

top of the brick encasing.

- » Stupas are normally constructed on a foundation of stone or bricks. A hemispheric dome (Anda) was built on top of this base.
- » The stupa's drum grew longer and higher as time passed. It came close to resembling a cylindrical vessel.
- » A harmika is positioned on the truncated top of the hemisphere, which is enclosed by a railing.
- » A vedika surrounds the stupa. The vedika at Bharhut, Sanchi, and Amaravati is made up of three transverse bars and three upright pillars. In the railing, four gateways are used.
- » A ground-level circumambulation path (Pradakshinapath) runs around the stupa within the railing.
- » **Toranas** were ceremonial gateways around the stupas.

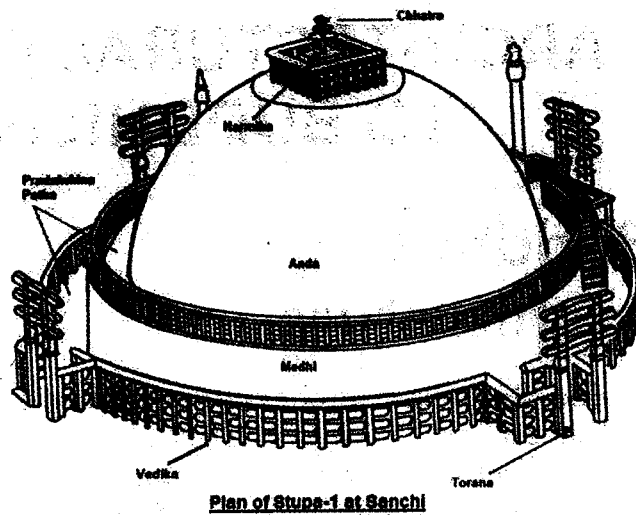


IMAGE 2.1: SCHEMATIC OF STUPA AT SANCHI

The Great Stupa (Sanchi)

- Mud mortar and large burnt bricks were used to build this structure.
- Built by Ashoka and destroyed during the Mauryan Empire's disintegration. It was fully restored in the 2nd century BC, under the rule of the Shungas.
- The Great Stupa is topped by a triple umbrella or Chhatra on a pedestal surrounded by a square railing and has a wide hemispherical dome that is flat at the tip.
- Its nucleus was a plain hemispherical brick structure constructed over Buddha's relics.
- Stupa at Sanchi has upper as well as lower Pradakshinapath or circumambulatory path. It has four ornately painted toranas depicting different scenes from the Buddha's life and the Jataka tales.

Dhamek Stupa (Sarnath)

- The Dhamek Stupa in Sarnath, Uttar Pradesh, is thought to have been built by Ashoka and later reconstructed by the Guptas to commemorate the Buddha's activities in the city.
- Since this stupa houses Buddha's relics, it is a famous Buddhist pilgrimage site.
- This stupa is said to mark the spot where the Buddha gave his first sermon upon attaining enlightenment to his first five followers, "revealing his Eightfold Path known as Ashtanga Marga leading to nirvana".
- The current shape of the stupa is a solid cylinder of bricks and stone.
- The Gupta era is thought to have raised the stone basement, which has eight projecting faces with niches carved with beautiful floral and geometrical designs.

Bharhut Stupa

- It is believed that the Bharhut stupa were originally built by Ashoka in the 3rd century BC, but many works of art, particularly the gateway and railings, were added during the Shunga period