

अगम्य

Agamya

A SHORT ANIMATION FILM

GUIDE : PROF.SHILPA RANADE

PRESENTATION BY : TANUSHREE PAUL

126340005

IDC, IIT BOMBAY

Ajanta

an introduction

- ✧ 31 rock cut monuments dating back to 2nd century BCE/BC; in Maharashtra
- ✧ First sanctuaries [Chaitya Grihas] were built during Satavahana dynasty, in the canyons of the Waghora River.
- ✧ Rock cut Architecture of Buddhists are generally in two categories - Chaitya and Vihara.
- ✧ **Chaitya: [Prayer Hall] and Vihara** [monasteries - ie. room or place where the monks live] .
- ✧ **Walter M Spink** a long time researcher declared that most of the work of Ajanta caves took place between **460 AD/CE - 480 AD/CE [ie. in 40 years]** during the reign of emperor **Harisena of the Vakata** dynasty.
- ✧ Ajanta caves were abandoned after the fall of Harisena in 480 CE/AD. The place got forested and hence "lost" till it got rediscovered accidentally during hunting by a British officer - **John Smith**.
- ✧ Ajanta caves were excavated in 2 phases
- ✧ Caves in earlier phase dating 2nd century BC [2nd century BCE] were made during rule of satavahanas. Hinayana is a form of buddhism where Buddha was not represented in human form. he was worshipped through symbols such as the wheel and footprints and rituals mounds were called stupas.
- ✧ The chaityas numbered 9 and 10 and Viharas 8,12,13,15a belonged to this period.

Ajanta caves were excavated in 2 phases

↳ HINAYANA (2nd cent. B.C.)

↳ MAHAYANA (4th to 6th cent. A.D.)

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The Second Creative Phase

Six centuries after the above mentioned caves were excavated, king Harisena of Vakataka dynasty created the remaining chaityas and viharas with beautiful murals. By this period the Hinayana buddhism had given way to Mahayana order. Statues of Buddha with different mudras were made during this period. Most of these caves had paintings of Jataka stories.

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Philosophical Influences on Paintings

THE Upanishads were composed in the 9th or 8th century B.C. These philosophical texts have had a profound influence on all later Indian religious thought. They speak of the relationship between the individual soul and the divine creator and the essential unity of the whole of creation.

The material world is seen as *mithya*, an illusion. They say it is desires and attachments that keep one bound to this ephemeral world. One has to lift the veils of the material world and look beyond to the eternal.

The philosophy of aesthetics, developed to great heights in India.

It was believed that the moment of the experience of beauty was one in which the veils of illusion were lifted and one was able to see one's own intrinsic unity with the whole of creation.

Thus, art played a very important role in Indian religious life.



The paintings of the 5th and 6th centuries at Ajanta mainly depict the Jataka tales.

These are the stories of the Buddha in his previous lives, when he was still on the path to enlightenment.

These stories or parables depict the qualities of a virtuous life and are told to serve as examples for the followers of the Buddha.

On the ceilings of the caves is the depiction of the teeming life of the world, its flowers and fruit, the animals of the world and mythical creatures.



The next great cave to be created at Ajanta was Cave 17, which was made by a feudatory of Harisena.

The walls of this cave are crowded with numerous Jataka stories. Many of these depict the Buddha in his previous births in the form of various animals, including a monkey, a buffalo and an elephant.



Cave 1, of the late 5th century, was directly patronised by King Harisena. It has some of the magnificent paintings to be seen at Ajanta.

To the left of the entrance to the antechamber of the main shrine of the cave is a painting of the Bodhisattva Padmapani, the Bearer of the Lotus.

Around the Bodhisattva are painted playful monkeys and a joyous musician.

Yet, amid all this activity, the Bodhisattva responds to a deep harmony: he looks within. There is a great sense of sublime peace that pervades this figure, which is one of the greatest masterpieces of Indian art.

There are a few compositions of divinities, but not part of any story.



The paintings in the last category are decorative.

They fill up all the available space on the ceilings pillars, etc.



The tradition of painting inherited by the artists of Ajanta has been documented as the **Chitrasutra** of the Vishnudharmottara Purana.

This was a verbal tradition, which would have come over many centuries, passed on through guilds of painters, and from father to son.

Chitrasutra was penned on paper by perhaps the 5th or 6th century A.D.,

Chitrasutra

The tradition of Indian Painting and its
Development

"the eyes of the painting have to be opened"

Six Limbs of Painting

Rupa-bheda

Pramanam

bhava

lavanya-yojanam

sadrisham

varnika-bhangam

differentiation

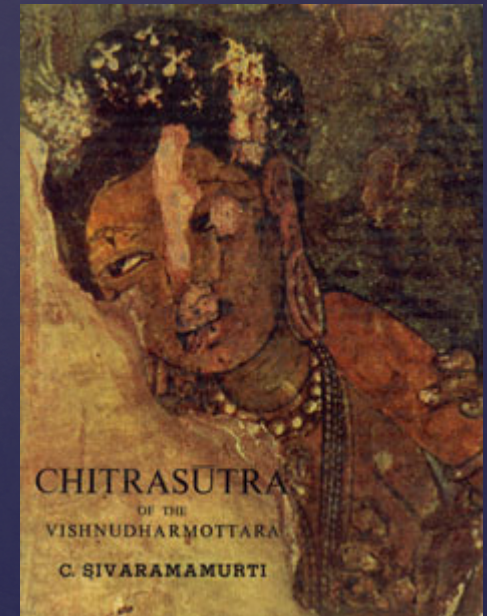
proportion

suggestion of action/mood

infusion of grace

resemblance

application of colour



Symbolism in Indian Art

- Parts of body should resemble plants/animals.
- Sensuous lips like that of Bimba fruit.
- Fingers like lotus petals.
- Padmapani's divine face like that of an egg.
- Shoulders like massive domed head of an elephant.
- Arms like tapered trunks.
- Hands like flower buds.

A non realistic likeliness, attention on content and its mood,
but not in the form itself.

The masters praise the Rekha's –lines .

The connoisseurs praise the display of light and shade.

Women like the display of ornaments.

The richness of colours appeals to common folks. The artists, therefore, should take great care to ensure that the painting is appreciated by every one.

The rules of perspective, three different ways to carry out shading and hundreds of details on how to paint are placed before the artist.

He is given a framework of suggestions on how to depict different kinds of people.

He is informed that rules do not make the painting.

The Jataka

Jataka are stories ,parables on the past births of Buddha

- Parables
- Study of Art Style
- Method of narration of this period
 - Story within a story to prove the rebirth and identifies the Bodhisatta in the story.

Pairing of stories

- Information Regarding

Costumes
Hair Styles
Jewellery
Court etiquette
Society and Customs

- The rebirth motif is dominant.
- Didactic purpose.They teach certain truths never meant for leisure entertainment.
- Recursive in motif and style.
- Each story opens with a preface
 - “Paccu- Panna- Vatthu”
 - “Story of the present”

Stories based on the Four Noble Truths of Buddha's Teachings

- Dukkha
- The cause of Dukkha
- The cessation of Dukkha
- The path leading to the cessation of dukkha.

“The Awakening”

AGAMYA (अगम्य)

AGAMYA the title of my story, means inaccessible. , which stands in regards to the caves, which were not accessible for many centuries and also for the conscious soul which remains inaccessible to the human beings. Buddhism states that the three poisons - ignorance, attachment, and aversion are the primary causes that keep sentient beings trapped in Samsara leading to the creation of karma, which further leads to rebirth and a non-terminating cycle of sufferings.

The Cave 17 of Ajanta

The Cave 17 of Ajanta, a Vihara cave (Monastery) was patronized by a Rishika prince, who was a feudatory of the famous Vakataka King Harisena.

Most of the paintings in this cave are still preserved and hence provides great deal of information about the subjects, contents, patrons, artists and about the era.

This cave is also home to many famous Jatakas namely:

Vessantara Jataka * Simhala – Advana * Sibi Jataka
Chaddanta Jataka * Hamsa Jataka * Sudasa Sutasoma *
Syama Jataka

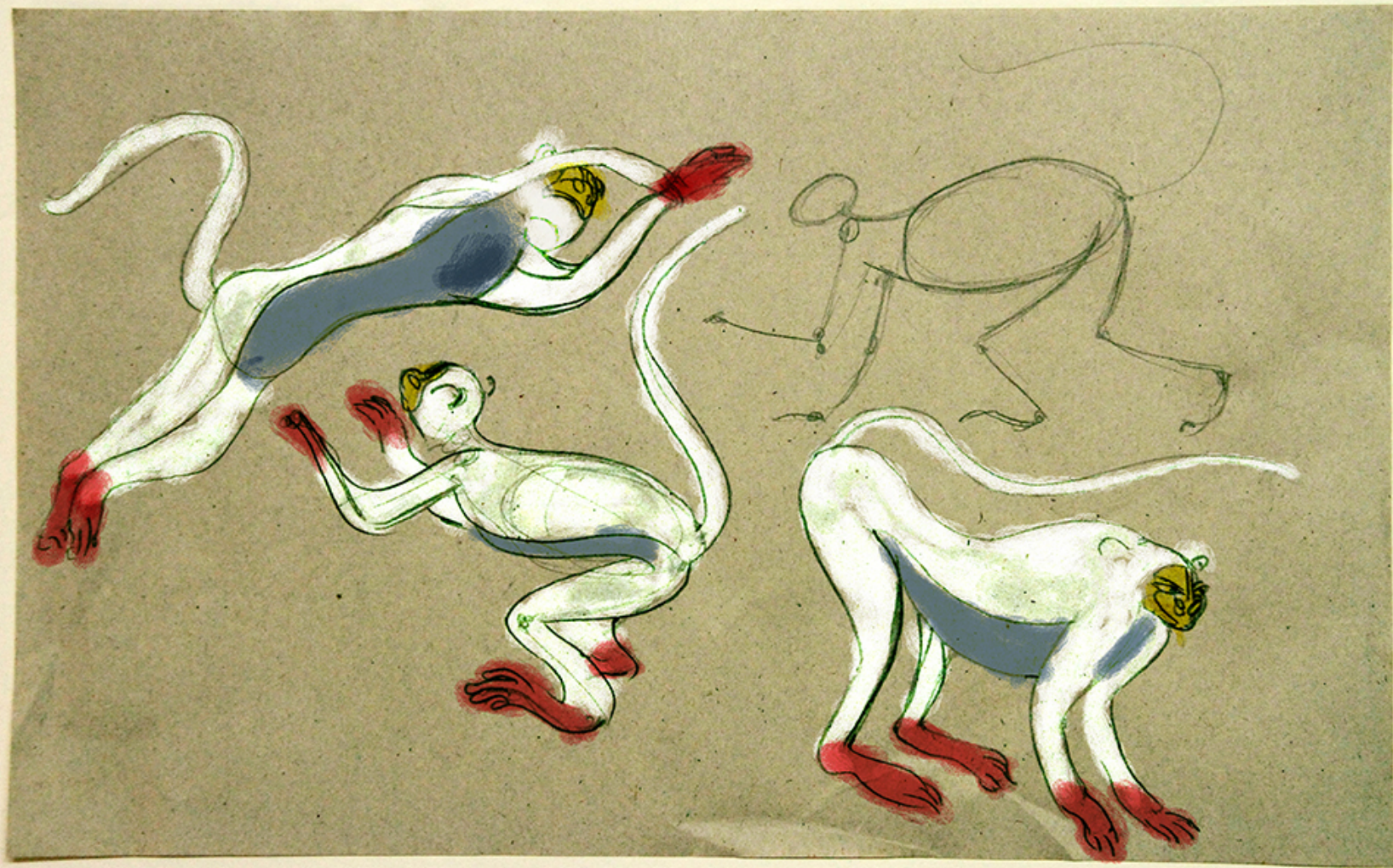
Nigrodhamiga Jataka * Ruru Jataka * Nalagiri Jataka *
Mahakapi-1 Jataka * Mahakapi-2 Jataka

Mahisha Jataka * Hasti Jataka * Matriposhaka Jataka *
Kinnara- Kinnari * Return of Buddha

Character Design



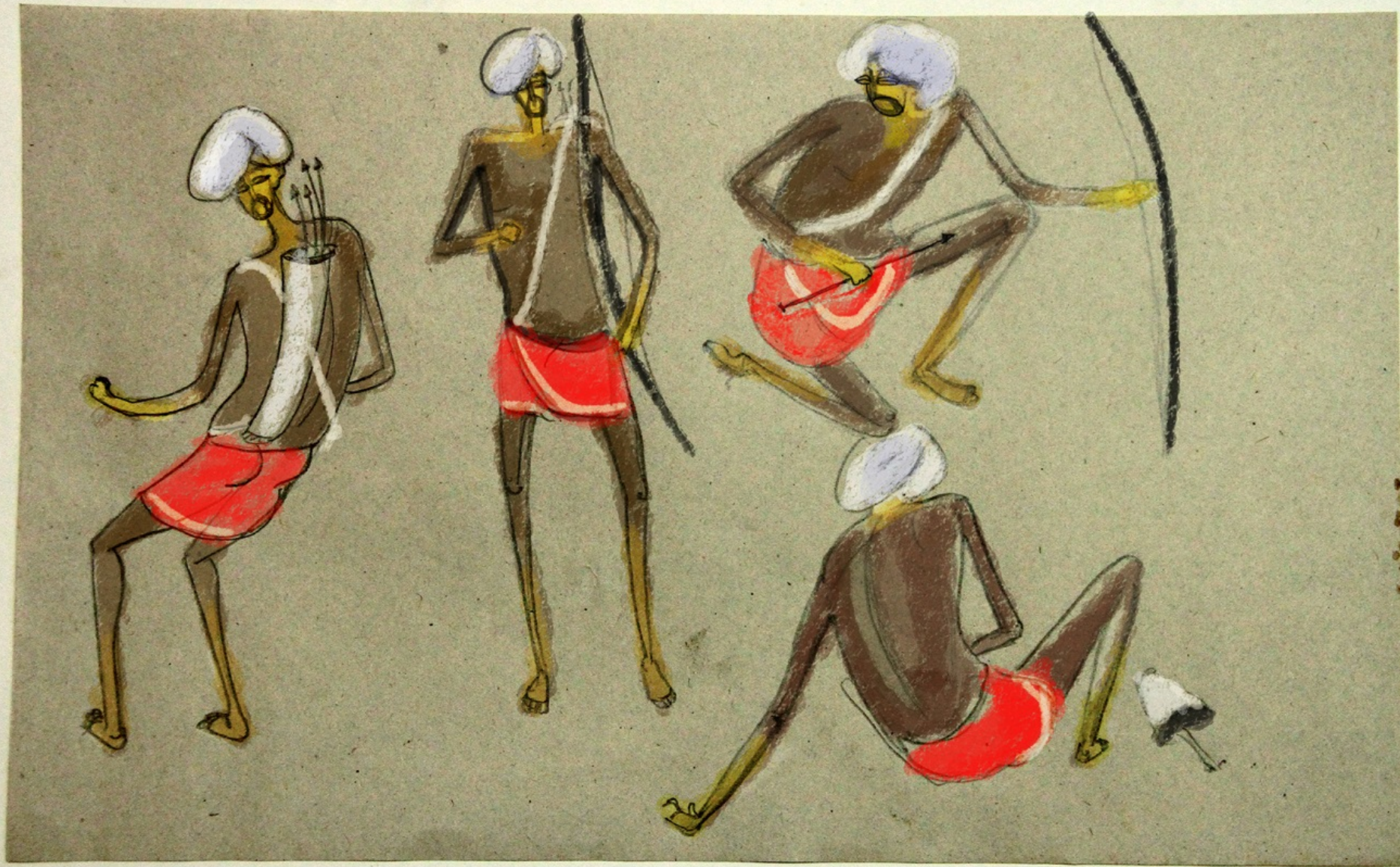
MAHAKAPI





TIGER





POACHER





DANCER



Ajanta profused a lot of patience in me, which is certain of a heritage been created with utmost sophistication and dedication. There are multiple areas and potential to come up with amazing stories but that vast dimension also causes confusion. Ajanta is structured on Buddhist philosophy, with that it doesn't only highlights the religious context but carries a panorama ranging from Paintings, sculptures, Way of living, clothing , ornaments, politics etc. In my project I marked the possibilities on what subjects I can work with. Miraculously most of the areas I touched were already linked with each other, everything is chained and undergrounded, pivotal of the Buddhist metaphysics.