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Art and Culture

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Syllabus

Indian Culture - Salient aspects of Art Forms, Literature and Architecture from ancient to modern times.

Previous Years Questions

Qn No.	YEAR	QUESTION	TOPIC	MARKS
1	2024	Underline the changes in the field of society and economy from the Rig Vedic to the later Vedic period. (150 words, 10 Marks)	Vedic period	10
2	2024	Estimate the contribution of Pallavas of Kanchi for the development of art and literature of South India. (150 words, 10 Marks)	Pallavas	10
3	2023	What were the major technological changes introduced during the Sultanate period? How did those technological changes influence Indian society? (250 words, 15 Marks)	Delhi Sultanate	15
4	2023	Explain the role of geographical factors towards the development of Ancient India. (150 words, 10 Marks)	Geography and History	10
5	2022	How will you explain the medieval Indian temple sculptures represent the social life of those days? (150 words, 10 Marks)	Temple sculptures	10
6	2022	Discuss the main contributions of Gupta period and Chola period to Indian heritage and culture. (250 words,	Gupta and Chola	10

		15 Marks)	period	
7	2022	Discuss the significance of the lion and bull figures in Indian mythology, art and architecture. (250 words, 15 Marks)	Lion and Bull figures	15
8	2021	Evaluate the nature of the Bhakti Literature and its contribution to Indian culture. (150 words, 10 Marks)	Bhakti movement	10
9	2020	The rock-cut architecture represents one of the most important sources of our knowledge of early Indian art and history. Discuss. (150 words, 10 Marks)	Rock-cut architecture	10
10	2020	Indian Philosophy and tradition played a significant role in conceiving and shaping the monuments and their art in India. Discuss. (250 words, 15 Marks)	Philosophy	15
11	2020	The Pala period is the most significant phase in the history of Buddhism in India. Enumerate.	Palas	10
12	2020	Persian literary sources of medieval India reflect the spirit of the age. Comment. (250 words, 15 Marks)	Persian literary sources	15
13	2019	Highlight the Central Asian and Greco Bactrian elements in the Gandhara art. (150 words, 10 Marks)	Gandhara art	10
14	2018	Safeguarding the Indian art heritage is the need of the moment. Comment (150 words, 10 Marks)	Indian art heritage	10
15	2018	The Bhakti movement received a remarkable re-orientation with the advent of Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu. Discuss. (250 words, 15 Marks)	Bhakti movement	15

Indian Heritage and Culture

ANCIENT INDIAN HISTORY

Geography has always played a fundamental role in shaping the course of human history. The natural features of the land—such as mountains, rivers, plains, and climate—not only influence where people settle but also affect their culture, economy, politics, and conflicts. From the rise and fall of ancient civilizations to the patterns of trade and conquest, geography acts as both a stage and an actor in historical events.

Role of Geographical Factors towards the Development of Ancient India

1. Fertile River Valleys Facilitated Agriculture

The presence of major rivers like the Indus, Ganga, and Yamuna created fertile alluvial plains ideal for agriculture.

Example: The Indus Valley Civilization (Harappan Civilization) thrived along the Indus River due to rich soil and water availability.

2. Monsoon Climate Boosted Crop Cultivation

Seasonal monsoon rains ensured water supply for crops, supporting multiple harvests and agricultural surplus.

Example: The Eastern Gangetic plains were suitable for rice cultivation due to abundant monsoon rains.

3. Natural Barriers Provided Protection

Himalayas in the north and the Thar Desert in the west acted as natural defenses, protecting ancient kingdoms from frequent invasions.

Example: The Himalayan ranges helped protect the northern plains and facilitated the development of stable empires like the Mauryas.

4. River Systems Promoted Trade and Communication

Rivers served as natural highways for trade, cultural exchange, and communication across regions.

Example: The Saraswati and Indus rivers helped trade flourish in the Harappan Civilization.

5. Mountain Passes Facilitated Selective Invasions and Cultural Exchange

Mountain passes like the Khyber Pass allowed movement of people, traders, and invaders, shaping political and cultural history.

Example: The Aryan migration into India is believed to have occurred through the northwest passes like the Khyber Pass.

6. Coastal Geography Encouraged Maritime Trade

Long coastline and natural harbors supported overseas trade and cultural contact with Mesopotamia, Egypt, and Southeast Asia.

Example: Ancient ports like Lothal on the west coast of India were important trade centers.

7. Diverse Topography Led to Regional Specialization

The variety of geographical zones—plains, plateaus, deserts, and forests—encouraged different economic activities and cultural diversity.

Example: The Deccan plateau was rich in minerals, promoting early iron technology and trade.

8. Availability of Natural Resources Supported Craftsmanship

Geographical diversity provided abundant resources like metals, timber, and stones used in tools, construction, and crafts.

Example: Copper from Rajasthan and iron from the Deccan were crucial for the development of metallurgy.

9. Climatic Conditions Influenced Settlement Patterns

Regions with moderate climate and water availability attracted dense settlements and urbanization.

Example: Urban centers like Mohenjo-Daro and Harappa emerged due to favorable climatic and geographical conditions.

10. Geography Influenced Religious and Cultural Development

Sacred rivers, mountains, and forests became centers of religious practices and cultural identity.

Example: The Ganges River is considered holy and has been central to Hindu rituals and culture since ancient times.

India's rich and diverse art heritage reflects its vibrant history, culture, and traditions spanning thousands of years. From ancient sculptures and classical paintings to traditional crafts and performing arts, Indian art forms are treasures that connect us to our past and identity. Safeguarding this priceless heritage is essential not only to preserve our cultural legacy but also to inspire future generations and promote global appreciation of India's artistic contributions.

Need to Safeguard Indian Art Heritage

1. Preserves Cultural Identity - Art heritage reflects India's diverse cultural roots and history.
2. Promotes National Unity - Shared heritage fosters pride and unity among citizens.
3. Encourages Tourism - Historic monuments and art attract tourists, boosting the economy.
4. Educational Value - Art heritage provides insights into ancient knowledge and traditions.
5. Inspires Contemporary Art - Traditional art forms influence modern creativity and innovation.
6. Supports Local Communities - Protecting crafts sustains livelihoods of artisans and craftsmen.
7. Prevents Loss from Urbanization - Rapid development risks destruction of heritage sites.

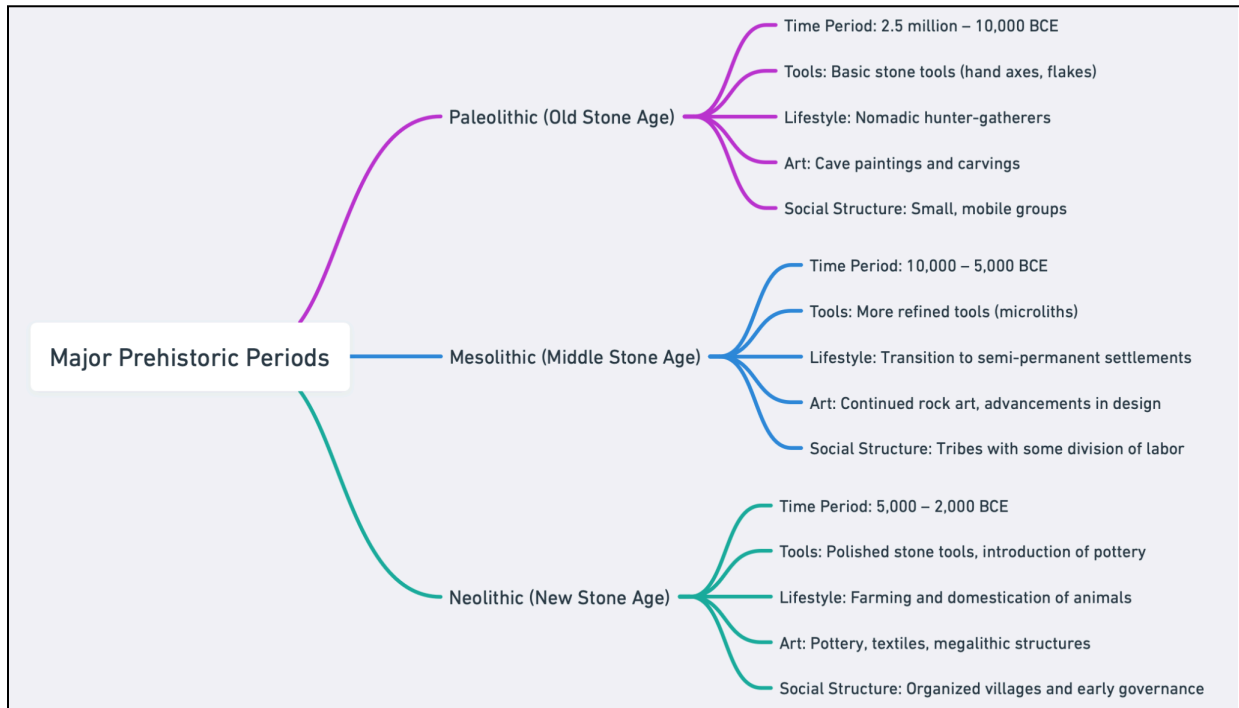
8. Preserves Architectural Marvels - Ancient temples, caves, and forts are invaluable cultural assets.
 9. International Recognition - UNESCO World Heritage sites in India highlight global importance.
 10. Encourages Cultural Exchange - Heritage promotes dialogue between different communities and countries.
-

Constitutional Provisions Justifying Protection

- **Article 51A (Fundamental Duties)** - It is the duty of every citizen to protect and preserve the rich heritage of our composite culture.
 - **Article 49** - The state shall protect every monument or place of historic or artistic interest declared by law.
 - **Article 29 & 30** - Protection of interests of minorities, including cultural and educational rights, ensuring diverse art forms survive.
 - **Directive Principles of State Policy (Article 37, 38)** - Promote cultural and social welfare, including protection of heritage.
-

Prehistoric Periods

The Prehistoric Period refers to the vast span of time before the invention of writing, when human societies existed without written records. It covers the earliest stages of human development, including the evolution of tools, discovery of fire, and the beginnings of art and culture. This era is crucial for understanding the origins of humanity, how early humans adapted to their environment, and laid the foundations for the civilizations that followed.



Indus Valley Civilization

An advanced urban society developed along the Indus and Ghaggar-Hakra rivers in present-day Pakistan and northwest India. Named after Harappa, the first excavated site, this civilization is also called the Saraswati-Sindhu culture since most discoveries occurred near the Ghaggar-Hakra river system.

The Harappans mastered working with four key metals: copper for daily tools, bronze for stronger implements, and silver and gold for trade and decoration. Remarkably, they had no knowledge of iron technology, marking them as a Bronze Age society.



Geographical Extent

- It covered parts of **Punjab, Sindh, Baluchistan, Gujarat, Rajasthan** and some parts of **West Uttar Pradesh**.
- It extended from **Minchinā in Jammu** in the north to **Daimabad** in the south, and from **Alamgirpur** in eastern UP to **Sutkagendor** in Baluchistan in the west.

Town Planning

- **Grid System:** Roads cut the town into large rectangular or square blocks.
- **Street Lighting:** Lamp-posts at intervals.
- **Building Material:** Burnt bricks of good quality (elsewhere, only mud-bricks).
- **Housing:** Two or more storeys; centred on a square courtyard; no windows facing the street; each house had an internal bathroom.
- **Drainage:** Well-planned drains made of mortar, lime and gypsum, covered with large bricks for cleaning—evidence of concern for health and sanitation.
- **Citadel vs Lower Town:**
 - **Citadel:** Oblong artificial platform 30–50 ft high; about 400–200 yd²; enclosed by a crenellated mud-brick wall; public buildings located here.
 - **Lower Town:** Residential area.
- **Great Bath (Mohenjodaro):** Public bath 12 m × 7 m × 2.4 m; steps at both ends; flanked by changing rooms; likely used for ritual bathing.

Religious Life

- Worshipped **Mother Goddess** (symbol of fertility).
- Worship of **Pashupati Shiva** as proto-form seen in seal (sitting in yogic posture, surrounded by animals).
- **Animals worshipped:** Elephant, tiger, rhino, buffalo.
- **Male deity** (possibly **Pashupati**) worshiped.
- **Phallic worship (linga)** and **Yoni worship** were also prevalent.
- **Sacred animals and trees** worshipped.
- **Unicorn** motif common in seals.
- **No temples found.**

- **Fire altars** discovered at **Kalibangan and Lothal**.
-

Political Organisation

- No clear idea.
 - Possibly ruled by a **merchant class**.
 - No evidence of monarchy.
 - Some sort of **municipal organization** is inferred (for civic amenities).
-

Economic Life

The Indus Valley Civilization was **economically well advanced**. Trade and commerce flourished not only within the civilization but also with **contemporaneous cultures**.

- **Sowing:** November (when floodwaters receded)
- **Reaping:** April (before the next flood)
- **Crops:** Wheat, barley, rai, peas, sesame, mustard, rice (at Lothal), cotton, dates, melon, etc.
- **Cotton:** First produced by the Indus people.
- **Ploughing:** Wooden ploughs used at Kalibangan.

Trade and Commerce

- Trade links were well-established internally and externally.
- There was no metallic money in Harappan Civilization.
- Trade was carried through the Barter **System**.
- **Standardized measures of accuracy** existed.

Ports and Trade Centres:

- **Lothal, Rangpur, Somnath, Balakot** – functioned as **seaports**.
- **Sutkagendor and Suktagen Dor** – westernmost ports.

Land Transport:

- Done by **bullock carts**.
 - Harappan seals often depict a **bull bearing a yoke**, possibly indicating trade and transport.
-

Art and Craft in Indus Valley Civilization

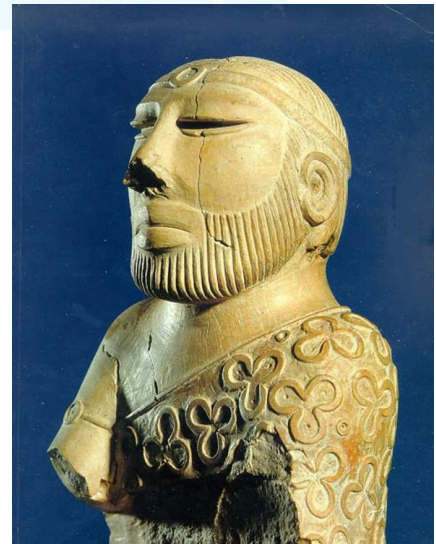
- Belong to the **Bronze Age**.
- Tools: Mostly **made of copper and bronze**.
- Sources:
 - **Copper** from Rajasthan & Baluchistan
 - **Tin** from Afghanistan
- **Cotton** fabrics were used.
- Woolen clothes used in winter.

Jewelry & Ornaments:

- Worn by both **men and women**.
- Materials: **Gold, silver, copper, bronze, precious stones**
- Items: Necklaces, earrings, bangles, finger-rings, anklets, nose rings, etc.
- Harappans were **expert bead makers**.

Pottery:

- Made using a potter's **wheel**.
- Red or black in color.
- Painted pottery and **terracotta toys** were found.



Statues:

- Famous figures include:
 - **Bronze statue of a dancing girl** from Mohenjodaro.

- **Bearded priest** from Mohenjodaro (red sandstone statue).

(Pro Tip: Google these art and craft features and see google images of actual artefacts)

Decline of the Civilization

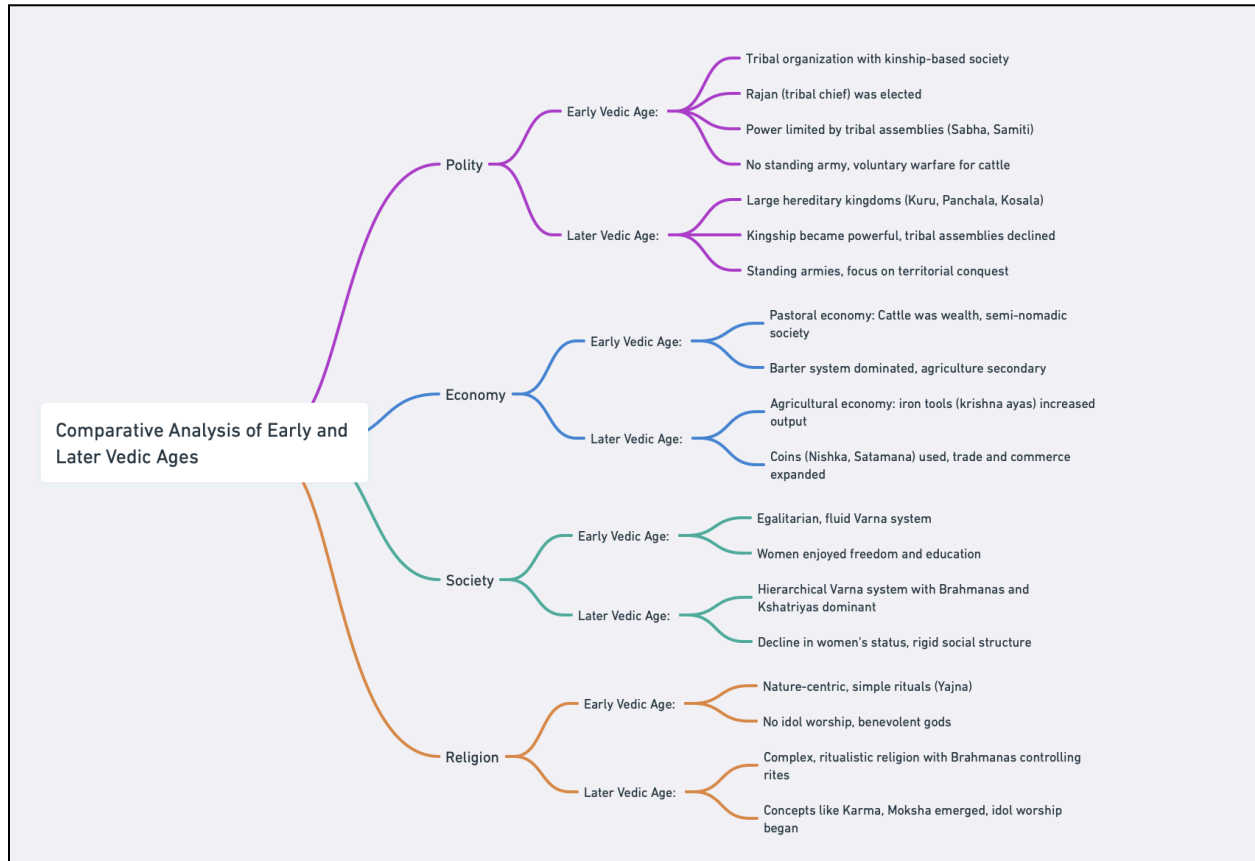
- Lasted around **1,000 years**.
- Reasons for decline:
 - **Invasion by Aryans**
 - **Floods**
 - **Decline of trade**
 - **Earthquakes**
 - **Social breakdown**
- No **single reason** is responsible; different regions had different reasons.

VEDIC PERIOD

Following the mysterious collapse of Harappan urban centers, a new chapter in Indian history emerged. The Vedic era takes its name from the composition of the Vedas—sacred hymns and rituals that form the foundation of Indian spiritual literature. This period witnessed the Aryan peoples establishing their cultural dominance across the subcontinent. Our understanding of this transformative age comes primarily from the Rigveda, the earliest of these holy texts, supplemented by later Vedic compilations. These ancient verses provide invaluable insights into the social, religious, and political structures that would shape Indian civilization for millennia to come.

Chronology of Vedic Age

1. **Early Vedic Period (1500–1000 BC)**
 - **Most of Rigveda composed**
2. **Later Vedic Period (1000–600 BC)**
 - **Other three Vedas and Brahmanas composed**



Causes of Rise of New Movements

- Vedic rituals were **expensive** and the **meaning lost** to common people.
- Common people had little understanding of sacrifices and rituals.
- Brahmins gained **supreme position** in society.
- Caste system became **rigid**.
- Buddhism and Jainism offered lower castes an **alternative**.

Buddhism

Basics

- Buddhism stands on **3 pillars**:
 - **Buddha**: Its founder
 - **Dhamma**: His teachings

- **Sangha:** Order of Buddhist monks and nuns

Five Great Events of Buddha's Life and Symbols

- Birth: Lotus and bull
- Great renunciation: Horse
- Nirvana: Bodhi tree
- First sermon: Dharmachakra or wheel
- Parinirvana or death: Stupa

Teachings of Buddha

1. The world is full of **sorrow and misery**.
2. The cause of all pain and misery is **desire**.
3. Pain and misery can be ended by killing or controlling desire.
4. Desire can be controlled by following the **Eight Fold Path**.

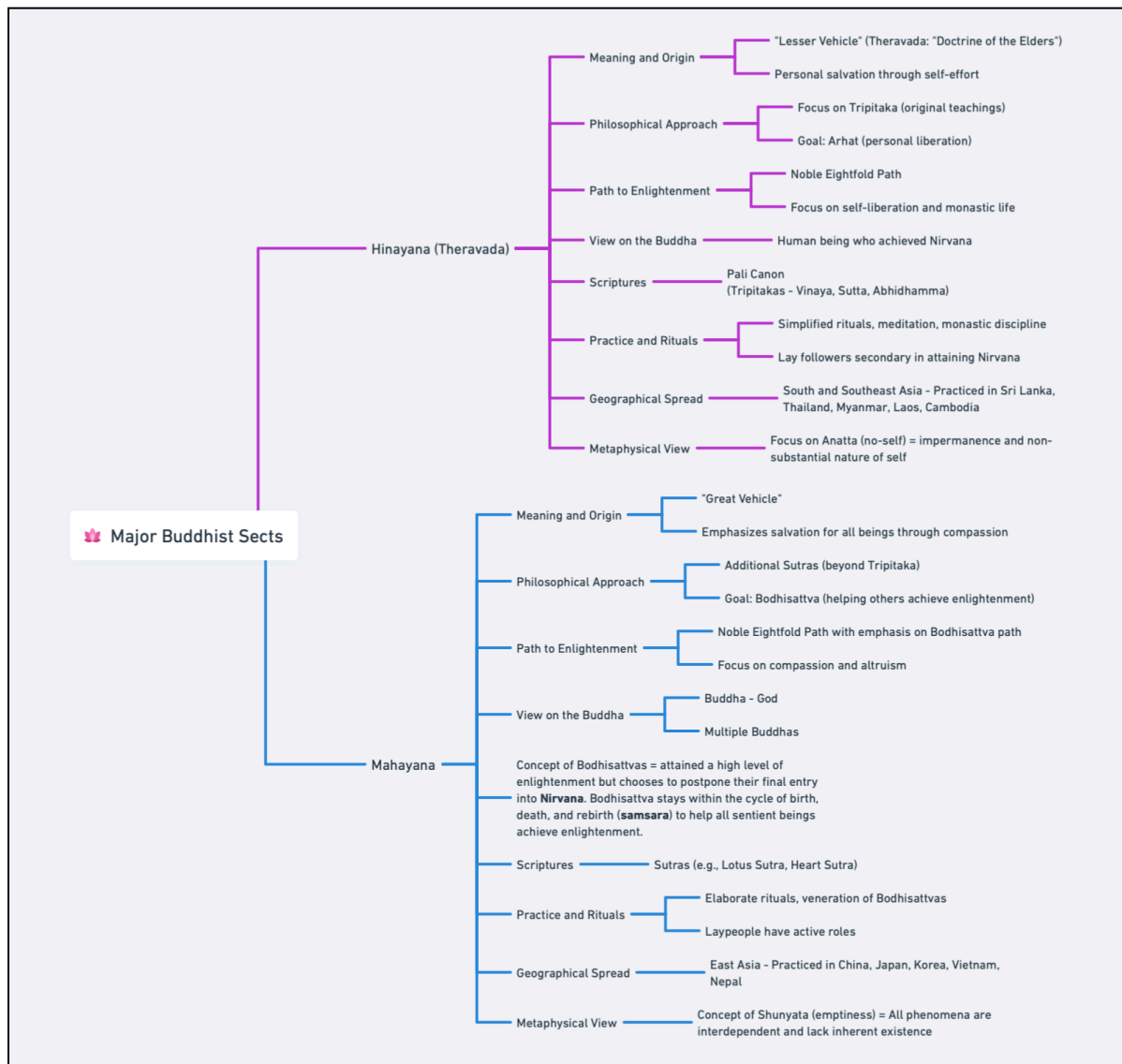
The Eight Fold Path



Buddhist Literature

- Buddhist scriptures in Pali are called **Tripitakas** or **Threefold Basket**.
- **Vinaya Pitaka:** Rules of discipline in monasteries.
- **Sutta Pitaka:** Largest, contains Buddha's sermons.
- **Abhidhamma Pitaka:** Explanation of philosophical principles.
- **Mahavansa** and **Dipavamsa:** Other Buddhist texts, provide info on Sri Lanka.
- **Jataka:** Fables about different births of Buddha.

Major Sects of Buddhism



Causes of Decline of Buddhism

- Succumbed to **Brahmanical rituals** and ceremonies like **idol worship** (which Buddhism had earlier denounced).
- Buddha started to be considered one of the incarnations of **Vishnu**.
- Revival of reformed Hinduism with Shankaracharya from 9th century onwards.
- Decline in moral standards among monks.
- Attacks by **Hun king Mihirkula** (6th century).

- Turkish invasions in 12th century AD.
-

Jainism

- Founded by **Rishabhanath**.
- 24 Tirthankaras (Prophets or Gurus), all Kshatriyas.
- First was Rishabhanath (Emblem: Bull); 22nd Tirthankara Parshwanath (Emblem: Snake), 24th and last was **Vardhaman Mahavira** (Emblem: Lion).
- Mahavira added celibacy.

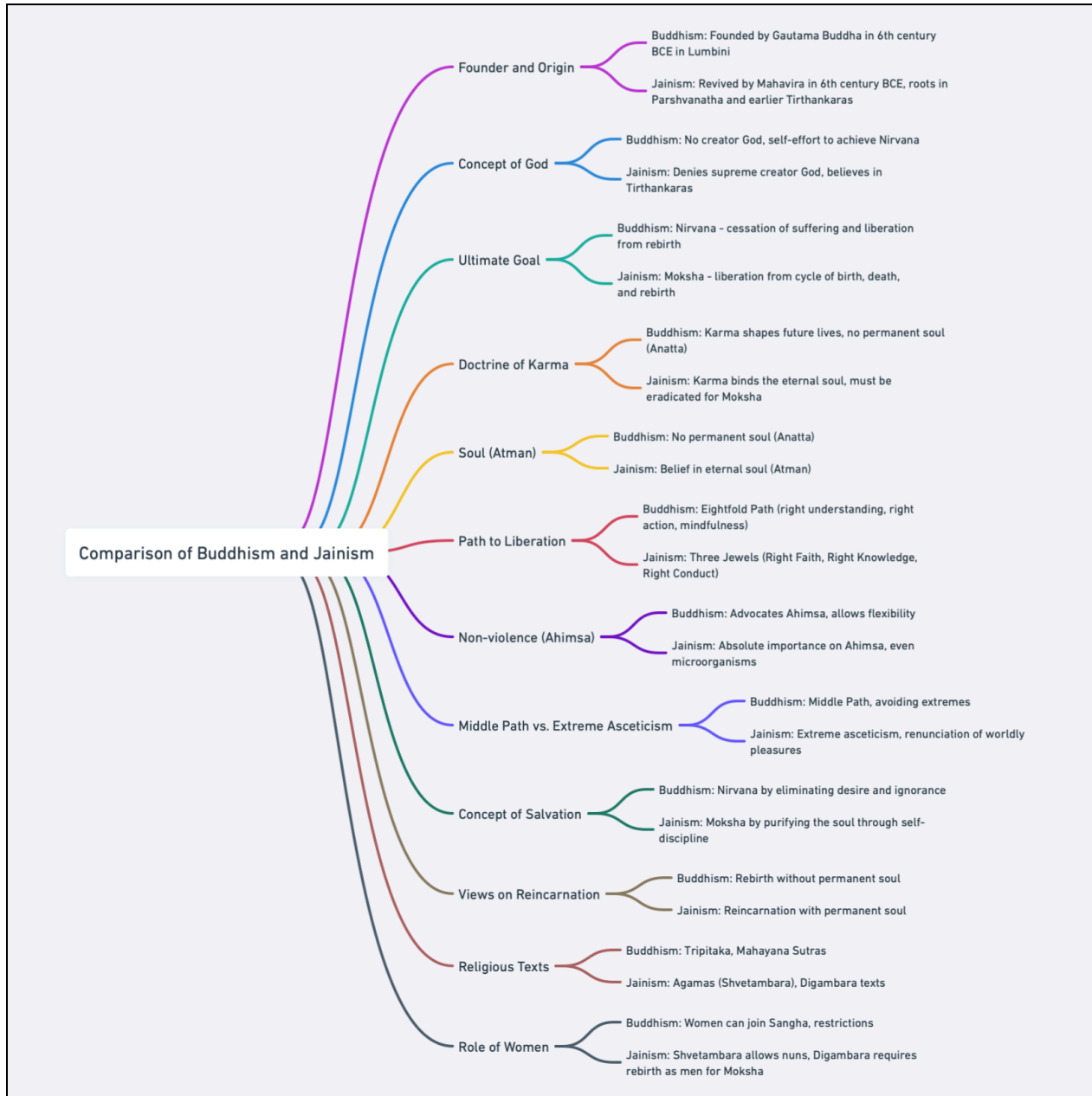
Teachings of Mahavira

- Rejected authority of the **Vedas** and did not attach importance to **sacrifices**.
 - Believed every object, even smallest particle, has a **soul** endowed with consciousness.
 - Observed strict **nonviolence (ahimsa)**.
 - Rejected concept of Universal Soul or Supreme Power as creator or sustainer of the universe.
 - Universe governed by **universal law** of soul, matter, space, time, principles of motion.
 - Gods exist but have no important role in universe.
 - Practiced **universal brotherhood** and non-belief in caste system.
 - **Anekantavada**: Principle of pluralism and multiplicity of viewpoints; truth is complex and no single point of view is complete.
-

Other Points

- Jainism reached its peak during **Chandragupta Maurya's** time.
- In Kalinga, Jainism was patronized by **Kharavela** (1st century AD).
- Factors for decline: Jainism's rejection of medicine was considered extreme by some, leading to its decline.
- Jainism spread due to regional languages like **Marathi, Gujarati, Rajasthani, Kannada**.
- Jain literature is in **Ardh-Magadhi** and **Prakrit** dialects.

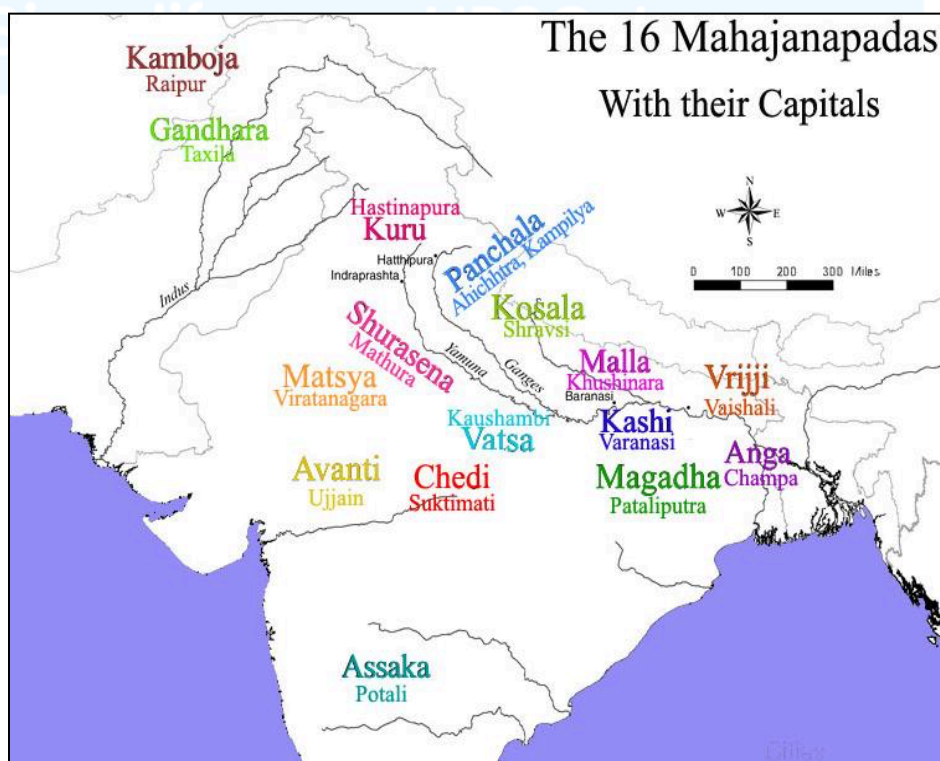
Comparison of Buddhism and Jainism



Mahajanapadas

As Vedic society evolved and expanded across the Indian subcontinent, tribal communities gradually transformed into organized political entities. By the 6th century BCE, sixteen powerful kingdoms and republics known as Mahajanapadas had emerged, marking India's transition from pastoral tribes to sophisticated statecraft. These "great territories" represented the first major experiment in large-scale governance on the subcontinent, establishing trade networks, administrative systems, and military organizations that would influence Indian political development for centuries. The Mahajanapadas era witnessed the rise of legendary rulers, the birth of new religious movements including Buddhism and Jainism, and the foundation of urban centers that became pillars of ancient Indian civilization.

- From the 6th century onwards, **use of iron** in eastern UP and western Bihar led to the rise of large territorial states called **Mahajanapadas**.
- Land between Himalayas and Narmada divided into **16 independent states** (Mahajanapadas).
- Mahajanapadas were often in conflict; alliances and wars were common.
- By the 4th century BC, Magadha became powerful; under Mauryas, states united, forming the **Mauryan Empire**.



Magadha's Success

- Magadha Empire was one of the largest and most prosperous ancient empires.
 - Reasons for success:
 - **Geographical position** near rich east Indian deposits (effective weapons).
 - Two capitals: **Magadha Rajgir** and **Pataliputra**, strategically located.
 - Fertile soil of lower Ganga regions helped agriculture development.
 - Availability of elephants as **war machines** yielded positive results.
-

Alexander's Invasion (356 BC - 326 BC)

- The son of Philip of Macedonia invaded India in **326 BC**.
 - NW India was divided into small states like **Taxila, Punjab, Gandhara**.
 - Except for **Porus**, all submitted meekly.
 - Famous battle: Porus on banks of Jhelum with Alexander.
 - Alexander's soldiers refused to go beyond Beas; returned.
 - Marked farthest point of Alexander's advance: huge stone altars on north bank of Beas.
 - Stayed in India for 19 months; died 323 BC in Babylon.
 - Effects:
 - Opened four distinct communication lines in India: land and sea routes.
 - Due to cultural contact, cosmopolitan school emerged in Gandhara.
 - Paved way for unification of north India under Chandragupta Maurya by weakening small states.
-

Mauryan Empire

From the fragmented landscape of competing Mahajanapadas emerged India's first great imperial dynasty—the Mauryans. Founded by Chandragupta Maurya around 322 BCE, this remarkable empire would eventually stretch from the Hindu Kush mountains to the Bay of Bengal, uniting the subcontinent under a single ruler for the first time in recorded history. The Mauryan period represents a revolutionary leap in administrative sophistication, military organization, and cultural synthesis, reaching its zenith under Emperor Ashoka, whose transformation from conqueror to Buddhist patron would reshape not only India but influence the

spread of Buddhism across Asia. This golden age of ancient India established precedents for governance, diplomacy, and religious tolerance that would echo through centuries of Indian civilization.

Chandragupta Maurya (322–297 BCE)

- Founded empire in 322 BCE by overthrowing Nanda dynasty.
 - Expanded westward across central and western India, exploiting disruptions from Alexander's withdrawal.
 - By 320 BCE, fully occupied NW India, defeating remaining satraps left by Alexander.
 - Called Sandrocottus by Greek scholars; Seleucus Nicator one of Alexander's generals.
 - After Seleucus' death, Chandragupta defeated him (305 BCE) and controlled most Asiatic provinces.
 - Forced to give parts of Afghanistan to Seleucus in treaty.
 - Marriage alliance between two families.
 - Built a vast empire covering Bihar, Bengal, western and northern India, Deccan.
 - Account by Megasthenes (Greek ambassador) in *Indica*.
 - Chandragupta adopted Jainism and went to Sravana Belgola with Bhadrabahu; died by slow starvation.
 - Vishakhadatta wrote the drama *Mudrarakshasa* about him.
-

Ashoka (269 – 232 BC)

- Chandragupta's grandson, Bindusara's son.
- Also known as **Ashokavardhan Maurya**, Ashoka the Great (ruled 273–232 BCE).
- Brilliant commander who crushed revolts in Ujjain and Taxila.
- Ambitious and aggressive monarch, reasserted empire's superiority in southern and western India.
- Buddhist text **Dipavamsa** says he usurped throne after killing 99 brothers except youngest.

- Fought the **Kalinga war in 261 BC** (9th year of reign).
 - War was turning point; became a **Buddhist under Upagupta**.
 - Hundreds of thousands died or affected by destruction and fallout.
 - Felt remorse, embraced Buddhism, renounced war and violence.
 - Adopted policy of ruling by **Dharma (moral law)** instead of force and violence.
 - Considered one of the greatest rulers; first to maintain **direct contact with public** via inscriptions.
 - Empire covered territory from **Hindukush to Bengal**, extended over **Afghanistan, Baluchistan, and whole of India** except small area in NW. Kashmir and Nepal valleys included.
-

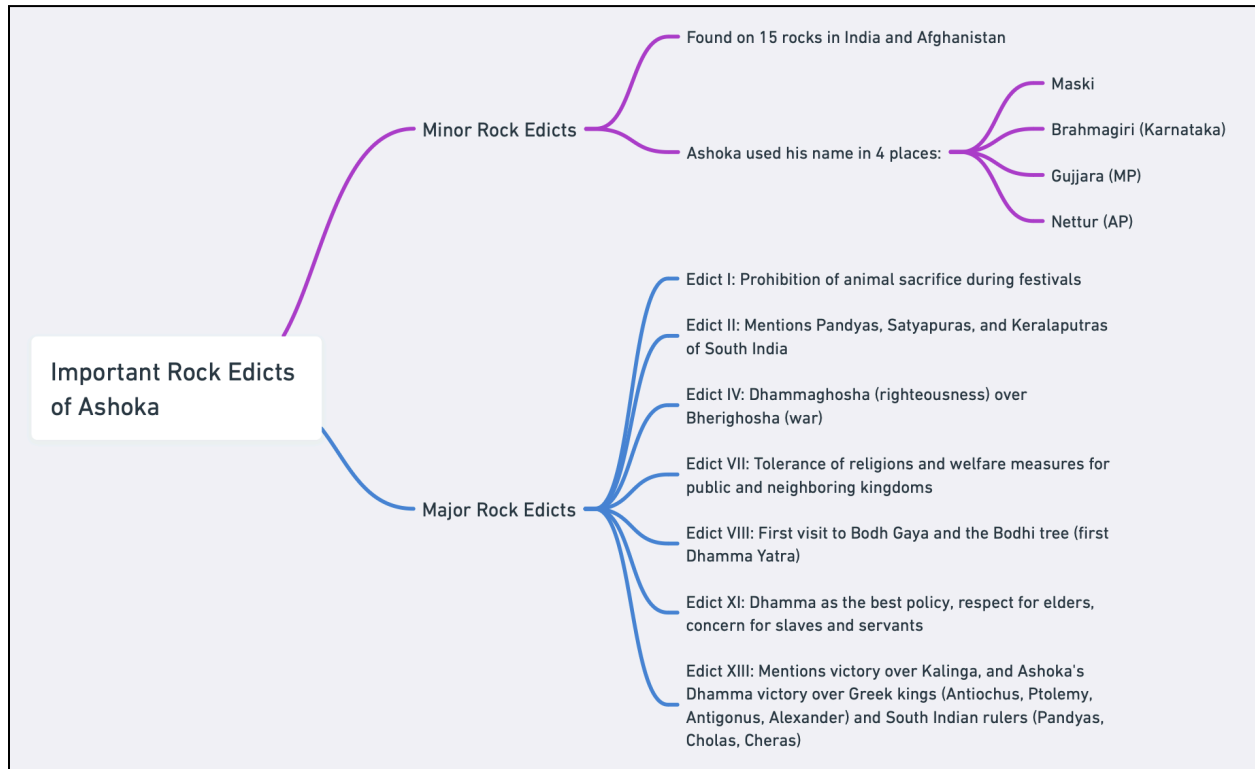
Ashoka's Dhamma

- Ethical code aimed at building an attitude of **social responsibility** among people.
 - Not synonymous with Buddhism, aimed at building mind of social responsibility based on **dignity and humanistic approach**.
 - Found in edicts, essence of Dhamma:
 1. Prohibit **animal sacrifices** and festive gatherings; avoid expensive and meaningless rituals.
 2. Efficient administration with focus on social welfare.
 3. Non-violence and courtesy to animals and people, especially Brahmins and Sramanas.
 4. Humane treatment of servants by masters and prisoners by government officials.
 5. Tolerance among all sects.
 6. Replace **bherighosa** (sound of war drums) with **dhammaghosa** (sound of peace).
 7. Conquest through Dhamma instead of war.
-

Important Sites of Ashoka's Edicts

- Allahabad-Kosam or Prayag Edicts (Pillar Edicts I-VI and Queen's Edict or Schism Edict): same as modern Kosam on left bank of Yamuna. Inscribed later by various rulers including Samudragupta and Jahangir.

- Barabar Hill Caves: Donation inscription to Ajivika sect.
- Delhi-Meerut and Delhi-Topara: Pillar Edicts I-VI and I-VI respectively, transported by Firuz Shah Tughlaq.
- Girnar (Major Rock Edict), known as Junagarh Edict, east of Junagarh in Kathiawar. Importance increased by construction of dam on Sudarsana Lake during Chandragupta reign.



Economic Conditions during Mauryan Period

- Both **agricultural** and **industrial sectors** expanded significantly.
- Large scale **colonization of lands** for agriculture took place due to royal incentives.
- Industrial arts and crafts proliferated due to good **communication networks** and government incentives.
- Employment of **slaves in agriculture** on a large scale noted.
- Purity marked **silver coins** served as imperial currency.
- Formation of **guilds or shrenis**: associations of craft persons and merchants.

- Guilds provided training, raw materials, and distribution for industry.
 - Guilds served as banks where rich deposited money.
 - Guilds had administrative and judicial powers over members but had to be registered with king.
 - Guilds enjoyed high autonomy due to importance in urban economy.
-

Mauryan Administration

- Vast and highly **centralized bureaucratic rule**.
 - King as **fountain head of all powers** and chief administrative authority.
 - King claimed no divine right but was **paternal despot**.
 - **Kautilya** called king the **Rajguru (high priest)** and **promulgator of social order**.
 - **Espionage**: Spies operated as sanyasis, wanderers, beggars, called **Sansthis** and **Sanchari**.
 - Spies worked by remaining stationed in public places and moving from place to place.
 - Three types of officers in espionage.
 - **Pulisani**: Public relation officers, gathered public opinion and reported to king.
-

Mauryan Architecture

- **Period**: Flourished during the Mauryan Empire (circa 322–185 BCE), especially under Emperor Ashoka.
- **Material Used**: Primarily polished sandstone, notable for its high finish known as the “Mauryan polish.”
- **Ashokan Pillars**: Famous for their tall, monolithic sandstone pillars topped with elaborate capitals (e.g., the Lion Capital of Sarnath, now India’s national emblem).

- **Stupas:** Large hemispherical domes built to house relics of the Buddha; the Great Stupa at Sanchi is the most famous example.
 - **Rock-cut Architecture:** Early examples of rock-cut caves and chaityas (prayer halls) were developed during this period.
 - **Urban Planning:** Capital city Pataliputra featured a fortified wooden palisade and advanced urban design.
 - **Use of Relief Sculpture:** Ashokan pillars and stupas were decorated with intricate reliefs depicting animals, lotus motifs, and symbolic figures.
 - **Architectural Innovation:** Introduction of stone columns with polished surfaces, a significant shift from earlier brick or wood constructions.
 - **Symbolism:** Architecture often incorporated Buddhist symbols such as the wheel (chakra), lotus, and animals representing power and spirituality.
 - **Legacy:** Mauryan architecture set the foundation for later Indian architectural styles and influenced Buddhist architecture across Asia.
-

Social Conditions During Mauryan Period

- **Megasthenes** divided Mauryan society into **seven castes**: philosophers, farmers, soldiers, herdsmen, artisans, magistrates, and councilors.
 - Kautilya recommended recruiting Vaishyas and Shudras in the army but their enrollment was doubtful.
 - Kautilya referred to **five mixed castes** called **Antyavasayin** living beyond Aryan pale.
 - Position of Shudra improved somewhat; some acquired land.
 - Existence of many sects may have caused social tension.
-

Decline of the Mauryas

- Reasons for decline:

1. **Brahmanical reaction:** Har Prasad Shastri attributes decline to Ashoka's pro-Buddhist policy annoying Brahmins; killing of last Mauryan Brihadratha by Brahman general Pushyamitra Sunga.
 2. Ashoka's **pacifist policy** leading to emasculation of army, no evidence of disbanding but reduction in number.
 3. **Economic weakness:** debased coins and bureaucracy caused downfall.
 4. **Administrative weakness:** Romila Thapar attributes decline to heavily centralized bureaucracy, lack of competitive recruitment, lack of nationalism.
 5. Ashoka's weak successors and division of empire adversely affected strength and resources; empire fell to Indo-Greek invasions.
-

Satavahanas or the Andhras

Following the decline of Mauryan authority, the Satavahana dynasty emerged as the dominant power in the Deccan plateau, establishing a kingdom that would endure for over four centuries. Rising around the 1st century BCE, these rulers skillfully bridged the cultural divide between North and South India while controlling crucial trade routes connecting the subcontinent to the Roman Empire and Southeast Asia. The Satavahanas pioneered a unique blend of indigenous traditions with Hellenistic influences, patronized both Hindu and Buddhist institutions, and developed sophisticated maritime commerce that brought unprecedented prosperity to the Deccan region. Their reign marked the beginning of South India's political independence and cultural flowering, setting the stage for the region's emergence as a major center of art, literature, and international trade.

Important Aspects

- Mostly issued **lead coins** (some copper, bronze).
- Acted as bridge between north and south India.
- Called themselves **Brahmans**.
- Performed Vedic rituals and worshipped gods like Krishna, Vasudeva.
- Promoted **Buddhism** by granting land to monks.
- Official language: **Prakrit**; script was **Brahmi**.

- Satavahana king called **Hala**.
-

Satavahana Architecture

- **Period:** Flourished roughly between 1st century BCE and 3rd century CE, following the Mauryan era.
- **Rock-Cut Caves:** Satavahanas are famous for developing early Buddhist rock-cut architecture, especially chaityas (prayer halls) and viharas (monastic dwellings).
- **Key Sites:** Important cave complexes like Ajanta, Karla, Bhaja, and Nasik were either started or expanded under Satavahana patronage.
- **Chaitya Halls:** Characterized by vaulted ceilings with wooden ribbing, large entrances, and stupa shrines inside.
- **Viharas:** Monastic cells arranged around a central hall or courtyard to accommodate Buddhist monks.
- **Material and Technique:** Mainly rock-cut architecture carved into hillsides; also use of brick and timber in structural components.
- **Decorative Elements:** Use of elaborate sculptural motifs, including floral patterns, animals, and Buddhist symbols like the lotus and wheel.
- **Influence:** Satavahana architecture shows a blend of indigenous Indian styles with influences from the earlier Mauryan and contemporary Western Asian art.
- **Patronage:** The Satavahana rulers were strong patrons of Buddhism, which is reflected in the scale and elaboration of their cave temples.
- **Legacy:** The Satavahana period marks a crucial phase in Indian rock-cut architecture, influencing subsequent Buddhist and Hindu temple styles.

Social Conditions during Satavahana Period

- Re-inforced **four-fold Varna system**.
- Gautamiputra Satakarni put an end to **intermixture of caste**.

- Absorption of Sakas into Hindu society, with possible matrimonial relations with Satavahanas.
 - Indigenous tribes drifted towards Buddhism.
 - Satavahanas showed traces of **matrilineal social structure**.
 - Progeny named after mother.
 - Satavahana rule was **patriarchal** with succession to male member.
-

Central Asian Contacts

- In eastern India, central India & Deccan, Mauryas succeeded by native rulers: Sungas, Kanvas, Satavahanas.
 - NW India ruled by dynasties from central Asia.
-

The Indo-Greeks

- Numerous invasions around 200 BC.
 - First to invade India were Greeks, also called **Indo-Greek** or **Bactrian Greeks** (because of rule in Bactria).
 - Pushed forward to Ayodhya and Pataliputra.
 - Famous ruler: **Menander (165-145 BC)** aka Milinda.
 - Capital at Sakala (modern Sialkot) in Punjab.
 - Converted to **Buddhism** by Nagasena.
-

The Kushanas (45 AD)

- Originated from **north central Asia near China**.
- Empire included parts of Central Asia, Iran, Afghanistan, Pakistan, and almost whole of North India.

- Famous king: **Kanishka (AD 78-144)**.
 - Capitals: First at Purushapura (near modern Peshawar), second at Mathura.
 - Kanishka patronized followers like:
 - **Puwaghosha** (wrote Buddhacharita, biography of Buddha)
 - **Sutralankar** (wrote Madhyamik Sutra)
 - **Vasumitra** (Chairman of 4th Buddhist Council)
 - **Charaka Samhita** author (physician).
 - Controlled famous **Silk route** in Central Asia, from China to Roman Empire.
 - Kanishka started the **Saka era (AD 78)** used by Govt of India.
 - Extended patronage to Buddhism, held 4th Buddhist Council in Kashmir.
 - Successors bore names like Vasudeva.
 - Gandhara School of Art received royal patronage from Kushans.
-

Impact of Central Asian Contacts

- Introduced use of **burnt bricks for flooring and roofing**.
- Introduced use of **riding horses on large scale**.
- Shakas and Kushans introduced **turban, tunic, trousers, heavy long coats**.
- Also brought **cap, helmet, and boots** used by warriors.
- Development of **Gandhara School of Art**.

Comparison of Gandhara and Mathura School of Art



Sangam Literature (Nothing much from Mains perspective - Just refer to information studied in the Prelims)

- **Period:** Composed roughly between 300 BCE and 300 CE during the Tamil Sangam era in ancient South India.

- **Language:** Written in classical Tamil, considered one of the oldest continuous literary traditions in India.
- **Sangam Assemblies:** The term "Sangam" refers to academies or gatherings of poets and scholars who composed and compiled these works.
- **Literary Collections:** The literature is divided mainly into **Akam** (love and personal life) and **Puram** (war, politics, and public life) themes.
- **Major Works:** Includes anthologies like **Ettuthokai** (Eight Anthologies) and **Pattuppāṭṭu** (Ten Idylls).
- **Themes:** Explores love, valor, ethics, social life, nature, kingship, and moral values in rich poetic form.
- **Poets:** Comprises works of numerous anonymous and known poets, often composing in praise of kings, deities, and landscapes.
- **Cultural Significance:** Provides detailed insights into early Tamil society, economy, trade, religion, and daily life.
- **Natural Imagery:** Unique for its vivid and symbolic use of landscapes (tinai) to represent emotional states.
- **Legacy:** Considered the foundation of Tamil literature, influencing later Tamil poetry and classical Indian literature.

Gupta Period

The Gupta Empire, flourishing from approximately 320 to 550 CE, represents the pinnacle of classical Indian civilization and is often hailed as the subcontinent's true Golden Age. Founded by Chandragupta I and reaching its zenith under Chandragupta II Vikramaditya, this dynasty restored political unity to much of northern India while ushering in an unprecedented era of cultural, scientific, and artistic achievement. The Gupta period witnessed revolutionary advances in mathematics, astronomy, medicine, and literature, producing luminaries like Aryabhata, Kalidasa, and Varahamihira whose contributions influenced civilizations far beyond India's borders. Under Gupta patronage, Hindu philosophy flourished, Buddhist art reached new heights, and a spirit of intellectual inquiry and religious tolerance created the ideal conditions for India's classical culture to reach its most refined expression.

Chandragupta I (319 - 335 AD)

- Influence initially limited within Magadha but greatly raised power and prestige of dynasty by matrimonial alliances and conquests.
 - Extended kingdom boundaries; adopted title **Maharajadhiraja** or **King of Kings**.
 - Married Kumardevi of Lichchhavi tribe.
 - Started a new era on 26th February 319 AD, beginning of **coronation of Chandragupta I**.
-

Samudragupta (335 - 375 AD)

- Great conqueror; fought many successful battles during father's reign.
 - Gave peace and unity to country; established mighty empire.
 - Was called “Indian Napoleon”
 - Allahabad pillar inscription composed by **Harisena**, court poet, describes Samudragupta as hero of hundred battles.
 - Patron of arts; poets like Harisena and Vasubandhu adorned his court.
 - Issued coins depicting **bow and veena**.
-

Chandragupta II (380 - 415 AD)

- Great conqueror, son and father of famous Gupta rulers.
 - Mehrauli Iron Pillar inscription claims his authority over NW India and Bengal.
 - Defeated last Saka ruler Rudra Singha and annexed Western Malwa and Gujarat.
 - Also called **Vikramaditya**.
 - Made Ujjain second capital of empire.
 - Strengthened position by matrimonial alliances.
 - Known as man of art and culture; court at Ujjain adorned by **Navaratna (Nine gems)** including poets and ministers.
-

Administration

- Unlike Mauryas, Gupta kings adopted **pompous titles** like Parmeshwar, Maharajadhiraja, Paramabhattacharaka, indicating rule over lesser kings.
 - Kings compared to gods Vishnu, protector and preserver.
 - Kingship was **hereditary** but royal power limited by absence of firm primogeniture.
 - Council of ministers existed; evidence of one man holding several posts like Harisena.
 - Empire divided into **Bhukti (province)** under **Uparika (viceroy)**.
 - Bhuktis subdivided into districts **Vishayas** under **Vishayapati**.
 - Sub-districts called **Peth**; villages under **Gramika or Mahattara**.
 - Guptas did not maintain vast bureaucracy like Mauryas.
 - **Kumaramatyas** were most important officers appointed by king in home provinces.
-

Social Conditions

- Aryan pattern of society based on **Varnaashram dharma** made its final assertion.
- Land grants to Brahmanas suggest **Brahman supremacy continued**.
- Caste proliferated into **numerous sub-castes**, due to assimilation of large number of foreigners and tribal people.
- Brahmanical society absorbed many through land grants.
- Religious functionaries granted land called **Agarhara** free of taxes forever.
- These officials were authorized to collect taxes from peasants, which otherwise would have gone to emperor.
- Land revenue was about 1/6 of produce payable in cash or kind.
- Though women were idealized in literature, in reality they were accorded **lower position**:
 - Early marriage before puberty
 - Denial of education
 - Treated as property
- First example of **Sati** came from Eran (Madhya Pradesh) in 510 AD.
- Position of Shudras improved somewhat but number of untouchables and outcastes increased.

- Practice of **untouchability intensified**, especially hatred for Chandalas.
-

Religion

- **Bhagavad-Gita** written during this time only.
 - Decline of Buddhism and **Bhagavatism** centered on worshipping Vishnu or Bhagvan.
 - History presented as cycle of 10 incarnations of Vishnu.
 - Idol worship common.
 - Temples:
 - Vishnu temple at **Deogarh (near Jhansi)**
 - Small temple near **Sanchi**
 - Brick temple at **Bhitragaon (near Kanpur)** belonging to Gupta architecture.
-

Art

- Numerous temples, artistic sculptures developed during period.
 - Major accomplishments:
 - Samudragupta represented on coins playing **lute (vina)**.
 - 2-meter high **bronze image of Buddha** belonging to **Mathura school** created during Gupta period.
 - Gandhara Buddha represents mask-like coldness; Mathura Buddha imparts warmth and vitality.
 - Buddha sitting in **Dharma Chakra mudra** at Sarnath belongs to Gupta period.
 - Buddha images at **Bamiyan** belonged to Gupta period (destroyed by Taliban).
 - Ajanta paintings and paintings at Bagh (near Gwalior, MP) belong to Gupta art.
 - Images of Vishnu, Shiva, and some other Hindu gods appeared for the first time in this period.
-

Literature

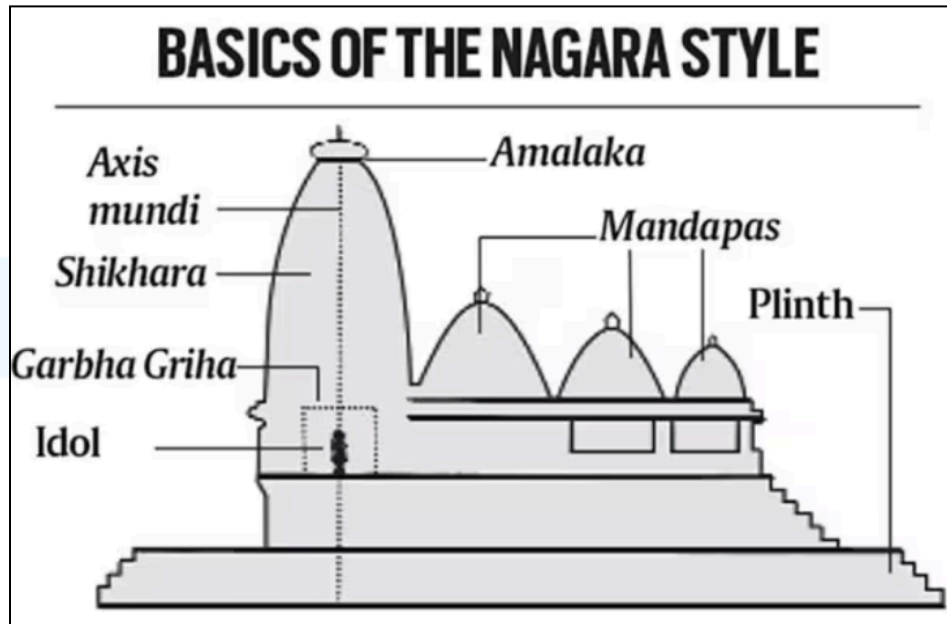
- Many famous literary works written:
 - **Kalidasa**, great Sanskrit dramatist.
 - His works: **Abhignanasakuntalam** (one of earliest India works translated to European language), **Meghadutam**, **Kumarasambhavam**, **Raghuvamsa** (epics and plays).
 - Others: Sudraka (author of **Mrichchhakatikam**), Bharavi (**Kiratarjuniya**), Dandin (**Kavyadarshana** and **Dasakumaracharita**).
 - 11 plays by **Bhasa**, most famous **Charudatta**.
 - Vishakhadatta wrote **Mudrarakshasa** and **Devi Chandraguptam**.
 - Vishnu Sharma wrote **Panchatantra** and **Hitopadesh**.
- Development of Sanskrit grammar based on **Panini** and **Patanjali**.
- Compilation of **Amarakosha** by Amarasimha.
- **Ramayana** and **Mahabharata** almost completed by 4th century AD.

Gupta Architecture

- **Temple Building** — Early Hindu temples with simple designs.
- **Shikhara Style** — Origin of the temple tower (shikhara).
Example: Dashavatara Temple's modest shikhara.
- **Rock-cut Caves** — Buddhist cave complexes carved into hills.
Example: Ajanta Caves (Maharashtra).
- **Stupa Enhancements** — Decorative gateways and railings around stupas.
Example: Sanchi Stupa's ornate gateways.
- **Stone and Brick Use** — Durable temples using stone and brick materials.
- **Simplicity and Elegance** — Balanced proportions, restrained decoration.
- **Mandapa and Garbhagriha** — Defined halls (mandapa) and sanctum (garbhagriha).
- **Influence on Later Temples** — Basis for Nagara style in North India.
Example: Later temples in Khajuraho and Orissa.

Nagara Style of Architecture

- Curvilinear Shikhara (tower) over the sanctum.
- Square-shaped Garbhagriha (sanctum sanctorum).
- Pillared Mandapa (assembly hall) in front of the sanctum.
- Horizontal moldings dividing the temple walls.
- Highly ornate carvings on walls and pillars.
- Temples built on elevated platforms (Jagati).
- Usually no enclosing boundary walls around temples.
- Square plan with multiple projections on walls.
- Smaller subsidiary shikharas surrounding the main tower.
- Extensive use of stone with intricate sculptural details.



Gupta Period Science and Knowledge

- **Sushruta** known as father of surgery.
- Highly specialized surgical instruments in use.
- **Dhanvantri** famous for Ayurveda knowledge.
- Unparalleled achievements in mathematics and astronomy.

- **Aryabhatta**, great mathematician, wrote Aryabhatiya and Suryasiddhanta.
 - Aryabhatta described place value, use of zero, invented Algebra, calculated sines of angles.
 - In Suryasiddhanta, proved earth revolves round sun and rotates on axis, discovered cause of solar and lunar eclipses and timing methods.
 - Stated heavenly bodies were spherical and shone by reflecting light.
 - Mathematicians: **Panchasiddhantika**, **Brihajjamhita**, **Brahmasphut Siddhanta** (**Brahmagupta**) hinted at Law of Gravitation.
 - Field of astronomy: **Romakasiddhanta** and **Vagabhata** (distinguished physician of Ayurvedic medicine).
 - Court language was **Sanskrit**.
-

Fahien's Account

- Chinese pilgrim who visited India beginning of 5th century AD.
 - Chief aim: visit holy places connected with Buddha's life.
 - Stayed in India about six years (405-411 AD), returned home in 414 AD after 15 years.
 - Visited places like Peshawar, Taxila, Mathura, Karpilvastu, Bodh Gaya, Sarnath, Kushinagar, Pataliputra.
 - Stayed about three years at Pataliputra.
 - Described political, social, economic, religious, and general conditions under Gupta monarch Chandragupta II (ruled 380-414 AD).
 - Pataliputra was big city and great center of learning and religion.
 - Many free hospitals in town; medicines given free to poor.
 - Praised Gupta administration as very liberal; criminal law was mild.
 - Most people were vegetarian and followed **Ahimsa** (non-violence).
-

Harsha (606-647 AD)

- After Gupta empire downfall, many independent states.

- Thanesar made great progress under Prabhakar Vardhana and son **Harsha**.
 - Harsha strengthened position by matrimonial alliances, facing Huna menace.
 - Described as lion to Huna deer.
 - Assumed title **Maharajadhiraja**.
 - In 604 AD, Harshavardhana crowned king along with elder brother Rajyavardhana after expedition against Hunas.
 - Rajyavardhana treacherously murdered; Harsha avenged him.
 - Soon after accession, had to attack Malwa because ruler Devagupta had imprisoned Rajyashri (Harsha's sister).
-

Administration

- Chinese pilgrim **Hieun Tsang** visited India in 7th century AD; praised Harsha's administration under Chandragupta II.
 - Harsha personally supervised business of state; punished evildoers and rewarded good.
 - Empire divided into provinces called **Bhuktis**, each under **viceroy or governor**.
 - Bhuktis subdivided into districts (**Vishayas**) under **Vishayapati**.
 - Districts further divided into tehsils (**Peth**) and villages (**Gramas**).
 - Main sources of income: **land tax** (1/6 of total produce), duties at ferries and barrier stations paid by traders and merchants.
 - State income spent systematically; poor, religious men, and intellectuals received considerable support.
 - Penal code stricter than Gupta period; resembled Chandragupta Maurya's code.
 - Few violent crimes; roads not very safe.
 - Hieun Tsang robbed more than once; once deprived of clothes.
-

Harsha's Religion

- Initially follower of **Hinduism**, worshiped **Shiva and Sun**.

- Later inclined towards **Buddhism**, influenced by Buddhist sister Rajyashri and Buddhist luminary Hieun Tsang.
 - Like Ashoka and Kanishka, employed state machinery for popularity of Buddhism.
 - Forbade slaughter of living beings and use of flesh as food.
 - Annually called meetings of Buddhist Sangha for examination and discussion.
 - Promoted Buddhism, called grand assembly at Kannauj attended by many rulers, monks, Brahmans, and scholars.
-

Harsha's Assembly

- Assembly continued for 18 days promoting the **Mahayana faith**.
- Harsha called assembly of Buddhist monks at Prayaga every 5 years.
- One assembly in 643 AD witnessed by Hieun Tsang.
- Buddhism divided into 18 sects at that time.
- Harsha donated generously to Buddhist monks, Brahmans, Jainas, poor, orphans, and Rajyashri.

Simplify your UPSC Journey

Architecture during the Harshavardhana Period

- **Period:** Flourished during the reign of Emperor Harshavardhana (circa 606–647 CE) in North India.
- **Religious Architecture:** Focused mainly on Buddhist and Hindu temples and monasteries, reflecting the king's patronage of both religions.
- **Use of Stone and Brick:** Architecture primarily used stone and brick, marking a transition from earlier wooden structures.
- **Temples:** Early examples of North Indian temple architecture emerged, featuring sanctuaries (garbhagriha) and mandapas (pillared halls).
- **Monasteries (Viharas):** Large Buddhist monasteries were constructed, often with residential cells around a central courtyard.

- **Notable Site – Nalanda:** The great Nalanda University flourished under Harsha's rule, with large monastic and educational complexes.
 - **Sculptural Decoration:** Temples and monasteries featured intricate carvings depicting religious themes and floral motifs.
 - **Influence of Gupta Style:** Harsha's architecture continued the Gupta tradition but incorporated more elaborate structural designs.
 - **Stupas:** Buddhist stupas continued to be important, serving as relic shrines and pilgrimage sites.
 - **Legacy:** The period paved the way for the development of later medieval temple architecture in Northern India.
-

The Pallavas

- Founder: Simhavishnu.
- Capital: Kanchi (south of Chennai).
- Simhavishnu bore title **Avarsimha** (lion of the earth).
- Successor: Mahendravarman I; defender of many titles including Vichitra-chitta, Mattavilas, Gunabhar, Shatrumalla, Sankimajati.
- Fought Pulakeshin II at Kulliatpur near Kanchi.
- Was follower of Jainism but converted to Shaivism under Tirunavukkarasu or Appar.
- Mahendravarman I succeeded by Narasimhavarman I Mahamalla.
- Constructed temple known as **Rajasimheshvara** aka **Kailasanatha**.

Art of the Pallavas

- **Rock-cut Architecture** — Famous for cave temples like Mahabalipuram.
- **Monolithic Sculptures** — Examples include the Descent of the Ganges and Arjuna's Penance.
- **Structural Temples** — Early Dravidian style brick and stone temples.
- **Intricate Carvings** — Detailed mythological and floral motifs.

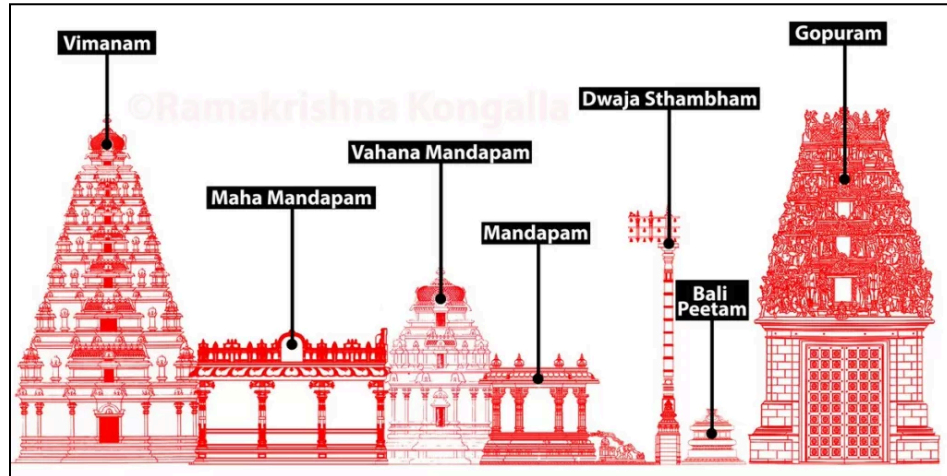
- **Bronze Casting** — Advanced metalwork, including idols of deities.
 - **Temple Tanks** — Water reservoirs built near temples.
 - **Relief Panels** — Depict epics like Ramayana and Mahabharata.
 - **Chola Influence Begins** — Pallavas influenced later South Indian temple art.
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Literature of the Pallavas

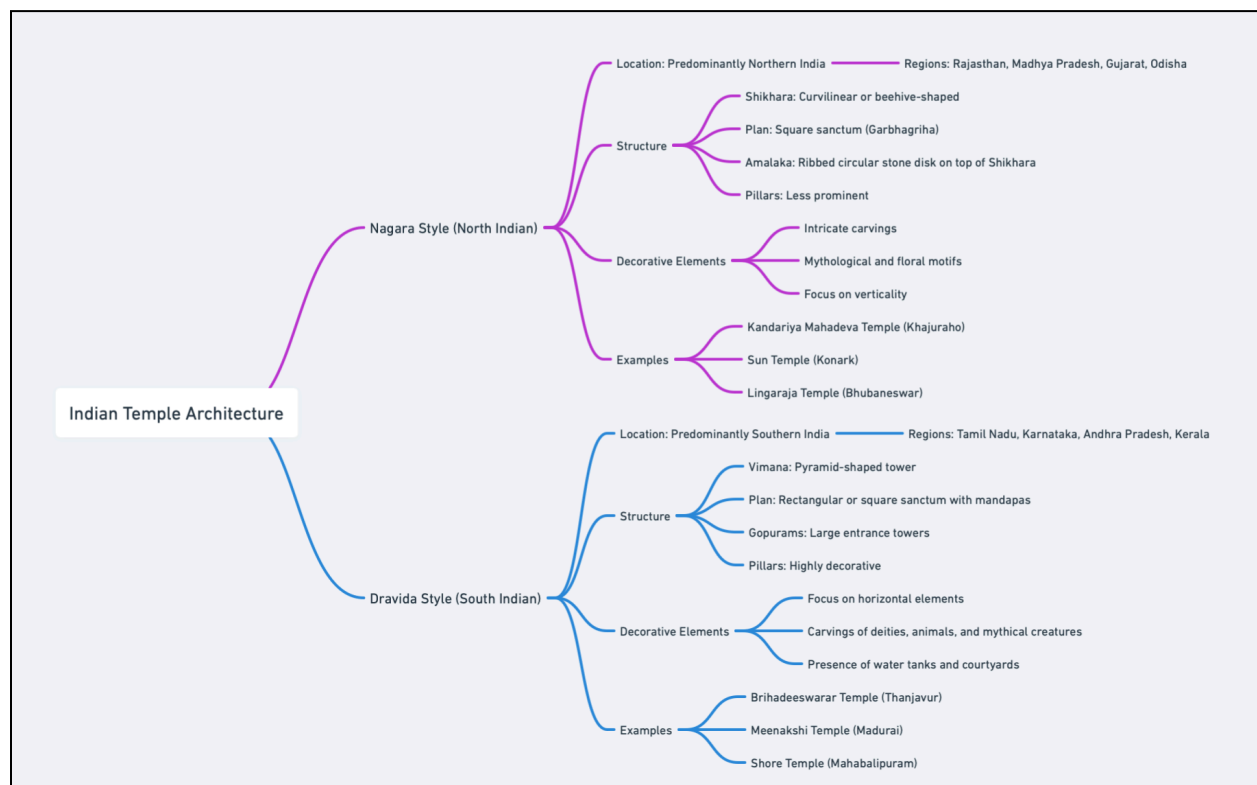
- **Tamil and Sanskrit** — Patronage in both languages.
 - **Kavirajamarga Influence** — Early Kannada literature's foundation during Pallava period.
 - **Court Poets** — Like Dandin and Bharavi gained prominence.
 - **Religious Texts** — Saiva and Vaishnava devotional literature flourished.
 - **Inscriptions** — Records in Grantha and Tamil scripts.
 - **Epics and Puranas** — Translations and commentaries commissioned.
 - **Grammar and Prosody** — Scholars contributed to classical language rules.
 - **Patronage of Learning Centers** — Temples as hubs of literature and education.
-

Dravida Style of Architecture (Started during the Pallavas)

- Pyramid-shaped Vimana (tower) over the sanctum.
- Garbhagriha (sanctum sanctorum) is usually square or rectangular.
- Large, spacious Mandapas (pillared halls).
- Multiple tiers with progressively smaller stories on the tower.
- Ornate sculptural work on pillars and walls.
- Use of massive gateways called Gopurams.
- Temples often enclosed within boundary walls.
- Use of stone and granite as primary materials.
- Elaborate pillared corridors and halls.
- Decorative motifs include deities, floral patterns, and mythical creatures.



Comparison Between Nagara and Dravida Style

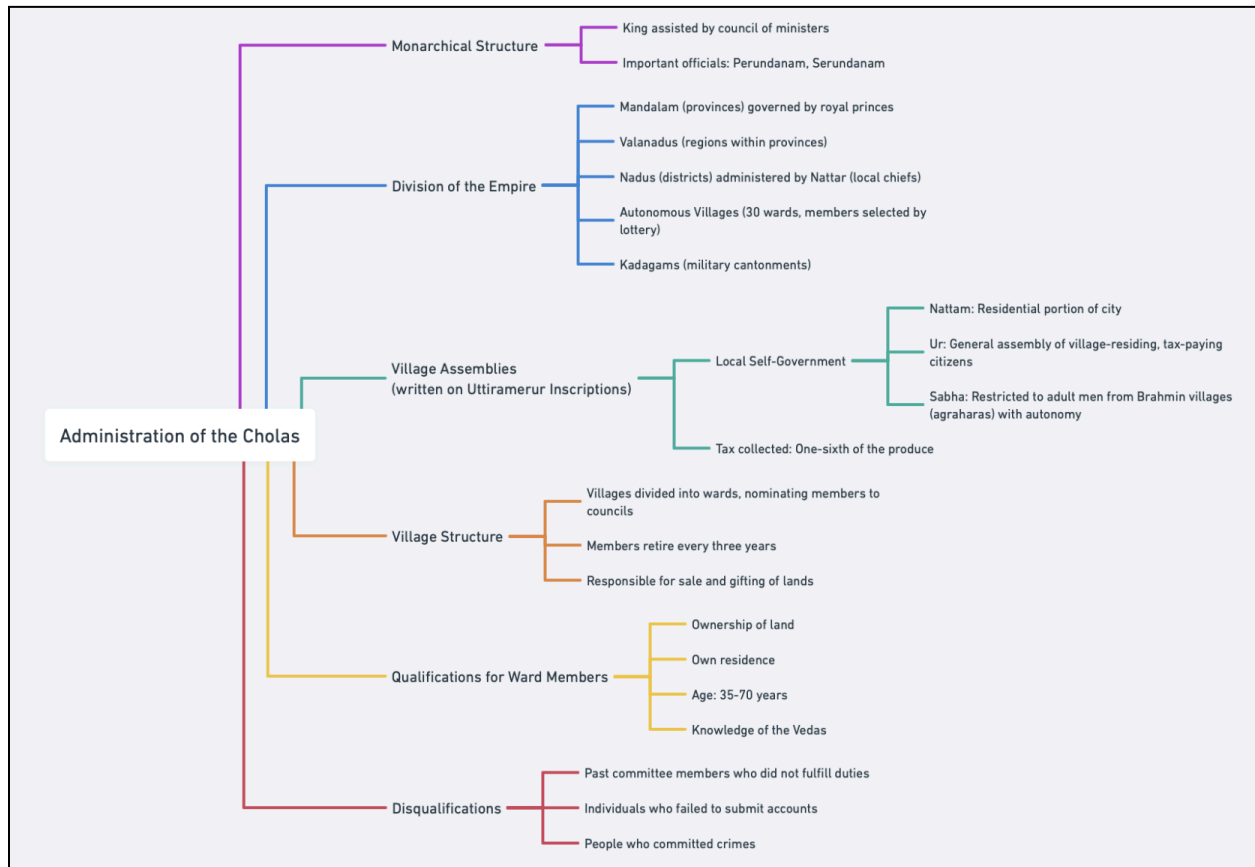


The Cholas (AD 846-1279)

- Founder: **Vijayalaya**; capital: Tanjore.
- By end 9th century, successor Aditya I Chola wiped out Pallavas of Kanchil and weakened Pandyas.
- Parantaka I captured Madurai but defeated by Rashtrakuta ruler Krishna III at Battle of Takkolam.
- Rashtrakutas later defeated.
- Greatest Chola rulers: Rajaraja I (985-1014) and Rajaraja founded largest dominion in south India.
- Led naval expedition against Shailendra empire (Malay Peninsula) and expanded Chola trade with China.
- Annexed northern Sri Lanka and named it **Mummadi-Cholamandalam**.
- Conquered Maldives islands.
- Constructed **Rajrajeshwari temple** aka Brihadeshwara temple at Thanjavur.
- Dancing figure of Shiva called Nataraja belongs to this period only.

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Administration of Cholas



Chola Period Contributions

1. **Dravidian Temple Architecture** — Brihadeeswarar Temple, Gangaikonda Cholapuram.
2. **Maritime Trade** — Extensive overseas trade and naval power.
3. **Bronze Sculpture** — Famous Nataraja statues.
4. **Tamil Literature Flourished** — Works of Kambar, Sekkizhar.
5. **Efficient Administration** — Local self-government (village assemblies).
6. **Cultural Spread** — Influence over Southeast Asia.
7. **Shaivism Patronage** — Temple-centric religious growth.
8. **Art and Dance** — Development of classical Bharatanatyam.

Rajendra I

- Son of Rajaraja I.
- Performed Ashwamedha sacrifice.
- By 1115 AD, extent of Chola empire remained undiminished under Kulottunga I.
- Lost Ceylon and central India south of Krishna river.
- Tungabhadra extended to Godavari on east coast.
- Kulottunga III (1178-1210) last great Chola monarch.
- Empire divided into 6 **mandalams or provinces** administered by governors.
- Mandalams divided into **Valanadus**.
- Valanadus divided into **Nadus** and Nadus into **Taniyurs**.
- Taniyurs were assemblies of common villages.
- Members of village assemblies could become members of Ur.
- Local self-government called **Chandravati Raj** borrowed from Panchayati Raj.

The Chola architecture is often called the "**Great Living Chola Architecture**" because many of its magnificent temples, like the Brihadeeswarar Temple at Thanjavur, are not just ancient monuments but active centers of worship and cultural life even today. These temples continue to function as vibrant hubs where rituals, festivals, and traditional arts thrive, preserving the legacy of the Chola dynasty in a living, dynamic form rather than as mere historical relics. This ongoing religious and cultural significance makes Chola architecture a remarkable example of heritage that is still very much alive.

Architecture during the Chola Period

- **Period:** The Chola dynasty flourished between the 9th and 13th centuries CE, mainly in Tamil Nadu and parts of South India.
- **Dravidian Style:** Chola architecture is a prime example of the Dravidian style, characterized by towering vimanas (temple towers) and elaborate gateways (gopurams).
- **Material Used:** Primarily granite stone was used, allowing for massive, durable temples.
- **Famous Temples:** The Brihadeeswarar Temple at Thanjavur (completed in 1010 CE) is the most iconic example, renowned for its grand scale and intricate sculpture.

- **Temple Layout:** Chola temples followed a strict layout with a central sanctum (garbhagriha), circumambulatory paths, pillared halls (mandapas), and large temple tanks.
 - **Sculptural Art:** Temples feature exquisite sculptures of gods, goddesses, dancers, musicians, and mythological scenes, demonstrating advanced craftsmanship.
 - **Bronze Sculpture:** The Chola period is also famous for its exquisite bronze icons, especially the Nataraja (dancing Shiva) statues.
 - **Inscriptions:** Temples contain detailed inscriptions recording donations, temple administration, and royal achievements.
 - **Temple Towns:** Temples were centers of social, cultural, and economic activity, often surrounded by settlements known as temple towns.
 - **Legacy:** Chola architecture deeply influenced South Indian temple design and inspired subsequent dynasties across the region.
-

The Palas of Bengal

- Mid 8th century Pala dynasty came to power.
- Founder: Gopala (750 AD), elected due to valour and capability.
- Succeeded by Dharmapala, raised Pala kingdom to greatness.
- Challenged by Pratiharas.
- Succeeded by Devapala, extended control over Pragjyotishpur (Assam).
- Devapala was Buddhist.
- Balaputradeva, king of Buddhist Sailendras in Java, asked Devapala for grant of 8 villages to endow monastery at Nalanda.
- Granted and appointed Viradeva as head of Nalanda monastery.
- Devapala's court adorned with Buddhist poet Vipradatta, author of **Devikavarsarataka**.

Palas and Spread of Buddhism

1. **Pala Dynasty Patronage** - Palas (8th–12th century) were great patrons of Buddhism in eastern India.

Example: Dharmapala and Devapala's support.

2. **Centers of Buddhist Learning** - They developed major universities promoting Buddhist studies.
Example: Nalanda and Vikramashila Universities.
 3. **Mahayana Buddhism Flourished** - Palas encouraged Mahayana and Vajrayana traditions.
 4. **Monastic Architecture** - Construction of large monasteries and temples dedicated to Buddha and Bodhisattvas.
Example: Somapura Mahavihara (UNESCO World Heritage).
 5. **Spread to Southeast Asia and Tibet** - Pala monks and scholars spread Buddhism through missions and trade routes.
Example: Buddhist influence in Tibet increased via Pala patronage.
 6. **Art and Sculpture** - Pala art promoted iconic Buddha images and tantric motifs.
Example: Bronze Buddha statues from Bengal.
 7. **International Buddhist Contacts** - Palas maintained links with Buddhist centers in Sri Lanka, Tibet, and Southeast Asia.
-

The Senas

- Ruled Bengal after Palas.
 - Founder: Samantasena.
 - Grandson Vijayasena (Hemanatasena) brought family into limelight.
 - Famous poet Sriharsha composed **Vijayaprasasti** in memory of Vijayasena.
 - Successors: Ballalasena, Danasagara, Abhutsagara, Lakshmanasena, Jayadeva (Vaishnava poet), author of **Gita Govinda** lived in his court.
 - Reign saw decline of Sena power.
 - Invasions of Bakhtiyar Khalji gave crushing blow.
-

Tripartite Struggle

The **Tripartite Struggle** was a prolonged conflict during the 8th and 9th centuries CE involving three major powers of early medieval India—the **Pratiharas**, the **Palas**, and the **Rashtrakutas**—who fought for control over the strategic and wealthy region of **Kannauj** in northern India. Kannauj's political and economic importance made it a coveted prize, and the struggle significantly shaped the power dynamics of northern and central India during this period. The contest involved repeated battles, shifting alliances, and political maneuvers, ultimately preventing any one dynasty from establishing long-term supremacy over the area for some time, which influenced the fragmentation of power in the region.

Pratihara Architecture

- **Period:** Flourished during 8th to 11th centuries CE, mainly in North and Central India.
 - **Style:** Developed early forms of North Indian (Nagara) temple architecture.
 - **Materials:** Mainly stone construction with elaborate carvings.
 - **Temple Features:** Prominent use of shikharas (temple towers) with curvilinear shapes.
 - **Sculptural Work:** Richly decorated with floral motifs, geometric designs, and divine figures.
 - **Urban Centers:** Temples often built in growing towns and served as cultural centers.
 - **Integration of Fortifications:** Palaces and temples sometimes integrated with defensive architecture.
 - **Example:** The famous **Bateshwar Temple Complex** in Madhya Pradesh, featuring numerous small temples dedicated to Shiva.
-

Pala Architecture

- **Period:** Dominated Bengal and Bihar from 8th to 12th centuries CE.
- **Religious Focus:** Strongly linked to Mahayana Buddhism; many monasteries and stupas.

- **Material:** Mostly brick and terracotta due to scarcity of stone.
 - **Architectural Style:** Blend of Indian and Buddhist architectural traditions.
 - **Monastic Complexes:** Large viharas (monasteries) with cells and prayer halls.
 - **Sculpture:** Characterized by elegant stone and bronze sculptures of Buddhist deities.
 - **Notable Features:** Multi-storied monasteries with elaborately carved doorways.
 - **Examples:** **Vikramashila Monastery** and **Somapura Mahavihara** (UNESCO World Heritage Sites).
-

Rashtrakuta Architecture

- **Period:** Flourished from 8th to 10th centuries CE, mainly in the Deccan region.
 - **Rock-Cut Architecture:** Pioneered some of India's finest rock-cut temples.
 - **Style:** Early development of Dravidian architecture with ornate sculptures.
 - **Materials:** Predominantly granite and basalt rock for cave temples.
 - **Architectural Innovation:** Large chaitya halls and intricately carved pillars.
 - **Temple Layout:** Included sanctum, mandapas, and large open halls.
 - **Religious Patronage:** Supported Hinduism, Jainism, and Buddhism.
 - **Examples:** The famous **Ellora Caves**, especially the Kailasa Temple (Cave 16), a monolithic rock-cut marvel.
-

Period of Rajputs

The emergence of Rajput warrior clans during the 7th and 8th centuries marked a pivotal transformation in Indian politics, with these martial communities becoming the central force shaping the subcontinent's medieval history. Ancient texts like Kumarap Charit and Varna Ramakar catalog 36 distinct Rajput lineages, though the Rajatarangini presents a different enumeration, highlighting the complex genealogical traditions surrounding these clans. The term "Rajput" itself evolved from the Sanskrit "Rajputra," originally denoting Kshatriya princes and ruling elites rather than a specific caste identity. Interestingly, the modern usage of "Rajput" only crystallized following the arrival of Muslim powers in India, suggesting that this martial identity was partly forged in response to new political challenges and the need for cohesive resistance against foreign conquest.

Rajput Architecture

- **Period:** Flourished between the 7th and 19th centuries CE across the regions of Rajasthan, Gujarat, and Madhya Pradesh.
- **Fortresses and Palaces:** Rajput architecture is renowned for its massive forts (e.g., Chittorgarh, Mehrangarh, Kumbhalgarh) and grand palaces.
- **Defensive Features:** Forts were built with thick walls, high ramparts, battlements, and strategically placed gates for defense.
- **Material Used:** Primarily sandstone and marble, often locally sourced, were used for construction.
- **Architectural Style:** Blend of indigenous Hindu temple styles and Islamic influences, creating distinctive ornate designs.
- **Jharokhas and Chhatris:** Decorative overhanging balconies (jharokhas) and elevated dome-shaped pavilions (chhatris) are characteristic features.

- **Temples:** Rajput temples exhibit intricate carvings, shikharas (temple towers), and detailed iconography.
 - **Gardens and Waterworks:** Use of terraced gardens (e.g., Saheliyon ki Bari) and sophisticated step wells and water harvesting systems.
 - **Decorative Elements:** Rich frescoes, mirror work, jaali (lattice) screens, and painted ceilings adorn many Rajput structures.
 - **Cultural Significance:** Rajput architecture reflects the martial ethos, royal grandeur, and aesthetic sensibilities of Rajput clans and remains a major tourist and heritage attraction today.
-

Arab Invasion

The establishment of Muslim authority in the Indian subcontinent traces its origins to the early 8th century CE, when Arab commander Muhammad bin Qasim successfully captured the regions of Sindh and Multan in what is now southern Punjab, Pakistan. This initial conquest opened the gateway for a series of military campaigns from Central Asian territories spanning the 10th through 15th centuries, ultimately resulting in the establishment of powerful Islamic dynasties across the subcontinent. The Persian chronicle Chachnama, compiled in 1216 CE, serves as our primary historical source documenting these early Arab incursions, providing crucial insights into the political and military strategies that marked Islam's first foothold in Indian territory and the beginning of a transformative period in subcontinental history.

Delhi Sultanate

The Delhi Sultanate (1206-1526 CE) marked the establishment of the first major Islamic empire in northern India. Five successive dynasties—Slave, Khilji, Tughlaq, Sayyid, and Lodi—ruled

from Delhi, creating a powerful centralized state that dominated the subcontinent for over three centuries until the Mughal conquest.

Slave or Ilbari Dynasty

- After Muhammad Ghori's death, all the Muslim rulers who ruled over India from 1206 to 1290 A.D. were either slaves themselves or were descendants of the slave rulers.
- Their dynasty is generally known as the "Slave Dynasty" in Indian history.
- In India, Qutb-ud-Din rose to power and was able to found a dynasty called after his name.
- The dynasty is called the **Ilbari dynasty** because all rulers of this dynasty, except Aibak, belonged to the Ilbari tribe of Turks.

Qutub-ud-Din Aibak (1206 to 1210 A.D.)

- Originally Qutub-ud-Din was a slave.
- Rose to the position of a Viceroy under Muhammad Ghori due to his courage and qualities of head and heart.
- Achieved most of his military exploits between 1191-1194 A.D.

Itutmish (1211 to 1235 A.D.)

- Was a slave who bought himself as a slave.
 - Ascended the throne in 1211 A.D.
 - Constituted a corps of 40 loyal slave Amirs known as Turkan-i-Chihalgani or Chalisa.
 - Divided his empire into Iqtas (land assignments in lieu of salary).
 - Every Iqtadar had to maintain law and order and collect revenue.
 - Iqtas were transferable.
-

Ghiyas-ud-din Balban (1266-1287 A.D.)

- Original name: 'Ulugh Khan'.
 - Slave of Itutmish from the Ilari tribe of Turkistan.
 - Crushed pretensions of the Chahalgani.
-

Khilji Dynasty

Jalalud-Din-Khilji (1290-1296 A.D.)

- Became ruler at 70 years old.
 - Mild and generous.
 - During his reign, nobles began to form factions.
 - Gathered all powers into his hand and murdered Kaiqubad in 1290.
-

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Ala-ud-din Khilji (1296-1316 A.D.)

- Nephew and son-in-law of Jalalud-Din Khilji.
- Great military genius.
- Conquered Gujarat, Ranthambhor, Chittor, Malwa, Devagiri, Warangal, Madurai.
- Adopted the policy of Blood and Iron.
- Administrative reforms: discouraged insurrections.
- No dinners or parties without the Sultan's sanction.
- Efficient spy system in place.
- Stopped interference of religion in politics.
- Revenue reforms: organized land revenue on sound basis.
- Market reforms: large storehouses and granaries built.
- Price fixed by state.

- Established four separate markets for various commodities.
-

Tughlag Dynasty

Ghiyas-ud-Din Tughlag (1320-1325 A.D.)

- Founder of Tughlag Empire in India.
 - Warden of marches or Governor of Punjab and Bengal.
 - Died in 1325.
-

Muhammad bin Tughlag (1325-1351 A.D.)

- Son of Ghiyas-ud-Din Tughlag.
- Ruled for 26 years.
- One of the most extraordinary kings on Delhi throne.
- Rational and innovative but hasty.
- Increased taxes in Doab in 1326 during famine.
- Transferred capital from Delhi to Daulatabad in 1326.
- Ordered inhabitants of Delhi to move to Daulatabad.
- Revolts occurred; Mongols repeated invasions.

Innovations and Failures of MB Tughlaq

- Experimented with token currency in 1330.
- Issued copper coins, but failed as people mined coins for metal.
- Cherished idea of world conquest, maintained a huge army (~370,000 soldiers).
- Tried to conquer Khurasan in Persia.
- Disbanded army after a year; soldiers plundered their own country.

- Established a new agricultural department (Diwan-i-Kohi).
 - Gave agricultural loans (Takavi) to farmers.
 - Conquered Kangra in 1337.
 - Failed to subdue Thatta or Sind.
 - Died broken-hearted.
-

Firoz Shah Tughlag (1351-1388 A.D.)

- Cousin of Muhammad bin Tughlag.
- Tried to repress everybody.
- Cancelled loans advanced by predecessors.
- Banned inhuman punishments.
- Developed agriculture through reclamation and irrigation facilities.
- Made Iqtadar system hereditary.
- Soldiers given land assignments instead of cash.
- Imposed oppressive taxes, burdening poor people.
- Levied only four taxes in Holy law: Kharaj, Zakat, Jazia, Khums.
- Built five canals for irrigation in Delhi and Haryana.

Administration and Social Welfare under Firoz Shah Tughlaq

- Established a department called **Diwan-i-Khatz** to help the poor and needy.
 - Assisted poor Muslims in arranging marriages for their daughters and gave state help.
 - Set up **free hospitals** for the poor.
 - A hospital called **Dar-ul-Shafa** was established in Delhi, providing free medicine and food to patients.
-

Lodhi Dynasty (1st Afghans)

Bahlul Lodi (1451-1489 A.D.)

- Accession resented by the king of Jaunpur's Sharqi dynasty.
 - Founded the Lodi dynasty during Nasiruddin Mahmud's reign.
 - Annexed the entire Sharqi kingdom and issued coins.
-

Sikandar Lodi (1489-1517 A.D.)

- Son of Bahlul Lodi.
 - Built a new **capital at Agra** in 1505 AD.
 - Continued campaigns against Raja Man Singh of Gwalior.
 - Succeeded in taking Chanderi and Ranthambhor.
 - Known as the greatest and ablest ruler of the Lodi dynasty.
 - Encouraged agriculture and made roads safe for travel.
 - Introduced **Qanun-i-Sikandari** (land measurement system).
-

Ibrahim Lodi (1517-1526 A.D.)

- Son of Sikandar Lodi.
 - Not very capable.
 - Captured Gwalior but was defeated by **Rana Sanga of Mewar**.
 - Governor of Bihar declared independence.
 - Defeated and killed by Babur in the **First Battle of Panipat on April 21, 1526**.
 - Babur occupied Delhi and Agra, founding the Mughal Empire in India.
-

Cultural Development (13th-15th Century)

Art and Architecture

- Use of **arch and dome** was the special feature of Muslim architecture.
 - Turks used **geometrical and floral designs** instead of human and animal figures common in Hindu temples.
 - Hindu motifs like bell, lotus, swastika are used.
 - Tughlaq walls called **battar** combined principles of arch, lintel, and beam.
 - Important monuments:
 - Qutub-ud-din Aibak built Qutb-ul-Islam Mosque and Ajmer's Dhi din ka Jhopra.
 - Iltutmish completed Qutub Minar and Qutb Masjid.
 - Ala-ud-Din Khilji built many mosques, forts, tanks, and laid the foundation of new cities.
 - Firoz Shah Tughlaq built Firozabad near Delhi, Junpur, Hissar, Fatehabad, and brought Ashoka's pillars to Delhi.
 - A new capital Firozabad was erected.
-

Indo-Islamic Architecture

1. Use of Arches and Domes - Example: Qutb Minar complex, Delhi
2. Intricate Calligraphy Decoration - Example: Alai Darwaza, Delhi
3. Minarets and Towers - Example: Qutb Minar, Delhi
4. Use of Red Sandstone and Marble - Example: Red Fort, Delhi; Taj Mahal, Agra
5. Geometric and Floral Patterns - Example: Tomb of Iltutmish, Delhi
6. Charbagh Garden Layout - Example: Humayun's Tomb, Delhi
7. Use of Jali (Lattice) Screens - Example: Jama Masjid, Delhi
8. Massive Gates and Fortifications - Example: Buland Darwaza, Fatehpur Sikri
9. Incorporation of Persian and Central Asian Styles - Example: Gol Gumbaz, Bijapur
10. Use of Calligraphy and Inlay Work - Example: Taj Mahal, Agra

Literature

- Sultans and provincial rulers gave importance to literature.
 - Provided shelter to scholars who produced historical, religious, and other knowledge in Persian and Sanskrit and other languages.
 - Books written in prose, drama, and poetry.
 - Bhakti movement saints participated in regional language literature.
 - Noted scholars include **Al-Biruni** (historian and scholar), **Minhaj-us-Siraj** (served under Iltutmish), and **Firoz Shah Tughlaq** (wrote Tughlaq Nama).
-

Technological advancements during the Delhi Sultanate period

- **Fort architecture** – Strong forts like Tughlaqabad Fort.
 - **Arches and domes** – True arches used in Qutb Minar.
 - **Water systems** – Stepwells like Hauz Khas Baoli.
 - **Gunpowder weapons** – Early use of cannons by Tughlaqs.
 - **Textile tech** – Fine cotton and silk weaving in Delhi.
 - **Persian techniques** – Persian-style urban planning in cities like Delhi.
 - **Coin minting** – Coins with Arabic and Persian inscriptions.
 - **Paper use** – Increased paper records in administration.
-

Vijayanagar Empire (1336 – 1646 A.D.)

The Vijayanagara Empire emerged through the vision of two brothers, Harihara I and Bukka Raya I, who established their kingdom with the support and blessing of the declining Hoysala Empire. This new state was conceived as a bulwark against the expanding influence of the Delhi Sultanate, serving as South India's primary defense mechanism against northern Islamic invasions. What began as a modest regional kingdom quickly transformed into a formidable empire through strategic military campaigns and diplomatic alliances, demonstrating the founders' remarkable ability to consolidate power and expand their territorial control across the Deccan plateau.

Capital and Geography

- The capital city Vijayanagar (Hampi) was strategically located on the banks of the Tungabhadra River.
- Surrounded by natural defenses such as rocky hills and rivers.
- The city was a major urban center with markets, temples, royal complexes, and granaries.

Dynasties

Dynasty	Period	Significance
Sangama	1336–1485	Founding dynasty of the empire
Saluva	1485–1505	Assumed power following Sangama decline
Tuluva	1505–1570	Era of maximum territorial expansion under Krishna Deva Raya
Aravidu	1570–1646	Final ruling dynasty; witnessed empire's gradual decline

Major Rulers and Contributions

- **Harihara I and Bukka Raya I:** Consolidated power and began temple construction.
- **Krishna Deva Raya:**
 - The empire includes much of the Deccan, parts of Odisha and Tamil Nadu.
 - Known for military campaigns against Bahmani Sultanate and Vijayanagar's rivals.
 - Patron of Telugu and Kannada literature.
 - Promoted religious tolerance and Hindu culture.
- Other notable rulers: Devaraya II, Achyuta Deva Raya.

Economy and Trade

- Agriculture was the backbone, supported by extensive irrigation (canals and tanks).
- Major crops: rice, sugarcane, cotton, spices.
- Thriving internal and external trade with Persia, Arabia, Southeast Asia, and Europe.
- Ports like Mangalore and Pulicat facilitated maritime commerce.
- Use of gold and silver coins for trade.

Military and Administration

- Maintained a large, well-organized army with infantry, cavalry, and war elephants.
- Strong forts and watchtowers built across the empire for defense.
- Used a decentralized administrative system with provincial governors (Nayakas).
- The land revenue system was based on **rajasva**, collected from cultivators.
- Local assemblies (Sabhas) managed village affairs.

Culture and Literature

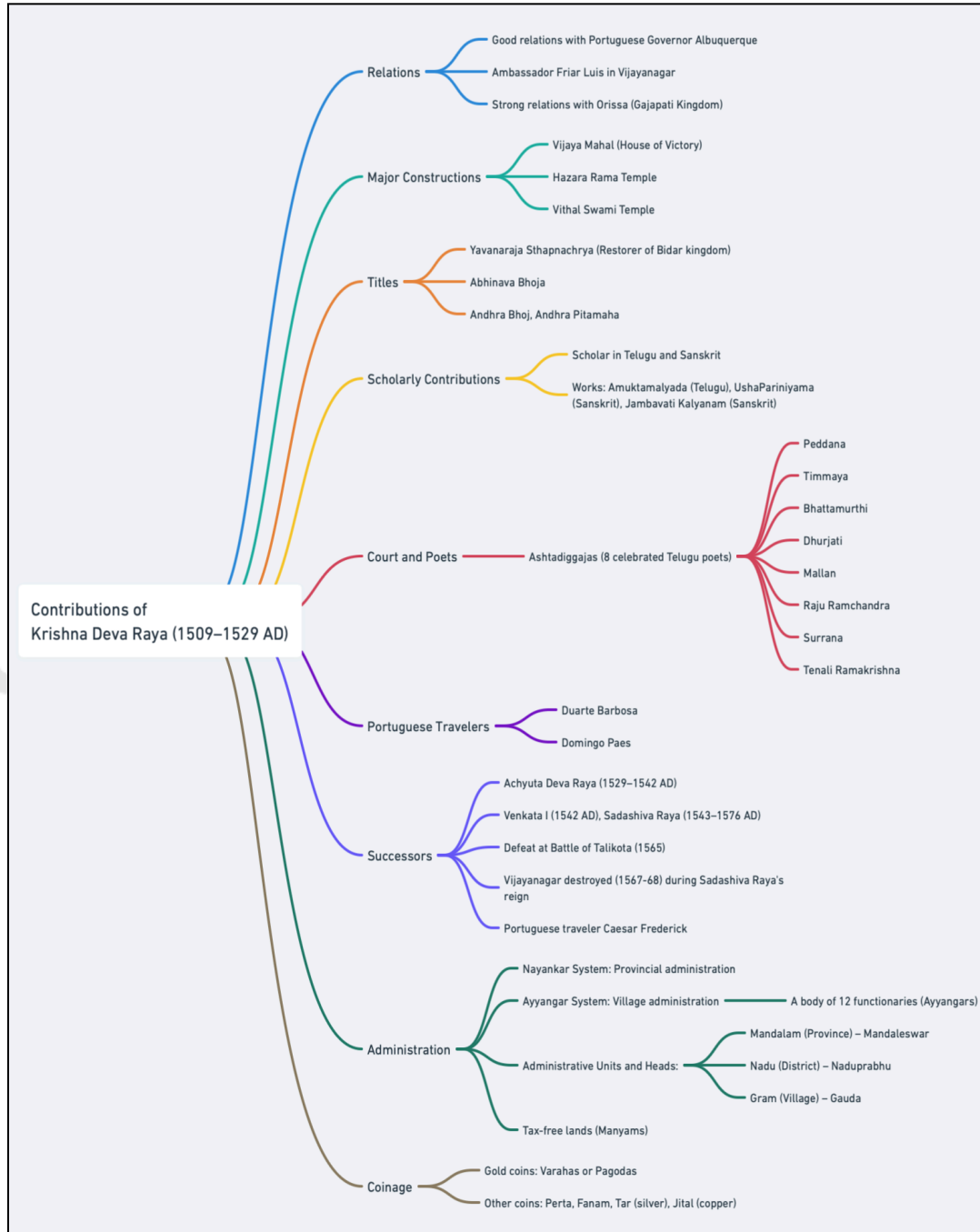
- Multilingual court promoting Kannada, Telugu, Tamil, and Sanskrit literary works.

- Noted poets: Allasani Peddana, Tenali Ramakrishna, Pothana.
- Emphasis on religious and secular literature.
- Supported festivals, music, dance, and cultural exchanges.

Architecture

- **Period:** Flourished during the Vijayanagara Empire (14th to 17th centuries CE) in South India, with Hampi as its capital.
- **Style:** A distinctive blend of Dravidian (South Indian) temple architecture with Islamic influences, reflecting the empire's cosmopolitan nature.
- **Material:** Primarily granite stone used for massive and durable structures.
- **Temple Complexes:** Large temple complexes with multiple shrines, mandapas (pillared halls), and towering gopurams (gateway towers).
- **Notable Temples:** Famous for the Virupaksha Temple and Vittala Temple in Hampi, showcasing intricate carvings and musical pillars.
- **Ornate Sculptures:** Richly decorated with detailed sculptures of gods, goddesses, animals, and scenes from Hindu epics.
- **Water Management:** Advanced water harvesting and irrigation systems integrated into city planning, including stepped tanks and canals.
- **Public Buildings and Fortifications:** Included impressive forts, bazaars, royal pavilions, and audience halls reflecting strong military and administrative architecture.
- Developed distinctive **Dravidian temple architecture** with tall gopurams (gateway towers).
- Patronized sculpture, painting, and classical dance (Bharatanatyam).

Contributions of Krishnadevraya:



Mughal Empire

The Mughal Empire, established by Babur in 1526 following his victory at the Battle of Panipat, represents the most magnificent and enduring Islamic dynasty in Indian history. Descended from both Timur and Genghis Khan, the Mughals combined Central Asian military prowess with Persian administrative sophistication and Indian cultural synthesis to create an empire that would dominate the subcontinent for over three centuries. Under rulers like Akbar, Jahangir, Shah Jahan, and Aurangzeb, the empire reached unprecedented heights of territorial expansion, architectural grandeur, and economic prosperity, leaving an indelible mark on Indian art, culture, and governance. The Mughal period witnessed the creation of iconic monuments like the Taj Mahal, the development of a syncretic Indo-Islamic culture, and the establishment of administrative systems that would influence Indian governance well into the colonial era.

Zahir-Ud-Din Muhammad Babur

- Babur was the founder of the Mughal Empire in India. His father Omar Shaikh Mirza was a petty chieftain of Fargana, now in Uzbekistan in Central Asia.
- Babur invaded India at the invitation of Daulat Khan Lodhi who suggested that he should displace Ibrahim Lodi. Babur's forces met and defeated Ibrahim Lodi at Panipat on April 20, 1526 (First Battle of Panipat). He next defeated Rana Sanga of Mewar in the Battle of Khanwa (1527).
- Babur extended his dominions from the Oxus to G. Iagra and from the Himalayas to Gwalior.
- Babur died on 26 December 1530 at the age of 48. He was buried at Kabul according to his wish.
- Babur successes in India were mainly due to Ottoman (Rumi) devices of warfare and use of gun powder for the first time in India.

Nasir-Ud-Din Muhammad Humayun

- Humayun was born to Maham Begum in 1508 in Kabul.

- His biggest rival was Sher Shah Suri who defeated him in the battle of Kannauj in the year 1540. He was left with no option but to leave India and escape to Iran for some time.
 - In the year 1555, Humayun came back with a strong force and fierce determination and recovered his kingdom back.
-

The Afghan Interlude: Sur Empire (1540-1556)

- Sher Shah Suri was one of the greatest rulers of India. His original name was Farid. He was born in Hoshyarpur district in Punjab. He was taken to Sasaram by his father Hasan Khan who held a Jagir there.
 - In 1522 AD, Sher Shah got into the service of Mohammad Shah Noohani, an independent ruler of Bihar. Noohani conferred on him the title of Sher Khan.
 - After the death of Mohammad Shah Noohani, Sher Shah became the independent ruler of Bihar.
 - He luckily captured the fortress of Chunar in the battle of Chausa near Buxar in 1539 AD. Mughals were defeated by Sher Khan. In May 1540 AD, he defeated the Mughals and the Afghans met again opposite Kannauj. This battle is also known as the battle of Bilgram.
 - Humayun was severely defeated and from this time he had to live a life of wandering for about 15 years.
 - Sher Shah ruled for a very short span of time and died of an explosion of gunpowder in 1545 AD at Kalinjar.
 - Abbas Khan Sarwani was his historian, who wrote Tarikh-i-Sher Shah.
 - Sher Shah was succeeded by his second son Islam Shah.
 - He was succeeded by his son Firuz Shah Suri, who was only twelve.
 - Within a few days the boy ruler had been murdered by Sher Shah's nephew Muhammad Mubarik Khan who then ascended the throne as Muhammad Adil Shah.
 - His Hindu minister Hemu became powerful who adopted the title of Vikramaditya.
 - The challenge of Hemu was subdued at the Second Battle of Panipat in 1556 A.D by Akbar and Bairam Khan.
-

Jalaluddin Muhammad Akbar (1556-1605)

- **Religious Policy** - Akbar was more traditional in outlook. He showed due respect to the ulemas. In 1562, after having friendly relations with the Rajputs Akbar followed liberal measures in the field of religion. In 1563, he resumed pilgrimages. The part of Akbar which led to a radical change in his religious views. This was the background to the building of the Ibadat Khana, or the Hall of Prayers at Fatehpur Sikri in 1575. Akbar issued a declaration of Mahzar. The real significance of the Mahzar, it seems, was that it was the first effective declaration of the principles of (Sulh-i-Kul) which he (Akbar) had decided to implement firmly. In 1581-82 (The final phase) Akbar inaugurated Tauhid-i-Ilahi, unity of all religions which later came to be known as Din-i-Ilahi which was an organic code. It was a synthesis of all the religions, based largely on the Islamic philosopher, Ibni-Arabi. Abul Fazl links it with the concept of Akbar being the spiritual guide of the people.
- **Revenue administration:** His Land Revenue System was known as Todar Mal's bandobast or Zabti System. Three salient features of the Zabti system were measurement of land, classification of land and fixation of rates. Under the Dahsala system land was classified into four categories, viz., Polaj - annually cultivated, Parauti - left fallow for a short period (1 or 2 years), Chachar - left fallow for 3 to 4 years, and Banjar - uncultivated for 5 years or more.
- **Mansabdari System:** Every officer was assigned a rank (mansab), and the ranks were divided into two, zat and sawar, the first being the personal rank of the mansabdar, fixing his position in the official hierarchy, the latter denoting the actual number of cavalymen he had to maintain. This was done to organize the civil and military wings of government into one official hierarchy.

Noor-Ud-Din Muhammad Jahangir (1605-1627)

- Jahangir inherited the Rajput policy of his father. They continued to be appointed as high mansabs.
- He brought to an end the conflict with Mewar. In the Deccan, in Ahmadnagar, he faced Malik Ambar, an Abyssinian.
- In the east too, there were rebellions led by the Afghan chiefs, Usman Khan and Musa Khan. But Jahangir succeeded in bringing Malik Ambar.

Shah Jahan (1627-1658)

- Shah Jahan was more successful in the Deccan. He signed treaties with Bijapur and Golconda in 1636 which enabled him to repose the ultimate object of Akbar; the suzerainty of the Mughal Emperor was now accepted over the length and breadth of the country. However, after 1656, Golconda and Bijapur overran the fertile Karnataka area. This, aided by the rise of Marathas, upset the balance of power in the Deccan.
- Two Frenchmen, Bernier and Tavernier, had an Italian adventurer Montinoz with them. This is of significance.

Aurangzeb (1658-1707)

- Bengal & North East: Within one year, Aurangzeb restored Mughal authority in Bengal, Bihar, and Orissa.
- Foreign Powers: Aurangzeb was the first Mughal Emperor to personally lead expeditions against the British in the Deccan. Aurangzeb brought the Deccan kingdoms of Bijapur and Golconda under Mughal suzerainty.
- There were many popular revolts and movements for regional independence in this period. In 1669, the Jats of Mathura revolted under the local zamindar Gokla, and there was a second uprising in 1659 under the leadership of Rajaram and later Chhatrapati. In the 18th century, Churaman carved out a separate Jat principality, in 1672, the Salnamis of Narnaul revolted. The execution of Guru Tegh Bahadur in 1675 also led to a clash with the Sikhs under Guru Gobind Singh.

Mughal Architecture

- Blend of Persian, Indian, and Islamic Styles: Mughal architecture is famous for its synthesis of Persian, Indian (Hindu), and Islamic architectural elements, creating a distinctive style.
- Use of Red Sandstone and Marble: Early Mughal buildings predominantly used red sandstone, while later structures incorporated white marble extensively, especially in imperial monuments.
- Large Domes and Iwans: Prominent large bulbous domes and arched entrances called iwans are characteristic features, often with intricate ornamentation.

- **Symmetry and Geometry:** Mughal buildings emphasize strict symmetry, balance, and geometric planning in both structures and surrounding gardens.
- **Gardens with Charbagh Layout:** The Charbagh (four-part) garden layout, inspired by Persian gardens, was widely used, symbolizing paradise, with water channels and fountains.
- **Decorative Elements:** Extensive use of pietra dura (inlay work with precious and semi-precious stones), calligraphy, floral motifs, and intricate jali (lattice) screens.
- **Forts and Palaces:** Mughal rulers built massive forts (e.g., Agra Fort, Red Fort) and luxurious palaces showcasing power, defense, and aesthetics.
- **Mosques and Tombs:** Grand mosques like Jama Masjid in Delhi and mausoleums such as the Taj Mahal are outstanding examples, combining religious and funerary architecture.
- **Use of Double Domes:** To create an imposing exterior height while maintaining interior proportions, double dome construction was employed.
- **Influence on Later Architecture:** Mughal architectural principles influenced later Indo-Islamic and colonial architecture, leaving a lasting legacy in the Indian subcontinent.

Mughal Paintings

1. **Fusion of Persian and Indian Styles:** Mughal paintings combined Persian miniature painting techniques with Indian themes and sensibilities, creating a unique style.
2. **Naturalism and Detail:** These paintings are known for their intricate detail, naturalistic depiction of human figures, animals, and landscapes.
3. **Themes and Subjects:** Common themes included royal court scenes, battles, hunting, portraits of emperors and nobles, as well as illustrations of literary works like the *Hamzanama* and *Baburnama*.
4. **Use of Vibrant Colors:** Artists used rich, vibrant colors made from natural minerals and plants, often highlighted with gold and silver.
5. **Miniature Format:** Paintings were often created on small-scale manuscripts, making them highly detailed and portable.
6. **Patronage by Emperors:** Mughal emperors like Akbar, Jahangir, and Shah Jahan were great patrons who established royal workshops (karkhanas) for painters.

7. **Innovations in Perspective:** Unlike earlier Indian art, Mughal paintings experimented with realistic perspective, shading, and three-dimensionality.
-

Bhakti and Sufi Movement

The Bhakti movement arose as a powerful counter-narrative to the orthodox religious establishment, challenging the inflexible caste hierarchies and elaborate ritualistic practices that dominated traditional Brahmanism. Beginning in South India during the 7th century, this devotional renaissance was pioneered by the Alvars, who worshipped Vishnu with passionate devotion, and the Nayanars, who dedicated themselves to Shiva through heartfelt poetry and song. The movement's transformative message of personal devotion over social status gradually swept across the subcontinent, finding new expression in the north through the teachings of luminaries like Kabir, Tulsidas, and Mirabai, who democratized spirituality by emphasizing direct communion with the divine over birth-based privilege and ceremonial complexity.

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Key Teachings:

- Personal devotion (bhakti) to a single deity (Vishnu, Shiva, or Shakti).
- Emphasized **equality** of all devotees regardless of caste or gender.
- Rejected idol worship and elaborate rituals by some sects.
- Preached use of **vernacular languages** instead of Sanskrit.
- Salvation through love and devotion rather than knowledge or rituals.

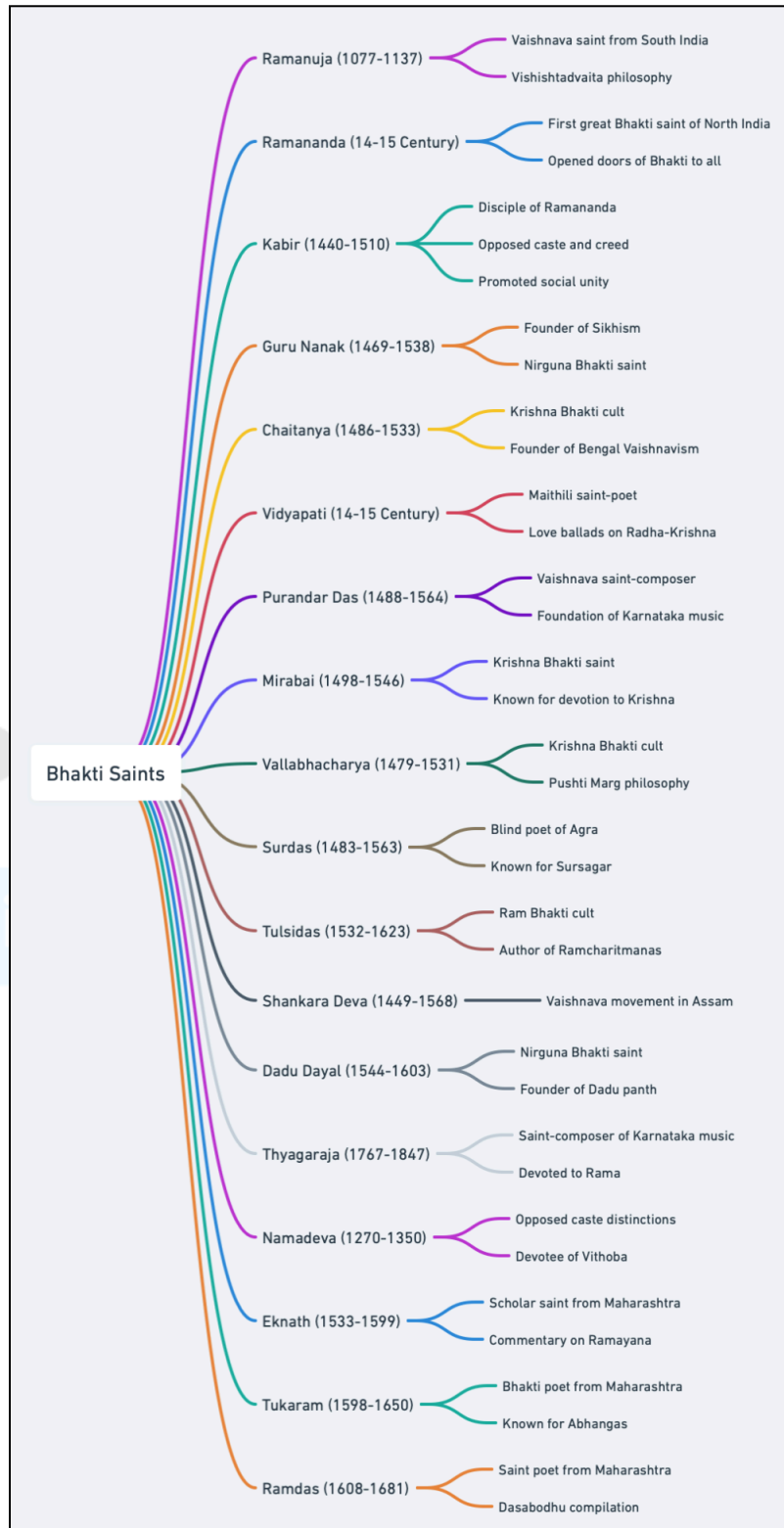
Social Impact:

- Reduced caste barriers and promoted social harmony.
- Empowered women and lower castes to participate in religious life.

- Inspired new forms of music, poetry, and congregational worship.
- Promoted vernacular languages over Sanskrit, making religious texts accessible to common people.
- Challenged the monopoly of Brahmin priests by encouraging direct devotion without intermediaries.
- Fostered religious tolerance and syncretism between Hindu and Islamic traditions.
- Created a new merchant and artisan class identity that transcended traditional caste boundaries.

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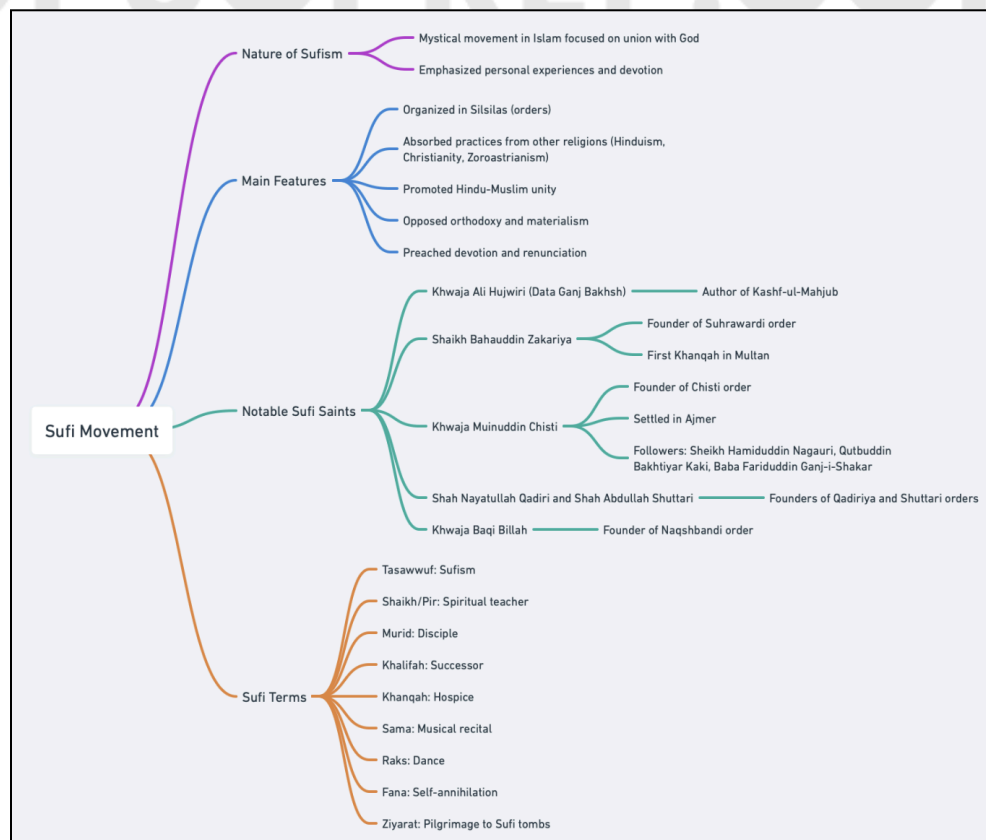


Sufi Movement Practices

- Use of **music (Qawwali)** and poetry (often in Persian and local languages) to evoke spiritual feelings.
- Emphasized service to humanity (langar or free community kitchens).
- Rejected religious formalism and legalism.

Socio-Political Role

- Helped bridge cultural divides between Hindus and Muslims.
- Attracted large followings among peasants, artisans, and rulers.
- Sufi shrines became centers of spiritual and social activity.
- Encouraged peaceful coexistence during times of religious conflict.



Contributions of Bhakti and Sufi Movements

1. **Promoted religious harmony** between Hindus and Muslims (e.g., Kabir, Moinuddin Chishti).
2. **Challenged caste discrimination** and promoted social equality (e.g., Basava, Guru Nanak).
3. **Popularized vernacular languages** making spirituality accessible (e.g., Tulsidas in Hindi, Mirabai in Rajasthani).
4. **Focused on personal devotion** rather than rituals (e.g., Surdas, Nizamuddin Auliya).
5. **Inspired rich arts and music** like bhajans and qawwalis (e.g., Qawwali at Ajmer Sharif).
6. **Encouraged moral values and social reform** such as compassion and service (e.g., Baba Farid's teachings).
7. **Gave rise to new sects** like Sikhism (Guru Nanak) and Lingayatism (Basava).
8. **Bridged cultural and community divides** through inclusive gatherings at shrines and satsangs.

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Limitations of Bhakti and Sufi Movements

1. **Little political impact; mainly spiritual** focus.
 2. **The caste system largely persisted** despite criticism.
 3. **Led to sectarian divisions** instead of unity.
 4. **Teachings were often local and oral**, limiting reach.
 5. **More emotional devotion, less rational debate**.
 6. **Patriarchal norms remained mostly unchanged**.
 7. **Coexisted with orthodox practices**, sometimes absorbed by them.
 8. **Did not challenge economic inequalities** or class structures deeply.
-

Miscellaneous Topics

Indian Philosophical Schools

1. Nyaya Darshana

- Focuses on logic and reasoning.
 - Teaches methods to acquire valid knowledge (Pramanas).
 - Recognizes four pramanas: perception, inference, comparison, and verbal testimony.
 - Aims to remove doubts and errors through critical thinking.
 - Developed a detailed theory of debate and argumentation.
 - Believes in the existence of a soul (Atman) and God (Ishvara).
 - Emphasizes epistemology as a means to liberation.
-

2. Vaisheshika Darshana

- Deals with categorization of reality into seven categories (Padarthas).
 - Introduced atomic theory: everything is made up of indivisible atoms (Anu).
 - Focuses on substances, qualities, actions, generality, particularity, and inherence.
 - Views the universe as composed of eternal atoms combining in various ways.
 - Believes in the soul as a separate substance.
 - Explains cause and effect through natural laws.
 - Influenced by and closely related to Nyaya philosophy.
-

3. Samkhya Darshana

- One of the oldest schools, dualistic in nature.
- Distinguishes between Purusha (consciousness) and Prakriti (matter).
- Holds that liberation (Moksha) is realization of Purusha's separation from Prakriti.

- Lists 25 fundamental tattvas (principles) explaining universe and mind.
 - Does not emphasize a personal God; largely atheistic or non-theistic.
 - Explains cosmic evolution through interaction of Purusha and Prakriti.
 - Forms the theoretical foundation of Yoga philosophy.
-

4. Yoga Darshana

- Practical system of spiritual discipline and self-control.
 - Based largely on Patanjali's Yoga Sutras.
 - Defines eight limbs (Ashtanga Yoga): Yama, Niyama, Asana, Pranayama, Pratyahara, Dharana, Dhyana, Samadhi.
 - Seeks liberation through mental discipline and control over body and mind.
 - Accepts Samkhya metaphysics but adds theism (belief in Ishvara).
 - Emphasizes meditation and ethical living.
 - Provides practical techniques for overcoming suffering and ignorance.
-

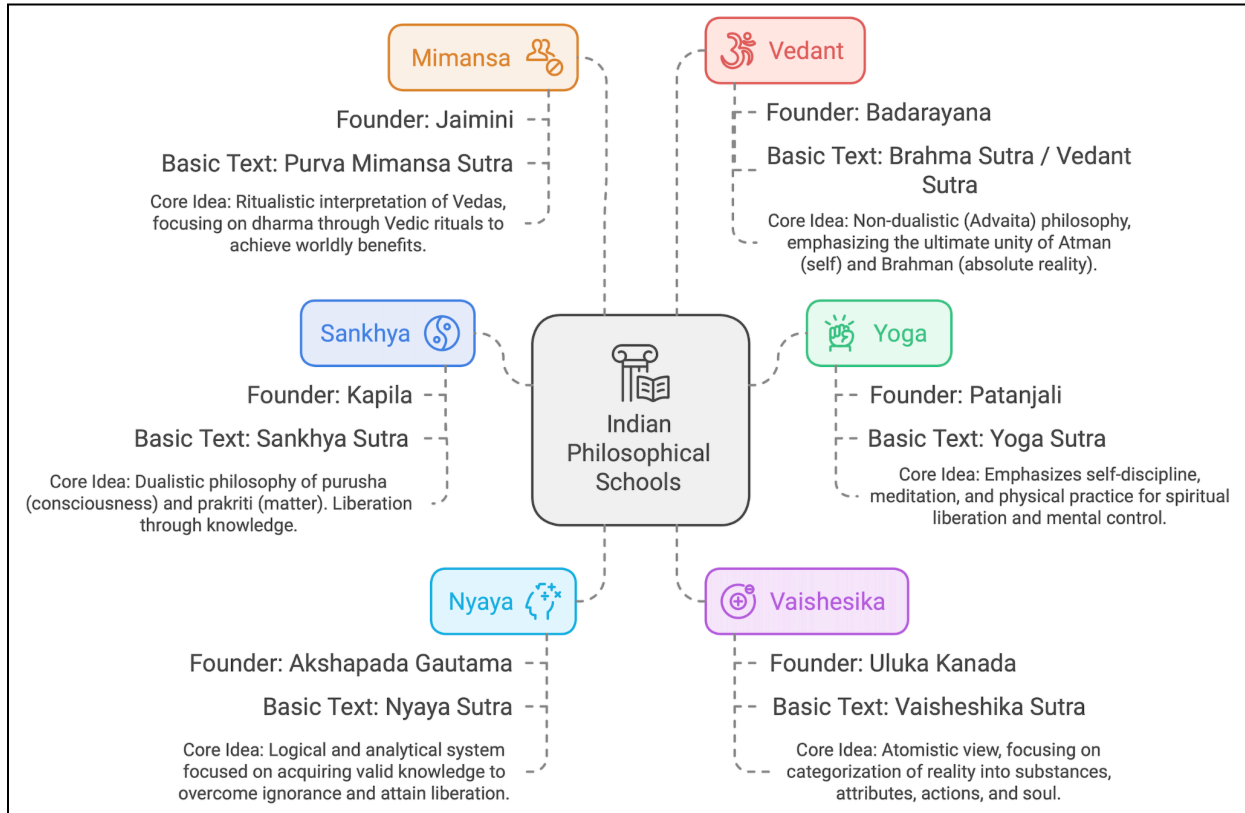
5. Mimamsa Darshana

- Primarily focuses on Dharma through Vedic ritual action.
 - Emphasizes performance of rituals as key to achieving worldly and spiritual goals.
 - Regards the Vedas as eternal and authorless (Apaurusheya).
 - Develops detailed rules of Vedic interpretation and exegesis.
 - Concerned more with Karma (action) than with knowledge or metaphysics.
 - Rejects the necessity of God for rituals to be effective.
 - Influenced Hindu legal and ethical thought deeply.
-

6. Vedanta Darshana

- Focuses on knowledge of Brahman (ultimate reality) and Atman (self).
- Based on the Upanishads, Bhagavad Gita, and Brahma Sutras.

- Various sub-schools: Advaita (non-dualism), Vishishtadvaita (qualified non-dualism), Dvaita (dualism).
- Seeks liberation by realizing identity (or relation) of Atman with Brahman.
- Emphasizes Jnana (knowledge) and Bhakti (devotion) as paths to Moksha.
- Views the material world as either illusion (Maya) or real but dependent.
- Most influential philosophical school in later Hinduism.



Evolution of Indian Painting

Prehistoric Period

- Earliest Indian paintings are found in rock shelters and caves, dating back to over 30,000 years ago.
- Examples include the Bhimbetka cave paintings in Madhya Pradesh.

- These paintings mainly depict animals, hunting scenes, human figures, and nature using natural pigments.
- They were mostly symbolic and functional, related to rituals and daily life.

Prehistoric paintings in India are among the earliest known expressions of human creativity and cultural life, dating back tens of thousands of years. These artworks, mostly found on rock shelters and cave walls, offer valuable insights into the lives, beliefs, and environments of ancient human communities in the Indian subcontinent. Unlike the famous European cave art, India's prehistoric paintings cover a vast geographic range and diverse ecological settings, reflecting a rich and continuous tradition of human artistic expression.

Major Sites and Discoveries

The most significant site for prehistoric paintings in India is the Bhimbetka Rock Shelters in Madhya Pradesh, a UNESCO World Heritage site. Discovered in 1957, Bhimbetka contains over 600 rock shelters with paintings dating back at least 30,000 years. These paintings depict a wide range of subjects such as animals, hunting scenes, human figures engaged in dance and rituals, and abstract symbols. The continuous layering of art at Bhimbetka reveals a long span of human habitation from the Upper Paleolithic through Mesolithic and Neolithic periods.

Other important prehistoric painting sites include:

- Mirzapur and Son Valleys (Uttar Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh), with shelters showing animals and human activity.
- Adamgarh Hills (Maharashtra), known for Mesolithic-era paintings of animals and hunters.
- Mangar Bani (Haryana), with hand stencils and abstract motifs.
- Jogimara Caves (Chhattisgarh), featuring animal and geometric designs.

These sites collectively illustrate the diversity of prehistoric art across India's landscape.

Materials and Techniques

Indian prehistoric artists used natural pigments sourced locally, primarily red and yellow ochre, charcoal, and white clay. These pigments were mixed with water, plant resins, or animal fats to create paints. Techniques included finger painting, the use of rudimentary brushes, and blowing pigment around hands to create stencils — a common motif found in many shelters. Paintings

were executed on rock walls and ceilings, with some shelters showing both pictographs (paintings) and petroglyphs (carvings).

Themes and Subjects

The dominant subjects of Indian prehistoric paintings are animals such as bison, deer, elephants, tigers, and wild boars — reflecting the centrality of hunting in early human life. Human figures appear often as stylized silhouettes engaged in hunting, dancing, or ritual activities. Abstract and geometric patterns, including dots, lines, and circles, are also common, particularly in later Neolithic art, possibly symbolizing religious or social ideas.

Hand stencils, created by blowing pigment around a hand pressed on the rock surface, are among the most widespread motifs and may represent human identity or ritual significance.

Cultural and Historical Importance

These paintings provide critical evidence about the cognitive and cultural development of prehistoric humans in India. They reveal early humans' relationships with their environment, social organization, spiritual beliefs, and symbolic thinking. Indian rock art also shows a remarkable continuity with later tribal and folk art traditions, linking ancient creativity to modern cultural expressions.

Preservation Challenges and Efforts

Prehistoric paintings in India face threats from natural weathering, biological growth, pollution, and human interference such as vandalism and unregulated tourism. The Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) protects major sites like Bhimbetka, employing measures like controlled access, scientific conservation techniques, and digital documentation. International recognition, such as UNESCO World Heritage status, has helped raise awareness and funding for preservation.

Ancient Indian Painting

1. Ajanta Cave Paintings

- Located in Maharashtra, these rock-cut Buddhist cave temples date from 2nd century BCE to about 6th century CE.
- Technique: Fresco paintings using natural pigments on wet plaster.
- Themes: Life of Buddha, Jataka tales (stories of Buddha's previous lives), royal courts, daily life, and nature.
- Style: Naturalistic figures with expressive emotions, flowing drapery, and detailed backgrounds.

2. Buddhist Influence

- Paintings were predominantly religious, used to spread Buddhist teachings.
- Use of symbolic gestures (mudras), iconography, and storytelling.
- Emphasis on spiritual themes and moral lessons.

3. Early Manuscript Paintings

- Illustrated manuscripts on palm leaves or birch bark began appearing, mostly associated with Buddhist and Jain texts.
- Early illustrations were simple but set the foundation for later miniature traditions.

4. Gupta Period Contributions

- Considered a classical age of Indian art, painting became more sophisticated with better use of colors and proportion.
- Temples and caves started incorporating painted panels with divine figures and floral motifs.

Medieval Indian Painting

1. Miniature Painting Tradition

- Flourished under royal patronage in various regional courts from the 13th century onward.
- Characterized by small, detailed paintings on manuscripts, albums, or walls.

2. Mughal School of Painting

- Origin: Established by the Mughal emperors in the 16th century, combining Persian miniature techniques with Indian themes.
- Features: Realistic portraiture, detailed landscapes, and court scenes. Use of shading (chiaroscuro) and perspective.
- Famous artists: Basawan, Mir Sayyid Ali.
- Example subjects: Historical events, royal life, flora and fauna, and illustrations of Persian and Indian literature.

3. Rajput School of Painting

- Developed in the Rajput kingdoms of Rajasthan and Madhya Pradesh.
- Themes: Hindu epics (Ramayana, Mahabharata), devotional themes (Krishna Leela), nature, and folk tales.
- Style: Bold colors, stylized figures, flat perspectives, and decorative motifs.
- Sub-schools include Mewar, Bundi, Kota, and Jaipur styles.

4. Pahari School

- Originated in the Himalayan hill kingdoms like Kangra, Guler, and Basohli.
- Known for delicate brushwork and lyrical themes.
- Subjects include Krishna's life, romantic themes, and nature scenes.
- Colors: Soft pastels and natural shades.

5. Deccan School

- It flourished in the Deccan Sultanates (Bijapur, Golconda) blending Persian, Turkish, and indigenous influences.
- Features: Vibrant colors, exotic themes, and intricate designs.
- Subjects ranged from court scenes to mythical and religious narratives.

6. Folk and Tribal Paintings

- Styles such as Madhubani (Bihar), Warli (Maharashtra), Pattachitra (Odisha and West Bengal), and Gond (Central India).
- These paintings were more symbolic and ritualistic, created for festivals and ceremonies.
- Use of natural dyes, geometric patterns, and mythological stories.

Famous ancient Indian universities

- Nalanda University
 - Located in present-day Bihar, it was one of the world's first residential universities.
 - Flourished between the 5th and 12th centuries CE under Gupta and later Pala rulers.
 - Offered studies in Buddhist philosophy, logic, grammar, medicine, astronomy, and more.
 - Attracted students from China, Tibet, Korea, and Central Asia.
 - Featured large multi-storey libraries called Dharmaganja.
 - Destroyed by Turkic invader Bakhtiyar Khilji in the 12th century.

- Taxila University

- Situated in present-day Pakistan, it was a prominent center from at least 6th century BCE to 5th century CE.
- Known for teaching Vedas, medicine, law, military science, and politics.
- Students learned through the guru-shishya (teacher-student) tradition.
- Mentioned in ancient texts like the Mahabharata and Buddhist scriptures.
- Had renowned scholars like Chanakya (Kautilya) and Charaka.

- Vikramshila University

- Established in the 8th century CE by Pala ruler Dharmapala in present-day Bihar.
- Focused mainly on Buddhist studies, especially tantric Buddhism and logic.
- Had a large library and several monasteries attached.
- It was a rival to Nalanda in terms of scholarship and student population.
- Destroyed by Bakhtiyar Khilji's forces in the late 12th century.

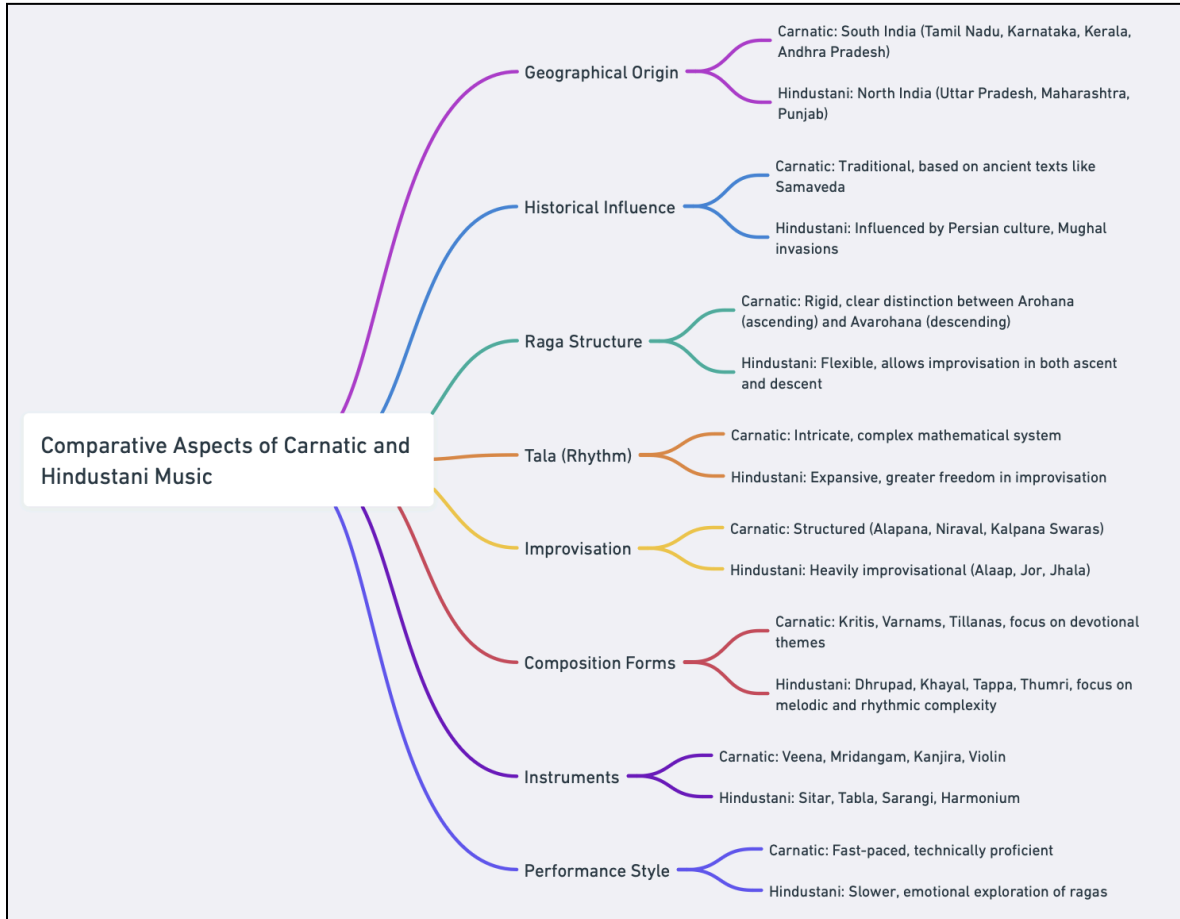
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Indian Music – Types of Music in India

India's musical heritage is incredibly rich and diverse, reflecting its vast cultural, linguistic, and regional variety. Indian music can broadly be classified into two main traditions — **Classical** and **Folk** — each with its own unique styles, instruments, and cultural significance. Classical music is highly structured and rooted in ancient texts, while folk music varies widely across different states and communities, often tied to local festivals, rituals, and daily life.

The two major classical music systems are **Hindustani** (North Indian) and **Carnatic** (South Indian) music, each with distinctive features but sharing common concepts like ragas (melodic frameworks) and talas (rhythmic cycles). Folk music encompasses a vast array of regional forms

such as Bhangra from Punjab, Baul from Bengal, Lavani from Maharashtra, and many others, showcasing the vibrant traditions of India's diverse populations.



Persian Literary Sources Reflecting Medieval India

1. **Political History:** Persian texts record rulers, battles, and administration.
Example: Tarikh-i-Firuz Shahi by Ziauddin Barani.
2. **Social & Cultural Life:** Describe customs, festivals, art, and Indo-Persian cultural blend.
Example: Ain-i-Akbari by Abul Fazl.
3. **Religion & Philosophy:** Highlight Sufism, Islamic thought, and religious interactions.
Example: Amir Khusrau's poetry.

4. **Court Patronage:** Literature flourished under royal support, reflecting court grandeur.
Example: Padshahnama by Abdul Hamid Lahori.
5. **Diplomacy & Foreign Relations:** Document political alliances and treaties.
6. **Foreign Travelers:** Their accounts add an outsider's view of India's society and polity.
Example: Ibn Battuta, Abdul Razzaq.
7. **Economy & Urban Life:** Detail trade, markets, and city life.
8. **Historical Value:** Despite biases, Persian works are key sources for medieval Indian history.

Key Persian Sources & Travelers

- *Tarikh-i-Firuz Shahi* (Ziauddin Barani)
- *Ain-i-Akbari & Akbarnama* (Abul Fazl)
- *Padshahnama* (Abdul Hamid Lahori)
- Amir Khusrau's poetry
- Travelers: Ibn Battuta, Abdul Razzaq, Niccolao Manucci

Significance of Bull and the Lion in Indian mythology, art, and architecture

Throughout India's rich cultural tapestry, few symbols have wielded as profound and enduring influence as the bull and the lion, whose sacred presence permeates every aspect of the subcontinent's spiritual, artistic, and architectural heritage. These majestic creatures transcend their earthly forms to embody fundamental cosmic principles—the bull representing divine strength, fertility, and unwavering devotion as Nandi, Shiva's eternal companion, while the lion symbolizes royal power, courage, and protective divinity through its association with goddesses like Durga and the Buddha's teachings.

Bull (Nandi)

1. Mythological Significance

- Sacred vehicle (vahana) of Lord Shiva.
 - Symbolizes strength, fertility, patience, and dharma (righteousness).
- 2. Religious Role**
- Represents devotion and service, often seen as Shiva's gatekeeper.
 - Associated with agricultural prosperity and cosmic order.
- 3. Artistic Depiction**
- Sculpted as seated or standing bulls in Shiva temples.
 - Decorated with bells, garlands, and sacred markings.
- 4. Architectural Presence**
- Prominently placed facing the main shrine in Shiva temples.
 - Often carved in stone or metal as large statues.
- 5. Famous Examples**
- Nandi at Brihadeeswarar Temple, Tamil Nadu (large monolithic sculpture).
 - Nandi Mandapa in various South Indian temples.

Lion (Simha)

- 1. Mythological Significance**
- Symbol of power, courage, and protection.
 - Associated with goddess Durga and Lord Vishnu's Narasimha avatar (lion-man).
- 2. Religious Role**
- Represents royal authority and divine protection.
 - Seen as guardian of sacred spaces and dharma.
- 3. Artistic Depiction**
- Carved in temple pillars, gateways, and thrones.
 - Lions often appear in fierce, dynamic postures.
- 4. Architectural Presence**
- Featured in the Lion Capital of Ashoka (national emblem of India).
 - Used as motifs on temple entrances, royal insignia, and sculptures.
- 5. Famous Examples**
- Lion Capital of Ashoka at Sarnath.

- Lion sculptures at Konark Sun Temple and many medieval temples.
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