

**PREMODERN INDIA**

**BUDDHISM**

- Buddhism is very old religion.
- A religion and philosophy that developed under the teachings of the teacher known as Buddha.
- It is an ancient Indian religion which have roots from 6<sup>th</sup> century BCE.
- One of the philosophical ideas that achieved worldwide attention.
- Continuation of Sramana tradition.
- Nastika ideology.

**Origin**

- Started in India over 2600 years ago.
- It is an important religion of south and south east countries.
- The religion is based on teachings Siddhartha Gauthama.

**Siddhartha Gauthama**

Founder of Buddhism - <b>Siddhartha Gauthama</b>
Born - 563 BCE - royal kshatriya family of <b>Shakya clan</b> - <b>Kapilavasthu</b> - <b>Lumbini</b> which is situated in <b>Indo-Nepal</b> border. (Scholars have different opinion on birth date of buddha, some claim he was born 100 years later – 463 BC – based on the textual evidence of that period).
<b>Shakyamuni</b> (the sage of Sakya clan)
His mother was <b>Mahamaya</b> – story about the dream of mother: white elephant.
Married to princess <b>Yashodhara</b> at the age of 16
<b>29</b> Gauthama <b>left his home</b>
There were four sights on Gautama’s way that made him changed.
<b>Old man</b>   <b>Disease</b>   <b>Dead body</b>   <b>ascetic</b>
Practiced life of <b>extreme self-discipline.</b>
After 49 days of meditation, Gauthama attained <b>Bodhi</b> or enlightenment and became Buddha under a <b>peepal tree at Bodhgaya</b> , a village in <u>Bihar</u> .
Gave his <b>first sermon at Sarnath</b> (a village near <u>Banaras</u> ) - Event of first sermon is known as <b>Dharma chakra pravartana</b> (turning of the wheel of law).
Buddha called himself <b>Thatagatha</b> (which means both 'the one who thus come')

and 'the one who thus gone').  
 Died at the **age of 80 in 483 BCE at a place called Kushinagara**, a town in Uttar Pradesh - event of his death is known as **Mahaparinibban**.

- Buddha – someone who achieved spiritual liberation or moksha.
- Later Buddhist believe that – there were many more buddhas born or Buddha incarnations in this world.
- Some opines that – Siddhartha Gauthama was 25<sup>th</sup> buddha.

**Tenets of Buddhism**

- Buddha asked his followers to avoid two extremes of indulgence in worldly pleasure and practice of intense ascetism.
- He ascribed Madhyama Marga (middle path) to be followed.
- According to him everyone was responsible for their own happiness in life.
- Buddhism believes in reincarnation of life and law of karma. A soul undergoes thousands of lifes, this cycle is called Samsara (when a person completes his life cycle, he attains liberation or Buddha).

**Four noble truths of Buddhism**

Dukha Samudya Nirodha Attanga magga	(suffering) - is the essence of the world. every suffering has a cause; desire is the cause. suffering can be extinguished. nirodha can be achieved by eight-fold path.
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**Attanga Magga - eight-fold path**

- Buddhism preached in pali language – magga and its Sanskrit term is – marga.
- The path consists of various inter connected activities related to knowledge, conduct and meditative practices.
- Eight-fold path to achieve salvation.

1. Right view
2. Right intention
3. Right speech
4. Right action
5. Right livelihood
6. Right mindfulness
7. Right effort
8. Right concentration

- Dukha and its extinction - are central to the Buddhist doctrine - Suffering is not limited to the actual pain but also to the potential to experience these things.

## E ▶ ENTRI

- The essence of Buddhism is the attainment of enlightenment.
- It points to a way of life that avoids self-indulgence and self-denial.
- There is no supreme god or deity in Buddhism.
- The ultimate goal of Buddhist teaching was the attainment of nibbana (pali, nirvana in Sanskrit) which was not a place but an experience and could be attained in this life.
- Buddha also established code of conduct both for the monastic order and the laymen to follow which are also known as the five precepts or Pancasil and refrain from them.

### Five precepts or Pancasil:

- Violence
- Stealing
- Sexual misconduct
- Lying or gossip
- Taking intoxicating substances e.g., drugs or drink

## Major Buddhist Texts

- The Buddhas teaching was oral. He taught for 45 years, adapting the teaching to suit the group he was addressing.
- The Sanga memorized the teachings and there were group recitations at festivals and special occasions.
- The teaching was rehearsed and authenticated at the first council and were divided in Three pitikas in 483 BC.
- His teachings were written down around 25 B.C.E.in pali.
- Teachings were written down after the death of Gauthama.
- Written in pali language.

## Three pitikas

- Buddhas teaching were compiled and that is known as tripitaka.

Vinaya pitika	consists of rules of conduct as discipline applicable to the monastic life of the monks and nuns.
Suktha pitika	consists of the main teaching or Dhamma of Buddha. It is divided into five nikayas or collections <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>◦ Digha nikaya</li><li>◦ Majjhima Nikaya</li><li>◦ Smayutta Nikaya</li><li>◦ Anguttara Nikaya</li><li>◦ Khuddaka Nikaya</li></ul>
Abidhamma pitika	philosophical analysis and systematization of the teaching and the scholarly activity of the monks.

- Other important Buddhist texts include - **Divyavadhana, Dipavamsa, Mahavamsa, Milind Panha.**

## **Buddhist councils**

- Buddhist councils marked important turning points in the early Buddhism.
- These councils resulted in sectarian clashes and the eventual great schism that resulted in the two major schools - Theravada and Mahayana.
- In total, **four major Buddhist councils** were convened.

### **First Buddhist council**

- It held soon after the Mahaparinirvan of the Buddha, around 483 BC.
- Under the patronage of king Ajathashatru.
- Presided by Mahakashyapa, a monk.
- The council was held in the Sattapani cave at Rajgriha
- The council was held with the purpose of preserving Buddha teaching (sutta) and rules for disciples.
- During this council, the teaching of buddha were divided into three Pitaka.
- Anand (cousin of Buddha) elaborated sutta and Upali (student) formulated the Vinaya

### **Second council**

- 383 BCE under the patronage of Kalashoka.
- Presided over by Sabhakammi.
- Held at Vaishali (bihar)
- Informal division into two
  - Sthavirvadin-orthodox
  - Mahasamkhika-liberal

### **Third council**

- It was held in 250 BC in Pataliputra under the patronage of Ashoka and was presided by Moggaliputta.
- Ashoka recognized sthavirvadin as true Buddhism and they now known as Theravada.
- Final compilation of Abhidamma pitaka and three Pitaka.
- Ashoka sent son Mahendra and daughter Sanga Mithra to Ceylone for the propagation of Buddhism

### **Fourth council**

- It was held in 72 AD at kundalvana, Kashmir.
- It was presided by Vasumithra while Asvaghosha was his deputy under the

- patronage of king Kanishka of Kushan empire.
- Buddhism was divided into two sects namely Mahayana and Hinayana.

## Sects of / Schools of Buddhism

Mahayana school  
Hinayana school  
Theravada  
Vajrayana School  
Zen Buddhism

### Mahayana school

- It is one of the two main schools of Buddhism.
- The term Mahayana is a Sanskrit word which literally means "great vehicle".
- It believes in the heaven less of Buddha and idol worship of Buddha and Bodhisattvas embodying Buddha nature.
- It originated in northern India and Kashmir and then spread east into central Asia, east Asia and some areas of southeast Asia.
- Buddhist schools embedded in China, Korea, Tibet and Japan belong to the Mahayana tradition.
- As the tradition developed, there emerged new texts that were considered by Mahayana adherents to be **Buddha vachana** ('the word or words of the Buddha').
- This new literature went far beyond the ancient canons and was believed to be the highest revelation, superseding earlier texts.
- Bodhisattva one who vows to become a Buddha and delays entry into nirvana to help others.

### Hinayana school

- Literally lesser vehicle, also known as **abandoned vehicle or defective vehicle**.
- It believes in the original teaching of Buddha or doctrine of elders.
- It does not believe in idol worship and tries to attain individual salvation through self-discipline and meditation.
- Theravada is a Hinayana sect.

### Theravada

- It is the most ancient branch of extant Buddhism today.
- It remains closest to the original teachings of the Buddha.

## **E ▶ ENTRI**

- Theravada Buddhism developed in Sri Lanka and subsequently spread to the rest of south Asia.
- It is the dominant form of religion in Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar, Sri Lanka, and Thailand.
- Also known as **Sthavirvadas.**
- Subdivided into 3
  - Abhayagiriviharavasi – close relation with Mahayana and Vajrayana.
  - Mahaviharavasi – original Theravada Buddhism.
  - Jetavanaviharavasi – associate with mahaviharavasi.

### **Vajrayana School**

- ❖ Vajrayana means "the vehicle of the thunderbolt", also known as tantric Buddhism.
- ❖ This Buddhist school develop in India around 900 CE.
- ❖ It is grounded on esoteric elements and very complex set of rituals compared with the rest of the Buddhist schools.
- ❖ Widespread school of Buddhism.

### **Zen Buddhism**

- It is a school of Mahayana Buddhism that originated in china during the tang dynasty as the Chan school of Chinese Buddhism in and later developed into various schools.
- It spread to Japan in 7<sup>th</sup> century C.E.
- Meditation is the most distinctive feature of this Buddhist tradition.
- UNESCO'S heritage sites related to Archaeological site of Nalanda Mahavira at Nalanda, Bihar.
- Buddhist monuments at Sanchi, Madhya Pradesh.
- Mahabodhi Temple Complex at Bodh Gaya, Bihar.
- Ajanta Caves Aurangabad, Maharashtra.

### **BODHISATTVA**

- Enlightened beings who delay entering paradise to help others.
- **Bodhisattva in Theravada Buddhism:** It refers to - a person who has taken a spontaneous vow to become a buddha - a person is also assured by a living Buddha regarding the fulfilment of the vow - The school focuses on previous lives of Buddha before he attained enlightenment

- **Bodhisattva in Mahayana Buddhism:** it is an object of devotion as Mahayana Buddhism inspires others to walk on the path of bodhisattva because the school believes that every individual possesses an inherent nature like buddha and hence, anyone can become Buddha.
- To make it simple, while Bodhisattva path is an optional path for a heroic few like Sidharth Gautama Buddha in Theravada (or Hinayana sect) it is a normative path in Mahayana.

### Four virtues of a Bodhisattva (The Brahma viharas)

1. **Maltri (Loving-kindness):** It refers to goodwill towards all.
2. **Karuna (compassion):** It denotes identification of the suffering of others as one's own.
3. **Muditaa (emphatic joy):** it is the feeling of bliss as others are happy, even if a person has not contributed to it, it is a form of emphatic joy
4. **Upeksha (Equanimity):** it refers to even-mindedness and serenity, treating everyone impartially.

### Eight prominent Bodhisattvas

<b>Avalokitesvara</b> – Buddhas compassion	Means – <u>one who sees all</u> . Most popular Bodhisattva of all. Represents the ideal of welfare in which he postpones his own transformation into Buddha to help others.
<b>Manjusri</b> Buddhas wisdom	<u>Gentle glory</u> . Represents Prayaga or transcendental wisdom at a very early age.
<b>Samantabhadra</b> Buddhas Aspiration	<u>Universal worthy</u> Associated with practice and meditation. Made ten vows to fulfil his journey of becoming a Buddha.
<b>Ksitigarbha</b> Buddhas merit	Buddhist monk in East Asia. Means – <u>Earth Womb</u> . Reversed as the guardian of children and patron deity of deceased children. Carries a staff.
<b>Maitreya</b> Buddhas Activity	Known as <b>Ajita Boddhisattva</b> . He will arrive when people forget the path of righteousness. Considered as the successor of Gautama Buddha. In Buddhist tradition – he is revered as someone who will achieve complete enlightenment and will teach dharma to people.
<b>Vajrapani</b> Buddhas power	Described as <u>one of the three protective deities</u> around the Buddha. Others Manjusri and Avalokitesvara.
<b>Sarvanivarana</b>	Invoked to remove or <u>eliminate all the obstacles</u> to insure a successful

<p>– <b>Vishkambhin</b> Buddhas Qualities</p>	meditation.
<p><b>Akasagarbha</b> Buddhas Blessings</p>	He is <u>boundless as space</u> . Twin brother of Ksitigarbha. Manifests as a blessing.

