

**Introductory Course
History & Appreciation
of Indian Art & Culture.
Lectures and films by Benoy K Behl**



***Bodhisattva Padmapani, Mural, 5th century AD,
Cave 1, Ajanta, Maharashtra, India. Photograph
by Benoy K Behl***

***Bodhisattva means one who he is on the path
towards enlightenment.***

***Padmapani means one who bears a lotus. This
gentle figure is one of the masterpieces of the art
of India.***

Art historian Benoy K Behl takes us on a journey through Indian art and culture and its influences across Asia.

These talks are profusely illustrated by Behl's well-known photographs and films, including the scarcely-seen ancient murals. He shows the continuity of the tradition of painting in India, through ancient and medieval times.

Selected films are shown from his repertoire of scores of documentary films which he has made, with shooting across India and in many countries of Asia. He also takes us on a journey through the development of Buddhism and the spread of the tradition of the Ramayana.

Behl presents the traditions of art making and patronage of art since ancient times. He shows the first deities that were conceived in Indian thought and art, as well as the development of subsequent spiritual traditions and deities. He

explains the meaning of the stupa, the linga and the development of the temple in India.



***Parvati as Shivakami, 7th cent.
Rarely seen painting, Pannamalai,
Tamil Nadu.***

***Benoy K Behl is credited with having established
the continuous tradition of painting in India in
ancient and medieval times.***

He shows Indian art in the light of the ancient Indian treatise on art making and Indian philosophic traditions upon which the art is based. He presents the Indian philosophy of aesthetics, which underlies the making of art and deities, since ancient times.

Early Indian art embodies deep philosophic concepts. What survives today of the ancient art of India is only a small fraction of what would have been created. Yet it consists of such vast number of monuments and sculpture that it staggers the mind.

The art and culture of India is its greatest treasure. This is an important part of the heritage of the world and very enriching for all who are aware of it.

This art embodies a deeply ethical vision of life. It is these values which provide a stable base to life and make it possible

for us to have a joyous existence. People deserve to be exposed to these traditions, so as to experience life in its fullest and most meaningful dimensions.

Benoy K Behl is a film-maker, art-historian and photographer who is known for his tireless and prolific output of work over the past 44 years. He has taken over 53,000 photographs of Asian monuments and art heritage and made 145 documentaries which are regularly screened at major cultural institutions worldwide. His photographic

exhibitions have been warmly received in 74 countries around the world. These have been inaugurated by ministers of the governments of various countries, ambassadors, archbishops and others dignitaries. He holds the Limca Book Record for being the most travelled photographer and art historian.

His films, including 26 documentaries on 'The Paintings of India', 26 documentaries on 'The Sculpture of India' and 26 documentaries on 'Spectacular India' have been nationally telecast on prime time in India, as well as repeat telecasts. These have also been screened at scores of universities and museums in several countries around the world.

India Habitat Centre, New Delhi screens one film of Behl every month; the National TV channel DD Bharti has been showing a film of his every day since 2001; India International Centre, New Delhi held two Festivals of Behl's films, in 2009 and in 2019.

In January, 2008, National Geographic magazine carried an 18-page story about ancient Indian art revealed through Behl's photography to the world. He is the first Indian about whose work National Geographic magazine have carried a story. BBC World News have also carried 3 major stories about Behl's pioneering work in India and Vietnam.

The vastness of Behl's documentation presents a wide and new perspective in understanding the art of India and Asia. His photography of ancient murals in remote places has clearly established the continuous tradition of painting in India, from ancient times through the medieval period. This is significant, as earlier, the Indian tradition of painting was believed to begin in medieval times.

Behl's recent work on Yoga has made a notable contribution to the knowledge of the subject. On all the International Days of Yoga, from 2015 to 2020, his exhibitions on yoga were held across the world. His films on Yoga were also shown in Indian Embassies and High Commissions around the world and he has been invited to lecture on Yoga in many countries.

Behl's films, including on 'Indian Roots of Tibetan Buddhism' and 'Indian Deities Worshipped in Japan' have won several awards at international film festivals.

Behl has been invited to lecture by many of the important universities and museums around the world, who have departments of Asian art. His book on **'The Ajanta Caves'**

is published by Thames & Hudson, London and Harry N. Abrams, New York. His recent books include **'THE ART OF INDIA, Sculpture and Mural Painting'** in two volumes; **'Buddhism: The Path of Compassion'** on the Buddhist heritage of the world, **'Hindu Deities Worshipped in Japan'**; **'Buddhist Heritage of Andhra Pradesh'**; **'Northern Frontiers of Buddhism'** and **'Buddhist Heritage of Sri Lanka'**.