• **Buddhism** is a religion and philosophy encompassing a variety of traditions, beliefs and practices, largely based on teachings attributed to Siddhartha Gautama, commonly known as the "Buddha - the awakened one".

• Two major branches of Buddhism are recognized: **THERAVADA** ("The School of the Elders") and **MAHAYANA** ("The Great Vehicle").

• Theravada has a widespread following in **Sri Lanka and Southeast Asia**.

• Mahayana is found throughout East Asia and includes the traditions of **Pure Land**, **Zen**, **Nichiren Buddhism**, **Tibetan Buddhism**, **Shingon**, **Tiantai (Tendai)** and **Shinnyo-en**.

• In some classifications Vajrayana—as practiced mainly in Tibet and Mongolia, and adjacent parts of China and Russia—is recognized as a third branch, while others classify it as a part of Mahayana.

• Buddhist Architecture has its roots deeply planted in Indian 'soil'—both physically, in relation to existing construction styles, and philosophically, in relation to various cosmic theories that influenced the layout of sacred sites.

• The development of various symbols representing aspects of the Buddha's life (563 - 483 BCE) was the beginning of a specifically Buddhist architecture.
• Traditional building styles would have been used but it was the mode of decoration which began to set these buildings apart.

• As support for the new religion increased so too did the need for buildings to accommodate the requirements of the expanding monastic order.

• Although stonework was quite common wood was still the main medium and the skill to erect stone structures enclosing appreciable space had yet to be developed.

• The earliest Buddhist construction of significance was the stupa; but these were sculpture not structure.

• Probably the most significant site is at Sanchi where as well as having one of the best preserved Indian stupas, the full range of Buddhist art and architecture from the third century BC to the twelfth AD can be studied here.

• The other form of specifically Buddhist construction that evolved quite early was the rock-cut monastery.

• For about six centuries, beginning around 100 BCE, several monasteries were hewn from the cliffs and rock walls of valleys.

• Probably the most famous of these is at Ajanta. Their development is looked at under CAVES.
- And hence the basic plan of the Buddhist temple is established: an entrance area with a square or rectangular central covered hall or open courtyard.
- The outward structure is modelled on the key concept of Mt Meru.
- The basic floor plan is seen in the early cave monasteries (with meditation cells added) and the structural form in the Mahabodhi temple and Borobudur stupa.
STUPA AND ASOKA PILLAR, VAISHALI, BIHAR

DHARMAKSHA STUPA, SARNATH

STUPAS OF THE 3RD CENTURY B.C., BHOJPUR, MADHYA PRADESH.
STUPA-SANCHI

Sanchi is 68 kilometers north of Bhopal in Madhya Pradesh
STUPA-SANCHI

Diagram showing:
- Chattras
- Yati
- Harmika
- Toranas/Gateway
- Upper Level Walkway
- Double Stairway
- South Toranas
- Stupa Dome
- Stone Fence
STUPAS

- Stupas were built of stones or bricks, or mark important places associated with Buddhism or to house important relics (leftovers) of Buddha. Ashok Maurya who laid the foundation of this group of monuments is said to have built 84,000 stupas.

- The best examples of stupas are those constructed at AMARAVATI, SANCHI, BARHUT AND GAYA.

- "One of the most striking architectural remains of ancient India" and the earliest and largest of the three stupas found in Sanchi was built by Ashoka (273-236 B.C.)

- The Great stupa has a large hemispherical dome which is flat at the top, and crowned by a triple umbrella or Chattra on a pedestal surrounded by a square railing or Harmika.

- Buddha's relics were placed in a casket chamber in the centre of the Dome.

- At the base of the dome is a high circular terrace probably meant for parikrama or circumambulation and an encircling balustrade.

- At the ground level is a stone-paved procession path and another stone Balustrade and two flights of steps leading to the circular terrace.

- Access to it is through four carved gateways or Toranas in the North, South, East and West.
SANCHI STUPA

- Sanchi in Raisen district of Madhya Pradesh is famous for its magnificent Buddhist monuments and edifices.
- Situated on a hill, these beautiful and well-preserved stupas depict the various stages of development of Buddhist art and architecture over a period of thirteen hundred years.
- The Great Stupa is 120 feet across (36.6 meters) and, excluding the railing and umbrella, is 54 feet high (16.46 meters).
- Stupas may be made of brick, brick and rubble, or encased in masonry.
- The present stupa encases an earlier one of about half its present dimensions.
- The earlier one, built of large burnt bricks and mud, has been attributed to the Emperor Ashoka, the main reasons being that the level of its floor is the same, and that the bricks used in it resemble those in other Ashokan structures.
- The diameter of the stupa is 36.60 metres and its height is 16.46 metres. It is built of large burnt bricks and mud mortar.
SANCHI STUPA - TORANA

• The first Torana gateway to be built is the one at the principal entrance on the South.
• Each gateway has two square pillars.
• Crowning each pillar on all four sides are **four elephants, four lions and four dwarfs.**
• The four dwarfs support a superstructure of three architraves or carved panels one above the other.
• Between these are intricately carved elephants and riders on horseback.
• The lowest architrave is supported on exquisitely carved bracket figures.
• The panels are decorated with finely carved figures of men, women, yakshas, lions and elephants.
• The entire panel of the gateways is covered with sculptured scenes.
TAKHT-I-BAHAI

• The Buddhist monastic complex of Takht-i-Bahai (Throne of Origins) was founded in the early 1st century. Owing to its location on the crest of a high hill, it escaped successive invasions and is still exceptionally well preserved.

• The Takht-i-Bahi is situated on top of a 152 m high hill, about 80 km from Peshawar and 16 km north-west of the city of Mardan.

• The name Takht-i-Bahi derives from the spring on the hilltop and is literally translated as 'Spring Throne'.

The principal buildings are contained within a rectangle of approximately 200’ in length, consists of:

- A stupa court on the south
- The monastery on the north

**CONJECTURAL RESTORATION OF THE COURT OF THE STUPA, TAKHT-I-BAHAI, NORTH-WEST FRONTIER C. 2ND.CENT A.D.**
TAKHT-I-BAHAI

• An intervening terrace for the reception of votive stupas, small chapels & structural contributions.
• To the west of the monastery is a conference or assembly hall.
• The courtyard was an open quadrangle measuring 45’ by 55’.
• In the center, on a platform of 20’ side and 8’ high, rose the tall tapering stupa, which with its six tiered umbrella, reached a total height of 50’.
• An elegant stairway on the north side gave access to the platform for circumbulation, but the ordinary processional path was around the quadrangle at the base.
• Enclosing the court on three sides was a range of small chapels, each containing a cell or niche, not as in the hinayana face.
• The roof of the chapels were so designed that a cupola alternated with a trefoil vault, each an architecturally decorative motif and depicting a separate constructional tradition, for the former was derived from the anchorite’s bee hive hut and later from the conventional shape of the Chaitya hall.
• The cells or the monastery had unadorned walls protected by a verandah. It had the stone bed for relaxing and a small niche to act as shelf.
CHAITYA HALL

• Chaitya grihas or halls of worship were built all over the country either of brick or excavated from rocks.

• Ruins of a large number of structural Buddhist chaitya grihas are found in the eastern districts of Andhra Pradesh, in valleys, near rivers and lakes.
• The largest brick chaitya hall was excavated at Guntapalli.
• Some of the most beautiful rock-cut caves are those at Ajanta, Ellora, Bhaja, Karle, Bagh, Nasik and Kanheri. Some of the chunar sand-stone rock-cut chaityas of Bhaja. Kondane.
• Karle and Ajanta, all in Maharashtra state are earlier excavations and belong to the first phase or Hinayana creed of Buddhism and are similar to the brick and wooden structures of Ashokan times.
• Some of the chaityas show that wood had been used in the roofing and entrance arches.
• The chaitya at Bhaja is a long hall 16.75 m long and 8 m broad with an apse at the end.
• The hall is divided into a central nave and an aisle on either side flanked by two rows of pillars. The roof is vaulted.
• The rock-cut stupa in the apse is crowned by a wooden harmika.
• The chaitya has a large arched torana or entrance with an arched portico.
• Hinayana rock architecture reaches the peak of excellence in the splendid chaitya at Karle.
• The second phase of Buddhist architecture is marked by the Mahayana creed of Buddhism seen in some of the excellent rock-cut chaityas at Ajanta in Aurangabad district of Maharashtra excavated between 5th AD and 9th century AD during the rule of the Vakatakas, the Guptas and the Rashtrakutas.
• The caves were first discovered in the beginning of the 19th century.
• The caves are excavated from a semi-circular steep rock with a stream flowing below, and were meant for the use of the monks who spent the rainy season there in meditation.
• The caves are at different levels and have stairs leading down to the stream.
• The chaityas have a vaulted ceiling with a huge horse-shoe shaped window or chaitya window over the doorway.
• A remarkable feature of these Chaityas is the imitation of woodwork on rock.
• Beams and rafters were carved in the rock though they serve no purpose.
• From the unfinished caves, we get an idea of the method of excavation.
• Starting from the ceiling, they worked downwards.
• Solid blocks were left to be carved into pillars.
• After finishing the verandah, they excavated the interior.
CHAITYA HALL AT KARLI
SECTION IN PERSPECTIVE OF THE ROCK-CUT BUDDHIST CHAITYA HALL AT KARLI, BOMBAY PRESIDENCY.
CIR. 1ST CENT. B.C.
• It is an architectural gem shows usual nave in the center divided from the side aisles by pillars and terminating in the apse which contains the stupa.

• There are two solid octagonal columns and two pillars at the sides which forms the vestibule.

• In front of these standing columns stood a pair of simha stambhas (lion pillar); the column with the bell shaped column surmounted by 4 lions back to back resembles the lion pillar at Saranath.

• Above the screen rises a plain wall which has now disappeared.

• On top of the plain wall stand dwarf pillars, between which light penetrates not only to the vestibule but through the great Chaitya window of the façade to the interior of the magnificent hall.
• A high barrel vault with ribs formed of separate pieces of wood fixed by plugs into the rock covers the nave.
• The seven remaining pillars without base and capital stands in the apse at the far end around the back of the stupa.
• The central stupa has the harmika with inverted stepped pyramid and an umbrella.
• Three entrances lead into the hall.
• The central one meant for the members of the sangha had a raised pathway into the nave.
• 37 pillars adorn the interior of the hall. 30 of them belonging to the opt based type, richly carved. each stands on a diminishing squares.
• on this rest the pot like base which appears to hold the bottom of the pillar.

• An inverted lotus capital with the ribbed element placed inside the box above it crowns the octagonal columns.
• The abacus which repeats the form of the stepped base but in reverse order, supports finely sculptured groups of figures mounted on elephants and horses.
VIHARAS

• Viharas or monasteries constructed with brick or excavated from rocks are found in different parts of India.

• These monastic buildings built of bricks were self-contained units and had a Chaitya hall or Chaitya mandir attached to a stupa - the chief object of worship.

• They have a hall meant for congregational prayer with a verandah running on three sides or an open courtyard surrounded by a row of cells and a pillared verandah in front.

• These cells served as dwelling (living) places for the monks.

• Some of the important Buddhist viharas are those at Ajanta, Ellora. Nasik, Karle, Kanheri, Bagh and Badami.

• The Hinayana viharas found in these places have many interesting features which differentiate them from the Mahayana type in the same regions.
• The columns have a square base with figures of dwarfs and elaborately carved brackets (supports) and capitals.
• Below the capital is a square abacus with finely carved designs.
• The walls and the ceilings of the cave contain the most exquisite paintings.

Though plain, they are large halls with cells excavated in the walls on three sides.
• The hall has one or more entrances.
• The small cells, each with a door have one or two stone platforms to serve as beds.
• The viharas of Ellora dated 400 AD to 7th century AD are of one, two, and three storeys and are the largest of the type.
BIBLIOGRAPHY

• Percy Brown, Indian Architecture (Buddhist and Hindu period), Taraporevala and sons, Bombay, 1983

• Satish Grover, The Architecture of India (Buddhist and Hindu period), Vikas Publishing House, New Delhi, 1981

• http://www.wikipedia.org/

• http://www.google.co.in/

• http://indiapicks.com/