

# AJANTĀ

An Interactive Multimedia and Virtual Walkthrough CD-ROM



*Cultural Informatics*

Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts

AJANTĀ is situated on the Western Ghāts of the Deccan Plateau, 60 kilometre from Jalgaon and 108 kilometre from Aurangabad in Maharashtra State of India. It was created in two periods; the first being Hinayāna, coincided with the rule of the Sātavāhanas during first century B.C. and first century A.D. when the Buddha was revered in the form of the stūpa. The second phase, called as late Hinayāna, or more popularly, Mahāyāna, coincided with the rule of the Vākāṭakas during late fifth century A.D. At this time the Buddha was also being revered in the human form.

Hinayāna caves were the donations of the sangha (monastic establishment), while the Mahāyāna caves were donated by pious and powerful patrons. It was the ambition and commitment of these patrons that saw through the creation of this glorious undertaking.

Ajantā is famous for its murals that focus on life of the Buddha, the Jātakas (the life of the Buddha as Bodhisattva in his previous existences), and devotional and ornamental themes. They served as didactic tools for the laity. Painting was no different than sculpture and architecture. They interrelate and mutually compliment one another. The śilpin (artist, craftsman, artisan or architect) was well versed in more than one art. The approach was holistic.

Many books, essays, travelogues, films, photographic collections exist on Ajantā but an all encompassing and integral view as can be possible though the multimedia and virtual walkthrough technology was due. The present CD-ROM attempts to provide such a comprehensive view for the students, teachers, tourists and scholars to help them know and explore further this grand monument which, as claimed by an inscription, resembled the splendour of Indra's crown.

## CULTURAL INFORMATICS

The Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts (IGNCA) is visualised as a centre encompassing the study and experience of all the arts. The Cultural Informatics unit of IGNCA employs latest technology to help dissemination of information on India's culture, tradition and heritage. Other available/forthcoming titles are *Devadāsī Murāī*, *Muktēśvara Temple*, *Man and Mask*, *Gīta Govinda*, *Viśvarūpa*, *Two Pilgrims*, *Oral Narrative of Devanārāyaṇa* and *Agnicayana*.

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