



NAKSHALBARI COLLEGE  
DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY

TOPIC: MATHURA SCHOOL OF ART

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## Mathura school of art

- The **Mathura School of Art** flourished mostly during the reign of Kushana ruler Kanishka in the first century AD. Mathura School grew up on its own.
- Mathura was the traditional centre of output for this school, with Sarnath and Kosambi also playing key roles. **Spotted red sandstone** was utilised in the construction of this school. During the **Gupta period**, in the **6th or 7th century**, this art achieved its pinnacle.

- The representations of Buddha, Bodhisattvas, Vishnu, Shiva, Yakshas, Yakshinis, Jinas, and others found in the Mathura school depict the **city's life** and assimilation character as a result of **Brahmanism, Jainism, and Buddhism's religious fervour.**
- Mathura art was notable for its Jina image and indigenous style of Buddha's image.
- In the artwork, the Mathura School used a lot of **symbolism. Avayudhas** were used to depict the Hindu gods. Shiva, for example, is represented by linga and mukhalinga.

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- In the artwork, the Mathura School used a lot of **symbolism**. **Avayudhas** were used to depict the Hindu gods. Shiva, for example, is represented by linga and mukhalinga.
- Similarly, the halo around Buddha's **head is bigger** and adorned with geometrical patterns than in the Gandhara School. **Padmapani holds** a lotus and **Vajrapani holds a thunderbolt**, and Buddha is encircled by two **Bodhisattvas**.



# Salient features of Mathura Art

- **Buddha image** - Buddha was never represented in a human form at any of Sanchi, Bharhut, or Gaya prior to the founding of this school.
- **Themes** - Only symbols, such as two footprints or a wheel, were used to represent Buddha. Mathura artists continued to depict symbols at first, but the human figure of Buddha gradually emerged as a separate school of art.
- This depiction of the human Buddha was based on **Yaksha representations**.
- Early depictions of the Buddha and Bodhisattva are plump, joyful beings with no spirituality. They have a blocky appearance and a smooth, close-fitting robe that is virtually entirely free of wrinkles.

- **Patrons** - The Mathura statues are related to earlier **yaksa** (male nature deity) figures, with a strong resemblance to the early Kushan period's massive standing Buddha representations.
- **Features of sculpture** - The overall impact of them, as well as the more traditional seated Buddhas, is one of great force. The **shoulders are broad**, the **chest expands**, and the legs are planted firmly with feet split apart.

- The **shaved head**, the protuberance on the top of the head indicated by a tiered spiral, a round smiling face, the right arm raised in **abhaya-mudra** (reassurance gesture), the left arm akimbo or resting on the thigh, the drapery closely moulding the body and arranged in folds over the left arm, leaving the right shoulder bare, and the presence of the lion throne rather than the lotus throne are
- **The halo around Buddha's head was lavishly adorned.**
- The Mathura school etched out both the sitting and standing postures of **Buddha and Bodhisattvas**. The Sravasti Sarnath and Kaushambi Standing Buddhas are the best examples of Buddha images under this style.
- The later evolution of Buddha's Human form was linked to human beauty and heroic values.

- **Type of sandstone** - Spotted red sandstone was utilized in the construction of this school.
- **Vaishnava and Shiva images** - At Mathura, pictures of the Vaishnava and Shaiva faiths can also be seen, but Buddhist ones predominate.
- **Women's position in Mathura's art** - The woman was at the center of the painting, and there are few works of Indian art that can match the gorgeous feminine figures created by the Mathura artists in terms of beauty, delicacy, and appeal.

## Conclusion

In many aspects, the Mathura school of art was a formative art that influenced later styles of art. Mathura is a significant turning point in Indian art history. It is here that the move from symbolism to iconographic forms, which were later embraced, can be clearly seen. In addition, Mathura was the first place where the forms of Brahmanical deities crystallised. The influence of the Mathura school's Buddha image expanded throughout India and Central Asia.



# THANK YOU

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