

UPSCprep Free Daily Answer Writing Initiative

Subject: GS 1

Syllabus: Art and Culture

Questions

Q1. Early Mauryan art and architecture, while depicting ideas of ancient times, successfully expounds Buddhist ideals. Elucidate. (150 words) 10

Q2. The Chola period witnessed remarkable development in sculptures and bronze works. Discuss. (150 Words) 10

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Model Structures

Q1. Early Mauryan art and architecture, while depicting ideas of ancient time, successfully expounds Buddhist ideals. Elucidate. (150 words) 10

Model Structure

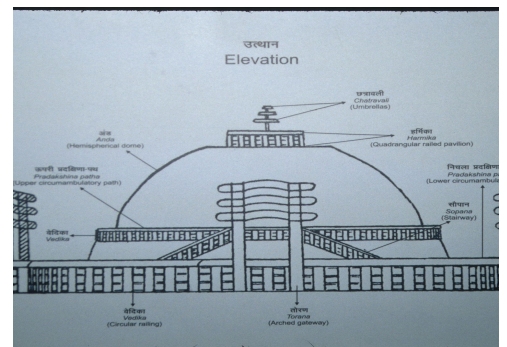
Introduction:

- The Mauryan contribution to art and architecture was significant. More so towards Buddhism and Jainism development during that period.

Main Body:

The Mauryan art and architecture depict ideas of ancient times:

- The influence of **Persians and Greeks** on art and architecture.
- The Mauryan **pottery** consisted of many types of wares. The black polished type found in North India is important. It has a burnished and glazed surface.



- Two of the most famous **sculptures** of the Mauryan period are those of **Yaksha and Yakshi**.
- Predominance of **rock-cut** architecture.

The Mauryan art and architecture depict **Buddhist ideals** as:

- Buddha's relics: preserved in **stupas**
 - Ashoka built 84,000 stupas to commemorate various events of Buddha's life. According to Megasthenes, Pataliputra's grandeur matched that of the cities of Persia.
 - Due to the popularity of Buddhism and Jainism, **stupas and viharas** were constructed on a large scale. Important ones being:
 - **Rajagriha, Vaishali, Vethadipa and Pava** in Bihar, **Kapilavastu, Allakappa and Ramagrama** in Nepal, **Kushinagar and Pippalvina** in Uttar Pradesh.
- **Pillar edicts:**
 - One of the Ashokan edicts stands at **Lauriya Nandangarh (Bihar)**.
 - The **bull capital** from **Rampura** is another fine example of a Mauryan sculpture.
 - The most famous capital is the one at **Sarnath**, which shows four lions and the **Dharmachakra**, popularly known as the **Lion Capital**, is the finest example of Mauryan sculptural tradition. This pillar capital symbolizing **Dharmachakrapravartana** (the first sermon by the Buddha) has become a standard symbol of this great historical event in the life of the Buddha.
- **Rock-cut caves:**
 - The rock-cut cave carved at **Barabar hills** near Gaya in Bihar is known as the **Lomas Rishi cave**. The Lomas Rishi cave (with its impressive entrance) and the Sudama caves are examples of such architecture. Used as **viharas** and **chaityas**.
- **The life cycle of Buddha:**
 - During the early phase of Buddhism, Buddha is depicted **symbolically** through **footprints, stupas, lotus throne, chakra**, etc. This indicates either simple worship or paying respect, or at times depicts historicisation of life events.
 - Gradually, narratives became a part of the Buddhist tradition. Thus, events from the life of the Buddha, through **Jataka stories**, were depicted on the railings and

torans of the stupas. Mainly synoptic narrative, continuous narrative and episodic narrative are used in the pictorial tradition. The Jataka stories also became equally important for sculptural decorations. The main frequently depicted were events related to **birth, renunciation, enlightenment, dharmachakrapravartana, and mahaparinibbana** (liberation from the cycle of birth.)

Conclusion:

- However, in this period, apart from stupas and viharas, stone pillars, rock-cut caves and monumental figure sculptures were carved at several places. Thus it set the solid base for development of Buddhist architecture to flourish further in the post-Mauryan period.

Q2. The Chola period witnessed remarkable development in sculptures and bronze works.
Discuss. (150 Words) 10 Marks

Model Structure

Introduction:

- Several chola era Tamil Nadu sculptures (antiquities) have been recovered from Australia, US. Hence, bringing to forefront its uniqueness and grandeur.

Main Body:

Development in Sculptures:

- The Chola period is remarkable for its sculptures and bronzes.
- The sculptures and bronzes show **classic grace, grandeur and taste**.
- The sculptors' work during this time are famous for their **elegance, sensitive modelling, and balanced tension**.
- Realism and attention to finer details reached their utmost perfection during this time.



- Example: Clear demarcation of the areas of the body, such as the creases between the torso and the stomach, around the navel, sharp edges along the tibiae, a pointed nose, facial expressions are one of the most noticeable features of this time (**Nataraja**)
- The next most popular image is **Somaskanda**, in which Shiva is depicted sitting with his consort Uma and his son Skanda, dancing between them on a platform.
- **Kalyanasundara Murti** is a 9th-century artwork depicting the marriage of Shiva and Parvati (or panigrahana).
- **Ardhanarishwar**, with half Shiva and half Shakti, is another popular image

Development in bronze work:

- The **cire-perdue or 'lost-wax' process** for casting was learnt as long ago as the Indus Valley Culture.
- Along with it was discovered the process of making **alloy of metals** by mixing copper, zinc and tin which is called **bronze**.
- The **bronze casting technique** and making of **bronze images of traditional icons** reached a high stage of development in South India during the medieval period.
- Some of the most beautiful and exquisite bronze statues were produced during the Chola Period in Tamil Nadu from the tenth to the twelfth century.
- Exquisite pieces of art developed during this period. This technique is still practised in south India, particularly in **Kumbakonam**.
- The distinguished patron during the tenth century was **the widowed Chola queen, Sembiyan Maha Devi**.
- Chola bronzes are the most sought-after collectors' items by art lovers all over the world.

Conclusion:

- Thus, Chola bronze sculptures give us a glimpse of the finesse in metallurgy and technical advancement in the field of sculpture making.
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