CHAPTER VIII

ART AND ARCHITECTURE
ARTS IN ANCIENT INDIA:

The essence of art is 'beauty' and beauty is an essential part of 'nature'. It is apparent everywhere in every object around us. In other words, whatever we see around us, bushes, fields, forests, beasts and what not, is a gallery of art and all the pieces of art are the creation of the supreme artist that is Nature. Art, as we understand it, is human effort or activity devoted to the creation of beauty. The success of an artist is measured by the standard as to how near he comes to nature in producing to the effect of beauty.

Arts thrive on peace and plenty, on contentment and generosity. When man's hunger's are satisfied, when his basic needs are supplied, when he is perfectly at peace with himself, he turns aesthetic, he is in a generous mood, he sees beauty in his surroundings, and he desires some how to express his joyous sentiments and these find expression in a dance, a song or the like. Paintings, modelling and carvings were likewise man's first attempts at giving permanency to the expression of his aesthetic sentiments.

This must have happened to the man who hunted for food and lived in caves or rock-shelters thousand of years ago. After a successful hunt, and on a full belly, he leisurely took in was happening around him. He has left permanent impressions of that for us in rock-paintings and
rock-carvings. It is not our purpose to trace the history of the origin and development of arts. We have rather to observe how they grew popular and whence they received impetus.4

Indian tradition recognises 64 arts, chatuhsamshti kalāṇa, but they can all be accommodated in the modern five-fold classification of fine-arts: music, poetry, architecture, sculpture and painting. Such minor arts as dance, carving, etc. can all be included in the said five major arts.5

Beginning from the earliest evidences of the patronage of arts in ancient India, we have to cite beautiful animal figures carved on numerous seals from various so-called Harappan sites as also some fine bronze and stone figurines from the same sites. This takes us back, to, 3000 years B.C.6

In the history of almost all the civilized nations, art and religions are found emerging together from the dim recesses of the past.7

The principal subject-matter of artistic treasures throughout the world has been mostly based on religion. The beginnings of religion and art lie hidden in the immemorial life of the primitive man. Religion has always been a great source of art, and the art of worship, the mother
of all arts. Art is a medium of religion to put the man nearer to God.

To sum up, it can be said that "the art is an visual expression of human mind regarding sensory and high feelings about life". The rendering of deities, beautiful Apsaras, and amorous couples, as well as the world of vegetation and animals, the scenes of dance and music, fights and hunting and many more aspects in concrete forms testify this. Art in a way becomes the language of images. Art is the realm which man has created for himself, wherein he can find scope for visual representation of unexpressed powers, which man derives from his multi-headed and multi-armed deities.

Though the visual forms and their many aspects of the deities, such as the Buddha, Mahāvīra, Śiva, Rāma, Krishna, belonging to different faiths, we find expressions of the mind and heart of the contemporary people, who reproduced them in different media of art. Coomaraswamy has explicitly remarked that the formal element in art represents a purely mental activity, citta-sanna.

Indian art depicts human beings and their environs in specific frame work of time and space in the context of an edifying story, sacred myth, legend or anecdote. The quiet procession of the whole of nature is unfolded before
the artist's wonderous gaze; men, vegetations and animals are seen in their subtle communion and extensive reciprocity.\textsuperscript{12} V.S. Agrawala observes that Indian art is a mirror of the thought, religion, philosophy, cults and culture of India. It is a rich commentary on the life of the contemporary Indian people.\textsuperscript{13} How the people lived and felt, their ideas about the divine, method of worship and what they created on the plane of matter is documented in Indian art. The extensive representation of Indian art, spread all over the country, extending from the pre-historic times to the present day, has been in the forms of architectural monuments, stūpas, chaityas, vihāras, temples, sculptures and icons in metal, stone, ivory, terracotta, paintings (both wall and manuscript), coins, pottery, textiles, jewellaries and many other forms.\textsuperscript{14}

The truly historical period begins with the Maurya dynasty in the 4th century B.C. we have numerous stone monuments, found all over the country, in the shape of monolithpillars, railings, stūpas etc. of which those at sāṃśāth near Vārānasī and sānc̦h̦ near Vidiș́h̦ are most outstanding. After the Mauryas, we have the Sūdras, the Indh̦ras, the Kușan̦as, the Gup̦tas and parāmāras as great patrons of arts. The public patronage continued side by side as evidenced by the short dedicatory inscriptions at Bharhut, sānc̦h̦, Mathur̦a and many other places.
EVOLUTION OF ROCK-ART:

The valleys of Narmada, Betwa, Chambal and Son in Madhya Pradesh are of particular significance from the point of view of art-history. The early 'cave-men' of Prehistoric and proto-historic times found these valleys convenient for their habitation. These early people lived in natural, and sometimes man-made, rock-shelters, wherein relics of their habitation have been discovered. Recent excavations at Bhimbaitkā (dist. Raisen) have brought light evidence of considerable importance pertaining to the Proto-historic (chalcolithic period).

BHIMBAITHAKĀ (ROCK-ART):

In the year 1971, Prof. K.D. Bajpai, assisted by Dr. S.K. Pandey of Saugar University undertook limited diggings in two rock-shelters and found remains of the Mesolithic Period. In one of the shelters was exposed a human skeleton associated with black and red pottery. From 1972 to 1977, Dr. V.S. Makankar, University of Ujjain excavated eight shelters and Dr. V.N. Misra and his team, Deccan College, Poona, excavated three trenches for four seasons (1973-76). The excavations at Barkherā rock-shelters have proved the Mesolithic Age people have drawn the figures of deer, antelope, cattle and wild boar etc. over the surface of these rock-shelters.
It is, therefore, evident that the Mesolithic period witnessed a rapid cultural advancement. However, it is far more important that these advanced hunting people began to create works of art of a high imaginative quality, executed in an amazingly wide range of techniques. Their sculpture, modelling, painting and engraving put us in touch with them on fully human terms. They had the same creative urge, the same gift for image making: they are already feeling their way towards religious symbolism.\(^\text{18}\)

The rock-shelters of Mirzapur are also excavated by Prof. G.R. Sharma and Prof. R.K. Verma. Coloured stone pieces were obtained from microlithic levels at Mirzapur.\(^\text{19}\)

After Dr. Jagdish Gupta produced his volume 'Prāgaithihāṣik Bhārtīya Chittraśālā', in 1967, a systematic and detailed study of Indian rock-art has been attempted by Dr. V.S. Wakankar, particularly his discovery of famous art-galley of Bhimbhīthālā,\(^\text{20}\) which is perhaps the largest in the world. The work of Dr. S.K. Pandey, Prof. Shankar Tiwari from Madhya Pradesh and Prof. G.R. Sharma and Prof. R.K. Verma, have also been of a great interest.

Besides, Mirzapur and Bāndā regions of U.P. bordering M.P. Raigarn, Nischangādī, Bhopal, Raisen, Vidishā, Sāgar, Damoh, Rewā, Pānā, Chhatarpur, Jabalpur, Narsinghpur, Morenā, Gwalior, Datiā, Chhindwādā, Bastar, Nimār and Mand-
- saur districts of M.P. have hundreds of Painted rock-shelters. Many more are awaiting to be adventurous explorers.

The Bhīma Baithaka rock-shelters containing a large number of paintings in the form of animal, human, and half animal figures, religious symbols, hunting and dancing scenes, are seen on the uneven walls and ceilings of these shelters. It is, however, strange that all the shelters, which were inhabited, did not always contain paintings. Even small hollows or notches are overhangs, which are difficult to reach, also carry paintings.

On the basis of superimpositions, subject matter and style of paintings, patination, encrustation, their correlation with already known designs, datable material and inscriptions, they have been divided into seven periods by Wakan kār21 and nine periods by Mathpāl.22

The brief details of the painted rock-shelters of Ahmedpur23 and Māser24 in Vidishā district, given below:

AHMEDPUR (near Vidishā) - Sri M.D. Khare have brought to light a group of painted rock-shelters in the Ahmedpur hill, about 20 km. from Vidishā and 2 km. north-west of Bilori, on Vidishā-Berasia road.

The hill is about 1200 m. long, 550 m. wide and oriented almost east-west having a height of about 570 m.
above M.S. A small river, Sahodrī, tributary of Betwa, flows to its south.

The subject matter of the painting is the same as at Bhīmbāīthaka as also the colours used. But the number of paintings belonging to the earliest phase of Bhīmbāīthaka are proportionally less, while those associated with period - II are more in number and display greater motion. The earliest phase is identifiable by stick-like human figures and animals in green colour. In some shelters superimpositions of paintings are also discernible.

The largest figure of an elephant is about 2 m. long and 1 m. high and the latest painting here could be dated painting here could be dated to about 4th-5th century A.D. on the basis of a painted inscription in Šankhalipi. There is another inscription of about 2nd century A.D. referring to Matha of king 'Jayavāda' a yavana and Rewā (river?).

These paintings were made by thin brushes, probably made of chewed sticks. It appears that almost every process known to us today was developed during the first flight of visual arts.

Hāsar Caves:— Dr. V.S. Wakankar has brought to light a belt of painted rock-shelters at Hāsar Hills, about 20 km. north-east from Ganj Bāsoda in Kurvāī tahsil of Vidishā
district. Some of these paintings belonging to the stone Age culture, chalcolithic period and rest of the early historical period. Two more sites Bāṁkherā and Neemkherā were also bearing the archaic paintings.

**Significance:** The pictorial art in the form of rock-paintings was innovated on the land of Mālwa from the pre-historic times when the man was in a hunting stage. For the first time he started decoration in his dwelling-shelters with colourful drawings. The memory of past events and some form of magic is also not ruled out. Gradually, the theme of paintings changed from hunter to food gatherer, to domestication of animals and lastly, to the life of the warriors. The gradual development in the life of shelter-dwellers is well depicted in these rock-paintings.

**Early Terracottas:** The terracotta art of India dates from the proto-historic period, the remains of which have been unearthed at pre-Indus and post-Indus culture sites. As a popular medium of art expression it continued to flourish during the historical period also.  

The excavations at Besnagar and Rangai have brought to light the various interesting terracottas of human and animal figurines from the chalcolithic phase. Mention may be made of the archaic bulls of terracotta with very long horns, prominent hump, short legs and very delicately carved tail. Worship of mother-goddess was also
dominant among the chalcolithic people. Mother earth figures on storage-jars of Navdātoli and terracotta figures from Nāgā, Daṅgewā, Kāyathā, Pipliya-Lorkā and Eran are some of the best specimen of this cult.

Chalcolithic people decorated their houses with different kinds of terracottas. Besides decoration they served some other purpose. A large number of unique figurines of bulls discovered at Kāyathā,²⁷ are either naturalistic or highly stylized forms, depicting the hump and horns. At Navdātoli,²⁸ an interesting specimen of a tiny bull. Similar terracotta bulls have been obtained from Avarā,²⁹ Eran³⁰ and the other chalcolithic sites in M.P., proved the early art-activities in the region.

Art of the Paintings on the Chalcolithic Pottery:-

The chalcolithic pottery³¹ of Rangai and Besnagar having the various paintings in black, displaying the horizontal or vertical bands, triangles, cheques, dots, horns of antelopes, bulls, etc. The black-and-red pottery represented by shallow basin types, some of which have white paintings inside of the vessels.

The other excavated chalcolithic sites in Madhya Pradesh viz. Navdātoli, Kāyathā, Eran, Pipliya-Lorkā, Daṅgewā, Runīja, Asādnagar, Avarā, Manotī etc. have yielded the various painted ceramics of the chalcolithic period.
The decorations on the pottery types mainly included liner designs, loops (both in single and double rows one over the other), triangles, arches, cross-bands, check designs, matted black designs, diamonds with dots, ladder decoration, leaves, plants, circles, pendants, Nandipada marks, Zig-Zag lines and lines in wavy-horizontal and vertical, criss-cross, arrow-points etc. on inside and outside of the rims. Animal designs such as antelope, black buck spiral designs, formed the decoration mostly on the rim, neck and globular body.

Besides, the paintings the graffiti marks such as geometrical designs, figures of animals, tātrik religious, symbols such as svastic, triangles etc. formed the decoration. The colour used in paintings of the pottery are mostly black, red, white and pinkish.

All this shows that the artistic activities during the chalcolithic period were par-excellence and the potters were the past masters depicting the flora and fauna on such painted pottery.

**Structures**— The mud-defence wall and a moat at Ṣran, give an idea of the town-potence. At Rangai, the main mound is encircled with a circular ditch from the three sides and the forth side has a natural protection from the river Betwa. The floors of houses were made of yellow clay rammed with kankar and pottery. No regular plan of the houses could be obtained.
MAURYA - SURGA - SATAVAHANA PERIOD

Vidishā played a prominent role in Indian history right from the Mauryan period to the time of the Paramāras. The town witnessed the rise and fall of rulers of various dynasties. Vidishā also has a glorious past. Its contribution to Indian culture, particularly to plastic art, was remarkable. Relics found in and around Vidishā have thrown ample light on the history and culture of eastern Mālwā.

Several scholars, like A. Cunningham, John Marshall, H.H. Lake, D.R. Bhandarkar, M.B. Garde, D.R. Patil have conducted the field work in and around Vidishā.

Cunningham surveyed Vidishā area in the year 1975 and again in January, 1977. He wrote an account of Vidishā-Besnagar in vol. X of his Survey Reports.

The antiquity of the city was confirmed by the discovery of ancient coins. Here we have only concerned with the art & Architectural remains found in and around Vidishā region.

REMAINS OF BUDDHIST ARCHITECTURE:

On eastern side of Besnagar Cunningham recovered several parts of Buddhist railing, which once surrounded a stūpa. These consisted of one coping stone, one railing and two rail-bars. He assigned the construction of the stūpa during 3rd century B.C. on the inner face of the
coping stone, there is a procession of four elephants and
four horsemen placed alternately with a footman between
each pair. Beginning from the right, No. 1 pannel has an
elephant, No. 2 shows a pair of Musicians, nos. 3-4 have
a female bearing a tray, and a man carrying streamers.
Nos. 5, 6, 7 and 8 have each a single female carrying a
tray in hand, no. 9 has two musicians, and no. 10 a stûpa.
Above, there is engraved a short record, in Asokan Brâhmi
characters mentioning names of donors. There is a Swastika
at the beginning and 'Dharmachakra' at the end. The railing
pillar, two rail-bars, a broken ball capital and a colossal
female statue etc. are the other important relics. One
the pedestal of the female statue, there are two lions
seated back to back, with a buffalo's head between them.

To the east, near the village of Sempura, Cummín-
gham discovered at broken pillar of Buddhist railing with
medallions in front. One abacus of a Buddhist pillar and
some other fragments found from Udaigiri, are ball-capital,
pilasters and lion capital.

During the period of Buddhism, Vîdishâ was a great
centre of trade connecting the flourishing town of the
Gangetic plains with the western coast and the Deccan. It
came to prominence in the time of Asoka, the Mauryan
emperor. During his reign, the development of Buddhism is
amply reflected in the famous ruins at Sâncâ, adjacent to
Vîdishâ.
Sir John Marshall, to whom the scholarly world will ever remain indebted for his great monumental work on Sānchī. Prior to Marshall several scholars had written on the Art and Architecture of Sānchī. Mention may be made of Fergusson, Maisey, Cunningham, Cole, Burgess, Grunwedel and Foucher. A brilliant exposition of this new, along with the previously known, material was published by Cunningham in his monumental work.

Sānchī:— Asoka erected one of his inscribed pillars at Sānchī besides constructing the other monuments. He took special care of the Buddhist Sangha established at Sānchī. This monarch is believed to have constructed a brick-stūpa on the site of the great stūpa and Sānchī. The original brick stūpa of Asoka was hemispherical in shape. After less than a century of Asoka’s demise, the original stūpa was encased in stone and a railing was constructed around its base. Later on during the days of the Śātavāhanas, four highly embellished gateways were erected to complete the stūpa.

The religious queen of Asoka caused the construction of a Buddhist monastery at Vīdisha. Asoka did much for the propagation of Buddhism. He was responsible for the erection of two lofty stūpas in central India, one at Sānchī (near Vīdisha) and the other at Bharhut (near Sātnā). Gradually these two sites became great centres of Buddhism.
Stūpa—II of Śāncī comes slightly after Bharhut and may be assigned to about 150 B.C. The plastic art here follows the main tradition of Bharhut. The linear anatomical stress in the human form and the archaic devices pertaining to composition are clearly discernible here. It is also interesting to note that the Greco-Scythian elements make their first appearance in the central Indian art during this period.

The next important stage in the art-history of central India is represented by stupa I and III of Śāncī. The mature art of Śāncī is marked by a definite and advanced sense of refinement. The figure of heavenly nymphs carved on the gateways of Śāncī are remarkable for their sensitive forms and attractive postures. The folk aspect of the Buddhist pantheon is much more elaborate at Śāncī. The life depicted through a large number of scenes is richer and more colourful than what we know of it at Bharhut. The artists of Śāncī brought sensuous elements also in the modelling of the female figures. The costumes and ornaments found on the female figures of Śāncī add to the beauty of the fair sex and are not intended to conceal it. The composition in surcharged with finer ideas of plasticity and perspective. The traits of Bharhut and Śāncī art are in a restricted sense discernible in the Śuṅga art of Mathurā and Bodhgaya, the two other centres of the north.
A graphic description of the civil architecture (moats, rampart, walls, buildings, pavilions, torana, gateway, railings, windows, pillars, elephant, stables etc.) as depicted in the bas-reliefs of the Sānchi monuments from 2nd century B.C. to 1st century A.D. is necessary. The whole range of along with that of the Buddhists, seems to be represented in many panels of the Sānchi bas-reliefs.

Besides the stūpas, Bodhi temples and other shrines, small huts, made of bamboo and leaves or straw, big buildings of multistoreyed structures, large cities fortified with defence-walls, guarded with high gate-houses and decorated with arched gateways, have also been well depicted in Sānchi sculptures. If we have aside the ground plans of the Harappan architecture, the representation provided by the bas-reliefs of Sānchi stand as the earliest example of Indian architecture to depict the ancient literary description.

Other Buddhist Stūpas (2nd cent. B.C.) :-

The rulers of the main house of Pusyamitra Śunga with their capital at Vidishā, must have contributed to the Buddhist establishment and erection of the Buddhist stūpas at Sānchi, Sañdhāra, Sonārā, Māñjulasī, and Prasāro (in Vidishā and Raisen districts). Recently a few other Buddhist remains have been brought to light from Hākushkharā in Raisen district and Zāfarahīdī in Vidishā district.
These Buddhist architectural pieces and the stupas have been assigned to the Maurya-Sunga period.

Other Remains:-- About 1½ m. east from Vidishā, Cunningham found a stone figure of an elephant with rider. A miniature lion figure and huge image of Gāṅgā on Makara (vehicle) was also found. A capital of the Sunga period once adorned to top of the Lohangī rock also discovered.

BRAHMANICAL REMAINS of the Sunga Period (2nd cent. B.C.)

From Besnagar (Vidishā):--

Cunningham discovered two fan palm capitals, Kalpadruma (wishing-tree) and a crocodile (Makara) capital of the Sunga period, from Besnagar. The colossal female image, one Buddhist railing, Makardhaja and the walls of a brick-temple were also excavated by Cunningham.

1. Makardhaja (crocodile pillar)-- This pillar was traced by Cunningham near the fan-palm capital. It is now exhibited in the Gwalior Museum.

2. Kalpa-druma-- A stone capital crowned with Kalpadruma. It has long roots from which money in the shape of square pieces is dropping in large quantities. The upper part of the tree is spherical in shape.

3. Fan-Palm capital-- On the abacus stood the fan-palm. It is now preserved in the Gwalior Museum.
PILLAR OF HELIODOROS - (Besi Nagar) -

Cunningham discovered this monolithic pillar, locally known as Khāmbāba during the year 1877. Its significance was brought to light later on by Marshall in 1909. The importance of the Heliodoros pillar was revealed after the inscription incised on it was deciphered. This inscription records the erection of a Garudadhvaja (column surmounted by Garuda) in honour of the god Vāsudeva (Vishnu) by Heliodoros, son of Dion. In this inscription he is called worshipper of god (Vāsudeva), and a citizen of Taxila. He came from there to Vidishā as an envoy from the Indo-Bactrian king Antialkidas to the court of king Bhāgabhādraka of Vidishā. The date of Antialkidas is the 2nd half of the 2nd century B.C. The pillar is made of quartz sandstone and is of pinkish brown colour. It has the characteristics of the Asokan pillars. The pillar as it stands rises from a platform.

Elliptical Temple - (C. 4th-3rd cent. B.C.)

During the excavations at Besnagar (1963-65), Sri M.D. Khare has discovered the plan of an elliptical temple belonging to c. 4th-3rd century B.C. It is represented by two rows of grooves in an elliptical outline with the passage in between serving as the pradakshinapatha, is an important discovery from architectural point of view. The available evidence shows that the super-structure of the temple must have been made
largely of timbar. The outer grooves was found to project forward to form an antarāla in front of the garbha-grīha facing east. This temple was destroyed sometime by the close of the 3rd century B.C. Two small sherds of N.B.P. ware and six punch-marked coins were recovered from the floor of this complex.

In the second phase, the temple was represented by a brick platform on a raised plinth, retained by free-built rubble walls (roughly measuring 30 x 30 metres and about 2.40 metres in thickness) the core being made up of clay filling. Stratigraphically, the Heliodoros pillar standing nearby and a portion of the stone-railing, exposed in an earlier excavation by D.R. Bhandarkar, belonged to this phase. The railing surrounding the Khāmbābā and the column are assigned to C. 165 and 140 B.C. respectively. 

Ruins of Irrigation canal:— The excavations carried on at the site during the year 1913-14 and 1914-15 yielded remains of Mauryan or Pre-Mauryan Age. This included an irrigation canal found below the foundation of stone railing. The canal had brick-walls in filled with pure alluvial earth evidently brought here by the floods of the river Bes. It seems that this excavated canal had been a storage canal as indicated by the cross-wall joining the south & north walls.
Sacrificial Kundas:— Three ancient sacrificial pits or kundas were brought to light during the excavations on mound situated on the eastern bank of the river. These are square, oblong and yoni shapes. These brick structures are at the distance of two to three metres from each other. The Ṛṣaṇa rulers coins were also found on the same level, where the kundas were found. These help us in fixing the date of these kundas to the beginning of the 4th century A.D.56

Assembly Hall:— Walls of two structures, one to the south and the other to the east of the pits were discovered on the same level.57 One of them is about 35 metres in length, while the other is of 19 metres in length. One of these structures probably served the purpose of an Assembly Hall.

Relic Casket:— The site also yielded a piece of flat stone with Bhikhuniya (by the non) incised on it in characters of the Maurya or Maurya Age, a thing like relic casket and a vase.

Building Structures:— An idea of secular architecture is gained from the residential buildings discovered in the excavations. Besides following the earlier tradition of having foundations of coarse rubbles, people introduced the use of foundations of large bricks, arranged on pebbles, mixed with sticky black clay and resting on rammed earth, in building structures.
Suśakasātvāhana Sculptures,-

During this period, sculptural art became narrative. Scenes from the Jātakas of vesantara, chhadanta, ayama and Mahākapi have been beautifully carved in reliefs on gateways and railings of the Sānci stūpas. Historical scenes, such as the visit of Ajātasatru and Prasenjit of Kosala to the Buddha, of Prasenjit visiting the Mango tree at Sravasti, Ajātasatru visiting the Amavana of Jīvaka, king Suddhodana going to meet the Buddha, the war of the relics which the chief of seven other clans waged against the Mallās of Kusināra, and Asokas visit to Bodhivriksha, and Nāga stūpa. This sculptural art has its root in the faith of the people, and gives eloquent expression to their spiritual beliefs.

The base reliefs relate to Buddha's life showing his birth (Jāti), enlightenment (sambodhi) first sermon (Dharmachakra pravartana) and death (Mahāparinirvāna). Each is represented by its own peculiar symbol: The lotus, the pipal tree, the wheel and the stūpa. They also depict the miracles of the master, e.g. his walking in the air, on water, and the miracles in the hermitage of Kasyapa. Buddhist emblems, triratna, nandipada, arivatśa and pillar crowned by lions or elephants.
Figures of animals or birds are, as a rule, arranged schematically in pairs (Saṃghāta). The animals are both real and legendary, sometimes with riders and sometimes without them. They include goats, horses, bulls, camels, elephants, deer and winged lions. Among birds, the peacock, the groose and the Saras are prominent. Among plants, the favourite is lotus.

There are female figures, or caryatids, standing under the dense foliage of trees on the toranas, and they are known as toranāsālabhanjikā. There are also figures of yakṣhas. The artists depicted the scenes of the uttara-kuru country, where happy mithunas enjoy dance, music and drink, under the kalpavrikṣha trees. The figure of Śrī-Lakshmi and also that of Pūrṇakuṇḍa, are remarkable.

Yakṣha Cult: — A few free standing statues of yakṣa and yakṣi of the Suṅga period found at Besnagar, are massive in size. They are peculiarly Indian in their dress and ornamentation, and also in spirit and outlook. They reflect primitiveness in art, and indicate the earliest phase of the indigenous art of India.

The description of yakṣas in early Indian art has been exhaustively discussed by Anand Coomarswamy, R.C. Agrawal, V.S. Agrawal, Pramod Chandra and R.N. Misra and a few other scholars.
From Vidishā and its vicinity have been obtained several important figures of yaksas and yakṣīs. Their aesthetic excellence is remarkable. According to K.D. Bajpai, their mellowed modelling marks a gradual development from the archaic figures of the Maurya and early Suṅga Age.

The newly discovered images of yaksas and yakṣīs from the bed of river Betwā (now preserved in Vidishā Archaeological Museum) are unique in this respect. The free-standing statues of yaksas and yakṣīs of the Suṅga-sātavāhana period found at Besnagar, reflect primitiveness of Indian art.

The following yaksas and yakṣī images have been discovered from Vidishā (Besnagar) and around the area:

1. yaksā from Vidishā, 1st cent. B.C.
2. yaksā (Torso), Vidishā, 3rd cent. A.D.
3. yaksā on decorated lintel, Vidishā, 1st cent. B.C.
4-6. Three yakṣī images from Vidishā, (Besnagar) 1st cent.
7. yakṣī from Besnagar (now preserved in the Indian Museum at Calcutta), 1st cent. A.D.

Terracottas:— The various terracottas and plaques also represent the art-styles of the period under discussion. These are mostly in human and animal forms.

Houses:— The houses were made of burnt-bricks having floors
of stone rubbles and the brick-bats. The evidences of brick-floors were also noticed.

During the *Sunga* Sātavāhana age and the succeeding periods of the Saka-Kushāna supremacy, central India had close contacts with Deccan and west India. The Sātavāhanas and the ksatrapas gave impetus to the cave-art in this part of the country. Under their patronage this art flourished right from the beginning of the 2nd century B.C. to the 7th century A.D. The affinities in the art of Bharhat, Sānci, Vidisha and Pawāya on one hand and of Pitalkhora, Bhāja, Kanheri, Pawnī, etc. on the other clearly point out to the inter-relations between the art-styles of the two regions.67

The Nāga Cult:— Vidishā and the region around was a centre of Nāga worship also. A dynasty of the Nāga kings ruled here after the Sūhja-Sātavāhanas. It continued to rule over Vidishā and Sran about the middle of the 4th century A.D. The names of the Nāga kings are known from the Purāṇas and from their coins found here in a large numbers. These rulers were Saivites and they also worshipped the Nāga deities. Statues of Nāga and Nāgīs, both in the human and the serpent forms, have been found at Vidishā and round about. These can be assigned between the 1st and the 3rd century A.D. It appears that during this period there
were some temples of Nāgas at Vidishā like the temple of 'Dadhikarna' at Mathurā.

The literary evidence concerning the popularity of the Nāga cult is confined by the numerous representations of the Nāgas in ancient Indian plastic and pictorial art.

Some interesting statues of the Nāgas and Nāgis, both in human and serpent forms have been found at Vidishā, Śāṅchi, and other sites in the region. There are three other important Nāga statues given as follows:

1. Nāgarāja, 3rd cent. A.D., Śāṅchi.
3. Nāgarāj (Torso 2nd cent. A.D.); Eran (Sagar University Museum).

In central India, particularly in the Vidishā, Śāṅchi-Eran, Tumain, Kutwar, Pawāya and Mathurā, this cult gained much fillip for quite a long time. The profuse relics of the yakṣas and the Nāgas in this area bear testimony to this.

Gupta Art:- The Gupta period is the Golden age in the Indian art-history. Central India occupies a place of pride in this regard. The chief art-centres of the Gupta period in Central India are much larger than in other part of the country. In one way, it is the age of the culmination and perfection of earlier phases and forms of art,
but in another, it marks the ushering in of a new age, which is connected with the evolution of temple art.

The Sāndhi–Vidishā region have played a significant role for the development of religious and secular art flourished during the Gupta period. Vidishā, Bhan, Tumākān, Pawāya, Mandsaur, Nachā, Bhāmarā, Tigā, Deogarh etc. were the chief centres of the Gupta art-activities. Similarly, architecture of both rock-cut and structural types, are known from Udaigiri and Patnāri (both in Vidishā district). At these places the pre-and proto-historic tradition of portraying the figures in rock is remarkably alive.70

Among the art centres enumerated above, Vidishā may particularly be singled out. The early art of Vidishā upto the Gupta age bears an eloquent testimony to the aesthetic excellence, original concepts and iconographic details. Like Mathura, Vidishā became a centre of the composite Indian culture. Here the Vedic-Purānic religion, Buddhism and Jainism for a long period found congenial atmosphere for their growth. The Bramanical faith developed at Vidishā in its various forms. Out of these, Vaishnavism carved out its enviable place from the time of Chandra-gupta-II Vikramaditya. This monarch, as a true devotee of Viṣṇu (Paramabhaṭavata), was responsible for propagation
of Vaisnavism in northern India in the same way as Asoka did in a larger measure, for Buddhism. In all probability, Chandragupta-II was responsible for the initiation of the classical Gupta art in central India. This is borne out by several examples of plastic art, such as the inscribed Varaha image from Eran and a large number of sculptures at Vidishā, Sānci and Udaigiri. The sculptural art of the Udaigiri caves and other several other sites in and around Vidishā is a pointer to the tremendous growth of Vaisnava art in central India.

The chief religious pantheons, referred to above had their unhampered growth in this region. It may be pointed out that during this age the aesthetic excellence gained and upper hand over the iconic details in the case of a larger number of Gupta statues.71

Udaigiri Caves:72 There are in all 20 caves excavated on the eastern face of the Udaigiri hill. The caves are mostly small rock-cut chambers enshrining idols or images of divinities carved into the rock of the hill. Cave nos. 1 and 20 are Jain caves. Architecturally cave no. 1 is a little interesting in so far as it represents the earliest phase in the development of temple architecture in India, planned as it is with a small shrine and a simple porch in front. Caves no. 2 and 3 are small cells with few sculptural remains. Cave no. 4 enshrines a Siva lingam and is
popularly called 'Bīṇā cave' from the figure of a man carved on its doorway represented as playing on the Indian lute (Vīṇā). The cave no. 5 is, however, the most important at Udaigiri because of the famous Varāha incarnation in it. The God Vishnu is here represented in animal-human form, as a man with boar's head. With his left foot he treads upon the head of the Nāga king. With his right tusk he raises the slender and tiny figure of 'Ahūdevī' (prithvī), the personified goddess of the earth from out of the waters of the ocean shown by the wavy lines in the back-ground. The event here depicts the famous cosmic myth of the creation of order out of chaos by the god Vishnu in this form of Varāha. In the back-ground at the top on both sides are represented the Devas and Asuras watching with interest this great cosmic event. On the left and right sides of the cave are portrayed descent of the rivers Gaṅgā and Yamunā from the heavens to the sea accompanied by heavenly dancers and musicians. The river goddesses are personified as females holding vessels of water in obeisance to the god Varāha. The waters of the two rivers further join together and are shown entering into the sea where they are received by the god of ocean, i.e. Varuna.

Artistically the scene is of profound interest to the history of the sculpture of the Gupta period of the 4th-5th cent. A.D.
On the other caves, the most notable are the caves nos. 6 and 7 containing important historical inscriptions of the Gupta period, and no. 13 for the large rock-cut image of Sesṣāyī Viṣṇu in it. The cave no. 19 is the largest in the group. The cave no. 20 on the north-eastern top of the hill contains a few Jaina images and an important inscription of the Gupta Period.

Ruins of the Gupta-Temple (Udaiyiri):— At a short distance towards south of the cave no. 20 are seen the ruins of an ancient Gupta temple, which Cunningham explored. He noticed traces of buildings at several places. It is near the place where the ruins of the temple are now seen that he first noticed the massive and of a shaft of a pillar still standing. Apparently this was one of the great lion pillars which had stood for centuries on the top of the hill. A lion capital is now kept in the Gujarī Mahal Museum at Gwalior.

Sculptural Art:— The above description of the caves gives a glimpse of the religious and artistic activities of the people at Vidishā during the Gupta Age, 4th-5th century A.D. It also shows that the worship of Viṣṇu and his various incarnations (Dasāvatāra), Śiva, Mahiṣāsuramardini, saptamātrikās, Ganesa and kārttikeya was prevalent in this age. Their idols were carved in a spirit of religious tolerance. They were the characteristic of the Golden age in which
equal emphasis was laid on the worship of Viṣṇu and Śiva. The sculptural representations of the Purānic stories, like Varāha redeeming the Earth from the cosmic convulsion, Viṣṇu resting on the primeval serpent 'Ananta', the devas and asuras churning the ocean and the goddess Durgā killing the buffalo-demon are faithfully portrayed at Udaigiri.

The architecture of the Udaigiri caves indicates a gradual evolution and development. Cave no. 1 is the most simple and primitive in appearance. It has no ornamentation, and the design of its pillars is simple but impressive. Cave no. 4 and 6 are more ornate. Cave no. 19 represents a still further stage in the growth of temple architecture.

The caves were not suited to the ritualistic needs connected with the image worshipped. The earlier small shrines could not provide proper space for the deities.

In order to fulfill the religious needs, the building of the structural temple was started and the cave art fell to the background.

Numerous sculptures of Viṣṇava (Dasaśāvatāra), Śaiva, Śākt, and other divinities, Jain Tirthankaras etc. were discovered from Vīdīśā and region around. Most of the sculptures and architectural pieces are now preserved in the Archaeological Museum, Vīdīśā and Gujārī Mahal Museum at Gwalior.
Jaina Sculptures:—Quite a good number of Jaina Tīrthankars images found in the Vīdīśa district are now displayed in the Gujarī Mahal Museum, Gwālior, and the Vīdīśa Museum. One is exhibited in the Victoria and Albert Museum, London.

Recently three inscribed images of Jaina Tīrthankars have been found in a village called Durjanpur (near Vīdīśa). These are extremely rare finds now preserved in the Archaeological Museum at Vīdīśa. Two of these images, according to the inscriptions on their pedestals, are of 'Chandraprabha' and the third one is of 'Puspadanta'. The inscriptions clearly indicate that these statues were caused to be installed by 'Mahārājadhīraja Rāmgupta.'

The inscribed image of Pārvanātha carved during the reign of Kumargupta I in cave No. 20 at Udaigiri also deserves special mention. It refers to the year 106 of the Gupta Era (A.D. 425–26).

Terracottas:—A number of terracotta figurine figurines were unearthed from the excavations at Besnagar of the human figures nearly half of male and half female. The backs of most of them are flattened. Of other living beings, figurines of the duck, parrot, elephant, horse, ram, bull, tortoise, fish have been found which must have served as play-things for children.

Paintings:—The art of painting reached a high point of
development during the Gupta Period. In Mālwa, there are specimens at Bāgh. The subject covered by the paintings are varied and numerous, such as the representation of the Buddha and Bodhisattvas, decorative scroll works, friezes and other patterns. The Jātaka stories have been beautifully illustrated.

Specimens of cave-Architecture have been found at Bāgh and Udaigiri and the structural buildings of the Gupta temples at Sānci, Tigwā and Bān are the earliest examples.

EARLY MEDIEVAL ARCHITECTURE: PRATĪHĀRA ARCHITECTURE:

The art-history of the region during the early Medieval is marked by a voluminous growth, both from the artistic and iconographic points of view. During the rule of the Gurjara-Pratīhāras, the Gupta artistic devices were largely followed. The surviving temples of the 8th and 9th centuries in Vidiśā district have certain common features, which distinguished them from the preceding and the following temples. The Pratīhāras of Mālwa are characterized by a low socle, a simple and relatively stunted spire, a wall decorated with a single band of sculptured niches crowned by tall pediments. There is an unpretentious plan, generally consisting of only the sanctum and vestibule, which is in a few cases, preceded by a porch. The group of temples at Naresar (Gwālior), Mahā (Shivapuri), Tehri, Teli-Ka-Mandir
(Gwālior fort) etc. deserves special mention. At Kagpur (Vidishā), there are remains of two old temples of the 8th-9th cent. A.D. The other temples in Vidishā district are found at Badoh-Patārī and Gyāraspur. A short description of the main shrines is appended below:

**Badoh-Patārī**:-

1. Gadarmal Temple,
2. Solī-Khambī Hall,
3. Dasāvatāra Temple,
4. Satmarī Temples, and
5. Jain Temples.

1. **Gadarmal Temple**: It consists of two distinct parts - (1) the lower portion or the basement which is a remnant of the original magnificent of about 9th cent. A.D., (2) the **Sikhara** or spire which, which is composed of a haphazardous collection of pieces, evidently a later repair. The temple stands on a spacious platform and is surrounded by seven attendant shrines which are all in ruins. There was originally a fine carved torana gateway over the stepped entrance to the platform. The plan of the principal temple is rather unusual. It consists of an oblong shrine room, and an entrance porch without sabhāmandapa, and in this respect, this temple is somewhat similar to Telī-kā-mandir (Gwālior fort). The exterior of the basement has the usual
mouldings and niches inset with images of gods and goddess of the Hindu pantheon. The attendant shrines sheltered subsidiary idols, only one of which, that of the Sun-god, has survived in the shrine at the north corner. On the whole, the sculptures and carving on this temple are usually fine, and the entrance porch is particularly imposing. This is the largest and most commanding of all the temples at Badoh.

Sculptures:— A fine large sculpture of a mother goddess with a baby was found lying in the shrine. It is now kept in the Gwalior Museum. According to the identification mother and child of this panel may be Yasoda and Krishna. The four-armed figure on the balaramabha of the lintel over the entrance in this temple represents Parvati. There is a series of sockets-holes in the line of pedestals indicating a row of idols was installed there. These idols of goddesses found in the debris are provided with tenons at the bottom. All these goddess are those of yoginis.

2. Salā-Khaṇḍa:— It consists of a sixteen pillared hall. It belong to the 9th century A.D. on architectural point of view.

3. Dasāvatāra Temple:— The group consists of shrines dedicated to one or another of the ten incarnation of Visnu. There is also a temple in the shape of a hall which once sheltered the images of the ten incarnations (Dasāvatāra).
The temple, all of which are now in ruins, range in date between 8th-10th century A.D.

4. Satmarhi Temples:— The name of the satmarhi temples implies the existence of seven shrines in this group of which only six are standing. The ruins indicate the existence of many more. The sculptures in the ruins indicate that some of the shrines were Vaishnavite and others Saivite. At least one shrine was sacred to Ganesa.

5. Groups of Jain Temples:— The group consist of twenty-five different shrines, to the north-west of the great temple and near the foot of the hill. The cells-shelter images of Jain Tirthankaras of different sizes.

The different cells of temple appear to have been constructed at different times ranging in date from the 9th to 12 century A.D. Some were constructed even after 1200 A.D.

Pethārī:— The monuments at Pethārī are:

1. A rock-cut panel of 'Saptamātrikas', is assignable to about 500 A.D. Other art-relics range in time from the 9th to 11th century A.D. A contemporary Sanskrit inscription is engraved on a rock-cut piece under the panel of the saptamātrikas. This inscription mentions the name of a king 'Jayatēna', who was the ruler of the area about 400 A.D.
2. A monolithic pillar was setup as Garuda-dhvaja by the chief minister of Rāṣṭrakūta king Prabala in V.S. 917 (A.D. 861).

3. The unfinished sculpture of Varāha is carved in a huge boulder.

4. Siva temple: This early medieval Siva-temple stands in a grove near the village Pathārī.

Most of the stone sculptures of this period are now preserved in Gwalior and Vidisha museums. They belong to vaishnavism, saivism, saktism and Jain pantheons.

Gyārāspur (Vidisha) - Mālādevī Temple: At Gyārāspur, the Mālādevī temple which is partly rock-cut and partly structural, is a mature example of Pratihāra style. From the decorative motifs and architectural features, this temple appears to be of the 9th century A.D. It consists of a porch, hall, vestibule and sanctum with an ambulatory. Each of its shorter sides, shows a pair of non-functional balconied windows, while the longer sides show three such windows, two projecting from the māṇḍapa, and one from the sanctum proper. The sanctum is tri-rātha on plain with a pancha-rāta sikhara of nine turrets. The buttress of the sikhara extends to the neck which is surmounted by a pair of āmalakas and a pot-finial. The roofs of the porch and the hall are pyramidal, composed of horizontal tiers.
The hall-doorway shows a figure of chakresvari as the tutelary image, while the sanctum door-frame is carved with a row of standing Jinas on the lintel. But as indicated by a figure of a goddess which occupies the dedicatory block on the outer door-frame, the decorative images and the current name of the temple, it appears to have originally been a temple of a goddess which was later on appropriated by the Jains like the 'Bājrā Matha' temple. Beglar believes that the original Brahmanical temple was appropriate first by the Buddhists and later by the Jains. Stylistically the temple appears to belong to about 9th century A.D.

2. Athkhāmbā:— The most important is the group of eight pillars known as Athkhāmbā (eight pillared hall). Four of these are the centre pillars of the sābhamandapa. Two pillars are of the aṅtarāla carrying a beautifully carved torana, the remaining two pillars are jamb of the door-frame. All the pillars and the sealing slab are exquisitely carved. The temple belonged to 9th century A.D. It was dedicated to Śiva. An inscription mentions the idol of the temple as Kṛnanesvara, which was the name of Śiva.

3. Bājrāmath:— It is an example of a rare class. In the shrine there are several Jain images put at a later date.

According to D.R. Patil, the central shrine was
dedicated to god Sūrya, while the southern and northern ones were for Visnu and Śiva respectively. Beglar believes, on the basis of Buddha figure on the architrave that the temple was a vaishnava on with the Buddha as the central deity. The central shrine is sacred to Sūrya, who is often substituted for Brahma, the southern to Visnu, and the northern to Śiva.

4. Hiṇḍolā Torana: This is one of the torana or ornamental entrance arches connected with the large temple dedicated either to Visnu or Trīṃśti. It is known as Hiṇḍolā from its general resemblance to the stand of a swing. The fragment of a figure of Visnu and the opening of an inscription with an obeisance to Visnu and his ten incarnations carved on the pillars of the torana tend to show that it was a Vaishnava temple. A fragmentary inscription states that it was built in the year 936 V.S. (A.D. 879).

The excavations have further shown that the adjoining group of four pillars carrying brackets with lions and elephant heads constitutes the central pillar of the sabhā- mandapa of the principal hall of the temple to which the Hiṇḍolā Torana belongs.

Images of Ganesha, Bhairava are found around the hill.
5. **Buddhist Stūpas and Images**:— On the hill to the north of the village area, a few ruined platforms built of dry rubble masonry which may possibly be the remnants of Buddhist stūpas. Two images of seated Buddha are carved in the face of a hill about 3 kms. to the west of Gyāraspur are other vestiges of the last activities of Buddhism which survived till the Medieval period.

Gyāraspur was one of the centres, where early Medieval art flourished in the form of Brahanical, Buddhist and Jain pantheons.

*sālabhānjikā* From Gyāraspur (Early 10th Century A.D.):

This Gyāraspur, torse is said to represent a *sālabhānjikā*. From the contours of the body in lyrical movement, with all the makeup and the sensuous charm, she would seem to be a reflection of one of those courtesans of the post Gupta world, when the way of pleasure was accepted as a norm among the princes. Perhaps the Greek settlements in the court of Ujjain and the life of hedonism had percolated to minor courts in the early Medieval period.

The figures of the *sālabhānjikā* is in the true tradition of the early images of this type which we find right from the early Śuhga period. It is carved in relief. The lady wears a short printed lower garment around her hips to cover the nudity. The tassel drops from it between
her thighs. Her hair styles is more artistically done with coiffure at the back. The head is decorated with beaded string in loop. She wears round junkalas and a close fitting necklace in three stands. From the lower stand drop a pendant between her breasts. The upper part of the jewellery is still but the last necklace moves freely between the full breasts. One ornament plays on the left hip apparently due to a violent movement. Another loose necklace covers her breasts. The hands and the feet below the knees are broken.

The figure's happily smile is worth notice. She fulfils the poetric descriptions of the ideal nayikas, who were designed as 'moon breasted, swan-waisted and elephant hipped'. Certainly there was rendered up, in the grace, the loveliness and exquisite charms of this women, one of the greatest sculpture in world-art.

It can thus be seen that the Suṣa-śātavāhana age brought a congenial atmosphere in central India for the development of plastic art tradition of the Vidishā region continued throughout the Gupta and early Medieval periods.

Art and Architecture of the Paramāra Period:— The Paramāra ruled over in Mālū in the later part of the early Medieval period. One of the rulers of this dynasty, Bhoja Parmāra, was a versatile genius. A work on art and architecture
entitled 'Samarāṅgana sūtraṇāra' is attributed to this ruler. The literary work deals with architecture, painting and iconographic details of unusual importance. Example of the Paramāra art can be seen at Udaipur, Vidishā, Ujjain, Dhār, Badoh-Patārī, Bhojpur, Āshāpurī, Modī, Hinglajgarh and several other sites in Mālwā. The sculptures under this style is marked by the conventional norms and ornamental details. These features had become quite prominent during this age of artistic upsurge. Iconography had by now assumed superiority over the aesthetic side of art. It is interesting factor that many of the iconographic details of the Pañchdevaś and their associates, as found in the relevant text, are met with in the sculptures from the above areas.

Several temples and a large number of the sculptures belonging to the Paramāra period were found in the Mālwā and the Bundelkhand regions. The temples built during the reign of the Paramāras in Mālwā are known as the Bhūmija style of architecture. As the Paramāras had intimate contact with Khāndesa and Koṅkan, they are affiliated more to this style than the Northern one. This style was not confined to Mālwā, but spread to Rājasthān, Gujrāt, Mahārāstra and Deccan.104

"The most distinctive feature of the Paramāra temples105 is its sikhara of Bhūmija class, which shows four
spires decorated with the usual mesh of chaitya-dormers on the central rathas (offsets), but the quadrants between these spires, filled with miniature shrine-models of diminishing heights, arranged in three or five horizontal and five to seven vertical rows. Another characteristic of these temples is the prominent sukmasika-anteika exhibiting a conspicuous chaitya-dormer at the base of the spine on each side. The mandapa usually shows a nascent form of bell roof. The pillars are squat and highly ornamented and show a few circular mouldings. The wall faces of the temples are richly ornamented. Though most of the temples are panch-rath in plan and elevation, many of them have a star-shaped layout and are built by rotating a square round a central axis. The temples do not, as a rule, possess an ambulatory, and consists of a sanctum, a vestibule and a mandapa with three cordinal porches. Triple-shrined temples are not unknown, and always possess a common mandapa and a porch.

This style originated in Mālwa in the 10th century A.D., 106.

Mālkaṭhēsvara or Udayēsvāra Temple:— The temple of Mālkaṭhēsvara or Udayēsvāra, after its royal author Udayāditya, at Udaipur 107 (in Vidisha district) is the grandest specimen of Paramāra architecture and was started in 1059 and completed in 1080 A.D., it is known from two inscriptions on this temple.
The temple has been described by Fergusson, who rightly admires its great beauty and elegance. This is indeed the finest and the best preserved example of the medieval Hindu temple in Vindhyâ in Vindhyâ district and possibly in the whole of Malwa.

The idol enshrined in the temple is a large Siva linga set on a high pedestal.

The three porches in the temple are carved with numerous sanskrit inscriptions, some of which are of historical interest and other are pilgrim records.

The exterior of the temple is adorned with sculptures representing various gods and goddesses of the Hindu pantheon, including Brahma, Vishnu, Ganesa, Kartikeya and the eight guardians of the quarters placed in their proper positions. Figures of Siva and his consort Durgâ in various forms are numerous.

2. Bījamandala:—This is the remnant of an interesting two storied house, contemporary with the Udayesvara temple. There is one sanskrit inscription on the wall which opens with the praise of Sûrya.

3. Bārśhâlā:—This is the ruin of a temple belonging to the 11th century A.D. It stand outskirt of the village.

There are a few rock-sculptures in the vicinity.
of Udayapur. Mention may be made of a huge but unfinished image of 'Siva' carved in a boulder and a panel of sapta-
matrikas on the side of an adjoining hill.

It is interesting to note that Udayesvara temple has thrown a welcome light on the art and architecture of the Paramāra age.

Besnagar-Vidisha:— Patil observed that "the medieval times of 9th to 12th century A.D. Vidisha continued to maintain, in a way, the cultural importance of ancient Vidisha. It was a prosperous centre of Jainism and Hinduism in central India and a number of magnificent temples were built here which may have been destroyed by invaders in subsequent times. The famous Bījāmaṇḍala mosque in the town must have been once one of the largest temples in central India which was later converted into a mosque. Under the sultans of Mīlāvī, Bihisā was one of the provincial capital of the kingdom in charge of a governor. The temples of the sun-god 'Bhaillasvāmina' and the other dedicated to the goddess 'Charkha' or vījavā (now vījāmaṇḍala mosque) deserves special mention. Both the temples have been dated to the 11th century A.D. on the basis of the epigraphical records.

River Goddess Gāṅgā from Besnagar:— This rare image of the river goddess Gāṅgā from Besnagar is now exhibited in the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, U.S.A. She is shown standing
in trībhaṅga upon a makara under the shade of mango tree. Her left elbow rests upon the shoulder of a female attendant. The right hand holds a flower. Gaṅgā is shown wearing akāvalī, kundalas and armlets and anklets. She has a high head dress. The upper portion of the body is bare. The workmanship of Gaṅgā is exquisite.

The figure of makara is carved very artistically. The reptile is trying to devour a fish in the wide open mouth. A child is holding the upper snout of the makara into the left hand and with the right he is trying to strike at it. The other body attendant stands on the tail of makara, holding a basket of flowers.

Vāgdevī (Goddess of speech): The most important figure of the Paramāra period is the famous image of Vāgdevī (goddess of speech) from Dhār is now in the British Museum, London. It belongs to the reign of king Ahoḍadeva. It was executed in 1034 A.D. by famous sculptor Manthala. The goddess is in the abhaṅga pose. Of her four hands, the front pair are mutilated. She wears a crown and her ear-rings hang down to her shoulders. She wears a pearl necklace round her neck and a pearl embroidered band circles her breast, her waist is decorated all round. She is attended by five subordinate figures, two above and three below. On the left below are a rai and a dwarf, and on the right, probably
Pārvatī on the lion. On the left above is a flying female figure is indistinct. The Devī is in meditative mood. Her urumālā (thigh ornament) and carchet are Dvāvidian in style and the ornaments of her arms remind one of the early images. Shri Shivarama Murti claims it as one of the most marvellous creations of the sculpture of the Paramāra realm patronised by Bhoja.¹¹¹

Significance of the Paramāra Art and Architecture:— The sculptures of Mālwa including the Vidishā district during the Paramāra period reflects an admixture of both the east Indian tradition of Bihar and Bengal and that of Rājputānā and Gujarāt, where the medieval trends found their most congenial home.¹¹² The figures of the Paramāra period are largely and vigorously conceived and modelled in ample dimensions and are informed by classical value of form.¹¹³ They are free from jerky movements and intense flexions, and do not seem to feel the weight of the heavy roundness which characterises their youthful body.¹¹⁴ The face also fully and vigorously modelled, observes S.K. Saraswati, 'however wears an expression of blankness and is lighted up neither by any pleasure of the senses nor by any inner experience, urge or inspiration.'¹¹⁵ The legs are stumpy and ornamentation is characteristically medieval. ¹¹⁶

The Bhumija style of temple architecture gained
ground during the Paramāra rule. Quite a large number of excellent temples in Mālwa, Gujarāt and Rājasthān can be referred to in this connection. The last example can be seen in the Udayesvara temple at Udaipur which incorporates all the typical features of a Bhūmīja temple of Nāgara style. Most of the Paramāra temples are of the panchāvatana type.

The contemporary inscriptions furnish some interesting name of Śiva and Devī in whose honour the temples were set-up by kings, merchants and other people.

Quite a large number of the Brahmanical deities carved during the Paramāra period are still preserved in the temples and elsewhere. Some of preserved in the museums, at Indore, Dhār, Ujjain, Bhopal, Vidishā and Gwalior etc. Both from the point of view of aesthetic excellence and the iconographic details, they are worth study side by side with their iconic texts given in the contemporary sīla texts.

In the Udayesvara temple the two sculptures representing Pārvatī and Sarasvatī are exquisitely carved. They very well tally with the description of Śridevī given by Bhoja. Numerous other examples of Śiva (in various forms), Viṣṇu, Sūrya, Ganesa, Devī and the Tīrthankaras can be cited. There are remarkable depictions of yakṣas, yakṣīs and sura-sundarīs at Ṣhinglājgarh, Nānāwar, Jhālarpatan, Chittor, Ujjain, Mandāeur, Udayesvara, Vidishā, Badoh-Pathērī, Gyāraspur
and several other sites. Recent explorations at Hinglajgarh in the Mandsaur district of Madhya Pradesh have brought to light more than five hundred stone sculptures of the Paramara period. Some of these are extremely important for the study of Indian art-history. 117

The parmara art, with its local characteristics developed in the socio-religious background of the period requires a thorough study.

Paintings: Though no tangible evidence is now left of the works of painting during Parmara period, there is no doubt that the art was quite popular among the aristocratic sections of society. The author of the 'Samaragopasutradhara' has devoted full section to painting. 118

To sum up, this great activity of cultivation of patronage of art and architecture in ancient India continued in an ever-increasing measure for over fifteen hundred years beginning from the 4th century B.C. Thereafter it received a set-back owing to the political disintegration and resultant confusion. There were periods of intensive artistic activities in the subsequent periods before the present day revival. Now-a-days the styles and motives are fast changing alongwith their popularity. 119

Besides, numerous temples, art and architectural remains of the Brahmanical, Buddhist and Jaina religions
spread over Vidishā-Besnagar, Udaigiri, Badoh-Pathārī, Gyāraspur, Udaipur and at a few other centres in the Vidishā district, several sculptures and the architectural pieces of these three pantheons are now preserved in the state Archaeological Museum, Vidishā and the Gūjarī Mahal Museum, (Fort) Gwalior. These belonging to a period ranging from C. 2nd century B.C. (Sukāga period) to the 13th century A.D.

A short description of some of the selected sculptures is given hereunder:

I - VIDISHĀ MUSEUM

1. yaksha, suṅga period
2. yakṣi, suṅga period
3. Panel depicting serpents, 1st cent. A.D.
4-6. Three Jaina Tīrthāṅkara, Gupta period.
9. Head of Vīṣṇu, 8th cent. A.D.
10. Sūrya (hands broken), 10th cent. A.D. (two sculptures).
11. Vāmana, 10th cent. A.D.
14. Umā-Mahēśvara, 10th cent. A.D.
15. Vīṣṇu, 10th cent. A.D.
16. Śeṣhaśāyī vīṣṇu, 10th cent. A.D.
17. Śeṣhaśāyī (with inscription), 11th cent.
18. Kaṃkāl (head), 11th cent. A.D.
22. Gaja-Sārdūla, 11th cent.
23. Apsara, 11th cent.
24. Visnu, 11th cent.
25. Vāmana, 12th cent.
26. Seśhasāyī Visnu (inscribed), 12th cent.
27. Chauri bearer female attendant, 12th cent.
28. Visnu (inscribed), 13th cent. A.D.
29. Brahmā, 13th cent.
30. Gaurī, 13th cent.
31. Nāga couple, 12th cent.
32. Ādināth, 9th cent.
33. Nemināth, 10th cent.
34. Jain Tīrthankara, 10th cent.
35. Sāntināth (Head mutilated) 11th cent.
36. Jaina Tīrthankara, 11th cent.
37. Upper part of a Jaina image, 11th cent.
38-40. Ādinātha, Neminātha, Tīrthankara, 13th cent.
41. Ambikā, 10th cent.
42. Deepavāhini, 10th cent.
43. Nādhī, 10th cent.
44. Ambika (mutilated), 11th cent.
45. Chauri bearer female attendant, 12th century.
46. Yugala, 13th cent.
II. Gwalior Museum (Sculptures and architectural pieces from Besnagar, Badod-pathari and Gharaspur, etc.)

1. Railing of Buddhist stupa, 2nd cent. B.C.

2-8. Fragmentary pieces of cross-bars of the Buddhist railing, having mutilated lotus, Garuda, Makara, lion and palm capitals, 2nd cent. B.C.

9. Fragment of Buddhist railings with two devotees under the Bodhi tree, 2nd cent. B.C.

10. Buddhist railing (six devotees standing - three on each row one above the other under the Bodhi tree), 2nd cent. B.C.

11. Buddha (miniature with face broken, two attendants seated below on the pedestal), 2nd cent. B.C.

12. Buddha (seated, miniature without head) in dhyana-mudra, 2nd cent. B.C.

13. yakshi, 2nd cent. B.C.

14. Siva linga with a face, 5th cent. A.D.

15. A torso (appears to be apart of Visnu, 5th cent. A.D.).


17-22. Mother Goddess, Gupta period.

23. Visnu standing, Gupta period.

24. Six-armed goddess, 5th cent. A.D.

25. Jaina Tirthankara(standing) 5th cent. A.D.

26. Siva linga (with a face), 5th cent. A.D.

27. Nrisimha (standing), -do-
29. Kūrma incarnation, **Badoh**, -do-
30. Varāha incarnation, **Badoh**.
31. Kalki incarnation, -do-.
32. Mother and child, -do-
33. Aśvattha or skandamātā, **Gvāraspur**, Early medieval (9th century).
34. Brahmā, **Besaragar**, -do-
35. Līṅga Chaumukha (Pañchāyatan) Badoh, -do-.
36. A woman (Sālabhañjikā), **Gvāraspur**, Early Medieval.
37. Viṣṇu (chaumukha) depicting four avatars of Viṣṇu, varāha, Nṛsiṁha, Trivikrama, etc, **Badoh**, Early Medieval.
38. Indra, **Badoh**, Early Medieval.
39. Nṛsiṁha, -do-.
40. Vāmana, -do-.
41. Ashta-Dikpāla, -do-.
42. Rāma, -do-.
43. Lākṣmī-Nārāyana on Garuda, -do-.
44. Face of Moon (?) **Bhilsā**, Early Medieval.
45. Brahma, **Bhilsā**, -do-
46. Chaumukha Līṅga, **Gvāraspur**, Early Medieval.
47. Varāha, **Badoh**, Early Medieval.
49. Jaina Tīrthankara, **Bhilsā**, Medieval Period.
50. Jaina chaumukha, **Bhilsā**, -do-.
51. Buddha (Brahmanical), **Sunārī**, Medieval period.
52. Viṣṇu riding on Garuda, Bhilsā, Medieval period.
53. Varāhi, Badoh, Medieval period.
54. Siva and Pārvatī, Bhilsā, Medieval period.
55. Siva in his fierce form slaying Gajāsura, Gvāraspur, 13th cent. A.D.
56. Head of Siva, Gvāraspur, Medieval period.
57. Siva dancing, Udaipur, " ".
58. Siva and Pārvatī, Bhilsā, " ".
59. Gaṇesa with his Sakti (consort), Udaipur medieval period.
60. Drummer, Badoh, medieval.
61. Brahmā, Bhilsā, medieval.
63. Five nos. females in standing or Bust part, Badoh, medieval.
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