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Salient Features of Indian Culture
Module-3: Indian Sculpture and Folk Paintings

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Chapter 1. Sculpture in Indus Valley Civilization

Stone Sculpture in Indus Valley Civilization

The forms of art found from various sites of the Indus Valley Civilization include sculptures, seals, pottery, gold jewellery, terracotta figures etc.

In stone, the two most discussed male figures are as follows:

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.*

Male Torso, Red Sandstone, Indus Valley

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 armlet 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.

Bearded Priest (Priest King)
Indus Valley Civilization

Bronze Casting in the Indus Valley Civilization

Bronze casting was a widespread practice during the Indus Valley Civilization, particularly at Harappa.

The Bronze statues were made by the "*lost wax technique*". 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

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.

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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 in Indus Valley

There terracotta images are inferior in depiction of the human forms in comparison to the copper and bronze images of the Indus Valley.

Mother Goddess , Terracota
Indus Valley

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.

Chapter 2. Sculpture during Mauryan Period

- 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.
- Monumental images of Yaksha, Yakhinis and animals, pillar columns with capital figures, rock-cut caves belonging to the third century BCE have been found in different parts of India.

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.

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- **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 Achaemenid 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.*

Court Art- Stone Pillars

- 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.
    - The 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.

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:
    1. The shaft, which is broken in many parts now

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2. A lotus bell base
3. A drum on the bell base with four animals proceeding clockwise
4. The figures of four majestic lions
5. The crowning element, Dhammachakra, 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.
- 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 *Dhammachakrapravartana* (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.

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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.

Popular Art during Mauryas

- 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

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

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- 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

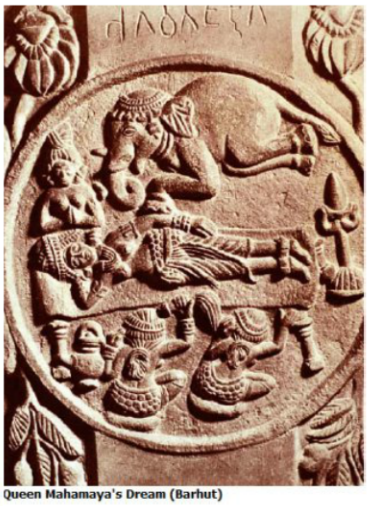
- The rock-cut cave carved at Barabar hills near Gaya in Bihar is known as the Lomus Rishi cave. The facade of the cave is decorated with the semicircular chaitya arch as the entrance.
- The cave was patronised by Ashoka for the Ajivika sect. The Lomus Rishi cave is an isolated example of this period.

Chapter 3. Post Mauryan Sculpture

Some of the prominent examples of the finest sculpture of Post-Maurya period are found at Vidisha, Bharhut (Madhya Pradesh), Bodhgaya (Bihar), Jaggayyapeta (Andhra Pradesh), Mathura (Uttar Pradesh), Khandagiri-Udaigiri (Odisha), Bhaja near Pune and Pavani near Nagpur (Maharashtra). Its worth note that till the development of the Gandhara and Mathura art school, Buddha was depicted mainly as symbols.

Sculptures at Barhut

Yakshi; Barhut Stupa Railing



Queen Mahamaya's Dream (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.

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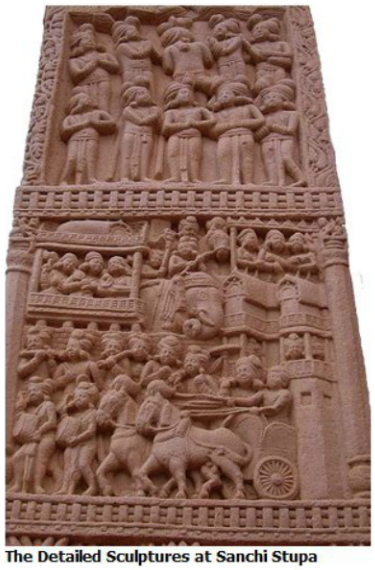
- The nine-foot-high railing, or vedika, and the gateway, or torana, are made in imitation of the wooden architecture of that time. The railings create a path for the devotee to walk on as he goes around the revered stupa. As he proceeds, stories made on the railings remind him of the virtuous qualities of the Buddha. Jatakas, or tales of the pervious lives of the Buddha, are used to exemplify the rules of conduct in everyday l ife.
- The sculpture was mainly done in low relief in the panels of the stupa along with narratives which are in few words. The artists are 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 Boddhisattva 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.


The Detailed Sculptures at Sanchi Stupa

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The Mathura and Gandhara Schools of Art

The first Buddha image appeared more or less simultaneously in Mathura and Gandhara regions in the first century C.E. under the **Kushana political hegemony**; a flurry of images appeared during the reign of Kanishka. Kushanas are considered to be the great patrons of art. 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 these schools of arts as well.

Mathura School of Art

Origin and Salient Features

- At Sanchi, Barhut or Gaya, Buddha was never depicted in a human form but was represented only as a symbol of either two footprints or wheel. Artisans from Mathura initially continued the Mauryan sculptural forms of the Yaksha and Yakshi, until a human image of Buddha appeared, which was independent of other schools of art, but later influenced by the Gandhara School. Thus, Mathura School of art is purely indigenous style. Mathura art reached its peak during the Gupta period (AD 325 to 600).

Buddha; Mathura School of Art

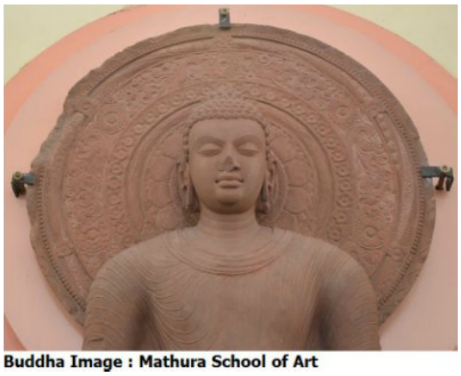
- The material used in this school was the **spotted red sandstone**. The Mathura School of Art, noted for its vitality and assimilative character, was a result of the religious zeal of Brahmanism, Jainism and Buddhism. Images of Vaishnava and Shaiva faiths are also found at Mathura but Buddhist images are found in large numbers. The images of Vishnu and Shiva are represented by their weapons. Images of the Buddha, Yakshas, Yakshinis, Shaivite and Vaishnavite deities and portrait statues are profusely sculpted.

Centres of Production

- The traditional centre, Mathura, remained the main art production site whereas Sarnath and Kosambi also emerged as important centres of art production.

Sculpting Features

- The Jina Image and Indigenous style of Buddha's image was a remarkable feature of Mathura art. The *Sarvatobhadrika* image of 4 Jinas standing back to back belongs to the Mathura school. The Standing Buddhas of the Sravasthi Sarnath and Kausambhi belong to the Mathura School.


Buddha Image : Mathura School of Art

- In Mathura School, there is boldness in carving the large images. The first Mathura image makers never intended to sculpt an anatomically correct human Buddha. Their images were a composite of *32 major and 80 minor laksana*, or marks. Later, the Human

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Buddha images evolved associated with humanly beauty and heroic ideals. Both sitting and standing posture of Buddha's statues were carved out in the Mathura school.

- *Buddha image at Mathura is modelled on the lines of earlier **Yaksha** images whereas in Gandhara it has Hellenistic features.* The early images of the Buddha and the Bodhisattva are happy, fleshy figures with little spirituality about them. The block like compactness and smooth close-fitting robe, almost entirely devoid of folds, are replicated in the earliest standing Buddha image that belongs to the Mathura school. The volume of the images is projected out of the picture plane, the faces are round and smiling, heaviness in the sculptural volume is reduced to relaxed flesh. The garments of the body are clearly visible and they cover the left shoulder. However, 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.*

Gandhara School of Art

The Gandharan Buddha image was inspired **by Hellenistic realism**, tempered by Persian, Scythian, and Parthian models. Sculptors constructed Buddhist images with **anatomical accuracy, spatial depth, and foreshortening.** In this art, Buddha's curls were altered into wavy hair. The Buddha or Gandhar art is sometimes very thin, which is opposite in Mathura art. It looks like the Mathura, Gandhara arts cross-fertilized in due course of time, and the bulky Mathura Buddha gradually gave way to the slender elegance of the Gandharan image. The result of this synthesis ennobled, refined, and purified the Buddha image that appeared in the Gupta period. This Gupta style became the model for Southeast Asian Buddha images.

Buddha Head as depicted in Gandhara Art

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.
- The Bamyan Buddha of Afghanistan were the example of the Gandhara School. The other materials used were Mud, Lime,

Meditating Buddha of Gandhara Art

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Stucco. However, Marble was NOT used in Gandhara art. Terracotta was used rarely. **Bimaran Casket** has yielded the earliest specimen of the Gandhara Art.

The Various Mudras of Buddha in Gandhar 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:

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

Major Centres

Jalalabad, Hadda, Bamaran, Begram & Taxila were the main centers where art pieces of Gandhara School have been found. Both Shakas and Kushanas were patrons of Gandhara School. The head of the Buddha matched very much with Greek God Apollo.

Amravati School of Art

The third type of sculpture art that Flourished during the Kushana time was Amaravati School of art in the Andhra Pradesh. White Marble was used in this art and the themes were Buddha's life and Jatakas tales. The curly hairs of Buddha is a feature that is influenced by the Greeks. In this school, the Kings, Princes, Palaces etc. have got prominence.

Chapter 4. Comparison of Mathura School and Gandhara School

Factor	Mathura School	Gandhara School
Origin	No foreign Influence, however, later it cross fertilized with the Gandhara School. Its development took place indigenously. Initially inspired by Yaksha Images	Strong Greek influence. Was based on Greco-Roman norms encapsulating foreign techniques and an alien spirit. It is also known as Graeco-Buddhist School of art. 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 Later Period: Flashiness reduced. Not much attention to detailed sculpting. Buddha is stout	Finer details and realistic images Buddha carved out in various Mudras. Curley hair, anatomical accuracy, spatial depth, and foreshortening Buddha is sometimes thin
Halo	The halo around the head of Buddha was profusely decorated. Images are less expressive	Not decorated, generally. The images are very expressive,

Chapter 5. Indian Metal Sculpture – Ancient

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.

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- 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 Vrishabhnath, 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).

Sultanganj Buddha
The most outstanding example of the ancient Indian metal sculpture is the Buddha image at Sultanganj, Bihar, which is quite a monumental bronze figure. 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.

Sultanganj Buddha

- 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 Budhist

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Viharas.

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 (Chaturanana)

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 Brahamanical 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.

Shiva Family; Pallava Era

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.

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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. 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.

Nataraja is one of the most important, visually thrilling forms of the Hindu god Shiva. Artists in the Tamilnadu began to make this form of Shiva in the early tenth century, with the patronage of Chola kings, inspired by poetry written by ardent devotees and using skills in metal craft developed over hundreds of years. Appearing more than a thousand years ago, Nataraja's importance has endured as a god and a popular icon. Today he is worshipped in major temples and circulates in public life. Nataraja represents Indian tradition, cosmic principles, Tamil identity, and classical dance.

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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. Metted 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.

Chapter 6. Modern Indian Sculpture

Brief Background

- 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.

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- 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, keeping in view the ***short answer questions*** in your examination.

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, 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.*

End of the Day
Fanindranath Bose

V. P. Karmarkar

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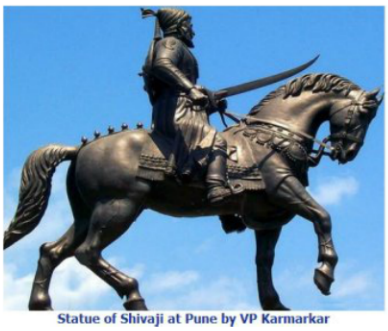
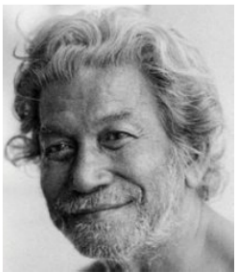
Vinayak Pandurang Karmarkar (1891-1966) was born in Raigad district in the year 1891.His father used to make Ganesh idols. Karmarkar was interested in drawing and get his first sculpture lessons at home from his father. That time, the district collector Otto Rothfield saw a drawing of Shivaji made by 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 aslo 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 Maharastran nationalists who wished to commemorate the nationalist icon Chatrapati 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.


Statue of Shivaji at Pune by VP Karmarkar

Ramkinkar Baij

Ramkinker 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. 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.

Famine
Ramkinkar Baij

Santhal Family (1938), Ramkinkar Baij

The artistic creations of Ramkinkar Baij have been inspired by the lifestyles of rural dalit or Adivasi communities. Through his sculptures, he

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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.

"Mill Call" by Ramkinkar Baij

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.

Gandhi - Dandi March
Ram Kinkar Baij

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

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A Creation of Sankho Chaudhury

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*.

Other Sculptors

- **Pradosh Dasgupta**: Pradosh Dasgupta (1912-1991) was one of the founder members of the Calcutta Group.
- **Nek Chand Saini:** He gained international recognition for building the *Rock Garden of Chandigarh*. Gundan Anivaritachari
- **Gundan Anivaritachari**: He was the chief architect of the *Virupaksha temple* which is considered as the most famous and center piece at world heritage temple complex at Pattadakal.
- **Raghunath Mohapatra:** Raghunath Mohapatra is a famous Indian sculptor from Odisha. He was awarded *Padma Shri* in 1975, *Padma Bhushan* in 2001 and *Padma Vibhushan* in 2013.
- **Ashok Gudigar:** Ashok Gudigar is an Indian sculptor who specialises in making statues out of sandalwood, stone, metal, and fiberglass. He hails from Sagara, Shimoga District (Karnataka, India). The statue of Bahubali (measuring 41 feet) carved by Gudigar and his team, , is one of the biggest stone statues of the world. It is displayed in Singadh Village (Bhavnagar, Gujarat).
- **Sudarshan Pattnaik:** Sudarsan Pattnaik is the inventor of sand art in India. He has never received any formal training. He started sculpting images on sand since the age of seven. He established "The Golden Sand Art Institute" which is first of its nature in India.
- **M. S. Nagappa:** M.S. Nagappa was a notable Indian sculptor who acknowledged for designing the statues and monuments in British India. In 1935, he prepared a bronze statue of George V and presented it to the monarch during his silver jubilee celebrations on behalf of Lord Govinddoss, a popular businessman and philanthropist of Madras. George V also appointed him official sculptor to the British Crown and presented him with a coat of arms.

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- **Anish Kapoor:** Anish Mikhail Kapoor is an Indian-born British sculptor. He gained worldwide acknowledgement in the 1980's for his geometric or biomorphic sculptures made using simple materials such as granite, limestone, marble, pigment and plaster. In latter half of 1980's and early 1990's, he was acclaimed for his explorations of matter and non-matter, specifically evoking the void in both free-standing sculptural works and ambitious installations. Won prestigious *Turner Prize in 1991*. In 2012, he was awarded the *Padma Bhushan*, India's third highest civilian honour by the Government of India. **ArcelorMittal Orbit** was designed by Anish Kapoor and Cecil Balmond of engineering Group.

Chapter 7. Indian Folk Paintings and Related Topics

Manjusha Art

- It is believed that Manjusha art originated in Anga Mahajanapada, it is also known as Angika Art. It was used in *Bihula-Vishahri Pooja*, a festival dedicated to Snake God, Celebrated in Bhagalpur(Bihar) in the month of August.
- It is one of the very old and historically very important Art. It is often referred to as Snake Paintings by foreigners as swirling snakes in the art depict the central character Bihula's tale of love and sacrifice

Varayarangu

- Varayarangu is unique art genre from Kerala. The performing level possibilities of Fine Art as a Stage Art are explored through this new and innovative type of Infotainment. In simple language it can be referred to as a Cartoon Stage Show with a unification of poetry, anecdotes and socio-political satire and high speed drawing.
- This art genre had been initiated and developed by performing Cartoonist S. Jithesh. The mode of presentation of this 'Cartoon Stage Show' is very captivating and enchanting by means of interlacing interesting anecdotes, light talk and social satire.

Phad Paintings

- It is a popular style of folk painting done on a long piece of cloth, known as *phad*. It is practiced in Rajasthan. The *phads* depict the narratives of the folk deities of Rajasthan, mostly of Pabuji and Devnarayan.
- Traditionally, the priest-singers called *bhopas* carry the painted *phad*s along with them. These phads are then used as the mobile temples of the folk deities. The *phad*s of Pabuji are normally about 15 feet in length, while the *phad*s of Devnarayan are normally about 30 feet long. Conventionally the *phad*s are painted with vegetable colors.

Kalighat Painting

This Indian Style of painting originated in the vicinity of Kalighat Kali Temple, Kalighat (Kolkata, India) in 19th century. Kalighat temple was considered the main centre around which the traditional artists called '*the pataus*' or 'painters of cloth' concentrated. Later academic training institutions

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were set up in Bengal imparting European style of art for the Indian artists by British patrons. This induced the traditional artists to move from rural areas to the city. They started learning from the newer techniques. They also created innovative and new art forms. This eventually led to the birth of Kalighat painting.

Special Features

- Kalighat School was a unique and delightful Blend of the Oriental and the Occidental styles of painting. Due to this exceptional combination, it gained steady acknowledgment.
- The artists played an important role in the Independence movement through the depiction of secular themes and personalities in their paintings.
- Paintings apart from depicting religious themes also portrayed different professions and costumes which were popular among the tourists. Sometimes, even contemporary events like crime were the subject of many paintings.
- Images of goddess were popular among Kalighat artists. Kali was the favourite goddess among all deities. The artists also portrayed themes like Sita-Rama, Radha-Krishna and the exploits of Hanuman. Another theme depicted, dear to the Bengali ethos, was that of Chaitanya Mahaprabhu and his disciples.
- The simple paintings and drawings of the Kalighat artists could easily be reproduced by lithography. Such prints were then hand coloured. This trend continued up to the early part of the twentieth century and these paintings ended up in museums and private collections. This was considered as one of their significant accomplishment. They captured the essence of daily life which influenced many modern artists.

Warli Painting

Warli Paintings is believed to be dating back to 2500 or 3000 BC. These mural paintings bear a resemblance to those created in the Rock Shelters of Bhimbetka. Scenes portraying hunting, fishing and farming, festivals and dances, trees and animals are used to surround the central theme of the painting. To represent animal and human bodies, two triangles are joined at the tip in which the upper one signifies the trunk while the lower one signifies the pelvis. The precarious equilibrium signifies balance of the universe. The walls are made of a mixture of branches, earth and cow dung, making a red ochre background for the wall paintings. They use a bamboo stick chewed at the end to make it as supple as a paintbrush. The wall paintings are done Only white colour for the paintings which is made by mixing rice paste to water and gum is also used to bind the paste. To make the paint brush the edge of the bamboo stick is chewed. The pared down pictorial language is matched by a rudimentary technique. The ritual paintings are usually done inside the walls of huts only on special occasions such as weddings or harvests.

Unique features:-

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- A very basic graphic vocabulary like a circle, a triangle and a square are used in these rudimentary wall paintings which are monosyllabic in nature. The circle represents the sun and the moon while the triangle derived from mountains and pointed trees.
- However, the square seems to be a human invention which indicates a sacred enclosure or a piece of land. Hence, the square also called '*chauk*' or '*chaukat*', is the central motive in every ritual painting. The *Devchauk* and *Lagnachauk* are two types of square used in the wall paintings. The mother goddess, *Palaghata*, who is a symbol of fertility, can be found inside a *Devchauk*.

Cheriyal Scroll Painting

- This school of painting originated from Cheriyal, a place situated in Warangal district of Andhra Pradesh. It is a modernized and stylized version of **Nakashi art**. A rich scheme of colours is used to depict the scrolls of narrative format from mythology and folklore.
- These paintings are Cheriyal scrolls because these paintings are now only confined to Cheriyal villages. Some historians believe that the cheriyal scroll paintings have its origin in Rajasthan. It is also claimed the Mughal emperors brought this Art to India.
- This style of painting is considered culturally and sociologically significant by the people of Telangana part of Andhra Pradesh.
- By virtue of its distinct traditional style and characteristics Cheriyal Paintings received Intellectual Property Rights Protection or Geographical Indication (GI) status in 2007.

Cheriyal Scroll Paintings: Some details
This traditional form of art became an indispensable and inseparable part of the profession of **Kaki Padagollu**, a story telling community. The Cheriyal scrolls were displayed by them with the help of music and dance. They went from one village to another, singing and narrating the stories from Indian Epics and Puranas.
The scroll would flow like a film roll. The function of the visual medium was played by the scroll while the song of the bard was the audio medium. The traditional scrolls are normally in vertical format, illustrating stories in a series of horizontal panels. Depending upon the story, the length of the scroll went up to 40 feet and the width used to be around three feet. The two panels were separated by a floral border while the linear narrative was demonstrated by a building or a tree. Each panel of the scroll depicted one part of the story. One scroll would consist of approximately 50 scrolls. With the narration of the story by the bard, the panel depicting that particular part of the story would be displayed. The selection of episodes and iconography of each deity was done taking into account to the caste for which the scroll was made.

Salient Features of Cheriyal Scroll Painting:

- In vivid hues (mostly primary colors) with a predominance of *red in the background, these scroll paintings are easy to relate to – as the themes and stories are familiar – drawn from ancient literary, mythology and folk traditions.*

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- The common themes are from the Krishna Lekha, Ramayana, Mahabharata, Shiva Puranam, Markandeya Puranam and stories of communities like Gauda, Madiga and so on.
- Simple rural life - Women doing chores in the kitchen, working in the paddy fields, festival scenes are so endearingly depicted.
- The costumes and settings in which the figures are depicted are a reflection of the culture of Andhra, where these paintings originated.
- Within the narrow panels, proportion is created by depicting trees, or building, a pillar with drawn curtains, etc.

Patua Paintings

- The Patua is a community found in West Bengal. Some Patuas are Hindus, while others are Muslims and Buddhists. The paintings tradition of Patuas was started as a village tradition as painters of scrolls or pats telling the popular mangal stories of the gods and goddesses.
- The Patua painters or scroll painters have gone from village to village with their scrolls or pat singing stories in return for money or food. These pats or scrolls are made of sheets of paper of equal or different sizes which are sown together and painted with ordinary poster paints.

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