

# Gupta Art

By  
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Gupta king patronised brahan religion but buddhist and Jain and also ordinary man and women art had also been developed during this time

Arts include- Painting, Sculpture ,

# Sculpture

- ❖ Used Red Sandstone
- ❖ The human figure
- ❖ taken as the image
- ❖ A new canon of beauty is evolved leading to the emergence of a new aesthetic ideal.
- ❖ The soft and pliant body of the Gupta sculpture with its smooth and shining texture, facilitates free and easy movement,
- ❖ It is the sensitiveness of the plastic surface that the artist seeks to emphasise and for this; all superfluities, such as elaborate draperies, jewellery, etc., that tend to conceal the body, are reduced to the minimum.
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- ❖ The wet or transparent clinging drapery hence became the fashion of this age. But the sensuous effect of these draperies especially in the case of female figures, was restrained by a conscious moral sense, and nudity as a rule was eliminated from Gupta sculpture.
- ❖ The great artistic creations of the period were invested with sweet and soft contours, restrained ornamentation and dignified repose.
- ❖ Under the patronage of the Guptas, the studies of Mathura and Sarnath produced several works of great merit. Though Hindu by faith, they were tolerant rulers.
- ❖ The great Master, in all his sublimity, is here shown standing with his right hand in *abhayamudra*, assuring protection, and the left holding the hem of the garment.
- ❖ The smiling countenance with down-cast eyes is robed in spiritual ecstasy. The robe covering both shoulders is skilfully represented with delicately covered schematic folds and clings to the body.
- ❖ The head is covered with schematic spiral curls with a central protuberance and the elaborate halo decorated with concentric bands of graceful ornamentation.
- ❖ The finished mastery in execution and the majestic serenity of expression of the image of Buddha came to be adopted and locally modified by Siam, Cambodia, Burma, Java, Central Asia, China and Japan, etc., when these countries adopted the Buddhist religion.

The image of the standing Buddha is an excellent example of Gupta art in its maturity from Sarnath.

The softly moulded figure has its right hand in the attitude of assuring protection. Unlike the delicately carved drapery folds of the Mathura Buddha, only the fringe of the diaphanous robe is here indicated. The perfect execution of the figure matched by its serene spiritual expression is truly worthy of the sublime being.

Sarnath introduces not only a delicacy and refinement of form but also a relaxed attitude by bending the body in the case of the standing figure, slightly on its own axis, thus imparting to it a certain liteness and movement in contrast to the columnar rigidity of similar Mathura works.

The culmination of these characteristics seen in this sublime image of the Master represented in the act of turning the Wheel of Law is one of the masterly creations of Gupta classical sculpture. The image is carved in Chunar sandstone and has a surface texture of shining smoothness. The Master is shown as seated in *Vijraparyanka* with the hands held near the breast in *Dharmachakrapravartana Mudra* (the gesture of Preaching).

## Temple

During the Gupta period the characteristic elements of the Indian temple emerged and the plastic forms began to be used admirably as an integral part of the general architectural scheme. The stone carving from the temples at *Deogarh* and those from the temples of *Udayagiri* and *Ajanta* are excellent specimens of figure sculpture in their decorative setting. The large panel of *Sheshashayi Vishnu* from the *Deogarh* temple, representing the Supreme being slumbering wakefully on the serpent *Ananta*, the symbol of eternity, in the interval between the dissolution of the universe and its new creation, is a magnificent example.

The four-armed Vishnu is reclining gracefully on the coils of the *Adisesha*, whose seven hoods form a canopy over his crowned head. His consort Lakshmi is massaging his right leg and two attendant figures stand behind her. Various gods and celestials are hovering above. In the lower panel, the two demons *Madhu* and *Kaitabha*, in an attacking attitude, are challenged by the four personified weapons of Vishnu. The whole composition fashioned with a masterly skill, breathes an atmosphere of serene calm and an agitated tension, making it a superb piece of art.

magnificent representation of Vishnu belongs to the Gupta period, 5th century A.D., and comes from Mathura. The typical gown, the vanamala; the charming string of pearls twirled around the neck, the long and elegant *yajnopavita* are all characteristic of early Gupta work.

Ganga and Yamuna, two life-sized terracotta images, originally installed in niches flanking the main steps leading to the upper terrace of the Shiva temple at Ahichhatra. belong to the Gupta period 4th century A.D. Ganga stands on her vehicle, the *makara*. and Yamuna on the *cacchap*. Kalidas mentions the two river goddesses as attendants of Shiva and this occurs as a regular feature of temple architecture from the Gupta period onwards, the most notable example being the door jambs of the Brahmanical temple of Deogarh. Clay figurines (Terracottas) have great value as sources of social and religious history. In India, the art of making figurines of baked clay is of great antiquity as we have already seen at Harappa and Mohenjodaro where terracottas have been found in large numbers.

The Head of Shiva is an elegant example of Gupta terracottas, depicted with matted locks, tied in a prominent and graceful top knot. The expression on the face is noteworthy and both the figures, of Shiva as well as Parvati, are two of the most charming specimens from Ahichhatra.

The Head of Parvati with the third eye and crescent mark on the forehead. Her hair is beautifully arranged in spiral alaka-locks, with braid fastened by a garland and adorned by a floral boss. She is wearing a round earring with the Swastika mark on it.







