

Free essay on greek and south asia

[Religion](#), [Buddhism](#)



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The art pieces from both the Greek and South Asian traditions express divine qualities, as well as, human qualities. They each indicate that the divine can be shown in ornate, exaggerated versions of humanity and also in the everyday person. Both traditions communicate the divine at distinct ends of the spectrum: from royal gods to the everyday person.

Athena Lemnia:

Athena Lemnia and Athena Pathenos is the art displayed in the Greek tradition. Athena Lemnia looks like a typical Greek woman. Her hairstyle is plain, absent of any decorations or elaborate headdress. The face is also plain, without any adornments or references to being royalty. Her expressions seems neutral and flat. The material used is marble, which is considered hard and cold, but very beautiful. Although, the sculpture is plain and unadorned, it is captivating to look at. There are not any signs of this woman being special or of the gods, such as, a crown on her head or a staff

next to her. The size of the sculpture is larger than a typical person's head, which would make the viewer small in comparison. She seems to express an inner strength and a confidence that would be typical of a goddess. The size symbolizes greatness, power, and inspires awe in the viewer. Creating a plain, typical female for the visual representation of the goddess Athena communicates the concept that the divine can be anyone.

Athena Parthenos:

In contrast, the artwork Athena Parthenos is extremely ornate, covered in gold, and highly decorated. She has gold bracelets on her wrists, and cuffs around the upper part of her arms. She has a high crown denoting royalty, she is holding a huge shield with a large snake attached to it, and a long spear is resting on her arm. She is larger-than-life, as can be seen, compared to the men standing at the base of the statue in the picture, and looms over little figures of humans and horses. The figures at the base of the platform are depicted in typical human behavior, such as, lounging in chairs, riding on horses, and talking amongst each other. She is so large that she can carry an angel in the palm of her hand. The angel almost appears to be a gift that Athena Parthenos is giving to the viewer. This gives the idea that humans are small and almost irrelevant compared to the great Athena. This depiction has a clear social order: Athena as a goddess, angels, and then humans. Athena Parthenos inspires awe in the viewer, much like Athena Lemnia, but in a different manner; the viewer sees a ruler and a warrior, someone to fear.

Vairocana Buddha:

The South Asian tradition follows the same depiction of deity as Athena Parthenos with the artwork Vairocana Buddha. This Buddha is very regal, he is wearing a tall crown, is positioned above the viewer, and is very large in size. His facial expression is peaceful, but his body is juxtaposed to the peaceful expression with the hard lines of his crossed legs and the particular manner in which his hands are held. His hands are folded over each other with his two fingers touching at the tips creating a hard angle that is repeated with the bends of his arms. He is sitting in a composed, restricted manner, as though he is meditating. The dais he is sitting on seems to be a plant, giving the impression that Vairocana Buddha bloomed into existence. He, himself, is a gift to mankind. This depiction of Buddha symbolizes a god that is above humans. With the massive size of the artwork and the position of the sitting Buddha, the viewer feels smaller and lower in comparison. This places the social order in perspective: humans are smaller and socially lower in comparison to the divine Buddha.

Bundai the Monk with the Cloth bag:

The artwork Bundai the Monk with the Cloth bag is in direct contrast with the Vairocana Buddha, but compares to the Athena Lemnia. Bundai the Monk is depicted as being just like a monk. There are no indications that this monk is a divine being. He is dressed only in a robe which shows his robust figure and prominent belly. He is in a comfortable, relaxed posture with a happy expression on his face. He is sitting on the floor which places him in the viewer's position, and therefore, on the viewer's same social level. This Buddha is not considered to be more important than the viewer, but more of

an equal. The medium used to create the Bundai Monk is not a material that seems expensive, but something the common person could afford. The material almost seems rusted and dirty. He is exposed, which shows humility; a quality designated to humanity rather than divinity.

In conclusion, the Greek and South Asian traditions follow linear expressions of divinity and humanity. Divinity can be depicted with ornate decorations, exaggerated dimensions, and the regalia associated with royalty, as expressed with the Greek's Athena Parthenos and the South Asian's Vairocana Buddha. Divinity can also be depicted in a more humanly manner, with natural poses, plain dress, and more natural dimensions, much like the Greek's Athena Lemnia and the South Asian's Bundai the Monk with the Cloth bag.