelve pairs of chariot wheels. Rajput kings in northwest India commissioned many temples, including the Hindu complex at Khajuraho (ca. 945), famous for its sculptural imagery of voluptuous women and loving couples, symbols of good fortune, abundance, and the union of opposites—a metaphor for spiritual transcendence.

image 18, 22

A number of important dynasties, including the Pallava and Pandya (7th–8th century), thrived in South India. Their Hindu temples were built of granite or carved directly from rock. The Pallavas began the tradition of large-scale cast copper processional images of Hindu deities that, under the subsequent Chola dynasty, constitute one of the great artistic achievements of the South India tradition (image 18 and 22).

Buddhism was first introduced in Tibet in the seventh century as a court religion. However, it did not gain popular support until the early eleventh century, when Tibetan Buddhist teachers traveled to India to study at the great monasteries and famous Buddhist teachers were invited to Tibet to reform the practice of Buddhist rituals. The Pala style of eastern India influenced the art of Nepal from the eighth through the twelfth century, but had a more lasting impact in Tibet, from the twelfth through the early fifteenth century. Nepalese art also had a profound influence on that of Tibet from the thirteenth century through the fifteenth. From the fifteenth century onward, the Tibetans forged their own unique style with elements from India, Nepal, and China.

Muslim Invasions: 12th–16th century

Muslim traders and merchants began arriving in India through northwest mountain passes as early as the eighth century, but it was not until the twelfth century that Muslim rulers, backed by armies, gained control in northern India. These early sultans were Turks from Central Asia. The military presence of the Delhi Sultanate (1192–1526), the largest Muslim kingdom, may have saved the subcontinent from the devastating destruction caused by the Mongols throughout western and Central Asia in the thirteenth century.

During the first millennium A.D., Hinduism and Buddhism had existed side by side, and the same aesthetic styles—and often the same artists—were employed by adherents of both. However, by the end of the twelfth century, Buddhism was unable to rebound from the destruction of its most important monasteries by Muslim invaders. Although Buddhism continued to flourish in East and Southeast Asia, it all but died out in India in the thirteenth century. Despite Muslim pressure, Hindu and Jain art continued to be created in India but would never again reach the same levels of inspiration.

As the Delhi Sultanate began to weaken, various Muslim and Hindu petty kingdoms jostled for power. In the sixteenth century, Sikhism was founded in North India in an attempt to reconcile Hinduism with Islam. A monotheistic faith, Sikhs believe that God transcends all religious differences and caste divisions. This was the political situation when the Mughals invaded India.

The Mughal Empire: 1526–1857

The Mughals established an empire that at its peak extended across most of northern India. The name *Mughal* is a corrupt form of *Mongol*, reflecting their Central Asian origin. Babur, the first Mughal ruler, was a descendent of both Genghis Khan and Timur (Tamurlane).

image 30

The Mughal military conquest was directed against both Hindu (Rajput) and Muslim kingdoms and continued through the seventeenth century. However, the Mughal emperor Akbar (r. 1556–1605) realized that a policy of tolerance and inclusion would better serve Mughal interests, allowing them to consolidate their conquests and create an effective political system (see image 30). As a way of securing loyalties, members of the Mughal royal family married Rajput royalty, and Rajput maharajas served as Mughal generals and statesmen. Many Indians converted to Islam in order to advance in the powerful Mughal bureaucracy and to participate in their networks of trade to the east and west. Others were attracted to Sufism, an Islamic sect that preached a direct approach to God through love and devotion. Such an approach was remarkably similar to the Hindu belief in *bhakti*, the personal devotion to God. Mughal painting and architecture influenced the indigenous Rajput styles and, by the late seventeenth century, constituted the dominant court style. Although the Mughal dynasty continued until 1857, it gradually lost power and by the second half of the eighteenth century, its function was largely ceremonial.

Contacts with Europe

Vasco de Gama, the Portuguese explorer, sailed around Africa and made landfall on the west coast of India in 1498. Soon, Portuguese merchants had established a trading port at Goa. They introduced from the Americas emeralds treasured by the Mughals, and also chili peppers, which rapidly became a staple seasoning in India's various cuisines because of their preservative powers. Soon to follow the merchants were Jesuit priests equipped with European prints and Bibles and eager to convert the Mughal rulers. Although intrigued with Christian beliefs and examples of European art, Mughal emperors beginning with Akbar (r. 1556–1605) were much more interested in establishing trade relations with Europe. They exported

textiles, spices, and gems but acquired very few European goods in exchange, preferring instead payment in gold and silver, which increased their wealth immensely and enabled the court to indulge in luxurious and highly refined works of art. For their part, Europeans found it easy to comply with this demand because they had plentiful supplies of these metals from South American mines.

European civilization was beginning to blend and interact with the equally rich heritages of ancient India and Islam, a process that continues in South Asia today. The Portuguese, Dutch, French, and British vied for trading advantages and began to establish inland trading centers as well as ports along the coast. As so often in the past, the Mughals and the smaller Muslim and Hindu kingdoms failed to unite against these intrusions. During the second half of the eighteenth century, the British overcame their European competitors, gradually gaining control of the divided remnants of the Mughal Empire and what was left of the smaller kingdoms. By the middle of the nineteenth century, almost the entire subcontinent was united for the first time under colonial rule, represented by the British Raj.

Independence

Increasing support for independence culminated with the nonviolent protests led by Gandhi. Independence finally came in 1947 and with it division into two states, India and Pakistan, along religious lines. The vast majority of India's citizens are Hindu, although there is a large population of Muslims and small numbers of Jains, Sikhs, Buddhists, Christians, and Jews. Pakistan is mainly Muslim. Bangladesh split off from Pakistan in 1971, forming the second Muslim nation in South Asia.

Southeast Asia

The prehistoric, ancient, and medieval political subdivisions of the Southeast Asian subcontinent have little relation to the region's modern nations—Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Myanmar (Burma), Malaysia, Singapore, Thailand, and Vietnam. Nonetheless, their names will be used to keep our geographical bearings.

The Prehistoric Period

Little is known about the early indigenous cultures of Southeast Asia. It is unclear how and when pottery making and metalworking were first discovered in the region and whether the sites that have been excavated represent related or separate traditions. Archaeologists have investigated only a few Bronze and Iron Age sites such as Ban Chiang in Thailand (4th century B.C.–A.D. 3rd century) and Dong-son in Vietnam (7th century B.C.–A.D. 2nd century). Their discoveries, and those made accidentally by local peoples in these modern nations as well as in Indonesia, suggest that there were well-organized prehistoric cultures whose populations had the skill and technical knowledge to make fine ceramics and cast bronze objects (image 40). To what extent such finely made objects were traded or commissioned from other centers in Southeast Asia remains unclear.

image 40

Initial Contacts with India

Southeast Asia came under the influence of Indian civilization toward the end of the first millennium B.C., when India, Sri Lanka, and mainland Southeast Asia became involved in the network of trade along which luxury goods were moved both east and west by sea from the eastern Roman Empire to the Han dynasty in China. These sea routes were lengthy and required stopovers that changed over time due to politics and technological development. First the Thai peninsula and Mekong Delta and later some of the Indonesian islands became important way stations.

The Rise of Southeast Asian Kingdoms: 4th–9th century

Commercial centers flourished in these areas, which had long been governed by local chiefdoms. The founding myths of later Southeast Asian kingdoms indicate that Indian merchants settled in these centers and intermarried with local nobility, forming states ruled by divine kings according to the Indian model. Brahmins and Buddhist monks also came, bringing their religions, cosmologies, and concepts of social and political structure, the Sanskrit alphabet, and the rich religious literature of India.

India continued to be a source for Southeast Asian cultures for the next thousand years. Buddhist and Hindu devotees visited holy sites in India, returning with firsthand impressions of Indian art and architecture, religious texts, and portable images of Buddhist and Hindu deities. By the sixth century A.D., kingdoms and principalities had formed in the southern part of mainland Southeast Asia, on the Thai peninsula, and on Java and Sumatra.

Their political structure was based on the Indian concept of divine kingship, expressed in the *Mahabharata* and *Ramayana*, Indian epics recounting the heroic deeds of gods and rulers.

Southern Cambodia and Vietnam were controlled by the Hindu rulers of the Funan kingdom (4th–6th century), later usurped by rulers, also Hindu, of the nearby kingdom of Zhenla. The earliest surviving Funan-Zhenla sculpture dates from the sixth century. By the seventh and early eighth century, stone sculpture of this combined kingdom was created with such skill and assurance that its forms must have derived from an already ancient tradition of carving in wood (image 46 and 47).

image 46, 47

In the eighth century, Zhenla-Funan collapsed, perhaps because the lucrative trade routes that had passed through their territories now moved by sea through the Strait of Malacca. The fleets of the Shrivijaya kingdom, which was centered on Sumatra and controlled portions of the Thai peninsula, made the sea passage safe from piracy for the first time. From 770 to 855, Central Java was ruled by kings who were most probably related to the Shrivijaya rulers of Sumatra. This Javanese kingdom was the most powerful Southeast Asian kingdom of its time. The classical style of Indonesian art flourished under its patronage, and a large number of temples, both Buddhist and Hindu, were built, including the great stupa of Borobudur (image 43, 48, and 52).

image 43, 48, 52

At the same time, parts of Thailand and Myanmar were controlled by the Mon peoples, who were Theravada Buddhists. Other small kingdoms in the region were also strongly influenced by India. In Burma, Hinduism and Mahayana Buddhism coexisted with Theravada Buddhism until the eleventh century, when the newly established Pagan kingdom proclaimed Theravada Buddhism the state religion (image 45). After Mongols destroyed the Pagan kingdom in 1287, Burma was divided among a number of smaller kingdoms.

image 45

The Khmer Empire: 9th–13th century

After a long stay at the Central Javanese court, a Zhenla nobleman returned to the mainland and founded the Khmer Empire of Cambodia. In 802, he gave himself the name of Jayavarman II and built a capital, which he called “the mountain of the king of the gods,” in the tradition of Central Javanese rulers who called themselves “mountain kings.” He erected a temple-mountain that mirrored the abode of the gods, and established the cult of the *devaraja*—the god-king—in Cambodia. The Khmer kings henceforth were believed to be the physical incarnation of a god, usually Shiva but sometimes Vishnu. Perhaps because of this initial connection with Java, Javanese art and architecture seem to have influenced early Khmer art.

The Khmer dynasty ruled Cambodia for the next six hundred years, expanding their empire into Thailand, to the borders of Myanmar, into northern Vietnam, and south into Malaya (image 44, 49, and 50). In the ninth century, the capital was moved to Angkor, which over the next three centuries became a vast royal city of palaces, canals, reservoirs (for rice paddy cultivation), and temple-mountains, the most famous of which is Angkor Wat, built in the twelfth century.

image 44, 49, 50

Later Kingdoms: 13th–16th century

The Khmer Empire began a slow decline in the thirteenth century. A large part of what had been Khmer land eventually was taken over by the Thais, a tribal people from southern China who became Theravada Buddhists through their contact with the Buddhist kingdom of Pagan in Myanmar. For the next four centuries, two Thai kingdoms—one located in the north, the other in what is now central Thailand—vied for power and often fought off Buddhist neighbors from Myanmar. Thai people also ruled small provincial kingdoms in what is now Laos.

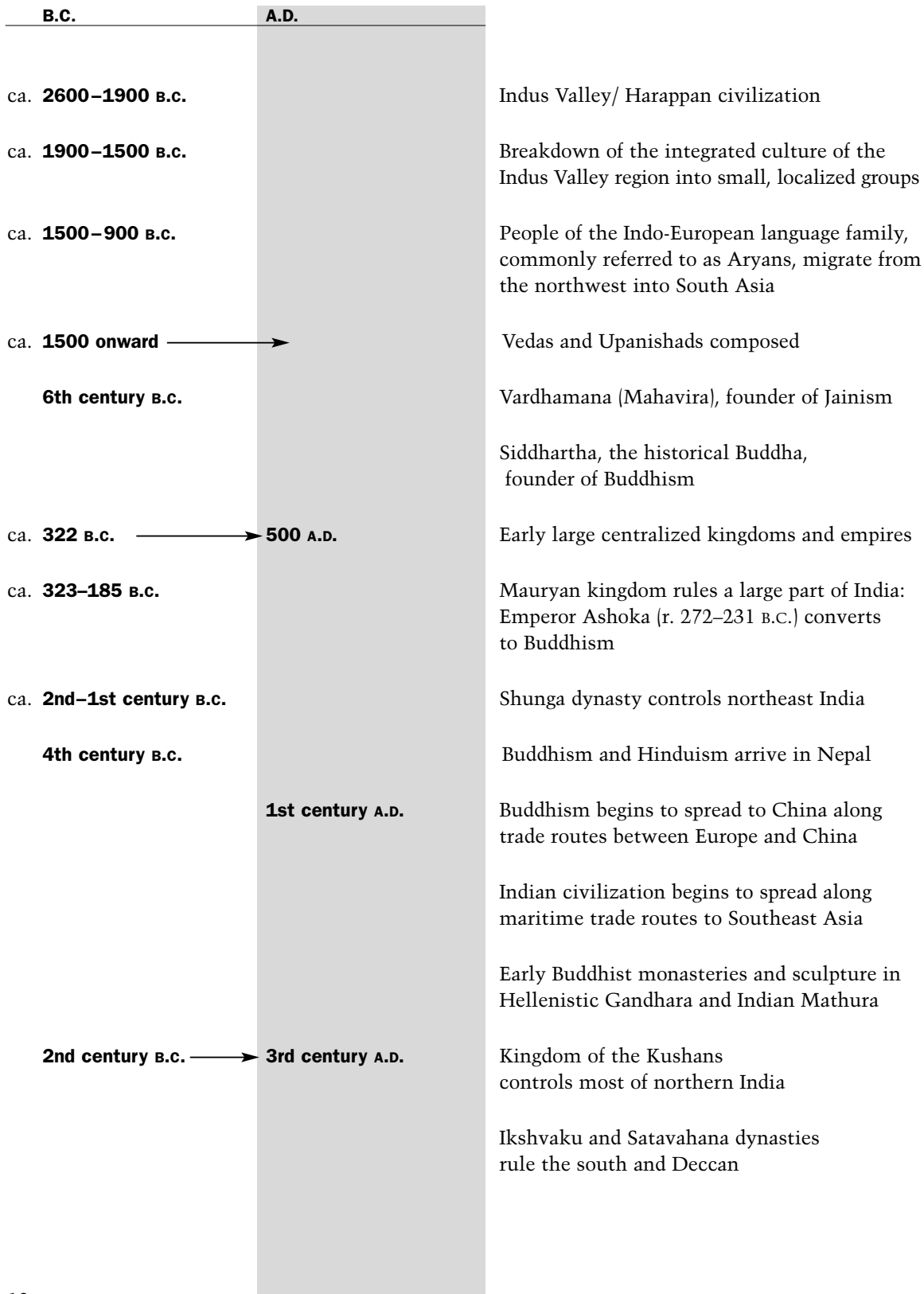
The great classical sculptural traditions of Southeast Asian art came to an end by the early sixteenth century. The Southeast Asian collection of The Metropolitan Museum of Art focuses on this classical period and upon the art forms preceding it.

Colonization and Independence

In the sixteenth century, Southeast Asia came under greater and greater pressure from Muslim traders and European seafaring nations. With the exception of Bali, whose population is Hindu, the peoples of Indonesia became Muslims. The Dutch gradually ousted the Muslims and the Portuguese from their trading centers. Later, the Dutch and British parried for control of Southeast Asia and were joined by the French in the nineteenth century.

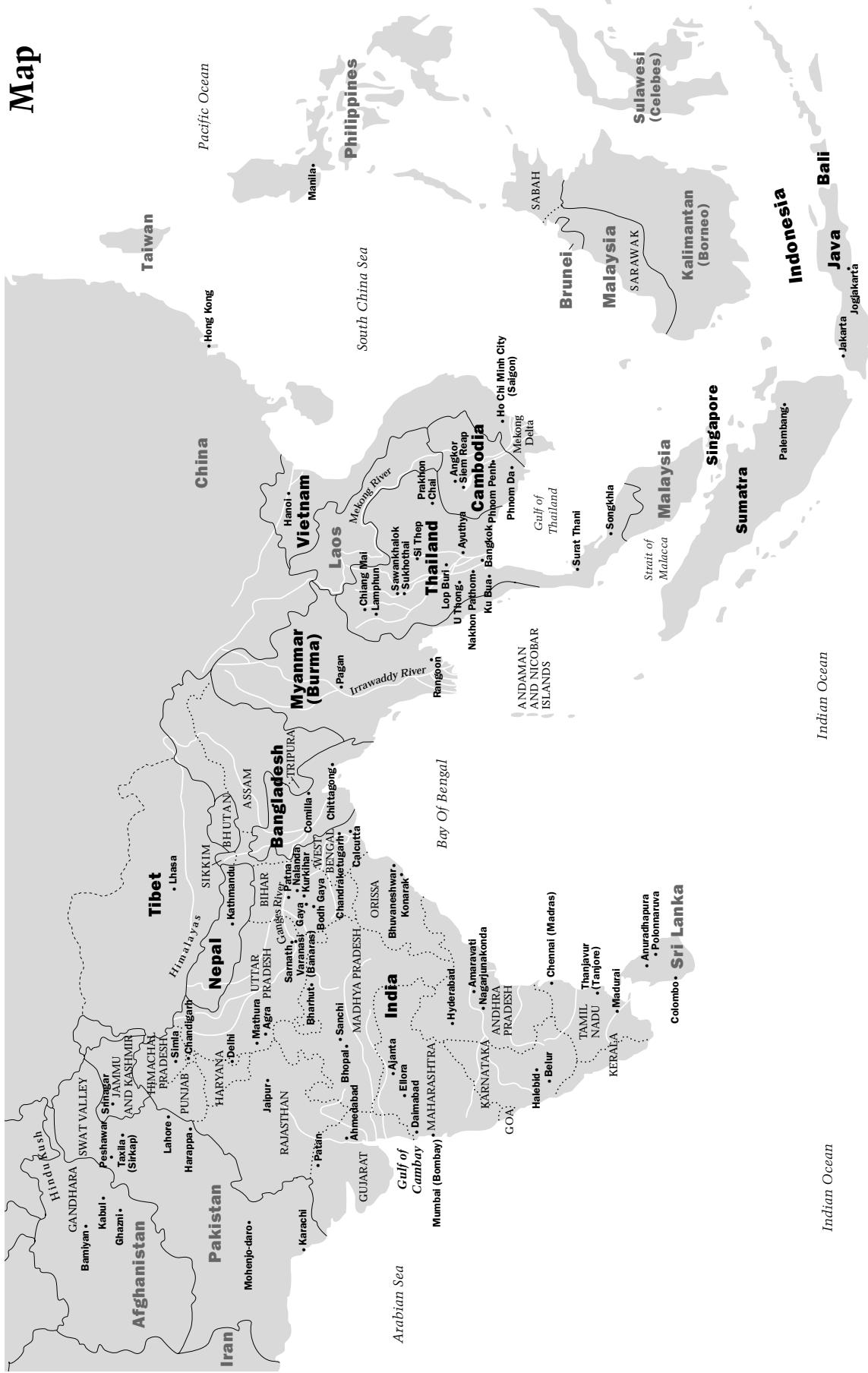
Only Thailand (then called Siam) managed to remain independent. In the nineteenth century, the British took control of the Malay peninsula and gradually annexed Myanmar to British India. Indonesia became a Dutch colony, and to the French went Cambodia, Laos, and Vietnam. All these nations gained independence after World War II.

Timeline



	A.D.	
ca.	321–500 A.D.	Gupta dynasty rules northern India The classic image of the Buddha created, the form of the Hindu temple developed
	6th century A.D.	Buddhism spreads to Korea and Japan
	7th century A.D.	Buddhism arrives in Tibet
	4th–9th century A.D.	Rise of Southeast Asian kingdoms on mainland, in Java and Sumatra, and on the Thai peninsula
ca.	700–1200 A.D.	Medieval period in India: Pala and Sena kingdoms in northeast
	9th–13th century A.D.	Khmer kingdom in Cambodia
	880–1279 A.D.	Chola dynasty in South India
	late 12th century A.D.	Buddhism in decline in South Asia Muslim invaders come from the northwest
ca.	1200–1500 A.D.	Delhi Sultanate in India
	1498 A.D.	Portuguese navigator Vasco da Gama makes landfall on west coast of India; opens India to European trade
	1526–1857 A.D.	Mughal Empire, which declines in power early 18th century
ca.	1500–1850 A.D.	Hindu Rajput kingdoms in northwest India
	1600 A.D.	British East India Company establishes trading post
	1856–1947 A.D.	British rule all of subcontinent
	1947 A.D.	Independence; subcontinent is divided along religious lines into India and Pakistan
	1971 A.D.	Formation of Bangladesh as separate Muslim nation

Map



Indian Ocean

Indian Ocean

III The Art of South and Southeast Asia

III. The Art of South
and Southeast Asia

The Religious Context

Hinduism, Buddhism, and Jainism, the three great religions that developed in the subcontinent, share certain basic beliefs: that time is cyclical, and the universe is created and destroyed in endless cycles; that the world is transitory and the appearance of permanence is illusion (*maya*); that all living beings are born and reborn in different lives and bodies (*samsara*); and that one's good and bad deeds (*karma*) accumulate from life to life and determine the form in which one is reborn. The goal is to accumulate enough good deeds to finally be released from cycles of birth and rebirth by attaining nirvana (extinction or quiescence) in Buddhism, or *moksha* (release or liberation) in Hinduism.

Over the centuries, as these religions have evolved, they have incorporated a variety of physical disciplines and esoteric and magical practices such as yoga, meditation, trance, breath control, and the repetition of mantras (words of power). An essential feature of all three religions is a holistic view of life: all forms of life—gods, demons, humans, animals, and vegetation—are integrally connected.

Although Buddhists and Jains believe in *maya*, *samsara*, *karma*, and eventual release (as Hindus do), they reject caste, Hindu gods, sacrifices, and the power of the priestly caste (Brahmins). The founders of Buddhism and Jainism both lived in the sixth century B.C. and were born in the warrior, or *kshatriya*, caste.

Early Religious Practices in India

An ancient form of religious practice was the worship of spirits believed to dwell in trees, rivers, and rocks. Many Indians still hold such beliefs. One form these beliefs took is the worship of yakshas and yakshis, male and female deities associated with the fertility of the earth. Serpent kings called *nagarajas* and their consorts, *naginis*, as well as *makaras*, fabulous crocodilelike creatures, are all associated with the cult of life-giving waters. These early deities were incorporated into the major Indian religions as minor gods.

image 1

Only fragmentary information can be pieced together about the religion of the Indus Valley civilization. Horned animals (image 1), trees, many female figurines (probably mother goddesses), and phallic sculptures suggest that the people practiced some kind of fertility worship. Depictions of figures in yogic postures suggest that meditation was used. These images relate to those of later Indian religions, and some may be prototypes of later Indian deities.

Some time after the collapse of the Indus civilization, Aryans migrated down to the subcontinent from Central Asian steppes, bringing with them beliefs in gods, predominantly male, who personified forces and nature and were worshipped in elaborate sacrifices performed by Brahmins, the priestly class. The Aryans composed religious texts beginning with the *Rig Veda*, *Soma Veda*, and *Athar Veda* (ca. 1500–1200 B.C.), which contained hymns to the gods and descriptions of the customs, behavior, and traditions of Aryan life. The Upanishads, composed later (700–500 B.C.), contain profound

philosophical speculations about the “One who lies behind.” This “One,” called Brahman, is eternal, formless, all encompassing, and the origin and essence of all things.

Hinduism

There is no single founder or doctrine of Hinduism. It has evolved over the centuries, incorporating previous doctrines and deities, for instance, maintaining reverence for the ancient Vedic texts and adopting some of the Vedic deities but in new guises, and responding to non-Vedic religious movements such as Buddhism and Jainism. Hinduism as we know it seems to have coalesced at the beginning of the first millennium A.D.

Initially, Hinduism was centered around three male gods: Brahma, creator of the cosmos; Vishnu, preserver and protector of the universe; and Shiva, destroyer of the universe so that from the formless void it may be created again. Brahma has never had a large number of worshippers. Shiva, Vishnu, and the Great Goddess Devi (Mahadevi) in their myriad forms are the most widely worshipped Hindu gods. They are described in the Puranas, a group of texts formulated between A.D. 200 and 800.

image 22 Shiva is worshipped as the ascetic god, remote when in meditation but also at times wild, passionate, and loving. As Lord of the Dance (image 22), he both destroys and creates the universe. His cosmic dance visualizes the cycles of creation and destruction in human lives, in the history of nations, and in the universe. Shiva is also manifest in a phallic emblem called a linga (image 17), and it is in this form that he is most often portrayed in the inner sanctum of his temples. Worshippers of Shiva believe that he is the supreme god who contains and controls all creation.

image 16, 20 Vishnu (image 16 and 20) preserves and maintains order in the universe. Whenever destructive forces, usually symbolized by demons, threaten to overwhelm the world, Vishnu descends in the form of an avatar to restore moral order. His concern for human political and social activities expresses the gentle and just-minded side of the One. It is believed that in our present universe, Vishnu has already appeared in nine incarnations, taking such animal forms as a fish and a tortoise and various human forms such as Krishna, Rama, and the Buddha. It is believed he will appear once more in the future. As Rama (image 38), he symbolizes the importance of loyalty and obedience. As Krishna, he is the divine lover (image 30) as well as a slayer of demons (image 15). Krishna’s consort, Radha, and his female devotees, in their passionate longing for him, symbolize the soul’s desire to be one with God (image 29).

One of the most striking characteristics of Hinduism is the importance of goddesses. As Hinduism developed, Vedic goddesses came to the fore. Lakshmi and Sarasvati, for instance, became the consorts of Vishnu. Other goddesses, who may have been worshipped independently outside of the Vedic tradition, gradually appeared as powerful deities on their own, most prominently, Devi, who represents the essence of female power.

In the seventh century, Hinduism and Buddhism were influenced by Tantra, a new religious movement that employed esoteric knowledge to speed the

image 18

image 24

image 19

believer toward spiritual liberation. The Hindu pantheon of gods expanded to include *shaktis*, female counterparts to male gods and personified as their consorts. Shakti is female energy, which activates the powers of the male gods and emanates from the goddess Devi. Many other goddesses represent aspects of Devi's powers, for instance, Parvati, the beautiful, loving, and obedient consort of Shiva (image 18), and Durga (image 24), Chamunda (image 19), and Kali, whose actions and moods indicate anger, ferocity, and the horrific. This range of emotions symbolizes their multiple purposes and the variety of forms female energy and power can assume.

From its beginnings, Hinduism has possessed a remarkable ability to assimilate rather than reject new ideas. It has developed complex overlays of beliefs, cults, gods, and forms of worship. Hindus recognize no single founder or prophet. There is no single holy book similar to the Bible or Qur'an; the religion is not supervised and interpreted by a hierarchy of priests, and its great texts were not inscribed but handed down as an oral tradition. Hindu worship is based on a one-to-one relationship between devotee and god rather than being congregational. This practice intensified beginning in the seventh century with the popularity of *bhakti*, passionate personal devotion to an individual god or goddess. Over the centuries, a number of important poets and musician-saints emerged from the *bhakti* tradition whose works, such as the *Gita Govinda*, became classics of Indian culture.

Indian people have treasured, in particular, two great epics: the *Ramayana* (2nd century B.C.) and the famous epic poem, the *Mahabharata* (500–400 B.C.), both of which may be based on actual historical events. The *Ramayana* has been, and still is, a rich source for art.

Today the great majority of Indian people are Hindus. Although Hindus may select one deity for personal worship among the great gods and goddesses and the countless regional and local gods, all of these deities can be understood as representing the many aspects of the One.

Buddhism

Siddhartha Gautama, who later became the Buddha, was born in North India in the sixth century B.C. According to legend, Siddhartha was the son of a king of the Shakya clan (hence the name Buddha Shakyamuni, by which he is often referred). At his birth, a soothsayer predicted he would become either a great military ruler or a great spiritual leader. To prevent the latter from happening, Siddhartha's father kept him within the palace, providing him with luxuries and pleasures so that he would remain unaware of the harshness and suffering in the world.

One day, already a young man, Siddhartha managed to escape from the palace. For the first time he saw an old person, a sick person, a corpse, and an ascetic holy man. He was stunned and deeply affected by their suffering. Realizing that pleasures are transitory and cannot prevent suffering, he put aside all his jewelry and fine clothing. Leaving his wife and son at the palace, he embarked on a journey to seek the meaning of life and the ways in which humans can attain peace (image 5).

image 5

At first Siddhartha turned inward in his quest for knowledge. He went into the forest to seek the advice of holy men and to meditate. In Siddhartha's time, yoga was already an ancient way to seek inner knowledge and understanding of universal truths. He became an ascetic and attempted extreme forms of renunciation, nearly starving himself to death. Having recognized that extreme deprivation was not the way, he once again took food. He sat meditating beneath a bodhi tree, overnight according to some accounts and days and days according to others. The evil demon Mara, realizing that Siddhartha was close to enlightenment, tempted him with his beautiful daughters and threatened him with a powerful army. But Siddhartha touched the ground with his right hand, calling the Earth to witness his resolve to achieve enlightenment and thereby vanquishing Mara. When Siddhartha arose, he had become the Buddha, which means the Enlightened One (or the Awakened One). He realized that the causes of human suffering lay in the attachment to physical desires of all kinds, and as long as this was so, the karma-laden souls of living creatures were destined to suffer endless rebirths. Only with the complete elimination of worldly attachments could one reach release into a state of eternal selfless bliss, called nirvana, the Sanskrit word for "extinguishment."

Buddhism was a philosophical and ethical system with the Buddha as its greatly revered founder. The Buddha spent the rest of his life teaching his ascetic doctrine, gaining an ever-growing group of followers. He taught that nirvana could only be achieved through first realizing the Four Noble Truths: that all life is suffering; that suffering is caused by desires; that to eliminate suffering, one must eliminate desires; and that this can be done by following the Eightfold Path, which includes right thoughts, right intentions, right deeds, and the right concentration in meditation. Nirvana can only be attained through the extinguishment of one's ego by following the Eightfold Path.

Buddhism attracted many people for whom caste and the Brahmins' exclusive control over worship were problematic. Even before the Buddha's death, many of his followers had become monks and nuns and were settling into monasteries provided by wealthy laity as merit-producing gifts. Gradually the monks spread his teachings across northern India in peaceful conversions. The main focus of worship became stupas, hemispherical mounds containing relics of the Buddha or other transcendent beings and often decorated with scenes from the *Jatakas* (folk tales about the past lives of the Buddha). The faithful also made pilgrimages to important places in the Buddha's life, including his birthplace, the bodhi tree at Bodhi Gaya where he reached enlightenment, and the Deer Park at Sarnath where he preached his first sermon. As the centuries passed, pilgrims throughout Asia came to visit these sacred sites. There they learned about the Buddha's life and his teachings.

The earliest form of Buddhism is called the Theravada (Way of the Elders). It adheres strictly to the Buddha's teaching and to his austere life of meditation and detachment. Theravada Buddhists believed that very few would reach

nirvana. Initially, in this system, the Buddha was represented in art only by symbols, but in the first century A.D., under the Kushan rulers, the Buddha began to be depicted in human form. At about this time, a new form of Buddhism emerged called the Mahayana (the Great Way), which held that the Buddha was more than a great spiritual teacher but also a savior god. It was believed that he had appeared in perfect human form to relieve suffering with the message that, by performing good deeds and maintaining sincere faith, everyone could reach nirvana through means less strict and arduous than in Theravada (which Mahayana Buddhists called the Hinayana, or Lesser Way).

A whole pantheon of Mahayana Buddhist deities began to appear to aide the devotee—Buddhas of the past, bodhisattvas such as Maitreya (Buddha of the Future), and Vajrapani (“thunderbolt bearer”), who had evolved from the chief Vedic god Indra. Most appealing and approachable of all is the gentle Avalokiteshvara, the bodhisattva of infinite compassion, who can be called upon to help people in all kinds of trouble. A bodhisattva is a being who has reached the moment of spiritual transcendence but foregoes nirvana in order to guide all beings in their quest to attain enlightenment. The Mahayana faith became the more popular form of Buddhism and was carried by merchants and monks across Central Asia along the trade routes to China, and from there to Korea and Japan.

Another form of Buddhism, called Esoteric and also known as Tantric or Vajrayana Buddhism, grew out of Mahayana Buddhism beginning in the late sixth or early seventh century. Esoteric Buddhists accepted the tenets of the Mahayana but also used forms of meditation subtly directed by master teachers (gurus) involving magical words, symbols, and practices to speed the devotee toward enlightenment. They believed that those who practiced compassion and meditation with unwavering effort and acquired the wisdom to become detached from human passions could achieve in one lifetime a state of perfect bliss or “clear light,” their term for ultimate realization and release. Their practices paralleled concurrent developments in Hinduism.

image 12

Many new deities appeared in the Esoteric Buddhist pantheon who, in their poses, gestures, and expressions, visualize philosophical ideas (image 12). For instance, male and female deities shown in embrace express the union of wisdom and compassion. Wrathful deities symbolize protection, and their violent and horrific appearance helps devotees to overcome the passions that hinder salvation. Also central to Esoteric thinking were the five celestial Buddhas (the four directions and the zenith), who represent both the energy of the universe and the potential for wisdom within the psychological make-up of the individual (image 8, 10, and 43).

image 8, 10, 43

By the twelfth century, Buddhism was concentrated mainly in northeastern India, where the Buddha lived and preached. Its near extinction seems to have been caused by Muslim invaders who destroyed the Buddhist monastic universities. Teachers and monks fled to Nepal, Tibet, and Burma. Today only a small percentage of India’s population is Buddhist.

Buddhism and Hinduism in Southeast Asia

Hinduism and Theravada, Mahayana, and Esoteric Buddhism had spread throughout Southeast Asia by the seventh century, and important monuments and sculptures of both faiths survive from that period onward. Throughout the region, ancient indigenous animistic and pantheistic beliefs survived and complemented the tenets and practices of the Indic faiths.

Theravada Buddhism spread to Sri Lanka at an early date and is still the dominant religion there. It was also carried along sea routes to Thailand and Burma (Myanmar). It is the form of Buddhism still practiced in those countries today, as well as in Cambodia and Laos. In neighboring Vietnam, the population is largely Mahayana, perhaps due to the proximity to China, where the Buddhism that still exists is largely Mahayana. In Indonesia, Hinduism and Esoteric Buddhism, which had coexisted peacefully for centuries, were gradually displaced by the spread of Islam through not only Indonesia but also Malaysia in the fifteenth century. Indonesia now has the largest Muslim population in the world. Bali, however, remains largely Hindu.

Jainism

Mahavira, the founder of Jainism, and Siddhartha Gautama, the founder of Buddhism, both lived in the sixth century B.C., and both were princes who left their fathers' kingdoms for the life of an ascetic. They shared the belief in karma and samsara, and sought release (moksha) through meditation and control of one's desires. Unlike Buddhism, however, Jainism never spread beyond India. Today there are some two million Jains in western India, where Mahavira taught.

As a prince, Mahavira's name was Vardhamana. The ideal Aryan prince was a *vira*, meaning "brave warrior." Vardhamana also wished to be known as a brave warrior, not in a battle against human foes but in his battle against his own desires. So he took the name Mahavira (*maha* = great). A person who has absolute control over his senses and has become a great teacher is known as a *jina* or tirthankara. Mahavira's followers believed that he was the last of twenty-four tirthankaras (image 27).

image 27

Mahavira led an austere life, teaching, meditating, begging for food, and denying his body any comforts. When his clothes fell into tatters, he went without them, "sky-clad" for the rest of his life. Jain monks disagreed about how far their austerities should go. One group held that, like Mahavira, they should teach "sky-clad," or naked. Those opposed wore white robes. Most present-day Jain monks are "white-clad."

Mahavira taught his followers to detach themselves from worldly desires and also from their own viewpoints. He suggested that it is often easier to give up material possessions than it is to part with one's opinions. According to Mahavira, a person can see only a very small part of the truth, and what one believes to be true depends on many factors like social status, education, and context. An ancient Jain parable interpreted by a nineteenth-century poet clarifies this point.

*It was six men of Indostan
To learning much inclined
Who went to see the Elephant
(Though all of them were blind)
That each by observation
Might satisfy his mind.*

*The first approached the Elephant
And happened to fall
Against his broad and sturdy side
At once began to bawl:
"Bless me! But the elephant
Is very like a wall."*

*The second, feeling of the tusk
Cried, "Ho! What have we here,
So very round and smooth and sharp!
To me 'tis mighty clear
This wonder of an Elephant
Is very like a spear."*

*The third approached the animal,
And happened to take
The squirming trunk within his hands,
Thus boldly up and spake:
"I see," quoth he;
"the Elephant
Is very like a snake."*

*The fourth reached out his eager hand
And felt about the knee.
"What most this wondrous beast is like
Is mighty plain," quoth he;
"'Tis clear enough the elephant is very like a tree."*

*The fifth, who chanced to touch the ear,
Said "E'en the blindest man
Can tell what this resembles most;
Deny the fact who can,
This marvel of an Elephant
Is very like a fan."*

*The sixth no sooner had begun
About the beast to grope
Than seizing on the swinging tail
That fell within his scope,
"I see," quoth he, "the elephant
Is very like a rope."*

*And so these men of Indostan
Disputed loud and long,
Each in his own opinion
Exceeding stiff and strong,
Though each was partly in the right,
And all were in the wrong.*

—John Godfrey Saxe (American, 1816–1887)

Mahavira taught that to avoid accumulating bad karma, one should not harm any living things. This is the doctrine *ahimsa*, the most important concept in Jain teaching. Because of their reverence for all life, Jain monks preached against brahminical animal sacrifices and introduced strict vegetarianism. Since a human soul can be reborn as an animal or insect, and since all forms of life have souls, even the smallest creature should not be harmed. To prevent this, devout Jains wear face masks when they are outside to avoid inhaling insects, and gently sweep the path in front of them before taking a step. Jains avoid farming because their ploughs might injure burrowing animals. The Jain emphasis on nonviolence influenced both Buddhism and Hinduism and established a tradition which many prominent Indians such as Gandhi have followed.

Islam

The faith of Islam arrived in India gradually from western Asia beginning as early as the seventh century A.D. Islam, an Arabic word meaning “submission to God,” was founded by the Prophet Muhammad (ca. A.D. 570–632) after God (Allah) had appeared to him as the archangel Gabriel in the desert outside of Mecca. In those times, South Arabia was a crossroads of inter-regional trade and a place where the traditional beliefs of idol worshippers who gathered around the Ka’ba, the sacred center of Mecca, clashed with the religious ideas and practices of Christianity and Zoroastrianism, an ancient Iranian religion.

“Recite in the name of the Lord,” commanded Allah as he gave to Muhammad the final and complete instructions about the relationships between humankind and God. These relationships had been only partially revealed to the Old Testament prophets and to the New Testament prophet Jesus. Muhammad immediately began to teach God’s divine message, converting many in Mecca. He experienced a temporary setback, however, when he and the newly faithful were driven from Mecca by local merchants who feared his preaching against idol worship would divert the lucrative trade routes elsewhere. This forced migration in 622, called the Hijra in Arabic, marks the beginning of the Islamic calendar, the years of which are referred to as A.H. (Anno Hijra).

By the end of his life, Muhammad and the faithful had returned triumphantly to Mecca, cleansed the Ka’ba of idols, and declared it sacred to Allah. Within a century of his death, Muhammad’s followers had spread Islam through the Middle East to the borders of India and westward across Africa to Spain.

Islam is a strictly monotheistic religion. Although Muslims revere Muhammad as God’s greatest prophet, they worship only one god, Allah, who controls the fate of all beings. Allah’s words which he ordered Muhammad to recite were written down after the Prophet’s death in the Qur’an, the Muslim holy book. *Qur’an* means “recitation” in Arabic. Because God spoke in Arabic, the Qur’an must be written and read in Arabic. As a consequence, within Islamic cultures Arabic calligraphy (the art of writing beautifully) has traditionally been deemed the highest form of art. Described in the Qur’an are the five obligations of all Muslims, often called the Five Pillars of Islam: the profession of faith (“There is no god but God; Muhammad is the messenger of God”); prayer five times a

day at dawn, noon, afternoon, evening, and night; the giving of alms; fasting from sunrise to sundown during the month of Ramadan; and making a pilgrimage to Mecca at least once in a lifetime if physically possible.

Nearly a quarter of the world's population is Muslim. The nation with the largest Muslim population is Indonesia. Although Muslims come from diverse cultures and speak many different languages, they are united by their faith and, historically, by a busy network of East-West trade. At the same time, there was and continues to be diverse political, cultural, and artistic expressions in regions of the Islamic world that were not part of the Arabic-speaking heartland of Islam and where there existed strong pre-Islamic indigenous traditions.

Art of South Asia (before ca. A.D. 1500)

Content

Religious images dominate the surviving art of the great periods of South Asian sculpture, from the second century B.C. to about A.D. 1500. What remains are stone temples, stone and metal temple sculpture, and smaller religious sculpture created for personal worship. Like much ancient sculpture—for instance, Greek and medieval European—many of these images were probably originally painted. A few retain original gilt surfaces and inlaid gems. The walls of sacred structures were also sometimes enriched with mural painting and textiles.

“Surviving” is a key word because not all art created in this time span was religious. Archaeological excavations have proven the existence of many palaces that were constructed in brick and wood. As described in literature, the interiors were decorated with richly carved wood and murals depicting courtly life. One can only imagine the opulent colors, the lavish royal jewelry made of precious stones set in gold, and the luxurious costumes of silk and diaphanous cotton for which India has been famous in the West since ancient Roman times. The details of costume and adornment found on the sculpture and paintings of Hindu and Buddhist deities give some idea of this splendid finery. Much more Indian art from the last four hundred years has survived, providing a more complete picture of the rich secular arts of India. This sumptuous later royal art is described on pages 36–37.

The Ideal

Hindu, Buddhist, and Jain deities are depicted in ideal human forms to symbolize their transcendent and divine natures. Other civilizations—such as the Greek, Egyptian, and sub-Saharan African peoples—have also used ideal human forms to visualize beliefs about divinity, moral behavior, and beauty. A comparison of their creations with South and Southeast Asian images (and with images from our own culture) shows that how the ideal human body is portrayed depends upon the beliefs of the culture in which the art is made.

Metaphors from Nature

Artists created ideal human forms by using a vocabulary of metaphors derived from nature. This vocabulary was codified during the Gupta period (mid-4th–6th century), and artists worked from this repertory to make their images. Eyes were to be shaped like the curve of a little fish or a lotus petal, eyebrows like an archer’s bow, lips like lotus blossoms, the chin like a mango stone, and arms like an elephant’s trunk—or, in the case of a woman’s arms, long and tapering like a perfectly formed edible root. The male torso should resemble the frontal view of a bull’s head or the chest of a lion, and the female torso should be shaped like a narrow-waisted drum (called a *damaru*). Often Buddhist and Hindu deities, male and female, are depicted with three rings around the neck, a symbol of beauty and good fortune. They are a metaphor for the three folds at the opening of the conch

shell. The genius of the Indian artist was the melding of these disparate quotations from nature into ideal bodies that are at once human and transcendent—appropriate vessels for gods and spiritual beings.

Identification of Hindu and Buddhist Deities

In Indian art, worshippers recognize images of an individual deity or spiritual being by the particular attributes he or she holds, and by the deity's pose, gestures, color, and adornment. Certain symbols are common in the iconography of all three religions.

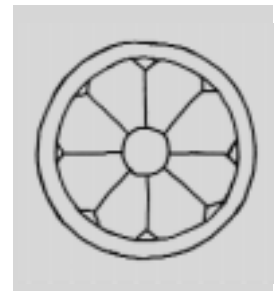
The Lotus. The Indian symbol par excellence is the lotus, sign of spiritual perfection. As its flower rises unsullied from the muddy waters and blooms to the sun, so the devotee attempts to rise above the impure, illusory world and become transformed through enlightenment into a spiritually perfected being. The lotus appears in art both as a complete blossom and as stylized petals that form the pedestal upon which spiritual beings sit or stand.



lotus



lotus pedestal



wheel

The Wheel (chakra) is another symbol with several layers of meaning. It represents the doctrine preached by the Buddha in his first sermon after attaining enlightenment. The words he spoke are called “turning the wheel of the law.” In Hindu thought, the wheel symbolizes time and the cycles of creation and destruction that form successive universes. It is also one of Vishnu’s attributes, where it functions as a weapon in the form of a discus.

The halo or nimbus of light frequently surrounds the heads of deities, particularly Buddhas and bodhisattvas, and often envelops their entire body to signify transcendent radiance. It is thought that this luminous symbol originated somewhere in western or Central Asia and spread eastward to India by the second century A.D. and westward by the fourth century, when it appears in Christian art to signify spirituality. Halos also appear in Hindu sculptures and were later adopted by the Mughal and Rajput aristocracy in their portraits.

image 2, 3

Adornment. Hindu deities and bodhisattvas wear the lavish jewelry and elaborate hairstyles of Indian royalty (image 2 and 3) as well as the “sacred thread,” a symbol of learning and the transition to adulthood worn by the upper castes. It crosses the left shoulder and falls in a curve across the torso and around the right hip.

Multiple Features. One of the most striking features of Hindu and Buddhist art is the portrayal of multiarmed and occasionally multiheaded gods. These images express the multiple powers and responsibilities of the gods. The several hands were needed to display the deity's attributes and to make gestures that symbolize concepts associated with the deity. Because the attributes, gestures, and physical form of each god are distinct, worshippers can identify each god by these features.

Expressions. Although the majority of sculptural figures are idealized and sublime, occasionally they are ugly and horrific. To the Hindu and Buddhist faithful, these wrathful deities are protective because their terrifying energies are directed against evil and ignorance. In Esoteric Buddhist thought, they represent human failings such as greed, hatred, and ignorance which one must recognize and overcome on the path to enlightenment. Often Hindu and Buddhist gods are depicted as serene in one guise and wrathful in another. Such contrasts reflect the Indian belief that dualities in our world are only an illusion. Seemingly opposite forces are merely aspects of the same ultimate reality.

Poses. Many poses commonly found in art—such as the lotus position—are drawn from yoga which, according to myth, was practiced by the gods. Another source for poses and gestures in South Asian sculpture is classical dance, which evolved in Hindu temple ritual and in performances at royal courts. With a visual vocabulary of particular movements and gestures well known to their audience, dancers acted out the adventures of the gods and heroes of India's great epics. Contemporary dance performances in the traditional style have been revived by following descriptions in ancient texts on dance, called the *Natyashastras*, and also by studying the poses of figures in temple sculpture and wall reliefs.

The most common poses in art are:

- An iconic frontal pose (*samabhanga*) with both feet equally supporting the weight or with one knee very slightly bent.
- A swaying pose with the weight on one leg, the head and lower body slanting in one direction, and the torso moving in the opposite direction. This thrice-bent (*tribhanga*) pose suggests potential movement.
- The seated meditation pose derived from yoga commonly known as the lotus position (*padmasana*) in which the legs are crossed with feet upturned.
- The seated pose of royal ease (*lalitasana*) in which one leg is folded so that the foot rests on the seat and the other leg hangs down.
- A dancing pose in which all the weight rests on one leg.
- An active standing pose in which a deity tramples upon a demon; one leg is bent, the other is stretched out at an angle.

Architectural Decoration. Sacred Hindu and Buddhist architecture is decorated with flora, fauna, mythical creatures, and human forms. Carvings of fantastic, powerful animals signify protection. Patterns of flowers, trees, vines, figures of *yakshas* and *yakshis*, loving couples, and sensuous women (image 23) allude to fertility, abundance, and the generative powers of the divine. Mural paintings survive in some sacred sites and rich textiles may also have adorned the walls.

image 23

Symbols and Attributes in Buddhist Art

The Buddha

Early Buddhist art did not show the Buddha in human form. In relief sculptures at early stupa sites, his presence is indicated by symbols such as the lotus (signifying purity), the eight-spoked wheel (emblem of the Buddha's law), the parasol (ancient symbol of royalty), and a footprint (the Buddha's presence). It may be that this symbolic way of representing the Buddha arose from the view that with enlightenment he had transcended human form. Not until the first century A.D., more than five hundred years after his death, do images of the Buddha in human form begin to appear. Perhaps these figures were a response to emerging beliefs that the Buddha was not only a great spiritual teacher but also a savior god who, with personal devotion, could help others achieve nirvana.

Figures of the Buddha have particular features, called *lakshanas*, which express his exalted state as the Enlightened One. The bulge at the top of his head—the *ushnisha*—signifies his transcendent knowledge. The *urna*, a whorl of hair between the eyebrows that can also be depicted as a dot, is another symbol of his transcendent nature; its placement corresponds to that of the pineal gland. The Buddha's webbed hands and feet are also *lakshanas*.

Images of the Buddha have other distinguishing marks. His earlobes are elongated from wearing heavy gold earrings when he was a prince. After gaining enlightenment, he discarded such adornments, which represented attachment to the physical world. Princes traditionally had long hair piled up in an elaborate coiffure. When the Buddha became an ascetic, he cut his hair short as a sign of renunciation and humility; in visual art, it is often shown curled in tight snail-like whorls.

The Buddha wears the simple garments of a monk: an undergarment, robe, and sometimes a shawl. His serene expression and half-closed eyes signify meditation and inner peace. His eyes are also half-open to show awareness and compassion for the devotee. Often his lips reveal the hint of a smile, another sign of compassion (image 6 and poster A). Wheels, emblems of Buddhist law, or stylized lotus blossoms are often inscribed on his palms and the soles of his feet.

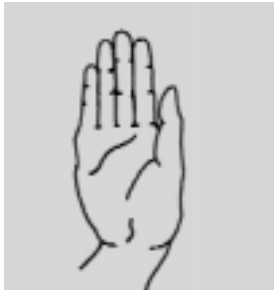
image 6; poster A

image 41

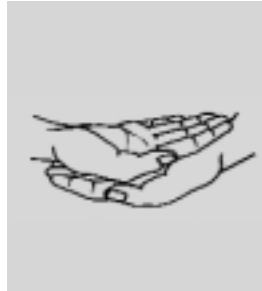
Events from the *Jatakas* were popular subjects in relief sculpture (image 41). These were folk tales written down after the Buddha's death describing the animal and human forms he had taken in his 550 past lifetimes on his journey to enlightenment.

Hand Gestures

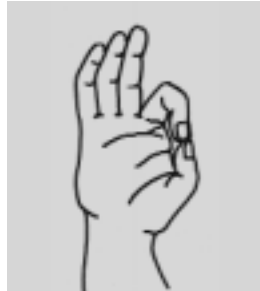
The elongated fingers of the Buddha's hands emphasize his gestures (mudras), which convey meaning to his worshippers. The most common gestures are illustrated below, along with their meaning:



allaying gesture



meditation



teaching



prayer



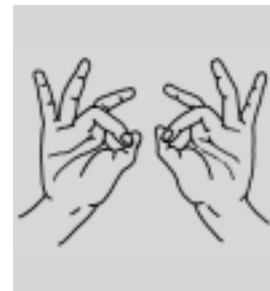
bestowing



**calling the earth to witness
(signifying the Buddha's
right to enlightenment)**



**teaching the law or turning
the wheel of the law**



discussion

Bodhisattvas

Bodhisattvas are beings who have reached enlightenment but elect to stay on earth to help others attain "release." Thus, they are intermediaries that aid in humankind's enlightenment. Bodhisattvas are identified by their princely dress and adornment (image 4, 10, and 12). As spiritual princes, they have earned regalia of the highest order. Individual bodhisattvas are identified by the gestures they make, the attributes they hold, their color, and in some cases symbolic elements in their headdresses.

image 4, 10, 12

Esoteric Buddhist Deities

Esoteric (Tantric) Buddhism expanded the pantheon of deities, both male and female. They are identified by a variety of hand gestures, body positions, and skin color. Many are depicted with multiple arms and hands to show their diverse powers, and may have more than one face. Esoteric deities may have animal mounts or vehicles, as Hindu gods do, to carry them through the universe. These new deities include the cosmic Buddhas, Buddhas of past ages, and personified aspects of the most important bodhisattvas portrayed in pacific or wrathful forms (image 10, 12, 13, and 14).

image 10, 12, 13, 14

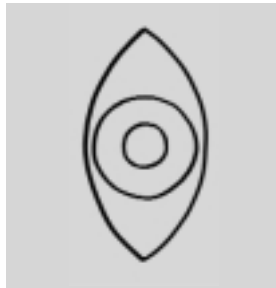
Identification of the Hindu Gods

Like Buddhist deities, Hindu gods are identified by the attributes they hold, their attendants, their color, and their adornment. Many wear the lavish jewelry and elaborate hairstyles of Indian royalty, and most wear the “sacred thread.” (Bodhisattvas are also sometimes depicted wearing the sacred thread.) Often male gods have female goddess consorts, and most gods and goddesses have an animal or a bird (called vehicles or mounts) upon which they travel about the universe. The deities described here are among the most important in the Hindu pantheon and their images are the ones most frequently encountered in the Metropolitan Museum galleries.

Shiva

image 17, 21, 22, 36

Shiva has many roles and guises, each identified by particular attributes and poses (image 17, 21, 22, and 36). He is sometimes depicted with two arms but more frequently four, and he often carries a trident. In the center of his forehead is a third eye, shown vertically. His hairlocks, long and matted from his ascetic practices, are piled up in a tall chignon. Some of Shiva’s most common attributes are:



the third eye, indicating divine omniscience



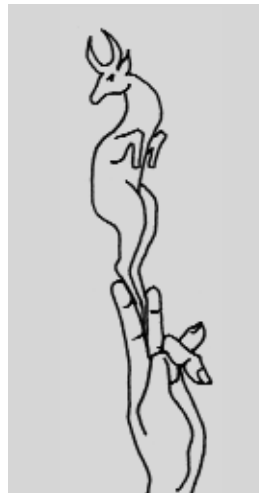
damaru, a hand drum, indicating the primordial sound of creation



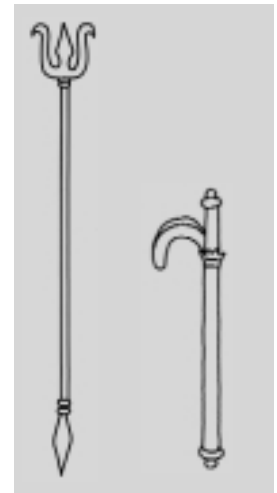
a crescent moon in his hair, representing the cyclical nature of time



agni, the consuming fire of destruction



an antelope, representing animal fertility (Shiva is lord of the animals)



a trident and battle ax, symbols of Shiva's militance

Vishnu

image 16, 20, 46

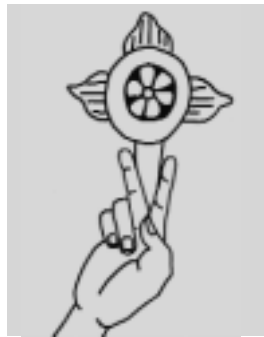
Vishnu is usually depicted with four arms (image 16, 20, and 46) and wears a tall conical crown. Typically, one of his hands makes the fear-allaying gesture. His animal mount is Garuda, a man-bird and ancient solar symbol of power. In Vishnu's nine previous avatars, he appeared as a fish, tortoise, boar, man-lion, dwarf, the ax-bearer Parashurama, Rama, Krishna, and the Buddha. Vishnu's tenth appearance, yet to come, will be Kalki. His two most popular avatars are Krishna (image 15, 25, 29, 30, and 48) and Rama (image 38), both of whom, like Vishnu, are portrayed with dark blue-gray colored skin.

image 15, 25, 29, 30, 48
image 38

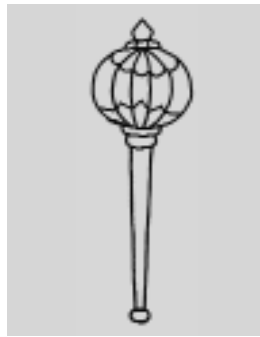
Vishnu's usual attributes are:



The conch shell, a war trumpet which in spiral form symbolizes the origin of existence



The war discus, a wheel-shaped weapon with a sharp cutting edge



A club or mace, symbol of authority and the power of knowledge



The lotus, symbol of transcendence and purity

The Great Goddess

Devi, the Great Goddess, appears in myriad forms. As Lakshmi, goddess of wealth and beauty, she is one of the most popular deities in India and is sometimes shown flanked by two elephants who honor her by pouring water over her head with their trunks. Devi, in the form of Lakshmi, is Vishnu's wife. Devi also appears as Vishnu's wife in two of his incarnations: when he is Rama she is Sita, and when he is Krishna she is Radha.

image 18, 21, 36, 49

Parvati (image 18, 21, 36, and 49) is another form of Devi. In Hindu mythology, she is the reincarnation of Shiva's first wife Sati, who killed herself because of an insult to her husband. (The traditional custom, now outlawed, in which a Hindu widow throws herself upon her husband's funeral pyre is called suttee, a word derived from Sati. As the name implies, suttee recreates Sati's final act of loyalty and devotion to her husband.) Beautiful Parvati was born to lure the mourning Shiva into another marriage, thus taking him away from the life of the ascetic into the more active realm of husband and father. Like Lakshmi, Parvati represents the ideal wife and mother. She is portrayed as a perfect balance between purity and sensuality.

image 24

The militant Durga (image 24), another incarnation of Devi, was created by the gods to kill a demon that the male gods, even combining their powers, could not vanquish. Durga holds in her multiple hands the weapons lent to

her by the gods; for instance, Shiva's trident and Vishnu's war disk. She also holds a sword, bell, and rhyton (drinking vessel) shaped like a ram for drinking the blood of demons she has killed. Despite her awesome powers, when she kills the demon Mahisha, her face is serene and beautiful and her body is the female ideal.

image 19

Violent, ferocious images of the goddesses Chamunda (image 19) and Kali symbolize the darker side of the Great Goddess, who in these forms kills demons, repels evil, defeats ignorance, and protects the devotee and the temple.

Ganesha

image 26

With his elephant head and chubby, childlike body, Ganesha is the most beloved of all Hindu deities (image 26). He is the remover of all obstacles and so is called upon before the start of all kinds of ventures. But Ganesha has a deeper significance, made clear in a Hindu prayer that begins, "Lead us as a tuskier would out of the forest of false ideas to the path of truth." His animal vehicle is the rat, which, though small by contrast, can gnaw through any obstacle. This comparison suggests that there are two ways to remove obstacles: to be like an elephant who tramples everything in its path, or, like the rat, to find a way through small openings to achieve the same goal.

Ganesha is usually shown with four arms. With his trunk he reaches for a bowl of the sweets he so loves and holds a string of prayer beads, an elephant goad, sometimes a snake, and his broken tusk. Sculptures of Ganesha are usually found at the beginning of a sequence of deities on the exterior walls of a Hindu temple, placed there to eliminate obstacles faced by the worshipper in his or her religious quest.

Hanuman

image 38

In the *Ramayana*, Hanuman is the chief minister to the monkey king. Together with the king and his army of monkeys, Hanuman helped Rama battle against Ravana, the evil demon king (image 38) who had abducted Rama's wife Sita. Hanuman was so agile, clever, strong, and loyal to Rama that he symbolizes the ideal of loyalty and service.

The Formal Elements of South Asian Art

Emphasis on Volume

image 4

With the exception of certain areas like the Gandhara region, which was influenced by late Roman art (image 4), the anatomy of figures does not emphasize the internal structure of muscle and bone. Rather, it expresses a body purified of these elements and instead filled with spirituality. As the vessel of *prana*, sacred breath of life, the body seems to swell from within; flesh is rounded and the skin is taut, so that the volumes of the entire body flow smoothly one into another. This conception of *prana* derives from yoga, an ancient method of achieving spiritual insight through control of mind and body. Despite the strong sense of volume in most forms of Indian sculpture, stone figures are rarely portrayed fully in the round. They are actually in very high relief, perhaps because most sculptures were set on the external walls of religious structures and were meant to be seen from only one side.

The sensual female figures in Indian art take their forms from ancient nature goddesses whose full breasts, narrow waists, and generous hips symbolize the abundance of the land and the female's procreative powers. Images of the major male deities have broad shoulders and curving contours with slender waists and powerful thighs, a physique that suggests both power and spirituality. The prana-filled bodies of both males and females in Indian art evoke a serene otherworldliness. This is not surprising, as they are spiritual beings who have passed beyond the actual physicality of the human body.

Measured Proportions

Canons of proportion were devised to create the ideal anatomy. The figure was divided according to the number of *tallas* in its height. A *talla* is a hand span from chin to top of forehead. These canons varied slightly from age to age and region to region. In general, earlier figures tend to be shorter and stockier than later ones.

Scale and Placement

When sculptors and painters depicted groups of figures surrounding the main deity, they used a hierarchy of proportion to clarify each figure's relative spiritual importance (image 8, 10, 11, 13, 14, 20, and 39). Even important deities are shown smaller (image 20) if they are not the main gods in the scene. In iconic (rather than narrative) representations, the placement of the figures is balanced by the main deity in the center. Lesser gods, guardian figures, celestial musicians, and dancers often appear as the god's entourage in both Hindu and Buddhist art. Again, size indicates their relative importance and they are placed in less prominent positions flanking the central figure.

**image 8, 10, 11,
13, 14, 20, 39**

Surface Contrasts

On images of bodhisattvas and Hindu deities, intricate details of the head-dress, hair, jewelry, crowns, scarves, garlands, and drapery create pleasing contrasts with the smooth prana-filled flesh.

Color

Indian stone sculpture was probably originally painted, as is modern sculpture on Indian temples. Marble figures, however, were generally left unpainted to preserve the purity of the white stone. Only the eyes were inlaid or colored (image 27). Many bronze statues were gilded. Ancient texts and illustrations on palm leaf (the traditional surface for writing and painting before the Muslim introduction of paper in the thirteenth century) indicate that specific colors were associated with specific deities. When a god had multiple faces, each face often had a distinctive color. Colors were also used symbolically in Buddhist cloth paintings of Nepal and Tibet (image 8, 10, 11, 13, and 14).

image 27

image 8, 10, 11, 13, 14

Functions of South Asian Art

Figural Art

Hindu, Buddhist, and Jain statues and paintings of the gods were created as a focus for worship and meditation. Narrative reliefs illustrating stories about the Buddha or other deities contained an underlying ethical lesson. At another level of meaning, these religious images expressed in visual form complex philosophical concepts about the nature and workings of the universe.

**image 8, 10, 11, 12,
13, 24, 26**

Smaller images were made, perhaps for personal worship and contemplation in monastic or domestic shrines, or as votive offerings (image 8, 10, 11, 12, 13, 24, and 26). Most larger Indian sculpture was set into the exterior walls of a sacred structure, to be worshipped by devotees as they circumambulated the exterior. Jain temples, however, were set in walled courtyards and their interiors were covered with sculpture.

The Buddhist Stupa

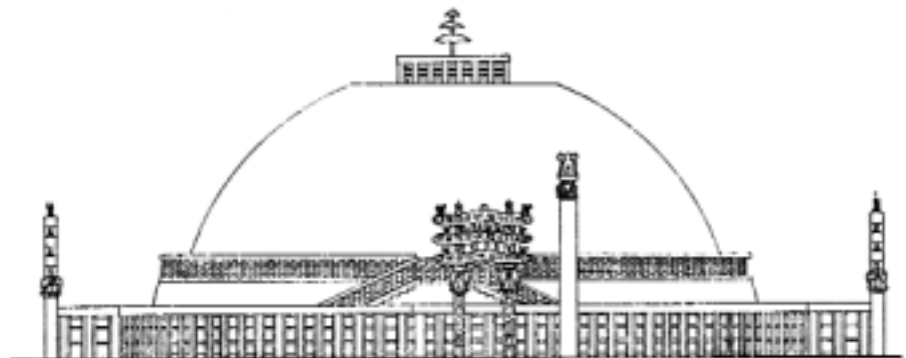
Relics of the Buddha and venerated Buddhist saints were buried inside stupas, hemispherical mounds of earth that were circumambulated by worshippers. In early times, the paths around the stupa were delineated by a stone railing with four gateways oriented to the cardinal directions. Often these railings and gateways were decorated with reliefs depicting the life of the historical Buddha Shakyamuni and his past lives. Pilgrims traveled great distances to be near the holy relic within the stupa and to see the sculptural narratives as they meditated upon the Buddha's teachings. The stupa was topped by a small square structure with a multitiered spire of umbrellas of decreasing size rising from its center. This ensemble may derive from the ancient custom of fenced sacred trees that probably were worshipped as the axis mundi (world axis) or as the abode of a deity. The layered parasol symbolically honors and shelters the relics, just as parasols honor kings in South Asia. In East Asia, the tall spire minus the hemispherical mound developed into the pagoda tower. Small stupas were often incorporated into monastic halls and monasteries.

Model of a Stupa

Pakistan (ancient region of Gandhara). Kushan period, ca. 4th century. Bronze. Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Donald J. Bruckmann, 1985 (1985.387ab)



**a votive model of
a stupa in bronze**

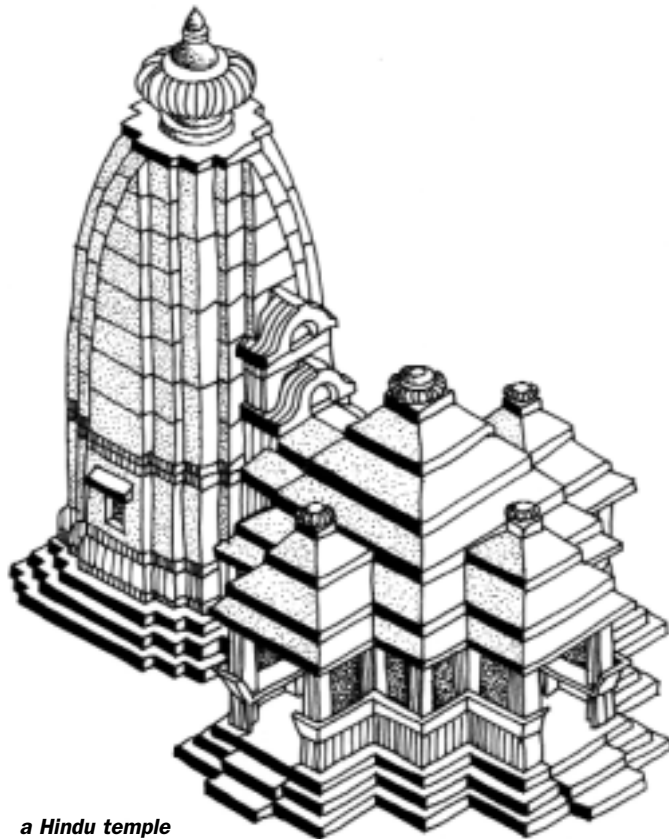


The Great Stupa at Sanchi

Hindu Temples

Hindu temples are themselves objects of worship. Their typical form emulates the cosmic mountain that is the abode of the deity honored and housed in the temple. As the devotee circles the temple exterior in the proscribed direction, he or she worships the various gods portrayed on the walls, particularly the deity honored within. These images are arranged to aid the viewer on the path to spiritual release. Worship is usually individual rather than congregational, and only at times of religious festivals do crowds throng the temple compounds. A porch and gathering chamber lead to the inner sanctum, which lies beneath the central tower of the temple and contains the image of the main deity, usually made of stone.

Hindu worship has several distinctive features. Merit gathered through sight is called *darshan*. Viewing a temple itself accrues merit to the pilgrim who comes to see the god and makes offerings in the hope of receiving divine blessings. Hindus believe that the image of a god contains the actual living god, and that the god can see the devotee and thus bestow blessings upon him or her. Consequently, the eyes of the image are open. The consecration of a deity image includes a ritual to fill the figure with the breath of life (*prana*), followed by the "opening of the eyes" ceremony, in which the carving or painting of the eyes is finished and the eyes are opened with a ritual implement. *Puja*, the offering ritual before the image of a god, involves the other four senses as well. Through the intermediary of a priest, worshippers present flowers, food, and pour libations of water and milk over the image as they ask for its blessings. Mantras are chanted and bells rung.



a Hindu temple

image 18, 22, 25

In South India, copper statues of deities were worshipped both inside and outside the temple. They were equipped with rings and carrying bases so they could be carried in processions on festival days. Like a living king, they could view and be viewed by their followers. Within the temple, statues of deities were bathed, fed, clothed, and entertained by singing and dancing (image 18, 22, and 25). Whether in a temple or a home, daily acts of devotion include waking the image in the morning, washing, dressing, and feeding it. The image is honored as a guest would be. In this way, the devotee develops a close and loving relationship with his or her god. Seeing the image of a god in a Hindu temple is a very different experience from viewing sculpture in a museum gallery: although sculptural figures of the gods are depicted with luxurious jewels and diaphanous garments that fall in delicate folds, in daily pujas they are covered with real clothing and garlands of flowers, and the carved details of the sculpture would be seen only by the priests.

Jain Temples

image 28

image 27

Jain temples have ground plans similar to Hindu temples, with an entrance porch and a central gathering chamber or pavilion (image 28) which opens into a sanctuary containing an image (image 27) of one of the twenty-four *tirthankaras* ("Those who show the path to enlightenment"). A walled courtyard filled with many small shrines dedicated to other Jain saints usually surrounds the temples.

Muslim and Hindu Art (after ca. A.D. 1500)

In the early eleventh century, the first large numbers of Muslims began to raid India from Ghazna in Afghanistan. In the subcontinent, Muslims encountered an ancient civilization whose peoples worshipped the powers and perfection of the gods in idealized human forms and, though of different faiths, managed to coexist peacefully. Turko-Afghan invasions continued through the twelfth century and the first Muslim kingdom in India, the Delhi Sultanate, was proclaimed in 1206. Buddhism, which had gradually lost adherents in India, seems to have been dealt a deathblow when Muslim invaders destroyed the great Buddhist monastery-universities in northeast India. Although many Hindu temples were destroyed as well, the Hindu faith continued to be the religion of most Indians.

The Muslim invaders brought new forms of architecture and art rooted in Persian court traditions. Artistic creativity resurfaced under the patronage of Muslim and Hindu royal courts, and the greatest achievements shifted from the religious to the secular realm. The major Indian art forms, sculpture and figural reliefs, gave way to painting and architecture. However, human and animal figures continued to be the main subjects of “miniature paintings,” that is, pages from illustrated books and folios.

Content and Function: Court Art

The Art of the Book

The holy book of the Muslims, the Qur’an, was often adorned with beautiful calligraphy, geometric patterns, and vegetal designs. The depiction of humans and animals was taboo. However, the production of elaborate illustrated books was the hallmark of a sophisticated Islamic court. Particularly in Persia, books about the adventures of mythic heroes were filled with remarkable scenes of humans and animals created for the enjoyment of the king and his courtiers. Muslim invaders brought this art of the book to the courts of South Asia, along with the use of paper, which gradually replaced flattened and cut palm leaves for writing and painting.

image 30

The Hindu (Rajput) courts made unbound manuscripts of traditional texts, while the Mughals created bound volumes that included not only Muslim subjects and historical texts but also, under the early Mughal emperor Akbar, great Hindu epics (image 30). Although imperial book commissions continued throughout the seventeenth century, illustrations of everyday life became popular as well, including portraits of court officials, harem scenes, and realistic depictions of animals and flowers. The Hindu courts were influenced by these trends, particularly in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth century, when a number of Mughal artists departed the imperial ateliers to seek work at Rajput courts.

Textiles

image 35

Since ancient times India has been famous for fabrics. Greek and Roman texts mention the luxurious and finely woven cottons of Benares. These textiles are called “muslins” in tribute to their place of origin. Ikat weaves and permanently dyed cottons (chintzes) are equally ancient textile techniques (image 35). The weaving of pile carpets, however, was not native to India. In the hot and often damp climate, a heavy floor covering was deemed unnecessary and impractical. Muslims introduced the technique in the fifteenth century, but it was Akbar (r. 1556–1605) who first established pile carpet weaving as a royal art. He had become accustomed to their use and to their rich patterns and colors during his stay at the Persian court before his conquest of northern India (image 33).

image 33

Palace Decor

It is from the Muslim kingdoms of India that we have the earliest surviving stone palaces. Inset stones, tiles, and openwork windows (poster B and drawing of a *jali* on page 56) decorated walls, fountain courtyards, domes of palaces, and the homes of wealthy court officials. Doors, shutters, and paneling of walls and ceilings were carved and inlaid in geometric and vegetal patterns. Furniture was sparse. People sat on pillows or low settees, and slept in bedding on the floor. The only pieces of wood furniture were storage chests and collapsible stands supporting metal trays from which people dined.

Personal Art Objects

image 32

image 37

It was a tradition in the Mughal and Rajput courts to give elaborate gifts to impress and gain favor at court. Giving beautiful, skillfully made objects that could be held or worn advertised the refined taste of the donor, another way to advance one’s position at court. The most treasured possessions, and therefore the most prized gifts, were jewels (image 32), bejeweled daggers and turban ornaments, fancifully designed containers made of precious materials for food and drink, incense, jewelry, perfume and water for bathing, writing implements, and hunting equipment (image 37). At the biannual weighing ceremony of the Mughal emperor, his weight in gold and silver, made from gifts by his courtiers and subjects, would be distributed to holy men and the poor. The emperor, in exchange, bestowed costly personal objects on his favored princes, ambassadors, and officials.

Religious Art

The Mosque and Calligraphy

Inspired by Persian architecture, the Muslim sultanates constructed mosques using the arch and dome, building techniques that were unknown in India. These rounded shapes were set within rectangular walls in harmonious and balanced geometrical arrangements. Interiors and exteriors were decorated with traditional Islamic geometric and floral patterns, based on geometric principles believed to reflect God’s order in the universe. These patterns can also be interpreted as a way of visualizing God’s infinite pow-

ers, since many of them can be repeated endlessly in all directions (see the *jali* drawing on page 56). The most important decorative element was Arabic calligraphy, which perpetuates God's words to Muhammad.

The most famous Mughal religious structure, the Taj Mahal, is not a mosque but a tomb. Built by Emperor Shah Jahan for his wife, it includes a small mosque in its walled enclosure. From a distance the measured geometric architectural shapes and their symmetrical arrangement evoke harmony and grandeur. Closer up, the white marble walls are seen to be inlaid with beautiful calligraphy and delicate patterns of semiprecious stones representing flowers.

Formal Elements of the Art

Styles of Painting

image 29

Although mural paintings are known to have decorated the walls of palaces and mansions, few survive. However, secular manuscripts dating from the sixteenth century onward are extant. The indigenous Rajput painting style favored flat areas of bright color, shallow space, and decorative patterning to depict timeless events (image 29). In contrast, Mughal painting featured greater naturalism and a sense of deeper space, and portrayed both historical scenes and mythic events. Figures are individualized through lively expressions, gestures, and poses. Realistic details of costume, adornment, personal possessions, architecture, gardens, and animals abound. Colors are nuanced. This interest in naturalism was fueled by the prints and paintings brought to the court by European merchants and missionaries in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Exposed to new ways of depicting the world, Mughal painters experimented with modeling in light and shadow and other European techniques such as perspective to create the illusion of volume and depth.

image 30

Mughal painting evolved during the reigns of the three greatest Mughal emperors. Akbar (r. 1556–1605) commissioned illustrated dynastic histories and translations of Hindu classics into Persian (image 30). The artists of Jahangir's court (r. 1605–27) gratified the emperor's taste for individual portrait studies of birds, animals (image 31), flowers, and members of his court. Shah Jahan (r. 1628–58) shared this interest in lifelike portraits, especially of the royal family and court members (image 32), and resumed his grandfather's interest in history painting.

image 31

image 32

As Mughal power and patronage waned in the late seventeenth century, some court painters were drawn to the many small Rajput kingdoms. They began to develop increasingly distinct artistic styles. Some drew inspiration from Mughal art, adopting its naturalism, deeper space, more varied colors, and subject matter. Others produced paintings inspired by the indigenous Rajput love of bright color, shallow space, expressive gesture, and mythic subject matter. Still others synthesized elements of both.

In the nineteenth century, this profusion of styles, at first vivid and exciting, seemed at a loss for inspiration in the face of India's changing world. Painting ateliers declined, as the British preferred to build elaborate palaces, and

the advent of photography to record royal events further undermined the traditional role of painting at the courts.

Pattern

Pattern—floral and geometric—is another distinctive feature of court art, whether spread across a wall, on a book cover or border of an album leaf, around a dagger hilt, or on a carpet. With straight edge and compass, artists created geometric patterns of intersecting circles upon which they drew grids of equilateral triangles and squares (see drawing of the jali on page 56). These in turn could be elaborated into polygons and stars. Vines, leaves, and blossoms grew out of each other in continuous curving patterns. In the Mughal period, these floral designs became more and more realistic, so that many flowers could be identified (image 32).

image 32

Color

In the royal art of many cultures, colors are strong and bold. In India, surfaces both large and small—architecture, clothing, and personal art—were enriched with bright color, especially reds and brilliant blues (image 39 and poster B). There was also an appreciation of the softer, subtler colors of jade.

image 39; poster B

Colors in patterns were combined to create the rich floral and geometric designs found in Mughal textiles and carpets (image 33). Color in miniature painting was at first fanciful and jewel-like—blue rocks, for instance, and lavender horses—as in the Persian court style. In the early Rajput style, a limited number of colors were used with little attempt at naturalism (image 29). In Mughal painting, color became increasingly naturalistic, although artists also used them to lead one's eye through detailed scenes of court crowds, battles, and hunting so favored by the Mughals.

image 33

image 29

Surfaces

Muslim and Hindu patrons delighted in sumptuous polished surfaces: the glisten of gold, silver, and other metals, the reflective qualities of polished gems and stones such as jade and rock crystal, and the sheen of silks and ivory (image 37). Another favored way to enrich surfaces was the technique of inlay, in which materials such as ivory and shell were set into wood, and gold and silver into darker metal surfaces.

image 37

The same formal elements—rich geometric and vegetal patterns, rich colors, and rich materials—were applied to architecture, textiles, ceramics, metalwork, and stone, stucco, and wood carvings. No distinction existed between what is called fine art in Western cultures and the decorative arts.

Southeast Asian Art

A Religious Content

Although rich and varied court art was produced in Southeast Asia, as we know from temple reliefs, religious subjects in stone and metal dominate the surviving art from the classical period (7th–13th century). Little art made from other materials has withstood the region's tropical climate, although a few extant pieces of early wood sculpture—now very worn—point to the existence of an important earlier tradition of carving. No early textiles have survived, and we can only imagine the beauty of the ancient costumes. Similarly, paintings on palm leaves and paper deteriorated long ago, and we have only second-hand evidence for the elaborate wood carvings and murals that may have decorated palace and temple walls. Some Cambodian stone palace architecture exists, but it is devoid of such decoration.

The South Asian Connection: Assimilation and Adaptation

The iconography of Southeast Asian sculpture strongly reflects Indian influences, which began to penetrate the region early in the Common Era. Buddhism and Hinduism were adopted with the identifying attributes and gestures of deities basically unchanged. Ideals of physical perfection and its representation in sculptural form, however, present quite distinct local characteristics such as regional facial types and bodies that reveal underlying musculature and skeleton.

Fewer Hindu deities are depicted in Southeast Asia than in India. Vishnu (image 46), Shiva, Ganesha, and Durga are the most popular, together with a syncretic deity called Hari-Hara (image 47), who combined aspects of Shiva and Vishnu. In Buddhist sculpture, emphasis was placed on the interceding role of bodhisattvas such as Avalokiteshvara (image 42 and 44) and Maitreya, the Buddha of the Future.

image 46

image 47

image 42, 44

Narratives

Royal courts, particularly in Cambodia and Java, commissioned extensive narrative reliefs for temple walls which portray episodes from the Buddha's life and scenes from Hindu legends and mythology. They also offer a wealth of detail about courtly and vernacular life, domestic customs, agriculture, industry, transport and architecture, music and dance. Most remain on temple walls in Cambodia and Java.

Functions of Southeast Asian Art

Worship

As in India, the majority of sculptures covered the exterior of temples that were circumambulated in worship. Sculptures of deities in the round may have been placed in the interior of temples and shrines, where dim light

would have added to the mystery of the divine being. Why small statues were made and how they were used is not known. They may have been votive images created as gifts to temples and shrines, or intended for personal use.

Hindu temples and Buddhist stupas were themselves objects of worship. They can be seen as microcosms of the universe, with their architectural forms replicating the cosmic mountains where the gods dwell. Typically, Hindu temples had towers that were oriented to the cardinal directions. Sometimes the ground plan is rectangular, with the temple surrounded by walls, a plan that resembles the sacred form of the mandala (image 8 and 13). Differing versions of this sacred cosmology in brick and stone occur throughout Southeast Asia, the most famous examples being the Buddhist monuments of Borobudur in Java, the Bayon at Angkor, and the stupas of Pagan in Burma, and the Hindu temples of Angkor, in particular Angkor Wat.

image 8, 13



Buddhist Shrine
Thailand or Cambodia.
Khmer style of central
and northeast Thailand,
13th century. Bronze.
Gift of Enid A. Haupt,
1993 (1993.387.7a-c)

bronze model of a Buddhist shrine

To Glorify the King

In Khmer Cambodia and in Java, the *devaraja* (god-king) cult embodied the belief that the living king transmitted divine will through his relationship with a particular god, and that the deity's images in the temple constructed by the king symbolized the god's approval of the king's divine right to rule. The *devaraja* cult was appropriated from India. Hindu rulers turned to Shiva or Vishnu as their patron deity. Buddhist kings derived their authority not from Buddha, who had renounced his worldly position, but from *bodhisattvas*, who were still of this world and possessed extraordinary powers. In keeping with these beliefs, occasionally representations of the monarch were made in the image of the god, often complete with the attributes of a deity (image 50). Many of the greatest Khmer temple-mountains were centered on a funerary shrine—the inner core of Angkor Wat, for instance—in which such statues were placed.

image 50

To Teach

Along with the cosmic and spiritual truths embodied in the temple's architectural form, extensive narrative reliefs on temple walls performed an educational role by instructing worshippers in both religious and historical events. For instance, as the pilgrim ascends the galleries at Borobudur, circling each level before climbing to the next, he or she is inspired by depictions of the Buddha's life and the compassion of bodhisattvas.

Precious Possessions

In comparison with India, where little ancient gold survives, hoards of jewelry and ritual vessels have been found in Indonesia and, to a lesser extent, Cambodia and Vietnam. The jewelry includes gold adornments for the head, ears, neck and chest, waist, fingers, upper and lower arms, and ankles and toes. Other examples of sophisticated metalwork are bronze, silver, and gold vessels for religious and court ceremonies, ritual weapons with elaborate finials, temple lamps and bells, and ritual objects such as the *vajra* (thunderbolt) and processional staffs. The fate of a large number of these precious objects was (and still is) to be melted down for the value of the metal.

Styles of Southeast Asian Art

Idealized Human Forms

Following the conventions of Indian art, Southeast Asian artists sought to visualize the spiritual perfection of the gods in idealized human form. Although the iconography was imported from India, notable differences are evident in Southeast Asian sculpture.

Anatomical Structure

The sculpture combines sensual forms with a strong architectonic basis, as if the sensuality of Indian sculpture had been merged with the formal, hieratic qualities of Egyptian sculpture. Although surface flesh seems to be inflated by *prana* (inner breath), the body is not usually as taut as in Indian sculpture. Beneath the skin surface, whose junctures are subtly indicated, there is the sense of muscle and bone. The sensuality and fecundity expressed in Khmer female figures (image 49) are not as exaggerated and seem restrained when compared with the voluptuous femininity typical of Indian art. Later Southeast Asian sculptures are even more abstracted, and forms cease to have a direct relationship to the human anatomy (image 45).

image 49

image 45

Pose

In general, a sense of dignity and restraint is created in the sculpture by an erect posture, frontal pose, and balanced forms. Serene expressions emphasize the compassion, purity, and introspection of transcendent beings.

Surfaces

In comparison to Indian sculpture, less emphasis is placed on adornment. Smooth areas contrast with the rich patterns of the figure's hairstyle and the pleats of the garment and the elaborate way in which it is worn. Some images were probably adorned with actual jewelry.

Sculpture in the Round and in Relief

Unlike Indian sculptural figures, which were rarely more than carvings in very high relief as part of a stela or for display in a niche, Southeast Asian deities were often carved fully in the round. A tradition of low-relief sculpture also flourished.

Scale

As in South Asian art, to express the power and complexity of the gods or kings, sculptures of them were sometimes represented on a superhuman scale, while lesser spiritual beings were portrayed smaller.

Artists and Materials

Artists in the Classical Period of Indian Art

Artists were born into their craft and trained in family guilds under the supervision of a master craftsman. They followed detailed instructions, outlined in texts and given by monks and priests, describing the appropriate proportions, poses, and expressions for each deity. Artistic talent and imagination were not entirely curbed, however, because styles did change slowly over time. This is clear when comparing works of art from different periods. The most talented artists were employed by temples, monasteries, members of royal courts, and wealthy merchants. Carvers, painters, and sculptors often congregated in regional workshops and were employed whenever a local temple was being constructed. Whether the temple was Hindu, Buddhist, or Jain did not seem to matter. Presumably, the same artists were also employed to create secular buildings, few of which survive.

image 7

Little is known about these carvers and metalworkers. Artists rarely signed their works (image 7). It is not known whether this anonymity was purposeful (perhaps for religious reasons) or related to the craftsman's rather low position in the social hierarchy. It was believed that erecting a sacred structure accrued merit (good karma) for the patron in this life and in future lives, so that his name is often the one inscribed on the building.

Artists in Southeast Asia

It would seem from written records in temple and court accounts that artists were viewed as merely craftsmen and artisans not worthy of mention. Sculptors, painters, and metalworkers probably congregated in court workshops or regional centers. Although iconography was based on Indian models, artistic talent and imagination were not entirely curbed. Regional styles emerged and developed—a fact that is clear when one looks at the works of art in the slides.

Artists after the Muslim Invasions

The Muslim rulers brought to India a new worldview in which the individual's role in history was more important and the creation of history and religious books was a central part of the culture. At the same time, the Hindu Rajput courts began producing unbound manuscripts. These Muslim and Rajput rulers attracted the finest craftsmen, both Hindu and Muslim, and the prestige attached to their manuscript commissions occasionally afforded great honor to the artist.

The Mughal emperor Akbar's father brought two outstanding artists from the Persian court to direct his atelier. At Akbar's court and that of his son Jahangir and grandson Shah Jahan, painters of illustrated books and album leaves became famous and were given impressive titles. However, although we may know their names, scant biographical information about most of the artists has been uncovered. During the seventeenth and early eighteenth

century, in periods when the Mughal atelier was less vital, artists moved to the Hindu courts and created cross-fertilization between the indigenous Indian and Mughal styles.

Materials

Stone and Wood

Because the first Indian stone sculptures (3rd century B.C. in South Asia) were so skillfully conceived and finished, it is assumed that there must have been an earlier, well-developed tradition of carving in wood sculpture. Early stone architecture such as stupa railings also follows wooden construction techniques. However, wood is perishable in tropical climates and few examples of this early tradition survive. A similar assumption can be made about the early stone sculpture of Southeast Asia, where fragments of early wood sculpture have been found. The tools and techniques used in carving stone and wood are the same as those of today: massive hammers and chisels are used to rough out the basic sculptural forms, then smaller ones to refine the work.

Because of its durability, stone became the preferred material for temples and temple sculpture. Probably all stone and wood sculpture (and architecture) was originally painted, although the available pigments, derived from natural sources, would not have been as strident as the artificially manufactured ones so popular in India today. Some figures were further embellished with gold and silver leaf.

During the period of Muslim rule in India, stoneworkers did not produce figural sculpture because of the traditional Islamic aversion to the depiction of the human form. Instead, they excelled in creating architectural embellishments such as openwork screens, windows, inlaid stone, and brickwork.

The Central Asian origins of the Mughals are reflected in a fondness for carved jade objects that could be handled and admired. Jade is such a hard stone that shaping it requires immense skill. It cannot be carved with traditional tools. Rather, the jade worker covers the surface with pastes of ground stone and then gradually shapes the object by abrading it with stone and metal tools. Once the desired form has been created, the artist brings the surface to a high polish with further abrasion.

Metals

Metal sculpture was cast in the lost-wax technique and was made of bronze or brass alloyed with various mixtures of zinc, tin, and lead. Except for small figures, most Buddhist and almost all Southeast Asian metal sculptures were hollow cast in the lost-wax technique and had clay cores.

A simplified explanation of the lost-wax hollow-casting technique is as follows. The form of the work was modeled in clay. The surface was covered entirely with melted wax. After the wax was hardened, the details were created in the wax and the surfaces were then covered with several layers of fine clay and a coarser clay coating. When fired, the clay mold and core were transformed into terracotta and the wax melted out. Molten metal was

poured into this mold. After it cooled, the terracotta mold was broken away to reveal the image. For that reason, only one statue could be cast from a mold. The metal figure was then burnished and a few details may have been intensified with chasing tools.

image 18, 22, 25

Small metal figures and most South Asian Hindu sculpture (image 18, 22, and 25) were solid cast with no clay core. In this casting method, the sculpture with all its precise detail was first created in wax stiffened with the addition of resin. The wax model was then covered with layers of fine and then coarser clay. When fired, the wax melted, leaving a clay negative mold of terracotta. The molten metal was then poured into the mold. As in the lost-wax technique, the terracotta mold had to be broken to free the metal figure, allowing for only a single statue to be cast.

image 50

Metal sculptures were often gilded, inlaid with copper and silver (image 50), and adorned with semiprecious stones or glass paste. The metal was incised or hollowed out to accommodate these inlays, which mimicked actual jewelry or emphasized eyes, mouths, and other features (image 12, 42, and 44). Some small sculptures were cast directly out of gold and silver.

image 12, 42, 44

Metalworkers in Muslim and Hindu courts channeled their skills into making elaborately decorated armor, weapons, and containers for personal effects. They enriched the metal surfaces with inlays of gold, silver, and sometimes gemstones. In the inlaying process, gold and silver were worked into designs cut into the surface. If desired, gems could be set into gold-lined cavities; the soft gold edges were then turned over the edges of the jewels to secure them.

Gold

The Indian love of gold had been gratified from early times by Indian rulers' insistence that they be paid in gold for trade goods. So great was the demand for Indian cotton in Kushan times that it almost bankrupted Rome's supply of the precious metal. Gold was used extensively for jewelry and for gilding precious statues. Frequently, small-scale metal images were gilded in the mercury gilding technique, in which a paste of gold and mercury was applied to the surface and heated. Because mercury burns at a lower temperature than gold, the mercury burns off, leaving the gold bonded to the underlying metal (image 12).

image 12

Very little ancient or medieval gold jewelry from South Asia survives because it was melted down again and again to make more up-to-date adornment. It was usually made of hammered gold. Because gold is soft, it can easily be hammered into thin sheets and cut into the required shapes for a finished piece. Designs can be pressed into a gold sheet placed on a yielding surface such as pitch or wax. When the gold sheet is turned over, the designs protrude from the surface. This technique is called repoussé.

image 3

The gold earring illustrated in image 3 is constructed of several pieces of hammered gold sheets cut into the required shapes and soldered together. The surface designs are created by innumerable tiny gold balls adhered to the surface in a technique called granulation, which requires extraordinary skill (see Glossary for description).

image 52

Much larger quantities of ancient gold have been found in Southeast Asia. In Java and Vietnam, gold was usually cast solid in the lost-wax method. Fine details were added afterward with chasing tools (image 52).

Gemstones

Details on classical Indian sculpture and in Muslim and Hindu miniatures provide evidence that rulers through the ages had plentiful supplies of diamonds, balas rubies, and pearls. From the sixteenth century onward, the supply of emeralds was augmented by gems brought from South American mines.

Painting Materials

Miniature paintings, as book illustrations and album leaves are often called, involved the collaboration of many artists and apprentices in the court workshops. The process began with discussions between patron and artist to determine subject matter. After creating a sketch and then a finished drawing for approval, the artist would “pounce” (trace) the lines of the drawing. This was done by putting a transparent material, often gazelle skin, over the drawing and pricking the outlines. The tracing was placed on the paper to be painted and black pigment was pushed into the tiny pricked holes creating dotted lines. Then the tracing material was removed and the dotted lines were connected with brushwork.

Apprentices would grind costly minerals such as malachite (green) and lapis lazuli (blue). Other pigments came from colored earths, the lac secreted by a beetle (shades of red), indigo (blue) from the plant, and brilliant yellow made of urine from cows fed on mango leaves. These colors were mixed with a binding medium of gum arabic or glue to make an opaque watercolor paint.

Apprentices were often the younger members of a family of craftsmen in a workshop. The youngest made the paintbrushes by inserting very fine animal hairs into quill handles. Older assistants painted the less important details. Often the artist applied several layers of paint to create particularly bright or strong colors. The unfinished painting was laid on a smooth surface and its back was typically burnished with a smooth agate to create a hard and permanent paint surface. Details were added after this process.

Paintings on Cloth from the Himalayan Kingdoms

image 10

The majority of *thankas* (from Tibet; image 10) and *paubhas* (from Nepal) were painted on primed cotton whose weave varied from the very fine to quite coarse. The first step was to stretch the cloth on a rectangular wood support. The fabric was then sized on one side with animal glue and mixed with kaolin, a white earth powder, to create a painting surface. The artist could then begin to lay out the painting’s composition, frequently using a grid system following strict rules of representation, scale, and arrangement. Most of the pigments were mineral, for instance, lapis lazuli and azurite for blue, malachite for green, and cinnabar and other red and yellow earth colors. Black was derived from soot and white from kaolin. Organic colors such as lac (red) and indigo (blue) were also used. The colors, mixed with warm animal glue (distemper) and water, had to be applied quickly before the glue

cooled and became too difficult to apply evenly. The finished painting was removed from its wood supports and mounted in silk borders.

Textiles

South and Southeast Asian textile makers have been known for their skill in creating cottons and silks since ancient times. However, due to the damp climate, the earliest surviving textiles date from the late fifteenth century. A close look at the costumes depicted on earlier sculptures reveals something of their sumptuousness.

As trade with Europe increased, finely woven Indian cottons came to be known as “muslins.” Another famous fabric of India is “chintz.” To create chintz cloth, textile designers used the resist-dye technique, or reserve work as it is sometimes called. The entire cloth is first covered with wax except for the areas that are to receive a particular color. When the cloth is dipped in a colored dye, the unwaxed area takes the dye and the waxed surfaces resist it. The cloth is then boiled to wash away the wax. This labor-intensive and highly skilled process is repeated for each color in the design (image 35).

image 35

Both flat-woven (*dhurrie*) and pile carpets were made in India. Many craftsmen contributed to the production of intricate pile carpets from the Mughal workshops. A master designer, usually in consultation with the patron, created a full-scale colored drawing (called a cartoon) of the carpet for the weavers to follow. Sitting at a vertical loom the width of the carpet, they would begin by weaving several rows of cotton threads, called weft, across the vertical warp threads. Next, they would tie a row of colored wool or silk yarn to each warp thread from one side to the other. Then came another row of cotton weft threads woven across the width of the loom, followed by another row of knots, and so on. When carefully clipped, the ends of the knots form the soft surface or pile of the carpet.

Terracotta

image 15

The terracotta (fired clay) relief illustrated in image 15 is from a Hindu temple made of wood and brick with terracotta embellishments. Before the fourth century A.D., when stone began to be used for building freestanding Hindu temples, wood and brick were the traditional materials. Terracotta reliefs were modeled by hand and with hand tools. Then they were fired and probably painted with bright colors that no longer exist.

image 2

The terracotta plaque illustrated in image 2 was made from a terracotta mold in a technique called press molding. The images on such plaques were first formed on the surface of a master model made of clay. When the clay hardened, the surface was greased and a thin slab of fine moist clay was pressed firmly onto the surface of the master model. As soon as this clay layer was firm enough, it was carefully removed and some additional details worked into its surface. Then it was fired to make a negative mold for producing multiple positive images like the Museum's plaque in the slide.

IV The Visual Materials

Introduction to the Visual Materials

Please familiarize yourself with the slides and CD images and read their descriptions. Initially, you may want to show the slides or CD-ROM images to your class without providing any information to see what their reactions and questions will be. When you are ready to look at the images in more depth, you may decide to lead a discussion yourself or assign one or more images to each student, who will study the information and be the “expert” when the class looks at and begins to analyze those particular slides and CD images. Whichever of these approaches you choose, students should first be asked describe what they see and then try to identify the object and its function.

Ideas of ways to group the images for individual or class discussion, activities, or research assignments are offered below. You, alone or in consultation with your class, can select the themes that are most interesting and that could provide a focus for a museum visit. The groups are thematic based upon content or formal qualities. Many of these themes appear in the “Class Discussion and Activities” section.

The Notice, Discuss, and Compare notes following the descriptions for each slide and CD-ROM image are guides to looking and understanding designed to stimulate visual analysis, to encourage theories about possible meanings, and to renew investigation as the “expert” leading the discussion provides more information. Further observations will follow when the suggested comparisons are made. As you and your class delve more deeply into the material, you will no doubt discover other interesting comparisons.

Dimensions of each artwork are noted to avoid misunderstandings about scale when looking at the slides and CD-ROM images. When placed properly in a carousel projector, the star imprinted on the lower left-hand corner of the slide frame should be showing at the top outside corner of the carousel slot.

Older students, individually or in small groups, might be assigned reports (oral, written, or both) based on particular themes. Ask them to use the descriptions of the appropriate images and the pertinent information about content, style, and meaning in section IV.

Visual Materials Grouped by Theme

Depicting divine and spiritually perfected beings

poster A, image 6, 9, 10, 17, 20–22, 27, 29, 45, 49
(see activities and discussion, pages 132–40)

Vishnu

image 15, 16, 20, 25, 29, 30, 38, 46–48

Shiva

image 17, 18, 20–22, 26, 36, 47, 49
(see activities and discussion, pages 138–39)

The Great Goddess

image 18, 19, 21, 24, 26, 36, 49
(see activities and discussion, page 137)

Attributes and symbols

poster A and B, image 3, 6, 7, 9–14, 16, 17, 19–22, 24, 26, 27, 39, 42, 43, 45–49
(see activities and discussion, pages 133–40)

Animals (real and fantastic)

image 1, 3, 5, 10, 11, 14, 15, 20, 24, 26, 29–31, 33, 37, 38, 41, 48, 51, 53
(see activities and discussion, pages 141, 145–47)

Nature and the environment

poster B, image 3, 6, 7, 12, 14, 20, 22, 24, 29, 30, 32–34, 39, 51

Music and dance

poster B, image 11, 13, 22, 23, 34, 39, 41

Costume and jewelry

poster A and B, image 2–4, 6, 10–12, 16, 18, 20, 21, 23, 32, 34, 35, 39, 49, 50, 52
(see activities and discussion, page 137)

Cultural interconnections

poster A and B, image 4–6, 9, 30, 32, 33, 35, 37, 39, 41, 43, 44, 46, 53

Pose and gesture

poster A, image 2, 6–15, 18, 20–25, 27, 29, 30, 34–36, 38, 42–44, 46, 48, 50
(see activities and discussion, pages 135–36)

Expression

poster A, image 10–12, 14, 15, 17, 19, 24, 27, 44, 48, 49

Movement / balance / stasis

poster A and B, image 2, 5, 6, 8, 10, 11, 14, 15, 18, 20–24, 27, 29, 34, 35, 38–40, 42, 44, 48, 49

Scale

poster B, image 7, 8, 10, 11, 13, 14, 16, 20, 24, 28, 35, 37–40, 43

Perspective

poster B, image 5, 8, 13, 29, 32, 34, 36, 38, 39, 51

Pattern

poster B, image 2, 6, 8, 10, 12, 13, 20, 28, 29, 32–36, 38–41, 50, 51, 53

Surface contrasts

poster A and B, image 2–4, 6, 9, 15, 17, 23–25, 37, 42, 44, 45, 48–50, 52

Color

poster B, image 8, 10, 11, 13, 14, 20, 29, 30, 33, 34, 36, 38, 39

Sculpture

poster A, image 2, 4–7, 9, 12, 15–27, 37, 40, 42–50

Painting

poster B, image 8, 10, 11, 13, 14, 29–32, 34, 36, 38, 39, 53

Textiles

poster B, image 8, 10, 11, 13, 14, 32, 33, 35, 39

Descriptions of the Works of Art

Summary of the Visual Materials

Digital images of all fifty-three works of art in this resource are provided on the CD-ROM. Forty of these images also appear in slide format and two are reproduced as posters. They are organized chronologically within the following categories:

South Asian Art	images 1–39
The Rise of Civilization	1–3
Buddhist Art	4–14
Hindu Art	15–26
Jain Art	27–28
Court Art of North and Central India	29–39
Southeast Asian Art	images 40–53
The Rise of Civilization	40
Buddhist Art	41–45
Hindu Art	46–50
Secular Art	51–53

The works of art can be located within modern national boundaries as follows:

South Asia	
India	2, 3, 5–7, 15, 16, 18–20, 22–39
Afghanistan	17
Pakistan	1 and 4
Bangladesh (or India)	24
Sri Lanka	9
Nepal	8, 12, and 21
Tibet	10, 11, 13, and 14
Southeast Asia	
Cambodia	44, 47, 49, and 50
Indonesia	40, 43, 48, and 52
Malaysia	41
Myanmar (Burma)	45
Thailand	42 and 44
Vietnam	46, 51, and 53

Posters



Poster A (see also image 6)

Standing Buddha

Standing Buddha

India (Uttar Pradesh, Mathura).
Gupta period, 5th century.
Mottled red sandstone.
H. 33^{11/16} in. (85.5 cm)

Purchase, Enid A. Haupt Gift,
1979 (1979.6)

Slide and CD image

Buddha is identified by his cranial protuberance (ushnisha), the shell-like curls of his hair, his elongated earlobes, and his monastic robes. His missing right hand would have formed one of his most frequently portrayed gestures, the raised palm of the fear-allaying mudra. Well modeled and elegantly proportioned (his entire body is about seven face lengths in height), he stands in a subtly flexed posture with his right leg slightly relaxed.

A clinging diaphanous robe descends from his broad shoulders, revealing the forms of the figure's arms, torso, and knees, and the knotted sash of his undergarment. At the same time, the elegant rippling folds seem to dematerialize the body of the Buddha. Their curving patterns would be impossible to arrange in real cloth.

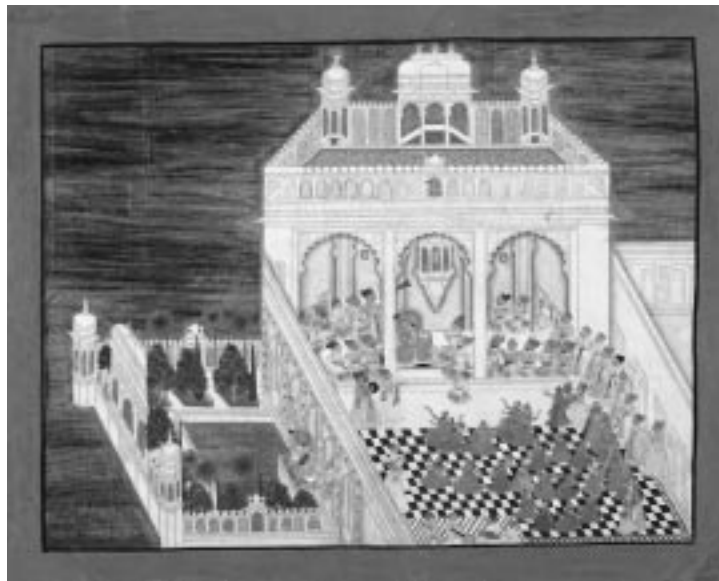
The serenity and calm of this image expresses the concept that, as the Enlightened One, Buddha has passed out of the cycles of time into eternal nirvana, the attainment of perfect knowledge and integration of the soul with the Universal. The Buddha's otherworldliness is indicated by his gentle expression, idealized face, half-closed eyes, and the way his anatomy swells as if supported by prana, not muscle and bone. The sense of divine harmony is enhanced by the many circular forms and repeated curves of the design.

In the Gupta period, artists developed a vocabulary of idealized forms derived from nature with which they constructed images of transcendent beings: for example, eyes like lotus petals, head oval like an egg, eyebrows like an archer's bow, and chin like a mango stone. These conventions continued to be used in India after the Gupta period. Only a section of the halo that encircled this Buddha's head remains. It is composed of auspicious and transcendent symbols such as bands of lotus petals, scrolling plant motifs, jewels, and stylized flames.

Notice: expression, pose, drapery

Discuss: marks of the Buddha, physique, mood, balance

Compare: image 9 and 45



Poster B (see also image 39)

Maharana Ari Singh with His Courtiers at the Jagniwas Water Palace

Maharana Ari Singh with His Courtiers at the Jagniwas Water Palace

By Bhima, Kesu Ram, Bhopa, and Nathu.

India (Rajasthan, Mewar), 1767.

Ink, gold, silver, and opaque watercolor on paper.

26³/₄ x 33 in.

(67.9 x 83.8 cm)

Purchase, Mr. and Mrs. Herbert Irving, Mr. and Mrs. Arthur Ochs Sulzberger, and Mr. and Mrs. Henry A. Grunwald Gifts, in honor of Mr. and Mrs. Gustavo Cisneros, 1994 (1994.116)

CD image only

Ari Singh ("Lion") was Maharana (Great King) of the Rajput kingdom of Mewar. Like other rulers, both Hindu and Muslim, he commissioned his court painters to record palace festivities, royal hunts, elephant fights, diplomatic exchanges, and battles—always featuring his rank and abilities. Udaipur, the capital of Mewar, is built around an artificial lake. At the center of the lake is Jagniwas, the palace pictured here. Silver paint, now tarnished dark gray, originally suggested the lake's shimmering surface. The architectural style of the palace is influenced by Mughal architecture with its curving, scalloped arches, which the Rajputs adapted as the Mughal Empire waned. Very close inspection of the tiny wall paintings that line the arcade in the Maharana's private garden reveals depictions of the ten avatars of Vishnu and several erotic scenes which are traditional Hindu subjects.

In the open courtyard of the palace, Ari Singh and his Rajput clansmen have the privilege of sitting, each in a formal profile pose. Although a dance performance is taking place before the royal group, all eyes are on the Maharana. Were he to stand up, he would be much larger than his courtiers, and they in turn are much larger than the dancers and musicians, despite the fact that they are farther back in the picture. Obviously, scale indicates rank.

Ari Singh appears in two other episodes within this painting. Below, on the left, he admires his garden from a balcony while being attended by two servants. In the middle window on the second floor of the pavilion, he views his kingdom and his people view him. The Mughal emperors are often shown in a like position hearing petitions from the populace. In all three appearances, the Maharana's head, large in proportion to his body, is further emphasized by a brilliant green halo emitting gold rays. This symbol of royal power derives from images of Mughal emperors whose halos were inspired by pictures of Christian saints brought to India by Europeans in the sixteenth century.

In this unusually large painting from a royal folio, court artists depicted the palace spaces from many viewpoints, with walls tilted up and out to reveal inner chambers and courtyards that would otherwise be hidden to us. For example, we look down upon the black and white marble courtyard and into the Maharana's private garden. At the same time, the royal entourage seated in the pavilion appears to be at eye level. The open roof gallery of the palace is tilted up and recedes in one-point perspective to show the floral carpet. However, the roof gallery towers and the smaller towers in the walls surrounding the garden are depicted in a reverse one-point perspective in which the sight lines diverge rather than converge, so that three sides of each tower can be seen. These multiple perspectives can also be understood to indicate the three different time frames contained within the picture.

With its luxurious fittings and sumptuous activities, the palace proclaimed the wealth and power of the Mewar rulers. Pierced screens (jalis) are set in the palace walls, each one in a different geometric openwork pattern, and red textile hangings with tree patterns cover the tower windows. The central scene is full of rich details of court life. Notice the court members' gestures, costumes, turbans, turban ornaments, daggers, and jewelry. They sit or stand at attention while the Maharana, in a long gold-covered coat, lounges against a soft bolster. In contrast, the performance before them is very lively. The dancers move in three different groups involving different poses and gestures. Four of them are men wearing orange turbans. A fourth group of dancers waits to perform in a line on the right. There appear to be two singers, one male and one female, and six musicians.

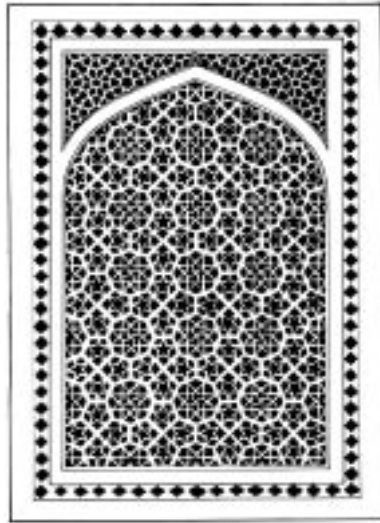
All these precisely painted details of court life are organized within clearly outlined architectural spaces. The color red leads the viewer's eye from the central dance scene to the garden to the open roof and back again, and a broad red border outlined in black encloses the entire composition. This type of court painting based on Mughal prototypes was first adopted in Mewar in the early eighteenth century. However, the naturalism of the Mughal school has been tempered by Rajput decorative painting, a somewhat limited palette, and the use of multiple perspectives.

Notice: subject, architecture, materials, and technique

Discuss: narrative sections, color, viewpoints, scale, symbols of power, cultural exchange

Compare: image 2, 33, and 35

Drawing



Pierced Screen (Jali) (a drawing)

Pierced Screen (Jali)

India.

Mughal, reign of Akbar,
(r. 1556–1605).

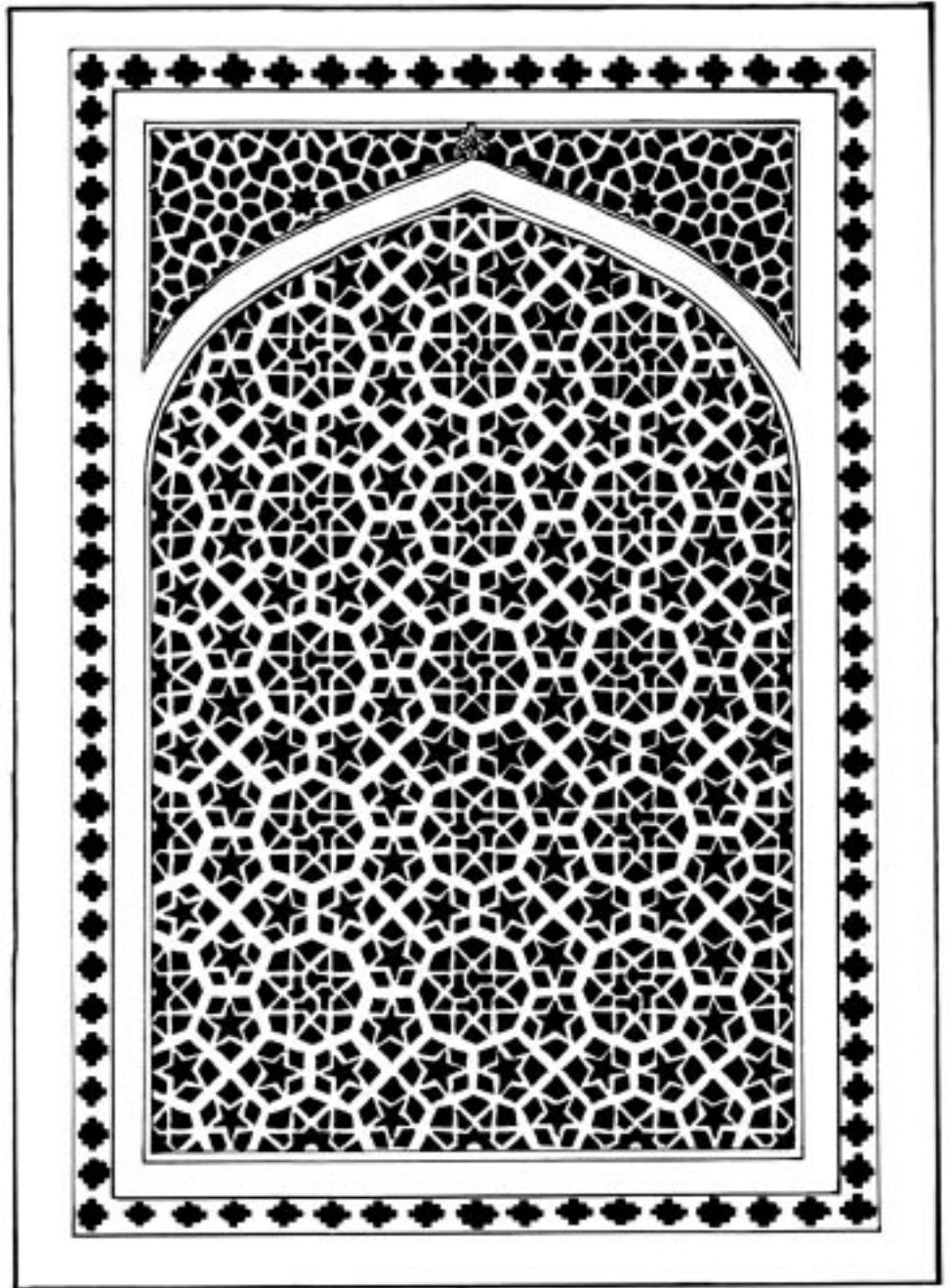
Sandstone.

73¹/₄ x 51³/₁₆ in. (186 x 130 cm)

(1993.67.1)

The earliest extant jalis, or pierced screens, are found in a mosque in India dated to the early sixteenth century. They became a common feature in Mughal buildings of the late sixteenth century and were later adopted in Rajput architecture as well. They functioned as windows, room dividers, and decorative features. They were ideal openings in outer walls of buildings in the warm climates of South Asia because they screened the sunshine yet allowed air to circulate freely. From early morning to sunset, the shadow patterns they cast continuously moved, adding richness to the interior of the room.

This drawing shows the intricate openwork design of a jali. The patterns consist of octagons containing eight-pointed stars around which radiate hexagons containing five-pointed stars. These geometric patterns could be endlessly repeated in all directions yet are contained within a typically shaped Mughal arch and rectangular outer frame. Within the corners above the arch is a smaller, more delicate pattern based on overlapping circles and stars. The most skilled craftsmen carved openwork out of one piece of sandstone—a feat requiring tremendous precision. Although most jalis are geometric, some incorporate flowers and leaves into their designs.





South Asia: The Rise of Civilization

1 Seals with Designs of a Unicorn, Bulls, and an Elephant

Seals with Designs of a Unicorn, Bulls, and an Elephant

Pakistan, Indus Valley civilization (3000–1500 B.C.).
Baked steatite.

H. from left: $\frac{13}{16}$ in. (2.1 cm),
 $1\frac{1}{2}$ in. (3.8 cm), $1\frac{1}{8}$ in.
(2.9 cm), $\frac{13}{16}$ in. (2.1 cm)

1984.482, 49.40.2, and
promised gifts

CD image only

Thousands of steatite seals like these have been discovered in the ruins of ancient sites throughout Pakistan and North India. Carved with a copper or bronze burin, the images on the seals depict powerful animals such as elephants, lions, rhinosceri, and bulls. Each seal bears letters in a writing system that is still undecipherable. One famous seal shows a figure seated in a yogic pose of meditation surrounded by animals, perhaps a prototype of the Hindu god Shiva as “lord of the animals.”

On these seals, the powerful creatures face ritual stands. Above them are letters or characters, which may represent the name of a family or merchant organization involved in the network of trade extending across western Asia. Indus Valley stamp seals found in ancient Mesopotamian cities and Mesopotamian seals found at Indus Valley sites prove the existence of long-distance trade.

Stamp seals were used in the following way: clay was pressed over cords binding bundles of merchandise and then the seal was stamped into the clay. Any attempt to tamper with the contents would be immediately evident.

Notice: content, size, material, technique

Discuss: writing, function, trade

Compare: image 31



2 *Plaque with a Royal Family*

Plaque with a Royal Family

India (West Bengal,
Chandraketugarh).
Shunga period, 1st century B.C.
Terracotta.

12³/₄ x 10¹/₄ in. (32.4 x 26 cm)

Purchase, Florence and
Herbert Irving Gift, 1992
(1992.129)

Slide and CD image

Although most early terracotta plaques portray deities, this one shows a porch with two columns framing a scene of a royal family at ease. The man is seated on a throne and his wife stands to his left. They wear extraordinary headdresses (hers counterbalanced by a large curving blossom, probably a foxtail lily), lavish jewelry (some of which was probably made of strung flowers), and elaborately pleated costumes. Affectionate gestures link the couple: they touch each other as the woman leans gracefully toward her husband and looks toward us, drawing us into the scene. Her full breasts, narrow waist, and wide hips represent the female ideal in Indian art.

Below the royal pair sits a chubby child wearing a beaded cap and heavy pleated robe. He seems unaware of the howling dog he holds on a chain, or the two ducks and the monkey that surround him. The patterns on the floor where he sits and the carved details on the column capitals and bases and on the lintel suggest the luxurious decoration of ancient palaces constructed of wood.

Terracotta plaques like this were made from terracotta molds, which means the image could have been duplicated several times. Working in clay enabled the mold maker to create the remarkable details seen here, some of which were created after the impression had been made with small stamps. The function of such plaques is unknown. It might have been suspended from a cord passed through the two holes near the upper edge.

Notice: figures, costume, setting, material

Discuss: relationship between figures, working in clay, details

Compare: image 15, 32, 35, and 50



3 One from a Pair of Royal Earrings

One from a Pair of Royal Earrings
India (probably Andhra Pradesh).
ca. 1st century B.C.
Gold.
W. 3 in. (7.6 cm)

Gift of The Kronos Collections,
1981 (1981.398.3)

Slide and CD image

This ear ornament resembles a tightly curving gold vine ending in two large flaring buds. Vines, sometimes sprouting fantastic fruits and flowers, are a common symbol of fertility in ancient India. On the underside of each bud is a vase from which foliage grows, a design of classical origin that was adopted into the Indian art repertoire as a symbol of the earth's bounty. On one side of each of the buds are animals, either a winged lion or an elephant (which can be seen here). Both animals are royal emblems. Ear ornaments like these were so large and heavy that they distended the earlobes of the wearer almost down to the shoulders. At the center of the curving vine is a narrow slit that can be partially seen on the right. The distended earlobe was passed through this slit so that the earring hung from the earlobe of the wearer. Figures wearing similar large earrings appear in image 5.

image 5

Very little ancient Indian jewelry has survived. Rather than being passed from one generation to the next, most jewelry was probably melted down in order to avoid transmitting the karma of the former owner. This earring and its mate are the finest and most elaborate examples of early Indian jewelry known. They remind us of the extraordinary cultural remains—domestic architecture, wooden sculpture, jewelry, and textiles—that have largely perished and can only be imagined by reading descriptions in literature and by looking at the surviving art. For instance, the elaborate jewelry depicted on deities in Indian sculpture and painting was undoubtedly based on real models. The basic forms of this earring were made from flat hammered sheets of gold. The animals were made from separate sheets hammered from the back to create their forms (*repoussé*) and then decorated with gold granulation. In granulation, tiny globes of gold are adhered to the surface. Granulation was also used to outline the foliage and abstract designs and to add texture to the smooth surfaces. Twisted wires of different thickness and small pieces of gold sheet enliven the surfaces.

Notice: material, size, form, surface decoration

Discuss: function, how worn, symbols, status of wearer, gold-working techniques

Compare: image 2, 6, 16, and 18



South Asia: Buddhist Art

4 Standing Bodhisattva Maitreya (The Buddha of the Future)

Standing Bodhisattva Maitreya (The Buddha of the Future)

Pakistan (ancient region
of Gandhara).

Kushan period, ca. late

2nd–early 3rd century.

Gray schist.

H. 64 1/4 in. (163.2 cm)

Purchase, Lita Annenberg
Hazen Charitable Trust Gift,
1991 (1991.75)

Slide and CD image

In Buddhism, a bodhisattva is a being who has accumulated sufficient merit and wisdom to escape the cycle of death and rebirth but chooses to remain on earth to help others achieve this goal. It is believed that Maitreya will be the Buddha of the Future, when the next great world age begins. He is identified by the sacred-water flask (only a fragment remains) held in his left hand, and by the double-loop topknot of his hair. A circle of radiance symbolizing his divinity surrounds his head. The low-relief carving beneath his feet represents six monks adorning a cylindrical casket of Buddhist relics that rests beneath a canopy.

At the time this statue was made, major trade routes from Rome to India and China passed through the ancient region of Gandhara (today mostly in Pakistan and Afghanistan) and descendants of Alexander the Great's armies still lived in the region. Consequently, the peoples of Gandhara were exposed to an international mix of beliefs and styles. This bodhisattva was carved during the reign of the Kushan kings, some of whom had converted to Buddhism. Many stupas and monastic assembly halls were erected during their reigns.

The Kushan court had two capitals, one at Peshawar in Gandhara (Pakistan) and the other further east at Mathura in India. In Gandhara, the Kushan carvers portrayed Buddhist subjects in gray schist stone in a style that reflects classical prototypes, while those in India worked in red sandstone in an indigenous style that was more conceptual. In this image, the bodhisattva's muscular, heavysset body, his togalike robe with realistic three-dimensional folds, and his coiffure show inspiration from Mediterranean cultures. Gandharan images of the Buddha were depicted in a similar style.

Notice: adornment, jewelry, drapery, physique

Discuss: identity of figure, sense of power, weight shift, Greco-Roman influence, cultural diffusion

Compare: image 6 and 42



5 *The Great Departure and the Temptation of the Buddha*

The Great Departure and the Temptation of the Buddha

India (Andhra Pradesh, Nagarjunakonda).
Ikshvaku period,
ca. first half of 3rd century.
Limestone.

H. 56³/₄ in. (144.1 cm)

Fletcher Fund, 1928 (28.105)

Slide and CD image

The Ikshvaku rulers, whose kingdom was located on the east coast of India, built many stupas whose surfaces were covered with Buddhist reliefs. This fragment illustrates two episodes from the life of Siddhartha, the name of the Buddha before he reached enlightenment. He is pictured riding out from his palace accompanied by an attendant who holds his sword. Siddhartha is about to dismount, set aside his royal regalia, and leave his wife and son behind to seek a solution to human suffering. To avoid waking the occupants of the palace, yakshas (earth deities) hold up the feet of Siddhartha's horse and his attendants. Celestial musicians and dancers throng around Siddhartha, celebrating his future enlightenment. One holds a parasol over Siddhartha's head to symbolize his rank as a prince and the much greater rank he will assume as the Enlightened One. The fragment above the main scene shows Siddhartha seated in meditation, ignoring the temptations of worldly power and pleasures being offered to him by the evil demon Mara.

This region, like Gandhara, was situated on trade routes between East and West, in this case sea routes, and its artists were influenced by classical traditions of relief carving. Notice the illusion of depth created within the fairly shallow relief by placing the figures in a series of overlapping planes. Those that are slightly higher up are understood to be farther back. The scene is packed with figures in many positions, yet at the center of the swirling action Siddhartha is clearly visible astride his horse. Although the surface is damaged, details of adornment and decoration are still visible, suggesting the splendor of ancient court life. The large earrings worn by Siddhartha resemble those in image 3.

image 3

Notice: action, adornment, center of interest, detail

Discuss: the narrative, illusion of depth, probable function

Compare: image 35, 39, and 41



6 *Standing Buddha*

Standing Buddha

India (Uttar Pradesh,
Mathura).

Gupta period, 5th century.

Mottled red sandstone.

H. 33¹¹/₁₆ in. (85.5 cm)

Purchase, Enid A. Haupt
Gift, 1979 (1979.6)

Slide and CD image



detail



7 Seated Preaching Buddha

Seated Preaching Buddha

India (Bihar, probably Bodh Gaya).
Pala period, 10th–11th century.
Black stone.

H. 24¹/₄ in. (61.5 cm)

Rogers Fund, 1920 (20.43)

CD image only

image 6

The Buddha sits on a double-lotus throne in the classic yoga position of meditation—a pose in art that originated in India. His half-closed eyes and faint smile express ultimate serenity and knowledge. This sense of transcendent calm is reinforced by the balanced composition and the pose of the Buddha's body, which fits within the stable shape of an equilateral triangle. Even his simple monk's robe seems to surpass reality. As in the Gupta Buddha (image 6), it falls as no real drapery ever would, in graceful patterns, each fold no more than a curving line.

The Buddha is identified by the ushnisha, urna, the lotus blossom designs on his palms and soles, the elongated earlobes, halo, spiral curls of hair, and the gesture he makes. His hands are positioned in the teaching mudra—he is naming the Four Noble Truths and the Eightfold Path, the way to final release from the cycles of life. On each side of the Buddha are columns, suggesting a temple niche, the frame of which displays prancing leogryphs, a part-lion part-ram beast who assures protection. A Sanskrit inscription on the lotus-throne base says, "To the cause of the divine religion by the stonecutter Vijaka."

Notice: pose, expression

Discuss: symbols, mudras, variations in scale, mood, transcendence, inscription

Compare: image 10, 43, and 44



8 *Paramasukha-Chakrasamvara Mandala*

***Paramasukha-Chakrasamvara
Mandala***

Nepal.
ca. 1100.
Distemper on cloth.
26⁷/₈ x 19⁷/₈ in. (68.2 x 50.5 cm)
Rogers Fund, 1995 (1995.233)

Slide and CD image

The painting depicts the Paramasukha-Chakrasamvara (Supreme Bliss Wheel) mandala. The main circular area contains a diagram of a palace with four elaborately decorated gateways. This structure should be imagined as three-dimensional. From the square base, the palace rises up as a pyramid and is topped by a circle within a square containing the major deity, in this case Chakrasamvara, a horrific form of the Buddha Akshobhya, one of the five cosmic Buddhas from the Esoteric Buddhist pantheon. He is shown in union with his consort, the goddess Vajravarahi, a metaphor for the union of wisdom and compassion, ways and means. The main figures are surrounded by a group of six attendant deities standing within stylized lotus petals.

Surrounding the main circular area are vivid depictions of the traditional eight charnel grounds of India, auspicious sites for meditation on wrathful deities. Here the worldly existence of transitory pleasure and the inevitability of death contrast with the realm of the Buddha envisioned in the center. The horizontal shape of the lower register resembles ancient Indian wooden book covers used to bind manuscripts written on palm leaves. The Pancaraksha, the five protective goddesses especially favored in Nepal, are flanked by donors on the right and a monk on the left, each seated in front of offerings.

This is the earliest paubha (painting on cloth) known from Nepal. The style of apparel worn by the monk in the lower register is typically Nepalese rather than Tibetan.

Notice: organization, pattern, geometric shapes, color, scale, action

Discuss: function, meaning, how one travels into a mandala, meditation

Compare: image 14 and 19



9 Standing Buddha

Standing Buddha

Sri Lanka.
Polonnaruva period,
11th–12th century.
Gilt bronze.
H. 23⁵/₈ in. (60 cm)

Gift of Enid A. Haupt, 1993
(1993.387.8)

CD image only

Several different models for describing the Buddha's appearance developed in India. His anatomy and the style of his monk's robe in Gandharan sculpture (image 4) differ from the sculptural traditions of the Gupta period (image 6). Another variation formulated in southeast India in the Ikshvaku period (image 5) spread to Sri Lanka and Southeast Asia and became the standard way of depicting the Buddha. This imposing gilt bronze statue shows the Buddha with his right hand raised in a variant of the fear-allaying gesture and with the fingers of his left hand positioned to hold the edge of his robe (see image 6). His facial type has become broader and the features are somewhat sharper and less curvilinear. A flame surmounts his ushnisha.

image 4

image 6

image 5

The Buddha's robe falls in diagonal curving patterns across his upper body and down his right side. It does not cover his right shoulder as in sculptures from Mathura. Part of the length of cloth has been grasped in his left hand, drawing up the fabric so that on the inner side it falls down across the body in a series of near-vertical folds, and on the outer side, straight down from the wrist.

Notice: material, proportions

Discuss: gesture, symbols, line, rhythm, contrasts

Compare: image 6 and 16, poster A



10 *The Buddha Amoghasiddhi Attended by Bodhisattvas*

The Buddha Amoghasiddhi Attended by Bodhisattvas

Tibet.
 First half of 13th century.
 Distemper on cloth.
 27¹/₈ x 21¹/₄ in. (68.9 x 54 cm)

Purchase, Miriam and Ira D. Wallach Philanthropic Fund Gift, 1991 (1991.74)

CD image only

Thankas are Tibetan paintings on cloth. In Buddhist monasteries, they are often used to focus meditation. This thanka depicts the transcendent Amoghasiddhi, one of the five cosmic Buddhas. Each of these Buddhas has a particular gesture, color, and vehicle and is associated with one of the five directions: north, south, east, west, and straight up. Amoghasiddhi sits in his northern paradise; his gesture allays fear, his color is green, and his vehicle for traveling through the cosmos is Garuda. A Garuda appears on both sides of the throne. He sits in the cross-legged yogic position in front of a large striped bolster and wears lavish jewelry, which symbolizes his spiritual perfection. The soles of his feet and palms of his hands are henna-colored, an ancient form of aristocratic adornment.

Two bodhisattvas in tribhanga poses flank him, while above him are smaller bodhisattvas seated in rows who also attend his sermon. The relative sizes of the figures in this crowded scene reflect the degree of their spiritual perfection, and the entire entourage is arranged symmetrically around the central figure of Amoghasiddhi.

image 12

Five forms of the goddess Tara, the protector and guide of Buddhist pilgrims (image 12), are shown seated in a row at the bottom, each a different color and with varying numbers of arms. In the lower right corner is a monk seated before an offering stand. He may have officiated at the ceremony consecrating the set of thankas portraying the five cosmic Buddhas to which this painting belonged.

Notice: arrangement, balance, scale, expression

Discuss: identity of figures, function, meditation, female energy

Compare: image 12, 27, and 48



11 Portrait of Jnanatapa Surrounded by Lamas and Mahasiddhas

Portrait of Jnanatapa Surrounded by Lamas and Mahasiddhas

Eastern Tibet, Riwoche monastery.

14th century.

Distemper on cloth.

27 x 21¹/₂ in. (68.6 x 54.6 cm)

Purchase, Friends of Asian Art Gifts, 1987 (1987.144)

CD image only

The large figure at the center of this cloth painting is a great Indian practitioner of Esoteric Buddhism called Jnanatapa. His large, unfocused eyes indicate that he is in an ecstatic trance. He wears a distinctive golden helmet with a pleated fringe, a large amount of delicately made jewelry, and an apron of carved bone over his red lion cloth. In his right hand is a horn and in the left a golden casket surmounted by a lion. The palms of his hands and soles of his feet are hennaed in brilliant red, an ancient aristocratic sign of beauty often used in the portrayal of deities and spiritually evolved beings, including abbots. A small golden halo encircles his head with an outer rim of red, yellow, and blue bands symbolizing wisdom and protection. A pair of lions guards the double-lotus throne with jeweled decoration. Behind his throne, vertical shapes with pointed and hooked tops symbolize mountains. Onpo Rinpoche, the founder of Riwoche monastery, for which this painting was made, was believed to be an incarnation of Jnanatapa.

Directly over Jnanatapa's head is a portrait of a Buddha with his consort. Both were Jnanatapa's spiritual masters. To each side are three seated figures of abbots. The four central ones are the first abbots of Taklung monastery. The one to the far left is the teacher of its first abbot and the one to the far right, the second abbot of Riwoche. The eight figures along the sides of the lower half of the painting are famous *mahasiddhas* (great practitioners) of Esoteric Buddhism whose revelations included nontraditional means to achieve spiritual perfection. Their knowledge was kept secret to all but their most spiritually evolved student monks and was passed directly from teacher to adept from generation to generation.

Notice: figures, scale, pose, gesture, expression

Discuss: use of color, meditation practices

Compare: image 9, 24, and 19



12 Standing Tara

Standing Tara

Nepal.
14th century.
Gilt copper alloy with color,
inlaid with semiprecious
stones.

H. 20¹/₄ in. (51.4 cm)

Louis V. Bell Fund, 1966
(66.179)

Slide and CD image

Tara, the Buddhist savioress whose name means “star,” guides pilgrims on their journeys to sacred sites and protects them from peril. On another level of meaning, she also guides and protects the adept on his or her journey toward enlightenment. As the female counterpart to the Bodhisattva Avalokiteshvara, she is the goddess of compassion. She takes many forms (image 10). Here she stands in the tribhanga pose, her left hand raised in the teaching mudra. Attached to her left upper arm is a lotus. She holds a small citron or pomegranate in her right hand, signifying her gift of compassion to the devotee. Note the patterns on her palms. She wears a long floral printed dhoti and shawl which falls down her back. As is typical in Nepal, her jewelry is set with actual semiprecious stones and includes a crown, earrings, necklaces, armbands, wide cuff bracelets, and an elaborate belt. Her skin is brightly gilded.

image 10

The overall effect of this figure is one of elegance, refinement, and other-worldliness created by her adornment, her swaying pose and slender, graceful body, and the serene expression on her face. The effect is enhanced by light reflecting off the smooth gilt-copper surfaces. Such images were placed in temples. Nepali sculpture was greatly influenced by the sculpture of India. However, Tara’s anatomy is somewhat less voluptuous than her Indian counterparts (compare image 18), and her wide face with large, partially closed eyes, pursed mouth, and arched nose is purely Nepalese, as are the elaborate foliate swirls in the crown.

image 18

Notice: material, pose, gesture, adornment, expression

Discuss: identity of figure, symbols, pattern, line, female counterparts

Compare: image 1 and 18



13 Mandala of Jnanadakini

Mandala of Jnanadakini

Tibet, School of the Ngor monastery.

ca. late 15th century.

Distemper on cloth.

33 1/4 x 28 7/8 in. (84.5 x 73.3 cm)

Purchase, Lita Annenberg Hazen Charitable Trust Gift, 1987

(1987.16)

CD image only

In Tibetan monasteries, Buddhist monks use mandalas as aids to meditation. Mandalas are representations of a deity and his or her entourage. They often take the form of a cosmic diagram with the main deity at its center. The architectonic arrangement of many mandalas resembles a square palace with four entrances surrounded by circular bands that represent abstract realms. Often the palaces are multistoried. The entire structure should be imagined as a three-dimensional stepped pyramid whose top is inhabited by the deity with whom the devotee hopes to become one.

In this mandala, the deity is the wrathful goddess Jnanadakini, who sits within a red circle on a throne guarded by two lions. She has three heads and six arms to display her multiple powers. Her wrath protects Buddhists from the evil and ignorance that hinder their quest for spiritual enlightenment. Surrounding her are four other seated deities and four lesser, animal-headed deities. The palace is set inside concentric circles of stylized lotus petals, vajras (ritual thunderbolts), flames, and extraordinary scenes of charnel (cremation) grounds. The latter are auspicious places for the contemplation of wrathful deities. In each of the four red circles at the outer corners is a female deity in an energetic pose, flanked by smaller attendants. There are thirteen lamas in the row at the top; on the bottom register in the two niches on the left, the donor of the painting is seated in front of an offering table. The other figures in the register are wrathful deities and protectors of the faithful.

Notice: organization, pattern, geometric shapes, color, scale, action

Discuss: function, meaning, how one travels into a mandala, meditation

Compare: image 8 and 28



14 Yama

Yama

Tibet.

Mid-17th–early 18th century.

Distemper on cloth.

72³/₈ x 46⁵/₈ in.

(183.8 x 118.4 cm)

Purchase, Florance

Waterbury Bequest, 1969

(69.71)

Slide and CD image

This powerful painting, over six feet tall, was part of a large set representing the ferocious protectors of Buddhism. Yama is the Indian god of death who, in the corpulent form of a buffalo-headed demon, protects against outer perils such as storms, pestilence, murder, or attacks by wild animals. When he appears with an ogre face, as he does here, Yama guards against the inner demons of emotional addictions such as lust and hate. He carries a chopper (*katrika*) which he uses to eradicate these demons once the devotee has recognized and overcome them. Yama holds a skull cup in the other hand, filled with the blood of these vanquished evils. He wears a tiger-skin loincloth and a garland of human skulls as he tramples on an agonized being who symbolizes ignorance. He is surrounded by stylized flames and is supported by a black lotus petal floating in seas of blood. On each side of the painting, lightning bolts flash out of clouds, and four small, wrathful buffalo-headed Yamas dance and grimace in the flames. Two serene seated monks holding books flank a fifth small dark-blue image of the ogre-faced Yama at the top of the painting.

Notice: action, expression, mood

Discuss: symbolism, meaning, scale, color, organization, detail

Compare: image 19, 22, and 24



South Asia: Hindu Art

15 Krishna Battling the Horse Demon Keshi

Krishna Battling the Horse Demon Keshi

India (Uttar Pradesh).
Gupta period, 5th century.
Terracotta.

H. 21 in. (53.3 cm)

Purchase, Florence and
Herbert Irving Gift, 1991
(1991.300)

Slide and CD image

Early Hindu temples were built of brick and decorated with terracotta reliefs. On this plaque, which probably comes from a temple exterior, Krishna, an avatar of Vishnu, displays his supernatural powers. The evil king Kansa had dispatched several demons to kill Krishna (see story accompanying image 25), but Krishna had easily slain them. In a rage, Kansa summoned one of his most powerful demons, named Keshi, who changed himself into a huge, powerful horse and raced to the place where Krishna dwelled. Everyone who saw Keshi coming was terrified—except Krishna. With a loud roar, Keshi charged. Krishna, smiling and seemingly fearless, stood his ground and, upon impact with Keshi, thrust his left arm deep into the horse's mouth. His arm became fiery hot, so Keshi could not bite it with his huge teeth, and it expanded, so that Keshi could not breathe. "Discharging balls of dung" (as the story traditionally goes), the evil demon fell dead.

image 25

The sculptor of this plaque compressed the episode into one action-filled scene. The figures' curving forms swell outward from the background. Krishna's extraordinary strength is emphasized by the diagonal thrust of his body and by his flying hair as he stops Keshi cold. The heads of Krishna and Keshi are enlarged to dramatize their eyes, which bulge from their exertions: Krishna's from the intensity of battle, Keshi's from the realization that he is near defeat.

Notice: action, movement, narrative

Discuss: expressive exaggeration, material, function

Compare: image 2, 24, 25, 30, and 48



16 Vishnu as Vaikuntha Chaturmurti

Vishnu as Vaikuntha Chaturmurti

India (Jammu and Kashmir).
Second half of 8th century.
Stone.

H. 41 1/8 in. (104.5 cm)

Purchase, Florence and
Herbert Irving Gift, 1991
(1991.301)

Slide and CD image

As creator and preserver of the universe, Vishnu is called upon to restore order when calamities threaten. Consequently, most of his attributes are martial, such as the conch shell used to call signals in battle. He holds the shell in his upper left hand, and with his lower left hand touches the head of a male personification of the chakra (the flaming war disk), which appears behind the figure's head. It is known from other, more complete sculptures of Vishnu that his missing lower left hand would have touched the head of a female personification of his mace, and the upper hand would have been raised in the fear-allaying gesture. A small figure of the earth goddess Prithvi arises between his legs.

Vishnu is shown here as the supreme being with four heads, that of a lion to the right, a boar to the left, a benign central human head, and on the back of the halo, a grimacing emanation with fangs and a vertical third eye on its forehead. He wears the luxurious adornments of royalty: the garland of flowers draped over his shoulders and falling below his knees, the necklace, sacred thread, ear ornaments, and armbands.

The artistic traditions of the kingdoms of northwest India, of which Kashmir was perhaps the most important, grew in part out of the classically inspired, naturalistic representation of the human body that had been favored in Gandhara. This tradition can be seen in the muscular chest and sturdy legs, which convey physical strength. However, the conception of the body inflated by prana is Indian, as are the eyebrows shaped like an archer's bow and the eyes resembling lotus petals.

Notice: heads, missing arms, physique, pose, adornment, material

Discuss: symbols, what is missing, personifications, metaphors, scale

Compare: image 4 and 6



17 *Linga with One Face of Shiva (Ekamukhhalinga)*

***Linga with One Face of Shiva
(Ekamukhhalinga)***

Afghanistan.

Shahi period, 9th century.

White marble.

H. 22⁷/₁₆ in. (57 cm)

Rogers Fund, 1980 (1980.415)

CD image only

In the Indian subcontinent, worship of the linga (phallic emblem) goes back to remote antiquity. There and in other countries influenced by Hindu theology, to worship the linga is to worship the great generative principle of the universe, conceptualized as one aspect of Lord Shiva. The linga, the most sacred object in a Shiva temple, is housed in the innermost sanctum. It can be plain or carved with one to four faces, each portraying different powers of Shiva. This linga shows just one face of Shiva as he begins to manifest himself out of the linga. Three of Shiva's attributes can be seen here: his third eye, placed vertically on his forehead; his long, matted, piled-up hair, which refers to his role as an ascetic; and a crescent moon on the left side of his double-looped chignon.

The forms of this sacred sculpture create a sense of harmony and vigor: harmony, because of the repetitions of round and curving shapes; and vigor, because of Shiva's broad shoulders and the way his face projects boldly into the viewer's space. Yet his half-closed eyes and calm expression suggest this great god looks far beyond the world immediately before him.

Notice: repetition of forms, expression, surface contrast

Discuss: attributes of Shiva, symbolic meaning, function, symmetry

Compare: image 21, 22, 26, 36, and 47



18 *Standing Parvati*

Standing Parvati

India (Tamil Nadu).
Chola period, ca. first
quarter of 10th century.
Copper alloy.
H. $27\frac{3}{8}$ in. (69.5 cm)

Bequest of Cora Timken
Burnett, 1956 (57.51.30)

Slide and CD image

Parvati is portrayed here as the ideal consort of Shiva. She stands in a tribhanga pose, with her elegantly shaped left arm echoing the curve of her left hip. Her other arm is raised with her hand gesturing as if she were holding a flower. Images of Parvati in this position often accompany Shiva in his role as Lord of the Dance (Nataraja), suggesting that this sculpture may once have been placed on the left side of an image of the god.

Parvati wears a tiered tiara, luxurious jewelry, the sacred thread, and a diaphanous and form-revealing dhoti draped around her body and secured with a heavy jeweled belt. Her hair falls in elegant curls across the nape of her neck. These details emphasize the sensual volumes and outlines of her body, which are conceived as a series of graceful and flowing curves. The total effect is perfection, an ideal combination of realistic detail and abstract form.

Notice: pose, adornment, mood

Discuss: identity, dance, the ideal, proportions, function

Compare: image 10, 12, 21, 22, 36, and 49



19 Chamunda (*The Horrific Destroyer of Evil*)

Chamunda
(The Horrific Destroyer of Evil)
India (Madhya Pradesh).
10th–11th century.
Sandstone.
H. 44¹/₂ in. (113 cm)

Purchase, Anonymous Gift and
Rogers Fund, 1989 (1989.121)

Slide and CD image

This is a fragment of a sculpture portraying the ferocious Hindu goddess Chamunda, an emanation of the goddess Durga. She is shown as a cadaverous old woman who scowls and bares her teeth. Her hair is piled up into a chignon decorated with a tiara of skulls and a crescent moon, and her enormous eyeballs protrude menacingly from sunken sockets in her skeletal face. She wears a snake as a necklace whose coils echo the rings of decaying flesh sagging beneath her collarbone. Just above her navel on her emaciated stomach is a scorpion, symbol of sickness and death. Originally her twelve missing hands must have held such threatening objects as a scimitar, sword, trident, thunderbolt, cleaver, noose, mace, and skull cup.

Chamunda is naked except for a short dhoti partially covering two tiger skins. The heads hang down almost to her knees. Such horrific images of the Great Goddess, often depicted as striding upon a small human figure, were set in niches on the exterior walls of temples to symbolize Chamunda's terrifying powers to destroy the demons of evil and ignorance, and thus aid the devotee toward spiritual release.

Notice: expression, detail, arms

Discuss: action, symbolism, female energy

Compare: image 13, 14, 22, and 24



20 Stela of a Four-armed Vishnu

Stela of a Four-armed Vishnu

India (Punjab).

10th–11th century.

Sandstone.

H. 43½ in. (110.5 cm)

Rogers Fund, 1968 (68.46)

Slide and CD image

This elaborate stela of the god Vishnu shows him at its center holding his usual attributes (from upper right clockwise): a chakra (war discus), a conch shell (trumpet), and a gaddha (mace). He holds his raised hand in *abhayamudra*, the gesture that allays fear. He typically wears a tall miter and a long garland of flowers (*vanamala*), which here looks more like a chain. His head is surrounded by an ornate nimbus with bands of lotus petals, flames, and abstracted triangular floral motifs.

Flanking his legs are six figures: the personifications of his discus and conch trumpet (who also hold them), his two wives, and two attendants. On each side above them are two vertical panels. The innermost contains foliate scrolling and a pot from which plant life emanates. The left one is topped by a figure of Brahma seated on a lotus, and the right by Shiva in a similar attitude. Brahma can be identified by his four heads (three of which are shown), and Shiva by the trident and snake he holds. The outermost panel shows the typical pile-up of elephants surmounted by fantastic composite lion-goats (*vyalis*) and makaras (elephant-crocodiles).

As the main object of devotion, Vishnu is not only shown in the central position and by far the largest figure, he is also flanked by much smaller images of the other two principle Hindu male deities, Brahma and Shiva. A subtle rhythm and joyous feeling created by the expressions and poses of the small standing figures relieve Vishnu's static pose. The god's extraordinary ornaments, the graceful movements of his hands, and his gentle expression reinforce these sensations and communicate to the devotee a feeling of well being and power. Like the Pala-period seated Buddha (image 7), this sculptures shows the prominence of ornate decoration and linear detail that is a post-Gupta style.

image 7

Notice: variety of poses, adornment, arrangement

Discuss: identities, balance, scale, attributes, symbolism, color

Compare: image 7 and 10



21 *Shiva Seated with Uma (Umamaheshvaramurti)*

Shiva Seated with Uma (Umamaheshvaramurti)

Nepal.

11th century.

Copper alloy.

H. 11 1/8 in. (28.3 cm)

Samuel Eilenberg Collection,
Rogers Fund, 1987 (1987.218.1)

Slide and CD image

In this intimate portrayal of Shiva and his wife Uma (a form of Parvati), the ultimate oneness of all things is represented with great tenderness and elegance by their intertwined male and female figures. Shiva and Uma are not only the divine lovers but also symbols of cosmic totality. Their union is essential to the orderly working of the universe. Befitting their cosmic status, both figures are adorned with lobed tiaras, luxurious jewelry, and elegant sashed and belted dhotis.

The divine couple is seated on an oval double-lotus pedestal, each resting in *lalitasana*, the pose of royal ease. Their physical and emotional inseparability is conveyed by their serene, joyous expressions and by the subtle way their sensuous, curving poses relate to each other. In contrast to Shiva's erect upper body, Uma's torso is pulled in a gentle curve by her lover's hand, so that she leans toward him with her right forearm resting on his thigh. She holds a lotus bud, and perched on her arm is a parrot, symbol of passion, who pecks at the lotus. Shiva displays several of his attributes: a vertical third eye incised on his forehead and a lotus bud and prayer beads in two of his hands. He probably once held a separately cast trident in his upper left hand.

This sculpture was most likely the centerpiece of a larger ensemble, the other elements of which are lost. The entire group originally would have been gilded.

Notice: pose, adornment, relationship

Discuss: identity, symbolism, levels of meaning, how relationship is expressed

Compare: image 2, 25, and 26



22 Shiva as Lord of the Dance (Nataraja)

Shiva as Lord of the Dance (Nataraja)

India (Tamil Nadu).
Chola period, late 12th–early
13th century.

Copper alloy.
H. 25³/₄ in. (64.5 cm)

Harry Brisbane Dick Fund,
1964 (64.251)

Slide and CD image

If one had to select a single icon to represent the extraordinarily rich and complex cultural heritage of India, Shiva as Nataraja would come immediately to mind. It is a brilliant iconographic invention that is closer to being a summation of the beliefs and genius of Indian people than any other single image. Nataraja's eternal dance is performed at the center of the universe in the presence of all the gods. Through symbols and gestures, Shiva as Nataraja visualizes his powers as creator, preserver, and destroyer. A skull adorns his crown, and a snake coils around his shoulders. As he dances, he holds in his upper right hand a damaru (hand drum), from which issues the first primordial vibrating sound of creation. With his lower right hand he makes the fear-allaying mudra, which not only removes fear but also protects and preserves. In his upper left hand is *agni*, the consuming fire of destruction. With his left foot he tramples a small human figure who symbolizes illusion, the fault that leads humans astray. Yet as he dances this eternal cycle of creation and destruction, Nataraja raises his left leg and points to it with his lower left hand to symbolize refuge and release for the faithful.

The image teaches that through devotion to Shiva, a person's soul can be released from the bondage of illusion and the endless cycles of birth and rebirth to which the ignorant are doomed. The belief that he is the still point beyond cycles of time is emphasized by the fact that, although his flying hair indicates his dance is wild and swift, his face is absolutely calm, and although his legs and arms are in motion, their positions are balanced.

Additional details in this depiction further elucidate Shiva's ultimate powers. According to legend, Shiva agreed to bear in his long matted hair the weight of the great outpouring of water when the celestial river Ganges fell from heaven to earth. Riding in his locks on the left is the tiny figure of the goddess Ganga, who personifies the sacred river. Shiva's tall crown represents the stylized peaks of the Himalayas, from which the holy waters of the Ganges flow down to the sea.

The figure was originally attached through the hole in the lotus pedestal to a base so that it could be carried outside the temple during festivals, to see and be seen by worshippers.

Notice: action, position of arms and legs, circle, detail

Discuss: meaning, gesture, attributes, symbols, expression, creation and destruction, relationship to environment, material, technique

Compare: image 8, 11, 23, and 29





23 *Dancing Celestial*

Dancing Celestial

India (Uttar Pradesh).
Early 12th century.
Sandstone.
H. 33 1/2 in. (85.1 cm)

Promised Gift of Florence and
Herbert Irving (L 1993.88.2)

Slide and CD image

The contours and richly ornamented surfaces of this celestial attendant to the gods exemplify a stylistic shift away from earlier Gupta-influenced forms. Here the linear play of surface decoration and dramatic contours replace the earlier emphasis on seamless volume and subtle balance. The sculptor has twisted the figure into an extraordinary pose that captures the essence of her dance and seems absolutely believable until one imagines actually trying to turn this way. The jewelry sways and emphasizes her movements, both in the way the necklaces and sashes follow the curves of her body and in the upward thrust of the spiked tips of her crown. The crisp carving of her adornments makes a pleasing contrast with the smooth and rounded surfaces of her flesh.

Images of dancing semidivine attendants often appear on the outer walls of Hindu temples. They are placed near the figures of gods to honor the deity, just as actual female dancers honored the gods' images within the temple.

Notice: pose, adornment

Discuss: volume, line, action of the complete figure, mood, function

Compare: image 15, 18, and 22



24 *The Goddess Durga Killing the Buffalo Demon Mahisha*

The Goddess Durga Killing the Buffalo Demon Mahisha (Mahishasuramardini)

Bangladesh or India (West Bengal).

Pala period, 12th century.

Argillite.

H. 5⁵/₁₆ in. (13.5 cm)

Purchase, Diana and Arthur G. Altschul Gift, 1993 (1993.7)

Slide and CD image

This small sculpture portrays the sixteen-armed goddess Durga as the slayer of a buffalo inhabited by the fierce demon Mahisha. A threat to the whole world, Mahisha was so invincible that even the Hindu gods who had challenged him could not kill him. In desperation, they created the goddess Durga to be their champion and gave her their weapons. A missing right hand held the spear with which she is about to kill Mahisha. In her other right hands she holds an arrow, sword, chisel, hammer, thunderbolt, elephant goad, and war discus. The objects in her left hands are a shield, bow, bell, mirror, and noose.

Durga has just severed the buffalo's head with her many weapons. Mahisha, in the form of a tiny chubby man, emerges from the buffalo's decapitated body and looks up admiringly at the warlike but beautiful Durga, even as his toes are being bitten by Durga's lion. Durga smiles serenely as she hoists Mahisha by his hair and treads gracefully on the buffalo's body. All of these narrative details are skillfully composed and placed on a double-lotus base in a carving no larger than one's hand. Such miniature sculptures, mainly Buddhist, were important in transmitting the Pala style throughout East Asia.

Notice: action, multiple arms, attributes, facial expression, scale

Discuss: narrative, detail, expressions of power, balance, personal devotion (bhakti)

Compare: image 13, 14, and 19



25 *Yashoda and Krishna*

Yashoda and Krishna

India (perhaps Karnataka).
Vijayanagar period,
ca. early 14th century.
Copper.

H. 13³/₈ in. (33.3 cm)

Purchase, Lita Annenberg
Hazen Charitable Trust
Gift, in honor of Cynthia
Hazen and Leon B. Polsky,
1982 (1982.220.8)

Slide and CD image

The Krishna legend is told in books 10 and 11 of the *Bhagavata Purana*, the great Hindu epic. Stories about Krishna's infancy and youth are especially beloved by the Indian people (see image 29). This sculptural group shows the baby Krishna being nursed by his foster mother Yashoda who, with her husband, a cowherd, hid the protected Krishna from the evil tyrant Kansa. Kansa had planned to kill Krishna because he had been told by a sage that if he did not, Krishna was fated to kill him someday. The great god Vishnu instructed Krishna's family to secretly spirit Krishna away to the countryside to be raised by Yashoda and her family. In this representation of the story, baby Krishna hugs Yashoda with one arm and plays with her nipple with his other hand. Yashoda's selfless adoption of the infant, who unbeknownst to her was a god, earned her the status of a saint.

image 29

Here, darshan, the act of receiving merit by viewing a deity, is made especially poignant as Yashoda's eyes meet those of the viewer while she performs the tender and selfless act of feeding her baby. Her steady gaze and the prana-filled volumes of her body suggest great inner strength. The image is a particularly successful sculpture in the round, revealing new and unexpected massing of curving forms as one examines it from various angles. From every viewpoint, a sense of richness is created by the way the smooth metal surfaces glow with reflected light.

Notice: gesture, interactions, material, detail

Discuss: narrative, volume, outlines, surface, function

Compare: image 21



26 Seated Ganesha

Seated Ganesha

India (Orissa).
14th–15th century.
Ivory.
H. 7¹/₄ in. (18.4 cm)

Gift of Mr. and Mrs. J. J.
Klejman, 1964 (64.102)

Slide and CD image

Elephant-headed Ganesha is one of the most popular gods in India. He removes all obstacles, so devotion to him is important to assure auspicious beginnings in such ventures as starting a business, getting married, beginning a new school year, creating a work of art, or taking a long trip.

How Ganesha came to have his unusual head is the subject of several short stories. In the most popular one, Parvati, who becomes lonely in Shiva's absence, creates a human son from her own body and asks him to guard her door while she bathes. Shiva returns unexpectedly, and when the young boy refuses him entry, Shiva cuts off his head. Parvati becomes so distressed that Shiva promises to replace her son's head with the head of the first living creature he sees—which happens to be an elephant.

Due to his fondness for sweets, Ganesha's body is corpulent. He sits on a lotus pedestal and in his four hands holds an elephant goad, two entwined snakes, a pot of sweets which he tastes with his trunk, and his broken tusk. The latter is a reference to another well-known tale about Ganesha in which he hurls the tusk at the moon in embarrassment after the moon sees his stomach nearly burst from overeating. An elephant-headed human being could be an ungainly and monstrous sight. However, the sculptor has so skillfully made the transition from elephant head and ears to human body that Ganesha seems to be believable and very approachable. Ganesha's jewelry is finely carved, as are his headdress ornament, the veins in his ears, and the curly strands of his hair. Such an adeptly created piece made in valuable material was probably a household image belonging to a rich, perhaps princely family.

Notice: subject, human-animal form, adornment, physique, material

Discuss: attributes, volume, transitions, surface contrast

Compare: image 14, 18, 27, and 48



South Asia: Jain Art

27 Seated Jain Tirthankara

Seated Jain Tirthankara

India (Gujarat or Rajasthan).
Solanki period, 11th century.
White marble.

H. 39 in. (99.1 cm)

Purchase, Florence and
Herbert Irving Gift, 1992
(1992.131)

Slide and CD image

Like Buddha, Mahavira, the founder of Jainism, practiced meditation in the yogic tradition and sought release from the suffering and pain of earthly existence by the denial of desires. There is also little physical difference between representations of seated Buddhas and Jain saints (tirthankaras) in Indian art. They both appear in the yogic lotus position and both display markings appropriate for enlightened beings: the serene face; the ushnisha; the elongated earlobes, which symbolize princely jewelry once worn but now abandoned; and the symbolically perfect body held up and filled with prana. The auspicious *srivatsa* mark on the chest, and the lack of an urna indicate that this figure is a Jain “saint,” or tirthankara (Crosser of the Ford or Conqueror of Desire).

Mahavira’s followers preached that Mahavira was one of twenty-four tirthankaras, who were not deities but mortals whose ascetic lives set an example for worshippers hoping to attain release from the cycles of existence. The focus of worship in a Jain temple was an image of a tirthankara like this one, which probably was placed in the temple’s inner sanctum. Numerous smaller surrounding shrines would have contained other tirthankara images.

Notice: subject, pose, expression, unusual marks

Discuss: identity, simplification, asceticism, meditation

Compare: image 7, 10, and 44



28 Architectural Ensemble from a Jain Meeting Hall

Architectural Ensemble from a Jain Meeting Hall

India (Gujarat, Patan).
Last quarter of 16th century.
Teakwood with traces of color.
H. (approx.) 15 ft. (4.58 m)

Gift of Robert W. and
Lockwood de Forest, 1916
(16.133)

CD image only

This slide shows a section of a carved wooden dome with miniature balconies and supports that once crowned a meeting hall in a Jain temple in Gujarat. The carvings symbolize the splendors of the celestial realm that all Jains hope to attain eventually through accruing merit in their successive lives. Every surface of the teak has been carved with animal and floral forms, as well as with figures, whose size indicates their importance. The large figures represent the rulers of the eight cosmic directions, who are responsible for the orderly working of the universe and for the protection of the temple and its worshippers. Each has four arms and is flanked by female attendants.

At the center of the dome is a large pendant covered with flower designs that terminate in a lotus flower. Within the concentric circles that lead the eye up to the center of the dome are bands of decoration: floral patterns; a realm of birds and animals; *kinnara* (half-avian half-human creatures); musicians; another band of flowers; the rulers of the eight directions; and then a parade of elephants. Traces of pigment suggest that all these intricately carved images were once brightly painted. Eight large struts carved with voluptuous females, now lost, once completed the architectural form.

At the beginning of the twentieth century, many late medieval Jain temples were torn down because they were inadequate for the needs of the community. This ensemble was saved by two American collectors, one of whom was at that time the president of the Metropolitan Museum.

Notice: material, figures, floral forms, geometric shapes and organization, hieratic scale

Discuss: original location, symbolic meaning, function, Jainism

Compare: image 2 and 8



South Asia: Court Art of Northern and Central India

29 *The Gopis Beseeching Krishna to Return Their Clothing*

The Gopis Beseeching Krishna to Return Their Clothing

Page from the dispersed
"Isarda" *Bhagavata Purana*
(Life of Krishna).

India (probably Delhi-Agra
area).

ca. 1560–65.

Ink and opaque watercolor
on paper.

7⁹/₁₆ x 10¹/₈ in. (19.2 x 25.7
cm)

Gift of H. Rubin Foundation,
Inc., 1972 (1972.260)

Slide and CD image

In popular stories, the Hindu gods are often portrayed with human frailties. Thus, the young Krishna is often mischievous. In this episode, Krishna spies the Gopis, young female cowherds, bathing nude in the river, having hung their clothes (here, their blouses) in a tree. Krishna climbs the tree and teasingly announces that he will not return their clothes until they come out of the river and embrace him. At first the shy Gopis try to hide in the water and beg Krishna to return their blouses, but gradually they turn toward him. This story is a metaphor for the necessity of standing naked before God, not hiding anything, in order to receive divine grace.

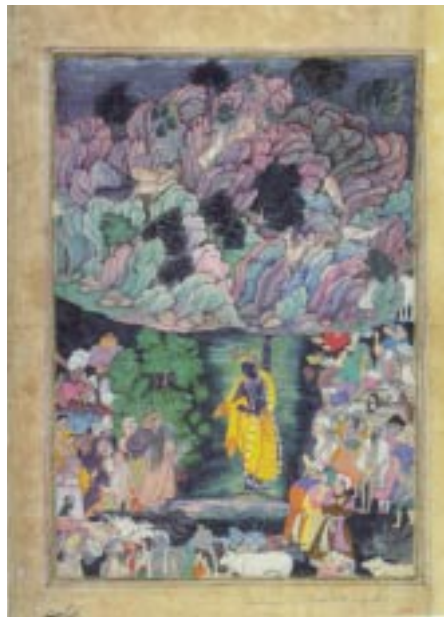
The red area around Krishna's dark blue form marks the scene's center of energy. Smaller areas of red lead one's eye to the Gopis, whose gestures express surprise and then gradual recognition of Krishna's identity. Black outlines emphasize their large eyes and lively poses. The deep-blue river, its surface rippling with curving patterns, rushes in a broad diagonal across the page, ignoring the painting's borders. This thrust is balanced by the angle of Krishna's pose, the gaze of the Gopis, and the two small cows who prance toward Krishna. Bristling and spiky trees push into the borders, reinforcing the sense of excitement and energy.

This style of painting, with its flat planes of solid color, shallow picture plane, and highly decorative effect, is part of a group representing the indigenous Indian painting style of the sixteenth century. Here, the only trace of Mughal influence is the way the river breaks the picture space into a clearly defined foreground, middle ground, and background.

Notice: gesture, glances, main character

Discuss: narrative, composition, diagonal, use of color, pattern, perspective

Compare: image 15, 23, and 48



30 Leaf from a Harivamsa Manuscript, The Legend of Hari (Krishna)

Leaf from a Harivamsa Manuscript, The Legend of Hari (Krishna)

Illustrated Detached Folio.

India.

Mughal, ca. 1590–95.

Ink and colors on paper.

11³/₈ x 7⁷/₈ in. (28.9 x 20 cm)

Purchase, Edward C. Moore, Jr., Gift, 1928 (28.63.1)

Slide and CD image

Krishna, the eighth avatar of Vishnu, grew up among a group of forest-dwelling cowherds. One year he convinced them that they need not continue making offerings to Indra, god of rain, since unlike farmers they were not dependent on rain. Instead, Krishna argued, their offerings of food and milk and their prayers should be directed toward the nearby Mount Govardhan. Infuriated by this turn of events, Indra ordered his storm clouds to flood and destroy the cowherds and their land. Realizing what was happening, Krishna uprooted Mount Govardhan and held it high like an umbrella to shelter the cowherds and their animals. There they all stayed for seven days and nights. At the end of that time, Indra recognized he was facing a divine force much greater than his own. So he dispersed his storm clouds and came down from the sky to worship Krishna.

This miniature from a Mughal manuscript of a Hindu religious text was translated into Persian and illustrated by royal court artists for the emperor Akbar. Akbar wished to know as much as possible about the beliefs and philosophy of other religions, particularly Hinduism, Christianity, and Buddhism. He is known to have called holy men of these faiths to his palace for all day and night discussions about the differences and similarities in their religions.

The animals on the uplifted mountain, the people of various ages and types who gesture and look up at Krishna's miraculous feat, and their animals patiently standing by are all recorded with accuracy and humor. In contrast, Krishna is clearly a great supernatural force. With his saffron robe, lavish jewels, and flower garlands swirling about his traditional deep blue skin, he stands at the center of the action, holding up the mountain with one hand.

Notice: subject, pose, expression, material

Discuss: function, how artist "tells" a story with color, shape, and composition

Compare: image 29 and 31



31 Nilgai (Blue Bull)

Nilgai (Blue Bull)

Leaf from an album made for Shah Jahan. By Mansur. India.

Mughal, period of Jahangir, ca. 1620.

Opaque watercolor and gold on paper.

7 1/8 x 9 1/2 in. (18.2 x 24.2 cm)

Purchase, Rogers Fund and The Kevorkian Foundation Gift, 1955 (55.121.10.13)

Slide and CD image

Emperor Jahangir combined a fascination with the animals, birds, and flowers of India with an interest in naturalistic painting. One of his favorite artists, Mansur, accompanied the emperor on travels through his empire and on hunting trips, making sketches of the local flora and fauna. The *nilgai*, a wild bull with a blue-gray hide, is a dangerous and wily animal to hunt. Mansur probably studied and sketched this nilgai from life in Jahangir's game park. Later, in his studio, he added the fine brushstrokes suggesting volume and texture. After another artist created the floral border, the picture was ready to be bound in an album for Jahangir to study and admire at his leisure.

A few faintly sketched plants suggest the field where the nilgai is grazing. All other background details are eliminated to focus on the bull. Mansur's ability to depict precise natural details of the animal is remarkable. Notice the sense of the bone structure and muscle beneath the short hair on the nilgai's head. In contrast, the muzzle seems soft and velvety, the hair of the mane bristly, and the tufts beneath the chin and at the tail's end soft and long.

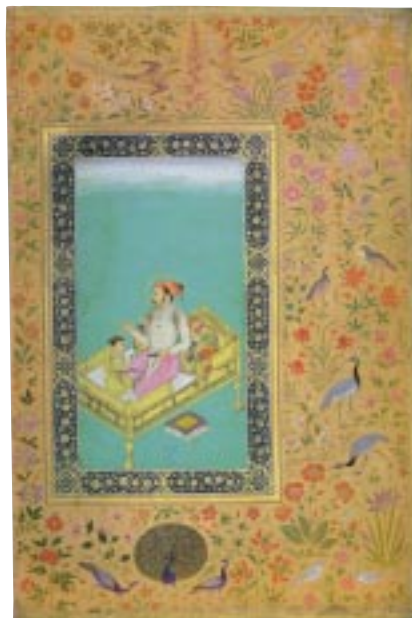
Mansur was an admired member of Jahangir's imperial workshop. His signature in a small curving script immediately to the left of the nilgai's front legs says, "the work of the servant of the court, Mansur, the Wonder of the Age." This impressive title was bestowed upon Mansur by the emperor and was his official name at court.

In contrast to this noble and formal portrait of the nilgai, the borders are filled with elegant, colorful floral scrolls created by another artist whose specialty was painting borders for album leaves. Vines circle about each other, producing flowers such as lilies, narcissus, and morning glories. The borders combine Islamic floral and vine patterns with classical floral motifs recently reinterpreted by Renaissance artists whose works were brought to the Mughal court in the form of prints.

Notice: animal, scenery, borders

Discuss: focus, what is omitted and why, contrasts, textures, technique

Compare: image 1 and 37



32 Prince Khurram (later, Shah Jahan) with His Son Dara Shikoh

Prince Khurram (later, Shah Jahan) with His Son Dara Shikoh

Leaf from an album made for Shah Jahan. By Nanha. India.

Mughal, reign of Jahangir, ca. 1620. Ink, opaque watercolor, and gold on paper.

15³/₈ x 10³/₈ in. (39 x 26.2 cm)

Purchase, Rogers Fund and The Kevorkian Foundation Gift, 1955 (55.121.10.36)

Slide and CD image

On this album page, Prince Khurram and his five-year-old son, Prince Dara, are portrayed sitting quietly upon a golden throne engaged in one of the Shah's greatest pleasures—admiring and examining jewels. Prince Khurram leans back against an embroidered pillow and studies a large, deep pink gemstone called a spinel (or balas ruby), which he has removed from a dish of emeralds and other gems. Prince Dara, a miniature gold-hilted dagger in his belt, holds a peacock-feather turban ornament and a sweet-smelling flower. Like his father, he wears a turban with ornaments and lavish pearl drop, emerald jewelry, and silk leggings under a belted silk coat. Although the artist seems to have captured a relaxed, private moment between father and son, both their faces are in perfect profile and Prince Khurram's head emanates a pale golden halo.

European visitors to the emperor's brilliant court brought gifts of art from their own lands. There is evidence in this painting that Mughal artists were increasingly aware of European styles of representation. In portraying Prince Khurram's face, the artist experimented with three-dimensional modeling in light and shadow, and tilted the throne up to show his ability in drawing objects in perspective. The halo around Prince Khurram's head may also have been inspired by European works of religious art.

The royal pair are portrayed against a plain, light green background that is isolated from the outer border by a dark blue band with gold floral designs. In contrast to the quiet concentration suggested by the expressions and poses of father and son, the outer borders team with flowering plants and with peacocks, cranes, partridges, and pigeons. At the top, two birds swoop toward each other from opposite edges of the page, flying into a realm that symbolizes paradise within a heavenly park. The carefully observed portrayal of plants and birds reflects the great interest of early Mughal rulers in flora and fauna. Both Jahangir and Shah Jahan commissioned floral borders for their album leaves whose forms may have been influenced by books on herbs brought by European ambassadors and merchants.

Notice: subject, costume, detail, borders

Discuss: focus, viewpoint, Mughal court life, European influences

Compare: image 2 and 39



33 Carpet with Pictorial Design (detail)

Carpet with Pictorial Design (detail)

North India.
Mughal, late 16th or early 17th century.

Cotton warp and weft,
wool pile.

27 ft. 4 in. x 9 ft. 6 in.
(833.1 x 289.5 cm)

Gift of J. Pierpont Morgan,
1917 (17.190.858)

Slide and CD image



Overall view of carpet

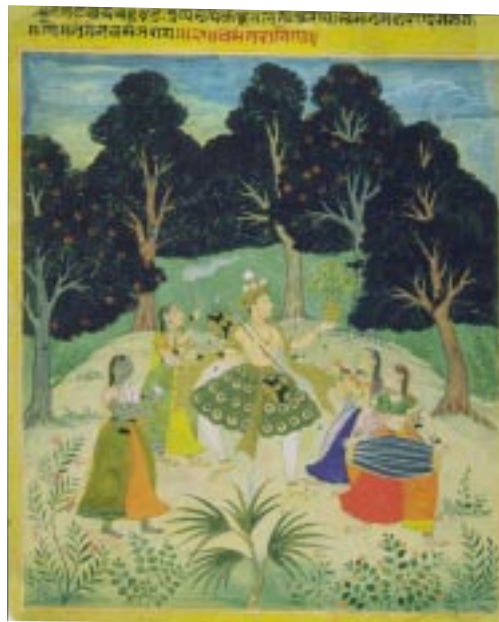
Across the imperial red field of this carpet, wild animals move freely about among decorative trees and plants. One lion is attacking an ibex, a type of wild mountain goat. Small birds are perched on the branches of the blossoming trees. Beneath them, large cranes stand about. It is as if one were looking into a royal Mughal hunting park filled with lions, tigers, ibexes, and palm trees, all native to South Asia. Closer examination reveals, however, that not all the beasts are real. Some lions and ibexes have flamelike attachments on their bodies, resembling those that appear on the *qilin*, a mythical Chinese beast. Since the thirteenth-century Mongolian invasions in Iran, Chinese motifs such as the dragon, phoenix, and decoratively curled clouds often appeared in Persian art. The Mughals, who greatly admired Persian art, brought to India this taste for Chinese motifs.

Iranian court weavers imported by the early Mughals introduced the Persian style of carpets in which a symmetrical field of stylized flowers, birds, and sometimes animals in combat were arranged in dense arabesque patterns based upon geometric order. The challenge faced by later Mughal weavers was how to adapt this traditional ornamental style to the growing imperial interest in pictorialism. Here the animals, birds, flowers, and trees are placed in a design that repeats three and a half times, each reversing the direction of the last. Although a sense of decoration and repetition still prevails, the area in which the birds, animals, trees, and flowers exist is more like a landscape. The field has opened up, the patterns are less insistent and symmetrical, and the animals charge about with natural energy.

Notice: animals, vegetation, color

Discuss: the mythical and the real, design repetition, material, technique

Compare: image 32, 35, 39, and 51



34 *Vasant Ragini*

Vasant Ragini

Page from a *ragamala* manuscript.
India (Rajasthan, Amber?).

Early 17th century.

Opaque watercolor and gold
on paper.

H. 9¹³/₁₆ x 7⁷/₈ in. (24.9 x 20 cm)

Friends of Asian Art, Purchase,
Mr. and Mrs. Andrew Saul Gift,
1999 (1999.148)

CD image only

Scenes illustrating ragas (musical modes) were popular subjects in Rajput painting. The raga, a melodic phrase used for improvisation, is the harmonic backbone of Indian music. The word *raga* is derived from the Sanskrit *ranga*, meaning color. A raga is usually associated with a particular time of the day and season of the year. In the late medieval period, many ragas were envisioned by poets and musicians as embodiments of human or divine stories. By the fifteenth century, artists began making visual analogues for them. These developed into series of stock representations whose formulae were repeated over and over by artists. Only a small number of the known ragas have pictorial equivalents.

Groups of ragas, called *ragamalas* (literally, garlands of ragas), were arranged into families, with a male raga presiding, five or six *raginis* (wives), and groups of *ragaputras* (sons) and *ragaputris* (daughters). Most albums of *ragamala* paintings included thirty-six or forty-two paintings. The presiding raga and the modes of illustration vary somewhat in different parts of India.

The audience for these paintings was mostly aristocratic Hindu or Muslim male patrons, together with their extended (polygamous) family. The prevalence of female love imagery in the paintings may point to their having been particularly popular with the women in the family.

Vasant Ragini visualizes a raga celebrating springtime, the season of music, dance, and love. A hero wearing a skirt of peacock feathers dances with four young women. He holds a vina (a string instrument with a gourd at each end, one for resonance, the other acting as a counterweight) in his right hand, and in his left a golden water pot containing flowers. Three of the four women around him are making music. One sounds a double-headed drum (*mridangam*), another marks time with a pair of handheld cymbals, and the third claps her hands in rhythms reinforced by her jingling bracelets. The fourth woman waves a fly whisk, an ancient symbol of honor and deference shown to a great leader.

The scene is set in a semicircular forest glade with a background of dark green flowering trees and a foreground of springtime vegetation. The five figures, with their minutely detailed costumes and possessions, stand out

against the plain light color of the glade. Everywhere around them, outlines and forms of nature are alive with curving energy. One can imagine what the celebration of spring must sound like in the melodies, rhythms, and variations of this *Vasant Ragini*.

By the seventeenth century, most of the Rajasthani princedoms had become feudatory states of the Mughals, and their maharajas were obliged to attend the emperor at court and provide military support. One of the first courts to ally with the Mughals was Amber (an old name for Jaipur) and the emperor Akbar had married an Amber princess. It is not surprising that some of the Rajasthani court workshops were influenced by the new artistic styles being created by Mughal court artists such as a more naturalistic use of color and treatment of space. For instance, here there is a definite fore-, middle, and background, and the colors are lifelike. However, the stylized flowering plants and trees of the forest echo traditional Rajasthani pleasures in pattern and decoration.

Notice: subject, pose, center of interest, vegetation

Discuss: ragamalas, color, pattern, composition, illusion of space

Compare: image 29 and 32



detail



35 Wall Hanging

Wall Hanging

India, Madras region.
ca. 1640–50, borders 18th
century.

Cotton, mordants, resist
medium, dyes.

99½ x 77 in. (252.7 x 195.6 cm)

Gift of Mrs. Albert Blum, 1920
(20.79)

Slide and CD image

Centered in this hanging is a well-dressed couple with a small child. The artist has made no attempt to model their features in light and shadow, preferring instead to outline their contours, costume, and adornment. The couple's size and large, staring eyes dominate the many fascinating details of life inside and outside a palace, the miniature rooms of which form a frame around them. Floral patterns are everywhere. The palace occupants are luxuriously dressed Indians except for two men—one riding a rearing horse—who are in rooms on the lower left. Their costume and coiffure identify them as European cavaliers whose poses are derived from European portraits.

Beneath the couple in a space of their own, three elegantly attired females move through a stylized garden. The gestures of their arms and hands and the flow of their shawls and sashes create the rhythms of a graceful dance. On a shelf above them is a decorative row of vases, bottles, containers for food, and a sword.

The ancient Greeks, Romans, and Chinese were eager importers of South Asian cotton textiles, famous not only for their fine textures and excellent weaving but also for their patterns and designs. With the arrival of the Portuguese in the fifteenth century and Dutch and British traders in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, imported Indian fabrics became the rage in Europe. Several English words such as *khaki*, *muslin*, *chintz*, and *calico* are derived from this period when Indian textiles were so popular.

The artist who created this hanging first completed the design on paper or parchment and perforated the outlines. By pressing powdered charcoal through the perforations, the design could then be transferred to the cotton. With the assistance of other craftsmen, he painted in the outlines or gradually added them along with the colors in a technique called resist dyeing (see page 48).

Notice: activities, detail, material, technique

Discuss: composition, scale, color, function, European influence

Compare: image 2, 11, and 39



36 *Shiva and Parvati Playing Charpar*

Shiva and Parvati Playing Charpar

Page from the dispersed
Rasamanjari (Essence of
the Experience of Delight).
By Devidasa of Nurpur.
India (Punjab Hills, Bashohli).
Dated 1694–95.
Ink, opaque watercolor,
silver, and gold on paper.
H. 6¹¹/₁₆ in. (17 cm)

Gift of Dr. J. C. Burnett, 1957
(57.185.2)

Slide and CD image

This picture's bold conception mirrors the charged nature of the event it portrays. Shiva and Parvati have just been playing charpar, a game similar to Parcheesi. He has just cheated her of her necklace, and she is pleading for its return. The deities sit flanking the game board on a tiger skin tilted upward toward the picture plane. On either side are stylized trees whose pendulous heads, nodding inward, mimic the posture of the figures. Shiva, his face partially turned toward the viewer, glances slyly across the field of brilliant yellow, while Parvati stares resolutely at her husband.

In the late seventeenth century, court painters in the Punjab hills of northwest India produced illustrations like this with vivid, unnatural colors, shallow space, and a decorative inventiveness that hark back to the indigenous Rajasthani painting tradition.

Notice: subject, expression, glances

Discuss: narrative, color, line, arrangement, perspective, material, technique, function

Compare: image 2, 21, and 32



37 Priming Flask

Priming Flask

India.
Mughal, 17th–18th century.
Ivory and bronze.
L. 10¹/₈ in. (25.7 cm)

Bequest of George C. Stone,
1935 (36.25.2420)

Slide and CD image

Images of royal hunts not only symbolized the courage and skill of the king, they also affirmed the king's control of his lands, since he alone granted to others the privilege to hunt. Elegantly designed hunting equipment was a sign of one's status at court. Priming flasks like this one were worn suspended from a belt or from the neck so that when the court hunter needed to pour fine gunpowder into the firing pan of his gun, the flask would be close at hand. He would press down on the brass metal fitting to open the lid of the flask (the smaller end).

At least ten carved animals are visible here. At the tip of the curving tusk on the right is a cheetah attacking an antelope. Indian rulers often hunted with tamed cheetahs that were trained to overtake and bring down swift animals. Other images of cheetahs crowd among other animals on the flask. Notice how the ivory carver adjusted the sizes of animals and overlapped them so that he could include as many as possible on the given shape of the ivory. To combine so many of them so cleverly requires great skill and imagination.

There was a Persian tradition of fitting together, like a puzzle, animal or human forms to create an image of a single creature. In India, such contrivances were often seen in miniature paintings. On another level of meaning, the animal images on this flask may refer to ancient beliefs that making magic images of animals brings good luck to the hunter. Their presence on hunting equipment would lend supernatural abilities to the hunter; his bullet would be more likely to hit its target and the cheetah more likely to capture its prey.

Notice: animal forms, material

Discuss: circular shapes, packed composition, function, possible meanings

Compare: image 30, 33, and 51



38 Rama, Surrounded by the Armies of the Great Bear and Monkey Clans, Pardons Two Demon Spies

Rama, Surrounded by the Armies of the Great Bear and Monkey Clans, Pardons Two Demon Spies

Page from the dispersed *Siege of Lanka* series, fifth book of the *Ramayana* (Stories of King Rama).
By Manaku of Guler.
India (Punjab Hills, Guler).
1725–30.

Ink, opaque watercolor,
and gold on paper.
24¹/₂ x 32⁵/₈ in.
(62.2 x 82.9 cm)

Rogers Fund, 1919 (19.24.1)

Slide and CD image

In this scene from the *Ramayana*, Rama and his brother Lakshmana sit with the kings of the monkeys and bears, who have brought their armies to join Rama in laying siege to the fortress of the demon king Ravana, ruler of Lanka (Sri Lanka) and abductor of Rama's wife Sita. Ravana's evil powers are symbolized by his ten heads, twenty arms, and twenty hands, each of which holds a different weapon. On the fortress roof in the upper right, Ravana, who is suspicious of his brother's loyalty, instructs two monstrous assistants to spy on his brother and Rama's forces. In the scene below, they leave the castle, unaware that Ravana's brother is already telling Rama about places where his armies can break through the fortress walls. As the two spies arrive upon the scene, they become so impressed with Rama's valor and goodness that they join in the plans to rescue Sita and destroy Ravana.

Areas of red, white, and black lead the eye from one episode to the next as the narrative unfolds from left to right. The monkeys and bears in delightful formations of tan and black encircle the culminating scene. Patterns dominate in the way trees, flowers, and architecture are portrayed. A river with frolicking fish and a curious red creature flows across the bottom, and shades of mustard and green tones further unify both halves of the narrative. Close examination yields wonderful details such as the jewelry—especially the pearls—and crowns, sashes, claws, fangs, and tails.

This unusually large Indian painting made for a Hindu ruler was part of an unfinished series describing the siege. It was probably designed to illustrate the story in a reading before a large court audience. The painting has text on the back, which suggests the narrator would hold it up in front of him while reading the story written on the back.

Notice: animals, humans, architecture, landscape, detail

Discuss: continuous narrative, composition, color, pattern, scale, perspective, function

Compare: image 20 and 26



39 Maharana Ari Singh with His Courtiers at the Jagniwas Water Palace

Maharana Ari Singh with His Courtiers at the Jagniwas Water Palace

By Bhima, Kesu Ram, Bhopa, and Nathu.

India (Rajasthan, Mewar), 1767.

Ink, gold, silver, and opaque watercolor on paper.

26³/₄ x 33 in.

(67.9 x 83.8 cm)

Purchase, Mr. and Mrs. Herbert Irving, Mr. and Mrs. Arthur Ochs Sulzberger, and Mr. and Mrs. Henry A. Grunwald Gifts, in honor of Mr. and Mrs. Gustavo Cisneros, 1994 (1994.116)

CD image only

See poster B for description and viewing notes.



detail



detail



Southeast Asia: The Rise of Civilization

40 Ceremonial Vessel in the Shape of an Ax Head

Ceremonial Vessel in the Shape of an Ax Head

Indonesia.

Bronze and Iron Age,
ca. 500 B.C.–A.D. 300.

Bronze.

H. 41³/₈ in. (105.1 cm)

Purchase, George
McFadden Gift and
Edith Perry Chapman
Fund, 1993 (1993.525)

CD image only

The function of this hollow object cast in bronze is unknown. Although it is more than three feet tall, it is in the shape of a small utilitarian ax. The surface, now rough and greenish brown from long burial, probably was once a bright metal. The meaning of the decoration is also unclear. Two vertical columns of raised horn shapes like those of a water buffalo, each surrounded by delicate oval lines, symmetrically flank a center column of diamond shapes containing a four-pointed star design. These patterns not only decorate the vessel but must also have expressed ideas in a symbolic language that was understood by the people of the time.

Bronze Age cultures flourished throughout Southeast Asia, and bronze utilitarian and ceremonial objects in distinct but related styles were produced in Thailand and Vietnam as well as in Indonesia. Where this vessel was made, how it was used, and for whom it was made is unclear, as little is known about the preliterate peoples of Indonesia. Future archaeological explorations may reveal the context and meaning of such impressive objects. Bronze has always been a very valuable metal and this vessel was cast hollow in the lost-wax process, a difficult technical feat. These considerations suggest the ax may not have been made on the small island of Sulawesi where it was found. Rather, it may have been created elsewhere for a local Sulawesi chief as a prestige object for ceremonial use.

Notice: shape, scale, decoration

Discuss: value of the material, technique, symmetry, possible use

Compare: image 51



detail, photograph ©Justin Kerr

Southeast Asia: Buddhist Art

41 Presentation Bowl

Presentation Bowl

Probably Malaysia.
ca. 7th–8th century.
Bronze.

H. 8¹/₄ in. (21 cm)

Rogers Fund, 1975 (1975.419)

Slide and CD image

Although the narrative depicted on this bowl has not been identified, it may come from the *Jatakas*, stories of the past lives of the Buddha. The lively procession moving from left to right immediately catches the eye. Riders on prancing horses and three elephants move among attendants on foot who seem to be dancing along in rhythm. They hold up standards, flags, and a palanquin carrying two people who seem to be royal personages. In South Asian art, exalted persons typically are carried in palanquins and accompanied by attendants holding fly whisks and parasols. It is tempting to think that the figure on horseback, sheltered from the sun by a figure holding a parasol, is the king himself, and that it is the king who also appears in the next episode within the palace courtyard. There he sits with his consort, flanked by attendants holding fly whisks and a servant carrying a dish of delicacies. The royal pair is being entertained by musicians and a dancer while court members observe from the balcony.

The band of narrative action circles the vessel at the widest part, where it can be clearly seen. It is not known where in Southeast Asia this skillfully cast bowl was made. The style of the narrative relief is similar to the Buddhist reliefs of the Ikshvaku dynasty of coastal southeast India (image 5). Notice how the overlapping figures create depth and how they are depicted from multiple viewpoints to create a sense of crowd action. The bowl's shape resembles several other vessels found in mainland Southeast Asia. The band of large, stylized lotus petals directly below the narrative frieze is an Indian motif, as are the eight potbellied creatures called *ganas* (dwarves), who strain and push as if they were holding up the bowl. However, no comparable vessel is known from India and details of the figure's costume and coiffure differ from those seen in Indian works.

Notice: decoration, shape, material

Discuss: narrative, placement of images on a three-dimensional surface

Compare: image 5 and 51

image 5



42 *Four-armed Avalokiteshvara (The Bodhisattva of Infinite Compassion)*

***Four-armed Avalokiteshvara
(The Bodhisattva of Infinite
Compassion)***

Thailand (Buriram Province,
Prakhon Chai).

ca. second quarter of 8th
century.

Bronze, silver, and black
glass or obsidian inlay.

H. 56 in. (142.2 cm)

Rogers Fund, 1967 (67.234)

CD image only

This nearly lifesized bronze image of a four-armed Bodhisattva Avalokiteshvara is the largest figure in a hoard of sculptures found buried at a site in what is now northern Thailand. The find contained both Hinayana and Mahayana Buddhist deities. Who made the images and why they were buried is still a mystery. The form of the torso, the rather square face, the eyes, lips, and mustache of this figure resemble late seventh- and eighth-century Cambodian sculpture. Avalokiteshvara's identifying feature is a small figure of a seated Buddha in his elaborate hair arrangement and headdress. Originally some of his hands may have held separately cast attributes.

The figure's meditative gaze and serene expression contrast with the sense of energy generated by the active gestures of the fingers and by the subtle weight shift of his wiry body onto the right leg, suggesting potential movement. The smooth surfaces are almost devoid of decoration except for the fine patterns of the hair and headdress and the delicate details of the *sampot* folds and sashes. The bronze contains a large amount of tin, giving the surface a silvery sheen. The pupils of the eyes probably originally were inlaid with glass paste.

Notice: pose, expression, costume, material

Discuss: identity, arms, gesture, portrayal of the body, surface contrasts

Compare: image 4, 12, and 44



43 Seated Transcendent Buddha Vairochana

**Seated Transcendent Buddha
Vairochana**

Indonesia (Java).
Central Javanese period,
ca. late 9th century.
Bronze.
H. 7⁵/₈ in. (19.4 cm)

Samuel Eilenberg Collection,
Gift of Samuel Eilenberg, 1987
(1987.142.23)

Slide and CD image

image 10

The Buddha represented here is probably Vairochana. In Esoteric (Vajrayana) Buddhism, Vairochana is the Buddha of the zenith, the most important of the five cosmic Buddhas (image 10). He sits on a double-lotus seat in the cross-legged yogic position of meditation, with the right leg over the left and the soles of both feet facing up. His diaphanous monk's robes closely follow the simplified forms of his body, creating continuous, smooth surfaces that harmonize with the Buddha's serene expression and gentle hand gestures, which signify teaching (the right hand) and meditation.

The pyramidal form of this sculpture rises up from the base to the ushnisha at the top of the Buddha's head. The feeling of serenity expressed by the stable and balanced composition perfectly visualizes the attainment of nirvana. The Buddha marks—the ushnisha, the snail-like curls of the hair, the three auspicious neck rings, and the urna—were canonized centuries earlier in South Asia, as was the double-lotus throne, the traditional support for deities. In addition to the small halo behind the Buddha's head, two holes at the back of the throne suggest that a much larger halo framed the body. Were this figure's small size to be enlarged to lifesize, it would closely resemble the many sculptures of meditating Buddhas that line the terraces of the great Javanese stupa of Borobudur.

Notice: subject, pose, expression

Discuss: gesture, symbols, scale, composition, function

Compare: image 7, 10, and 27



44 *Avalokiteshvara*

Avalokiteshvara

Cambodia or Thailand.
Angkor period, ca. last
quarter of 10th–first quarter
of 11th century, Khmer
style of Banteay Shrei.
Bronze with silver inlay.
H. 22³/₄ in. (57.8 cm)

Purchase, The Annenberg
Foundation Gift, 1992
(1992.336)

Slide and CD image

Avalokiteshvara is identified by the tiny figure of a seated Buddha that appears in his braided hair. Unlike the hieratic, frontal, and iconic images that typify many Southeast Asian sculptures, this figure is portrayed in a less formal pose, turning subtly from a frontal axis with his left shoulder slightly raised. From every point of view the sculptural forms are interesting. The sculptor adapted this pose from the traditional pose of royal ease in which deities were often depicted in South Asian art.

Prana fills Avalokiteshvara's body and pulls the skin taut so that the forms seem to flow one into another with no interruptions of anatomical detail. The smooth bronze surfaces reflect light, further emphasizing the sculptural volumes and creating pleasing contrasts with the raised details of jewelry and coiffure. Although the sense of muscle and bone has been downplayed, the figure looks completely natural, an effect due in part to the bodhisattva's arresting expression and the almost portraitlike quality of his face. A mood of serenity and gentleness perfectly suited to Avalokiteshvara, the bodhisattva of infinite compassion, is created by his slightly averted gaze and the faintly smiling lips. Glass inlays originally would have enlivened the hollowed-out eyebrows, pupils, mustache, and chin beard. The figure is one of the finest surviving large Khmer bronzes, of which only some two dozen remain.

Notice: pose, expression, adornment

Discuss: identity, balance, surface contrast, material, technique

Compare: image 2, 27, and 50



45 *Standing Buddha*

Standing Buddha

Myanmar (Burma).
Pagan period, 12th–13th century.
Bronze with silver inlay.
H. 19⁷/₈ in. (50.5 cm)

Gift of the Miriam and Ira D.
Wallach Foundation, 1993
(1993.235.1)

CD image only

Although this Buddha's image is a traditional frontal and static one, and his identifying marks and mudras derive from Indian models, his facial type and proportions have been altered to satisfy local tastes. The face is almost heart-shaped, with a broad forehead, wide eyes, long nose, upturned mouth, square jaw, and small chin. The unusually large head, the wide shoulders and hips, and the tapering legs have lost a close correspondence with the human form.

Attention is drawn to the Buddha's expression by the crisp patterns of his hair, which contrast with the otherwise smooth and simplified shapes. The ovals of his head and rounded cheeks are repeated in the volumes of the shoulders, chest, and thighs. The Buddha's monastic robes cling to his body as if they were transparent, revealing the belt of the under-robe and his robust upper body. The outer robe, devoid of folds, flares outward beneath his arms in a flat plane from which the upper body projects as if in high relief.

Notice: identifying features, stance, expression

Discuss: proportion, balance, contrasts, drapery, material

Compare: image 4, 6, and 9



Southeast Asia: Hindu Art

46 *Standing Four-armed Vishnu*

Standing Four-armed Vishnu
Vietnam (Mekong Delta area).
Pre-Angkor period, ca. second
half of 7th century.
Stone.
H. 41 in. (104.1 cm)

Purchase, Lita Annenberg
Hazen Charitable Trust Gift,
1992 (1992.53)

Slide and CD image

This image of Vishnu faces the worshipper directly in a symmetrical frontal pose with weight equally distributed on both feet. His body swells with prana, creating smooth simplified volumes that flow seamlessly one into the other. The sense of serenity created by the expression on Vishnu's face is reinforced by the pleasing repetition of circular forms. Notice the shape of the face, the arch of the eyebrows, the shape of the pectoral muscles, and the outline of the shoulders. The tall crown, neck, arms, and legs are all variations of the cylinder. The pose is frontal, static, and symmetrical, creating a sense of permanence and grandeur. However, the figure is also imbued with an underlying sense of realism, of the muscle and bone beneath the taut surface.

Vishnu is identified by his tall undecorated crown and by the attributes he holds. In his upper left hand is the conch shell—a war trumpet—and in his upper right hand is a chakra, a discus used as a weapon. The upper part of a battle mace is in his lower left hand, and his lower right hand would have grasped an orb, a symbol of the earth. The meaning is clear: as protector and preserver of the universe, Vishnu is ready to restore order should calamity threaten.

Unlike South Asian stone figures, which were usually high-relief sculptures, Southeast Asian stone figures were carved completely in the round. In Cambodian figures, a horseshoe-shaped support which was part of the original block of stone rose from the base to the back of the crown, supporting the hands and head. In Vietnam, the upper hands were joined to the crown by an arc of stone as a means of support. On this figure, only a small fragment of the arc remains and can be seen on the right side of the crown.

Notice: pose, multiple arms, costume

Discuss: attributes, abstraction, repetition, function

Compare: image 16 and 20



47 *Standing Hari-Hara*

Standing Hari-Hara

Cambodia.

Pre-Angkor period, late 7th–early 8th century.

Stone.

H. 35 1/2 in. (90.2 cm)

Purchase, Laurance S. Rockefeller Gift and Anonymous Gift, 1977 (1977.241)

Slide and CD image

image 20

Hari-Hara is a four-armed deity combining the Hindu gods Shiva and Vishnu. His image symbolizes ultimate unity despite apparent duality. The right side of his body is Shiva, identified by the stylized locks of matted hair on his tall chignon. His matted hair refers to an aspect of Shiva's character in which he is the great ascetic. Half of Shiva's vertical all-seeing eye is depicted at the center of the right side of Hari-Hara's forehead. The outlines of the second arms behind the first can be seen behind the upper forearms. In one of his missing right hands he would have held a trident, and the other hand might have been extended toward his worshippers in a gesture allaying fear. Hari-Hara's left side, the Vishnu side, is identified by the plain tall crown which Vishnu traditionally wears. He would have held two of his usual attributes, the conch and the battle mace, in his left hands (image 20).

The figure wears a sampot, a long wraparound garment drawn between the legs from the front. One end is fastened at the waist in back. The other half falls from the waist down the front in symmetrical pleated folds. Only one side of the sampot covering the thighs has folds, another sign of Hari-Hara's dual nature. Though simplified, the subtle indications of muscle and bone on the legs and torso are rendered more naturalistically than they would be in Indian sculptures. There is a subtle play between the human and the superhuman here. The pure physicality of the figure is evident in the muscles, broad shoulders, and stocky legs. The serene smile and the open, staring eyes create a spiritual counterpoint.

Notice: costume, pose, arms

Discuss: identity, symbolism, balance, what is missing

Compare: image 20 and 22



48 *Krishna on Garuda*

Krishna on Garuda

Indonesia (Java).
Central Javanese period,
second half of 9th century.
Bronze.

H. 15⁷/₁₆ in. (39.2 cm)

Purchase, Lita Annenberg
Hazen Charitable Trust Gift,
1992 (1992.135)

Slide and CD image

Garuda, Vishnu's mount, is part man and part bird, and legendary for strength, speed, and his hatred of evil men and serpents. In this sculpture, Krishna, an avatar of Vishnu, stands energetically astride Garuda's shoulders. With the index finger of his open left hand he makes a warning gesture, while in his raised right hand he holds his war discus. This group depicts the exciting climax of a story well known to the Javanese people. Aided by Krishna, Garuda has just successfully stolen the elixir of immortality from the gods, who had thought it was well protected by two poisonous serpents. He holds the vanquished serpents in his hands—the head of one is missing—and balances the elixir in a jar on his head.

Garuda's stance, with legs partially folded, suggests that he is rising in flight. His short wings beat the air and his long tail streams behind him in openwork loops. All the shapes and details form similar curves and lively projections, creating a sense that the figures are charging through space. The narrative is condensed effectively by using key gestures and the most essential objects.

Originally this ensemble formed the upper part of a hanging oil lamp. A chain for suspension was attached to the lotus design on top of Krishna's crown, and beneath Garuda is a loop from which a cup for lamp oil would have hung. When the lamp was lit, shadows of the god and his vehicle would have been cast on the walls.

Notice: action, narrative, material

Discuss: sense of energy, repetition, projections, negative space, function

Compare: image 15, 29, and 40



49 *Standing Uma*

Standing Uma

Cambodia.
Angkor period, Khmer style,
ca. 975.

Stone.
H. 28 in. (71.1 cm)

Gift of Enid A. Haupt, 1993
(1993.387.3)

Slide and CD image

Sculptures of the Hindu goddess Uma, another name of Parvati, the wife of Shiva, appeared frequently in Khmer temples beside or near her consort. She is believed to be the ideal wife and mother and her form is meant to symbolize the perfect balance between purity and sensuality. The sculptor of this figure visualized these qualities with great sensitivity and skill. The simplified, full volumes of her shoulders, breasts, and thighs flow harmoniously one into another in a natural and sensuous manner. The stone surfaces, especially the areas of flesh, were originally highly polished, which would have added to the figure's visual appeal. Uma's gentle smile, her serene expression, and the slight weight shift of her body create a sense of grace and ease.

The form-fitting sarong reveals her weight shift and emphasizes her curvaceous silhouette. Part of the wraparound fabric falls in elegant linear swags in front, partially covering the simple central folds which flare outward at the hem. Small holes in her earlobes indicate that actual ear ornaments were originally attached. Uma's only other adornment is her elaborate coiffure. The hair was braided in many thin strands and pulled up through the inside of a cylindrical basketry form. The braids were then arranged in loops in three descending bands. These few areas of detail contrast wonderfully with the texture of smooth flesh. Moving down from the top of the figure starting with the loops of the coiffure and the shapes of Uma's eyebrows and jaw, notice how the sculptor created a three-dimensional and linear harmony of curving shapes, both large and small.

Notice: subject, pose, expression, costume

Discuss: volume, movement, balance, surface contrast

Compare: image 12, 18, and 23



50 Deified King (Jayavarman VI?)

Deified King (Jayavarman VI?)

Cambodia.

Angkor period, second half
of 11th century.

Gilt bronze with silver inlay.
H. 41⁵/₈ in. (105.7 cm)

From the Collection of Walter
H. and Lenore Annenberg,
1988 (1988.355)

Slide and CD image

Divine kingship was the concept upon which Khmer authority and government was founded, and the cult of the devaraja, the god-king, was the state religion. All but one of the Khmer rulers were Hindu and were identified with either Shiva or Vishnu. It is thought that each devaraja may have commissioned a statue of himself to be placed in his temple-mountain. Such figures expressed in visual form the king's divine right to rule.

Because this statue's gestures and adornment do not identify it with Shiva, Vishnu, or any other known deity worshipped by Khmer royalty, it may be a devaraja image. If so, it is the only one known to have survived. His hands, torso, and face, though devoid of anatomical detail, are portrayed naturalistically, while the lower half of the image is more stylized and rigid. Our attention is drawn to the figure's upper body by the imperious gaze, the hand gestures, and the luxurious adornment. A wide, patterned belt decorated with jeweled pendants circles the figure's hips. His sampot is depicted in precise linear folds and the cloth's front end falls under and over the belt in an elegant fishtail design. Although such precision in real cloth seems impossible even with starching and pressing, the style of royal sampots were high-fashion items of the time. As in so much Cambodian freestanding sculpture, the smooth surface of the flesh provides a pleasing contrast to the details of costume and to the raised decoration on the anklets, bracelets, armbands, and necklace.

This figure is not only one of the largest, most complete Cambodian bronze sculptures known, it is also in excellent condition. The only missing pieces are the top of the crown (perhaps originally of solid gold), part of the ear pendants, and the inlays of the eyebrows, pupils, mustache, and beard. The gilding is original.

Notice: subject, hands, face, costume

Discuss: gesture, physique, balance, expression, pattern, material, technique

Compare: image 2, 9, and 44



Southeast Asia: Secular Art

51 Dish with Animals and Mounted Hunters

Dish with Animals and Mounted Hunters

Vietnam, Cham (or Cambodia, pre-Angkor period)
ca. 8th century.

Bronze.

Diam. 11¹/₁₆ in. (28.1 cm)

Purchase, Friends of Asian Art Gifts, 1999 (1999.261)

Slide and CD image

This beautiful vessel is in the form of a shallow dish set on a low splayed foot. At the center is a receptacle in the form of a lotus that may have once held a stone. Surrounding it is a narrow band of rosettes that outlines a wider frieze with trees and animals. It is encircled by a band of rectangular blocks within blocks. The main frieze, bordered near the rim with rosettes, contains highly naturalistic scenes with three hunters on horseback in a forest setting filled with animals, some of which are fighting each other. The low relief is extremely successful in conveying the massing of the figures and their lively and varied movement in the shallow space. Each of the hunters uses a different weapon: a sword, spear, and bow and arrow, the latter used in the "Parthian manner," aimed backwards across the horse's rump. The smaller inner frieze depicts six animals. A feline attacks a cow in another animal combat scene. Behind the feline is an animal lying on its back, either dead or in a pose of submission. Continuing around the frieze, a bull, a deer, and a rhinoceros move among miniature trees.

Early Southeast Asian bronze votive objects with narrative scenes are very rare. The quality of the relief is superb and forms a unique counterpoint to the naturalistic, if iconic, sculpture of the early (pre-Angkor) traditions of Southeast Asia (see image 46 and 47).

image 46, 47

Notice: subject, types of animals, weapons, environment

Discuss: interactions, pattern, repetition, adaptation to shape of the dish, material

Compare: image 30, 31, and 41



52 **Bangle with Male Head**

Bangle with Male Head

Indonesia (Java).
Central Javanese period,
first quarter of 10th century.
Gold.

H. 2¹/₈ in. (5.4 cm)

Purchase, Friends of Asian Art
Gifts, 1992 (1992.199)

Slide and CD image

Java is one of the few places in South or Southeast Asia where a great deal of ancient gold has been found. This bangle, or bracelet, is a stunning example. The exquisitely cast and richly chased and engraved gold is typical of Javanese workmanship. At the center is a human face in high relief set on top of two large sprays of stylized leaves. The face has a lively and intense expression and wears a diadem. The earlobes are distended and have large openings caused by wearing the heavy (and costly) ear ornaments favored by royalty in both South and Southeast Asia and often depicted on images of deities. The band consists of overlapping lotus petals of decreasing size, augmented next to the central medallion with additional small leaves and added chasing and engraving.

The goldsmith cast the major forms in one pour of liquid gold using the lost-wax method. Then he sculpted the many fine details by using fine chisels and sharply pointed incising tools.

Notice: material, function

Discuss: face, symmetry, surface, pattern, technique

Compare: image 3



53 Dish

Dish

Vietnam.
15th–16th century.
Stoneware with underglaze
cobalt blue decoration.
Diam. 14¹/₄ in. (36.2 cm)

Purchase, Friends of Asian Art
Gifts, 1998 (1998.213)

CD image only

Though real elephants are large and heavy, the one pictured at the center of this plate seems to float among Chinese-style “wish-granting” clouds. From very early times, the Vietnamese had been influenced by the beliefs and art styles of their large neighbor, China. By the fifteenth century, Chinese blue-and-white ware was famous worldwide and Vietnamese potters had also begun to excel in this borrowed technique in which the designs are painted in cobalt blue on the white porcelain surface. The surface is then coated with a transparent glaze before firing.

Although the clouds and the blue-and-white underglaze technique are derived from China, the way the elephant is portrayed is entirely different. In India, the elephant was an ancient symbol of royalty. In China, elephants were imported to add to the grandeur of imperial ceremonies and processions. In Vietnam, elephants were domesticated and were essential vehicles for transporting people and goods. Perhaps that is why the decorator of this dish painted the elephant with such familiarity, humor, and affection. The elephant turns as if to admire its loose hide, which is patterned with dot clusters resembling flowers. The curves of its soft chin and large eyes (with eyelashes) create a smiling expression. The rounded outlines of the cloud patterns and the elephant’s tusk, trunk, and body fit harmoniously inside the central circle of the dish.

Notice: subject, pattern, color

Discuss: role of the elephant, mood, movement, adaptation to shape of the plate, cultural diffusion

Compare: image 26, 31, and 41

V Glossary and Pronunciation Guide

Glossary

ahimsa	nonviolence; a code that specifies “no harm” to living beings, practiced mainly by Jains
Akshobhya	one of the five cosmic Buddhas; he rules the eastern paradise and symbolizes the will to enlightenment
argillite	a compact rock of hardened clay cemented with silica
Amoghasiddhi	one of the five cosmic Buddhas; he rules the northern paradise
Avalokiteshvara	a bodhisattva who is the embodiment of compassion and sometimes of enlightenment itself and, after about the sixth century, the most popular bodhisattva in Buddhism
avatar	the incarnation or “descent” of a deity on earth; especially of Vishnu
<i>Bhagavata Purana</i>	“Ancient Stories of the Lord”; featuring the exploits of the Hindu god Vishnu, Book 10, which focuses on Vishnu’s manifestation as the god Krishna, is the most popular portion of this classic, and incidents in it are often depicted in Indian painting
bhakti	a doctrine of faith in which, through loyal love to a god, the devotee becomes one with the deity
bodhisattva	an “enlightened being”; a person who guides others down the Buddhist path and who has the potential to attain Buddhahood
Brahma	the Hindu god of creation; he has four heads, one to look in each direction; Brahma is included, along with Shiva and Vishnu, in the Hindu triad, but never had a large following
Brahman	the “Supreme Being”; in Hinduism, the source of reality from which all being and knowing come
Brahmin	the priestly class or a member of the priestly class of Vedism and Hinduism, charged with the duties of learning, teaching, and performing rites and sacrifices
Buddha (buddha)	an omnipresent, enlightened being; the term may refer to mortals or those of abstract theoretical realms
chakra	a discus or wheel; sometimes a solar symbol; in Buddhism, the chakra is the wheel of law, sometimes referred to in Buddha’s first sermon, in which he put the wheel of the law into motion; in Hinduism, the chakra is an attribute and weapon of Vishnu
Chakravartin	the ideal, universal monarch

Chamunda	Hindu goddess who represents a destructive aspect of the Great Goddess
chasing	creating indented designs in a metal surface, working on the front surface (as opposed to repoussé) and using either metal tools or punches
circumambulation	walking around—i.e., a temple or stupa—in a proscribed manner to gain merit
damaru	a drum used by dancers consisting of two triangular forms joined at the apexes; when held by a deity, it can represent the rhythm of time and creative energy; the two joined sections may also be an allusion to male and female principals
darshan	the auspicious sight of a deity, sacred place, image, or revered person; sight
Devi (devi)	the Great Goddess who, with Shiva and Vishnu, is one of the three most widely worshipped deities in South Asia; she is manifest in many forms, sometimes as the consorts of the great gods
dharma	in Buddhism, dharma is considered the moral basis of religion; in Hinduism, the term refers especially to duty performed for its own sake, without thought of compensation
dhoti	a long rectangular garment worn over the lower portion of the body, wrapped around the waist, passed between the legs, and tucked at the base of the back
distemper	a warm glue binder added to powdered pigments to produce a liquid paint; it was used in Nepal and Tibet
Durga	a militant form of Devi, the supreme goddess in Hinduism
engraving	making an incised design in metal with a sharp tool
Ganesha	the god who removes obstacles; the son of Parvati and by extension, Shiva, elephant-headed Ganesha is called upon at the beginning of any venture, including worship
Ganga	the goddess who is the personification of the sacred Ganges River, located in North India; she is the daughter of the Himalayas and the sister of Parvati; her symbol and mount is the makara
Garuda	an ancient celestial creature, part-human part-bird, linked with the sun and air; he is the vehicle of Vishnu
granulation	gold surface designs created by the addition of tiny gold balls which are adhered to the surface with a mixture of glue and salt of copper such as ground malachite

Great Departure	refers to Prince Siddhartha (later the Buddha) leaving his palace to seek truth and enlightenment
guru	the Sanskrit word for a religious guide; spiritual teacher
Hanuman	the monkey god, faithful servant of Rama; he helped Rama free Sita from captivity in Lanka
Jatakas	folk tales about the Buddha's past lives
jina	someone who has reached a pinnacle of knowledge; in Jainism, a tirthankara
Kali	a horrific form of Parvati, hence a manifestation of Devi; a goddess who is both creator and destroyer of life
karma	the law of cause and effect, which pertains to consequences of one's deeds not only in this life but in future lives
kinnara	or kinnari: a part-bird part-human creature
Krishna	the ancient cowherd god and hero of India, playful lover of milkmaids; he is an avatar of Vishnu
lakshana	auspicious physical mark on a Buddha or bodhisattva indicating an advanced spiritual state; Buddha Shakyamuni has thirty-two major lakshanas, including the urna, ushnisha, and webbed fingers
Lakshmi	also known as goddess of good fortune and wealth; she is considered to be the main consort of Vishnu
lalitasana	a posture of relaxation: the left leg (usually) is folded on the seat while the right hangs down, sometimes resting on a pedestal or stool
lama	the Tibetan word for teacher
linga	the phallic emblem of Shiva, usually found in the innermost sanctum of his temples
lost-wax casting	<i>see description of the technique on pages 45–46</i>
Mahabharata	the great ancient Indian epic, including the <i>Bhagavad Gita</i> (Song of the Lord Krishna) and Krishna's philosophical instructions, which are key to Hindu thought; an oral tradition until written down in the fourth century B.C.
Maheshvara	"Great Lord"; an epithet of Shiva
Mahisha	a powerful demon slain by the goddess Durga
Maitreya	the Buddha of the Future, Maitreya will preside over an earthly paradise

makara	a mythological crocodile-like creature, an auspicious symbol of life-giving waters and the primal energy of life
mandala	an assembly of deities often shown within a schematic diagram in the form of a palace
mantra	a sacred utterance or prayer with magic power
Mara	an evil being, symbol of death and destruction, whose powerful armies and seductive daughters failed to tempt Siddhartha (the future Buddha) on his path toward enlightenment
maya	In Buddhism, the illusory nature of the world perceived as reality—that is, the mistaken perception that the world is permanent when it is actually <i>samsara</i>
mercury gilding	<i>see description of the technique on page 46</i>
moksha	“release” or “liberation”; the religious goal of Hindus, whereby the individual attains a state of oneness with the Universal
mudra	a gesture made with one or both hands to convey a particular meaning
naga/nagini	a male or female snake, generally a cobra; also, a class of ancient Indian serpent deities associated with water and therefore fertility; they were later appropriated as guardians by the great Indic religions; sometimes a serpent king or queen
Nandin	the bull vehicle of Shiva
Nataraja	a dance posture assumed by Shiva in his cosmic dance of creation and destruction
nirvana	the goal toward which Buddhists strive: the annihilation of the self, the attainment of perfect knowledge and integration with the Universal
Parvati	“daughter of the mountain”; a form of Devi, she is Shiva’s principal consort; her variant forms include Kali and Uma
prana	the sacred breath of life
puja	ritualistic acts performed to honor or worship a divinity, including offerings of food, flowers, water, and incense
Puranas	ancient literature about the Hindu gods
raja	“king”
Rajput	“The sons of Kings”; the Hindu kings and their clansmen in Rajasthan

Rama	the virtuous king and hero of the epic <i>Ramayana</i> , an avatar of Vishnu, and honored and revered in his own right as the ideal ruler; husband of Sita, the faithful wife
<i>Ramayana</i>	the story of prince Rama, one of the two ancient epics of India
repoussé	pressing designs into the back side of metal that has been laid on a yielding surface
sacred thread	a long circular cord worn over one shoulder and across the chest and back; a sign of learning and adulthood traditionally worn by the three upper castes as well as by deities
samabhangā	a posture in which the weight of the body is distributed equally on both sides
sampot	a Southeast Asian wraparound garment half of which is drawn between the legs from the front and fastened behind at the waist; the other half falls from the waist down the front in pleated folds
samsara	transmigration; the continuous cycle of death and rebirth undergone by living beings; a basic concept in Indic religions
Sarasvati	goddess of learning, the arts, and wisdom; consort of Vishnu
Shakti	in Hinduism, the feminine creative force or its presentation
Shakyamuni	the clan ruled by Siddhartha Gautama's father; when Siddhartha became enlightened, he was sometimes referred to as the Buddha Shakyamuni
Shiva	one of the principal Hindu gods; the god of destruction and creation who appears in many forms, both peaceful and angry; his vehicle is the bull Nandin and his most common attribute is the trident
Siddhartha	also Siddhartha Gautama: the princely name of Buddha; his name before his enlightenment
Skanda	the god of war, son of Shiva and Parvati
srivatsa	an auspicious mark
stupa	in Buddhism and Jainism, an architectural term for the dome-shaped structure that contains the relic of a Buddha or other revered individual; may be made in smaller votive forms
syncretic	an adjective describing the coming together or combining of different deities or beliefs
tirthankara	"Crosser of the Ford"; in Jainism, one who has attained perfect knowledge; there have been twenty-four such beings in the Jain present time-cycle, Mahavira (ca. 540–468 B.C.) being the most recent

tribhanga	the “thrice-bent” standing posture in which the tilt of the head, chest, and lower body are opposed
Upanishads	a body of ancient Indic religious texts; speculations upon the four “collections” of sacred hymns in the Vedas
urna	an auspicious mark manifested by a whorl of hair, a circle, or a protuberance between the eyebrows; it is one of the signs of the Buddha and is also characteristic of other exalted beings
ushnisha	a cranial protuberance on Buddhist figures symbolizing transcendental knowledge
vajra	double-headed thunderbolt originally held by the god Indra but later carried by several fierce Hindu and Buddhist deities
Vedas	ancient texts sacred to Hinduism; veda means “wisdom” or “knowing”
vina	an ancient Indian musical instrument, usually with four strings on a long fingerboard, with a gourd resonator at each end
Vishnu	“the Preserver,” one of the most important and widely worshipped deities in India
yaksha/yakshi	a male or female nature spirit; deity of wealth and guardian of treasure, especially associated with trees, pools, and vegetation
Yamuna	a goddess who personifies the Yamuna River, a sacred waterway on the subcontinent
yoga	physical exercises by which an individual attempts to “yoke” him- or herself to the Universal; yogic practices are used by most Indic religions; practitioners of yoga are called yogis
yoni	the pedestal supporting the linga in a Shaivite temple; a symbol of the female principle in creation; with the linga, represents the unity within duality that is central to Hindu thought

Pronunciation Guide

Avalokiteshvara (Avah-lo-kee-**TESH**-varah)

bodhisattva (bo-dee-**SAHT**-vah)

Buddha Shakyamuni (BOO-dah **SHAHK**-yah-moo-nee)

Bhagavad Gita (Bhah-gah-vahd **GEET**-tah)

Chamunda (Chah-**MUN**-dah)

Devi (**DAY**-vee)

Durga (**DUR**-gah)

Ganga (**GAHN**-gah)

Ganesha (Gah-**NESH**-ah)

Garuda (**GAH**-roo-dah)

Gupta (**GUP**-tah)

Lakshmi (**LAHK**-shmee)

Ikshvaku (Eesh-**VAH**-koo)

Jainism (**JAYN**-ism)

Jataka (**JAH**-tah-kah)

Kushan (**KOO**-shahn)

Mahabharata (**MAH**-hah-bar-**AH**-tah)

Mahavira (**MAH**-hah-veer-ah)

Maitreya (**MY**-tray-ah)

Mathura (**MAH**-tur-rah)

Mauryas (**MORE**-ee-yahs)

maya (**MY**-ah)

moksha (**MOK**-shah)

Mughal (**MO**-gull)

Nataraja (**NAH**-tah-**RAH**-ja)

nirvana (**NEER**-vah-nah)

prana (**PRAH**-nah)

Pagan (**PAH**-gahn)

puja (**POOH**-jah)

Rama (**RAH**-mah)

Ramayana (**RAH**-mah-**YAH**-nah)

ragamala (**RAH**-gah-**MAH**-la)

Sarasvati (Sah-**RAHS**-vah-tee)

Shiva (**SHE**-vah)

Siddhartha Gautama (Sid-**DAR**-thah Gow-**TAH**-mah)

stupa (**STOO**-pah)

tirthankara (**TEER**-thahn-kah-rah)

Upanishads (Oo-**PAHN**-ee-shahds)

ushnisha (oosh-**NEE**-shah)

Vedas (**VAY**-dahs)

Vishnu (**VISH**-noo)

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Video and Film

Art of Indonesia: Tales from the Shadow World, 1990, color, video

Produced by The Metropolitan Museum of Art Office of Film & TV and the National Gallery of Art.

Explores the ancient treasures of Indonesia and visits Borobudur, the ruins of a Buddhist temple from the ninth century. (28 min.)

Distributor: Home Vision Arts, 4411 N. Ravenswood Ave., Chicago, IL 60640, (800) 826-3456

Distributor: National Gallery of Art Department of Education Resources, Extension Programs Section, 4th Street and Constitution Ave. NW, Washington, DC 20565, e-mail: ExtProg@nga.gov

Circles, Cycles: Kathak Dance, 1989, color, video

Produced by the American Institute of Indian Studies.

Demonstrates the Kathak dance of northern India by a number of male and female soloists. This form of dance, which contains both Hindu and Muslim traits, includes narrative elements, often from tales of the Hindu deities Krishna and Radha or stories from the ancient Sanskrit epic *Mahabharata*.

The video also shows various Indian musical instruments that accompany the dancers. (28 min.)

Distributor: University of California Extension Center for Media and Independent Learning, 2000 Center Street, 4th floor, Berkeley, CA 94704, (510) 642-0460

Gopal's Golden Pendant, 1980, color, video

Produced by Sunrise Films.

Ten-year-old Gopal is learning the ancient art of enameling gold and silver, called minakari in India. From the World Cultures and Youth series. (25 min.)

Distributor: Phoenix Learning Group, 2349 Chaffee Drive, St. Louis, MO 63146, (314) 569-0211

Great Tales in Asian Art, 1994, color, video

Produced by Maryland Public Television.

Recounts four Asian tales with artwork and performance by Indian, Indonesian, Korean, and Japanese artists. Each segment can be viewed individually. The *Ramayana*, a 4,000-year-old epic poem from Indonesia, is the story of the brave Rama and his loyal wife Sita, who is kidnapped by the demon Ravana. The *Gita Govinda* is an epic poem about the love affair between Krishna and Radha, interpreted by paintings from Rajasthan and the Punjab hills and with a dance performance facing the Hindu temple at Konarak. (83 min.)

Distributor: Crystal Productions, PO Box 2159, Glenview, IL 60025, (800) 255-8629

Hasan the Carpet Weaver, 1976, color, video

Produced by Sunrise Films.

Follows twelve-year-old Hasan as he learns the traditional craft of carpet weaving from his grandfather, a master craftsman, in Kashmir, India. From the

World Cultures and Youth series. (25 min.)
Distributor: Phoenix Learning Group, 2349 Chaffee Drive, St. Louis, MO
63146, (314) 569-0211

In the Shadow of Angkor Wat, 1997, color, video
Produced by Les Films d'Ici and Réunion des Musées Nationaux.
Provides a comprehensive look at the ruins of Angkor in Cambodia, which
was the capital of the Khmer Empire from the ninth through fifteenth cen-
turies. (56 min.)
Distributor: Home Vision Arts, 4411 N. Ravenswood Ave., Chicago, IL
60640, (800) 826-3456

Kathputli: The Art of Rajasthani Puppeteers, 1988, color, video
Produced by the Smithsonian Institution of Folklife Programs.
Explores the unique and colorful world of kathputli puppet theater as it is
maintained and performed by itinerant families in Rajasthan, India.
Puppeteers demonstrate the construction and manipulation of the wood-
and-string creations used in this ancient art form. (28 min.)
Distributor: Pennsylvania State University, MTSS, University Libraries,
1127 Fox Hill Road, University Park, PA 16803, (800) 826-0132

Lee's Parasol, 1980, color, video
Produced by Sunrise Films.
Fifteen-year-old Lee Nakhampa of Thailand works with a group that makes
parasols by hand. Lee makes a parasol to give to her cousin at a Buddhist
festival. (25 min.)
Distributor: Phoenix Learning Group, 2349 Chaffee Drive, St. Louis, MO
63146, (314) 569-0211

Legacy: India: The Empire of the Spirit, 1991, color, video
Produced by Maryland Public Television & Central Independent Television,
U.K.

(available for view in the Museum's Uris Library)

This program, part 2 of *Legacy*, presents a history of India and its people and
discusses the origins of the caste system, the symbolic figures of Hinduism,
and the development of Buddhism. The video also explores the ancient city
of Mohenjo-daro built in 4000 B.C., and asserts that the villages of India best
reveal what life in India was like in ancient times. The program credits vil-
lage life with the long endurance of the *Mahabharata*, a 3,000-year-old
Sanskrit epic. Visits to temples in the great temple cities of southern and
northern India are featured, as well as a trip to Fatehpur Kikri, where the
buildings of Akbar the Great still stand. Further, the video discusses how
knowledge was transmitted through trade and credits India with the mathe-
matical system still used throughout the world today. (60 min.)

Distributor: Ambrose Video, 28 West 44th Street, Suite #2100, New York,
NY 10036, (212) 768-7373

Mirror of Gesture, 1974, color, video

Produced by Los Angeles County Museum of Art.

Intercuts views of Indian sculpture with sequences of Indian dance to demonstrate the relationships and correspondences between the two arts. (21 min.)

Distributor: University of California Extension Center for Media and Independent Learning, 2000 Center Street, 4th floor, Berkeley, CA 94704, (510) 642-0460

Mystic Vision, Sacred Art: The Tradition of Thangka Painting, 1996, color, video

Examines every step of the process of painting the scrolled Tibetan Buddhist devotional images called thangkas. Illustrates the preparation of the painting surface, the grinding of the pigments, and the drawing of the sacred image and its completion in brilliant color. (28 min.)

Distributor: Documentary Educational Resources, 101 Morse Street, Watertown, MA 02172, (800) 569-6621

Serama's Mask, 1980, color, video

Serama is a Balinese dancer like his father, who is soon to retire. He will join in his father's last dance, but first he must carve his own ceremonial mask. From the World Culture and Youth series. (25 min.)

Distributor: Phoenix Learning Group, 2349 Chaffee Drive, St. Louis, MO 63146, (314) 569-0211

Suggested Web Sites

The Metropolitan Museum of Art

www.metmuseum.org

Twenty images of South and Southeast Asian art with descriptions (thirteen of which are illustrated in this resource).

Other Museums

Asia Society

www.askasia.org/

AskAsia is an integral part of the Asia Society's Asian Education Resource Center (AERC), an initiative to organize and disseminate Asia-related information and resources; develop student-centered institutional materials; and provide teaching strategies and staff development programs. An informative online source for K-12 Asian and Asian-American studies, AskAsia offers easy 24-hour access to high-quality, classroom-tested resources and cultural information, maps, lesson plans, engaging games and activities, and links to relevant people, places, and institutions.

Asian Art Museum of San Francisco

www.asianart.org/

Programs and resource materials for teachers and students are available at this site, as well as images and information on selected highlights of the museum's collection.

The John C. and Susan L. Huntington Archive of Buddhist and Related Art

kaladarshan.arts.ohio-state.edu/

Under the On-line Exhibitions section see "Meeting God: Elements of Hindu Devotion."

Los Angeles County Museum of Art

www.lacma.org/lacma.htm

Images of and information on ten masterpieces in the South and Southeast Asian art collection.

Seattle Asian Art Museum

www.seattleartmuseum.org/

Contains a "Look and Discover Stories Game" for art from India and Southeast Asia.

Smithsonian

Smithsonian Freer Gallery of Art and Arthur M. Sackler Gallery

www.si.edu/asia/

Devi: The Great Goddess

www.si.edu/organiza/museums/freer/devi/

A Web site developed in conjunction with the exhibition of the same name at the Arthur M. Sackler Gallery, March 28–September 6, 1999. Like the exhibition, the site looks at the six aspects of Devi, and provides additional information on the contemporary and historical worship of Devi, activities for children and families, as well as a list of resources on South Asian arts and cultures.

Puja: Expressions of Hindu Devotion

www.si.edu/asia/puja/start.htm

Complementing the exhibition of the same name on view at the Arthur M. Sackler Gallery, this online guide for educators contains background information, activities, bibliography, and a resource list about puja.

Other Sources**The Ancient Indus Valley**

www.harappa.com/har/har0.html

This site includes “A Walk Around Harappa” and “A Walk Through Mohenjodaro.”

The Art of Tibet

www.tibetart.com/introduction/

Asian Educational Media Service

www.aems.uiuc.edu/index.las

Use the search tool to locate descriptions and reviews of media materials one can use in learning about the cultures and peoples of Asia, as well as information on how to obtain them.

Asian Studies WWW Virtual Library

coombs.anu.edu.au/WWWV-AsianStudies.html

Lists of WWW resources for topics in Asian Studies.

Asian Arts: the on-line journal for the study and exhibition of the arts of Asia

www.asianart.com/

This site provides a list of articles as well as museums and galleries from around the world that offer events and exhibitions on Asian art.

Asian Index: A Guide to Asian Art on the Internet

www.artindex.com/gen.htm

Buddhist Art and Architecture

www.buddhanet.net/gallery.htm

Buddhist Art: Symbolism of Mandalas

www.buddhanet.net/mandala.htm

The Encyclopedia Mythica

www.pantheon.org/mythica/

An online encyclopedia of mythology, folklore, legends, and more. Texts about Hindu divinities and the Ramayana

Exploring Ancient World Cultures

Eawc.evansville.edu/index.htm

The many images of Indian sculpture and sacred sites on this site are provided by the University of Evansville.

Harappa: Glimpses of South Asia before 1947

www.harappa.com/

This site includes images, movies, tours, and sounds of Harappa, an ancient city in the Indus Valley.

Hindu Temples and Gods of India

www.templenet.com/abode.html

The Ramayana

www.maxwell.syr.edu/maxpages/special/ramayana/

Syracuse University's *Ramayana* Web site.

Tibetan Art and its function

www.buddhanet.net/tibart.htm

World Art Treasures: Art from Burma/Myanmar

www.epfl.ch/berger/First/english/start_burma.html

Buddhist stupas and temples in Burma/Myanmar.

World Art Treasures: Art of Borobudur, Indonesia

sgwww.epfl.ch/BERGER/Borobudur/E/

A comprehensive tour of the great Buddhist stupa of Borobudur with details of the narrative reliefs.

World Art Treasures: Art from Thailand, Laos

www.epfl.ch/berger/First/english/start_laos.html

World Art Treasures: Art from India

sgwww.epfl.ch/berger/First/english/start_india.html

VII Suggestions for Class Discussions and Activities

Depending on the age and interests of your class and the time available for studying South and Southeast Asia, you will know which of the following activities are suitable—and you will undoubtedly think up other activities based upon the themes listed on pages 50–51.

In discussing the slides and CD images for each activity, you may assign the descriptions to one or more students, ask them to read them and then lead the class discussion—or you may decide to do it yourself.

Activities

Worldly Power

Images

- 2** *Plaque with a Royal Family*
- 3** *One from a Pair of Royal Earrings*
- 32** *Prince Khurram (later, Shah Jahan) with His Son Dara Shikoh*
- 35** *Wall Hanging*
- 50** *Deified King (Jayavarman VI?)*

As the class looks at these images, discuss the ways rulers in South and Southeast Asia have displayed their wealth and power. Note costume, jewelry, physical surroundings, pose, colors, and the use of scale.

Prince Khurram and his son are pictured admiring jewels. Have the class draw themselves admiring their favorite things and holding what they would like to have.

Talk about the different kinds of power people can possess. Make a list of positive powers (creative, intellectual, spiritual, supportive, loving, etc.). Then make a list of negative powers (destructive, uncontrolled, cruel, etc.).

Select several powers from the list to use as examples and ask the students how these powers might be pictured (as symbols or emblems, through pose and expression).

Have each student draw or write a description of a powerful person in their own lives or a well-known famous person. In deciding how best to represent this person, have them consider the following:

stance, expression, dress, actions, and relationship to others, and what symbols this person might be holding or wearing.

Divine Powers

Images

- 14** *Yama*
- 15** *Krishna Battling the Horse Demon Keshi*
- 18** *Standing Parvati*
- 22** *Shiva as Lord of the Dance (Nataraja)*
- 27** *Seated Jain Tirthankara*

Poster A

Standing Buddha (image 6)

Discuss the definition of divine power, as distinguished from human power.

As the class looks at the slides, ask them to describe the particular powers each divine being radiates. How did the artist of each image express these powers? Note pose, expression, gestures, adornment, symbols held or surrounding the image, and scale.

Talk about the visual language and symbols our society uses to describe extraordinary powers. Ask each student to think about how he or she might picture an all-powerful god. Would this divine force be best illustrated as one being or several? In a human form or as a phenomenon of nature? Without physical form, how might a divine power be worshipped and meditated upon? (Think of a symbol or group of symbols.)

Ask the students to record their ideas about picturing divine powers in a drawing, a series of drawings, a short essay, or a clay sculpture.

Beliefs about the divine are part of what defines a culture. Talk about how gods are pictured in other cultures the class has studied.

Multiple Arms and Hands

Images

- 10** *The Buddha Amoghasiddhi Attended by Bodhisattvas*
- 16** *Vishnu as Vaikuntha Chaturmurti*
- 20** *Stela of a Four-armed Vishnu*
- 24** *The Goddess Durga Killing the Buffalo Demon Mahisha*
- 26** *Seated Ganesha*

As the images are shown, ask the students to express their opinions about what the meaning of each deity's unnatural "extensions" might be. Which deities seem to be the most powerful and why? Which is most appealing? Notice how the artists attached the extra arms (always in equal numbers) to the rest of the body.

Discuss the reasons why Indian artists portrayed many of their gods with multiple arms (and sometimes with more than one head). At this point, you may want to hand out photocopies of attributes of the gods to see if the students can identify them.

Tell the story about how Ganesha came to have an elephant head. Ask the students to imagine a person with a different animal head, and make up a story about how that combination came to be, and what that creature's powers are.

In our culture, we can often identify peoples' professions by the objects they hold. Ask the students to make a list of as many such objects as they can think of. They should be able to come up with at least twelve examples.

Divide the class into several groups and have each group draw a human form with four, six, or eight arms on a large piece of paper, or provide each group with a drawing already made. Ask the group members to decide whether their drawing needs one head or multiple heads and to choose objects for the hands that will symbolize the multiple powers of their deity. Ask each group to show their deity to the rest of the class, and ask the class to interpret the various symbols.

Brainstorm with your group to list all the things you could do if you had four (or six or eight!) arms. Write a story or short play that includes at least one person with multiple arms. Would he or she have any special adventures or difficulties? Or ask the students to draw a picture of themselves with four arms holding objects that symbolize their favorite activities.

The Ideal

A writing or drawing activity for image 6, Standing Buddha, India, 5th century

The aim of South Asian art was to express spiritual perfection by creating idealized human forms—not by creating an illusion of reality. Artists turned to literary metaphors, often derived from nature, to portray ideal anatomical forms such as:

- **the head in the shape of an egg**
- **eyes like little fish or the petals of a lotus**
- **eyebrows like an archer's bow**
- **the chin in the shape of a mango stone**
- **shoulders like the elephant's**
- **legs as graceful as a gazelle's**

Ask the class to think about contemporary ideals of beauty and the well-built body. What metaphors would you use to describe:

- **facial features (eyes, mouths, etc.)**
- **shoulders**
- **forms of the torso**
- **arms and legs**

With these visual metaphors in mind, ask the students to draw, paint, or sculpt an ideally handsome, beautiful, or well-built human being, or write about one using verbal metaphors.

Body Language

Images

- 6 Standing Buddha**
- 12 Standing Tara**
- 21 Shiva Seated with Uma**
- 23 Dancing Celestial**
- 43 Seated Transcendent Buddha Vairochana**

What do the poses in these images tell us about each deity? Which poses seem serene? Graceful? Most human? Most complicated? (Since the answers are a matter of interpretation, there may be different reactions.) Discuss the ways in which South and Southeast Asian artists use facial expressions and postures to express ideas about cosmic powers and other unseen forces.

Ask the class what facial expressions and poses we use to express certain feelings and reactions. How do these actions reveal our moods and personalities?

Play charades. Give each student a folded card which names an emotion or a situation such as winning, losing, thinking, protecting, or getting a high mark in class.

Hand Gestures

Images

- 7 Seated Preaching Buddha**
- 9 Standing Buddha**
- 29 The Gopis Beseeking Krishna to Return Their Clothing**

Poster A

Standing Buddha (image 6)

First, talk about the many sorts of hand gestures we use and what they express. Ask the class to draw hand gestures that they would use to express the following messages:

Don't be afraid

I'm giving you a gift

I am meditating

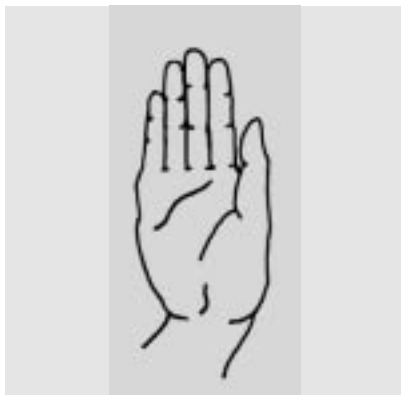
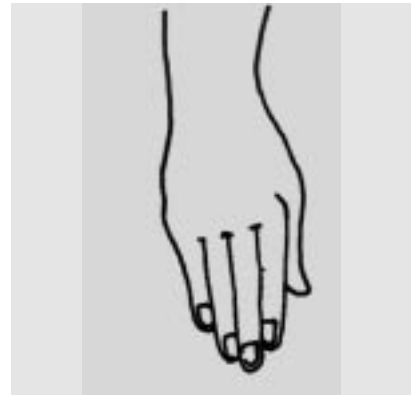
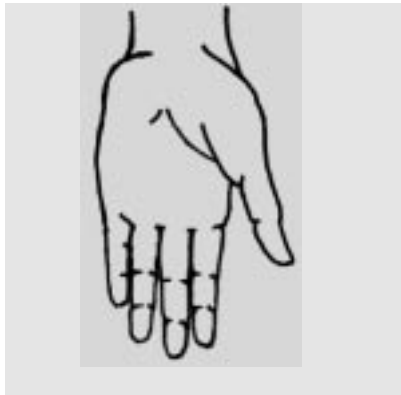
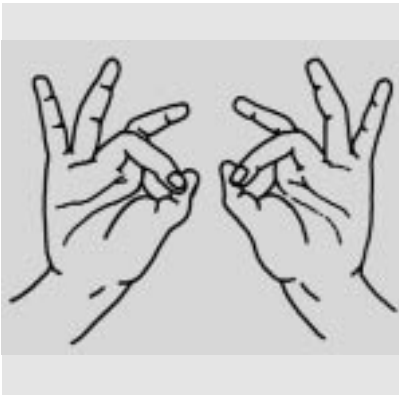
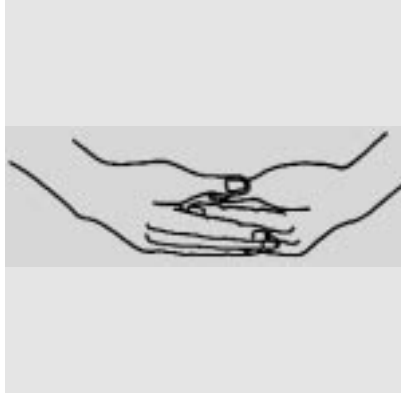
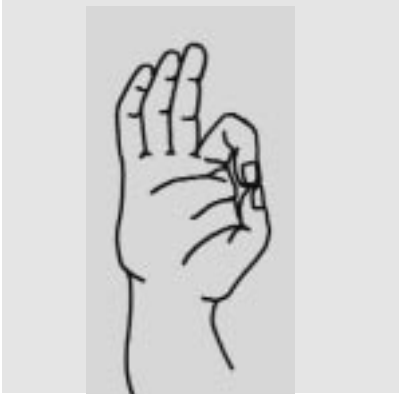
I am listing some important information for you

Now have the students compare their drawings with the mudras used in Buddhist art (photocopy page 136). Many of the mudras are also displayed by Hindu deities. See if the students can guess what the mudras mean.

Look at the artworks so that the students can identify the hand gestures and their meaning.

Worksheet

Hand Gestures (Mudras) of the Buddha



Adornment

Images

- 4** *Standing Bodhisattva Maitreya*
- 11** *Portrait of Jnanatapa Surrounded by Lamas and Mahasiddhas*
- 12** *Standing Tara*
- 20** *Stela of a Four-armed Vishnu*
- 23** *Dancing Celestial*
- 36** *Shiva and Parvati Playing Charpar*

Discuss the body ornaments depicted on these images of gods, goddesses, and bodhisattvas. Where were they worn on the body? (Note necklaces of many lengths, ornaments looped over one shoulder and across the torso, large earrings, crowns and headdresses, armbands, belts, bracelets, anklets, and rings for hands and toes.)

How is this adornment decorated, and does the decoration have meaning? (Floral patterns, mythical beasts, and human-animal creatures are auspicious symbols believed to assure good fortune and protection for the wearer. They also symbolize majesty and the exalted state of a deity.)

Ask the students to draw or design their own ornament or ornaments that symbolize good fortune, protection, or both.

The Goddess

Images

- 18** *Standing Parvati*
- 19** *Chamunda (The Horrific Destroyer of Evil)*
- 20** *Stela of a Four-armed Vishnu*
- 24** *The Goddess Durga Killing the Buffalo Demon Mahisha*
- 49** *Standing Uma*

What do these images reveal about the many powers of Devi, the great goddess? What are the different powers expressed in these images?

Discuss the strengths and powers we associate with women and make a list of them.

Ask each student to create an image that illustrates one or more of the qualities listed. Have the students share their pictures and discuss the meanings. Explore ways in which all these qualities might be portrayed in a single image.

With these ideas in mind, ask the class or a group within the class to combine efforts in producing a mural or large painting of a modern goddess.

The Dance of Shiva

Image

22 Shiva as Lord of the Dance (Nataraja)

Discuss the various meanings of the image of Shiva as Nataraja. Talk about what modern symbols could be combined to illustrate our civilization's views of how the universe was created, how it is maintained, and how it may end.

A further step would be to have the class collaborate in drawing and painting a wall mural depicting their ideas.

Discuss with your class the creation myths of other civilizations they have studied.

Vehicles of the Gods

Image

48 Krishna on Garuda

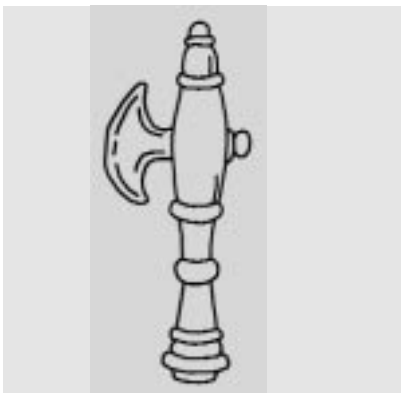
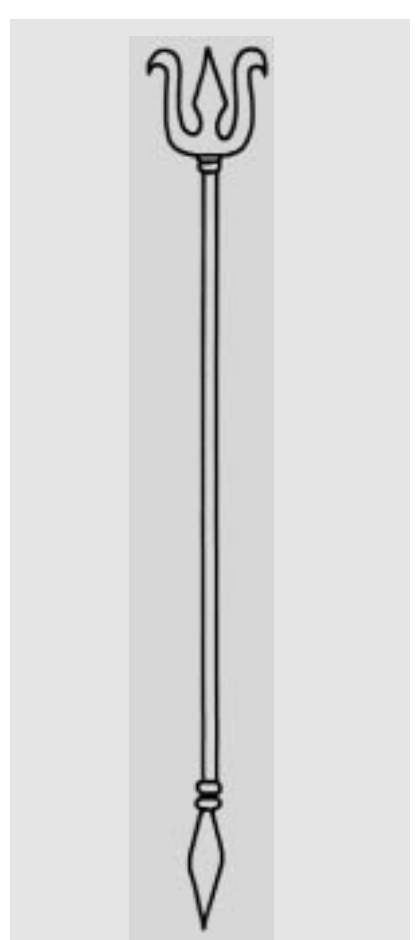
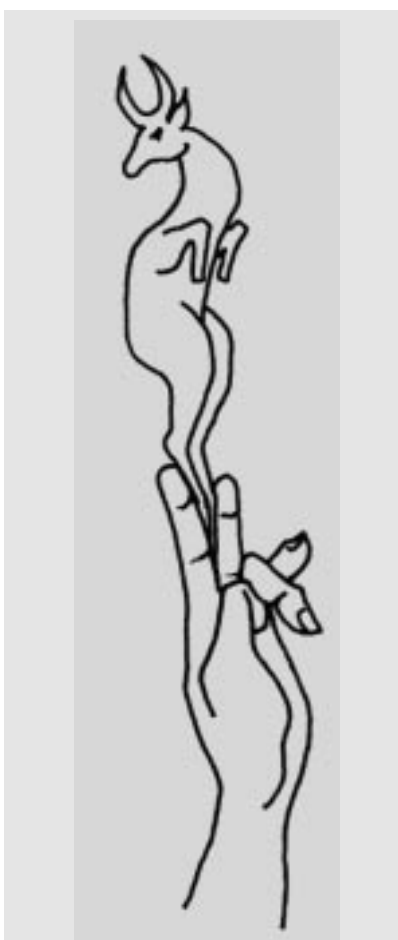
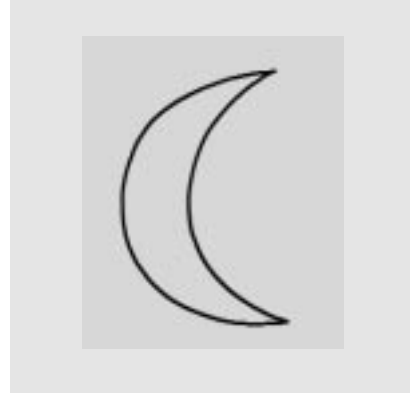
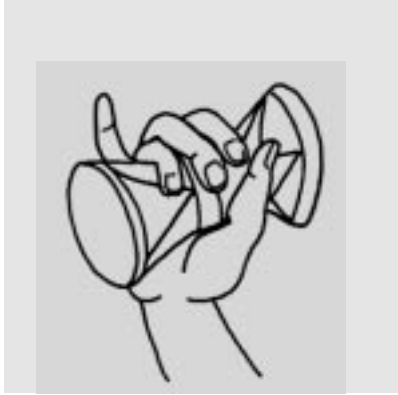
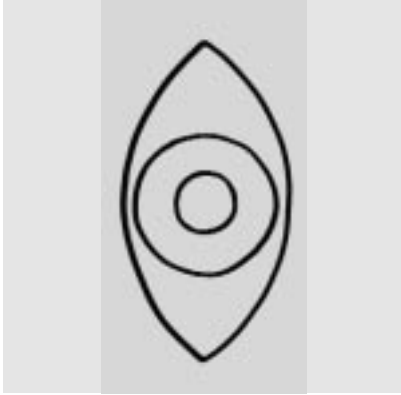
Show the slide and ask the class to guess what is happening. Who are the two actors, and what kind story do they think is unfolding? How has the artist created a sense of action and excitement?

Hindu gods travel about the universe on animal vehicles that symbolize their powers. Ask the students to draw an animal that symbolizes their personality, or construct a vehicle in that animal's shape, or write a story or poem about why that animal suits them.

Before the students sign the pictures, poem, written description, or construction, pass them around. See if the other class members can identify whose animal each creation is.

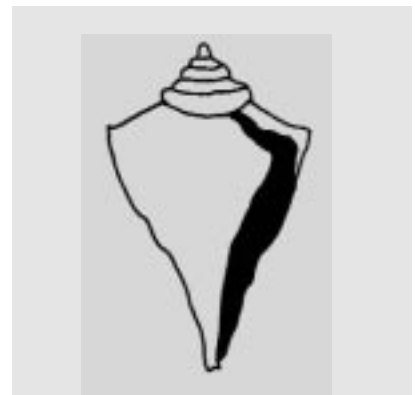
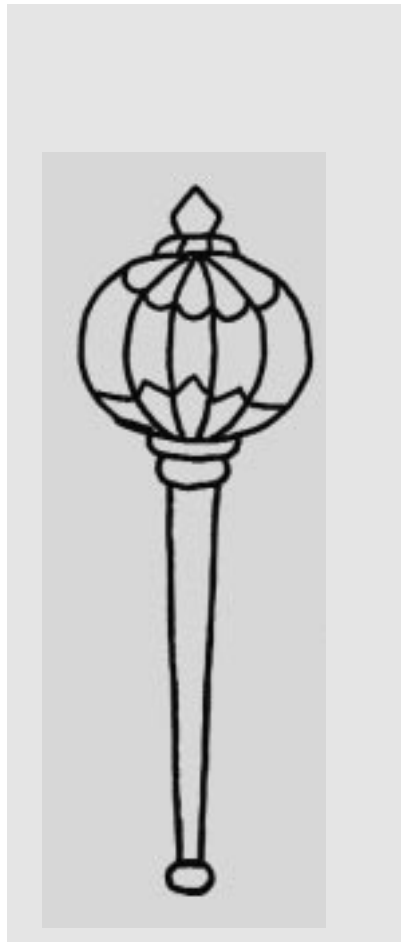
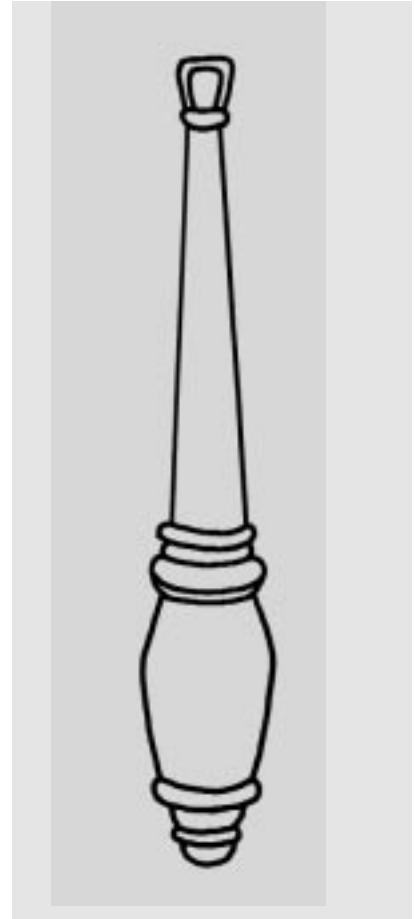
Worksheet

Attributes of Shiva



Worksheet

Attributes of Vishnu



Animals, Real and Imaginary

Images

- 1** *Seal with a Bull*
- 11** *Portrait of Jnanatapa Surrounded by Lamas and Mahasiddhas*
- 26** *Seated Ganesha*
- 30** *Leaf from a Harivamsa Manuscript, The Legend of Hari (Krishna)*
- 38** *Rama, Surrounded by the Armies of the Great Bear and Monkey Clans*
- 53** *Dish with Elephant*

In each of these images, animals function in different ways. Discuss their meaning and appearance. Which animals look natural? How have others been transformed?

What features would imply that some of them are imaginary and represent ideas?

How did the painter of the blue and white dish portray a large elephant in the center so that its form harmonizes with the shape of the dish?

While looking at the Ganesha image, tell the story about how he came to have an elephant head. Ask the students how they would picture a chubby boy with an elephant head? How could they prevent their drawing from looking weird or funny? How did the carver of Ganesha avoid such problems?

Have each student create an image—two- or three-dimensional—of a human with an animal head, and make up a story about how this human-animal combination came to be, and what this creature's special powers are.

Key Moments in Narrative

Image

5 *The Great Departure and the Temptation of the Buddha*

Discuss the way the carver of this well-known event in the Buddha's life included just enough of the key action for the viewer familiar with the story to recognize what was happening, what had happened, and what the Buddha's future would be.

Image

38 *Rama, Surrounded by the Armies of the Great Bear and Monkey Clans*

In the scene of Rama and his army of bears and monkeys, how many key moments of the story are depicted?

Ask the students to think about a story well known to them—religious, fairy tale, from film, fiction, television, etc. Identify the key figures and moments of the story and think about how they might be combined in one scene that people will immediately recognize.

When they have completed a drawing or painting of the most important moments, ask the students to share their pictures with the rest of the class to see if their story can be recognized.

Image

41 *Presentation Bowl*

Analyze the way the designer of this bronze bowl created a continuous narrative of royal activities that wraps around the widest part of the bronze presentation bowl.

Ask the students to think of two or more special events in their lives and draw them in a continuous narrative that will exactly fit the circumference of an oatmeal or cornmeal box, or an eighteen- or twenty-four-inch oaktag paper cut in a horizontal strip that will be stapled to form a cylinder when the drawing (and painting) is finished.

These activities can lead to discussions about figures and symbols that refer to myths and stories important to people of different cultures.

Imagine your P(a)lace

Image and Poster B

39 Maharana Ari Singh with His Courtiers at the Jagniwas Water Palace

Ask the students to take a close look at the Maharana and his activities and the details of his palace rooms. Have a discussion about what is happening in the various spaces. Are these events occurring at the same time? Are we seeing everything from the same point of view? Explain. Why did the artist decide to show the palace from several different angles? Why is the Maharana larger than the other figures? And what does that golden circle around his head signify?

Ask the students to imagine living in a perfect house. Which rooms would be the most important? What would they do in these rooms, who would be there, and how would these rooms be decorated? Ask them to draw a picture of their ideal home using several different points of view to show different things happening in each area.

The One and the Many

Talk about some of the basic opposites in life (for example, love and hate, creation and destruction, life and death, knowledge and ignorance, happiness and suffering). Discuss the possible ways of picturing a god who brings into balance all these seeming opposites.

Ask the students if they would picture this deity as a single being or several? Would it help to have more than two arms and one head? Could this ultimate unifying power be hinted at in an abstract design? (Think about pairing opposite colors or patterns in a balanced design.) Ask them to illustrate their ideas in a drawing, a series of drawings, or in a description in prose or poetry.

Image

21 Shiva Seated with Uma

Look at the image of Shiva and Uma. Discuss the way the sculptor hinted at ultimate unity in the pose, gestures, and symbols surrounding these two deities.

Talk about the Hindu belief that the many gods all point in the direction of the One and are manifestations through which the One (Brahman) makes itself approachable. They are like signposts that point us in the direction of the ultimate reality. Another metaphor is that the various gods are vehicles that take us to the Ultimate, and once we arrive, we will no longer need them.

Art and Culture

Discuss why art is an important source of information about civilizations. For example, talk about the different styles of depicting the human figure in South and Southeast Asian art. What do these distinctive forms communicate about the fundamental beliefs and the social structure of these cultures?

Discuss the way art communicates beliefs and social structure in other cultures the class has studied.

Think about how the human figure is depicted in art, photographs, and television in America. What do these forms suggest about our beliefs and the diversity and/or uniformity in our culture?

Lesson Plan: Animals in Art

Grade level Middle School, adaptable to elementary and high school

- Objectives**
- Students will look at and discuss the depiction of animals in three works of art from Mughal India.
 - Students will draw an animal from life.
 - Students will create a two-dimensional carpet using a pattern of plant and animal forms.
 - Students will sculpt a three-dimensional form decorated with animals.

Works of Art

- 31 Nilgai (Blue Bull)**
- 33 Carpet with Pictorial Design**
- 37 Priming Flask**

Motivation and Discussion

For the Teacher: Look at the three slides and read the entries before the lesson. You may adapt this lesson by choosing the activity or activities that best serve your classroom needs and time. Additional images from this packet that show animals may be added to the discussion.

The three components of this lesson are: (1) Drawing an animal from life; (2) Using animal and plant shapes in an all-over pattern; and (3) Adapting animal shapes to a three-dimensional form. The three images may be used as a basis for comparison and contrast in a class discussion. How does each work of art relate to the Mughal interest in animals? What is the function of the animal(s) in each work of art? How has each artist depicted animals and how does each artist use space?

Part 1: Drawing animals from life

Project slide 31 and ask students to describe what they see. The wild bull, or nilgai, is the most important element of this painting. Ask students to look at the way the artist Mansur has shown the body and muscles of the bull, its color, and the different textures of its muzzle, mane, and tail. Do students think that the artist was familiar with this animal? How can they tell? How has the artist depicted the animal's environment? Is it as detailed? What is the function of the detailed border?

A field trip to a zoo, nature preserve, or natural history museum will provide students with the opportunity to draw an animal from life. In the natural history museum, students may see the animals at closer range and have still subjects that they may observe and draw. They should notice the animal's pose, the textures of its skin or coat, facial qualities, etc. They may sketch the animal's habitat—rocks, grass, trees. Have the students save their drawings.

From the drawings they have made, have each student choose one to finish, using paints to add color, texture, and details. The animal should be the most important element of the painting and should take up most of the space. They may wish to add a few environmental details and perhaps design a border to frame the animal.

Part 2: Design a carpet using a stylized version of the animal

Materials

- 8¹/₂ x 11 inch or 11 x 18 inch red construction paper, one piece per student
- Small pieces of construction paper in a variety of colors
- Scissors
- Crayons, paint, or markers
- Pre-cut lengths of yarn for fringe

Show slide 33 and ask students to notice the animals. What animals can they identify? The artists who made this knotted rug also had observed the animals that they depicted. How can students tell this? Have them look for evidence of three-dimensionality in the animals, the white bellies of the ibex, and the way the stripes curve on the tiger's back. How realistic are the poses? Are the tigers acting like tigers? Notice their heads and their tails. Are the birds acting like birds, flying and roosting? Discuss scale, and the fact that all the animals, trees, and flowers are roughly the same size. The scale is distorted in order to make all the elements of the design fit together in a harmonious fashion. Are all the animals real? Which ones might be mythological or fantastic? Could some of the animals symbolize power or authority? Which ones and why?

Ask students to create a simplified version of an animal shape by cutting or tearing it from 3 x 3 inch construction paper. Have them use this shape as a template to cut or tear a series of identical forms. Position these on a piece of red construction paper, leaving a margin so that a border can be added. Some of the shapes may be flipped over to face the opposite direction. Cut or tear additional animal or plant forms and position them on the paper.

After all the forms are positioned, use glue or paste them into place. Add details to the animals and plants and a border with markers or crayon. Fringe can be attached by punching holes at the two short ends of the paper, then using lark's head knots to insert pre-cut lengths of yarn into the holes.

Part 3: Sculpt a form using the animals

Materials

- Clay
- Clay tools

Project slide 37 and explain to students the use of this object. Ask students to look at the animals on the priming flask and identify as many as they can. How has the carver of this object fit these animals together on the shape and space of the flask? Compare it to the carpet. Does the carpet show any overlapping of the animals?

Distribute balls of clay to students and ask them to roll it out so that it forms a smooth cylinder, then roll each end to a tapered point so that they have a shape similar to the shape of the flask. Students should sculpt animals into this shape by applying additional clay and by removing clay. Tools may be used to provide texture and details to the animals, but the basic shape of the clay should stay the same.

Science: Any of these projects may accompany and complement a science unit on animals, their protective coloration, their habits, and habitats.

Language Arts: To complement the study of these three works of art, students may explore how animals are depicted in writings: for instance, in scientific studies of animal habits and habitats, and in myths and legends. They may also learn about the symbolic associations of animals. Students may follow up with writings of their own to complement the artworks they have created.

Social Studies: Any of the additional slides in this packet may be combined with this lesson to look at the art and culture of South Asia specifically, or slides showing animals in artwork from other parts of the world may be compared for Global Studies classes.

List of the Works of Art

List of the Works of Art

All the works of art appear as digital images on the CD-ROM. Forty of these works of art are also provided in slide format, as indicated on this list. The numbers on the slide frames correspond to the numbers on this list.

South Asia

(including the Himalayan region)

The Rise of Civilization

1 Seals with Designs of a Unicorn, Bulls, and an Elephant

Pakistan, Indus Valley civilization (3000–1500 B.C.)
Baked steatite, H. $1\frac{3}{16}$ in. (2.1 cm), $1\frac{1}{2}$ in. (3.8 cm), $1\frac{1}{8}$ in. (2.9 cm),
 $1\frac{3}{16}$ in. (2.1 cm)
Anonymous Gift, 1844 (1984.482); Purchase, Dodge Fund,
1949 (49.40.2); Promised Gifts of the Kronos Collections,
(L 1994.18.2 and L 1993.51.10)

2 Plaque with a Royal Family

India (West Bengal, Chandraketugarh), Shunga period, 1st century B.C.
Terracotta, $12\frac{3}{4}$ x $10\frac{1}{4}$ in. (32.4 x 26 cm)
Purchase, Florence and Herbert Irving Gift, 1992 (1992.129)
Slide

3 One from a Pair of Royal Earrings

India (probably Andhra Pradesh), ca. 1st century B.C.
Gold, W. 3 in. (7.6 cm)
Gift of The Kronos Collections, 1981 (1981.398.3)
Slide

Buddhist Art

4 Standing Bodhisattva Maitreya (The Buddha of the Future)

Pakistan (ancient region of Gandhara), Kushan period, ca. late 2nd–early 3rd
century
Gray schist, H. $64\frac{1}{4}$ in. (163.2 cm)
Purchase, Lita Annenberg Hazen Charitable Trust Gift, 1991 (1991.75)
Slide

5 The Great Departure and the Temptation of the Buddha

India (Andhra Pradesh, Nagarjunakonda), Ikshvaku period, ca. first half of
3rd century
Limestone, H. $56\frac{3}{4}$ in. (144.1 cm)
Fletcher Fund, 1928 (28.105)
Slide

6 Standing Buddha

India (Uttar Pradesh, Mathura), Gupta period, 5th century
Mottled red sandstone, H. 33 ¹¹/₁₆ in. (85.5 cm)
Purchase, Enid A. Haupt Gift, 1979 (1979.6)
Slide and Poster A

7 Seated Preaching Buddha

India (Bihar, probably Bodh Gaya), Pala period, 10th–11th century
Black stone, H. 24 ¹/₄ in. (61.5 cm)
Rogers Fund, 1920 (20.43)

8 Paramasukha-Chakrasamvara Mandala

Nepal, ca. 1100
Distemper on cloth, 26 ⁷/₈ x 19 ⁷/₈ in. (68.2 x 50.5 cm)
Rogers Fund, 1995 (1995.233)
Slide

9 Standing Buddha

Sri Lanka, Polonnaruva period, 11th–12th century
Gilt bronze, H. 23 ⁵/₈ in. (60 cm)
Gift of Enid A. Haupt, 1993 (1993.387.8)

10 The Buddha Amoghasiddhi Attended by Bodhisattvas

Tibet, first half of 13th century
Distemper on cloth, 27 ¹/₈ x 21 ¹/₄ in. (68.9 x 54 cm)
Purchase, Miriam and Ira D. Wallach Philanthropic Fund Gift, 1991
(1991.74)

11 Portrait of Jnanatapa Surrounded by Lamas and Mahasiddhas

Eastern Tibet, Riwoche monastery, 14th century
Distemper on cloth, 27 x 21 ¹/₂ in. (68.6 x 54.6 cm)
Purchase, Friends of Asian Art Gifts, 1987 (1987.144)
Slide

12 Standing Tara

Nepal, 14th century
Gilt copper alloy with color, inlaid with semiprecious stones
H. 20 ¹/₄ in. (51.4 cm)
Louis V. Bell Fund, 1966 (66.179)
Slide

13 Mandala of Jnanadakini

Tibet, School of the Ngor monastery, ca. late 15th century
Distemper on cloth, 33 ¹/₄ x 28 ⁷/₈ in. (84.5 x 73.3 cm)
Purchase, Lita Annenberg Hazen Charitable Trust Gift, 1987
(1987.16)

14 Yama

Tibet, mid-17th–early 18th century
Distemper on cloth, 72 ³/₈ x 46 ⁵/₈ in. (183.8 x 118.4 cm)
Purchase, Florance Waterbury Bequest, 1969 (69.71)
Slide

Hindu Art

- 15 Krishna Battling the Horse Demon Keshi**
India (Uttar Pradesh), Gupta period, 5th century
Terracotta, H. 21 in. (53.3 cm)
Purchase, Florence and Herbert Irving Gift, 1991 (1991.300)
Slide
- 16 Vishnu as Vaikuntha Chaturmurti**
India (Jammu and Kashmir), second half of 8th century
Stone, H. 41 1/8 in. (104.5 cm)
Purchase, Florence and Herbert Irving Gift, 1991 (1991.301)
Slide
- 17 Linga with One Face of Shiva (Ekamukhhalinga)**
Afghanistan, Shahi period, 9th century
White marble, H. 22 7/16 in. (57 cm)
Rogers Fund, 1980 (1980.415)
- 18 Standing Parvati**
India (Tamil Nadu), Chola period, ca. first quarter of 10th century
Copper alloy, H. 27 3/8 in. (69.5 cm)
Bequest of Cora Timken Burnett, 1956 (57.51.3)
Slide
- 19 Chamunda (The Horrific Destroyer of Evil)**
India (Madhya Pradesh), 10th–11th century
Sandstone, H. 44 1/2 in. (113 cm)
Purchase, Anonymous Gift and Rogers Fund, 1989 (1989.121)
Slide
- 20 Stela of a Four-armed Vishnu**
India (Punjab), 10th–11th century
Sandstone, H. 43 1/2 in. (110.5 cm)
Rogers Fund, 1968 (68.46)
Slide
- 21 Shiva Seated with Uma (Umamaheshvaramurti)**
Nepal, 11th century
Copper alloy, H. 11 1/8 in. (28.3 cm)
Samuel Eilenberg Collection, Rogers Fund, 1987 (1987.218.1)
Slide
- 22 Shiva as Lord of the Dance (Nataraja)**
India (Tamil Nadu), Chola period, late 12th–early 13th centuries
Copper alloy, H. 25 3/4 in. (65.4 cm)
Harry Brisbane Dick Fund, 1964 (64.251)
Slide
- 23 Dancing Celestial**
India (Uttar Pradesh), early 12th century
Sandstone, H. 33 1/2 in. (85.1 cm)
Promised Gift of Florence and Herbert Irving (L 1993.88.2)
Slide

**24 The Goddess Durga Killing the Buffalo Demon Mahisha
(Mahishasuramardini)**

Bangladesh or India (West Bengal), Pala period, 12th century
Argillite, H. 5⁵/₁₆ in. (13.5 cm)
Purchase, Diana and Arthur G. Altschul Gift, 1993 (1993.7)
Slide

25 Yashoda and Krishna

India (perhaps Karnataka), Vijayanagar period, ca. early 14th century
Copper, H. 13³/₈ in. (33.3 cm)
Purchase, Lita Annenberg Hazen Charitable Trust Gift, in honor of Cynthia
Hazen and Leon B. Polsky, 1982 (1982.220.8)
Slide

26 Seated Ganesha

India (Orissa), 14th–15th century
Ivory, H. 7¹/₄ in. (18.4 cm)
Gift of Mr. and Mrs. J. J. Klejman, 1964 (64.102)
Slide

Jain Art

27 Seated Jain Tirthankara

India (Gujarat or Rajasthan), Solanki period, 11th century
White marble, H. 39 in. (99.1 cm)
Purchase, Florence and Herbert Irving Gift, 1992 (1992.131)
Slide

28 Architectural Ensemble from a Jain Meeting Hall

India (Gujarat, Patan), last quarter of 16th century
Teakwood with traces of color, H. (approx.) 15 ft. (4.58 m)
Gift of Robert W. and Lockwood de Forest, 1916 (16.133)

Court Art of Northern and Central India

29 The Gopis Beseeking Krishna to Return Their Clothing

Page from the dispersed "Isarda" *Bhagavata Purana* (Life of Krishna)
India (probably Delhi-Agra area), ca. 1560–65
Ink and opaque watercolor on paper, 7⁹/₁₆ x 10¹/₈ in. (19.2 x 25.7 cm)
Gift of H. Rubin Foundation, Inc., 1972 (1972.260)
Slide

30 Leaf from a Harivamsa Manuscript, The Legend of Hari (Krishna)

Illustrated Detached Folio
India, Mughal, ca. 1590–95
Ink and colors on paper, 11³/₈ x 7⁷/₈ in. (28.9 x 20 cm)
Purchase, Edward C. Moore, Jr., Gift, 1928 (28.63.1)
Slide

31 Nilgai (Blue Bull)

Leaf from an album made for Shah Jahan

By Mansur

India, Mughal, period of Jahangir, ca. 1620

Opaque watercolor and gold on paper, 7¹/₈ x 9¹/₂ in. (18.2 x 24.2 cm)

Purchase, Rogers Fund and The Kevorkian Foundation Gift, 1955

(55.121.10.13)

Slide

32 Prince Khurram (later, Shah Jahan) with His Son Dara Shikoh

Leaf from an album made for Shah Jahan

By Nanha

India, Mughal, period of Jahangir, ca. 1620

Ink, opaque watercolor, and gold on paper, 15³/₈ x 10³/₈ in. (39 x 26.2 cm)

Purchase, Rogers Fund and The Kevorkian Foundation Gift, 1955

(55.121.10.36)

Slide

33 Carpet with Pictorial Design

North India, Mughal, late 16th or early 17th century

Cotton warp and weft, wool pile, 27 ft. 4 in. x 9 ft. 6 in. (833.1 x 289.5 cm)

Gift of J. Pierpont Morgan, 1917 (17.190.858)

Slide

34 Vasant Ragini

Page from a *ragamala* manuscript

India (Rajasthan, Amber?), early 17th century

Opaque watercolor and gold on paper, H. 9¹³/₁₆ x 7⁷/₈ in. (24.9 x 20 cm)

Friends of Asian Art, Purchase, Mr. and Mrs. Andrew Saul Gift, 1999

(1999.148)

35 Wall Hanging

India, Madras region, ca. 1640–50, borders 18th century

Cotton, mordants, resist medium, dyes, 99¹/₂ x 77 in. (252.7 x 195.6 cm)

Gift of Mrs. Albert Blum, 1920 (20.79)

Slide

36 Shiva and Parvati Playing Charpar

Page from the dispersed *Rasamanjari* (Essence of the Experience of Delight)

By Devidasa of Nurpur

India (Punjab Hills, Bashohli), dated 1694–95

Ink, opaque watercolor, silver, and gold on paper, H. 6¹¹/₁₆ in. (17 cm)

Gift of Dr. J. C. Burnett, 1957 (57.185.2)

Slide

37 Priming Flask

India, Mughal, 17th–18th century

Ivory and bronze, L. 10¹/₈ in. (25.7 cm)

Bequest of George C. Stone, 1935 (36.25.2420)

Slide

38 *Rama, Surrounded by the Armies of the Great Bear and Monkey Clans, Pardons Two Demon Spies*

Page from the dispersed *Siege of Lanka* series, fifth book of the *Ramayana* (Stories of King Rama)

By Manaku of Guler

India (Punjab Hills, Guler), 1725–30

Ink, opaque watercolor, and gold on paper, 24¹/₂ x 32⁵/₈ in. (62.2 x 82.9 cm)

Rogers Fund, 1919 (19.24.1)

Slide

39 *Maharana Ari Singh with His Courtiers at the Jagniwas Water Palace*

By Bhima, Kesu Ram, Bhopa, and Nathu

India (Rajasthan, Mewar), 1767

Ink, gold, silver, and opaque watercolor on paper, 26³/₄ x 33 in. (67.9 x 83.8 cm)

Purchase, Mr. and Mrs. Herbert Irving, Mr. and Mrs. Arthur Ochs Sulzberger, and Mr. and Mrs. Henry A. Grunwald Gifts, in honor of Mr. and Mrs.

Gustavo Cisneros, 1994 (1994.116)

Poster B

Southeast Asia

The Rise of Civilization

40 *Ceremonial Vessel in the Shape of an Ax Head*

Indonesia, Bronze and Iron Age, ca. 500 B.C.–A.D. 300

Bronze, H. 41³/₈ in. (105.1 cm)

Purchase, George McFadden Gift and Edith Perry Chapman Fund, 1993 (1993.525)

Buddhist Art

41 *Presentation Bowl*

Probably Malaysia, ca. 7th–8th century

Bronze, H. 8¹/₄ in. (21 cm)

Rogers Fund, 1975 (1975.419)

Slide

42 *Four-armed Avalokiteshvara (The Bodhisattva of Infinite Compassion)*

Thailand (Buriram Province, Prakhon Chai), ca. second quarter of 8th century

Bronze, silver, and black glass or obsidian inlay, H. 56 in. (142.2 cm)

Rogers Fund, 1967 (67.234)

43 *Seated Transcendent Buddha Vairochana*

Indonesia (Java), Central Javanese period, ca. late 9th century

Bronze, H. 7⁵/₈ in. (19.4 cm)

Samuel Eilenberg Collection, Gift of Samuel Eilenberg, 1987 (1987.142.23)

Slide

44 *Avalokiteshvara*

Cambodia or Thailand, Angkor period, ca. last quarter of 10th–first quarter of 11th century, Khmer style of Banteay Shrei

Bronze with silver inlay, H. 22³/₄ in. (57.8 cm)

Purchase, The Annenberg Foundation Gift, 1992 (1992.336)

Slide

45 *Standing Buddha*

Myanmar (Burma), Pagan period, 12th–13th century

Bronze with silver inlay, H. 19⁷/₈ in. (50.5 cm)

Gift of the Miriam and Ira D. Wallach Foundation, 1993 (1993.235.1)

Hindu Art

46 *Standing Four-armed Vishnu*

Vietnam (Mekong Delta area), Pre-Angkor period, ca. second half of 7th century

Stone, H. 41 in. (104.1 cm)

Purchase, Lita Annenberg Hazen Charitable Trust Gift, 1992 (1992.53)

Slide

47 Standing Hari-Hara

Cambodia, Pre-Angkor period, late 7th–early 8th century

Stone, H. 35¹/₂ in. (90.2 cm)

Purchase, Laurance S. Rockefeller Gift and Anonymous Gift, 1977
(1977.241)

Slide

48 Krishna on Garuda

Indonesia (Java), Central Javanese period, second half of 9th century

Bronze, H. 15⁷/₁₆ in. (39.2 cm)

Purchase, Lita Annenberg Hazen Charitable Trust Gift, 1992 (1992.135)

Slide

49 Standing Uma

Cambodia, Angkor period, Khmer style, ca. 975

Stone, H. 28 in. (71.1 cm)

Gift of Enid A. Haupt, 1993 (1993.387.3)

Slide

50 Deified King (Jayavarman VI?)

Cambodia, Angkor period, second half of 11th century

Gilt bronze with silver inlay, H. 41⁵/₈ in. (105.7 cm)

From the Collection of Walter H. and Lenore Annenberg, 1988 (1988.355)

Slide

Secular Art

51 Dish with Animals and Mounted Hunters

Vietnam, Cham (or Cambodia, pre-Angkor period), 7th–8th century

Bronze, Diam. 11¹/₁₆ in. (28.1 cm)

Purchase, Friends of Asian Art Gifts, 1999 (1999.261)

Slide

52 Bangle with Male Head

Indonesia (Java), Central Javanese period, first quarter of 10th century

Gold, H. 2¹/₈ in. (5.4 cm)

Purchase, Friends of Asian Art Gifts, 1992 (1992.199)

Slide

53 Dish

Vietnam, 15th–16th century

Stoneware with underglaze cobalt blue decoration, Diam. 14¹/₄ in. (36.2 cm)

Purchase, Friends of Asian Art Gifts, 1998 (1998.213)

The Art of South and Southeast Asia



Maharaja Ari Singh with His Courtiers at the Jagriwas Water Palace. By Bhima Kesu Ram, Bhopal, India (Rajasthan, Mewar), 1767. Ink, gold, silver, and opaque watercolor on paper. 26 3/4 x 33 in. (67.9 x 83.8 cm). Purchase, Mr. and Mrs. Herbert Irving, Mr. and Mrs. Arthur Ochs Sulzberger, and Mr. and Mrs. Henry A. Crownwall Gifts, in honor of Mr. and Mrs. Gustavo Cisneros, 1994. [1994.116]

The Metropolitan Museum of Art

These educational materials are made possible by The Miriam and Ira D. Wallach Foundation.

The Art of South and Southeast Asia



Standing Buddha, India (Uttar Pradesh, Mathura). Gupta period, 5th century. Mottled red sandstone. H. 33 1/16 in. (85.5 cm). Purchase, Ernd A. Haupt Gift, 1979. (1979.6)

The Metropolitan Museum of Art

These educational materials are made possible by The Miriam and Ira D. Wallach Foundation.