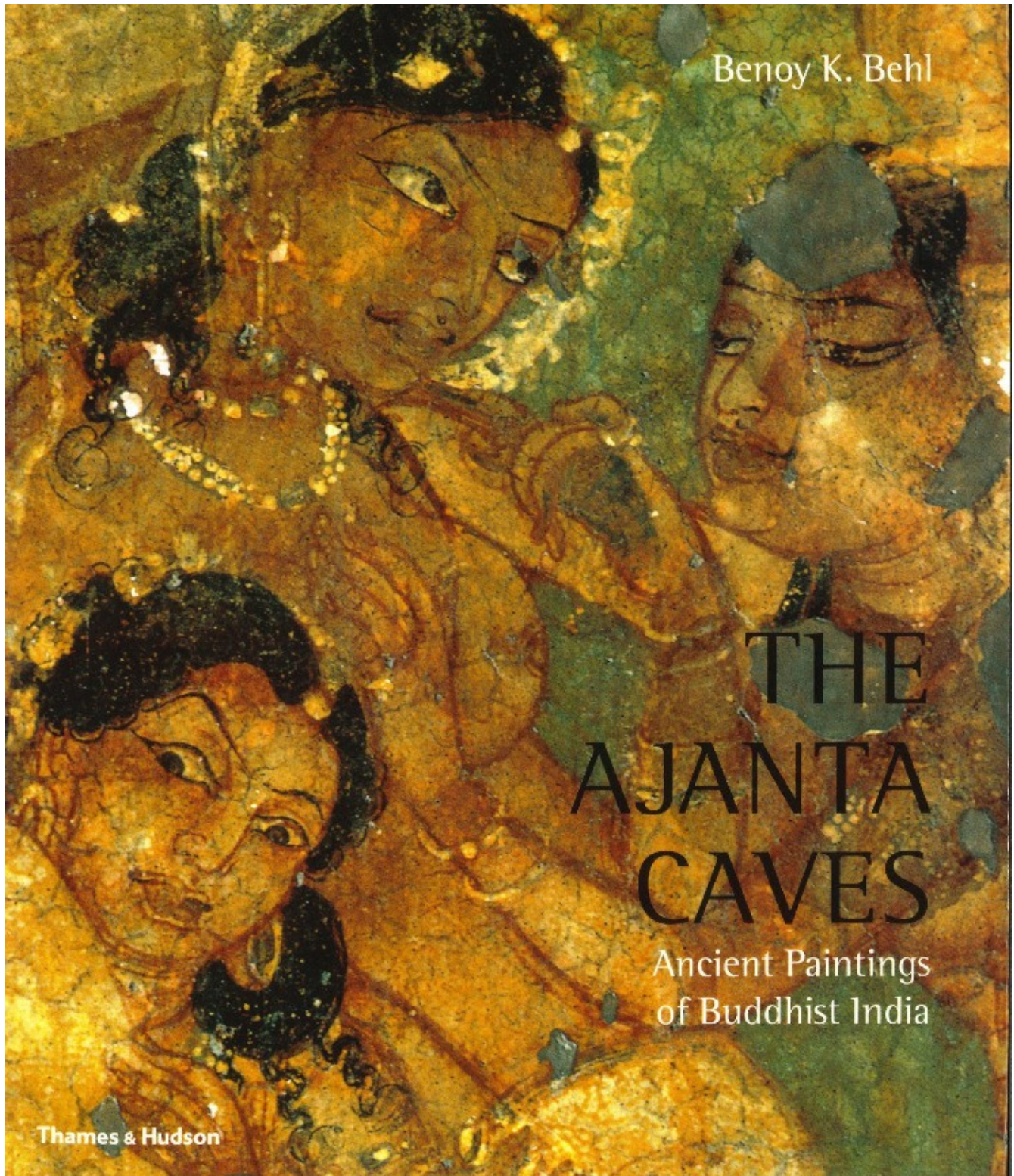


**Thematic India library collection : 'The Ajanta Caves'**

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In 1819, a group of British soldiers on a hunting expedition chanced upon the Ajanta caves, lying in a horseshoe-shaped ravine of the Waghora river some 200 miles north-east of Bombay. Ranging in date from the second century BC to the sixth century AD, the breathtaking Buddhist paintings and sculptures found there now rank among the world's most important cultural treasures. By using long exposures which pick up natural ambient light, Benoy K. Behl has captured these works in all their glory and luminosity.

The exquisite murals depict the Jatakas (tales of previous incarnations) of Lord Buddha, scenes of princely processions, ladies with their handmaidens, bejewelled animals, ascetics in monasteries and fantastical birds and beasts, all demonstrating a startling degree of sophistication.

Ajanta provides virtually the only evidence remaining of painting styles that first developed in India and then travelled with the spread of Buddhism into the Himalayan regions, and then via the Silk Roads across Central Asia into China, and from there to Japan and Korea. Now on UNESCO's list of World Heritage Sites, the Ajanta caves survive as a potent symbol of the great beauty of India's rich artistic past.

*With over 200 illustrations, 189 in colour*