

# Chapter 3: Early Temples and Buddhist Monuments

## Short Answers

CSM 02: History of India and Indian National Movement

Compiled by Prof. Ashok Vishandass

### **This chapter contains:**

- Early Temples Of Ancient and Medieval India
- Buddhist Monuments of South India
- Mudras of Buddha
- Dharmachakra Mudra
- Bhumisparsha Mudra
- Varada Mudra

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# 1. Early Temples of Ancient and Medieval India

The majority of architectural remnants of India are Ancient and Medieval are religious in origin. **Temples** in different parts of the country have distinct **architectural styles** due to **geographical, cultural, and historical variances**. The country's two major temple orders are Nagara in the north and Dravida in the south. Myths mentioned in the **Puranas** become part of the Hindu religion's narrative portrayal. This article will explain to you the concepts related to **Early temples** which will be helpful in Indian Art and Culture preparation for the UPSC Civil service exam.

## 1.1 Early Temples

- The majority of the architectural relics from **Ancient and Medieval** India are of a religious nature.
- **Geographical, cultural, and historical** differences resulted in varied architectural styles of temples in different sections of the country
- **Nagara in the north and Dravida** in the south are two broad orders of temples in the country.
- The **Vesara temple** style is sometimes discovered as a separate style, resulting from the selective merging of the Nagara and Dravida orders.
- More surfaces for **sculpture** were created as temples became more sophisticated, by adding more and more rhythmically protruding, **symmetrical walls** and niches without deviating from the shrine's basic form.

## 1.2 Historical background

- Temples in India have a **few thousand years** of history behind them. Their architecture has evolved with time.
- They **differ in size, style & construction material**, depending on geographical location and the resources available.
- In the early Vedic period there is no clear mention of temples. All worship & rituals were done before the holy fire called "**Yagna**".
- In the later Vedic period, idol worship began and those were kept in **elementary dwellings** with simple earth mounds that were substituted later by brickwork with grass roofs.
- Later on, **technology and science** brought more sophistication and temples were made with more details and designs.

## 1.3 Temples

Temple	Style and Features
Mahabodhi Temple,	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The MahaBodhi Temple Complex is one of the four sacred</li></ul>

Bihar (3rd century)	<p>locations associated with the life of the Lord Buddha, particularly his enlightenment (Bodhi).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lumbini (Birth) in Nepal, Sarnath (Dharma-Chakra-Pravartana - 1st Sermon) in Uttar Pradesh, and Kushinagar (Mahaparinirvana-death) in Uttar Pradesh are the other three.</li> <li>• The Mauryan emperor Ashoka erected the original building.</li> <li>• It was, however, completely rebuilt in brick during the late Gupta dynasty. T</li> <li>• The current temple was built in the fifth or sixth centuries.</li> <li>• The Mahabodhi Temple site contains outstanding records of the events surrounding Buddha's life and subsequent adoration.</li> </ul>
Sanchi temple 17, Madhyapradesh. (5th Century )	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Temple 17 in Sanchi is built on a low moulded bottom and is located near the north-east corner of Temple 18.</li> <li>• It comprises a square sanctum with a flat-roofed entrance porch supported by four pillars.</li> <li>• It is an outstanding example of Gupta architecture, with its structural integrity, symmetry, logical proportions, and ornamental restraint.</li> <li>• The portico pillars' capitals feature four lions, each with two bodies. A tree stands between the lions at the corners.</li> </ul>
Nachna Hindu temple, Madhyapradesh. (5th Century)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The exact date of the Nachna temples is unknown, but based on its architecture and other constructions that can be dated, they are thought to date from the 5th or 6th century Gupta Empire.</li> <li>• The majority of the temples in the area have fallen into disrepair.</li> <li>• The Parvati temple in Nachna is the best maintained and studied monument.</li> <li>• The temples have a square plan with a square sanctum surrounded by a circumambulation path with perforated screen stone windows and are erected on a raised and moulded plinth.</li> <li>• Goddess Ganga and Yamuna guard the entrance to the temple.</li> </ul>
Bhitargaon temple, Uttarpradesh. (5th century )	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Bhitargaon Temple is a terracotta-paneled terraced brick structure.</li> <li>• Built during the Gupta period in the 5th century. Though its upper chamber was damaged in the 18th century, it is the earliest surviving brick/terracotta Hindu shrine with a roof and a towering shikhara.</li> <li>• The temple faces east and has a square plan with double-</li> </ul>

	<p>recessed corners. Overlooking the garbhagriha is a lofty pyramidal spire.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Terracotta panels representing aquatic monsters, Shiva and Vishnu, and other Hindu gods adorn the walls.</li> </ul>
Bhumara temple, Madhya Pradesh (5th century)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bhumara Temple is a Hindu stone temple dedicated to Shiva that dates from the 5th or 6th century Gupta era.</li> <li>• The temple is square in shape and features a sanctuary and Mandapa. While much of it is in ruins, enough of the temple structure and artwork has remained to be studied by scholars.</li> <li>• The temple is remarkable as one of the earliest examples of enclosed concentric pradakshina-patha construction (circumambulation path).</li> <li>• It has a beautiful entry to the sanctum flanked by Ganga and Yamuna deities, as do other early Gupta era Hindu temples, as well as elaborately carved statues.</li> </ul>
Badami temple, Karnataka (6th century)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Badami cave temples are a collection of Hindu and Jain cave temples in Badami, India.</li> <li>• The caves, which date from the 6th century, are noteworthy examples of Indian rock-cut architecture, particularly Badami Chalukya architecture.</li> <li>• Badami is a modern name for Vataapinagara, the early Chalukya dynasty's capital, which dominated much of Karnataka from the sixth to the eighth centuries.</li> <li>• Badami is located on the west bank of a man-made lake, surrounded on the north and south by forts built in later times by an earthen wall with stone steps.</li> </ul>
Deogarh dashavatara temple, Uttarpradesh (6th century)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Deogarh is a notable example of a late Gupta Period kind of temple, dating from the early sixth century CE.</li> <li>• The main shrine is erected on a rectangular pedestal, with four smaller subsidiary shrines at the four corners, in the panchayatana style of architecture (making it a total number of five shrines, hence the name, panchayatana).</li> <li>• This curving latina or rekha-prasada kind of shikhara further indicates that this is an early example of a traditional nagara temple style.</li> <li>• The temple displays Vishnu in many forms, it was assumed that the four ancillary shrines must have likewise held Vishnu's avatars, and the temple was misidentified as a dashavatara temple.</li> </ul>
Pattadakal temples, Karnataka (7th century)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pattadakal, also known as Paadakallu or Raktapura, is a Hindu and Jain temple complex in northern Karnataka dating from the 7th and 8th centuries CE (India).</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This site has been designated as a UNESCO World Heritage Site.</li> <li>• The Archaeological Survey of India manages the monument, which is a protected site under Indian law.</li> <li>• Pattadakal has been hailed by UNESCO as "a harmonic blend of architectural forms from northern and southern India" and an example of "eclectic art" at its pinnacle.</li> <li>• The majority of Hindu temples are dedicated to Shiva, but there are also aspects of Vaishnavism and Shaktism doctrine and stories.</li> </ul>
Kailashnath temple at Ellora (8th century)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The construction of the temple began during the reign of Dantidurga, a Rashtrakuta ruler (735-757 AD).</li> <li>• The temple was carved from the top of the mountain, but a trench was constructed around it on the sloping side of the hill afterwards.</li> <li>• Aside from the gopura, the main temple contains a sabha griha (hall), vestibules, and a Nandi mandap that leads to the garba griha (sanctum) with the Shivling, all of which are intricately carved and feature Dravidian shikharas (towers).</li> <li>• The Nandi mandap and the gopuram are connected by a bridge.</li> </ul>
Lad Khan temple at Aihole (8th century)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Chalukya Shiva Temple (formerly known as Lad Khan Temple) is one of the earliest Hindu temples dedicated to Shiva.</li> <li>• The temple appears to be based on early timber versions, none of which have survived. This can be observed, for example, in the construction of the mandapa's roof.</li> <li>• The temple has a shrine (garbha griha) in front of it with a mandapa in front of it, as well as a covered road for circumambulating the sanctuary, as seen in other early temples.</li> </ul>
Chaturmukha temple, karnataka. (9th Century )	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Chaturmukha temple is a 9th-century structure. These temples are examples of Hindu temple architecture in the North Indian style.</li> <li>• It is known as chaturmukha (four faces) basadi because it has four symmetrical faces (a term used to refer to Jain temples in South India). Images of Tirthankaras Aranath, Mallinath, and Munisuvratnath can be found in the temple.</li> </ul>
Virupaksha temple, karnataka (9th Century)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lord Shiva is honoured at the Virupaksha Temple. This temple was built with the help of Lakkana Dandesha, a general under King Deva Raya II.</li> <li>• Krishnadevaraya, a notable Vijayanagara King, was a temple benefactor.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It is thought that he added the main pillared hall, which is the temple's most ornate building.</li> <li>• Along the side of the hall is a stone tablet with inscriptions explaining his temple contributions.</li> <li>• There are numerous crumbling mandapams surrounding the Virupaksha temple. In front of this temple, there was a historic retail centre with mandapams.</li> <li>• Hampi is a temple town in South India that has been designated as a UNESCO World Heritage Site.</li> </ul>
Kamakhya temple, Assam ( 8th Century)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dynasty of Mlechchha. Koch King Nara Narayan and Ahom kings rebuilt it.</li> <li>• It is situated on the Nilachal Hill, near the Brahmaputra River's banks.</li> <li>• Kamakhya is one of 51 Shakti peethas (holy locations) for Shakti devotees, each representing a different component of Lord Shiva's companion Sati.</li> <li>• Narakasura, the demon king, is said to have built the temple. However, records only date back to 1565, when Koch ruler Naranarayana had the temple restored.</li> </ul>
Kandariya Mahadeva temple (10th Century)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The temple, which dates back to 1050 BC and was built by the Chandela ruler Raja Dhandadeva, is one of the mediaeval wonders.</li> <li>• Kandariya Mahadeva temple is one of the most beautiful, tallest, and largest temples in the Khajuraho complex.</li> <li>• The large number of stone carvings inside the Kandariya Mahadev temple is one of the most attractive aspects of the temple.</li> <li>• These sculptures, which include human and animal sculptures, portray numerous aspects of our daily lives.</li> </ul>
Lakshman temple at Khajuraho (10th Century)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Lakshmana Temple is a Hindu temple erected by Yashovarman in the 10th century.</li> <li>• It's a Panchayatana Sandharaemple. As shown in the photograph, the entire temple complex is built on a high platform (Jagati).</li> <li>• All of the components of Hindu temple architecture may be found in the construction.</li> <li>• It has an ardha-mandapa (entry porch), Mandapa, Maha-Mandapa, Antarala, and Garbhagriha.</li> </ul>
Shiva temple of Thanjavur, Brihadeeswara temple	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Between 1003 and 1010 AD, Raja Raja Chola I constructed this temple.</li> <li>• Rajarajeswaram, also known as Peruvudaiyar Koyil, is a Shiva-dedicated Hindu temple in Thanjavur, Tamil Nadu.</li> <li>• It is built in the Dravidian style.</li> </ul>

(10th Century)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dakshina Meru is the name given to it (Meru of south).</li> <li>• Along with the Chola dynasty era Gangaikonda Cholapuram temple and Airavatesvara temple, which are roughly 70 kilometres apart, the temple is a part of the UNESCO World Heritage Site known as the "Great Living Chola Temples."</li> <li>• The vimana tower, which stands above the sanctum and is made of granite, is one of the tallest in South India.</li> </ul>
Lingaraj Temple in Bhubaneswar (11th Century)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It is thought to have been constructed by Somvanshi King Yayati I.</li> <li>• The Lingaraj Temple, dedicated to Lord Shiva and established in the 11th century AD, is the city of Bhubaneswar's greatest temple (Odisha).</li> <li>• Garbha Griha (sanctum sanctorum), Yajna Shala (prayer hall), Bhoga Mandap (offering hall), and Natya Shala are the four divisions of the temple (hall of dance).</li> <li>• The Bindusagar Lake, which is located on the temple's north side, is another attraction.</li> </ul>
Modhera Sun temple, Gujarat. (11th Century)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Modhera Sun Temple was built in the early 11th century by King Bhima I of the Chalukya dynasty.</li> <li>• It is a temple dedicated to the Sun God, located on the banks of the River Pushpavati in Modhera village, Mehsana district.</li> <li>• The temple's magnificent architecture is in a class by itself.</li> <li>• According to the Konark Temple, the shrine is built in such a way that the first rays of the Sun fall on the picture of Lord Surya.</li> <li>• Surya Kund, located in front of the temple, is a deep tiered tank.</li> <li>• Lord Surya was the inspiration for the tank's name (Sun God).</li> </ul>
Chausath Yogini temple (11th Century)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Devapala (CE 1055 – 1075), a Kachchhapaghata ruler, erected the temple.</li> <li>• Chausath Yogini Temple, also known as Ekattarso Mahadeva Temple</li> <li>• The temple is located on a hill, with 100 stairs leading up to the entrance. It is round, with a radius of 170 feet, and contains 65 small chambers, each with an open mandapa and a facade of pilasters and pillars.</li> <li>• The centre shrine to Shiva has a flat roof, as does the ring of shrines; the circular courtyard is hypaethral, exposed to the sky, and has an open porch as its entry.</li> <li>• This temple is supposed to be the inspiration for India's</li> </ul>

	parliament building.
Siddhesvara Mahadeva Temple (12th Century)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It is regarded as an opulent example of Western Chalukyan art from the 12th century, and it is well renowned for the numerous loose sculptures of Hindu deities that can be found inside.</li> <li>• The temple is unique in that it faces west rather than east, as is customary in Chalukyan architecture.</li> <li>• Though it is currently used as a Shaiva temple devoted to God Shiva, historians are confused whether faith or sect consecrated the temple and to whose deity it was initially dedicated.</li> <li>• This confusion may originate from the numerous loose deity statues that exist, as well as the deterioration of key wall depictions.</li> </ul>
Jagannath Temple in Puri (12th Century)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• King Anantavarman Chodaganga Deva of the Eastern Ganga Dynasty is thought to have built the temple in the 12th century.</li> <li>• The 'Yamanika Tirtha' of Jagannath Puri temple is where, according to Hindu beliefs, the power of 'Yama,' the god of death, has been negated in Puri due to Lord Jagannath's presence.</li> <li>• This shrine is part of the Char Dham pilgrimages and is known as the "White Pagoda" (Badrinath, Dwaraka, Puri, Rameswaram).</li> <li>• The Aruna stambha, or sun pillar, sits in front of the entryway and was originally located in the Sun Temple at Konark.</li> </ul>
Sun Temple in Konark (13th Century)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• King Narasimhadeva I built it in the 13th century (AD 1238-1264)</li> <li>• The temple is built in the form of a massive chariot.</li> <li>• It is dedicated to the God of the Sun. It is immediately and materially tied to Brahmanism and tantric belief systems in this respect.</li> <li>• The Konark temple is well-known for its architectural splendour as well as the complexity and abundance of its sculptural art.</li> <li>• In 1984, it was designated as a UNESCO World Heritage Site.</li> </ul>
Lakshmi narasimha temple (13th Century)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The temple was constructed in the early 13th century during the Hoysala dynasty.</li> <li>• It has three shrines dedicated to Lakshmi Narasimha, Venugopalswamy, and Purushothama, and is built in the 'Triakuta' style.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The temple's outside walls are adorned with intricate Hoysala sculptures.</li><li>• Devotees use the concrete platform flooring, also known as jagati, as a pradakshina path (ambulatory passageway for circumambulation).</li><li>• Hoysala temples are frequently referred to as hybrid or vesara because their unique style appears to be midway between Dravida and Nagara.</li></ul>
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## 1.4 Conclusion

Along with these types and styles, there are many different forms of temple architecture in India, each with its own name based on the location. And they're made of materials that are only found in that area. Kashmir's proximity to **Gandhara monuments** is notable, while the Himalayan region contains a variety of styles, such as Kedarnath in Garhwal and Jageshwar in Kumaon. As a result, temple architecture in different places has a variety of influences, resulting in a variety of styles with only a few distinguishing characteristics.

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## 2. Buddhist Monuments of South India

**Buddhist Monuments of South India** are the Amaravathi Mahachaitya stupa and protected Buddhist monument complex at Bavikonda in Andhra Pradesh, the Chudamani Vihara in Tamil Nadu, and the Namdroling Monastery of **Tibetan Buddhism** in Karnataka etc. This article will explain to you the concepts related to the **Buddhist Monuments of South India** which will be helpful in Indian Art and Culture preparation for the UPSC Civil service exam.

### 2.1 Buddhist Monuments of South India

- South India used to refer to the three kingdoms of the **Chera, Chola, and Pandya**, or the territory known as the Tamil country proper, which included what is now Tamil Nadu and Kerala.
- However, in modern usage, South India refers to the states of Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Kerala, Pondicherry, and Tamil Nadu, which are home to the 13 **dravidian language** family.
- The golden age of Buddhism in South India was distinguished by the blooming of culture in all aspects of life.
- The self-sacrificing **Bhikkhus** laboured not only for their own spiritual elevation and achievement of **Nirvana**, but also for the understanding and practise of the noble **Dhamma** based on love, compassion, and equality, which they helped and directed the great mass to comprehend and practise.
- Amaravati, Nagarjunakonda, Bhattiprolu, Ghantasala, and Jaggyyapetta in Andhra Pradesh; Vanavasi in Karnataka; Vanji or Vanchi in Kerala; and Kanchi and Nagapattinam in Tamil Nadu were the most prominent Buddhist shrines in ancient South India.

### 2.2 Namdroling Monastery, Karnataka

- **Thekchog Namdrol Shedrub DargyeLing, also known as Namdroling Nyingmapa Monastery, is the world's largest teaching centre for the Nyingma lineage of Tibetan Buddhism.**
- Buddhist monks transmit the **Buddha's lessons** to the next generation here, ensuring that the Guru's message lives on.
- Those who wish to spend more time at the monastery can stay at the monastery.
- Namdroling Nyingmapa Monastery's first construction was a **bamboo temple** that covered a space of around 80 square feet.
- The Namdroling Nyingmapa Monastery was constructed out of the jungle that the Indian government generously handed **Tibetan exiles**, with rampaging elephants and other tropical perils posing initial hurdles.

### 2.3 Karumadi Kuttan, Kerala

- **Karumadi Kuttan** is a historic shrine that may be the only spot in Kerala where you can find Buddha.
- This is a **modest temple** rather than a vast monastery.

- The presence of a black granite statue of **Lord Buddha**.
- The figure, which dates from the 11th century, is surrounded by a plethora of intriguing legends.
- It is thought to have been constructed by monks who travelled to Kerala to promote the **philosophy of love and nonviolence**.
- The structure's left hand is fractured, and an elephant is said to have torn it apart. Another local myth is that the statue has **healing powers**, and people travel from far and wide to seek relief from their ailments.

## 2.4 Chudamani Vihara in Nagapattinam, Tamil Nadu

- **Chudamani Vihara** was a **Buddhist monastery in Nagapattinam**, Tamil Nadu, that was built in 1006 CE.
- The current structure in town is thought to have been built in the year 1006 AD by **King Sri Vijaya Soolamani Varman** with the assistance of the **Chola dynasty**
- The vihara had persisted in a deteriorated state until 1867, and since 1856, over 350 Buddha bronzes dating from the 11th to 16th century had been discovered.

## 2.5 Amaravati Stupa, Andhra Pradesh

- The ruins of an **Ashokan pillar** have also been discovered during the excavations. If you come here, don't forget to see the 125-foot-tall statue of **Dhyana Buddha** in Amravati.
- From the **2nd century BCE** onwards, the region between the **Krishna and Godavari rivers** was a significant Buddhist centre.
- During the reign of Ashoka in 200 BCE, a Buddhist stupa was constructed with panels depicting Buddha's life story.
- This stupa was neglected after the **decline of Buddhism** and was buried behind rubble. The stupa was repaired according to a 14th-century inscription in Sri Lanka, and then it was forgotten.
- **Colonel Colin Mackenzie** of the British Army discovered the edifice, which had been abandoned in ruins, in 1797.
- The stupa is linked to the **Kalachakra Vajrayana teachings**, which are still taught in **Tibetan Buddhism** today.
- Since then, various excavations have been carried out in order to restore the shrine's full architectural glory.
- In 2006, the **Dalai Lama** of Tibet held a Kalachakra initiation at this place

## 2.6 Kanchipuram Monastery, Tamil Nadu

- Kanchipuram Monastery, formerly one of Tamil Nadu's most important Buddhist centres, has endured the test of time to display its architectural splendour to people in the **twenty-first century**.
- The shrine was constructed in the 2nd century BC and has been home to hundreds of monks for centuries. **Kanchipuram** is also thought to be the birthplace of **Bodhidharma**, a Buddhist monk who was instrumental in the spread of **Buddhism throughout Asia**.

- The shrine's grandeur represents the depths to which followers went in the worship of their gods.

## 2.7 Bavikonda, Andhra Pradesh

- Bavikonda is particularly well-known among Buddhists, and it is home to the **Bavikonda Monastery**, which was founded in the 3rd century BCE.
- A major Buddhist complex was also discovered at this location, yielding remarkable relics such as a chunk of bone kept in an urn (said to be Lord Buddha's remains), **inscriptions, pottery, relic caskets, moulded bricks, stuccos, and tiles.**

## 2.8 Bojjannakonda, Andhra Pradesh

- Between the 4th and 9th centuries, the site was constructed.
- There are 65 stairs on the western side of the slope that go up to the **two-story rock-cut cave**. Five of the cave's 16 pillars have perished over time, but the rest remain to allow visitors to observe this intriguing shrine.
- A Buddha statue can be found on the cave's upper level.
- **Lingalakonda**, which is not far from Bojjannakonda, is another hill with identical stupas and **rock-cut caves**. These two hills have yielded a plethora of antiquities, including coins, seals, and ceramic objects.

## 2.9 Kanaganahalli, Karnataka

- Excavations at Kanaganahalli village, Karnataka, have found ruins of an ancient Mahastupa, votive stupas and brick buildings in the style of a **Chaityagriha**, pictures of Buddha, antiquities such as lead coins, and a sculptural portrayal of **Mauryan king Ashoka**, termed "**Rayo Asoka**."
- The '**Jataka**' legends and the **life of Buddha** are depicted on sculpted panels near Kanaganahalli.

## 2.10 Bhattiprolu Andhra Pradesh

- Bhattiprolu, in the Guntur district of Andhra Pradesh, is a significant Buddhist site notable for the "**Vikramarka kota dibba**" Buddha Stupa, which was built between the third and second centuries BC.
- Three mounds were unearthed in 1870, and three inscribed stone relic caskets containing crystal caskets, Buddha relics, and gems were discovered in 1892.
- A big group of destroyed votive stupas with several pictures of Buddha, a stone receptacle containing copper vessel, which in turn contained a **silver casket**, and a gold casket enclosing beads of bone and crystal were unearthed.

## 2.11 Salihundam Andhra Pradesh

- Salihundam in Andhra Pradesh is known for its Buddhist relics, which include multiple Buddhist stupas and a **large monastic complex**.

- Relic caskets, four stupas, a **Chaitya Griha**, structural temples, and countless sculptures reflecting three stages of Buddhism have been discovered during excavations at the site.

## **2.12 Conclusion**

The Government Museum in Madras, as well as Amaravati and Nagarjunakonda in Andhra Pradesh, house the eternal forms of art and sculpture made by southern artisans. The huge number of inscriptions left behind by pious Buddhists in Amaravati, Nagarjunakonda, and other locations attest to the royal and public support given to the Buddha's faith. All of the Brahmi epigraphs in South India are associated with Buddhists, which is noteworthy.

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### 3. Mudras of Buddha

Mudras are a non-verbal mode of communication and self-expression in Buddhism, consisting of hand gestures and finger- postures. Dharmachakra Mudra, Abhaya Mudra, Bhumisparsha mudra, etc are some of the important mudras in Buddhism. This article will discuss the Mudras of Buddha, which will be helpful for UPSC Civil Service Exam preparation.

#### 3.1 What is a Mudra?

- In yoga, Buddhism, Hinduism, and Jainism, a mudra is a **sacred and symbolic gesture**.
- In Sanskrit, the phrase means "gesture," "mark," or "stamp."
- Hands folded on the lap, which represents meditation, a palm held up facing outward, which represents teaching or reassurance, and an open palm directed downward, which represents charity, are all common mudras or images of Buddha.

#### 3.2 Different Mudras of Buddha

Mudra
<b>Dharmachakra Mudra</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Dharmachakra in Sanskrit means the 'Wheel of Dharma'.</li><li>• It symbolizes the first sermon of Buddha.</li></ul>
<b>Bhumisparsha Mudra</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• It means 'touching the earth'.</li><li>• Symbolizes the moment when Buddha attained enlightenment under the Bodhi tree</li></ul>
<b>Varada mudra</b> <p>Also known as favorable mudra, it is a gesture of granting wishes or mercy</p>
<b>Dhyana Mudra</b> <p>It is the mudra of meditation, of concentration on the Good law, and of the attainment of spiritual perfection.</p>
<b>Abhaya Mudra</b> <p>It symbolizes protection, peace, and the dispelling of fear.</p>
<b>Vajra Mudra</b> <p>This gesture represents the five elements of air, water, fire, earth, and metal, which are represented by the blazing thunderbolt.</p>

### **Vitarka Mudra**

It is used to symbolize the transmission of the dharma or the truth teachings of the Buddha.

### **Jnana Mudra**

Jnana mudra is a psychic gesture of knowledge.

### **Karana Mudra**

In Buddhism, karana mudra is believed to remove obstacles, cultivate inner peace and guide the practitioner towards enlightenment.

### **Uttarabodhi Mudra**

It is mostly known as the mudra for enlightenment

### **Anjali Mudra**

Anjali mudra is used as a posture of composure, of returning to one's heart, whether you are greeting someone or saying goodbye, initiating or completing an action.

## **3.3 Significance of Mudras**

- Mudras, or hand gestures and finger postures, are a **non-verbal means of communication and self-expression**.
- Each of the five transcendental (Dhyani) Buddhas is allocated one of these mudras, and they are generally shown in visual arts with only that mudra.

## **3.4 Conclusion**

Ranging from the poetic and complicated Dharmachakra mudra to the prosaic, universal prayer symbol, mudras reference anecdotes from the historical Buddha's life and convey elements of Buddhist practice like meditation and teaching. Thus, Mudras hold a key position in Buddhist arts.

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## 4. Dharmachakra Mudra

Mudras are a non-verbal mode of communication and self-expression in Buddhism, consisting of hand gestures and finger- postures. The Dharmachakra Mudra, one of the most important mudras in Buddhism, symbolizes the first sermon of Lord Buddha. Here we will discuss the various aspects of Dharmachakra Mudra, which will be helpful in preparing Art and Culture for the UPSC IAS Examination.

### 4.1 Dharmachakra Mudra

- Dharmachakra means '**Wheel of Dharma**' in Sanskrit.
- It represents one of the most significant events in Buddha's life: the **first sermon** he gave to his companions in the **Deer Park at Sarnath** following his **Enlightenment**.
- As a result, it signifies the turning of the Wheel of the Dharma's teaching.

### 4.2 Posture

- The thumb and index finger of both hands touch at their tips to form a circle in this mudra.
- This circle depicts the Wheel of Dharma, or the combination of method and wisdom in metaphysical terms.
- The two hands' remaining three fingers are still extended. These fingers have a lot of symbolic value on their own.

### 4.3 Meaning of Each Finger

The three extended fingers of the right hand symbolize the Buddha's three vehicles of teachings:

- The middle finger represents the '**hearers**' of the teachings.
- The ring finger represents the '**solitary realizers**'.
- The little finger represents the **Mahayana** or '**Great Vehicle**'.

The three extended fingers of the left hand represent Buddhism's Three Jewels: **the Buddha, the Dharma, and the Sangha**.

### 4.4 Other Features

- **The hands are held in front of the heart** in this mudra, representing that these teachings come directly from the Buddha's heart.
- **Vairochana**, the first Dhyani Buddha, demonstrates this mudra.
  - Each of the five Dhyani Buddhas is linked with a different type of human illusion, and it is thought that they may assist mortals in conquering them.
- As a result, Vairochana is thought to change ignorance's misconception into reality's insight. He assists adepts in making this shift by presenting the Dharmachakra mudra.

## 4.5 Conclusion

Dharma is the Sanskrit word for 'Divine Law,' while Chakra is the Sanskrit word for 'Wheel.' Dharmachakra means "wheel of divine law" when both phrases are combined. The essential principle of Buddhism is built on this Dharma. It is stated that one who performs this mudra connects into the universal energy since Dharma also includes cosmic rule and order. As this mudra reflects Buddha's enlightened mind, it promotes optimism and calmness to the mind.

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## 5. Bhumisparsha Mudra

Mudras are a non-verbal mode of communication and self-expression in Buddhism, consisting of hand gestures and finger- postures. The Bhumisparsha Mudra, one of the most important mudras in Buddhism, symbolizes the Lord Buddha's enlightenment under the Bodhi tree. Here we will discuss the various aspects of Bhumisparsha Mudra, which will be helpful in preparing Art and Culture for the UPSC IAS Examination.

### 5.1 Bhumisparsha Mudra

- Bhumisparsha means '**touching the earth**' in Sanskrit.
- The **Buddha's enlightenment under the bodhi tree**, when he invited the earth goddess, Sthavara, to bear witness to his attainment of enlightenment, is symbolized by this mudra.
- It is formed with all five fingers of the right hand extended to touch the ground.
- The right hand, in earth-pressing mudra, is supplemented by the left hand, which is kept flat in the lap in the dhyana mudra of meditation, and represents the union of method and wisdom, samsara and nirvana, as well as realizations of conventional and ultimate truths.
- Shakyamuni overcame Mara's obstacles by meditating on Truth while in this pose.
- This mudra depicts **Akshobhya**, the second Dhyani Buddha. He is said to be able to change the misconception of rage into insight in the shape of a mirror. This is the metamorphosis that the Bhumisparsha mudra facilitates.

### 5.2 Conclusion

The Bhumisparsha mudra (touching the soil with the right hand) guides all bad energy to the ground, while the left palm on the lap gives birth to knowledge. This Mudra helps to alleviate tension and anxiety. This leads to a relaxing voyage through health-related issues. Thus it is a key posture in Buddhist philosophy.

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## 6. Varada Mudra

Mudras are a non-verbal mode of communication and self-expression in Buddhism, consisting of hand gestures and finger- postures. The Varada Mudra, one of the most important mudras in Buddhism, symbolizes charity, compassion, and boon-granting. Here we will discuss the various aspects of Varada Mudra, which will be helpful in preparing Art and Culture for the UPSC IAS Examination.

### 6.1 Varada Mudra

- This mudra represents **charity, compassion, and boon-granting**.
- It is the mudra for realizing one's desire to devote oneself to human redemption.
- It is almost often done with the left hand, and it may be done with the arm hanging naturally at the side of the body, palm facing front, and fingers extended.

This mudra's five outstretched fingers represent the following five perfections:

- **Generosity**
- **Morality**
- **Patience**
- **Effort**
- **Meditative Concentration**
- This mudra is shown by **Ratnasambhava**, the third Dhyani Buddha. The pride misconception transforms into the wisdom of sameness under his spiritual leadership. This metamorphosis is aided by the Varada mudra.
- This mudra is frequently performed in conjunction with another created with the right hand, most often the **Abhaya mudra**.
  - **Segan Semui-in or Yogan Semui-in** is the Japanese name for this combination of Abhaya and Varada mudras.

### 6.2 Conclusion

The Varada Mudra is nearly always shown made with the left hand by a revered figure devoted to human salvation from greed, anger, and delusion. The Varada Mudra is extensively used in the Buddha statues of Southeast Asia.

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