

Art of India

The Ganges Civilization & Rise of the Hindu Religion

The **Aryans** controlled India during the thousand-year period that is now commonly known as the **Ganges civilization**. They were warrior-like shepherds who relied upon their cattle and sheep for livelihood. Over time the Aryan religion, which recognized many gods and goddesses, blended with the beliefs of the Harappans to form what was to become the national religion of India: **Hinduism**.

Hinduism was not founded on the teachings of a single person but rather a blend of several different beliefs and practices. To the **Hindu**, there are three primary processes in life and in the universe: **Creation, Preservation** and **Destruction**.

The three main **Hindu** gods reflect this belief. They are **Brahma**, the Creator; **Vishnu**, the Preserver; and **Shiva** (or Siva), the Destroyer. To devote Hindu there is no distinction between humans and animals. Both have souls that continuously pass from one to the other **reincarnation**, or rebirth.

Reincarnation is a purification process in which the soul lives in many bodies over many lifetimes. Every action performed in one life influences how a person will be born in the next life. To move to a higher, purer state a person must follow a set of governing moral conduct. The ultimate hope of the Hindu is to escape the cycle of reincarnation. When that happens the soul becomes one with **Brahma**.



Tamil Nadu, Shiva, King of the Dancers (Nataraja). Chola Dynasty. 10th century. Bronze.

Name: _____

1. Who were the Aryans, how did they survive and what was their religion? (3)

who:

how:

religion:

2. Who were the 3 main Hindu gods and who represents each of the primary processes? (6)

1. -

2. -

3. -

3. What is reincarnation? (1)

4. Look at the Shiva, King of the Dancers sculpture and describe the mood/feeling you get from it and why? (2)

The Birth of Buddhism

By 500 B.C. another important religion known as **Buddhism** emerged. The founder of this new religion was a prince Siddhartha Gautama and in time he came to be called the **Buddha**, which means "**the Enlightened One**".

Buddha did not claim to be of divine origin, nor did he claim to receive inspiration from gods. He meditated or focused his thoughts, on a single object or idea, but did not pray to a Higher Being. After his death in 483 B.C., temples were built in his honor and his beliefs eventually spread throughout Asia.

Fundamental to those beliefs is **reincarnation**. Like **Hinduism**, **Buddhism** holds that after death a soul will return in others of life. The religions differ primarily in terms of the rules that must be followed if the **cycle of reincarnation** is to be completed successfully. If completed successfully, the spirit would experience **nirvana**, a blissful state of free of all desires.



The Buddha -"the Enlightened One"

5. Approximately when did Buddhism begin and who was the founder of the religion? (2)

6. What is the fundamental belief of Buddhism and how it is similar to Hinduism? (1)

7. How does the Buddhism belief of reincarnation differ from Hinduism? (1)

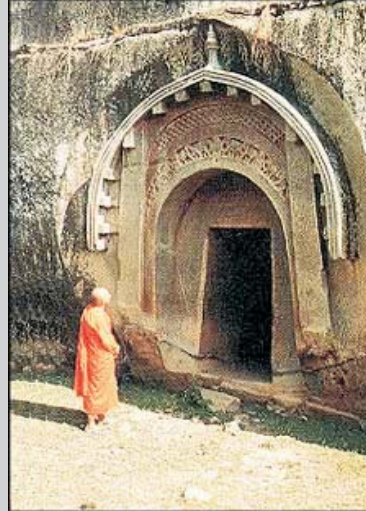
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Buddhist Architecture

The importance attached to **meditation** moved many of **Buddha's** followers to withdraw from society to live in monasteries called **viharas**. One of these was the Lomas Rishi Cave in the Barabar Hills in northeastern India.

Beginning in the 2nd century B.C. another important architectural form appeared known as the **Stupa**, a small round burial shrine erected over a grave site to hold relics of the **Buddha**.

One of the most impressive **stupas** was the one erected in the 1st century A.D. At Sanchi. Buddhists showed devotion by walking clockwise along the railed path at the bottom of the dome. This walkway symbolized the path of life that circled the world.



Name: _____

1. What is a Vihara and what purpose did it serve? (2)

2. Compare the floor plan of the Great Stupa at Sanchi with the floor plan of the early Christian Basilica from the 3rd century. List two architectural differences between the religious structures. (2)

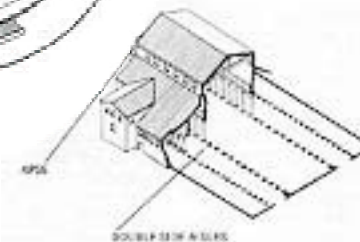
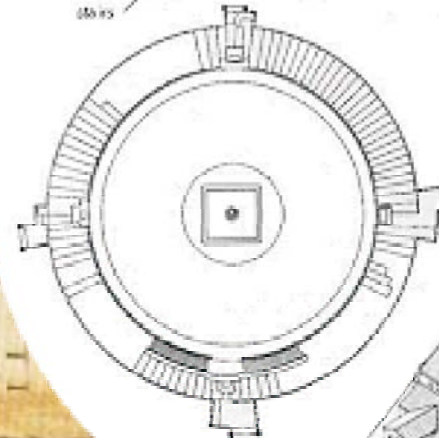
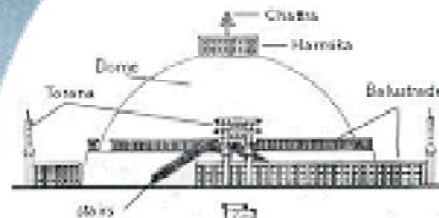
Stylistic Differences

1.

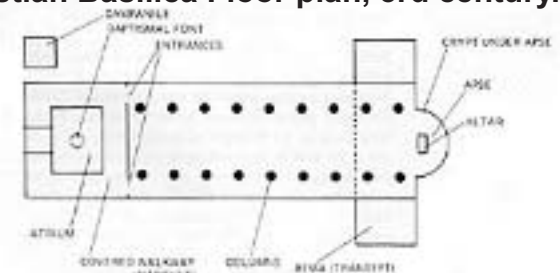
.2.



Great Stupa and Floor plan. Sanchi, India. 1st century A.D. Sandstone.



Early Christian Basilica Floor plan, 3rd century.



Buddhist Sculpture

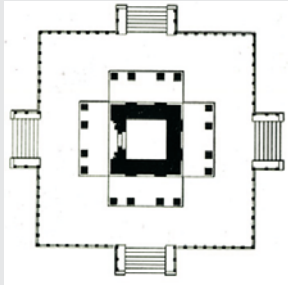
By the end of the 1st century A.D. artists began to represent the **Buddha** in **human form**. The **standing Buddha** image and the **Buddha seated** cross legged in **meditation** became the models.



Sitting Buddha, sandstone, 1-3rd Century.

Revival of Hinduism

Beginning around the 5th century A.D. Hinduism experienced a revival that ended with its return to prominence in the next two centuries.



Hinduism Architecture

The Vishnu temple from the 6th century, like all Hindu temples was never intended to accommodate large numbers of worshippers. Its primary purpose was to serve as a residence for a god. In this case the god was Vishnu, the Preserver.

Vishnu Temple & Floorplan, Deogarh, India. Early 6th century.



Shiva Nataraja, the Dancing Lord. Madras. Late Chola. 13th century. Bronze.



Mary and Jesus, St. Denis Abbey, France 13th century.

Shiva is shown as the Lord of the Dance.

He is performing a ritualistic dance, which symbolizes the destruction of the universe that is then reborn. This work echoes the Hindu belief that the human spirit too is born again after death, taking a new form reflecting the state of perfection achieved in previous lives. The arms not only emphasize the god's graceful movements but also permit him to hold several symbolic objects. In one hand he grasps a drum symbolizing creation. In another he holds the flame of destruction. A third had is

raised to protect the faithful. The fourth points gracefully to his upraised left foot which symbolizes escape from ignorance represented by the small figure he crushes beneath his foot.

3. Describe the mood/feeling of the Sitting Buddha from the 1-3rd century. (1)

4. What was the primary purpose of the Vishnu Temple at Deogarh India created in the early 6th century? (1)

5. Look at the Hindu sculpture depicting the god Shiva as the Dancing Lord from the 13th century and explain what her dance symbolizes. (1)

6. Compare the Hindu sculpture of the god Shiva as the Dancing Lord with the Christian sculpture of Mary and Jesus. List one stylistic similarity and one difference. (2)

Similarity:

Difference: