Jainism

Along with Hinduism and Buddhism, Jainism is one of the major religions of ancient India. Followers of Jainism believe that the universe are everlasting and is not the creation of any particular entity. Its main teaching is reverence of life. Everyone is seen to be equal, and because of this reason the Hindu caste system never became firmly established in Jainism.

Jainism was founded by Vardhamana Mahavira in the mid 6th century BC in eastern India. His views were similar to Buddha with reference to human suffering and the continuous cycle of birth and rebirth. He preached **ahimsa** (non-violence) which should be extended not only to humans but also to all creatures in the world. Any activity involving killing would result in bad karma and a lower rebirth in the next life.

He set up strict rules regarding consumption of foods and considered vegetarianism as essential to leading a moral life. Other rules included walking barefoot to avoid injuring insects etc.