

# Classical Indian & China Activity

# Hindu and Buddhist Art

The main difference between Buddhist and Hindu art in India was its subject matter. Buddhist art often portrayed the Buddha or bodhisattvas, who were potential Buddhas. Hindu gods, such as Vishnu and Ganesh, were common subject in Hindu art. Beyond the differences in subject, Hindu and Buddhist beliefs had little influence on Indian artistic styles. For example, a Hindu sculpture and a Buddhist sculpture created at the same place and time were stylistically the same. In fact, the same artisans often created both Hindu and Buddhist art.

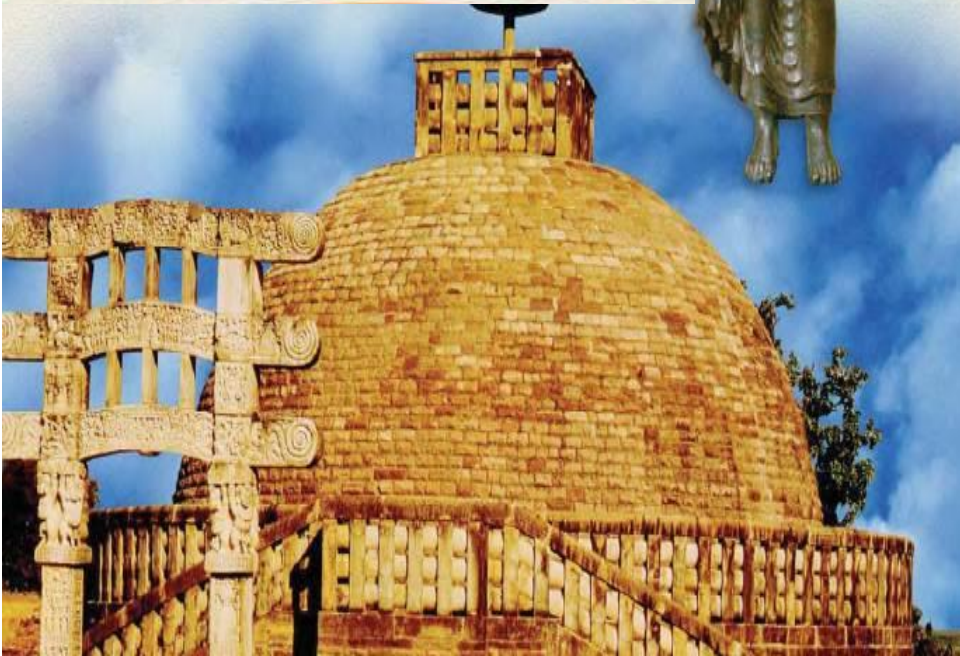
## Buddha

The bronze Buddha was made in India during the 6<sup>th</sup> century. Each detail of a Buddhist sculpture has meaning. For example, the headpiece and long earlobes shown here are lakshana, traditional bodily signs of the Buddha. The upraised hand is a gesture that means "Have no fear."



## The Great Stupa

Built during the 3<sup>rd</sup> to 1<sup>st</sup> centuries BCE, the Great Stupa is a famous Buddhist monument in Sanchi, India. This stone structure is 120 feet across and 54 feet high. It has a staircase leading to a walkway that encircles the stupa. Stupas serve as memorials and often contain sacred relics. During Buddhist New Years festivals, worshipers hold images of the Buddha and move in procession around the circular walkway.



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## Devi Jagadambi Temple in Khajuraho

Hardly any Hindu temples from the Gupta remain today. This temple, built in the 5<sup>th</sup> century CE, shows architectural trends begun in Gupta times. These include buildings with stone rather than wood: erecting a high pyramid roof instead of a flat roof; and sculpting elaborate decorations on the walls.



## Ganesha

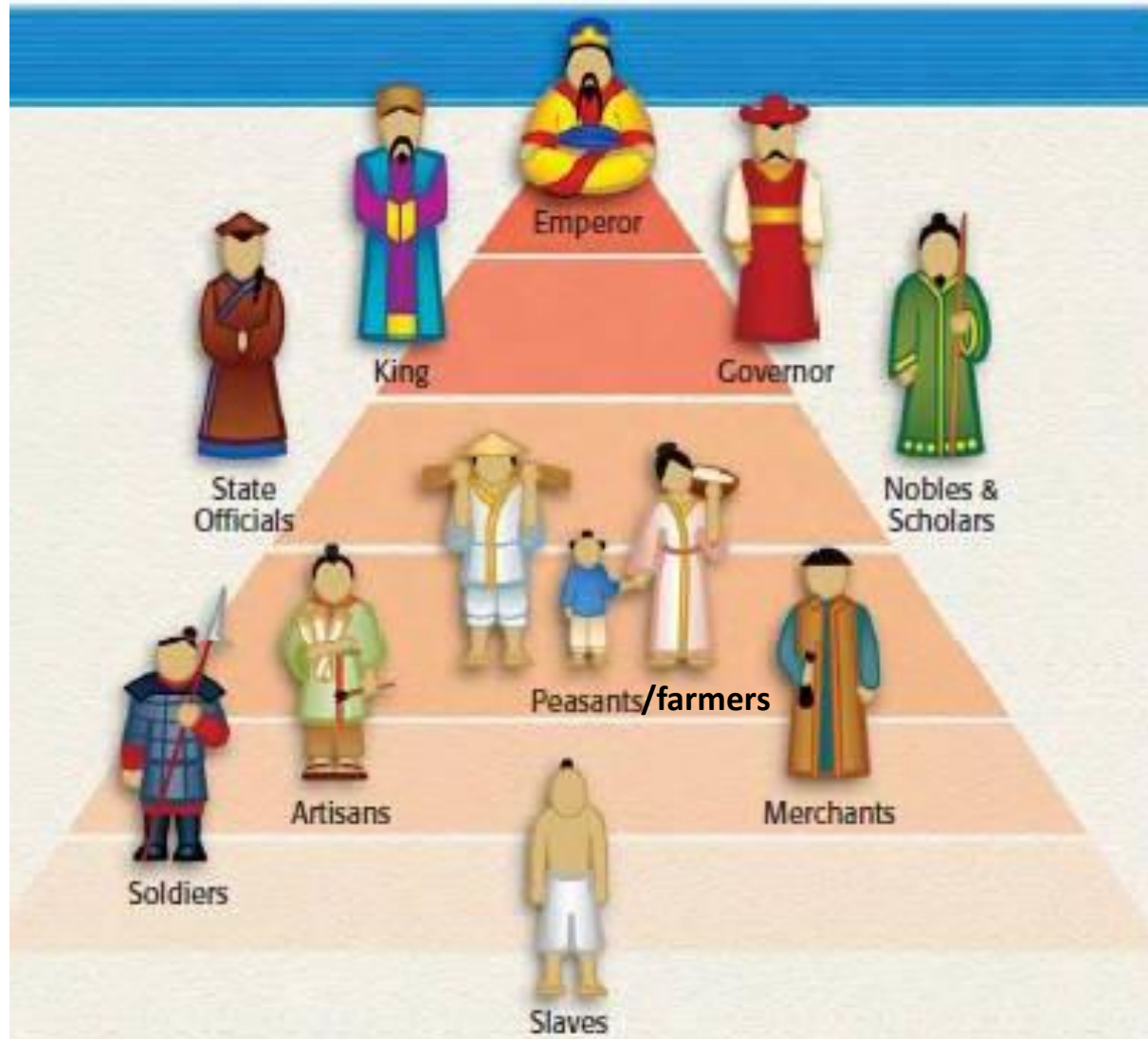
Carved in the 5<sup>th</sup> century BCE, this stone sculpture represents the elephant-headed god Ganesha. According to Hindu belief, Ganesha is the god of success, education, wisdom and wealth. He also is worshipped as the lifter of obstacles. The smaller picture is recent image of Ganesha who has gained great popularity during modern times.



## Chinese Society

Under the Han Dynasty, the structure of Chinese society was clearly defined. At the top was the emperor, who was considered semi divine. Next came kings and governors, both appointed by the emperor. They governed with the help of state officials, nobles, and scholars.

Peasant farmers came next. Their production of food was considered vital to the existence of the empire. Artisans and merchants were below them. Near the bottom were the soldiers, who guarded the empire's frontiers. At the bottom were enslaved persons, who were usually conquered peoples.



## Silk Roads

Why would anyone struggle over mountains and across deserts to buy fabric? Ancient peoples valued silk because it was strong, lightweight, and beautiful. Traders made fortunes carrying Chinese silk to the West. Because of this, the caravan trails that crossed Asia were called Silk Roads, even though many other valuable trade goods were also carried along these routes. The Silk Roads also encouraged cultural diffusion.

### Camel Caravans ►

No trader traveled the whole length of the Silk Roads. Mediterranean merchants went partway, then traded with Central Asian nomads—who went east until they met Chinese traders near India. Many traders traveled in camel caravans.

From this point, ships carried silk and spices to Rome. The Romans paid a pound of gold for a pound of Chinese silk!

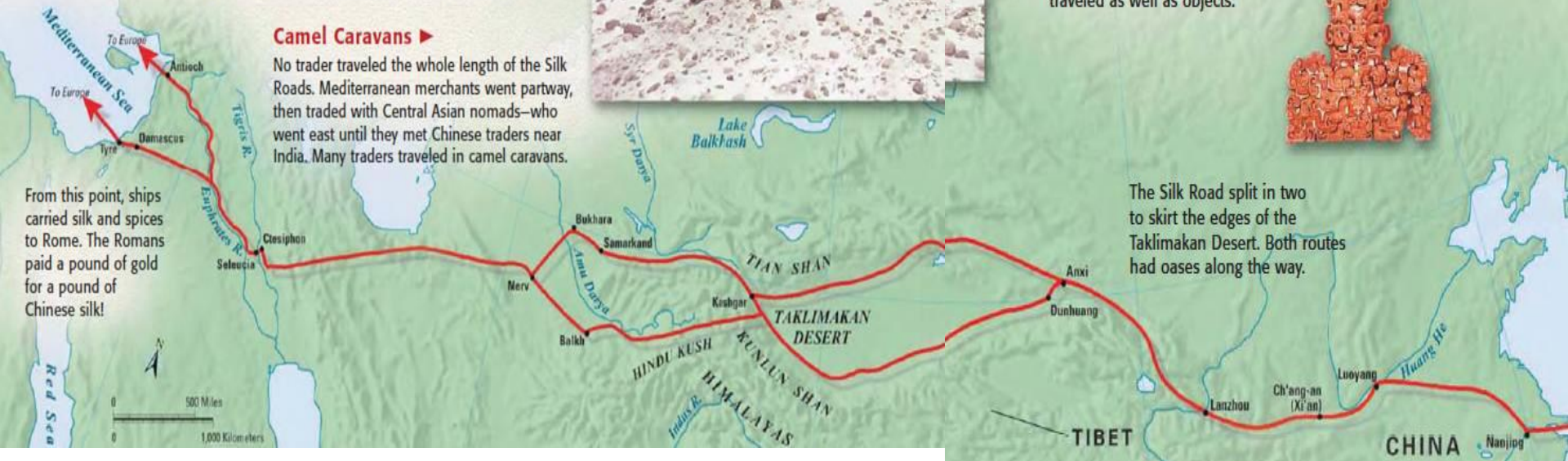


### Traded Gold ►

Gold was an important trade good. The object to the right is a Chinese gold dagger handle from the Zhou Dynasty. Many artifacts found along the Silk Roads show a mix of Greek, Central Asian, and Indian styles. This indicates that ideas traveled as well as objects.



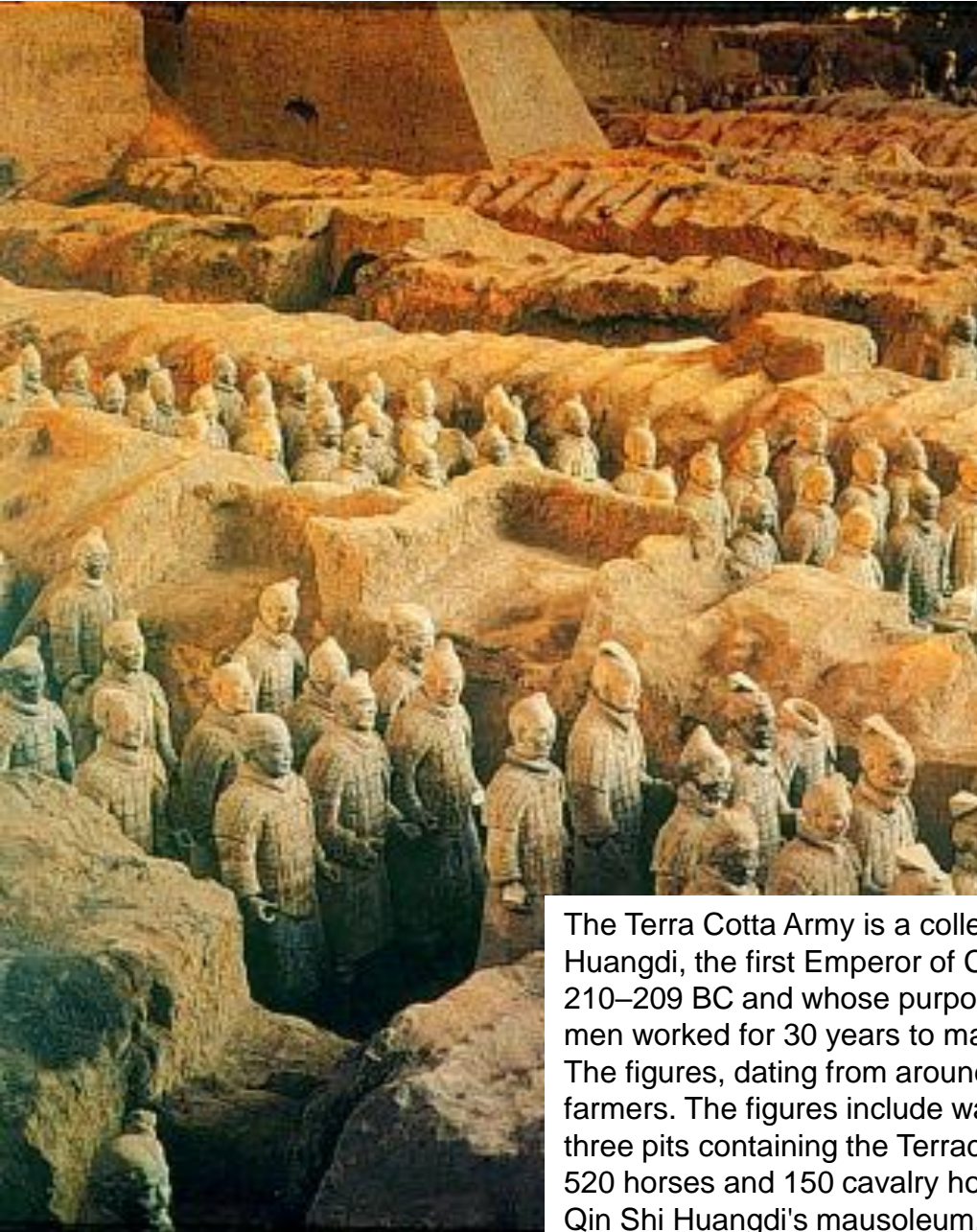
The Silk Road split in two to skirt the edges of the Taklimakan Desert. Both routes had oases along the way.





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# Terra Cotta Soldiers



The Terra Cotta Army is a collection of terracotta sculptures depicting the armies of Qin Shi Huangdi, the first Emperor of China. It is a form of funerary art buried with the emperor in 210–209 BC and whose purpose was to protect the emperor in his afterlife. About 700,000 men worked for 30 years to make these soldier.

The figures, dating from around the late third century BC, were discovered in 1974 by local farmers. The figures include warriors, chariots and horses. Current estimates are that in the three pits containing the Terracotta Army there were over 8,000 soldiers, 130 chariots with 520 horses and 150 cavalry horses, the majority of which are still buried in the pits near by Qin Shi Huangdi's mausoleum.



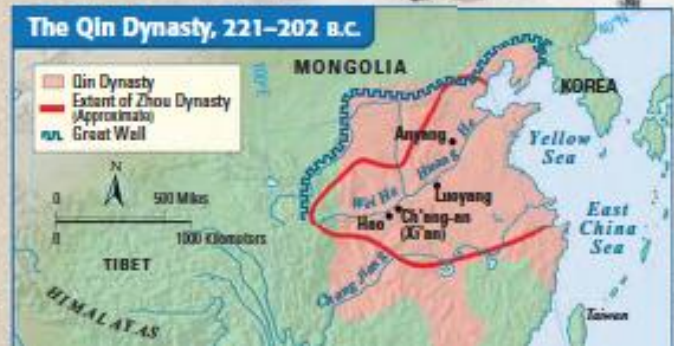
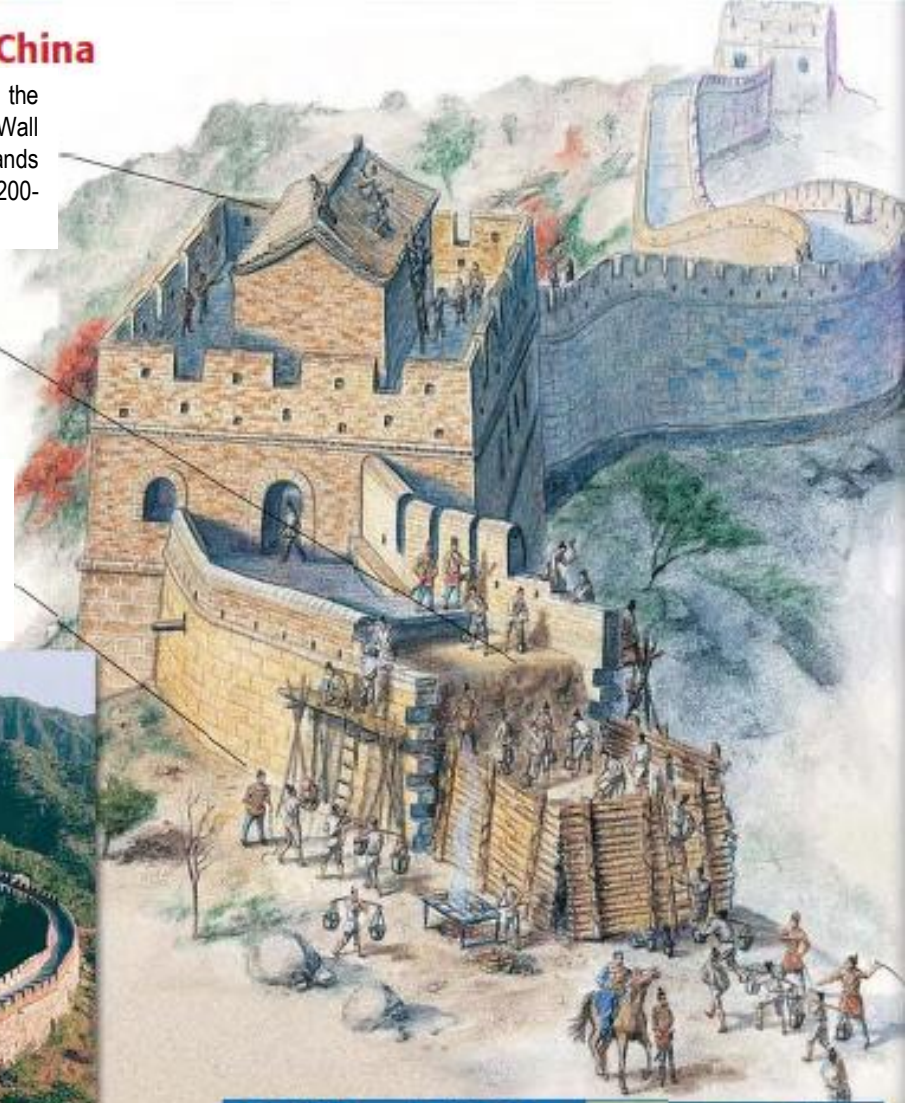
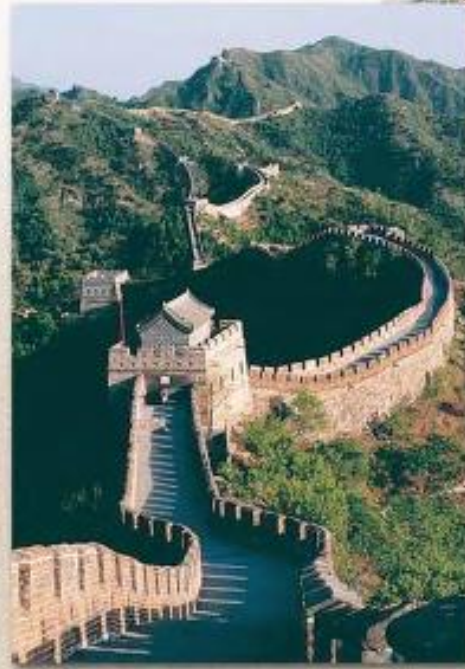
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## The Great Wall of China

From the Yellow Sea in the east to the Gobi Desert in the west, the Great Wall twisted like a dragon's tail for thousands of miles. Watch towers rose every 200-300 yards along the wall.

In the time of Shi Huangdi, hundreds of thousands of peasants collected, hauled, and dumped millions of tons of stone, dirt, and rubble to fill the core of the Great Wall.

Slabs of cut stone on the outside of the wall enclosed a heap of pebbles and rubble on the inside. Each section of the wall rose to a height of 20-25 feet.



Although Shi Huangdi built the earliest unified wall, the wall as it exists today dates from the late Ming Dynasty (1368-1644).