

TOP 60

Part-6

HISTORY QUESTIONS FOR THE CBSE EXAM 2025-26"

THINKERS BELIEFS AND BUILDINGS

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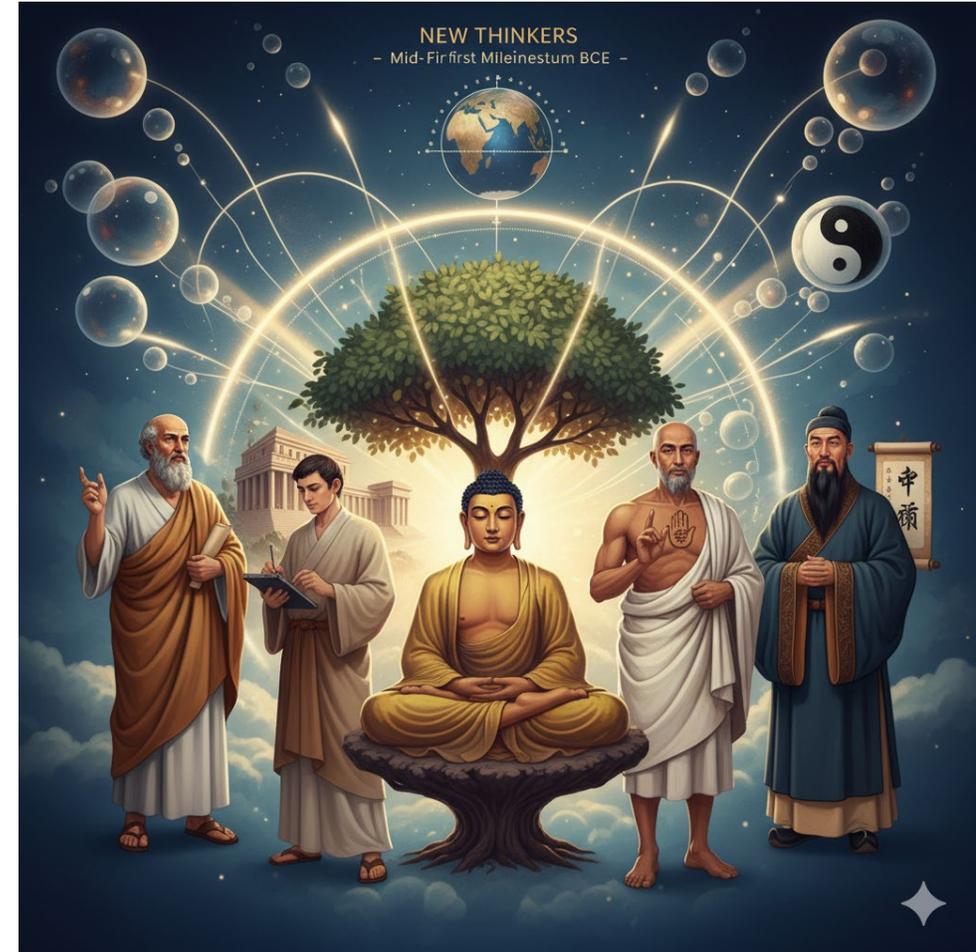
chapter wise previous year paper

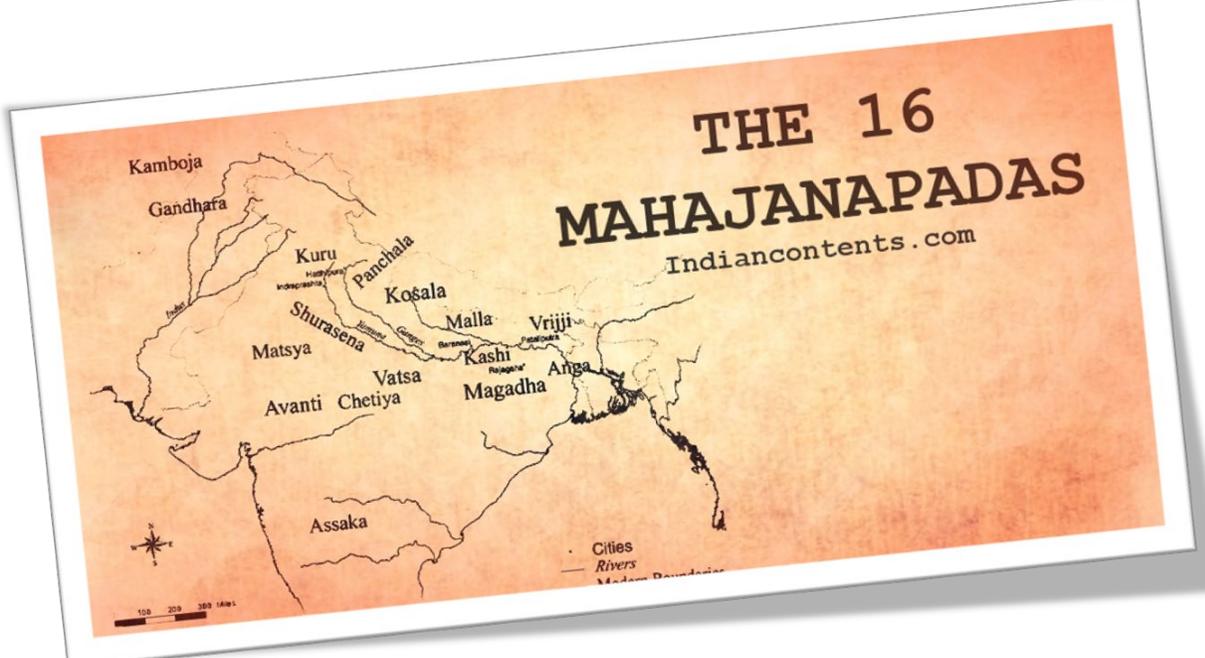
Q.19 "The mid-first millennium BCE is considered as a significant turning point in the course of World History." Justify the statement. (3 Marks, 2025 Main) OR

Q. "The mid first millennium BCE is still regarded as a **major turning point in world history. Justify.**"

Ans. The mid-first millennium BCE is seen as a turning point for the following reasons:

- **Emergence of New Thinkers:** It was an era of intellectuals like **Buddha, Mahavira, Socrates, Plato, and Confucius** emerging across the world. They tried to understand the mysteries of existence and the cosmic order.





- **Rise of New Religions:** New religious and philosophical traditions, such as **Buddhism and Jainism in India, emerged.** They challenged the authority of the Vedas and the existing sacrificial traditions.
- **Growth of States and Cities:** The period was associated with the emergence of early states, kingdoms, and the growth of cities. In India, this was marked by the **rise of the 16 Mahajanapadas.**
- **Change in social and economic life:** It was marked by **economically and socially stratified society.** This was reflected in terms like Gahapati and Dasa.



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Q.20 "Explain the teachings of Mahatma Buddha." (8 Marks, 2023 Supp)
OR

Describe the teachings of Buddhism." (3 Marks, 2024 Supp)

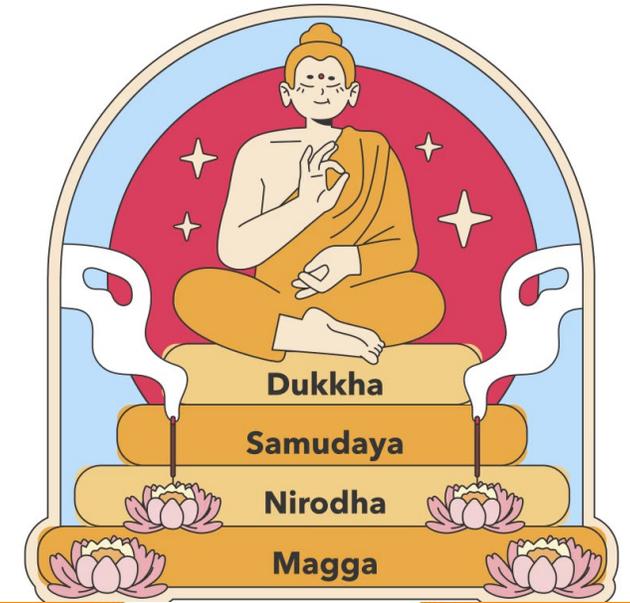
Q. "Be lamps unto yourselves as all of you must work out your own liberation." In light of this statement explain the teachings of Buddhism.

Ans. The main teachings of Mahatma Buddha are:

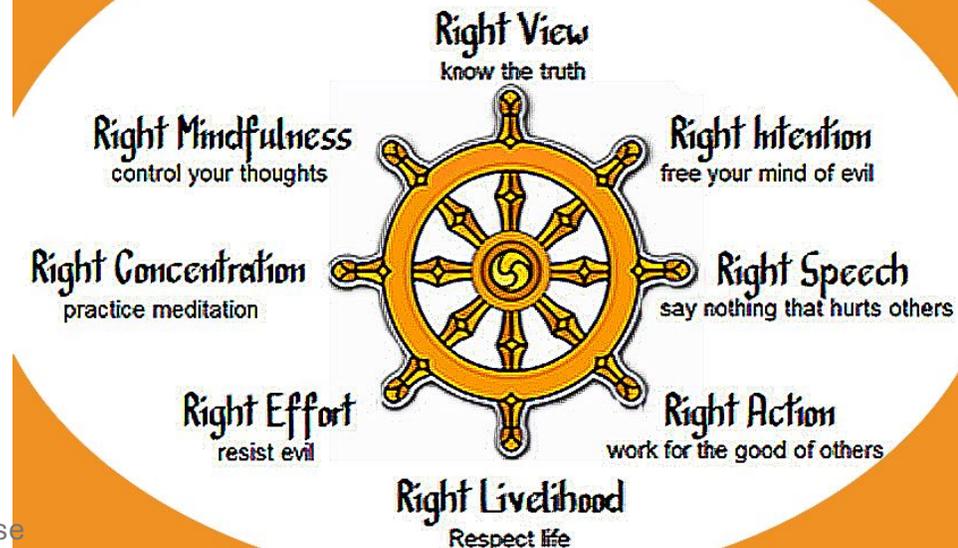
1. Four Noble Truths:

1. The world is transient/temporary (*anicca*), soulless (*anatta*), and filled with sorrow (*dukkha*).
2. Sorrow is intrinsic to human existence, caused by desire and ego.
3. There is a path to end Suffering.
4. This suffering can be ended by extinguishing desire. (Eight fold Path)

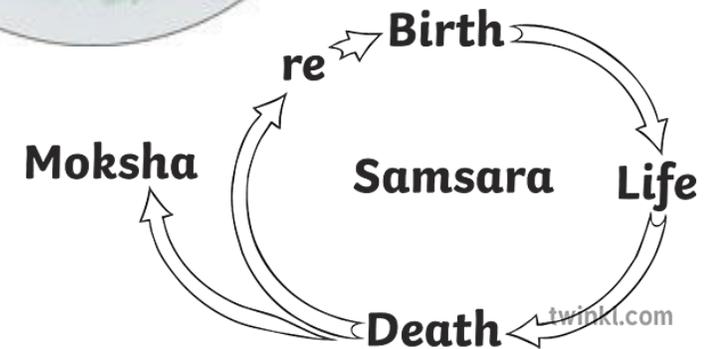
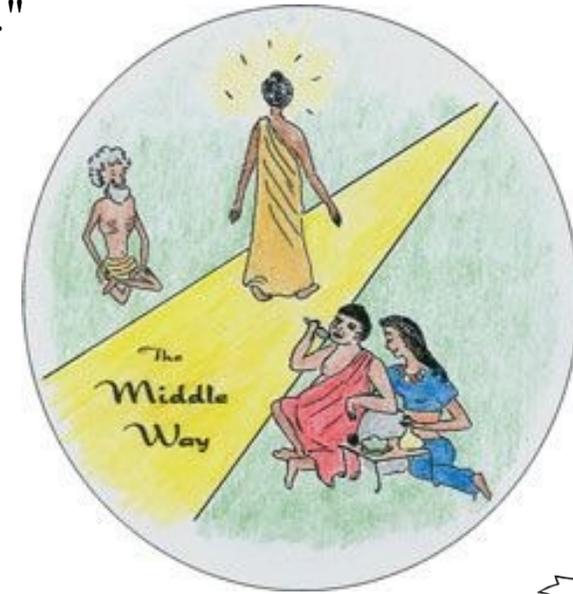
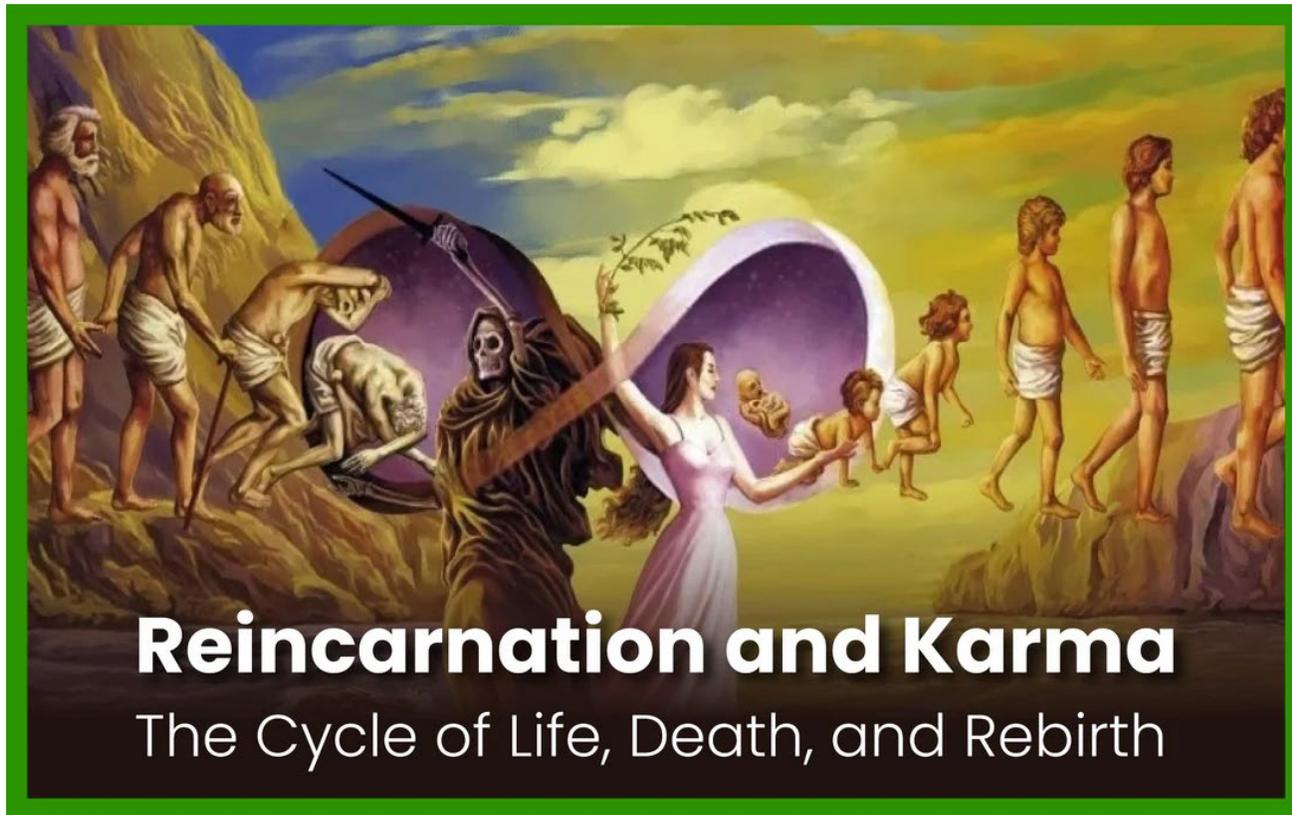
Four Noble Truths



The Noble Eightfold Path



2. **The Middle Path:** Buddha advocated a path of moderation, avoiding both severe penance (asceticism) and extreme self-indulgence.
3. **Individual Agency:** Buddha emphasised individual effort and righteous action (*kamma*) as the means to escape the cycle of rebirth and attain self-realisation and *nibbana*. He famously said, "Be lamps unto yourselves as all of you must work out your own liberation."





4. **Rejection of Social Hierarchy:** He rejected claims of superiority based on birth, treating everyone equally.

5. **Ethics and Morality:** Buddha advised kings and *gahapatis* to be humane and ethical. He attached high **importance to conduct and values**, stressing *metta* (fellow-feeling) and *karuna* (compassion).

6. **Language of the People:** He and his followers taught in Prakrit, the language of the common people, to ensure the message was widely understood.

7. **Irrelevance of God:** The existence or non-existence of God was irrelevant to Buddha's core teachings, which focused on a practical path to end suffering.

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Q. 21 "The Stupa at Sanchi is among the best preserved monuments of the earliest times." Explain the statement. (8 Marks, 2023 Main) OR

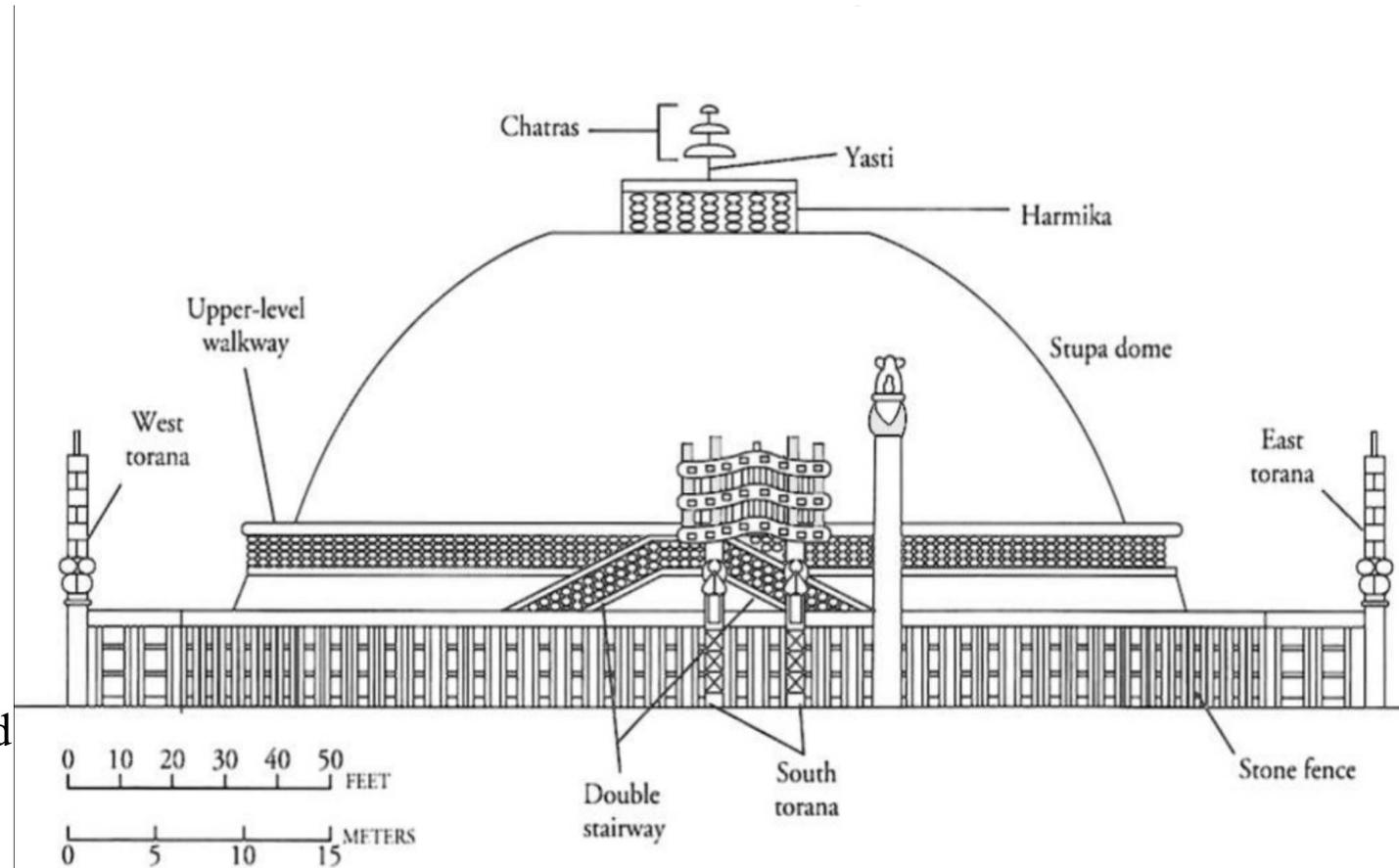
Q. "Among the best-preserved monuments of the 600 BCE to 600 CE is the Stupa at Sanchi. Justify the statement." (Q.7)

Ans. The Stupa at Sanchi is one of the best-preserved monuments of its time, largely due to the timely preservation efforts by the rulers of Bhopal, Shahjehan Begum and Sultan Jehan Begum.



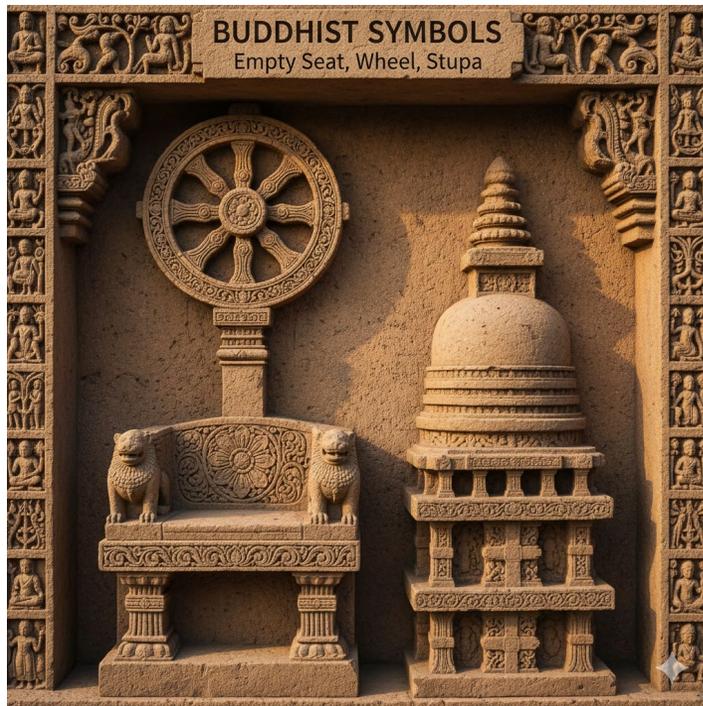
Structural Features:

1. **Anda:** The stupa originated as a simple semi-circular mound of earth, which later became a more complex structure.
2. **Harmika:** A balcony-like structure on top of the *anda*, representing the abode of the gods.
3. **Yashti:** A mast arising from the *harmika*, often surmounted by a *chhatra* (umbrella).
4. **Vedika (Railing):** A stone railing surrounded the mound, separating the sacred space from the secular world.
5. **Toranas (Gateways):** Four elaborately carved gateways were installed at the four cardinal points.

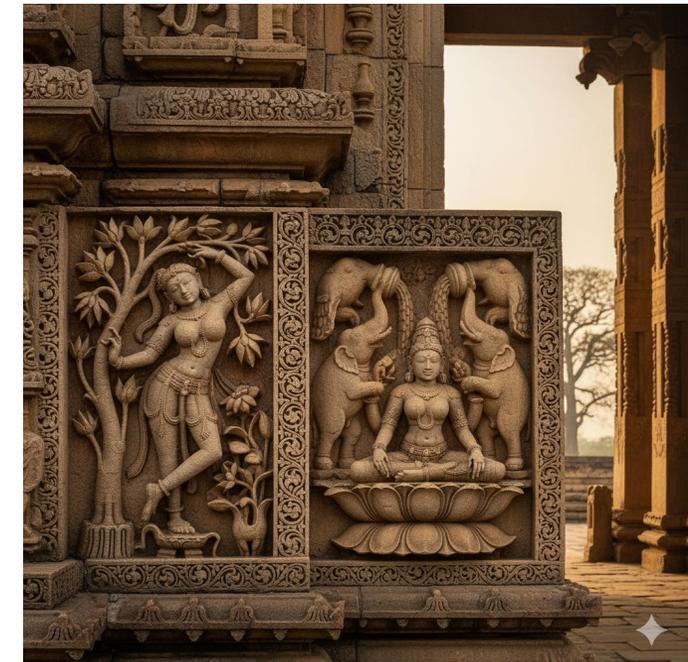


Sculptural Features:

1. **Buddhist Symbols:** The sculptures used symbols to represent the Buddha, such as the **Empty Seat** (meditation), the **Wheel** (first sermon), and the **Stupa** (*mahaparinibbana*).
2. **Jataka Tales:** Scenes from the *Jatakas* (stories of the Buddha's previous lives) were carved on the gateways.
3. **Popular Motifs:** It included non-Buddhist motifs like the **Shalabhanjika** (a woman swinging from a tree, an auspicious symbol) and **Gajalakshmi** (the goddess of good fortune).
4. **Animals:** Elephants, horses, monkeys, and cattle were depicted, signifying strength, wisdom, and attracting visitors.



<https://www.youtube.com/@TheSoSocietalSense>



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Follow up Questions

21 "How did the stupa come to be associated with Buddhist belief and practices? Explain the structural features of Sanchi Stupa with examples." (8 Marks, 2025 Supp)

Ans. Association with Buddhist Beliefs:

- 1. Relics:** Stupas were built over the bodily relics of the Buddha or other revered monks. The tradition was to erect mounds (stupas) over the relics after the Buddha's *mahaparinibbana*.
- 2. Symbol of Buddha:** The stupa itself a symbol of the Buddha and his final liberation.
- 3. Centre of Devotion:** Stupas became important centres of pilgrimage. Worshippers would visit and perform circumambulation (walking around the mound) as an act of devotion.

Structural Features of Sanchi Stupa: Described in previous question.

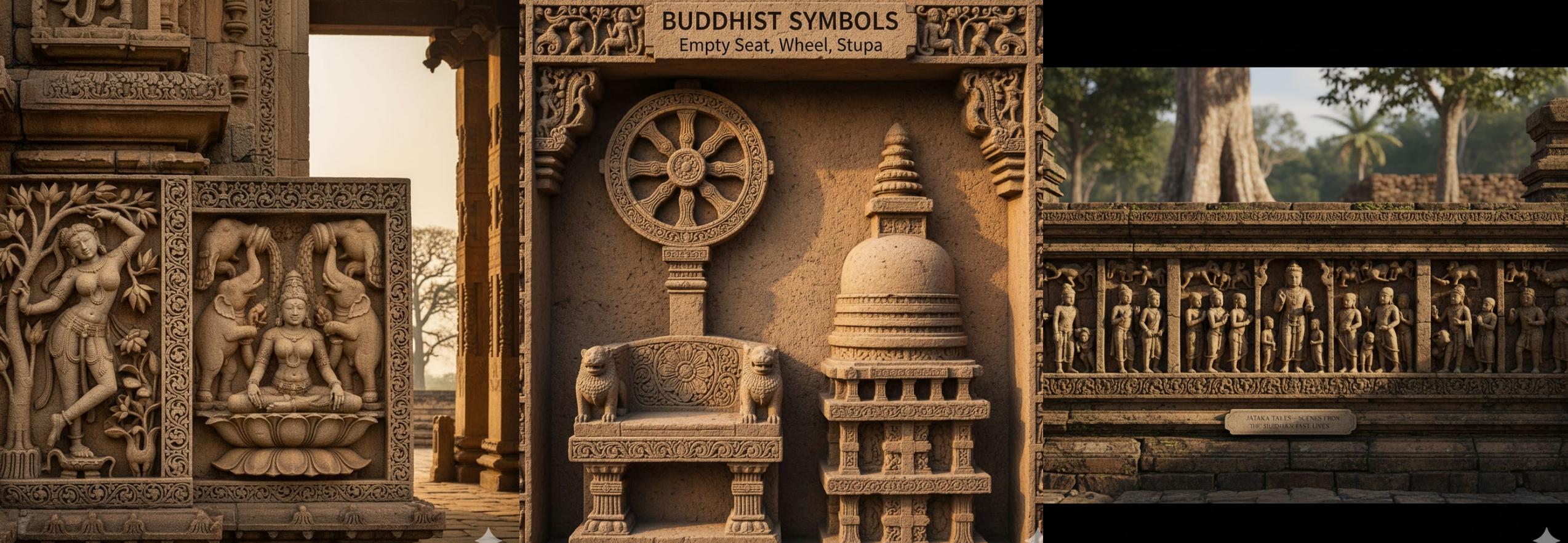
22. "Buddhist and non-Buddhist elements come together to create a spectacle at Sanchi." Explain the statement with examples. (8 Marks, 2025 Supp - OR) OR

Q. "To understand the meaning of sculptures, historians have to be familiar with the stories behind them." Support the statement by giving examples from Buddhist Art...

Ans. The statement is correct. The sculptures at Sanchi are a **blend of Buddhist symbols and popular, pre-Buddhist traditions** that created a unique spectacle.

Buddhist Elements:

- 1. Symbols of the Buddha:** The Buddha was not shown in human form but through symbols. The **Empty Seat** indicated his meditation, the **Wheel** (*chakra*) represented his first sermon, and the **Stupa** symbolised his *mahaparinibbana*.
- 2. Narratives:** The gateways are richly carved with scenes from the Buddha's life and from the **Jatakas** (tales of his previous births). Understanding these stories is essential to interpret the sculptures.
- 3. Vessantara Jataka:** One famous carving on a gateway depicts the story of the Vessantara Jataka, which describes a prince who gave away everything, symbolising the value of generosity.



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Non-Buddhist and Popular Elements:

1. **Shalabhanjika:** This is a recurring motif of a beautiful woman, holding onto a tree. This was not a Buddhist symbol but was considered auspicious and **associated with fertility**.
2. **Gajalakshmi:** The goddess of **good fortune (Lakshmi)** is depicted being consecrated by elephants. This was a popular deity adopted into the decorative scheme.
3. **Animals:** Many animals like elephants, horses, monkeys, and cattle are carved. While they could have symbolic meaning (e.g., the elephant signifying Buddha's conception), they also made the stupa relatable and attractive to common people.
4. **Nagas:** Serpent figures, part of popular folk traditions, are also found in the sculptures.

This mix shows that many who turned to Buddhism enriched it with their own beliefs, making Sanchi a unique site of blended traditions.

Fig. 4.21

A serpent at Sanchi



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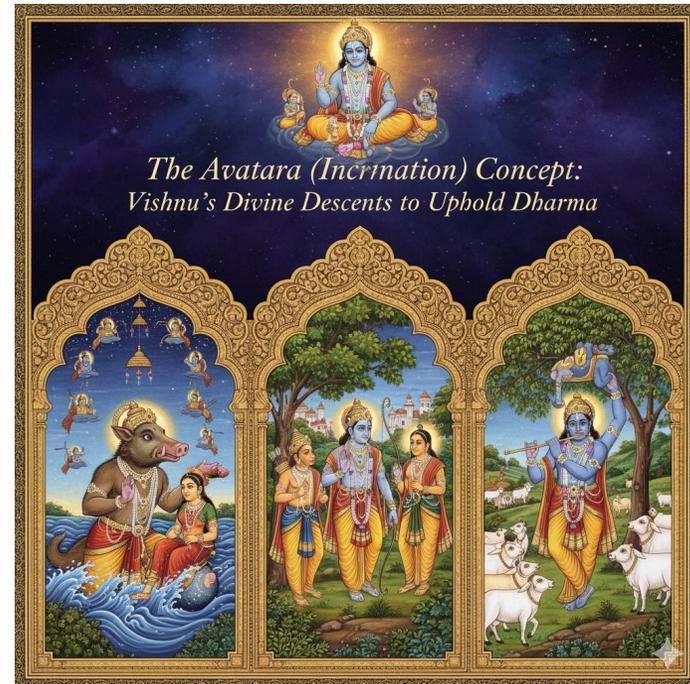
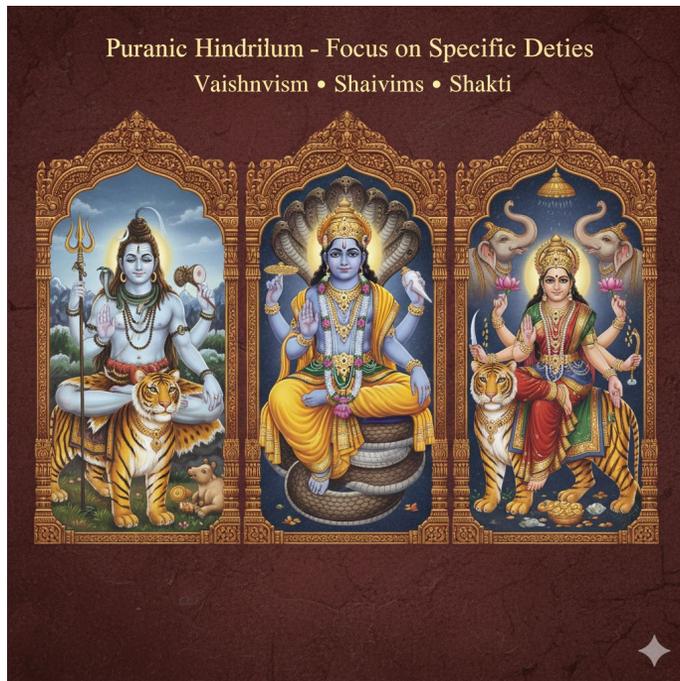
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Q.23 "Explain the growth of Puranic Hinduism." (8 Marks, 2023 Main - OR) OR Q. "Explain the growth of Puranic Hinduism in ancient India." (8 Marks, 2023 Supp - OR)

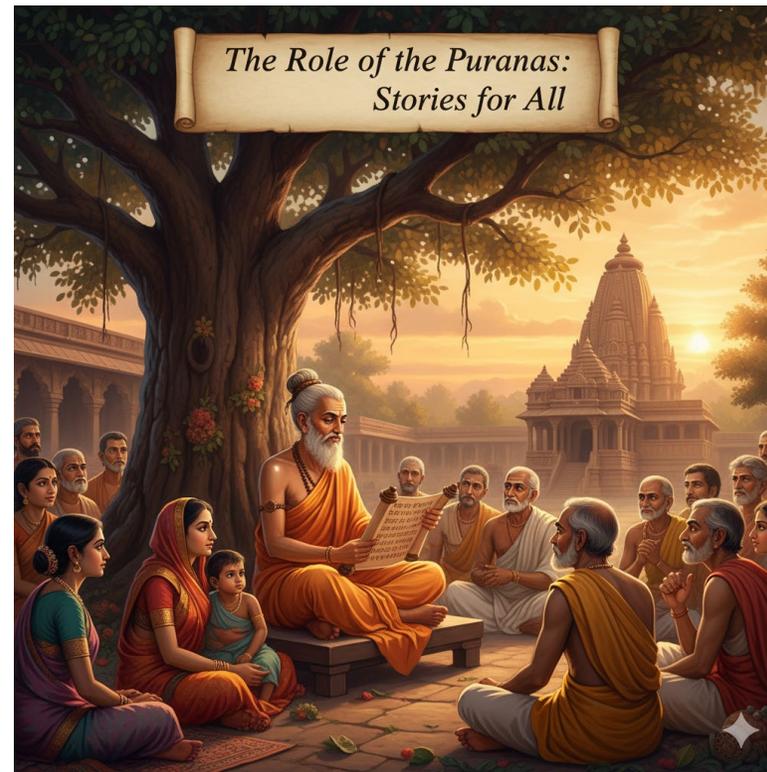
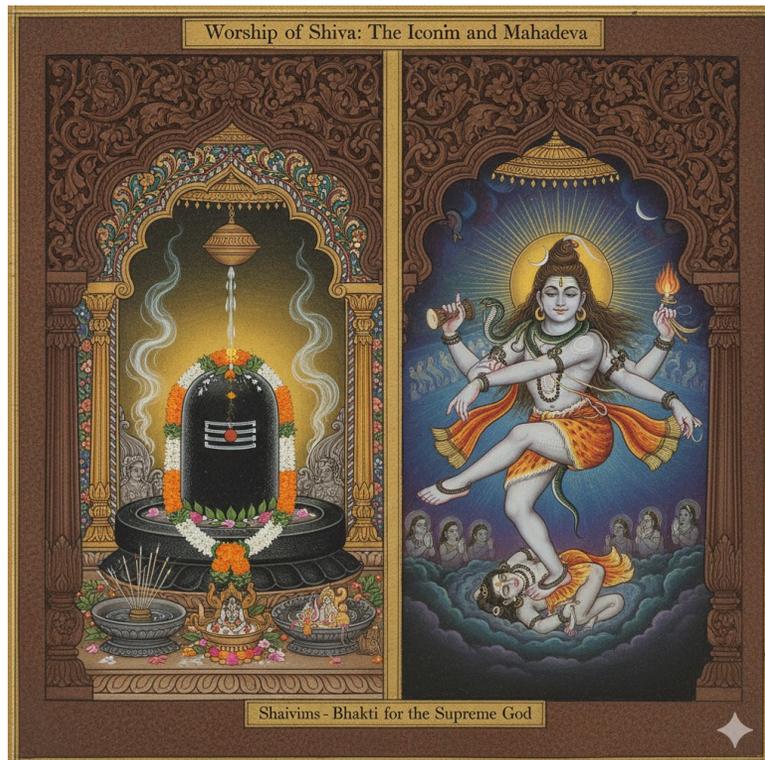
Ans. The growth of Puranic Hinduism, shifting away from the collective Vedic sacrifice can be explained by the following features:

- 1. Focus on Specific Deities:** The tradition was characterized by the **rising worship of specific deities**. Like **Vaishnavism, Shaivism, and the worship of the Goddess (Shakti)** in various forms like Durga and Lakshmi.
- 2. The Avatara (Incarnation) Concept:** It was believed that whenever the world was threatened by evil, Vishnu would take an incarnation (e.g., Varaha, Rama, Krishna) to save it. It made Vaishnavism very popular.



3. **Worship of Shiva:** In Shaivism, Shiva was **worshipped as the supreme god**, often represented by the *linga* (a symbol of the divine) but also in human forms, such as a great ascetic (Mahadeva) or in sculptures.
4. **The Role of the Puranas:** Puranas were written and compiled during this period, in simple Sanskrit. **They were read aloud to all**, including women and Shudras who were not permitted to study the Vedas, which greatly helped in spreading the ideas.
5. **Growth of Image Worship (Murti Puja):** This period saw the proliferation of image worship.

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6. **Rise of Temple Architecture:** As image worship grew, elaborate stone temples were built.
7. **Integration of Local Cults:** Many local cults and their deities were absorbed into the larger tradition. Local gods were often identified as a form of Vishnu or Shiva.
8. **Devotionalism (Bhakti):** This form of Hinduism emphasized *bhakti* (devotion) and love for a personal god as the path to salvation.



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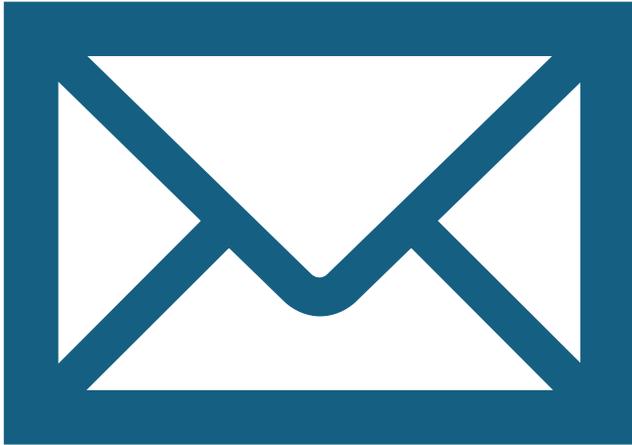
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COMPLETION OF PART-I

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THANK YOU

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