

# A Comprehensive Study of Bharhut Stupa with Special Reference to Madhya Pradesh

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## Abstract:

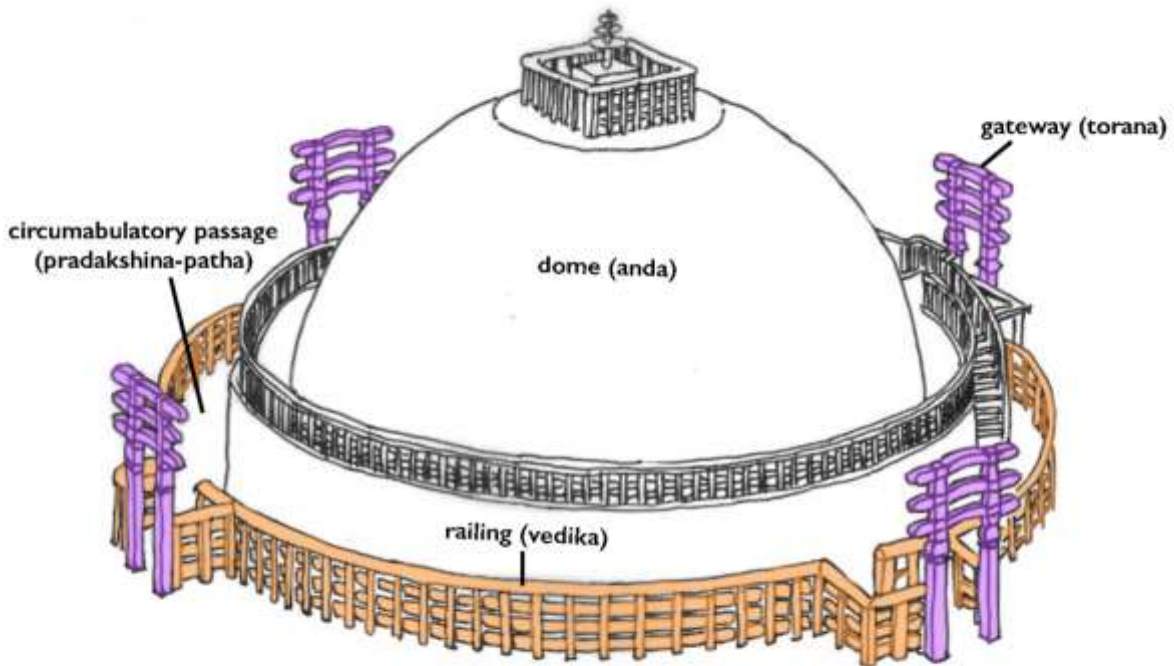
Bharhut Sculpture is the earliest piece of architecture of Shunga period in a village near Uchchra, Satna district of Madhya Pradesh. It was one of the main early Buddhist monuments that dominated the early Buddhist architecture of pre historic times in India and its remains have been the subject of much study still today. Alexander Cunningham first discovered the remains of the site of Bharhut in November 1873 while travelling to Nagpur as a part of much larger – scale survey of the central provinces. Following this discovery of the Bharhut stupa attracted attention of different architectures to study its art architecture. Despite of it, a little is known about this site. It has been largely destroyed, and most of the existing remains – railings and entrance gateways –are now in the Indian museum in Kolkata and in the municipal museum of Allahabad. The earlier studies of Bharhut was made rationally so a comprehensive study of Bharhut Stupa is to be made to study its art and architecture elements in the context of Buddhist architecture.

**Keywords:** Stupa, Bharhut Stupa's Architecture, Antiquity etc.

## Introduction:

The Buddhist Vihara at Bharhut is famous for beautiful Stupa is located at Bharhut village near Uchchra in Satna district of the state of Madhya Pradesh. It is believed Ashoka probably built the Stupa during 250 BCE. But many works of art, Particularly the gateway and railings, were apparently added during Shunga period with many reliefs from 2<sup>nd</sup> century BCE, after some time the sculptures made have been added during the age of Shungas, a northern Buddhist Kingdom. The Stupa originally built of Brick, and it was enlarged during the 2<sup>nd</sup> Century BCE, when a surroundings stone railing with entrance door on the four cardinal Points was constructed. This railing bears wealth of fine relief carving on its inner face. About the beginning of the 1<sup>st</sup> century BCE, it has four gateways (torans), each elaborately carved, were added to the entrances. An inscriptions on these Toranas assigns the work to king Dhanbhuti during the rule of the Shungas before 72 BCE. The sculptures adorning the shrine are among the earliest and finest example of the developing style of Buddhist art in India. It has the flat planes, rather stiffly posed figures, and precise, elegant detailing of the ornamentation suggest continuance in stone of an earlier tradition in wood. Some of the uprights bear in belief standing figures of yakshas and yakshinis (that is nature deities) that have been pressed into the service of the Buddhist religion; a frequent motif is a woman embracing a tree. The stone railing, which imitates wooden post and rail construction, is decorated with medallions and lunatics, most of them filled with the lotus ornaments and some of them centered by the head of a man or woman. Other railing medallions and the coping depict Jataka Stories

and events of the Buddha's life. Since these are labeled, Bharhut sculpture is indispensable for an understanding of Buddhist iconography. As in all-Indian sculpture before the 1<sup>st</sup> century CE, the Buddha is represented by a symbol such as a wheel, empty throne, or umbrella, never in human form. The composition is simple, even naïve, and with overlapping figures used in an attempt to distinguish planes. Animals appearing in the sculptures are treated with the Sympathetic understanding Characteristics of Indian art all periods.



### Aims of the Study

To find out the remains of Bharhut Stupa

To find out the antiquity and architecture of the Bharhut Stupa

### Bharhut Stupa; Special Reference to Madhya Pradesh

Emperor Ashoka was one of the India's most extraordinary; who built Bharhut Stupa in 3<sup>rd</sup> Century BCE. diameter of the Stupa was 67 feet. Foundation was stupa was constructed. It was highly polished. The Vedikas and the boundaries even the torana highly polished. The sculptures its boundaries were very flat. Around 100 B.C. a great stupa was made at Bharhut, in the eastern part of present day Madhya Pradesh (in satna district) Bharhut Stupa was initially built by Ashoka and was later improvised by the Shungas. The railings of the stupa and its one surviving gate are at the Indian Museum in Kolkata .This is the earliest stupa Railing to have survived.

Unlike the imperial art of the Mauryans, the inscriptions on railings of Bharhut Stupa Show that the reliefs and figures were donated by lay people, monks and Nuns. Thus, it is one of the earliest examples of Mauryan popular art.

The railings contain numerous birth stories of Buddha's previous birth and life. The Bharhut stupa represents the anionic phase of Buddhist art. Buddha has been represented in the form of symbols such as a seat, footprints, The Bodhi Tree, The wheel and the stupa. The Style is generally flat, with low bass relief. All characters are depicted wearing the Indian dhoti, except for one foreigner, thought to be an Indo-Greek soldier, with Buddhist symbolism. At Bharhut, we find the earliest images of the yakshas; yakshis represent the protection of nature, and its great fertility, which ensures continuance of life. One of the Sculptures is of Laxmi on the railing of the Bharhut, which is earliest image of this deity. One another railing, there is a nagraja, the serpent King, who is in human form but has a serpent hood. All the Sculptures at Bharhut are related with life of Buddha.



### Conclusion

The District of Satna is famous for archaeological sites. The Bharhut has historical as well as archaeological importance. This stupa was first discovered by Cunningham. The findings of this stupa draw attention towards the presence of Buddhism in Satna region. Scholars have been researching Bharhut since long time. During 2<sup>nd</sup> – 3<sup>rd</sup> century B.C., Pushyamitra Shunga destroys this stupa but his son reconstructs again it. Bharhut is located about 23.6 kilometers southeast of Satna district near Uchchhara in Madhya Pradesh. It is unique but it has left only remains. Its having perfect and well – preserved stupas but all parts has destroyed. This beautiful stupa was destroyed, partly by villagers and partly due to time. Some parts of it are still present in the Museum of Kolkata. If the government collects these remains and gets them rebuilt, Bharhut can be revived even today.

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