

GUPTA AGE (319-550) Art and Architecture

Architecture

- There are no surviving palaces or forts of Gupta period but a few temples survive.
- Gupta period marks the advent of structural temple architecture.
- Oldest temple in Indian subcontinent is Sanchi Temple
- 2nd oldest Dashaavatar temple (Deogarh Jhansi) dedicated to Vishnu
- Deogarh temple became trendsetter in temple design and architecture. It had two important features:
 - First temple in India with pyramidal shape (Shikhar Style) and
 - Mandap (Raised platform in temple's courtyard where spiritual ceremonies take place.)
 - Garbh Griha is most important part in temple. Presiding deity of the temple is kept here.

DIFFERENT STYLES OF ARCHITECTURE IN THE GUPTA PERIOD:
Dravida Style - a second storey (Vimana - South Indian style) The tower/shikhar consists of progressively smaller storeys of pavilions.
Nagara Style - Shikara (North Indian style) Himalayas to Vindhyas. The tower/shikhar is beehive/curvilinear shaped.
Vesara Style - Mixed North and South Indian style. Vindhyas to Krishna
The styles portrayed local culture, faith, availability of local material as well as skill of craftsmen

- Bhitargaon temple (Kanpur UP) was dedicated to Shiva is the first brick temple; earlier temples were made of stone.
- Nachna Kuthar temple MP dedicated to Parvati

Sculptures

- The icons and standards of Brahmanical, Jain and Buddhist divinities were perfected, which served as ideal models of for later centuries.
- They were different from Gandhara (Greco-Roman), Mathura, and Amravati. Gupta style was indigenous.
- Some typical highlights of Gupta style architecture:
 - Sculptures and paintings of Buddha and his life predominantly depicted in **Jataka Tales**
 - Sculptures of Buddha were with curly hair style like that of Indo-Greek Style
 - Facial expressions were much better depicted, statues depicted were fully clothed and not erotic
 - Abhaya Mudra (Blessing form)
 - Hollow-divine light (aura) in background
- Three statues became very famous : Mathura (Standing Buddha), Sarnath (Sitting Buddha) and Sultanganj (Standing Buddha, Bhagalpur, Bihar, made of Copper)
- Evidences of Brahminical sculpture are found on walls of Dashavtar temple, where Vishnu is shown resting on Sheshnag

Paintings

- Evidences from Ajanta (Maharashtra) and Bagh (MP)
- Significance of Ajanta and Bagh
- Highly detailed, long lasting colors, perfection in technique
- Ajanta caves are 29 rock-cut Buddhist cave monuments which date from the 2nd century BCE to about 480 or 650 CE. The site is a protected monument in the care of the Archaeological Survey of India, and since 1983, the Ajanta Caves have been a UNESCO World Heritage Site.
- Like other ancient Buddhist monasteries, Ajanta was a kind of college monastery.
- The earliest group of caves consists of caves 9, 10, 12, 13 and 15A credited to Satvahanas
- Paintings are in 10, 11, 16, 17 & 19. Last three caves have paintings are from Gupta period

Style and theme of paintings

- Paintings are done in Frescoe style, in this style paintings are executed when the plaster on walls is still wet.
- The themes are derived from Jataka tales, (Part of last Segment of Sutta Pitaka)
- According to this legend Buddha had more than 550 lives which are described in Jataka tales
- In Cave #16 the theme is of dying princess (depicted dying scene of Buddha's sister-in-law)
- Cave #17 depicts Mother and Son, Rahul and wife Yashodhara meeting Buddha when he was leaving the palace.
- Importance of paintings: We can get a fair idea of life and culture dating back to 1600 years.

Bagh Caves

- The **Bagh Caves** are a group of nine rock-cut monuments, examples of Indian rock-cut architecture, situated among the southern slopes of the Vindhyas in Dhar district in Madhya Pradesh
- Most significant of these caves is Cave 4, commonly known as the *Rang Mahal* (Palace of Colors).
- Most paintings were carefully removed in 1982 and today can be seen in Archaeological Museum of Gwalior.
- Theme is derived from Buddhism
- Paintings also depict the life of common man, flora & fauna is also present.

Decline of Gupta Dynasty

- Gupta's didn't have direct control over their entire kingdom. When their kingdom became weak, after death of Skandagupta, defeated kings became independent
- In areas of direct control, they had given land grants to ministers and monasteries and these feudals became very prosperous as well as powerful. Concept of state-within a state started emerging, which weakened imperial authority of the Guptas.
- Rulers after Skandagupta were weak both in terms administration as well as military strength.
- Economy was on decline. There was a general lack in growth of trade, crafts and industry.
- This in turn affected military power of Guptas and regional powers became stronger.
- Guilds were operating independently, so there were multiple factors for the decline of Guptas.

After Guptas there was a political vacuum. There were no major kings. Regional dynasties became prominent.

Hunas, Pallavas etc. were some larger regional dynasties. This trend continued till 6th century A.D.

Harshavardhana (606-647)

- He was last great king of ancient times, he belonged to Vardhan or Pushyabhuti dynasty
- His father Prabhakarvardhana was a king in Thanesar, who gave his kingdom to his elder son Rajyavardhana. He was killed in a conspiracy by rulers of Malwa and Bengal. Harshvardhana ascended to the throne thereafter.
- Harshvardhana was a great empire builder. His capital was in Kannauj.
- He was good Administrator; administration was centralized and similar to Gupta Empire.
- Empire extended from Bengal to Sindh and Himalayas to Vindhya
- Kashmir and Kamarup (Assam) were not part of his kingdom though they acknowledged his sovereignty.
- He maintained a very large army.
- He made Kannauj (UP) as his capital
- He wrote three dramas,
 - Priyadarshika
 - Naganad and
 - Ratnavali
- Banbhatta was the Court poet and biographer of Harsha and wrote two works which provide insight to his kingdom. His famous works are:
 - Harsha Charita (Sanskrit)
 - Kadambari - a drama (Sanskrit)
- Harsha Vardhan divided his income in four parts for family, army-administration, religious endowments & charity.
- Harsha was first North Indian King to be defeated by a South Indian Ruler when he invaded southern region.
- In South India Harsha's contemporary was a very famous king Pulakeshin II (Chalukya) with kingdom at Badami/Vatapi (modern day Karnataka). Aihole inscriptions provide evidence of this defeat though Banbhatta didn't mention Harsha's defeat in his books

Kannauj Assembly

- An all religions conference took place in his capital Kannauj in which scholars and priests of different sects were invited. Presidential address was given by Hiuen Tsang who supported Mahayanist sect of Buddhism
- Priest class of Brahmins got very annoyed and burnt down the conclave. Harsha punished about 500 Brahmins
- Except for this incident he is regarded as tolerant king

Festival in Prayag- Mahamoksha Parishad

- It was held every 5th year and in this festival Shiva, Ganesh, Buddha were revered, one day was for devoted for charitable purposes.
- Harsha personally participated in these festivals. Here he met Hiuen Tsang for the 6th and the last time

The two famous Chinese travelers; Fa Hien and Hiuen Tsang

Fa Hien (Faxien) was first Chinese pilgrim as well as Buddhist monk who visited during 399-415 during the reign of Chandragupta Vikramaditya (380-415)

- Purpose: to collect the holy Buddhist texts (Pitakas, Jataka tales) from Northern India

- He came through land route but went by sea route via Sri Lanka.
- His travelogue didn't mention any king (Chandraputa II of Pataliputra)
- He explains about the society; various castes, faith and culture of India, was shocked by practice of untouchability.
- He also gives details about lavishness of Pataliputra, and throne of king.

Hiuen Tsang

- He was also a Chinese pilgrim who visited India for 15 years during first half of seventh century to study and collect the holy Buddhist texts from Northern India
- He wrote his impressions in book called Shi-yu-qui or "The Records of Western World"
- He came and went back by land route.
- Mentioned three kings of that period, Harshavardhana, Narshimhavarman (Pallavas Kanchi, TN), Pulakeshin II (Chalukyas – Badami Karnataka)
- He studied yoga shastra for one and half years in Nalanda, he also taught in the same university for 9 years
- Information that is available about Nalanda University during the 6th and 7th centuries A.D. is due to the accounts left by Hiuen-Tsang.:
 - Nalanda attracted students from places as distant as China and South-east Asia.
 - Nalanda was supported by the income from a number of villages which the monastery acquired over the years through donations.
 - Built during the days of Kumar Gupta
 - 1000 resident monks and 10000 students
 - Evidence of 3000 students was given I-tsing (7th century)
 - Admission to studentship in the University was extremely strict. Intending students had to undergo entrance test. Swarpdra was in charge for conduct of examination and Chief of monastery was Sheelbhadra

Important inscriptions of Gupta period

- Mathura inscriptions of Chandragupta II
- Eran stone inscription of Samudragupta.
- Gadhwa inscription of Chandragupta II
- Gadhwa stone inscription of Kumaragupta
- Indore Copper Plate inscription of Skandagupta.

Medieval India can be classified broadly into three parts:

1. Early Medieval 8-12th Century A.D.
2. Delhi Sultanate 12th-16th Century
3. Mughals 16-18th century

Why 8th century is considered as turning point? It is because a new phase in economy, politics and society was emerging

1. Early Medieval 8-12th Century A.D.

a) Tripartite struggle:

The Tripartite struggle describes the period between the 8th century and the 10th century which witnessed a struggle for the resources of the rich Gangetic Doab and town of Kannauj. The three kingdoms involved in this struggle were - The Pala dynasty of Bengal, the Gurjara Pratihara dynasty of Malwa and The Rashtrakutas in the South. All these rulers emerged almost together and vanished at similar time

Palas (Bengal and Bihar)

- First King was Gopala, who was elected by people
- His capital was at Gauda (N. Bengal)
- Two great rulers: Dharamapala and Devpala
- Dharamapala built Vikramshila Buddhist Monastery in Bhagalpur (Bihar)
- In Devpala's period empire expanded from Bengal to Punjab (Kannauj and Ganga Doab)
- Palas were patron of Buddhism (last political patrons of Buddhism). They sent monks to Tibet
- Palas also patronized various arts, sculpture and paintings (Popular in folk traditions of Bihar)

Gurjara Pratiharas (Literal meaning Protector)

- They were called Gurjara because of their origin from Gujarat.
- Pratiharas (Agni Kuleen) claimed to be descendants of Lakshman
- Important Kings of dynasty; Nagabhatta I, Nagabhatta II, Mihir Bhoj
- Last two were two great kings with capital at Jodhpur, they also controlled Kannauj and Ganga Doab
- Rajshekhar famous courtier of Dharamapala was Sanskrit poet

Rashtrakutas

- They were rulers of Maharashtra with capital at Manyakhet
- Important Kings: Dhruva, Govinda III
- Dhruva was first south India king to come to north and defeat a North Indian King
- Govinda III defeated Nagabhatta II of Pratiharas and established control of Kannauj and Ganga Doab
- He built Ellora caves (37 caves)
- Ellora caves are associated with all three religions Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism, while Ajanta mainly with Buddhism
- He also built Kailashnath temple caves.
- Parsis came to India during this period and were given shelter by Rashtrakutas. Parsis were persecuted by Muslims in their native land of Iran.

2) RAJPUTS 8TH- 12TH CENTURY**Origin of Rajputs** (Rajput word means horse traders)

- Most accepted theory was given by Col. James Todd in his book, "Annals and Antiquities of Rajasthan"
- According to him Rajputs were not indigenous; they were foreigners; Hunas & Shakyas settled in India
- Since Hindu society was hierarchial, so they were given status of Kshatriya caste. Kshatriyas now had had two branches (Original from Vedic Ages and Rajputs)
- Originals didn't treat them equally and they were called as Patit Kshatriyas
- To claim that they were not ordinary, Rajputs developed various theories for social acceptance like.
 - Agnikulin vanshi
 - Suryavanshi vanshi
 - Chandravanshi
- Stories of their origin are written in "Rajataranginis"
- This legend is also described in Bhavishya Purana, Agnikulin Rajputs originated from yagya performed by Vashishta.
- Four clans of Agnikulin origins were:
 - i. Pratihars –Oldest of Rajputs e.g. Nagabhatta II, Mihir Bhoj,

- ii. Parmars: e.g. Raja Bhoj
- iii. Solankis/Chaulikyas Maharashtra e.g. Mulraj I, Mulraj II
- iv. Chauhans Rajasthan Delhi and Punjab e.g. Prithviraj Chauhan
- Clan of **Chandravanshi** linked themselves to Lord Moon
- Chandellas Madhya Pradesh built Khajuraho temples
- Clans of **Suryavanshi** origin claimed to be descendents of Sun
- Cholas and Chalukyas (Southern Part)
- Rajputs were further divided into 36 clans

Political system during the Rajputs

- This period is considered to be the period of feudalism in India
- Military officers were powerful and controlled administration, right to collect taxes, maintain law and order, and punish people. Since military officers were powerful war was inevitable.
- Rajput Kings claimed that they had divine powers.
- A king was considered ideal when he attacked his neighbour after Vijayadashmi Day, the day on which Lord Rama defeated Ravana (King was Ram and neighbour was Ravana)
- Cause of frequent wars: Fertile lands had been given as grants to temples and priests. They had to fight wars to get more lands by defeating other kings. Wars were frequently undertaken for making and remaking of kingdom.
- Also a king was judged by the number of wars he had won; so great kings had to win many wars
- The same theory applied to soldiers. Veergatha written by poets described the bravery of the soldiers.
- Martyrs were glorified by the poets and writers to encourage more people to join army.
- Rajputs were told that they had only two options; either win in a war or achieve martyrdom.
- Those who tried to escape were condemned.
- Top posts in administration were given to upper caste Rajputs.
- Lineage was very important, only at soldier level, all castes were recruited.
- Social composition of Rajput Army was one important reason for their defeat from Turks

Society of the Rajput Kingdoms

- Society depends on economy of kingdom. In Rajput period craft and industry had almost declined.
- It further led to decline in both external and internal trade and commerce.
- Villages were forced to become self-sufficient and isolated. They were not exposed to external circumstance/ changes/ progress leading to social orthodoxy.
- Rajput period was actually strengthening the caste system.
- Professions which were originally their class now became their castes.

Caste System

- Existence of 4 major castes
- Priest class were getting huge land grants and donations from the kings
- Rituals of yagna and sacrifice became popular in this period which was monopolized by priest class.
- Temples and education centers were controlled by priests
- Brahmins even had power to punish people in their lands (agrahar land)
- Kshatriyas and Rajputs had top posts in army.
- Ruling class, Rajputs, enjoyed great financial privileges.
- Vaisya: Maximum tax burden on this class, trade and commerce were not flourishing, decline in urban centres, very less no. of coins were in circulation, signifying decline in trade.

Rajput Architecture

- The Rajput Rulers had a keen sense of beauty in Art and Architecture which is seen in the artistic excellence of their temples, forts and palaces. The Indo-Aryan style of architecture developed in North India and Upper Deccan and the Dravidian style in South India during the Rajput period. Both sculpture and architecture attained a high degree of excellence.
- The Khajuraho Temple at Bundelkhand (the present Chatarpur district of Madhya Pradesh) was constructed by the Chandela ruler of Jejabhukti between 950 A.D. and 1050 A.D. About twenty five temples in all, these belong to the Shaiva, Vaishnava, and Jain sects.
- The Khandariya Mahadeva Temple also enshrining a linga is the largest monument of Khajuraho.
- The Parswanatha temple built in 950-70 AD dedicated to the first Jain Tirthankara is the finest and largest of Jain temples in Khajuraho.
- Architecture reached a high degree of artistic excellence in the 11th and 12th century AD. During the rule of the Chalukyas as seen in their Jain temples at Girnar and Palitana in Gujarat.
- The 11th century Jain temples at Mount Abu in Rajasthan built by the ministers of the Solanki rulers show the heights of perfection reached the artists of that time.
- The Dilwara Jain Temples, famous for architectural beauty, were built about 1088 AD during the reign of Vimalasah

Position of women in Rajput society

- Conditions of women had deteriorated both socially and politically because of decline in societal values.
- Women's condition had to suffer from issues like: Polygyny, Sati, Child marriage, Female infanticide, Purdah system
- Jauhar (Mass suicide). Women were denied basic education, social and political rights

THE PALLAVAS

- Pallav stands for creepers (lata in Sanskrit). They were rulers in South India (modern Tamil Nadu)
- The founder of dynasty was Singh Vishnu, who had his capital at Kanchi (Kanchipuram, Tamil Nadu)
- There were two great kings in Pallava dynasty: Mahedravarma & Narsimhavarman (7th century)
- Pallavas had contributed in field of Temple architecture:
 - Temple located in Mahabalipuram (Mamallapuram) Near Chennai, TN
 - Famous eight 'Rath Temples' built by Narshimhavarmana
 - Ganesha temple, Padiri-rath temple, Velayankutti rath temple, Draupadi rath temple, Bhim-rath temple, Arjun rath temple, Nakul-Sehdev temple
- The Pallavas started declining in 8th century A.D.

THE CHOLAS (9th to 12th century)

- They were feudatories of Pallavas and are known for contribution in field of administration and architecture.
- Their capital was in Tanjore (Tanjavur)
- Two important kings of Chola dynasty were: Raj Raja I 985-1014, Rajendra Chola 1014-953
- King Raj Raja I attacked and annexed northern part of Sri Lanka and Maldives
 - He built a temple in Tanjore – Brihadeswara temple, which is first granite temple in India and is dedicated to Shiva
 - He also installed own statue along with wife's statue, which was a unique tradition started by Cholas and carried on by later empires.

- His son Rajendra Chola I 1014-1044 was the greatest king of the Cholas
- Annexed entire Sri Lanka and Lakshwadweep Islands
- He is said to have controlled three seas surrounding India
- He also attacked (Not annexed) Java and Sumatra, with a purpose to protect the interest of Indian traders
- **Cholas had strongest navy empires of early medieval times in India**
 - Some historians call Bay of Bengal as Chola's lake
 - Raj Raja I was first king of deep south India to attack North India (upto Bengal/Ganga)
 - He adopted the title of Gangaikonda Chola
 - Built a new city "Gangaikonda Cholapuram" (Tamil Nadu)
 - Built a famous temple Brihadeshwara temple in Gangaikonda Cholapuram
 - Built a lake Ganga Chola Lake in the new city
 - Sculpture in Temples were of two types which are: temples sculptures and sculpture which stood alone
 - Bronze Nataraja in dancing form of Lord Shiva with four hands is a very famous sculpture
- **Administration Of Cholas**
 - They had unique village administration. It was very autonomous in nature with little interference from the Kings.
 - In matters of local administration representatives were elected by people
 - Assemblies were of three kinds:
 - Ur: assembly of villages
 - Sabha: assembly of Brahmins
 - Nagaram: assembly of traders
 - Uthiramerur Inscription during the reign of King Prantaka 903-953 gives description of Chola's administration.
 - According to the inscription there was an executive council of 30 members, further divided into committees
 - Garden: Taking care of plantation
 - Golden: fixing price of gold
 - Tank Committee: water management in villages
 - A representative for each of 30 wards was elected through Kudavolai system. Names of the contestants from whom one could be chosen were written on palmleaf tickets. These palmleaves were put into a pot and shuffled. A Child would pick up a slip and the member was thus chosen
 - Sabha members had to satisfy certain qualification conditions like age limit (35-70), education in Vedas, he should be land owner (one veli of land, atleast 1.5 acres), Not involved in any sin or crime (thieves, drunkards, or those who had killed Brahmin, women or cow)
 - After demitting his office term of 1 yr he could not contest for the next 3 years
 - Members of centre administration were present but did not interfere in the elections (observer)

HISTORY OF ISLAM

- Islam stands for peace; second meaning is surrender before Allah/God.
- Derived from word "slim"; peace. Complete meaning is "peacefully surrender before Allah". F
- Founder of Islam is Prophet Mohammed was born in 570 A.D. at Mecca. He died in 632 in Medina.

Fundamentals of Islam

According to Islam there are two important books; Quran and Hadith

- Quran was revealed by God to Prophet Mohammed and recorded during his life time
- Hadith records sayings, doings and approvals of Prophet Mohammed

First principal of Islam

- God is one and formless
- Belief in Prophet hood (Messengers) and holy books;
- In Islam it is believed that there were a series of Messengers starting from the first man on earth i.e. Adam and the last messenger was Prophet Mohammed.
- The major revelations were Torah (Old Testament), Zaboor (revealed to David), Anjeel (New Testament), Quran.
- It is believed in Islam that all previous books before Quran were lost either partially completely.
- They carried early laws which were meant for particular period or place.
- Quran is book for all mankind irrespective of place or origin and will last till Qayamat.
- Belief in Qayamat (day of judgement) when a person's deeds would be judged. Similar to Moksha, Parinam Nirvan
- In Islam concept of rebirth is rejected, they believe in resurrection. It is believed that a person will be reawakened on "Day of Judgment" as same person to send them to Heaven or Hell (Jannat or Jahannum)
- Followers would get Heaven (eternal life) and non-followers will get hell.
- Those who accepted the principals would be Muslims and have to adhere to certain conditions:
 - He has to perform Namaz – 5 times a day
 - Zakat (Alms/tax) – He has to give alms of value of 2.5% of his wealth provided his total annual income in lunar year is more than equivalent of 7.5% tolas of value of gold. One tola is 10 grams.
 - Roza in month of Ramzan – He has to undertake fasting in entire 9th calendar month of lunar calendar. Muharram is first month of this calendar. Women are exempted under some conditions
 - Hajj – A Muslim has to undertake pilgrimage to Mecca in last Islamic month Zi-ul-Hajj (12th month) out of his legal income at least once in lifetime provided he has financial ability.

Fiqh (jurisprudence)

It is the interpretation of Quran and Hadith in simple language by the medieval scholars. Based on interpretations of scholars where schools have emerged

- Hanafi school is mostly followed in India
- Ja'fari school followed by Shia
- Shaafi'i School followed by Kerala Muslims

Shia and Sunni Muslims

- After the death of Prophet Mohammed, issue arose for the post of next Khalifa (religious-cum-political head of the Islamic Community. There was struggle for power between various sects. The first three caliphs were elected/chosen.
- The first four Caliphs were
- Abu-bakr, Omar, Usman, Ali
- The followers of fourth Caliph, Shian-e-Ali were known as Shias.

Advent of Islam in India

- Islam didn't come through invaders. It came through Arab traders in south India.
- The first group of Muslims who came to India was of traders

First recorded attacks of Arabs in India

- 711-712 by Muhammaed Bin Qasim, he invaded Sindh because Arabs believed that Muslim traders were being persecuted by Indians.
- The ruler at that time was Dahir (king of Sindh) of Chacha Dynasty
- Chachnama – History of Sindh later written by Ali Kufi

- Arabs established rule in Sindh after the attacks and ruled for almost 300 yrs.
- They could not invade other parts of India mainly because of strong kings (Gurjar Pratiharas)
- **Turks** were a group of tribes of central Asia. They were not one homogenous group.
- The initial group of Turks who invaded India were:
 - Mahmood of Ghazni
 - Shabuddin Mohammed Ghori

Mahmood of Ghazni

- Ghazni was king of Afghanistan (998-1030 AD)
- He invaded India 17 times, the first attack was in 1000 AD
- Most famous attack was 1025 A.D. at Somnath Temple
- Purpose of his attacks was simply to plunder wealth, since temples were very rich they wanted to exploit wealth.
- He earned title of 'Butt Shikan' destroyer of idols
- Al Beruni, a great scientist came to India along with him (11th century A.D.) but settled in Varanasi and learnt Sanskrit
 - He wrote a book Tahqiq –I – Hind or Kitab-ul-Hind. In this book he explained about culture, society, prevalent system of untouchability
 - This book is known as "Mirror of 11th century of India".
 - The short coming of the book was that it relied too much on Indian sources