

Spring 2021 Arts of Asia Lecture Series
The Power of Images in Asian Art: Making the Invisible Visible
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RASA: THE ESSENCE OF INDIAN ART

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Terms: *rasa*: taste, essence, flavor, intuitive aesthetic experience
 rasika: one who experiences a work of art
 bhava: mood, emotion
 dharani: resonance, suggestion, utterance

Texts: *Natyashastra*, by Bharata-Muni
 Vishnudharmottarapurana

References: B.N. Goswamy. *Essence of Indian Art*. Asian Art Museum, San Francisco, 1986.
 Ananda K. Coomaraswamy. "Hindu View of Art: Theory of Beauty." *The Dance of Shiva*. New York: The Noonday Press. 8th Edition, 1969.

1. **Shringara** erotic *rasa* (blue/black—Visnu)
 Yakshi, Gyrapur, 10th C. Gwalior Museum
 Mithuna, Chandella 11th C. Cleveland Museum
2. **Hasya** comic, humorous *rasa* (white—Siva)
 Ganesha. Central India. 11th C. CE, Asian Art Museum, SF
 Krishna Stealing Butter. *Bhagavata Purana*. Mewar, 1550-75
 Krishna Stealing the Gopis' Clothes. *Bhagavata Purana*, Mankot, ca. 1700
3. **Karuna** sorrowful (pathos, compassionate) *rasa* (dove-colored—Yama)
 Fasting Buddha, Gandhara, Kushan Dynasty, 2nd C. CE
 Nirvana of the Buddha, Gandhara, Kushan Dynasty, 2nd C. CE
4. **Raudra** wrathful, furious *rasa* (red—Rudra)
 Durga, Udayagiri, Cave 6, ca. 401-2, Gupta period cf. Durga, Pala. 9th c.
 Narasimha (Visnu as Man-Lion avatar), Basohli, painting, 1735
5. **Vira** heroic *rasa* (yellow—Indra)
 Varaha, Udayagiri, Cave 5, 401 CE
 Siva Tripurantaka, Central India 11th Century, Asian Art Museum, SF
6. **Bhayanaka** terrible *rasa* (black—Kali)
 Mahakala, the terrible aspect of Avalokitesvara, Tibet, 15th C.
 Vajrabhairava, "Indestructible Terror." The terrible aspect of Manjusri

7. **Bibhatsa** odious *rasa* (blue—Mahakala)
Chamunda-Kali, Rajasthan, stone, Asian Art Museum, S.F. 9-10th C.
Chamunda-Kali, Nepal, Bronze, Los Angeles County Museum of Art, 14th C.
Palden Lhamo, 19th C. Tibet, bronze, Asian Art Museum, San Francisco
8. **Adbhuta** marvellous *rasa* (gold—a *gandharva*)
Nataraja, Siva the Lord of Dance. Bronze, 12th C. Cola Dynasty. BKB
White Tara, 18th C. Asian Art Museum, San Francisco
Durga Standing on head of Demon Buffalo 11th C., Asian Art Museum, SF
9. **Shanta** quiescent *rasa* (the color of jasmine and the moon—Narayana)
Seated Buddha, Borobudur, Central Java, mid-8th C.
Tibetan Monk, Sarnath