Architecture:

From Ashoka to Gupta 3rd century BCE to 5th century CE
Once Siddhartha (or the Gautama Buddha) gained enlightenment, he began to preach

The holy eight fold path: right views, right intentions, right speech, right conduct, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness and right concentration.

Four Holy Truths: all existence is suffering, all suffering and rebirth are caused by man’s selfish craving, Nirvana, freedom from suffering, comes from cessation of all craving, and fourth, the stopping of all ill and craving comes only from following the Eight Fold Path.

These are the way of the Buddha, the way of Enlightenment.
One reason I’ve directed you to the time-line on the MET website is so you can compare events, styles and cultures across the Silk Road.

http://www.metmuseum.org/toah/ht/?period=05&region=ssa

**Life of the Historic Buddha**
Siddhartha Gautama

**Mauryan Empire 323-185 BCE**
third Mauryan Emperor-Ashoka, 254 BCE began building monumental edicts on Buddhism carved into pillars, rocks and caves, and is credited with building 84,000 stupas to enshrine the holy relics (ashes) of the Buddha and commemorate the important events of the historic Buddha.

Contemporary:: Classical Greece (Plato, Socrates) In China (Confucius, Laozi)

**Kushan Empire 100 BCE-200 CE**
importance of Silk Road, Gandaharan region multiethnic, tolerance, flourishing of art and Buddhism
Conquered by Alexander the Great

**Gupta Period 300-500 CE**
sometimes referred to as a Golden Age, witnessed the creation of an "ideal image" of the Buddha.
Corresponds with Constantine in Rome
The **Kushan Empire** originally formed in the 1st century CE in the territories of ancient **Bactria** on either side of the middle course of the Oxus River in what is now northern Afghanistan, and southern Tajikistan and Uzbekistan. The kings of Kushan had diplomatic contacts with Rome, Persia and Han China. The empire declined from the 3rd century, and fell to the Gupta Empire in the 4th.

The **Gupta Empire** was an Ancient Indian empire which existed approximately from 320 to 550 CE and covered much of the Indian Subcontinent. Founded by Maharaja Sri-Gupta, the dynasty was the model of a *classical civilization*. The peace and prosperity created under leadership of Guptas enabled the pursuit of scientific and artistic endeavors. This period is called the Golden Age of India and was marked by extensive achievements in science, technology, engineering, art, dialectic, literature, logic, mathematics, astronomy, religion and philosophy that crystallized the elements of what is generally known as Hindu culture.
The Kushan kingdom was centered in two areas

...one around Mathura, in the north-central India and the other in Gandhara.

Capturing the ideals of yogic control...containers of the ‘vital breath’, rather than replicas of the physical body.

Buddha seated on lion throne, from Mathura, India, second century CE. Red sandstone, 2’ 3 1/2” high. Archaeological Museum, Muttra.
By contrast…

the **Gandharan Buddha**, despite having many of the same attributes---the lion throne, the yogic posture and radiant nimbus---remains a mixture of Roman styles. Most striking is the toga, an inappropriate garment for the climate of India…and the facial features which indicate an interest in realism.

Meditating Buddha, from Gandhara, Pakistan, second century CE. Gray schist, 3’ 7 1/2” high. Royal Scottish Museum, Edinburgh.
As interest and worship of Bodhisattvas increased, also the idea of the Buddha as a truly celestial figure grew.

As a result of the cosmic view of Mt. Meru as linked with the heavens, the appearance of the Colossal Buddhas in India and throughout northern countries from Afghanistan to Japan are seen.

Bodhisattva, Kushan
The Gupta dynasty, like the Kushan and Mauryan before, was established in Northern India. From 320 to the 7th century remains the standard of comparison between India and the rest of Asia.

For Buddhism, the Gupta period signaled the decline of Buddhism in India. Besides the monastic establishments being attacked by marauding tribes, the more powerful, dynastically supported Hinduism assimilated the Buddhist faith. The Mahayana emphasis on salvation by faith had served to bring Buddhism closer to Hinduism and the fewer differences allowed Buddhism to be absorbed by Hindu practices in India.

By the end of the Gupta period, most of the growth of Buddhism was taking place outside of India.
One of two Colossal Buddha statues characterized ancient Bakhtria, integrating various cultural influences into the Gandhara school of Buddhist art.

The area contains numerous Buddhist monastic sanctuaries, as well as fortified edifices from the Islamic period.

The site is also testimony to the tragic destruction by the Taliban of the two standing Buddha statues, which shook the world in March 2001.

Colossal Buddha, 5th-6th century, Afghanistan, destroyed in 2001 by the Taliban.
Originally gilded with gold and copper masks, two colossal images from Afghanistan are most spectacular, visible to pilgrims from miles away.
The sense of splendor was enhanced by wall paintings.

Colossal Buddha, 5th-6th century, Afghanistan, destroyed in 2001 by the Taliban.
Buddha, Yangon, China
Colossal Buddha, Myanmar, 5’3”
Different from that of a humble, meditative teacher, the Buddha had become an awesome, transcendent vision....reflecting the importance Mahayana Buddhism placed on the heavenly realm even suggesting the rewards awaiting those who managed to be reborn in such a paradise.

Colossal Buddha, 5th century, Kanheri, India
The Gupta Buddha is shown in the teaching mudra. No longer appearing heavy like the *yaksha* images, this is a person of great spiritual bearing. An evolution from the earthly Shakyamuni to the ethereal, spiritual figure we see here.

Attention is directed to the meaning of the faith, instead of the person of the Buddha.

Abstracted and simplified, all extraneous details are eliminated. Attracted to his quiet gaze, hands and face. Designed to go beyond the event being portrayed, the First Sermon, to a transcendent dimension found in Mahayana Buddhism.

The early growth of Buddhism after his death in around 481 BCE was enhanced by the Indian King Ashoka’s distribution of his ashes inside 84,000 stupas.

Two primary types of Buddhist structures:

1. The stupa
2. The monastery

Whatever form of the structure, Buddhist worship involves circumambulation
Stupa Reliquary, Pakistan, 2nd Century
Dating back to the 3rd century BCE, Ashoka’s caves in Bihar include references to the earlier wooden Buddhist building that have not survived.
Most of the caves were monk residence halls with individual cells and areas for instruction.

Less common were Chaityas, communal places of worship.
Rock-Cut Sanctuaries

Early ROCK-CUT monasteries were built on a rising plateau of mountains that run for several hundred miles along the western side of the subcontinent. They were constructed close enough to trade routes to attract donations but removed enough to maintain a monastic life. The trade routes connecting the cities of India provided many of the locations, for Buddhism cultivated the support of travelers and caravans, a practice that would also lead to similar cave building along the trade routes of Central Asia.
We have already looked at stupas at Sanchi and Bharhut from Ashokas reign.

One of the most complete architectural sites from the Gupta period is at Ajanta.

Built in a horse-shoe shaped cliff of 29 caves, it was occupied in the first century BCE and again in the 5th and 6th centuries.

Rediscovered in the early 19th century, it is being restored and preserved.

http://whc.unesco.org/en/list/242/video
Ajanta--29 caves in a horseshoe shape…occupied in the 1st century BC and then again in the 5th and 6th. Discovered in the early 19th century and has been continuously restored since then.
It contains two types of spaces:
Residence Halls—viharas
Chaityas--communal places of worship.
The chaitya hall consisted of a rounded, closed end or apse, imitation barrel-vaulted ceiling and rows of pillars.

The third major structure, the stupa, was added to the chaitya hall, with space around it for circumambulation.

Interior (left), section (top right), and plan (bottom right) of chaitya hall, Karle, India, ca. 100 CE.
The Chaityas halls at Ajanta are dominated by large, arched openings and projecting porches. ...originally protected by additional wooden structures.

The have elaborate walls crowded with Buddhas and bodhisattvas...the irregular positions a function of their being donated over time.
By the Gupta times (4th to 7th century) a shift to the more transcendent Buddha image resulted in the lower part of the stupa given over to this image…merging the Buddha and the stupa into one unified vision.
The Gupta transcendent Buddha image resulted in the merging the Buddha and the stupa into one unified vision.
Most of the Ajanta’s caves are residence and lecture halls---they too were modified as a result of the changes by Mahayana doctrine. They include wall paintings of jataka tales and ceilings painted as symbols of heavenly realms.
The bodhisattva, Padmapani, one of the manifestations of Avalokitesvara, one of the most widely revered.

Taking either male or female form, Padmapani embodies the compassion of all Buddhas.

In Sanscrit Pamapani is the ‘holder of the lotus’ or ‘lord of the world.’

In Tibetan Buddhism, Pamapani is said to be incarnated as the Dali Lama.
Loving Couple
Nalanda and Paharpur...