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Indian Culture-4: Sculpture

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Model Questions

Prelims MCQs

Please check Prelims Model Questions at the end of this module

Mains Model Questions

1. The “lost wax technique” seems to be an ancient technique still prevalent in many parts of India. Discuss the key features of this technique.
2. “The terracotta figurines had a universal popularity in the ancient world and Harappan culture was no exception to this.” Discuss.
3. With reference to the Maurya era art, what do you understand by the Court art and the Popular Art? Discuss with examples.
4. Point out the differences between the Asokan Pillar and the Achaemenian Pillar to show that the former is not an imitation of the latter.
5. Mauryan court-art, with all its dignified bearing, monumental appearance and civilised quality, forms but a short and isolated chapter of the history of Indian art. Discuss.
6. Both sculpture and architecture witnessed a new efflorescence during the Shunga-Kanva age. Discuss.
7. “Spiritually and formally the Sunga-Kanva art was opposed to Maurya art and stood for different motive and direction.” Explain.
8. Kusana period is known for rise of a new art movement with abundant dimensions and creativity. Examine.
9. “Mathura art represents an important formative stage in the history of Indian art that gave impetus to other arts.” Examine.
10. The Gandhara sculpture owed as much to the Romans as to the Greeks. Explain.
11. Write a note on the Utsava Murtis tradition and Tamalana System with reference to ancient metal sculpture in India.
12. Discuss the Tandava dance as recorded in the early Indian inscriptions.



Sculpture in Indus Valley Civilization

The Indus Valley art forms included sculptures, seals, pottery, gold jewellery, terracotta figures etc.

Stone Sculpture

In stone, the two most discussed male figures are male torso and the bearded priest.



Male Torso



Bearded Priest

Male Torso

The Male torso is a red sandstone figure, which has socket holes in the neck and shoulders for the attachment of head and arms. The frontal posture of the torso has been consciously adopted. The shoulders are well carved and the abdomen looks slightly prominent. This nude male torso is considered to be a remarkable object that in its balanced lines stands somewhat equal to the beautiful art of Gandhara two thousand years later.

Bearded Priest

This **steatite figure** of the bearded man interpreted as a priest or priest king is draped in a shawl coming under the right arm and covering the left shoulder. His shawl is decorated with trefoil patterns. His eyes are a little elongated, and half-closed as in meditation.

The nose is well formed and of medium size; the mouth is of average size with close-cut moustache and a short beard and whiskers; the ears resemble double shells with a hole in the middle. The hair is parted in the middle, and a plain woven fillet is passed round the head.

An armband is worn on the right hand and holes around the neck indicate a necklace. The shawl on the shoulder of the bearded priest indicates that the handicraft of embroidery was commonly practiced in Indus Valley Civilization.

Bronze Casting

The most discussed example of metal sculpture in context with Indus Valley is the **Dancing Girl**. Metal casting was popular at all the major centres of the Indus Valley Civilisation, for example the copper dog and bird of Lothal, bull from Kalibangan and the human figures of copper and bronze from Harappa and Mohenjodaro.

Dancing Girl

This is one of the best known artefacts from the Indus Valley. It's a four-inch-high **copper figure**, found in Mohenjodaro. It depicts a girl whose long hair is tied in a bun. Bangles cover her left arm, a bracelet and an amulet or bangle adorn her right arm, and a cowry shell necklace is seen around her neck.



Her right hand is on her hip and her left hand is clasped. She is resting her weight on one leg in a very natural fashion, as in the *contraposto techniques* of later sculptures. The girls seems be in what is called **Tribhanga** posture. The jaunty manner and liveliness of the figure are remarkable. She is full of expression and bodily vigour and conveys a lot of information.

Terracotta Sculptures

The terracotta figurines had a universal popularity in the ancient world and Harappan culture was no exception to this. There are plenty of terracotta seals and figurines recovered from Harappan sites which range from toys to cult objects such as mother goddess to birds and animals , including monkeys, dogs, sheep, cattle-both humped and humpless bulls.

IVC Figures



Dancing Girl



Mother Goddess

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The terracotta figurines of Indus Valley were modelled with great details of eyes, hand and neck. However, terracotta images are inferior in depiction of the human forms in comparison to the copper and bronze images of the Indus Valley. Among the human figurines, the female were more common. The head dress in such figurines is more elaborate.

Mother Goddess

The most important terracotta figure in the Indus Valley Civilization is the figure of Mother Goddess. This figure is crude standing female adorned with necklaces hanging over prominent breasts and wearing a loin cloth and a girdle.

The most distinct feature of the mother goddess figurines is a *fan-shaped head-dress with a cup-like projection on each side*. Rest of the facial figures are very crude and distant from being realistic.

Lost Wax Technique

Bronze casting was a widespread practice during the Indus Valley Civilization, particularly at Harappa. Bronze statues were made by the “lost wax technique”. This practice is still prevalent in many parts of the country particularly the Himachal Pradesh, Odisha, Bihar, Madhya Pradesh and West Bengal. In each region, a slightly different technique is used. Under this technique, the beewax is first melted over an open fire and then strained through a fine cloth into cold water. The bee wax immediately solidifies and it is now passed thru a pharni, so that the wax comes out of it in the shape



of noodle like wires. These wax wires are now used to make a shape of the entire image first. After that, this image is covered with a paste of clay, sand and other materials such as cow dung. On one side, an opening is kept. When it becomes dry, the wax was heated and the molten wax was drained out through a tiny hole. The hollow mould thus created was filled with molten metal which took the original shape of the object.

Mauryan Sculpture

The Maurya period is marked by an impressive progress in the Indian sculpture. Dr. Ananda Coomarswamy differentiates the Mauryan sculptures into **Court art** and the **Popular Art**. The **Court art** includes the pillars and their capitals while the popular art includes the works of sculptors such as the *Yakshas* and *Yakshinis*. The Yaksha image from Parkam and Yakshini Image from Besnagar are examples of popular art.

Maurya Art Examples



Lion Capital (Court Art)



Yaksha and Didarganj Yakshini (Popular Art)

Influence of Religions on Maurya Sculptures

In those times, the religious practices had many dimensions and were not confined to just one particular mode of worship. At the same time, the Buddhism became the most popular social and religious movement during Maurya era.

Yaksha worship was very popular before and after the advent of Buddhism and it was well assimilated in Buddhism and Jainism. Thus, the *concept of religious sculpture was predominant during the Mauryan Empire*.

Influence of Foreign Countries on Maurya Sculpture

It is a well-known fact that the first three Mauryan emperors, Chandragupta, Bindusara and Aśoka, maintained friendly relations with the Hellenic West, particularly with the court of the great Seleucid kings who may be described as successors of Alexander, the Great and of the Achaemenids



of Iran as well.

This may indicate the source of extraneous influences, and an adaptation of Achaemenids models has been recognised in the Edicts of Aśoka and in the remains of the Mauryan palace in the imperial city of Pataliputra.

But the Mauryan pillars are different from the Achaemenid pillars. The Mauryan pillars are rock-cut pillars thus displaying the carver's skills, whereas the Achaemenid pillars are constructed in pieces by a mason.

Maurya Court Art

During the Maurya era, excellent stone sculpture comes into full being all at once. The stone was now used all over the country for sculpture as well as architecture. Further, bright polish was imparted to the stone surface during Maurya era. Mauryan art is notable for bright mirror like polish as well as a huge variety of its creations. This art is visible in stone pillars, railings, parasols, capitals, animal and human sculptures and several other motifs besides.

However, the best specimens of Maurya court art are the huge number of monolithic columns with their majestic animal capitals. Generally speaking, each column consists of two parts, the shaft and the capital. The shaft, circular in section and slightly tapering, is made from a single block of stone and has a graceful and elegant proportion. The capital, monolithic like the shaft, was divided into three parts by an inverted lotus, often called 'bell', abacus and a crowning sculpture in the round.

The surface of both the shaft and the capital was chiselled with extraordinary precision and accuracy. The bell was decorated with highly stylized longitudinal lotus-petals with sharp and thin ridges in the middle and wide and roundish border moldings.

Stone pillars were erected all over the Mauryan Empire with inscriptions engraved on them. The top portion of the pillar was carved with capital figures such as bull, the lion, the elephant, etc. Every capital figure stands on a square or circular abacus. The abacuses have been decorated by stylized lotuses.

The important places where the pillars have been found are Basarah-Bakhira, Lauriya- Nandangarh, Rampurva, Sankisa and Sarnath.

These pillars were carved in two types of stone viz.

- Spotted red and white sandstone from the region of Mathura.
- Buff-coloured fine grained hard sandstone usually with small black spots quarried in the Chunar near Varanasi.

The uniformity of style in the pillar capitals suggests that they were all sculpted by craftsmen from the same region. They were inscribed with edicts of Ashoka on Dhamma or righteousness. The animal capital as a finely carved life like representation. Noteworthy are the lion capital of Sarnath,



the bull capital of Rampurva and the lion capital of Laurya Nandangarh.

Examples of Maurya Court Art

Lion Capital at Sarnath

- The Mauryan pillar capital found at Sarnath popularly known as the Lion Capital, which is now our national symbol, is considered to be the finest example of Mauryan sculptural tradition.
- The capital originally consisted of five component parts:
 - The shaft, which is broken in many parts now
 - A lotus bell base
 - A drum on the bell base with four animals proceeding clockwise
 - The figures of four majestic lions
 - The crowning element, Dharmachakra, a large wheel, was also a part of this pillar. However, this wheel is lying in a broken condition and is displayed in the site museum at Sarnath. Chakras were also made on the circular drum under the feet of the lions.
- The capital without the crowning wheel and the lotus base has been adopted as the National Emblem of Independent India.

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The four voluminous roaring lion figures firmly stand on a circular abacus which is carved with the figures of four animals – *a striding elephant, a galloping horse, a walking bull and a prancing lion*. Four lions placed back-to-back face the cardinal directions, **indicating the spread of dharma**. These are formal and stylised and are reminiscent of the Persian tradition.

The four lions on the Sarnath pillar originally supported a large chakra, or wheel. The chakra is an important symbol of cosmic order in Upanishadic thought. In Buddhism, it represents the *Dharmachakrapravartana* (the first sermon by the Buddha), which has become a standard symbol of this great historical event in the life of the Buddha.

Four other animals were also shown proceeding clockwise around the drum, suggesting the movement of the wheel of dharma. Unlike the lions above, these animals are made in a highly naturalistic manner.

The precision with which this capital has been carved shows that the Mauryan sculptors had considerable mastery in the sculptural techniques.

Pillar at Vaishali

The Asokan pillar at Vaishali is different from the earlier Ashokan pillars because it has only one lion capital. Location of this pillar is contiguous to the site where a Buddhist monastery and a sacred coronation tank stood. The lion faces north, the direction Buddha took on his last voyage.

Asoka Pillar at Allahabad

In Allahabad there is a pillar with inscriptions from Ashoka and later inscriptions attributed to



Samudragupta and Jehangir. The pillar is located inside the Allahabad Fort. It is assumed that the pillar was first erected at Kaushambi an ancient town some 30 kilometres west of Allahabad that was the capital of the Koshala kingdom. The Ashokan inscription is in Brahmi and is dated around 232 BC.

Pillars at Lauriya-Areraj and Lauriya-Nandangarh

The column at Lauriya-Nandangarh, 23 km from Bettiah in West Champaran district, Bihar has single lion capital. The hump and the hind legs of the lion project beyond the abacus. The pillar at Lauriya-Areraj in East Champaran district, Bihar is devoid of any capital.

Critical evaluation of Maurya Court Art

The most important function of the Mauryan pillars was to impress and over-awe the populace with the power and majesty of its rulers. This is evident from the compactness of the solid animal figures, their exaggerated forms and their conventional appearances, also the most imposing stateliness of the columns. But this renders Mauryan court-art to be individualistic in its essential character and ideology. It lacked deeper roots in the collective social will, taste and preference and was, therefore, destined to have an isolated and short life, coeval and coexistent with and within the limits of the powerful Mauryan court. That is the reason that Mauryan court-art, with all its dignified bearing, monumental appearance and civilized quality, forms but a short and isolated chapter of the history of Indian art.

Maurya Popular Art

The popular art in Maurya period is represented by images of Yakshas and Yakshinis. Yaksha refer to the nature-spirits, usually benevolent also known as fertility spirits. A yakshini is the female counterpart of the male Yaksha. Both Yaksha and Yakshini attend to Kubera, the Hindu god of wealth who rules in the mythical Himalayan kingdom of Alaka. Yaksha also refers to one of the Exotic Tribes of Ancient India. Yakshas and Yakshinis are the caretakers of the natural treasures. They have a prominent place in the Hindu, Jain and Buddhist literature and have become part of figure representation in Buddhist and Jaina religious monuments.

In India, large statues of Yakshas and Yakhinis, mostly in standing position, have been found at many places such as Patna, Vidisha and Mathura. Most common element among these images is the polished surface and clear physiognomic details.

Didarganj Yakshini

One of the finest examples of popular Maurya art is the **Yakshi figure** from Didarganj, Patna. This is a tall, well built, well-proportioned, free-standing sculpture in sandstone with a polished surface, reflecting the sophistication in the treatment of form and medium.

The Yakshini holds a chauri (flywhisk) in the right hand whereas the left hand is broken. The image shows sculptor's sensitivity towards the round muscular female human body. Folds of muscles are



properly rendered. The tightening of garment around the belly creates the effect of a bulging belly. The lower garment has been rendered with great care. Every fold of the garment on the legs is shown by protruding lines clinging to the legs, which create somewhat transparent effect. Heaviness in the torso is depicted by heavy breasts and impressive back.

Elephant sculpture at Dhauli

The rock cut sculpture of Elephant in Dhauli, near Bhubneshwar in Odisha represents the fore-part of an elephant carved over the Edicts of Aśoka, including the two specially meant for Kalinga.

In the modelling and execution of this elephant figure, one may recognise a note and feeling different from those manifested in the animal figures surmounting the pillar capitals. It represents a fine delineation of bulky volume and living flesh, natural to that animal, along with a dignified movement and linear rhythm that have no parallel except in the elephant figure in relief on the abacus of the Sarnath capital.

Facades of Lomus Rishi Cave

The rock-cut cave carved at Barabar hills near Gaya in Bihar is known as the Lomus Rishi cave. The facade of the cave is decorated with the semicircular chaitya arch as the entrance. The cave was patronised by Ashoka for the Ajivika sect. The Lomus Rishi cave is an isolated example of this period.

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Post Mauryan Sculpture

After the crumbling of Mauryan dynasty, the Sungas and Kushans came to power in the North and the Satvahanas in the south. Their period marked the beginning of sculptural idiom in the Indian sculpture wherein the physical forms were becoming more realistic, refined and expressive. The sculptors started mastering the art especially of the human body wherein it was carved in high relief and with vigour and heaviness.

The Ashokan stupas were enlarged and the brick and wood works were replaced with stone work. For instance the Sanchi stupa was enlarged and elaborate gateways were added. The Sungas reconstructed the railings around the Barhut stupa. They also built Torans and gateways around the stupa.

There is an inscription at the Barhut stupa which states that the Toran was constructed by the Sungas. The Torans indicate the influence of Hellenistic school and other foreign schools in Sunga architecture.

During this rule of Kanva and Sunga dyansty, a plenty of cave-temples, chaityas and stupas were built. The stupas of Bharhut, Bodhgaya and Sanchi and the amazing cave art of Udaygiri and Khandagiri remind us of the heights reached in sculpture. Human figures, dakshas-yakshas, figures of birds and beasts, plants and creepers were done in wonderfully intricate patterns; the walls of Ajanta



and Udaygiri are very smooth.

Comparison of Sunga-Kanva art with Maurya Art

Spiritually and formally the Sunga-Kanva art was opposed to Maurya art and stood for different motive and direction. The bas-reliefs of Bharhut, Bodh Gaya, Sanchi, Amaravati, etc. provide an illuminating commentary on the contemporary Indian life and attitude to life. These bas-reliefs were charana-chitras translated into stone.

The artists of the Sunga-Kanva period seem to have a special knack in depicting figures in all conceivable shapes, positions, and attitudes. If in Bharhut the figures show the great efforts of the artists Bodh Gaya distinctly shows the figures as work of better skill, more free and lively. Gaya was a step forward from Bharhut.

In the Sunga-Kanva period majority of the terracotta work consisted of female figures, richly dressed, well-disciplined body, magnificently modelled busts and elaborate hair-dressing.

Both sculpture and architecture witnessed a new efflorescence during the Shunga age. Art was cultivated at many a centre and the two great stupas of Bharhut and Sanchi give evidence of almost a continental planning.

Some other prominent examples of the finest sculpture of Post-Maurya period are found at Vidisha, Bodhgaya (Bihar), Jaggayyapeta (Andhra Pradesh), Mathura (Uttar Pradesh), Khandagiri-Udaigiri (Odisha), Bhaja near Pune and Pavani near Nagpur (Maharashtra).

It's worth note that till the development of the Gandhara and Mathura art school, Buddha was depicted mainly as symbols.

Post-Mauryan Art Examples



Queen Mahamaya's Dream (Barhut)



Sanchi Stupa Details



Yakshi; Barhut Stupa Railing



Sculptures at Barhut

Around 100 B.C., a great stupa was made at Bharhut, in the eastern part of present-day Madhya Pradesh. The railings of the stupa and its one surviving gate are at the Indian Museum in Kolkata. *This is the earliest stupa railing to have survived.* Unlike the imperial art of the Mauryas, the inscriptions on these railings show that the reliefs and figures were contributed by lay people, monks and nuns. Bharhut sculptures are the best examples of Post Maurya sculptures. These *mainly* include the images of Yaksha and Yakhshini akin to the Mauryan period.

Barhut is basically known for its Stupa which is thought to have been originally established by Asoka in the 3rd century BC, but was improvised and beautified during the Sunga period.

The nine-foot-high railing, or vedika, and the gateway, or torana, are made in imitation of the wooden architecture of that time. The railings create a path for the devotee to walk on as he goes around the revered stupa. As he proceeds, stories made on the railings remind him of the virtuous qualities of the Buddha. Jatakas, or tales of the previous lives of the Buddha, are used to exemplify the rules of conduct in everyday life.

The sculpture was mainly done in low relief in the panels of the stupa along with narratives which are in few words. The artists at Barhut have used the small space available on reliefs to depict the pictorial language very effectively to communicate stories. One of such pictorial narrative is the “Queen Mahamaya’s dream”. Queen Mahamaya was mother of Gautama Buddha. In this image, the queen is shown reclining on the bed whereas an elephant is shown on the top heading towards the womb of Queen Mayadevi.

Similarly, other sculptures depict the Jataka tales, for example the Ruru Jataka where the Bodhisattva deer is rescuing a man on his back. The other event in the same picture frame depicts the King standing with his army and about to shoot an arrow at the deer, and the man who was rescued by the deer is also shown along with the king pointing a finger at the deer.

Sculptures at Sanchi

The sculptural at Sanchi Stupa shows stylistic progression from Barhuta. The stupa-1 at Sanchi has upper as well as lower *pradakshinapatha* and four beautifully decorated toranas depicting various events from the life of the Buddha and the Jatakas.

In comparison to Barhut, the relief is high and filled up in the entire space. The depiction gets more naturalistic and rigidity in the contours gets reduced. The techniques of carving also appear to be more advanced than Barhut, however Buddhas continues to be prominently depicted as symbols than human figures. The narratives get more elaborated; however, the depiction of the dream episode remains very simple showing the reclining image of the queen and the elephant at the top. Some of the historical details such as historical narratives of the siege of the Kushinagara and



Buddha's visit to Kapilavastu etc. have been carved in details.

Mathura and Gandhara Schools of Art

Kushanas are considered to be the great patrons of art. Kushana period is known for rise of a new art movement with abundant dimensions and creativity. Mathura emerged as the new centre of art under the rule of the Kushana emperors – Kanishka, Huvishka and Vasudeva. The Mathura art represented an important formative stage in the history of Indian art. It is here that Buddha images came out of the cocoon of symbolism and slowly was carved out in iconographic forms.

During Kushana period, an exceedingly active school of sculpture and architecture flourished in Gandhara. The Gandhara school specialized in Buddha and Bodhisattva images, stupas and monasteries. These were built mostly of blue schist stone and of stone masonry. The first Buddha image appeared more or less simultaneously in Mathura and Gandhara regions in the first century C.E. under the **Kushana**; a flurry of images appeared during the reign of Kanishka. Thus, two schools, viz. **Mathura School of Art** and **Gandhara School of Art** flourished in the Kushana Era. Kushana had a cultural influence of the Hellenistic Greeks and this impact is seen in these schools of arts as well.

Mathura School of Art

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During the first century AD, Gandhara and Mathura School of Art flourished mainly during reign of Kushana emperor Kanishka. Mathura School had developed indigenously. The main traditional centre of production in this school was Mathura, and other important centres were Sarnath and Kosambi. The material used in this school was the **spotted red sandstone**. This art reached its peak during the Gupta period in 6th or 7th century.

The Mathura school images include those of Buddha, Bodhisattvas, Vishnu, Shiva, Yakshas, Yakshinis, Jinas etc. representing its vitality and **assimilative character** as a result of the religious zeal of Brahmanism, Jainism and Buddhism. Jina Image and Indigenous style of Buddha's image was a remarkable feature of Mathura art.

Master pieces of Mathura sculpture

Some of the master pieces of Mathura school include Wema Kadphises and Kaniska, Parkham Yaksa, Maholi Bodhisattva and seated Kubera.



Mathura School of Art Examples



Kanishka



Vima Kadphises



Buddha



Sarvatobhadra



Standing Buddha

Salient Features

Buddha Image

Before development of this school, Buddha was never depicted in a human form at any of Sanchi, Barhut or Gaya. Buddha was represented only as symbols, mainly two footprints or wheel. Artisans from Mathura initially continued to depict symbols but gradually the human image of Buddha appeared independent of other schools of art. This image of human Buddha was modelled on images of Yakshas rather. However, the initial image makers did not care for an anatomically correct Buddha image. Their images were a composite of *32 major and 80 minor laksana*, or marks.

The early images of the Buddha and the Bodhisattva are happy, fleshy figures with little spirituality about them. They have block like compactness and smooth close-fitting robe, almost entirely devoid of folds. In the second century AD, images got sensual with increased rotundness and became flashier. The extreme fleshiness was reduced by the third century AD and the surface features also got refined. The trend continued in the fourth century AD but later, the massiveness and fleshiness was reduced further and the flesh became more tightened. The halo around the head of Buddha was profusely decorated.

The later evolution of Human form of Buddha was associated with humanly beauty and heroic ideals. Both sitting and standing posture of Buddha and Bodhisattvas were carved out in the Mathura school. The Standing Buddhas of the Sravasthi Sarnath and Kausambhi are finest example of Buddha image under this school.

Vaishnava and Shaiva images

The images of Vaishnava and Shaiva faiths are also found at Mathura but Buddhist images are found in large numbers.

Jaina Images

The Sarvatobhadrika image of 4 Jinas standing back to back belongs to the Mathura school.

Position of women in Mathura art

Woman was at the centre of the picture and there are few creations in the whole range of Indian art



which can vie in elegance, delicacy and charm with the lovely feminine figures created by the Mathura artists.

Comparison with Gandhara Art

As mentioned above, the Mathura school had developed indigenously and the human Buddha image had rather modelled on existing Yaksha images. On the other hand, Gandhara School Buddha was modelled on existing *Hellenistic images and had such features.*

Analysis

How Mathura art was a formative art that gave impetus to other forms of art styles?

In many ways, Mathura school of art was a formative art which gave an impetus to other forms of art styles. Mathura represents an important formative stage in history of Indian art. It is here that one can fully observe the transition from symbolism to iconographic forms that were adopted later. Further, the forms of Brahmanical deities became crystallised at Mathura for the first time. The influence of Buddha image of the Mathura school spread far and wide both in India and Central Asia, reaching the great art centre of China. For example, the Buddha images at Tiang-lung Shan in Shansi are so similar to the seated images of Mathura that they seem to be the work of an Indian artist well acquainted with the Mathura school.

Gandhara School of Art

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The Gandhara School of art had also developed in first century AD along with Mathura School during reign of Kushana emperor Kanishka. Both Shakas and Kushanas were patrons of Gandhara School, which is known for the *first sculptural representations of the Buddha in human form.* The art of the Gandhara school was *primarily Mahayana and shows Greco-Roman influence.*

Salient Features

Gandhara School was based on Greco-Roman norms encapsulating foreign techniques and an alien spirit. It is also known as **Graeco-Buddhist School of art.** The foreign influence is evident from the sculptures of Buddha in which they bear resemblance to the Greek sculptures. Grey sandstone (Blue-grey Mica schist to be precise) is used in Gandhara School of Art.

Examples of Gandhara Art

The Bamyán Buddha of Afghanistan were the example of the Gandhara School. The other materials used were Mud, Lime, Stucco. However, Marble was NOT used in Gandhara art. Terracotta was used rarely. **Bimaran Casket** has yielded the earliest specimen of the Gandhara Art.

Major Centres

Jalalabad, Hadda, Bamaran, Begram & Taxila were the main centers where art pieces of Gandhara School have been found.

The Buddha image of Gandhara Art

The Gandharan Buddha image was inspired by *Hellenistic realism*, influenced by Persian, Scythian,



and Parthian models. In contrast with Mathura School, the Gandhara School images are known for their **anatomical accuracy, spatial depth, and foreshortening**. In this art, Buddha's curls were altered into wavy hair. The head of the Buddha matched very much with Greek God Apollo.

Buddha in Gandhara School



The Various Mudras of Buddha in Gandhara Art

In all the Buddha depicted in the Gandhara Art is shown making four types of hand gestures and this is a remarkable feature in this art. The gestures are as follows:

- Abhayamudra : Don't fear
- Dhyanamudra : meditation
- Dharmachakramudra: a preaching mudra
- Bhumisparshamudra: Touching the earth.

Greek & Roman Influence on Gandhara Art

Gandharan sculptures show strong Greek influences in the depiction of a 'man-god' and of wavy hair, sandals and extensive drapery. The depiction of Buddha as a 'man-god' in Gandharan sculpture is believed to be inspired from Greek mythology. Some examples of Gandharan art depict both Buddha and the Greek god, Hercules. Stucco plaster, which was commonly observed in Greek art, was widely used in Gandharan artwork for the decoration of monastic and cult buildings. The Roman and Greek Influences in Gandhara Buddha are enumerated as follows:

Roman influence

- **Artistic interpretation:** The legendary interpretation of Buddha is sometimes presented through roman motifs like triton.
- **Artistic techniques:** In artistic interpretation; Buddha of Gandhara is sometimes presented through roman art techniques using vine scroll; cherub wearing Garland
- **Anthropomorphic tradition:** The tradition of representation of Buddha in human form is inspired from roman anthropomorphic tradition .



- **Dresses:** The outer robe of Buddha of Gandhara like kaaya; antarvasa resembles to attire of roman gods.

Greek influences

- **Greek god as protector:** In many images of Buddha in Gandhara ; he is seen under the protection of Greek god Hercules.
- **Vajrapani:** Vajrapani found in the right hand of future Buddha is told as transformed symbol of Hercules who is seen as protector of Buddha.
- **Greek architectural influence:** Some images of Buddha in Gandhara are presented in Greek architectural environment bearing the affinity of Corinthian.
- **Artistic beauty:** The Apollo like face of Buddha; natural realism; wavy hair as seen in images of Buddha in Gandhara resembles to Hellenistic tradition.
- **Intellectual affinity:** The halo and bun of Gandhara Buddha signifies intellectual imbibitions of Buddha from Greek

However, Gandharan sculpture owes as much to Roman art as it does to Grecian art. Even though the iconography of Gandharan sculpture was Indian in nature, it also incorporated motifs and techniques from Classical Roman art. Some of the features of Classical Roman art observed in Gandharan sculptures are vine scrolls, cherubs with garlands, tritons and centaurs. Additionally, the Gandharan sculptors drew from the anthropomorphic traditions of Roman religion. The depiction of Buddha in Gandharan art is reminiscent of sculptures depicting a young Apollo. The draping of the robes on Buddha was also very similar to the drapery on Roman imperial statues.

Comparison of Gandhara and Mathura Buddha

In the Gandhara school Buddha portrayed had Hellenistic features whereas in the Mathura school the Buddha was modelled on earlier Yaksha images. The Gandhara School had also roman as well as Greek influences and assimilated Archimedean, Parthian and Bactrian. The Buddha has curly hair and there are linear strokes over the head. The forehead plane has protruding eyeballs, eyes are half closed and the face and cheeks are not round like the images found in other parts of India. The ears are elongated especially the earlobes.

Overall the image is very expressive and calmness remains the centre point of attraction in Gandhara style of Buddha. An example of Buddha in Gandhara style is the Buddha head at Taxila which is in the Gandhara region.

However, there are certain drawbacks of Gandhara school portrayal of the Buddha. The Buddha image of Gandhara school has been claimed to be an original contribution but its aesthetic quality is indifferent and it lacks the vigour and independence of expression that characterise the free standing Bodhisattvas of Mathura. The Indian elements derived from the ideal yogi type, namely the lotus seat



and the meditative gaze could not be properly assimilated, and the schematic folded drapery, heavy ornamentation and very often the moustaches betray a taste lacking in refinement.

In the Mathura art, Buddha image have fleshy body and the shoulders are broad. The Sanghati (garment) covers only one shoulder. Buddha is accompanied by attendant figures like Padmapani and Valrapani Bodhisattvas. The Buddha image is accompanied by Halo around his head which is very large. With respect to the face of Buddha, it is round with fleshy cheeks.

Factor	Mathura School	Gandhara School
Origin	No foreign Influence, however, later it cross fertilized with the Gandhara School.	Strong Greek influence.
	Its development took place indigenously.	Was based on Greco-Roman norms encapsulating foreign techniques and an alien spirit. It is also known as Graeco-Buddhist School of art.
	Initially inspired by Yaksha Images	Assimilating various traits of Acamenian, Parthian and Bactrian traditions into the local tradition is a hallmark of the Gandhara style
		Initially inspired by Hellenistic features.
Material Used	Spotted Red Sandstone	Blue-grey Mica schist / Grey Sandstone
Image Features	Early period: Light volume having fleshy body	Finer details and realistic images
	Later Period: Flashiness reduced.	Buddha carved out in various Mudras.
	Not much attention to detailed sculpting. Buddha is stout	Curley hair, anatomical accuracy, spatial depth, and foreshortening
		Buddha is sometimes thin
Halo	The halo around the head of Buddha was profusely decorated.	Not decorated, generally.
	Images are less expressive	The images are very expressive,

Amravati School of Art

The third type of sculpture art that Flourished during the Kushana time was at Amaravati and Nagarjunkonda in Andhra Pradesh.

The sculptures of Amaravati and Nagarjunakonda are fully inspired works and display a mastery in



which detailed ornamentation and elegance of figure sculpture are joined in a rare harmony. They unfold the cultural story of a glorious people who had adopted Buddhism as their creed and “linked it with their dynamism both on land and sea as merchants and mariners.

Numerous scenes of dance and music adorn these reliefs, which are very tender in conception and bespeak an irrepressible joy of life.

The sculptural remains of Amaravati have found their way to the British Museum and the Madras Museum. But the carvings of Nagarjunakonda are preserved almost in entirety at the site.

The white lime stone of the sculptures creates the illusion of marble and is as fresh today as it was when it left the hands of the carvers. It is a sensuous art, reflecting the joys of the people who had adopted the way of the Buddha as the new path of freedom and not of estrangement from the world.

The Mahayana religious movement in the Andhra country invested the life of the people with a golden halo whose brilliance is fully reflected in the sculptures of Amaravati and Nagarjunakonda.

The themes were Buddha’s life and Jatakas tales. The curly hairs of Buddha are a feature that is influenced by the Greeks. In these schools, the Kings, Princes, Palaces etc. have got prominence.

Ancient Metal Sculpture

The lost-wax process for casting is known to Indian from as long ago as the Indus Valley Civilization. The process of making alloy of metals by mixing copper, zinc and tin which is called bronze is also known to Indians for more than 5 thousand years.

The ‘Dancing Girl’ in *tribhanga posture* from Mohenjodaro is the earliest bronze sculpture datable to 2500 BC. Bronze statuettes of a well sculpted Chariot have also been discovered at Daimabad (Maharashtra) datable to 1500 BC.

The Bronze sculptures and statuettes of Buddhist, Hindu and Jain deities have been discovered from many regions of India. Most of them date from 2nd century AD till 6th century AD.

Most of these metal images were used for ritual worship. They have been sculpted with exquisite beauty and aesthetic appeal.

The metal casting process has also been used for making articles for various domestic purposes such as utensils for cooking, eating, drinking, etc.

Jaina Images

Bronze images of Jain Tirthankaras have been discovered from Chausa, Bihar, belonging to the Kushana Period (2nd Century AD). These images reflect how the Indian metal sculptors had mastered the modelling of masculine human physique and simplified muscles. The most remarkable metal sculpture is found in the depiction of **Adinath** or Vrishabh Nath, who is identified with long hairlocks. (Other tirthankaras have short curly hair).



Buddha Images Gupta / Vakataka

Majority of the Buddha images in metal, that were cast in Northern India are in Abhayamudra. Such images have been commonly found in Uttar Pradesh and Bihar and belong to the Gupta / Post-Gupta periods. In these images, the **Sanghati** or the monk's robe is wrapped to cover the shoulders which turn over the right arm, while the other end of the drapery is wrapped over the left arm (Mathura Style).

Vakataka bronze images of the Buddha from Phophnar, Maharashtra, are contemporary with the Gupta period bronzes.

In these images, the Buddha's right hand in *abhayamudra* is free so that the drapery clings to the right side of the body contour. The result is a continuous flowing line on this side of the figure. At the level of the ankles of the Buddha figure the drapery makes a conspicuous curvilinear turn, as it is held by the left hand.

There was one more advantage of the Gupta and Vakataka Buddha images that they were portable. The monks could carry them from place to place for individual worship or to install them at Buddhist Viharas.

Sultanganj Buddha

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The most outstanding example of the ancient Indian metal sculpture is the Buddha image at Sultanganj, Bihar, which is quite a monumental bronze figure of Gupta era. The statue is dated by archaeologists at between 500 to 700 AD and is 2.3m high and 1m wide, weighs over 500 kg and was made using the lost wax technique.

Ancient Metalcraft in India Examples



Four-faced Vishnu



Shiv Family

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Jaina Images Gupta / Vakataka

Most of the Gupta / Vakataka metal images found are of the Jaina tirthankaras like *Mahavira*, **Parshvanath** or **Adinath** and majority of them have been found in Rajasthan and Gujarat.

Among the Jaina images, the female images were also cast representing yakshinis or Shasanadevis of some prominent tirthankaras for example Chakreshvari is the Shasanadevi of Adinath and Ambika is of Neminath.

Four Faced Vishnu

In the later ancient India, there was a noteworthy development in the iconography of Vishnu images. The most notable example is that of the Four-headed Vishnu, also known as *Chaturanana* or *Vaikuntha Vishnu*. In this image, the central face represents Vasudeva, while the other two faces are that of Narasimha and Varaha. These images were normally found in Himachal Pradesh and other northern states.

Medieval Metal Sculpture

In the early medieval period, a great relationship of adoration and love was developed between devotees and the deities worshipped in the Brahmanical traditions. The human form of deities made it easy for the devotees to relate themselves to them. This led to the creation of the divine families, so that the people were able to easily engage themselves with their deities through their everyday lives.

Utsava Murtis Tradition of South India

According to the ritual texts, there are two kinds of *utsavas*. First is that take place as a regular part of worship, in which the deity may make a circumambulatory tour of the temple. Second is that which occurs once a week, month or year. The most important are the grand celebrations called *maha-utsavas*, that occur as annual celebrations.

The importance of these Utsavas is that the deity leaves the sanctum sanctorum and becomes approachable to all.

In the medieval period, a great tradition of *utsava murtis*, or festival images began. The deity, in many manifestations of the human form, comes out onto the streets. Sometimes the deity performs a journey to a place of pilgrimage or may be taken for a ritual bath or even to the seashore to enjoy the breeze.

Taalamana System with reference to Bronze sculpture in Tamil Nadu

In the 8th century, the *Utsava Murthis* were made in Bronze in Tamil Nadu. This tradition of Bronze sculpture reaches its zenith during the Chola period. The themes of the images are eternal.

In those times, a very different **tradition of modelling** was followed in India and particularly in the South Indian bronzes. Unlike the European tradition of using models, the images were all made using mnemonic techniques, whereby the craftsmen were meant to memorise *dhyana shlokas* which



describe the attributes of various goddesses and gods and they used the *taalamana* system of measurement to essentially visualise the image and then sculpt it out of their own imagination rather than using models. Taalamana is a complex system of iconography derived from the *Shilpa Shashtra*. Shilpa shastra normally employ divisions on a scale of one (eka tala) to ten (dasa tala). Each tala is subdivided into 12 angulas. It is called *Taalamana paddathi* or Taalamana system, the system of measurements by Tala, the palm of hand.

Nataraja Image

The most magnificent image in the bronzes is Nataraja, Siva in his cosmic dance. In this dance, he creates and destroys the world. The richness of symbolic meaning in the Nataraja image makes it one of the greatest icons created by man.



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The important features of this image have been described below:

Ring of Cosmic Fire

There is an oval ring around the original figure of Shiva Nataraja. It represents the cosmic fire he uses to destroy the universe as part of the cycle of destruction and creation. Each flame has three points.

In the eleventh and twelfth centuries, a round circle of fire with flames of five points became typical for the Shiva Nataraja image.

Third Eye

Shiva's third eye represents his cosmic knowledge.

Multiple Arms

The Hindu deities are depicted with multiple arms to illustrate divine power. Shiva Nataraja's four arms each take a different position or hold symbolic objects, showing his strength and constellation



of skills.

Cloths

Shiva wears a veshti around his waist. Across his torso is the *Yagyopveet* (Janeu in Hindi) the sacred thread of the Brahmin priestly class.

Earrings

On Shiva's right ear is an earring depicting a makara, a mythical water creature. His left ear is adorned with a circular earring worn by women. The pair represents Shiva's male and female aspects (*Ardhnarishwar*). He is sometimes depicted with his consort Parvati (Uma) as a half-male, half-female form, illustrating the cosmic balance of male and female energies.

Hands, Damaru, Snake, Cosmic Fire, Jata, Moon and Ganga

The left hand points downward to indicate sanctuary for the soul of the devotee. The open palm of Shiva's right hand forms the *abhayamudra*, or hand gesture, signifying that the worshipper need have no fear. In one hands, he has Damaru, that Shiva beats a rhythm that brings the universe into creation.

Shiva takes the snake and coils it around himself, thereby neutralizing it as a weapon. Poised in one of Shiva's hands is a flame of the cosmic fire he uses to end the universe in its cycle of creation and destruction. Matted locks of Jata reflect Shiva's role as a yogi who sometimes meditates for hundreds of years high in the Himalayan mountains.

Shiva is associated with the moon in a number of different narratives and wears the crescent moon in his locks. The tiny figure perched in Shiva's hair is the River Ganga (Ganges) in the form of a goddess. In response to devastating drought, Ganga agreed to descend to Earth, where Shiva received her in his matted locks to soften the impact of her landing.

Feet and Apasmara

Nataraja has been shown balancing himself on his right leg and suppressing the apasmara, the demon of ignorance or forgetfulness, with the foot of the same leg. At the same time he raises his left leg in *bhujangatrasita* stance, which represents tirobhava that is kicking away the veil of maya or illusion from the devotee's mind. He looks blissfully up at the conquering Lord Shiva.

Modern Indian Sculpture

The modernism in Indian sculpture has come via the transition from academism of the 20th century to well-defined non-objectivism of recent times. In early 20th century, the Indian sculpture adapted to the western academic art traditions and thus, the artists who trained in the academic realist style at British art schools worked on secular subjects.

This was a significant departure from the ancient and medieval norms, where the artists worked on myths and deities. This was the phase of intense and exaggerated realism in Indian sculpture. Many of the famous sculptors were trained painters and vice versa.



This phase continued with more and more developments added by important sculptors such as D.P Roy Chowdhury, Fanindranath Bose and V. P. Karmarkar.

The most important turning point in the modern Indian sculpture was in the form of works by Ramkinkar Baij in 1940s and 1950s. Baij looked afresh at both western and traditional Indian norms, and mixed them up in modern context. He not only was able to input the indigenous content in the sculptures but also experimented with unconventional material such as concrete, gravel and cement. The rural landscape and tribal communities were his subjects.

The 1950s onward, a variety of experiments have been done in the Indian sculpting. This includes experiments with wood, stone and unusual material such as hemp.

The following section deals with the contribution of important modern sculptors of India.

D.P Roy Chowdhury

D.P Roy Chowdhury (1899-1975) was basically a realistic artist, well known for his monumental sculptures installed in the public spaces. He was also a painter from the Bengal School of art, trained under Abhanindranath Tagore. In sculpture he was inspired by the Impressionist works of the modern Western sculpture, Auguste Rodin (French). Roy Chowdhury's forte was casting rather than carving. He is known for portraits of Mahatma Gandhi and Swami Vivekananda, his notable sculptures are **Triumph of Labour** (statue located at Marina beach Chennai) and **Martyrs' Memorial** (Bhopal).



Triumph of Labour, Marina Beach, Chennai by D.P Roy Chowdhury

Fanindranath Bose (1888 – 1926)

Fanindranath Bose lived only for 37 years, yet has left a profound impact on the New Sculpture, though he remains to be an unsung hero. He is best known for reproducing the human body in bronze.

He was trained at Calcutta School of Art before moving to Europe to fulfil his ambition to become a sculptor. He got enrolled at the Board of Manufacturers School of Edinburgh and married a Scottish woman and settled in Edinburgh. He was recruited by Sayaji Rao III Gaekwad, Maharaja of Baroda,

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to teach briefly at Baroda College whilst he was making eight sculptures for the Gaekwad's Laxmi Vilas Palace and two for Baroda Gallery. Bose turned down an invitation to work on the Victoria Memorial in Calcutta for unknown reasons. Important works are: *Boy in Pain*, *Hunter*, *The Sahdu*, *The snake charmer*, *An Indian peasant girl*, *St John the Baptist*.

V. P. Karmarkar

Vinayak Pandurang Karmarkar (1891-1966) was born in Raigad district in the year 1891. His father used to make Ganesh idols. Karmarkar was interested in drawing and get his first sculpture lessons at home from his father. That time, the district collector Otto Rothfield saw a drawing of Shivaji made by Karmarkar and realized his talent. His efforts were able to get Karmarkar enrolled in the JJ School of Arts. He was later trained at Calcutta School. He also started his own studio in Kolkata for some period but had to return back to Bombay due to lack of patronage over there. After that, he was taken up by the Maharashtra nationalists who wished to commemorate the nationalist icon Chhatrapati Shivaji with a life size equestrian statue. He sculpted the bronze statue of King Shivaji which weighs 8 tons and is 13.5 feet high. This statue is situated at the Military preparatory school in Pune. He did some excellent work by making sculptures of Gopalkrishna Gokhale, Acharya Kriplani and Matsyagandha. Later he studied at the London Royal Academy. He was awarded the Padmashri by the Indian government in 1962.

Ramkinkar Baij

Ramkinkar Baij (1906-1980), was a powerful modern painter and sculptor, best known for his magnum opus "Santhal Family" sculpture. Born in the Bankura District of West Bengal, Baij was a son of a village masseuse and barber. He came to Santiniketan on account of the skilful posters he painted during the non-cooperation movement. Here, he became another disciple of Nand Lal Bose, and then became one of the pioneers of modern Indian sculpture. He joined the Visva-Bharati University at Santiniketan as a fine arts student. At Santiniketan, under the guidance of Nandalal Bose, his artistic skills and intellectual horizons acquired new depth and complexity.

Initially, he started making sculptures which were innovative in subject matter and personal in style.

Santhal Family

His first magnum opus in this genre was the Santal Family done in 1938. Santhal Family is widely considered to be the first public Modernist sculpture in India. This sculpture depicts a mother, father, child and dog from the Santhal tribe, carrying their few possessions with them to a new life. It was made of cement cast and laterite pebbles.

The artistic creations of Ramkinkar Baij have been inspired by the lifestyles of rural dalit or Adivasi communities. Through his sculptures, he represented the tribal peasants of the region, giving the figures iconic presence and dignified grace that was so far limited to the images of Gods and Rulers.

He took a great interest in human figures, body language, and in the general human drama. His main



points of reference were modern western art and pre and post-classical Indian art. Regarding his work, he said: *“I do not know whether what I am doing is modern or not, but it is based on my experience.”*

Yaksha and Yakshini

Another famous work of Ramkinkar Baij was the Yaksha and Yakshini sculpture at the gates of RBI building in New Delhi. The art form of the male ‘Yaksha’ was drawn from the statue of the ‘Parkham Yaksha’ in the Mathura museum and the art form of the female Yakshini was derived from “Bisnagar Yakshini” from the Calcutta Museum.

Famine

The sculpture Famine was invariably triggered by the Bengal Famine of 1943, a happening that made him enter a pictorial space from the real.

Gandhi Dandi March

Despite its name, the sculpture depicts Gandhi at Noakhali in 1947. The skull at his foot stands for the violence he walked into. The larger version of the work executed in concrete is at Santiniketan. This is the original model and is from the NGMA collection.

Mill Call

Mill Call installed in Santiniketan, depicts a working-class family setting off for work on hearing the mill siren. It was done in concrete and laterite pebbles: Baij would throw the concrete inside the armature, a technique he used for the last time in this sculpture.

Paintings

His paintings too take on expressionist dimensions like his sculptures, which are filled with force and vitality.

Legacy and awards

There is a book called ‘Dekhi Nai Fire’ based on Baij’s life and work, written by Samaresh basu. In 1975, Ritwik Ghatak wisely made a documentary on Baij named ‘Ramkinkar’ where he featured him as a political icon. He was awarded Deshikottom by Visva-Bharati University. In 1970, he was honoured with Padma Bhushan by the Government of India. He died in 1980.

Sankho Chaudhuri

Sankho Chaudhuri was a student of Ramkinkar Baij. He began close to cubism and then was influenced by Istvan Beothy. His themes have included the female figure and wildlife. Chaudhuri was best known for carving his pieces out of wood and stone or moulding in metal simple and austere forms mostly intertwined with each other or broken into angles.

These often had a sweeping loftiness and smooth and polished surfaces. Besides a variety of wood, he used marble, both black and white and with zebra stripes, and limestone, which were characterised by a sheen.

He was worked in a wide range of media, and has produced both large-scale reliefs and mobiles. He expired in the year 2006. In 1956, he received the National Award by Lalit Kala Akademi. He also



became the Padma shri recipient in the year 1971. He became the Fellow of Lalit Kala Akademi in 1982. He was delivered the Desikottama by Viswa Bharati University in 1988. In 2000-02, he received the Kali Das Samman.

Prelims Model Questions

1. The Amaravati School of Art:

1. was patronized by Satavahanas and Ikshvakus
2. generally used white marble
3. represents Buddha symbolically

Which among the above is / are correct?

[A] Only 1 & 2

[B] Only 2 & 3

[C] Only 1 & 3

[D] 1, 2 & 3

Answer: [D] 1, 2 & 3

All are correct statements about Amravati school.

2. Which among the following is / are key features of Gandhara School of Art?

1. Lifelike statues of Buddha
2. Stress on portraying the physical features
3. Numerous folds and turns in the dress
4. Heavy use of spotted red sandstone

Select the correct option from the codes given below:

[A] Only 1 & 3

[B] Only 1, 2 & 3

[C] Only 2, 3 & 4

[D] 1, 2, 3 & 4

Answer: [B] Only 1, 2 & 3

Fourth statement is related to Mathura School of art rather.

3. Consider the following statements:

1. Both Maurya art and Gandhara school were influenced by Greek Art
2. Buddha image from Sarnath is a distinct example of Hellenistic influence on Kusana art

Which among the above is / are correct statements?

[A] Only 1

[B] Only 2

[C] Both 1 & 2



[D] Neither 1 nor 2

Answer: [A] Only 1

The second statement is incorrect because the Sarnath Buddha is an example of Gupta art. Three most outstanding examples of Gupta art are the seated Buddha image from Sarnath, the inscribed image of the standing Buddha in the Mathura Museum, and the colossal copper statue of the Buddha (about 7% feet high) from Sultanganj, now in the Birmingham Museum.

4. Which among the following is / are the features of the statues of the Gandhara School of art?
1. Large Number of life like statues of Buddha were created
 2. Great care was taken to show the physical features, muscles etc.
 3. Use of rich ornaments, costumes and drapery
 4. Buddha depicted more or less like Greek God Apollo

Choose the correct option from the codes given below:

[A] Only 1 & 2

[B] 1, 2 & 3

[C] 1, 2, 3 & 4

[D] Only 1 & 3 suraj_winner | rajawat.rs.surajsingh@gmail.com | www.gktoday.in/module/ias-general-studies

Answer: [C] 1, 2, 3 & 4

The given statements are features of Gandhara School of art.

5. The Indus Valley People commonly used the following metals / alloys?
1. Gold
 2. Silver
 3. Copper
 4. Brass
 5. Bronze
 6. Iron

Choose the correct option from the codes given below:

[A] 1, 2, 3, 4 & 5

[B] 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 & 6

[C] 1, 2, 3 & 5

[D] 1, 2, 3 & 4

Answer: [A] 1, 2, 3, 4 & 5

These people were aware of Gold, Silver, Copper, Brass, Bronze and Tin but did not know much about Iron. Copper was the most widely used metal.

6. The oval ring around the original figure of Shiva Nataraja represents___?



- [A] Universe
- [B] Cosmic Fire
- [C] Cycle of birth and death
- [D] Cosmic rhythm

Answer: [B] Cosmic Fire

There is an oval ring around the original figure of Shiva Nataraja. It represents the cosmic fire he uses to destroy the universe as part of the cycle of destruction and creation. Each flame has three points. In the eleventh and twelfth centuries, a round circle of fire with flames of five points became typical for the Shiva Nataraja image.

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