

New Philosophies in Asia, part 1:  
India: Buddhism, Jainism, Hinduism

300 BCE – 1000 CE



# Vedic Tradition

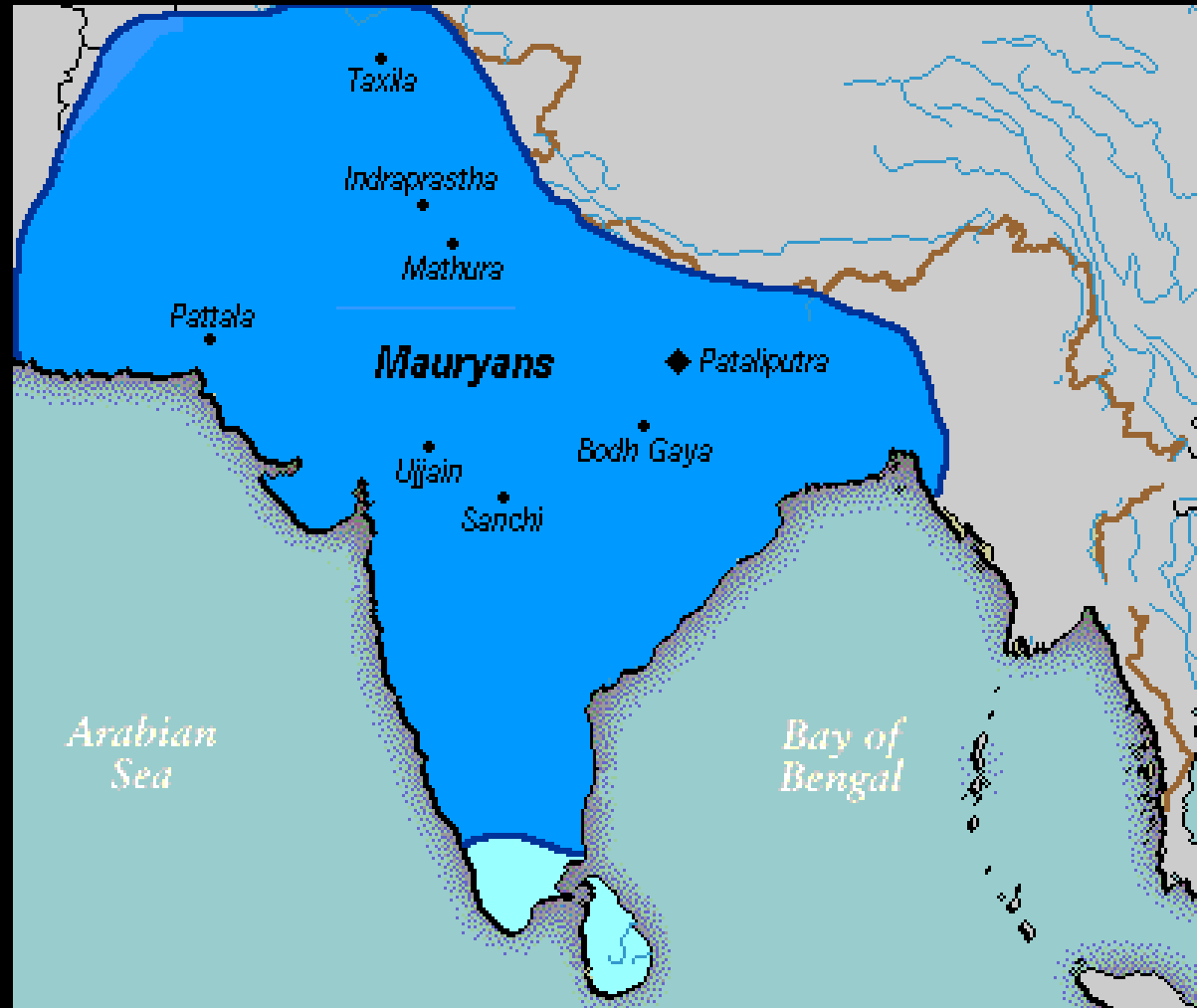
- Vedas: Upanishads (insights and teachings)
- Puranas – stories/memory
- Mahabharata (Bhagavad Gita)
- Ramayana

# Indian Art: Key Ideas

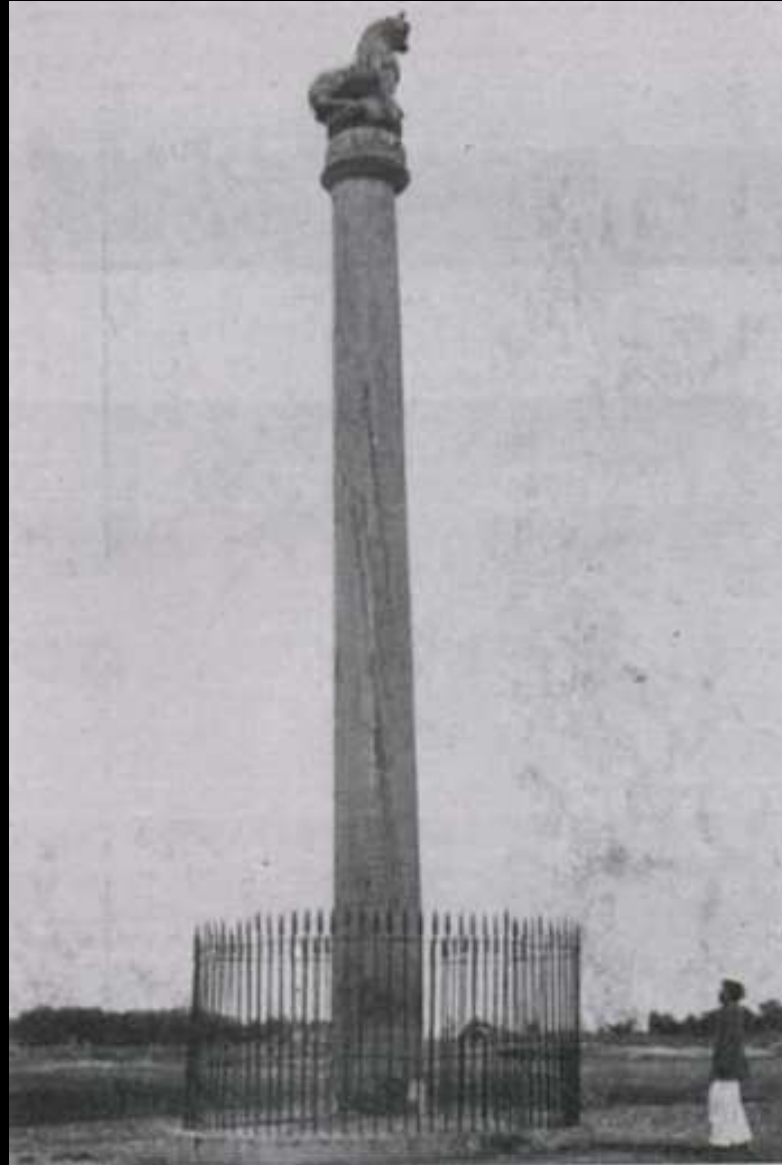
- Art is **functional**: used in religious practice for worship and devotion to the gods
- Three great religions have **origins in literary and philosophical texts** of this period (derived from oral traditions): Buddhism, Jainism, Hinduism
- **Material world (*maya*) is an illusion**; we must understand the nature of the divine in order to escape an endless cycle of birth, death, and rebirth
- **Visualization of the god** is central to understanding
- **Evocation of the senses** plays a role in our experience of the world as a gift of the gods

# Buddhism: Origins and Ideas

- Prince Siddhartha Gautama renounced his earthly life of luxury, meditated on how to alleviate suffering in the world, achieved enlightenment, and became “the Buddha.”
- The Buddha’s teachings were written down by his followers in the *sutras*.
- Buddha images are used to contemplate the divine/ the “Buddha nature” so that we can become like him (they are both teaching and sacred images).
- Buddhists seek *nirvana*, or release from an endless cycle of birth/death/rebirth (*samsara*).



*Ashokan Pillar, Maurya period, about 250 BCE, 32' h*



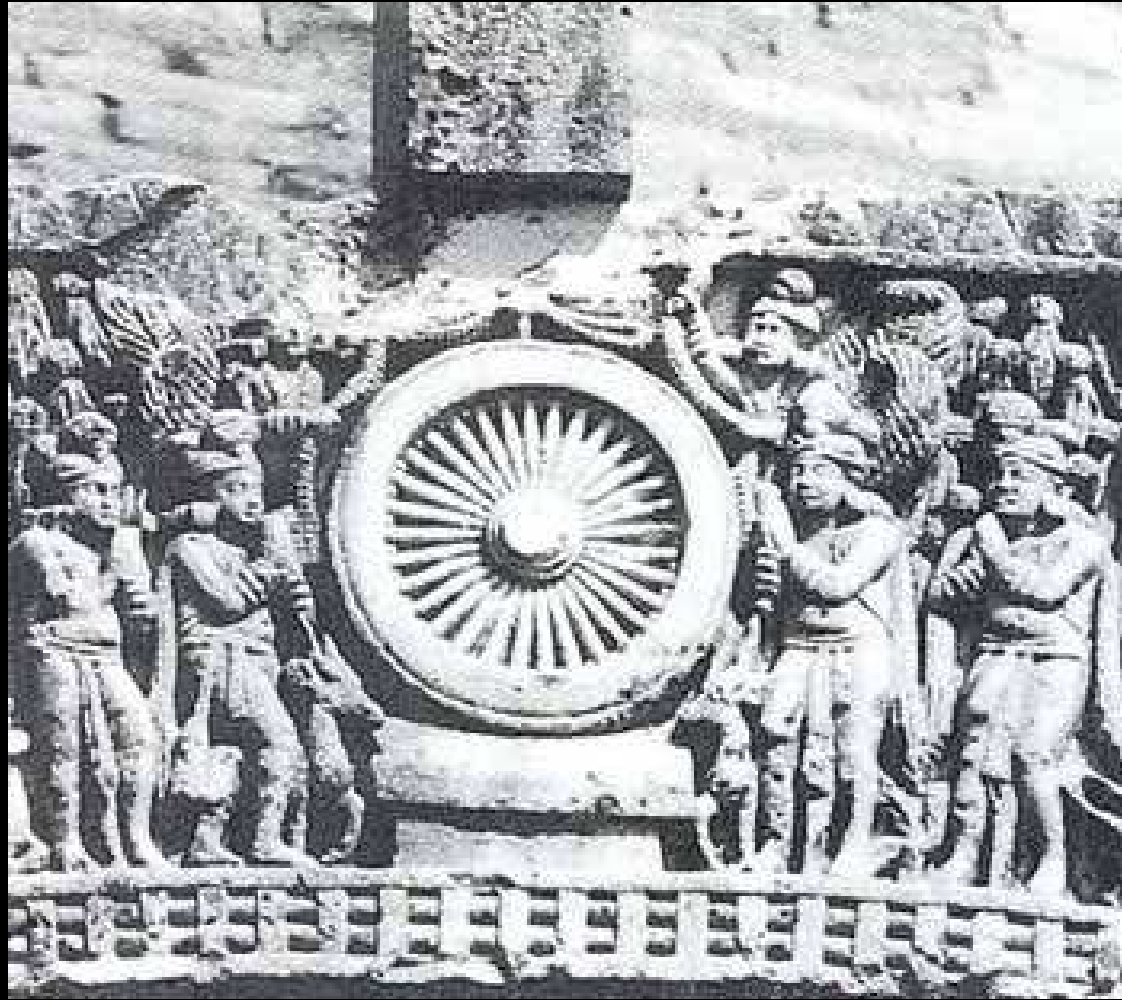
Sarnath, India, *Lion Capital* from Ashokan Pillar,  
Maurya period, c. 250 BCE, polished sandstone



सत्यमेव जयते



Sanchi, India, *Worship of the Prayer Wheel*,  
2nd-1st century BCE



Sanchi, Madhya Pradesh, India, *Great Stupa*, 3<sup>rd</sup>–1<sup>st</sup> c. BCE



Sanchi, Torana of *Great Stupa*, 3<sup>rd</sup>–1<sup>st</sup> c. BCE



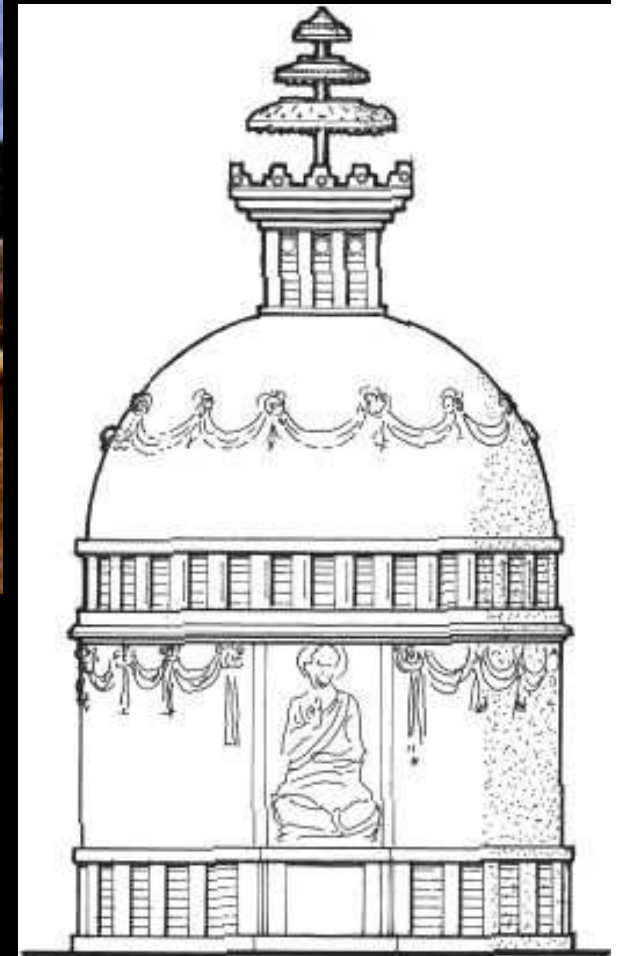




Buddha as empty throne:  
1<sup>st</sup>-3<sup>rd</sup> c. CE images

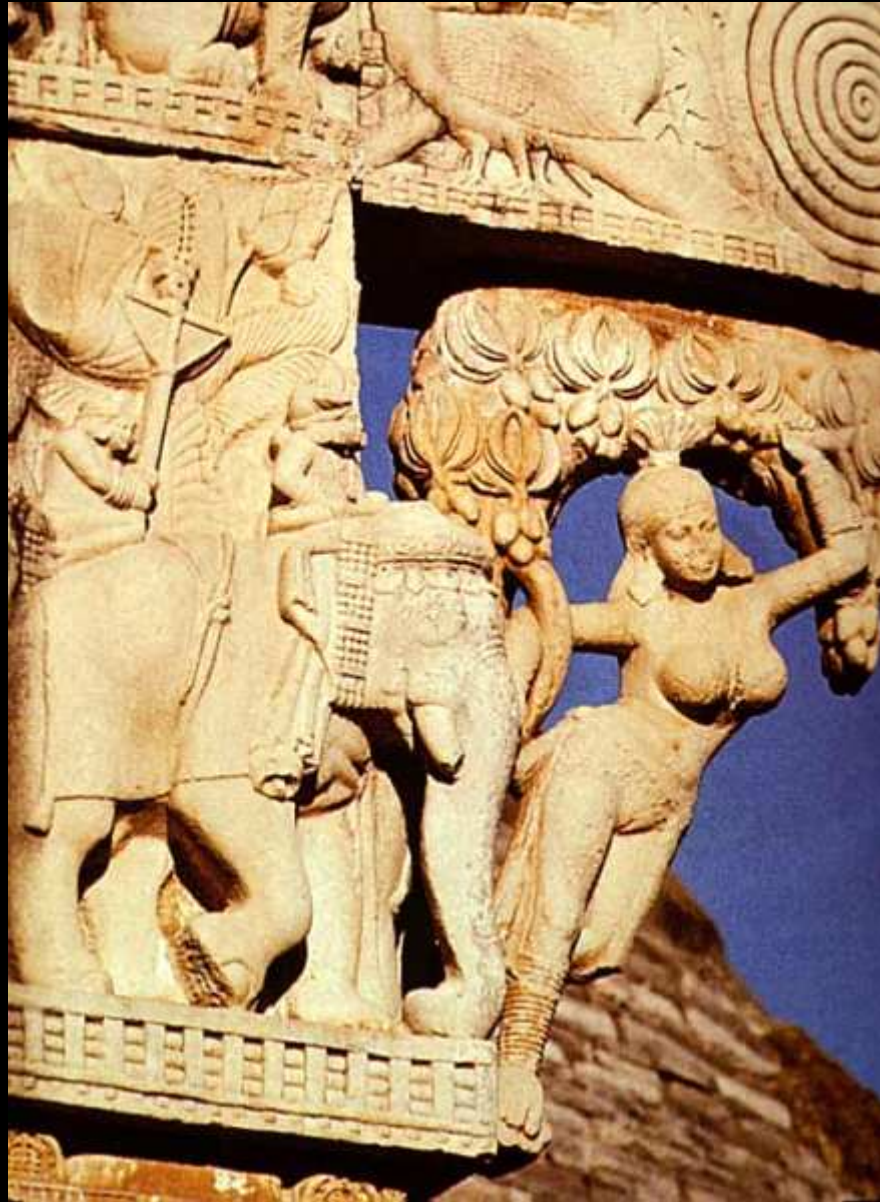


Sanchi, Madhya Pradesh, India, *Great Stupa*, 3<sup>rd</sup>–1<sup>st</sup> c. BCE



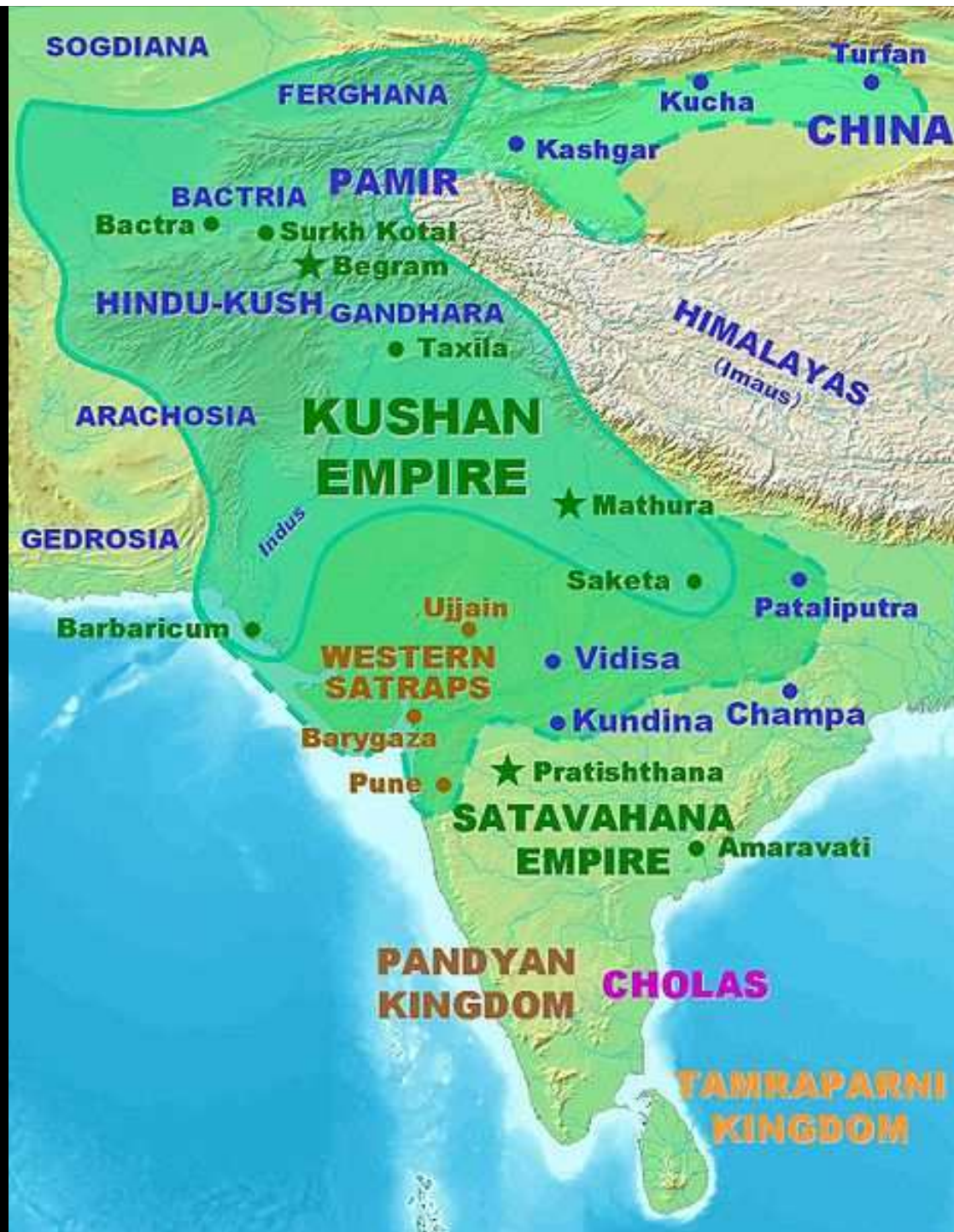


Sanchi, Yakshi bracket figure from *Great Stupa*



Chaitya Hall, 2<sup>nd</sup> century CE







Gandhara, *Prince Siddhartha Gautama*,  
2<sup>nd</sup>-3<sup>rd</sup> c.



Gandhara, *The Dream of Maya*, 2nd-3rd c.



Gandharan Buddha as ascetic,  
2<sup>nd</sup>-3<sup>rd</sup> c.



# Buddha under the bodhi tree





Afghanistan (Gandhara), *Standing Buddha*, 3<sup>rd</sup> c., 2001.153





Gandhara, *Head of Buddha*,  
2<sup>nd</sup>- 3<sup>rd</sup> c., 57.44



Greece, *Head of Aphrodite*,  
3<sup>rd</sup> c. BCE, 32.15





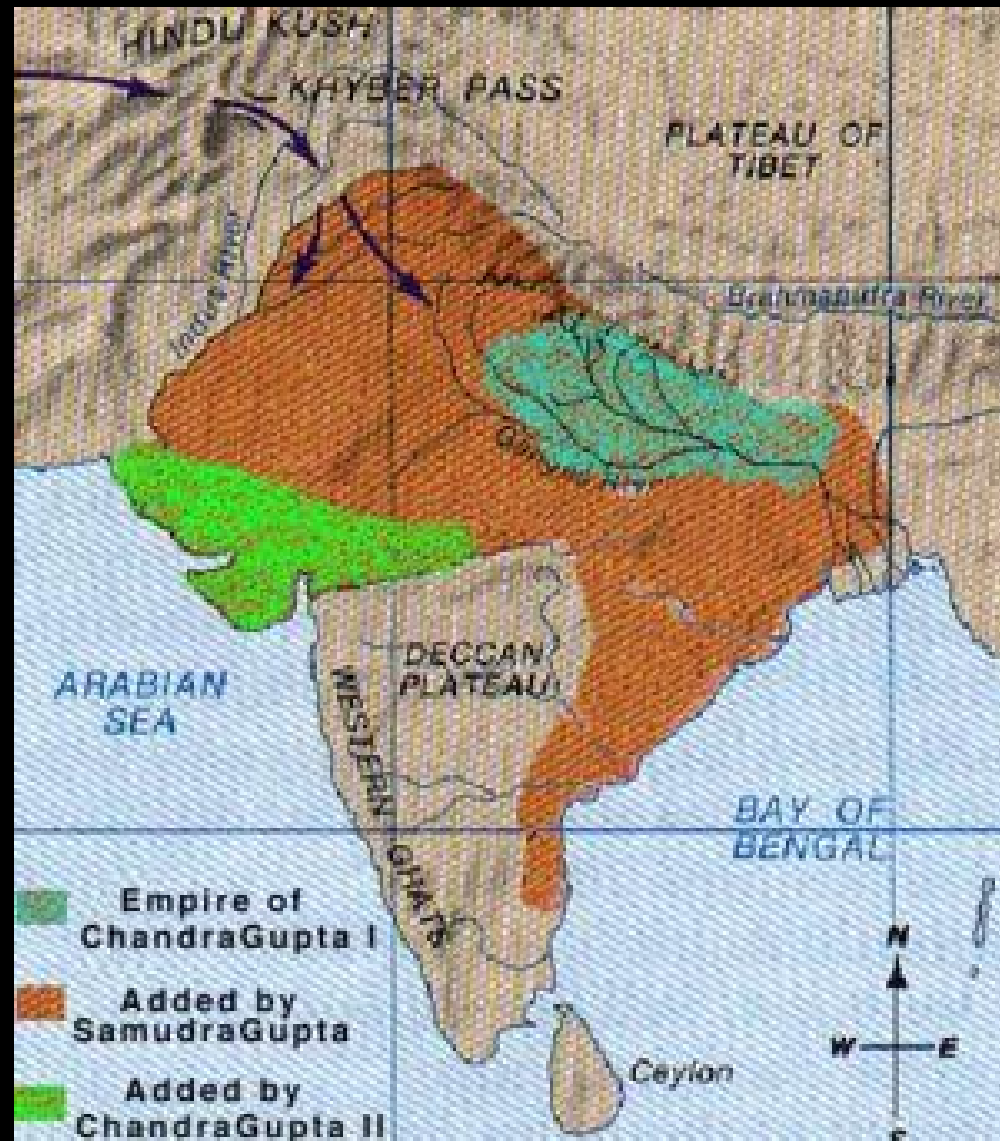


Afghanistan (Gandhara), *Standing Buddha*, 3<sup>rd</sup> c., 2001.153



Mathura, *Buddha and Attendants*,  
1<sup>st</sup>-2<sup>nd</sup> c., red sandstone





Mathura, India, *Standing Buddha*,  
5<sup>th</sup> c., mottled red sandstone



Thailand, Amaravati style, *Buddha Shakyamuni*, 6<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> c., L96.125.34





Sarnath, *Seated Buddha Preaching the First Sermon*, 5<sup>th</sup> c., sandstone



Thailand, *Seated Buddha*,  
10<sup>th</sup> c., 69.86.2



India, Sarnath style,  
*Standing Buddha, 5<sup>th</sup>- 6<sup>th</sup> c.*



Thailand, Sarnath style,  
*Buddha, 7<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> c., L96.125.35*





Ajanta, *Bodhisattva* (detail),  
cave painting, about 475



China, *Bodhisattva pair*,  
white marble, late 6<sup>th</sup> c.





## Spread of Buddhism from India



# Jainism: Origins and Ideas

- Mahavira gave up his earthly possessions and practiced severe austerities as an ascetic to attain enlightenment.
- Images of Mahavira are a symbol of perfection pointing toward a spiritual goal.
- Through a life of ascetism, Jain monks attain *kaivala*, which is release from endless cycle of birth/death/rebirth.
- *Tirthankaras* (“pathfinders”) help others find the path to enlightenment; also called *Jinas* (“victors”).

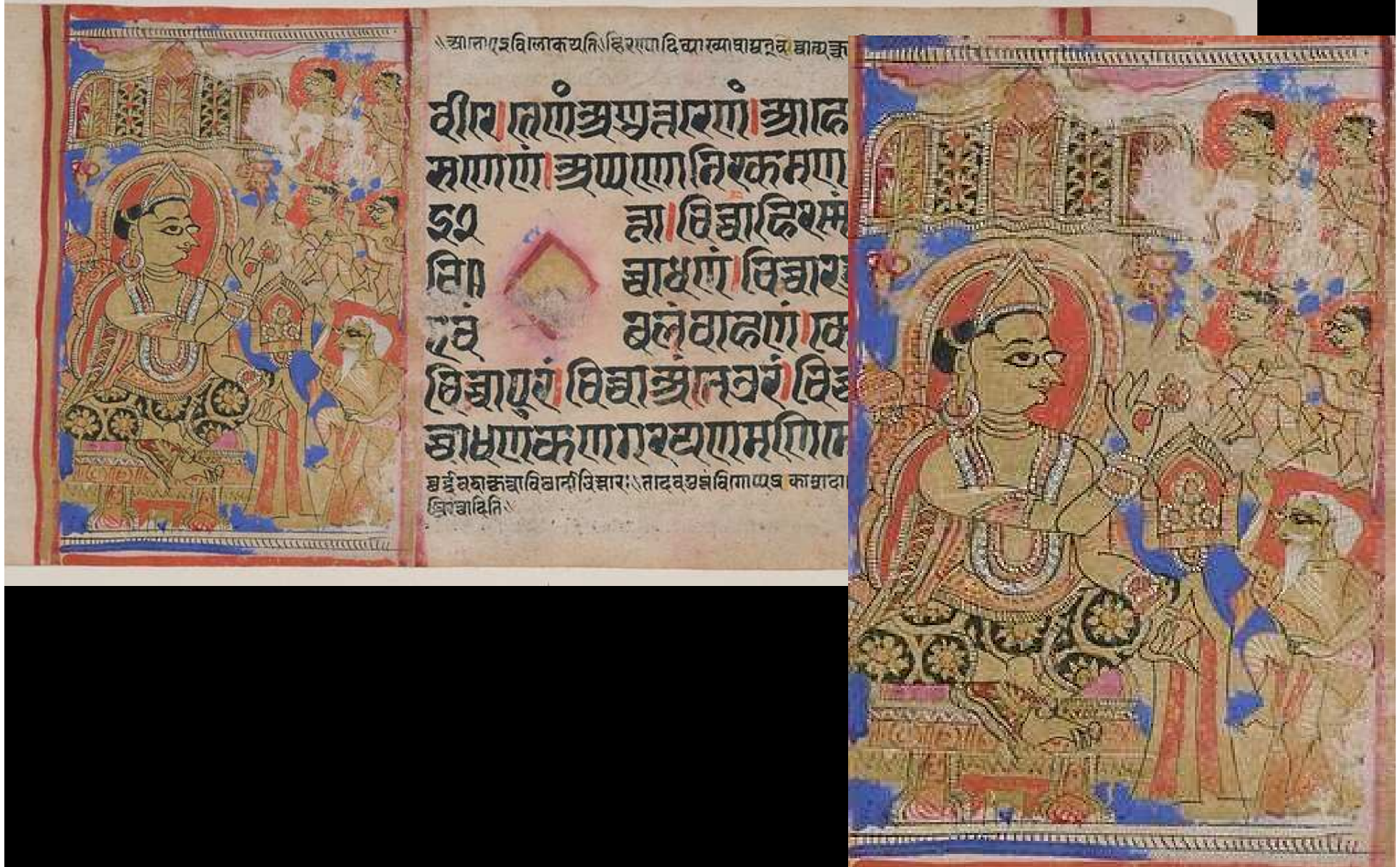
# INDIA

## States and Union Territories





Gujarat region, *Mahavira Gives Away all his Possessions*,  
about 1500, watercolor and gold on paper, 90.29.4



*Seated Jina, 1108, burnished black stone, 98.211*



*shrivatsa*



Karnataka, *Ascetic Gommata*, 10<sup>th</sup> c.,  
basalt, 60' h



*Standing Jina*, 11<sup>th</sup> -12<sup>th</sup> c., bronze, 98.246



Ranakpur, *Adinath Temple*, 15<sup>th</sup> c.





Ranakpur, *Adinath Temple*, 15<sup>th</sup> c.

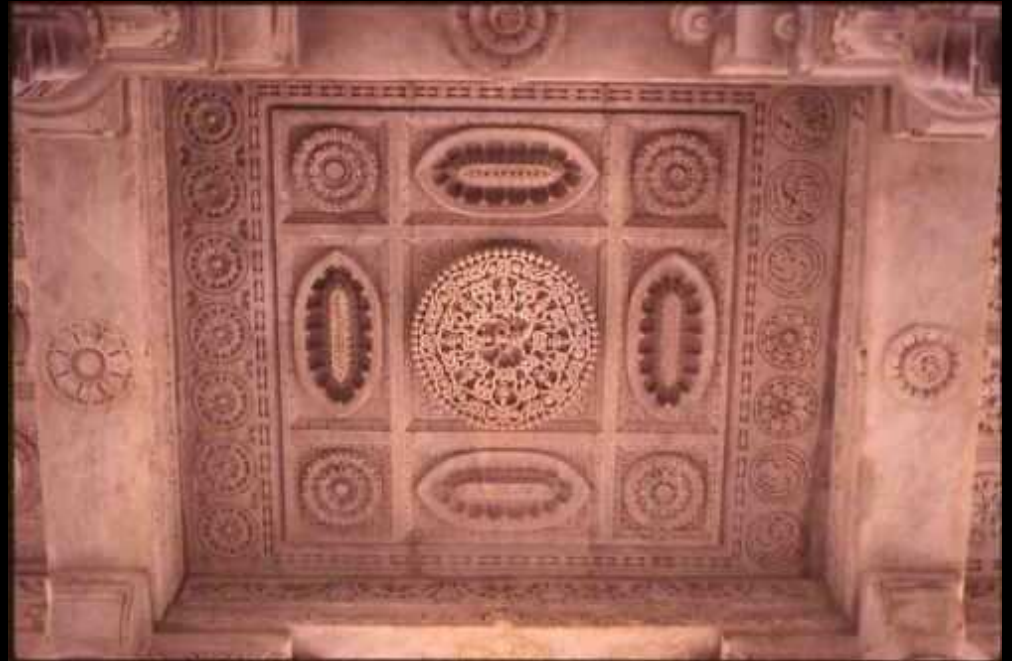


Mumbai, *Jain Temple*  
(detail with yakshis)





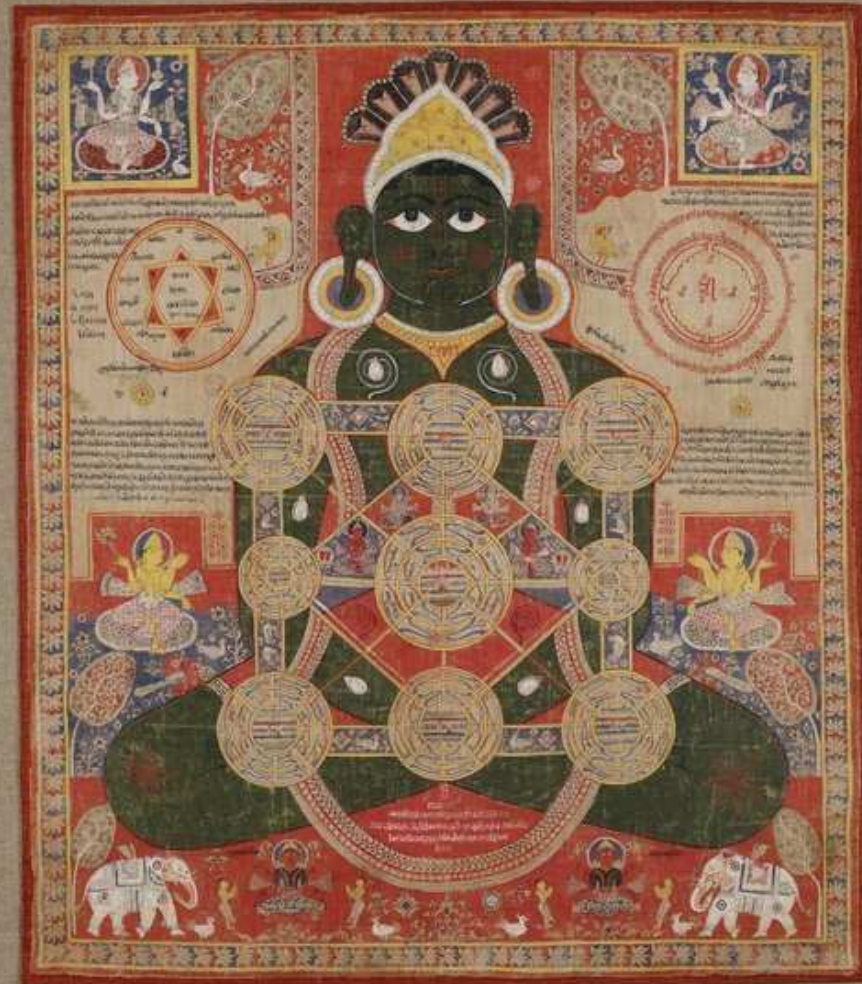
Ranakpur, *Adinath Temple*,  
marble ceiling details, 15<sup>th</sup> c.







India (Rajasthan),  
*Cosmic Parsvanatha*,  
16<sup>th</sup> c., colors on  
cotton, 97.77



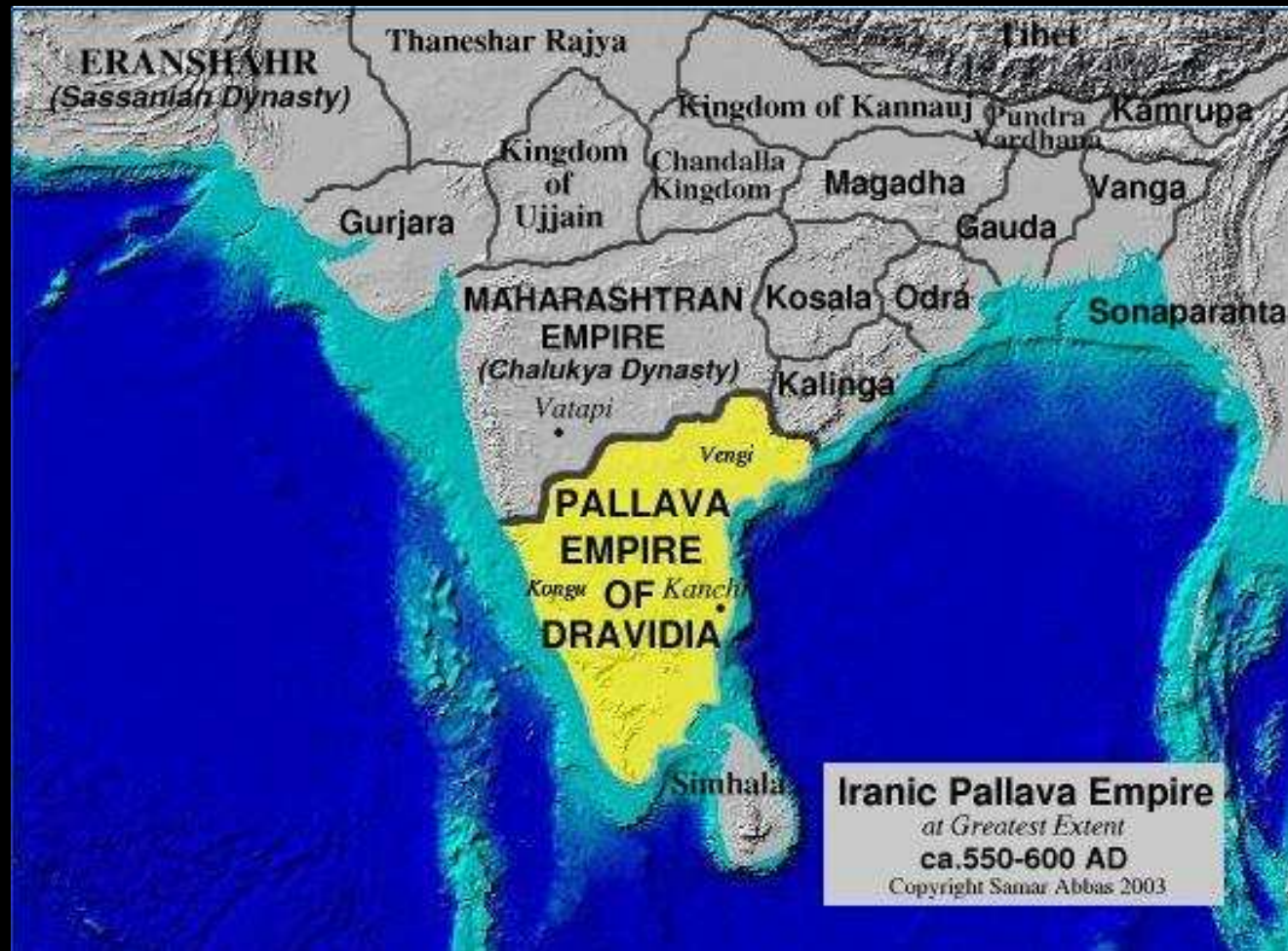


# Hinduism: Origins and Ideas

- Emerges out of mingled Vedic culture and indigenous beliefs; deities are associated with forces of nature
- Social class/caste system sanctioned by Hinduism
- First images appear in 2<sup>nd</sup> c. BCE; by 6<sup>th</sup> c. CE imagery is well established
- Each sect considers its deity to be supreme
- Brahmins (priests) perform rituals of the faith to help release practitioners from *samsara* and achieve *moksha*
- Artists create rich imagery based on Hindu/Vedic literature

# Characteristics of Hindu Art

- Profusely **ornamental, textural, and colorful**, Hindu art reflects the abundance and favor of the gods: through repetition and reduplication of elements we reach understanding and assimilation of the ideas expressed.
- **Symbolism** is pervasive. Many of the forms and iconography used were prescribed by ancient religious texts, as were the ritual practices in which the images are used.
- The arts show us a world infused with **divine dynamism**: forms are tactile, sensuous, and radiant. This is the way artists make manifest the divine nature.





*Cave-Temple of Shiva,*  
Elephanta Island, mid-6<sup>th</sup> c.

linga shrine







# INDIA

## States and Union Territories







Mamallapuram, *Five Rathas*, mid-7<sup>th</sup> c. CE



*Shore Temple*

Tanjore, *Brihadesvara Temple*, c. 1000







Khajuraho, *Kandarya Mahadeva*  
*Temple*, c. 1000

Madhya Pradesh, *Kubera*, 8<sup>th</sup> c.,  
2015.12



Madhya Pradesh, *Shiva's Family*,  
about 1000, 97.36













# Chola Territories around 1130 CE



Tamil Nadu, *Shiva Nataraja*,  
about 1100, 20.2



















Tamil Nadu, *Yogini holding a jar*, early 10<sup>th</sup> c., 60.21

# Yakshi bracket figure, Great Stupa at Sanchi















Tamil Nadu, *Devi as Uma*  
(*Parvati*), 14<sup>th</sup> c., 2009.12.1



Nepal, Goddess Durga, 13<sup>th</sup> c.







West Bengal or Bangladesh,  
*Vishnu with Lakshmi and  
Sarasvati*, about 1100, 90.67



Lakshmi



Sarasvati



Garuda



The Buddha and Kalki









Rajasthan, *Lintel with Vishnu and celestial musicians*, 12<sup>th</sup> c., 96.54.2



# Hindu home altar and street shrine

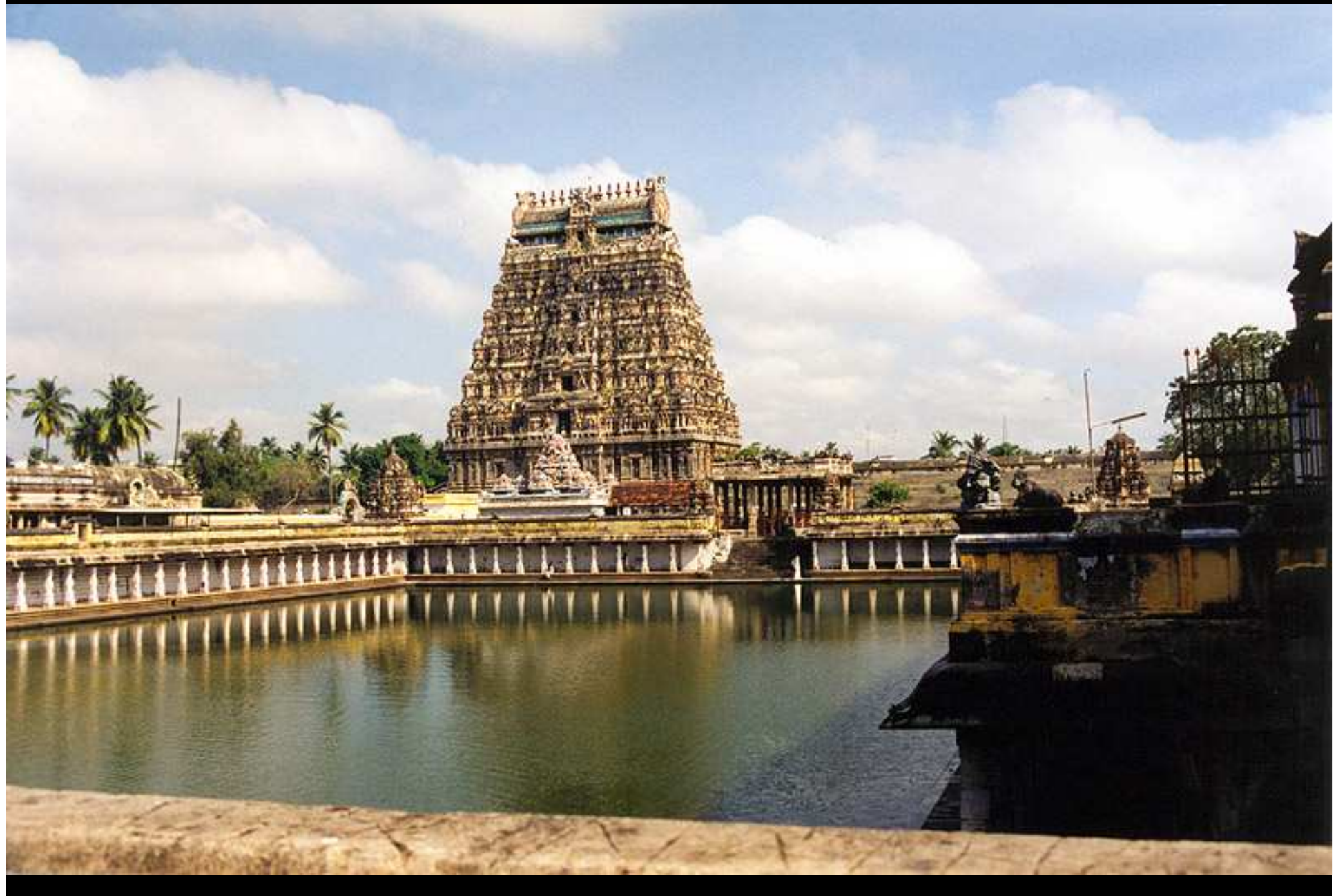


# Hindu Pilgrimage to Ganges River





Karnataka, *Brihadesvara Temple*, c.1525





Karnataka, *Brihadesvara Temple and Temple Complex*, c.1525



## Public Processional Worship

