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225en02

HISTORY AND APPRECIATION OF ART FROM 7th AD TO 12th AD

The Post Gupta period in India is known for the progress in temple architecture and sculpture. Major dynasties like, **Pallavas, Cholas, Hoysalas** in the south and **Palas, Senas, and Gangas** in the east patronized this progress. In the south, in Mahabalipuram or Mamallapuram, we see the **Pancharathas** and the **Mandapa** structures. While **Pallavas** and their rivals, Western **Chalukyans** are remembered for their sculptural activities, **Cholas** and **Hoysalas** would be always remembered for their temple projects. **Chola** artists excelled in the techniques of bronze casting and intricate metal sculptures with delicate and rhythmic body movements. But at the same time **Chola** period has also given us some of the most important temples of Southern India – like the **Gangakondacholapuram** temple, **Brihadeswar** temple and others. These temples are important for their simplicity, monumentality and majestic quality. Next in importance was **Hoysala** art. **Hoysala** style was a mix of intricate design and detail study. During the rule of the **Hoysala** kings, many important temple projects were given shape. Speciality of the **Hoysala** period temples are the presence of temple sculptures as part of the architecture. **They form an important part of the architecture.** In the eastern part of the country, some of the temple projects were taken up by the **Ganga** rulers, like the **Mukteswar** temple, **Lingaraja** temple and **Rajarani** temple in Orissa. Some of the most important Indian temples of **Kanchipuram, Chennai, Bhubaneswar, Bankura, Belur** and **Halebid** were built during this time. Artists by this time had become more and more proficient in carving and other techniques. Hence, this particular time is very important to understand the development of the Indian art and architecture.



OBJECTIVES

After studying this lesson, the learner will be able to:

- describe in brief the art of the period from 7th century AD to 12th century AD;

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ARJUNA'S PENANCE OR GANGAVATARANA

- identify the art objects of this period;
- distinguish between enlisted art objects of this period;
- mention the main characteristics of the enlisted art objects of this period; and
- identify distinctly the names of enlisted art objects of this period.

2.1 ARJUNA'S PENANCE OR GANGAVATARANA

Title	:	Arjuna's Penance or Gangavatarana
Medium	:	Stone
Date	:	Pallava Period (7th century AD)
Finding Site	:	Mamallapuram (Chennai)
Size	:	91 ft X 152 ft (Approx)
Artist	:	Unknown

GENERAL DESCRIPTION

The monuments of the **Pallavas** consist of cave temples and structural temples, plus a few monolithic structures. One of the most important sculptural works of this period is from **Mamallapuram**. The relief is on two huge boulders. The sculpture is uneven but very distinct and spontaneous in representation. There is a flow in the whole composition. There is a crowd of life-size human and animal figures. They include gods, demi-gods, and sages, all in the flying position. There is a cleft in between the two boulders. All the figures are shown facing the cleft. Though there are lots of movements and energy on the upper part of the relief, in the lower part of the composition the life shown almost calms down. The ascetic figures in the crowd have been shown in meditating posture. The name of the relief, according to some scholars, is **Gangavatarana** where **Shiva** has been shown receiving the flow of Ganges in his hair. To the right of the cleft a four-armed figure larger than all the rest can be identified as **Shiva** by the trident over his shoulders and his group of followers. Others think that it should be known as **Arjuna's Penance**, because a male figure (which they think is Arjuna) has been shown at one end in the posture of meditation. This is a distinctly Pallava Period work. There is enormous speed and monumentality in the sculptures. The animal figures and their characterization show the close observation of the artists. For example, the sleeping baby elephant, the monkey figures, the deer scratching its nose, all show their acute study of the natural world. The figures have softness in the treatment and roundness. This has been regarded for ages as one of the masterpieces of the Indian sculptures from the southern part of the country.



INTEXT QUESTIONS 2.1

- Where is Arjuna's Penance located?
- Arjuna's Penance was built under which dynasty?



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KRISHNA SUPPORTING MOUNT
GOVARDHANA



- c) What is the other name of Arjuna's Penance?
d) What is the measurement of the sculptural relief?

2.2 KRISHNA SUPPORTING MOUNT GOVARDHANA

Title	: Krishna Supporting Mount Govardhana
Medium	: Stone
Date	: Hoysala Period
Finding Site	: Belur
Size	: 3 ft
Artist	: Unknown

GENERAL DESCRIPTION

Temple architectures were one of the important activities during **Hoysala period**. Besides the elaborate temple architectures, each temple of this period was decorated with sculptures, which formed an intrinsic part of the architecture. The **Hoysala** style is named after one of the famous dynasties of the **Deccan**, which emerged around the middle of the eleventh century and is generally considered to have come to an end in the mid fourteenth century. The capital of the **Hoysala** kings was **Dvarasamudra**, the modern **Halebid**. Hoysala style is unique in its own way and is highly characterized. The earliest major **Hoysala** temples are at **Belur**. Hoysala sculptures show deep carving and undercutting, soft rhythms of the body contours, delicate and intricate designs. Deep carving and undercutting is facilitated by the soft stone. It gives the rich surface texture and is responsible for the intricate and detail scenes. This **Krishna Sculpture** is one of the best examples of the delicate and intricate **Hoysala** carving. The whole incident has been shown in layers. The obvious placement of **Krishna** as the central figure with human beings and cattle in different layers present an interesting way of narration. Though **Krishna** has been shown in a heroic form, his stance of standing and the rhythmic limbs bring softness in the whole composition. Very interesting to notice is the liveliness of the animal figures. With heavy breasts and buttocks, elaborate jewellerys, typical Indian hair-style, this composition is an example of typical **Hoysala period style**, where the intricate carvings of the stone shows the mastery of the artist.



INTEXT QUESTIONS 2.2

- a) Name one temple site of the Hoysala period.
b) Name the earlier name of Halebid.

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SURASUNDARI FROM KONARK

- c) When did Hoysala kings become powerful?
- d) Where was the Hoysala kingdom?
- e) From where the given example of sculpture has been found?

2.3 SURASUNDARI FROM KONARKA

Title	: Surasundari from Konarka
Medium	: Stone
Date	: Ganga Dynasty (12 th century AD)
Finding Site	: Konarka, Orissa
Size	: Little more than life size
Artist	: Unknown

GENERAL DESCRIPTION

The **Sun Temple at Konarka**, one of the best of great Orissan architectures was built by **King Narsimhadeva I** of the **Ganga dynasty** in the eastern coast of India near Puri in Orissa. The period saw a different type of sculptural development. The temple is famous for its gigantic structure and larger than life size sculptures. The larger images, usually of black stone have a little bit of affinity with later Bengal style of the **Pala** period. The modelling is tight and the face is broad with smile. The works are robust and have loose plasticity. The sculpture of the temple increases beauty and aesthetic value of the temple. The large Sun image and the female musician figures present a different kind of quality in this temple. This little more than life size female musician is one from the group of similar kind of sculptures. These female musician groups are found on the terraces above the bottom and the middle tiers. They have been shown playing with full confidence and delight. They are boldly carved. The figures are full of movement and volume. Each one is shown with a different kind of musical instruments. The **Surasundary** is shown with a drum. In spite of the big face with smile, the rhythmic actions of the limbs and the slight tilt of the head, present the graceful beauty of this drummer. The soft carving of the ornaments in between the breasts enhance the softness of the figure. The bends and the curves of the figures present a rhythm. The folds of the draperies and the posture add to the rhythm of the figure.



INTEXT QUESTIONS 2.3

- a) What is this Surasundari figure has been shown playing?
- b) Who built the Sun temple of Konarka?





Notes

- c) Where is the Sun temple of Konarka situated?
- d) What is the sculpture made of?
- e) Which dynasty did Konarka belong to?



WHAT YOU HAVE LEARNT

After the golden period of the Gupta dynasty, the development in the field of art and architecture continued under different dynasties. In the post Gupta period, the centres of the art activities shifted to southern and eastern India. In the 7th century AD Pallavas became powerful. Their capital was **Mamallapuram** or **Mahabalipuram**.

The main centres, which flourished during this period, were **Mamallapuram** and **Kanchipuram**. Hence a major portion of art works of this period are found in these centres. Some of the important contributions of the **Pallavas** in the field of Art are seen at **Mahabalipuram**. These are **Pancharathas**, **Arjuna's Penance**, **Mandapas**, the relief sculptures and many more. After the **Pallavas**, the important Southern dynasties were **Chalukyas**, **Cholas** and **Hoysalas**. **Pallava**, **Chalukyan**, and **Chola** sculptures show a gentleness, which was not seen before. While the Cholas excelled in the technique of bronze sculptures, **Hoysala** period is remembered for the stone sculptures with intricate works. They are known for their subtle poses, rhythms and movements in their works. Some of the best temple architectures were also built during their time, like **Haysaleswara** temple at **Halebid**, **Kesava** temple of **Somnathpur**. After the **Palas** and **Senas**, the dynasty that became prominent was the **Ganga** dynasty in the east. This dynasty is remembered as an important builder and is credited with the construction of the gorgeous and majestic **Sun temple** of **Konarka** in Orissa. The temple, which is in the form of a chariot drawn by horses, is world famous for its architecture and sculptures. Though the architecture is damaged badly, what remains is enough for us to understand the greatness of the artists of this period.



TERMINAL EXERCISES

1. Write in brief about the relief of Arjuna's Penance. Where is it located?
2. Where is the Sun temple of Konarka? Write in brief about it.
3. What are the characteristics of the Konarka sculptures?
4. Write in brief about the particular example of Krishna Govardhana sculpture from the Hoysala period.
5. Write the main characteristics of Hoysala period sculptures.
6. Write in short about the Konarka Sun temple.



ANSWERS TO INTEXT QUESTIONS

2.1

- a) Mahabalipuram or Mamallapuram
- b) Pallava dynasty
- c) Gangavatarana (Descent of Ganga)
- d) 91 ft X 152.ft (Approx)

2.2

- a) Belur:
- b) Dvarasamudra
- c) 11th Century;
- d) Deccan
- e) Belur

2.3

- a) Drum
- b) Narasimhadeva I
- c) Orissa
- d) Stone
- e) Ganga Dynasty

GLOSSARY

Plasticity	-	Softness
Tilt	-	Slight bend
Undercutting	-	Cuts in the deeper layers in a sculpture
Contours	-	Boundary line
Schist	-	One kind of stone
Cleft	-	Gap
Meditating	-	Worshipping
Monumentality	-	Hugeness felt inspite of smaller scale

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- Characterization - Creation and convincing representation
- Penance - Meditation
- Draperies - Cloth, Fabric
- Subtle - Delicate
- Chariot - Two-wheeled vehicle