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## Before Buddhism & Jainism — The Background (Vedic → Later Vedic → Mahajanapada Age)

### 1. After Harappan Civilization

- Harappan cities declined around **1500 BCE**.
- Around that time, **Aryans** migrated into India — bringing **Vedic culture**.
- Early Vedic period: focus on **rituals, sacrifices, nature worship (Agni, Indra, Varuna)**.
- Society: **Tribal**, pastoral, simple life.
- Economy: **Cattle = wealth**, agriculture just beginning.
- Politics: small **janapadas** ruled by chiefs (*rajas*).

### 2. Later Vedic Period (1000–600 BCE)

- Agriculture & iron tools improved — people settled more permanently.
- Society became **complex** → caste divisions deepened (Brahmins on top).
- Religion became **ritualistic** — heavy sacrifices, costly yajnas.
- Ordinary people were **discontented** — spirituality became mechanical.
- Kings became **powerful**, and states merged into larger **Mahajanapadas**.

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### 3. Mahajanapada Age (600–300 BCE)

16 great kingdoms and republics — the “Age of Transformation”.

#### Major Mahajanapadas

- **Magadha** (most powerful — later home to Mauryan Empire)
- **Kosala, Vatsa, Avanti, Kuru, Panchala, Malla, Vajji**, etc.

## Life during Mahajanapadas

- Use of **iron ploughs**, new **agriculture techniques**, trade expanded.
- First **urban centres** reappeared after Harappans — **cities like Rajagriha, Vaishali**.
- **Coins (Punch-marked)** came into use → monetary economy.
- **Social tension** rose — caste rigidity, high taxes, dominance of Brahmins.
- **People began to question rituals and inequality** — seeking *peaceful, personal spirituality*.

→ This is where **Buddhism and Jainism** were born — around **6th century BCE** — as *reform movements*.

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## Rise of Buddhism & Jainism (6th century BCE)

### Common Causes

1. Revolt against **Vedic ritualism and caste system**.
  2. Need for a **simple moral code** accessible to all.
  3. Urbanization → people wanted **ethical living** in new social order.
  4. New **merchant class** (Vaishyas) supported these ideas — they liked the emphasis on **non-violence, truth, and simplicity**.
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## Buddhism

### Founder: Gautama Buddha (563–483 BCE)

- Born in **Lumbini** (Nepal) to **Shakya clan of Kapilavastu**.
- At 29, left home (“Great Renunciation”) to seek end of suffering.
- Attained **Enlightenment at Bodh Gaya** under Bodhi tree.
- Preached first sermon at **Sarnath (Deer Park)** — “Dharmachakra Pravartana”.

- Died at **Kushinagar** — “Mahaparinirvana”.
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## Core Teachings

### Four Noble Truths

1. Life is full of **suffering** (*dukkha*).
2. Cause of suffering is **desire** (*tanha*).
3. Ending desire ends suffering.
4. Follow **Eightfold Path** to end desire.

### Eightfold Path (Middle Way)

 Right view, right thought, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness, right concentration.

### Middle Path

- Avoids both extreme luxury and severe austerity.

**Goal: Nirvana (freedom from cycle of birth and death).**

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## Monastic & Social Life

- **Sangha:** Community of monks & nuns; lived by discipline (*Vinaya*).
  - **Equality** — rejected caste; accepted all (men, women, poor).
  - Promoted **non-violence**, compassion, and truth.
  - Supported by **kings and merchants** (especially Bimbisara & Ashoka later).
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## Buddhist Councils

1. **First (Rajagriha)** – Teachings compiled.

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2. **Second (Vaishali)** – Monastic discipline.
  3. **Third (Pataliputra)** – During Ashoka; spread to Sri Lanka.
  4. **Fourth (Kashmir)** – Under Kanishka; Mahayana Buddhism emerged.
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## Spread

- Spread across **India**, then **Sri Lanka, Myanmar, China, Japan, Tibet**.
  - **Ashoka's patronage** made it a *world religion*.
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## Jainism

### Founder: Vardhamana Mahavira (599–527 BCE)

- 24th **Tirthankara** (spiritual teacher).
  - Born in **Vaishali (Bihar)**; prince of Licchavi clan.
  - At 30, renounced world; attained **Kaivalya (omniscience)** at 42.
  - Preached till his death at **Pavapuri**.
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## Core Teachings

### Three Jewels (Ratnatraya)

1. Right Faith (*Samyak Darshan*)
2. Right Knowledge (*Samyak Gyan*)
3. Right Conduct (*Samyak Charitra*)

### Five Great Vows (Mahavrata)

1. Non-violence (*Ahimsa*)

2. Truth (*Satya*)
3. Non-stealing (*Asteya*)
4. Celibacy (*Brahmacharya*)
5. Non-possession (*Aparigraha*)

**Goal:** Liberation (*Moksha*) through purity of thought and action.

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### Social & Economic Aspects

- Strong emphasis on **Ahimsa**, so followers were often **merchants**, not farmers (to avoid killing insects).
  - **Rejects caste system** and Vedic rituals.
  - Encouraged **simple life, meditation, and self-control**.
  - Society became more **ethical, non-violent, and urbanized**.
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### Jain Councils

1. **First at Pataliputra** – compiled teachings (Agamas).
  2. **Second at Vallabhi (Gujarat)** – finalized Jain canon (6th century CE).
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### Spread

- Spread mainly in **Western India** — Gujarat, Rajasthan, Karnataka, Bihar.
  - Supported by **trading communities**.
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### Comparison Table (For Govt. Exam Quick Revision)

Aspect	Buddhism	Jainism
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Founder	Gautama Buddha	Mahavira
Goal	Nirvana	Moksha
Method	Middle Path (Moderation)	Extreme Austerity
View on God	Silent (Agnostic)	No Creator God
Non-violence	Ethical principle	Absolute principle
Language used	Pali	Prakrit
Spread	India → Asia	Mostly India
Supporters	Kings (Ashoka)	Merchants
Texts	Tripitaka	Agamas

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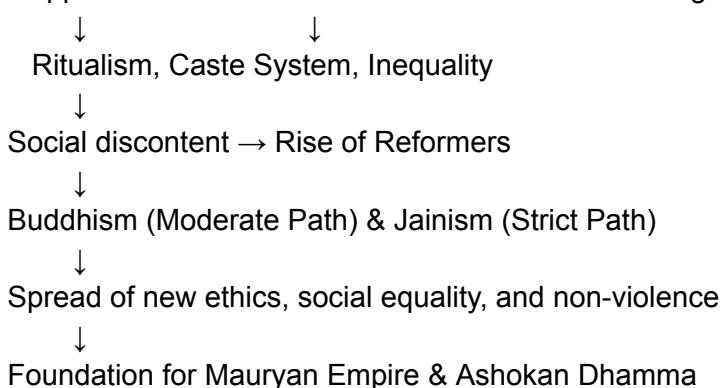
## 💡 Significance & Impact

1. Weakened **Brahminical dominance**.
2. Promoted **moral living, non-violence, equality**.
3. Supported **urban life and trade ethics**.
4. Influenced **art and architecture** — stupas, rock-cut caves, pillars.
5. Laid foundation for **Mauryan unity and Ashokan Dhamma**.

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## 🌐 Visual Summary (Imagine it like a flow chart)

Harappan Civilization → Vedic Period → Later Vedic Age → Mahajanapadas



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Would you like me to make a **PDF summary** of this (with diagrams and comparison tables)\*\* for revision notes\*\* — the kind you can quickly read before exams?