

# Art & Culture

# UPSC CSE

(Prelims + Mains)

## Module 3

## Indian Philosophy

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## Hinduism: Religion & Philosophy

The Hindu religious philosophy is derived from the vedic literature which is further divided into Sruti and Smriti Literature.

The **Sruti** Literature is considered sacred and infallible as it is believed to be divine in origin.

The **Smriti** Literature is based on retention of teachings passed from generation to generation.



**Sruti Literature:** It includes all the four Vedas, namely, Rig Veda, Sama Veda, Yajur Veda and Atharva Veda. Each Veda has a core text called “Samhita” and three embedded texts called Brahmanas, Aranyakas and Upanishads.

- **Veda Samhitas**

- Rig Veda: It is the oldest written text in the whole of Indo- European Literature. It has 1028 hymns in 10 chapters (mandalas). The 3<sup>rd</sup> Mandala contains the *Gayatri Mantra*, addressed to Goddess Savitri. The 8<sup>th</sup> Mandala mentions the *Soma Sacrifice*. The 10<sup>th</sup> Mandala mentions the *Purusha-sukta* hymn which defines the Varna System based on 4 varnas; Brahmin, Kshatriya, Vaishya and Shudra.
- Sama Veda: It is the prose form of Rig Veda hymns for recitation by the priestly class.
- Yajur Veda: It is the collection of sacrificial prayers with over 1500 hymns.
- Atharva Veda: It deals with peace and prosperity of the human society.

- **Brahmanas**

These are the manuals for the guidance of the priestly class. They mark the transition from Vedic to grammatical Sanskrit. Each veda has its own Brahmana

- **Aranyakas**

‘Aranya’ means forest and Aranyakas are known as ‘forest books’. They were supposed to be read in solitude in the forests by a married couple during the Vanaprastha phase of their lives. They emphasise on the philosophy of the Austerity.

- **Upanishads**

In literal terms, it means that knowledge which is imparted to the student who is sitting very near to the teacher. They represent the intellectual side of Hinduism as opposed to the ceremonial aspect. They are also known as ‘Vedanta’ which signifies the culmination of Vedic Philosophy. They are a total of 108 Upanishads.

The national motto ‘Satyamev Jayate’ is derived from the Mundaka Upanishad.

The define Ashramas: Brahmacharya, Grihasta, Vanaprashta, Sanyasa.

**Smriti Literature:** It is divided into 5 parts, namely:

- **Upvedas:** These are the sub- Vedas. Each Veda has its own Upveda.
  - Ayurveda: science related to life and medicine.
  - Dhanurveda: Various spiritual and material sciences
  - Gandharva Veda: Science of Music
  - Shilpa Veda: Architecture
- **Vedanga :** These are the limbs of the Vedas, which are supplementary texts to study/ comprehend Vedic Literature.
  - Niryukti(Etymology)
  - Vyakarna(Grammar)
  - Jyotish(Astronomy)
  - Kalpa(Rituals)
  - Chhanda(Vedic Meter)
  - Shiksha(Phonetics)
- **Darshanas :** These texts represent the metaphysical thought of Hinduism.
  - Samkhya: By Rishi Kapil. It denies the difference between God and the soul; Buddhism and Jainism are influenced by it.
  - Nyaya: by Rishi Gautam. It emphasised on the use of logic to attain salvation.
  - Vaisheshika: By Rishi Kannad. It hints at the existence of the smallest unit which makes up the whole universe i.e. Atom.
  - Yoga: By Rishi Patanjali/Hiranyagarba. It focuses on the right kind of spiritual exercises to attain moksha.
  - Purava Mimansa: By rishi Jamini. It emphasises on the right actions to attain salvation.
  - Uttara Mimansa: By Badarayan. It preaches monotheism and culminates the vedantic philosophy.
- **Puranas:** The word Purana means 'that which renews the old'. There are 18 Puranas in total. The Puranas are related to the Hindu trinity of Brahma, Vishnu and Mahesh.
- **Mahakavyas (Epic):** There are two Hindu epics, namely,
  - Mahabharata by Vedvyasa
  - Ramayana by Maharishi Valmiki

## Buddhism: Religion & Philosophy

### Origin

Buddhism was founded by Gautama Buddha (born as Siddharth Gautama).

He was born in 563 BC in a Sakya Kshatriya family in Kapilvastu. His father headed the republican clan of Sakyas and mother was a Kosalan princess.

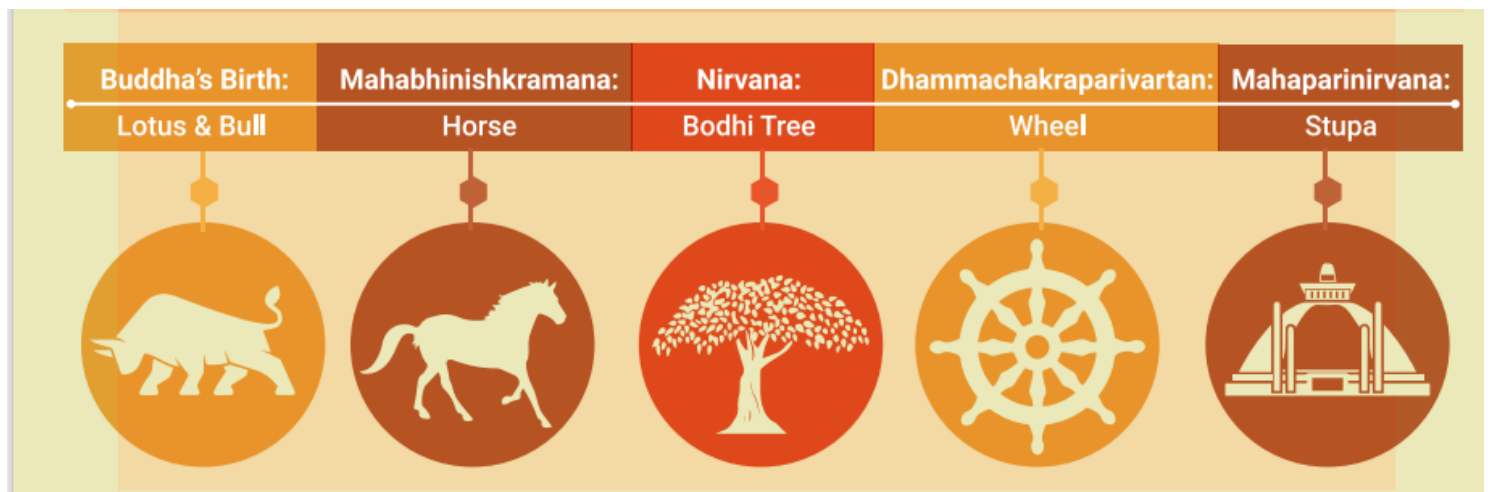


He was married to princess Yashodhara and had a son named Rahul. He left his family (Mahabhinishkramana) at the age of 29 in the quest to solve the misery in the world.

After wandering for several years, he finally achieved enlightenment (nirvana) at Bodhi Gaya under a papal tree. He was given the title of Buddha or Tathagata or Sakyamuni.

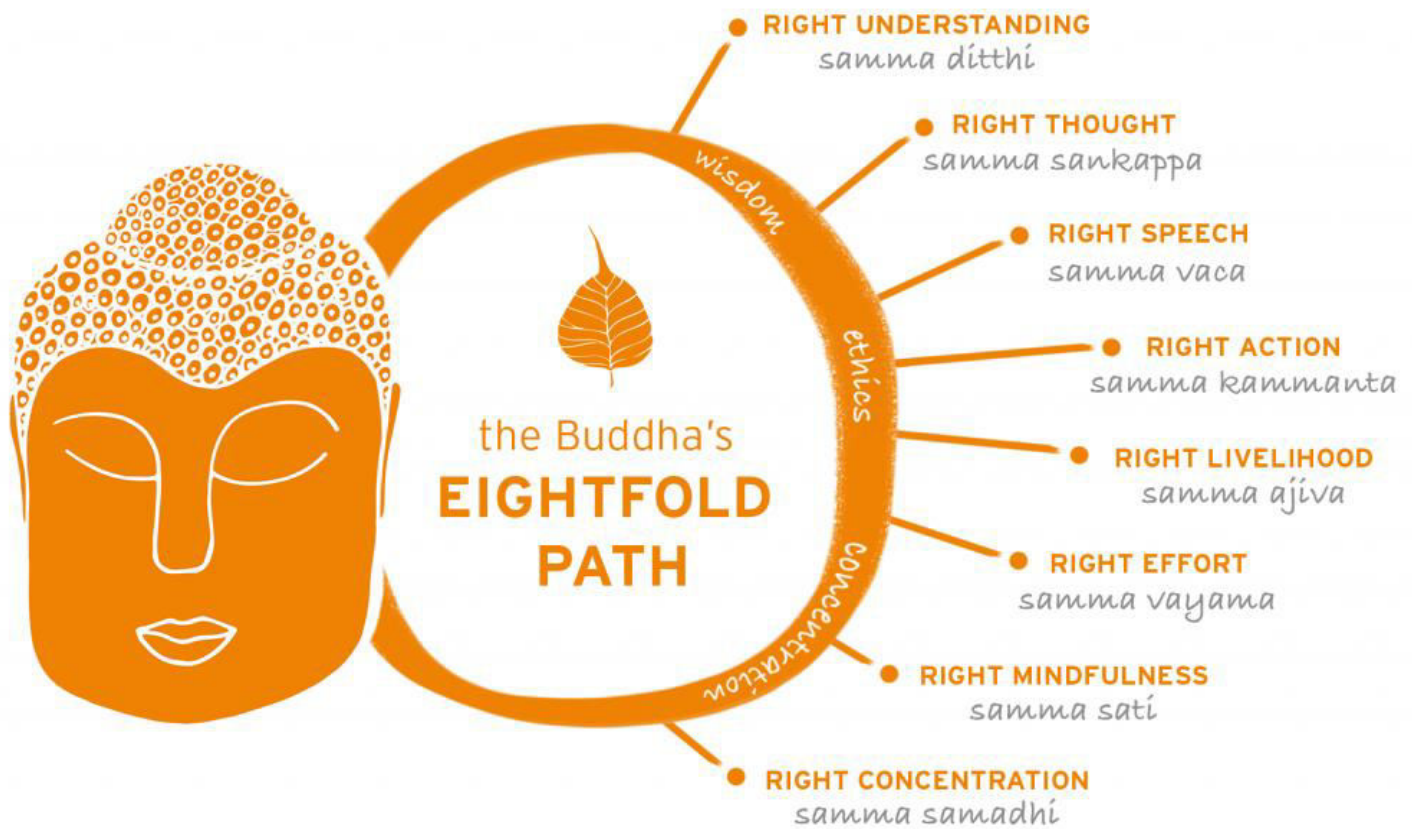
He delivered his first sermon (Dharmachakrapravartan) at Sarnath in Banaras. He passed away (Mahaparinirvana) at the age of 80 in 483 BC at Kusinagar.

### Symbols of 5 great events of Buddha's Life



### Doctrines of Buddhism

The Eightfold Path of Buddhism, also called the Middle Path was recommended by Buddha for the elimination of human misery. It comprises of:



Buddha taught the four noble truths in Dhammachakraparivartan which are the core teachings of Buddhism. They are:

- Sorrow: The world is full of sorrow.
- Cause of Sorrow: The cause of sorrows is desire.
- Prevention of Sorrow: Man can get rid of sorrow by triumphing over the desires.
- The Path of Prevention of Sorrow: Man can avoid sorrow by following the Ashtang Marg/ eight fold path.

Rather than believing in God, Buddhism focuses on moral progress independent of God.

Buddhism accepts the theory of transmigration, but not exactly the theory of transmigration of 'soul'.

Buddha also laid down a code of conduct for his followers. The main one are:

- Do not covet the property of others
- Do not commit Violence
- Do not use intoxicants
- Do not speak a lie
- Do not indulge in corrupt practices.
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## Buddhist Councils

| S. No. | Location    | Royal Patronage | Presidency         | Important Remarks  |
|--------|-------------|-----------------|--------------------|--|
| 1      | Rajgriha    | Ajatshatru      | Mahakasyapa        | Vinaya Pitaka and Sutta Pitaka were recited.   |
| 2      | Vaishali    | Kalasoka        | Sabakami           | First split in Buddhism with the split in Mahasanghikas and Sthaviravadinis over rules of monastic discipline. |
| 3      | Pataliputra | Ashoka          | Moggaliputta Tissa | Abhidhamma Pitaka was codified.  |
| 4      | Kashmir     | Kanishka        | Vasumitra          | Division between Hinayana and Mahayana sects.  |

## Sects in Buddhism

### Hinayana

It is the orthodox, conservative school of Buddhism emphasizing on strict personal discipline. It is known as the 'lesser vehicle' as lesser amount of people can reach enlightenment through it. It does not believe in idol worship. It was patronised by Asoka. Hinayana scholars used Pali as a medium of propagation.

### Mahayana

It is the liberal school of Buddhism which interprets Buddha's teachings logically. It is known as the 'greater vehicle' as it promises spiritual liberation to a large number of people. This sect believes in idol worship. It was patronised by Kanishka. Mahayana scholars used Sanskrit as a medium of propagation.

### Theravada

It developed primarily in Sri Lanka around 3<sup>rd</sup> century BC.

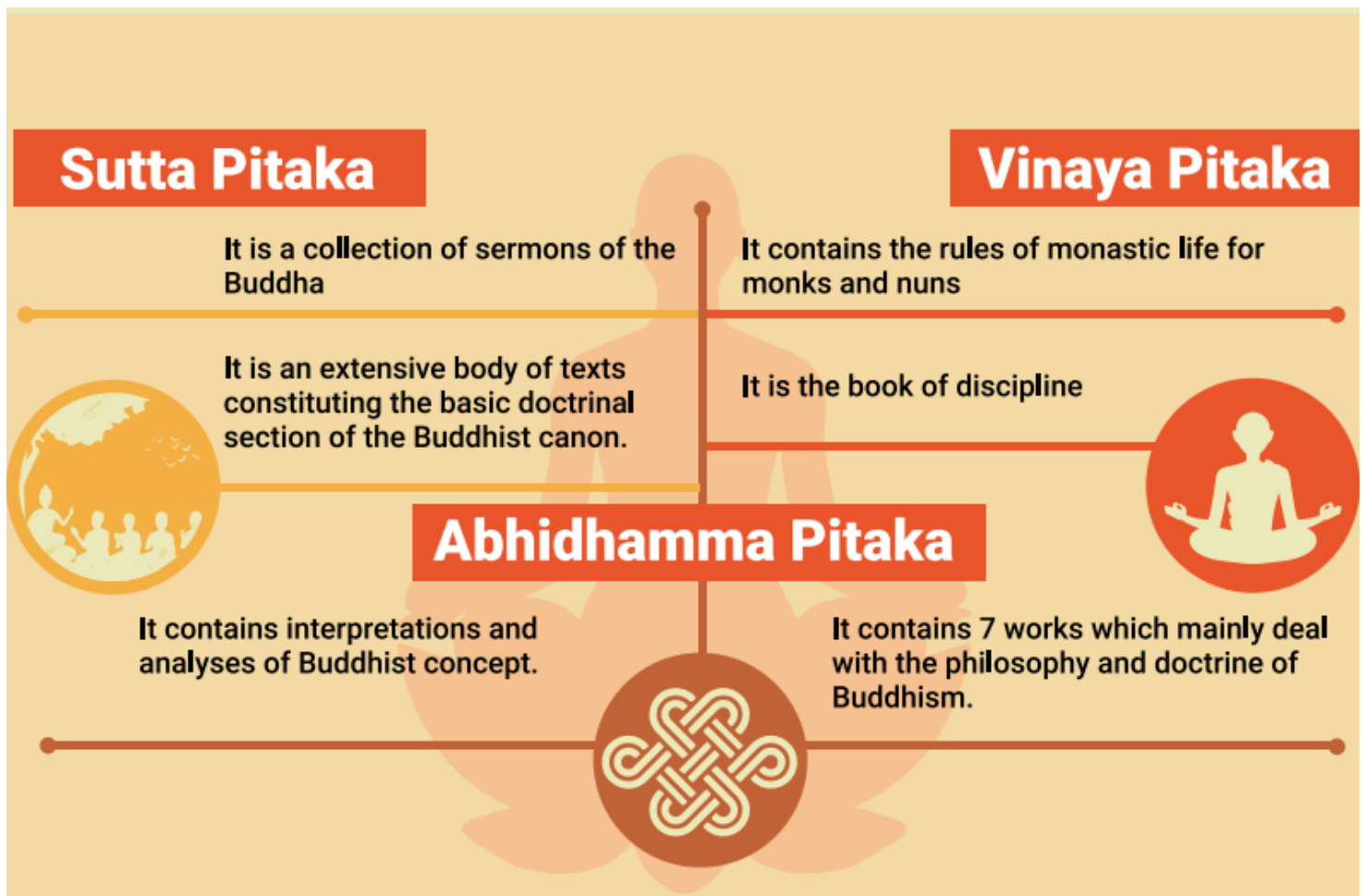
## Vajrayana

It mainly emphasized on Tantras.

## Zen Buddhism

It focuses more on spiritual breakthroughs and lesser on scriptures. It is mostly famous in Japan.

## Buddhist Literary Texts (Tripitikas)





## Jainism: Religion & Philosophy

### Origin

Jainism is said to have originated around the Rig Vedic Age. Jainism was founded by a line of 24 'Great Teachers' known as the Tirthankaras. The first Tirthankara was Rishabhadev, the 23<sup>rd</sup> was Parsvanath and the 24<sup>th</sup> was Vardhamana Mahavira.



### Vardhamana Mahavira

Mahavira was born in 540 BC at Vaishali (in present day North Bihar). His father, Siddhartha was the head of Jnatrika Kshatriya clan and mother, Trishala, was a Licchavi princess.

He abandoned his household life at the age of 30 in the search of the truths and became an ascetic. After 12 years of sacrifices and penance, he finally attained 'Kaivalya' or perfect knowledge at the age of 42.

Through this perfect knowledge, he conquered both misery and happiness, thus giving him the moniker of the Great conqueror or 'Mahavira' or 'Jain'.

He propagated the religion through Kosala, Magadha, Mithila, Champa, etc.

He passed away at the age of 72 at Pavapuri (near present day Rajgir).

### Doctrines of Jainism

Jainism asks followers to take five cardinal vows:

- Do not commit violence: Ahimsa
- Do not speak a lie: Satya
- Do not steal: Asetya
- Do not acquire property: Aparigraha
- Observe continence: Brahmacharya

The first four are believed to be given by Parsvanatha and the fifth is believed to be given by Mahavira.

Jainism believes in God but places him below the 'Jina'.

It believes in the theory of karma and transmigration of soul.

It believes in the Varna System and says that the Varna of a person is due to the Karma in previous births.



Jainism gives three gems (triratnas) for the attainment of liberation:

- Right Belief (Samyak Darshan)
- Right Knowledge (Samyak Gyana)
- Right Conduct (Samyak Charitra)

Jainism believes that even the most inanimate objects have a soul.

### Jain Councils

| S. No | Year   | Location    | President    | Remarks  |
|-------|--------|-------------|--------------|--|
| 1     | 300 BC | Pataliputra | Sthulabhadra | Compilation of Mahavira's teachings into 12 Angas  |
| 2     | 512 AD | Vallabhi    | Devridhigani | Systematic coding of Mahavira's teachings into 11 angas as the 12th was lost by that time. |

### Sects in Jainism

After the first Jain council, the Jain order was divided into two sects:

**Svetambars:** Those who wear a white dress (propagated by Sthulabhadra).

**Digambaras:** Those who keep themselves naked (propagated by Bhadrabahu).

### Spread

Both men and women are admitted in the Jainism order. Its spread was hampered due to its failure to differentiate itself from the Brahmanical religion. Chandragupta Maurya led its spread to South and west India. Kalinga's king Kharavela gave Jainism royal patronage in 1<sup>st</sup> century BC.