

## Jainism and Buddhism

Numerous religious sects arose in the mid-Gangetic plains in sixth–fifth centuries BC, and we hear of as many as sixty-two of them. Many of these sects were based on regional customs and rituals practised by different peoples living in north-east India. Of these sects, Jainism and Buddhism were the most important, and they emerged as the most potent religious reform movements.

### The Causes of Origin

Post-Vedic society was clearly divided into four varnas: brahmanas, kshatriyas, vaishyas, and shudras. Each varna was assigned well-defined functions. Though varna was based on birth, the two higher varnas captured power, prestige and privileges at the cost of the lower varnas. The brahmanas, who were allotted the functions of priests and teachers, claimed the highest status in society. They demanded several privileges, including those of receiving gifts and exemption from taxation and punishment. Post-Vedic texts show many instances of such privileges enjoyed by them. The kshatriyas, who ranked second in the varna hierarchy, fought and governed, and lived on the taxes collected from the peasants. The vaishyas were engaged in agriculture, cattle rearing, and trade. They were also the principal taxpayers. However, along with the two higher varnas, they were placed in the category of *dvija* or the twice-born. A *dvija* was entitled to wear the sacred thread and study the Vedas. The shudras were meant to serve the three higher varnas, and along with women were barred from Vedic studies. They worked as domestic slaves, agricultural slaves, craftsmen, and hired labourers in post-Vedic times. They were described as cruel, greedy, and

thieving in their habits, and some of them were treated as untouchables. The higher the varna, the more privileged a person was; the lower the varna of an offender, the more severe was the punishment prescribed for him.

Naturally, the varna-divided society seems to have generated tensions. We have no means of ascertaining the reactions of the vaishyas and the shudras, but the kshatriyas, who functioned as rulers, reacted strongly against the ritualistic domination of the brahmanas, and seem to have led a kind of protest movement against the importance attached to birth in the varna system. The kshatriya reaction against the domination of the brahmanas, who claimed various privileges, was one of the causes of the origin of new religions. Vardhamana Mahavira, who really founded Jainism, and Gautama Buddha, who founded Buddhism, belonged to the kshatriya clan, and both disputed the authority of the brahmanas.

However, the real cause of the rise of these new religions lay in the spread of a new agricultural economy in north-eastern India. North-east India, including the regions of eastern UP and northern and southern Bihar, has about 100 cm of rainfall. Before these areas were colonized on a large scale, they were densely forested and could not be easily cleared without the aid of iron axes. Although some people lived in these areas prior to the sixth century BC, they used implements of bone, stone, and copper, and led a precarious life on the banks of lakes and rivers and river confluences where land was opened to settlement through the process of erosion and flooding. In the mid-Gangetic plains, large-scale habitations began towards the end of the sixth century BC, when iron began to be used in this area on some scale. Given the moist nature of the soil in this area, not many iron tools of the earliest times have survived, but a fair number of axes have been found from the layers of c. 600–500 BC. The use of iron tools made possible clearance, agriculture, and large settlements. The agricultural economy based on the iron ploughshare required the use of bullocks, and could not flourish without animal husbandry. However, the Vedic practice of killing cattle indiscriminately in sacrifices hampered the progress of the new agriculture. The cattle wealth was gradually decimated because the cows and bullocks were being killed in the course of the numerous Vedic sacrifices, and the non-Vedic tribal people living on the southern and eastern fringes of Magadha also killed cattle for food. However, if the new agrarian economy was to stabilize, this killing had to be halted.

Around 500 BC, we see the rise of a large number of cities in northeastern India. We may refer, for example, to Kaushambi near Allahabad, Kusinagar (in Deoria district of UP), Varanasi, Vaishali (in the newly created district of the

same name in north Bihar), Chirand (in Saran district), Taradih in Bodh-Gaya, Pataliputra, Rajgir (situated at a distance of about 100 km south-east of Patna), and Champa in Bhagalpur district. Both Vardhamana Mahavira and Gautama Buddha were associated with several of these cities. In them, many artisans and traders worked who used coins for the first time. The earliest coins relate to the fifth century BC, and they were generally of the punch-marked variety. They circulated for the first time in eastern UP and Bihar. The use of coins naturally facilitated trade and commerce, which added to the importance of the vaishyas. In the brahmanical society, the vaishyas, as we have noted, ranked third, after the brahmanas and kshatriyas. Naturally they sought a religion that would improve their position. Besides the kshatriyas, the vaishyas extended generous support to both Mahavira and Gautama Buddha. The merchants, called the *setthis*, made handsome gifts to Gautama Buddha and his disciples. There were several reasons for it. First, Jainism and Buddhism at the initial stage did not attach any importance to the existing varna system. Second, they preached the gospel of non-violence, which would put an end to wars between different kingdoms and consequently promote trade and commerce. Third, the brahmanical law-books, called the Dharmasutras, decried lending money at an interest, and condemned those who lived on interest. Therefore, the vaishyas, who lent money because of the growing trade and commerce, were held in low esteem and looked for better social status.

On the other hand, we also notice a strong reaction against various forms of private property. Old-fashioned people did not like the use and accumulation of coins made certainly of silver and copper and possibly of gold. They disliked the new dwellings and clothes, new luxurious systems of transport, and disliked war and violence. The new forms of property created social inequalities, and caused misery and suffering to the mass of ordinary people. Therefore, the common people yearned to return to a primitive lifestyle, to the ascetic ideal which dispensed with the new forms of property and the new style of life. Both Jainism and Buddhism propounded simple, puritan, ascetic living. The Buddhist and Jaina monks were asked to forego the good things of life; were not permitted to touch gold and silver. They were allowed to accept only as much from their patrons as was sufficient to keep body and soul together. They, therefore, rebelled against the material advantages stemming from the new lifestyle of the Gangetic basin. In other words, we find the same kind of reaction against changes in material life in the mid-Gangetic plain in the sixth and fifth centuries BC as occurred against the changes brought about by the Industrial Revolution of modern times. As with the coming of the Industrial Revolution, many people

yearned for a return to a pre-machine age lifestyle, so in ancient times, people yearned for a return to the pre-Iron Age style of life.

## Vardhamana Mahavira and Jainism

The Jainas believed that their most important religious teacher Mahavira had twenty-three predecessors who were called *tirthankaras*. If Mahavira is taken as the last or the twenty-fourth *tirthankara*, the origin of Jainism would go back to the ninth century BC. Some Jainas believe that Rishabhadeve was the first *tirthankara* or teacher of Jainism, but he is associated with Ayodhya which was settled on any scale only by 500 BC. Most *tirthankaras*, up to the fifteenth, were supposed to have been born in eastern UP and Bihar, but their historicity is extremely doubtful. No part of the mid-Gangetic plains was settled on any scale until the fifth century BC. Evidently the mythology of the *tirthankaras*, most of whom were born in the mid-Gangetic basin and attained nirvana in Bihar, seems to have been created to endow Jainism with antiquity. The earliest important teachings of Jainism are attributed to Parshvanatha, the twenty-third *tirthankara*, who hailed from Banaras, abandoned royal life, and became an ascetic. However, it was his spiritual successor Vardhamana Mahavira who was the real founder of Jainism.

It is difficult to fix the exact dates of the birth and death of the great reformers Vardhamana Mahavira and Gautama Buddha. According to one tradition, Vardhamana Mahavira was born in 540 BC in a village near Vaishali, which is coterminous with Basarh in Vaishali district of north Bihar. His father Siddhartha was the head of a famous kshatriya clan, and his mother, Trishala, was the sister of the Lichchhavi chief Chetaka, whose daughter was married to Bimbisara. Thus, Mahavira's family was connected with the royal family of Magadh, and such high connections made it easy for him to approach princes and nobles in the course of his mission.

Initially, Mahavira led the life of a householder, but in his quest for truth he abandoned the world at the age of 30 and became an ascetic. He wandered for twelve years from place to place, not staying for over a day in a village and more than five days in a town. During the course of his long journey of twelve years it is said he never changed his clothes, and abandoned them altogether at the age of 42 when he attained omniscience (*kaivalya*). Through *kaivalya* he conquered misery and happiness. Because of this conquest he is known as Mahavira or the great hero or *jina*, that is, the conqueror, and his followers are known as Jainas.

He propagated his religion for thirty years, and his mission took him to Koshala, Magadha, Mithila, Champa, and elsewhere. He passed away at the age of 72 in 468 BC at a place called Pavapuri near modern Rajgir.

According to another tradition he passed away in 527 BC, but, archaeology does not support his existence in the sixth century BC. The towns and other settlements with which he was associated did not come into existence till 500 BC.

## Doctrines of Jainism

Jainism taught five doctrines: (i) do not commit violence, (ii) do not tell a lie, (iii) do not steal, (iv) do not hoard, and (v) observe continence (*brahmacharya*). It is said that only the fifth doctrine was added by Mahavira: the other four were taken over by him from previous teachers. Jainism attached the utmost importance to ahimsa or non-injury to living beings. Sometimes it led to absurd results, for some Jaina kings ordered the execution of persons guilty of killing animals. Although Parshva, Mahavira's predecessor, had asked his followers to cover the upper and lower portions of their bodies, Mahavira asked them to discard their clothing altogether. This implies that Mahavira asked his followers to lead a more austere life. Because of this, in later times, Jainism split into two sects: *shvetambaras* or those who donned white garments and *digambaras* who remained naked.

Jainism recognized the existence of the gods but placed them lower than the *jina*, and did not condemn the varna system as Buddhism did. According to Mahavira, a person is born in a high or in a lower varna as a consequence of his sins committed or virtues acquired by him in his previous birth. Mahavira looks for human values even in a chandala. In his opinion, by leading pure and meritorious life, members of the lower castes can achieve liberation. Jainism principally aims at the attainment of freedom from worldly bonds. No ritual is necessary for such liberation. It can be obtained through right knowledge, right faith, and right action. These three are considered to be the three jewels or *triratna* of Jainism.

Jainism prohibited the practice of war and even agriculture for its followers because both involve the killing of living beings. Eventually the Jainas principally confined themselves to trade and mercantile activities.

## Spread of Jainism

In order to spread the teachings of Jainism, Mahavira organized an order of his followers that admitted both men and women. He preached his teachings in Prakrit, the language of the common people. It is said that his followers numbered 14,000, which is not a large figure. As Jainism did not very clearly differentiate itself from the brahmanical religion, it failed to attract the masses. Despite this, Jainism gradually spread into south and west India where the brahmanical religion was weak. According to a late tradition, the spread of Jainism in Karnataka is attributed to Chandragupta Maurya (322– 298 BC). The emperor became a Jaina, gave up his throne, and spent the last years of his life in Karnataka as a Jaina ascetic, but this tradition is not corroborated by any other source. The second cause of the spread of Jainism in south India is said to have been the great famine that took place in Magadha 200 years after Mahavira's death. The famine lasted for twelve years, and in order to protect themselves, many Jainas migrated to the south under the leadership of Bhadrabahu, though the rest of them stayed back in Magadha under the leadership of Sthalabahu. The emigrant Jainas spread Jainism in south India. At the end of the famine, they returned to Magadha, where they developed differences with the local Jainas. Those who returned from the south claimed that even during the famine they had strictly observed the religious rules. They alleged too that the Jaina ascetics living in Magadha had violated those rules and had become lax. In order to sort out these differences and to compile the principal teachings of Jainism, a council was convened in Pataliputra, modern Patna, but the Jainas who had returned from the south boycotted it and refused to accept its decisions. From now onwards, the southerners began to be called *digambaras* and the Magadhans *shvetambaras*. The tradition that refers to drought as the cause relates to a later period and is considered doubtful. It is, however, beyond doubt that the Jainas were divided into two sects, but epigraphic evidence of the spread of Jainism in Karnataka is not earlier than the third century AD. In subsequent centuries, especially after the fifth century, numerous Jaina monastic establishments, called *basadis* sprang up in Karnataka and were granted land by the king for their support.

Jainism spread to Kalinga in Orissa in the fourth century BC, and in the first century BC it enjoyed the patronage of the Kalinga king Kharavela who had defeated the princes of Andhra and Magadha. In the second and first centuries BC, it also seems to have reached the southern districts of Tamil Nadu. In later centuries Jainism penetrated Malwa, Gujarat, and Rajasthan, and even now these areas have a substantial number of Jainas who are principally engaged in trade and commerce. Although Jainism did not win as much state patronage as did

Buddhism and did not spread very rapidly in early times, it still retains its hold in the areas where it spread. On the other hand, Buddhism virtually disappeared from the Indian subcontinent.

## Contribution of Jainism

Jainism made the first serious attempt to mitigate the evils of the varna order and the ritualistic Vedic religion. The early Jainas discarded the Sanskrit language principally patronized by the brahmanas. They adopted instead Prakrit, the language of the common people to preach their doctrines. Their religious literature was written in Ardhamagadhi, and the texts were eventually compiled in the sixth century AD in Gujarat at a place called Valabhi, a great centre of education. The adoption of Prakrit by the Jainas helped the growth of this language and its literature. Many regional languages developed out of Prakrit, particularly Shauraseni from which the Marathi language developed. The Jainas composed the earliest important works in Apabhramsha and compiled its first grammar. Jaina literature comprises epics, Puranas, novels, and drama. A large percentage of Jaina writing is still in the form of manuscripts that have yet to be published and which are to be found in the Jaina shrines of Gujarat and Rajasthan. In early medieval times, the Jainas also made substantial use of Sanskrit and wrote many texts in it. Last but not the least, they contributed to the growth of Kannada, in which they wrote extensively.

Initially, like the Buddhists, the Jainas were not image worshippers. Later they began to worship Mahavira and also the twenty-three *tirthankaras*. Beautiful and sometimes massive images in stone were sculpted for this purpose, especially in Karnataka, Gujarat, Rajasthan, and MP. Jaina art in ancient times is not as rich as its Buddhist counterpart, but Jainism contributed substantially to art and architecture in medieval times.

## Gautama Buddha and Buddhism

Gautama Buddha, or Siddhartha, was a contemporary of Mahavira. According to tradition he was born in 567 BC in a Shakya kshatriya family in Lumbini in Nepal near Kapilavastu, which is identified with Piprahwa in Basti district and is close to the foothills of Nepal. Gautama's father seems to have been the elected ruler of Kapilavastu, and headed the Shakya republican clan. His mother was a princess from the Koshalan dynasty. Thus, like Mahavira, Gautama too belonged

to a noble family. Born in a republic, he also inherited some egalitarian beliefs.

From early childhood Gautama showed a meditative bent of mind. He was married early, but married life did not interest him. He was moved by the misery suffered by people in the world, and sought a solution. At the age of 29, like Mahavira, he left home. He wandered from place to place for about seven years and then attained enlightenment at the age of 35 at Bodh-Gaya under a *pipal* tree. From this time onwards he began to be called the Buddha or the enlightened one.

Gautama Buddha delivered his first sermon at Sarnath in Banaras. He undertook long journeys and carried his message far and wide. He had a very strong physique, and this enabled him to walk 20 to 30 km a day. He kept wandering, preaching, and meditating continually for forty years, resting only during the annual rainy season. During this long period he encountered many staunch supporters of rival sects, including the brahmanas, but defeated them in debates. His missionary activities did not discriminate between the rich and the poor, the high and the low, and man and woman. Gautama Buddha passed away at the age of 80 in 487 BC at a place called Kusinagara, coterminous with the village called Kasia in Deoria district in eastern UP. However, as in the case of Vardhamana Mahavira, the existence of Gautama Buddha in the sixth century BC is not supported by archaeological evidence. The cities Kaushambi, Shravasti, Varanasi, Vaishali, and Rajgriha, which the Buddha visited, did not assume any urban character until the fifth century BC.

## Doctrines of Buddhism

The Buddha proved to be a practical reformer who took note of the realities of the day. He did not involve himself in fruitless controversies regarding the soul (*atman*) and Brahma which raged in his time, but addressed himself to worldly problems. He said that the world was full of sorrows and that people suffered on account of desires. If desires are conquered, nirvana is attained, that is, man is free from the cycle of birth and death.

Gautama Buddha recommended an eightfold path (*ashtangika marga*) for the elimination of human misery. This path is attributed to him in a text of about the third century BC. It comprised right observation, right determination, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right awareness, and right concern. If a person follows this eightfold path, he would free himself from the machinations of priests, and would reach his destination. Gautama taught that a



person should avoid an excess of both luxury and austerity, and prescribed the middle path.

The Buddha also laid down a code of conduct for his followers on the same lines as those of the Jaina teachers. The principal tenets are: (i) do not commit violence, (ii) do not covet the property of others, (iii) do not use intoxicants, (iv) do not tell a lie, and (v) do not indulge in sexual misconduct and adultery. These teachings are common to the social conduct ordained by virtually all religions.

## Features of Buddhism and the Causes of its Spread

Buddhism does not recognize the existence of god and soul. This can be seen as a kind of revolution in the history of Indian religions. As early Buddhism was not enmeshed in the claptrap of philosophical discussion, it appealed to the common people, and particularly won the support of the lower orders because it attacked the varna system. People were accepted by the Buddhist order without any consideration of caste, and women too were admitted to the sangha and thus brought on a par with men. In comparison with Brahmanism, Buddhism was liberal and democratic.

Buddhism particularly appealed to the people of the non-Vedic areas where it found virgin soil for conversion. The people of Magadha responded readily to Buddhism because they were looked down upon by the orthodox brahmanas. Magadha was placed outside the pale of the holy Aryavarta, the land of the Aryas, covering modern UP. The old tradition persists, and the people of north Bihar prefer not to be cremated south of the Ganges in Magadha.

The personality of the Buddha and the method adopted by him to preach his religion helped the spread of Buddhism. He sought to fight evil by goodness and hatred by love and refused to be provoked by slander and abuse. He maintained his poise and calm under difficult circumstances and tackled his opponents with wit and presence of mind. It is said that on one occasion an ignorant person abused him. The Buddha listened on silently, and when the person had ended his abuse, the Buddha asked: 'My friend, if a person does not accept a present what will happen to it?' His adversary replied: 'It remains with the person who has offered it.' The Buddha then said: 'My friend, I do not accept your abuse.'

The use of Pali, a form of Prakrit, which began around 500 BC, contributed to the spread of Buddhism. It facilitated the spread of Buddhist doctrines amongst the common people. Gautama Buddha also organized the sangha or the religious

order, whose doors were open to all irrespective of caste, creed, and sex. However, slaves, soldiers, and debtors could not be admitted. The monks were required to observe the rules and regulations of the sangha faithfully. Once they were enrolled as members of the Buddhist church, they had to take the vow of continence, poverty, and faith. There are thus three principal elements in Buddhism: Buddha, dhamma, and sangha. As a result of organized preaching under the auspices of the sangha, Buddhism made rapid strides even during Buddha's lifetime. The monarchies of Magadha, Koshala, and Kaushambi, and several republican states and their people adopted this religion.

Two hundred years after the death of the Buddha, Ashoka, the famous Maurya king, embraced Buddhism. This was an epoch-making event. Through his missionaries Ashoka spread Buddhism into Central Asia, West Asia, and Sri Lanka, and thus transformed it into a world religion. Even today Sri Lanka, Burma (Myanmar), Tibet, and parts of China and Japan profess Buddhism. Although Buddhism disappeared from the land of its birth, it continues to hold ground in the countries of South Asia, South east Asia, and East Asia.

## Causes of the Decline of Buddhism

By the twelfth century Buddhism became virtually extinct in India. It had continued to exist in an altered form in Bengal and Bihar till the eleventh century, but after that Buddhism almost completely vanished from India. What caused this? We find that at the outset every religion is inspired by the spirit of reform, but eventually it succumbs to the rituals and ceremonies it originally denounces. Buddhism underwent a similar metamorphosis. It became a victim to the evils of Brahmanism against which it had initially fought. To meet the Buddhist challenge, the brahmanas reformed their religion. They stressed the need to preserve the cattle wealth and assured women and shudras of admission to heaven. Buddhism, on the other hand, changed for the worse. Gradually the Buddhist monks were cut off from the mainstream of people's lives; they gave up Pali, the language of the people, and took to Sanskrit, the language of intellectuals. From the first century onwards, they practised idol worship on a large scale and received numerous offerings from devotees. The rich offerings supplemented by generous royal grants to the Buddhist monasteries made the life of monks easy. Some of the monasteries, such as Nalanda, collected revenue from as many as 200 villages. By the seventh century, the Buddhist monasteries had come to be dominated by ease-loving people and became centres of corrupt practices which had been prohibited by Gautama Buddha. The new form of

Buddhism was known as Vajrayana. The enormous wealth of the monasteries with increasing sexual activity led to further degeneration. Buddhists began looking upon women as objects of lust. The Buddha is reported to have said to his favourite disciple Ananda: 'If women were not admitted into the monasteries Buddhism would have continued for one thousand years, but because this admission has been granted it will last only five hundred years.'

The brahmana ruler Pashyamitra Shunga is said to have persecuted the Buddhists. Several instances of persecution occur in the sixth–seventh centuries. The Huna king Mihirakula, who was a worshipper of Shiva, killed hundreds of Buddhists. The Shaivite Shashanka of Gauda felled the Bodhi tree at Bodh-Gaya where the Buddha had attained enlightenment. Hsuan Tsang states that 1600 stupas and monasteries were destroyed, and thousands of monks and lay followers killed; this may not be without some truth. The Buddhist reaction can be seen in some pantheons in which Buddhist deities trample brahmanical deities. In south India both the Shaivites and Vaishnavites bitterly opposed the Jainas and Buddhists in early medieval times. Such conflicts may have weakened Buddhism.

For their riches the monasteries came to be coveted by the Turkish invaders, becoming special targets of the invaders' greed. The Turks killed a large number of Buddhist monks in Bihar, although some of the monks managed to escape to Nepal and Tibet. In any event, by the twelfth century, Buddhism had virtually disappeared from the land of its birth.

## Significance and Influence of Buddhism

Despite its disappearance as an organized religion, Buddhism left its impact on Indian society and economy. The Buddhists showed a keen awareness of the problems that faced the people of north-east India from about 500 BC. The iron ploughshare-based agriculture, trade, and the use of coins enabled the traders and nobles to accumulate wealth, and we hear of people possessing eighty *kotis* of wealth. All this naturally created sharp social and economic inequalities. Buddhism therefore advised people not to accumulate wealth. According to it, poverty breeds hatred, cruelty, and violence. To eradicate these evils, the Buddha taught that farmers should be provided with grain and other facilities, traders with wealth, and the unemployed with employment. These measures were recommended to eradicate poverty in the world. Buddhism also taught that if the poor gave alms to the monks, they would be born wealthy in the next world.

The code of conduct prescribed for the monks represents a reaction against the material conditions of north-east India in the fifth–fourth centuries BC. It imposes restrictions on the food, clothing, and sexual behaviour of the monks. They could not accept gold and silver, could not resort to sale and purchase. These rules were relaxed after the death of the Buddha, but the early rules suggest a return to a kind of primitive communism, a characteristic of the tribal society in which people did not practise trade and advanced agriculture. The code of conduct prescribed for monks partially reflects a revolt against the use of money, private property and luxurious living, that was prevalent in the fifth century BC in north-east India at a time when property and money were considered luxuries.

Although Buddhism tried to mitigate the evils resulting from the new material life in the fifth century BC, it also sought to consolidate the changes in the social and economic life of the people. The rule that debtors were not permitted to be members of the sangha helped the moneylenders and richer sections of society from whose clutches the debtors could not be saved. Similarly, the rule that slaves could not join the sangha helped slave owners. Thus, the rules and teachings of Gautama Buddha took full account of the new changes in the material life of the time and strengthened them ideologically.

Although the Buddhist monks had renounced the world and repeatedly criticized the greedy brahmanas, in several ways they resembled the brahmanas. Both of them did not participate directly in production, and lived on the alms or gifts given by society. They emphasized the virtues of carrying out family obligations, protecting private property, and respecting political authority. Both supported the social order based on classes; for the monks, however, the varna was based on action and attributes but for the brahmanas it was based on birth.

Undoubtedly the objective of Buddhist teaching was to secure the salvation of the individual or nirvana. Those who found it difficult to adjust themselves to the break-up of the old egalitarian society and the rise of gross social inequalities on account of private property were provided with some way of escape, but it was confined to the monks. No escape was provided for the lay followers, who were taught to come to terms with the existing situation.

Buddhism made an important impact on society by keeping its doors open to women and shudras. As both women and shudras were placed in the same category by Brahmanism, they were neither given the sacred thread nor allowed to read the Vedas. Their conversion to Buddhism freed them from such marks of inferiority. Buddhism did not deprecate manual labour. In a second-century sculpture from Bodh-Gaya, the Buddha is depicted ploughing with oxen.

With its emphasis on non-violence and the sanctity of animal life, Buddhism boosted the cattle wealth of the country. The earliest Buddhist text, *Suttanipata*, declares cattle to be givers of food, beauty, strength, and happiness (*annada*, *vannada*, *balada*, *sukhada*), and thus pleads for their protection. This teaching came, significantly, at a time when the non-Aryans slaughtered animals for food, and the Aryans in the name of religion. The brahmanical insistence on the sacredness of the cow and non-violence was apparently derived from Buddhist teachings.

Buddhism created and developed a new awareness in the field of intellect and culture. It taught the people not to take things for granted but to argue and judge them on merits. To a certain degree, the place of superstition was taken by logic, promoting rationalism among people. In order to preach the doctrines of the new religion, the Buddhists compiled a new type of literature, enormously enriching Pali by their writings. Early Pali literature can be divided into three categories. The first contains the sayings and teachings of the Buddha, the second deals with the rules to be observed by members of the sangha, and the third presents a philosophical exposition of the dhamma.

In the first three centuries of the Christian era, by blending Pali and Sanskrit, the Buddhists created a new language which is called Hybrid Sanskrit. The literary activities of the Buddhist monks continued even in the Middle Ages, and some famous Apabhramsa writings in east India were composed by them. The Buddhist monasteries developed as great centres of learning, and can be called residential universities. Mention may be made of Nalanda and Vikramashila in Bihar, and Valabhi in Gujarat.

Buddhism left its mark on the art of ancient India. The first human statues worshipped in India were probably those of the Buddha. Faithful devotees of the religion portrayed the various events in the life of the Buddha in stone. The panels at Bodh-Gaya in Bihar and at Sanchi and Bharhut in MP are illuminating examples of artistic activity. From the first century onwards, panel images of Gautama Buddha began to be made. The Greek and Indian sculptors worked together to create a new form of art on the north-west frontier of India known as Gandhara art. The images made in this region betray Indian as well as foreign influence. For the residence of the monks, rooms were hewn out of the rocks, and thus began the cave architecture in the Barabar hills in Gaya and also in western India around Nasik. Buddhist art flourished in the Krishna delta in the south and in Mathura in the north.

## Chronology

(BC)

Pre-600	People in north-eastern India lived alongside lakes and river banks and used stone, bone, and copper tools.
End of the 6 C	Rise in habitations in the mid-Gangetic plains.
600–500	A few iron axes in the mid-Gangetic plains.
6–5 C	Reaction against changes in material life. Numerous religious sects arose in the mid-Gangetic plains.
567	Traditional birth date of Gautama Buddha.
540	Mahavira's birth according to one tradition.
527	Traditional death of Mahavira.
500	Kaushambi, Shravasti, Varanasi, Vaishali, and Rajgriha.
487	The Buddha's death at the age of 80 years according to one tradition.
468	According to one tradition, Mahavira's death at the age of 72 years.
4 C	Jainism spread to Kalinga in Orissa.
322–298	According to a late tradition, spread of Buddhism in Karnataka attributed to Chandragupta Maurya.
3 C	Buddha's eightfold path mentioned in a text. Spread of Jainism in south India because of a famine in Magadh.
2–1 C	Jainism reached the southern districts of Tamil Nadu.
1 C	Jainism enjoyed the patronage of the Kalinga king Kharavela.

(AD)

1 C onwards	Buddhists practised idol worship; panel images of Buddha began to be made.
3 C	Jainism in Karnataka according to epigraphic evidence.
6 C	The Jaina texts, written in Ardhamagadhi, finally compiled at Valabhi in Gujarat.
7 C	Buddhist monasteries, dominated by ease-loving people, became centres of practices prohibited by Gautama Buddha.

12 C

Continuing brahmanical attacks (both Shaivite and Vaishnavite), and Turkish greed for monastic wealth in Bihar Sharif destroyed Buddhism. Monks fled to Nepal and Tibet.