



UPSC



Prelims

Union Public Service Commission

Volume – 1

Ancient and Medieval History



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Ancient & Medieval History PYQs Analysis

Topics	2025	2024	2023	2022	2021	2020	2019	2018	2017	2016	Total (Questions from a chapter)
Early History	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	2
Indus Valley Civilization	1	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	3
Vedic age	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1
Buddhism And Jainism	0	0	1	0	0	3	1	2	1	1	9
Magadh Empire	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Mauryan Empire	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	1	3
The Gupta Empire	1	0	0	1	0	3	1	0	0	0	6
Harshavardhana	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
Kingdom of South	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	2
Sangam Age	0	0	2	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	3
Early Medieval Period	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	3
Delhi Sultanate	0	0	0	2	1	0	1	0	0	0	4
Vijayanagara and Bahmani Kingdom	0	1	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	4
Mughal empire	0	0	1	1	0	0	3	0	0	0	5
Bhakti and Sufi movement	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	2
Through the eyes of travellers	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1
Important Terminologies	2	1	0	1	1	1	0	0	0	2	8
Miscellaneous	0	0	1	1	1	2	0	0	0	1	6
Total (Questions in a year)	7	3	6	10	7	10	8	3	3	7	64

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CHAPTER

Early History



History is divided into three categories:

- **Prehistory:** Covers events before writing was invented. The three Stone and 2 metal stages represent this period.
- **Proto-history:** Refers to the period between prehistory and history when writing existed, but scripts were undeciphered. The Harappan script is a key example.
- **History:** Study of the past after writing was invented, based on written and archaeological records.

Prehistoric Period

The Indian Stone Age is divided into three main categories:

1. **Old Stone Age (Palaeolithic):** 500,000–10,000 BCE
2. **Late Stone Age (Mesolithic):** 10,000–6,000 BCE
3. **New Stone Age (Neolithic):** 6,000–1,000 BCE

1. Palaeolithic Age (3.3 Million Years – 10,000 BC)

- The Palaeolithic period marks the first use of stone tools, from early human ancestors to the end of the Ice Age. Homo erectus migrated from Africa to India.
- **Tools Used:** Hand axes, cleavers, choppers, and scrapers made from quartzite.
- **Major Sites & Key Features:**
 - ✓ **Narmada Valley:** Narmada Man fossil, the oldest hominin fossil found in India.
 - ✓ **Soan Valley (now Pakistan):** One of the earliest known Paleolithic sites in India.
 - ✓ **Belan Valley (Mirzapur, Uttar Pradesh):** Rich Paleolithic and Mesolithic evidence, early microlithic tools, and habitation.
 - ✓ **Pallavaram (Tamil Nadu):** Early tools identified by Robert Bruce Foote in 1863.
 - ✓ **Athirampakkam, Pallavaram, Gudiyam (Chennai):** Evidence of Lower Paleolithic culture, stone tools like hand axes and cleavers.
 - ✓ **Hunsgi Valley, Isampur (Karnataka):** Presence of Acheulian tools, extensive evidence of toolmaking.
 - ✓ **Bhimbetka (Madhya Pradesh):** UNESCO site with rock shelters containing evidence from all three Stone Ages.
 - ✓ **Hoshangabad (Madhya Pradesh):** Narmada Man fossil site.

Phases of Palaeolithic Age:

- **Lower Palaeolithic (2,000,000–60,000 BP):** Homo erectus lived in India.
- **Middle Palaeolithic (385,000–40,000 BP):** Use of scrapers, choppers, and projectiles.
- **Upper Palaeolithic (40,000–10,000 BP):** Modern humans evolved, introducing microliths and rock art.

2. Mesolithic Age (10,000–6,000 BCE)

- **Climate & Life:** After the Ice Age, human groups became highly mobile, and monsoon patterns emerged.
- **Tools:** Microlithic tools for hunting smaller animals.
- **Major Sites:**
 - ✓ **Paisra (Bihar):** Evidence of Mesolithic culture.
 - ✓ **Langhnaj (Gujarat):** Rock shelter sites.
 - ✓ **Baghor II, Chopani Mando, Sarai Nahar Rai, Mahadaha, Damdama (UP):** Evidence of semi-permanent settlements, early burial practices.
 - ✓ **Sankanakallu, Kibbanahalli (Karnataka):** Evidence of Mesolithic tools.
 - ✓ **Lekhakia, Baghai Khor (UP):** Rock shelter sites with Mesolithic tools.
 - ✓ **Adamgarh, Bhimbetka (MP):** Evidence of rock shelters and Mesolithic tools.
 - ✓ **Coastal sites:** Mumbai, Thoothukudi (Tamil Nadu), and Vishakapatnam.

3. Neolithic Age (6,000–1,000 BCE)

- The beginning of agriculture, domestication of animals, and permanent settlements.
- **Tools:** Polished stone tools, axes, and microlith blades.
- **Sites:**
 - ✓ **Mehrgarh (Pakistan):** Earliest evidence of Neolithic culture, wheat, barley cultivation, and domesticated animals.
 - ✓ **Burzahom (Kashmir):** Evidence of pit dwellings, copper tools.
 - ✓ **Lehuradeva (Uttar Pradesh):** Early rice cultivation (6500 BCE).
 - ✓ **Chirand, Senuwar (Bihar):** Early evidence of plant & animal domestication.

Proto History

- This era witnessed the advent of copper tool usage alongside traditional stone tools, marking the first steps towards the development of metallurgy.
- **Chalcolithic Period (2600–1200 BCE)**
 - ✓ The Chalcolithic Period marks a transitional phase when humans started using copper tools along with stone tools. It represents early steps toward metalworking and more complex societies.
 - ✓ **Major Sites:**
 - **Ahar, Gilund, Ganeshwar (Rajasthan):** Evidence of copper metallurgy, trade with Harappa.
 - **Jorwe (Maharashtra):** Evidence of copper tools, early agriculture.
 - **Inamgaon (Maharashtra):** Fortified settlements, moats.

DID YOU KNOW?

- Jorwe Culture was a prominent Chalcolithic culture of the Deccan, especially in Maharashtra & parts of MP.
- It is known for its distinctive red-orange pottery with black geometric designs, planned rectangular mud houses & agriculture-based economy focused on crops like jowar and domesticated animals.
- Pit burials with urns placed north–south were a key funerary practice.



Historic Period

- It begins with the availability of written records. Literary texts, inscriptions, and coins supplement archaeological sources.
- The beginning of the iron age / Vedic age marks the historic period.

Iron Age (1100–800 BCE)

- **Key Features:** The use of iron tools like ploughshares and weapons, development of agriculture, and rise of settlements.
- **Major Sites:**
 - ✓ **Ganga-Yamuna Valley:** Painted Grey Ware pottery linked to early Vedic culture.
 - ✓ **Tamil Nadu:** Black-ware pottery, stone circles, and dolmenoid cists.

Megalithic Culture

- **Key Features:** Stone circles, cairns, and urn burials.
- **Major Sites:**
 - ✓ **Adichanallur (Tamil Nadu):** Iron objects, gold diadems, urn burials.
 - ✓ **Paiyampalli (Tamil Nadu):** Black-Red pottery, iron implements.
 - ✓ **Kodumanal (Tamil Nadu):** Pit burials, urn burials, chamber tombs.
 - ✓ **Brahmagiri (Karnataka):** Stone circle burials, transition from Neolithic to Megalithic.
 - ✓ **Hirebenkal (Karnataka):** Largest megalithic site in South India.
 - ✓ **Maski (Karnataka):** First site to mention the name "Ashoka."
 - ✓ **Jorwe (Maharashtra):** Evidence of copper tools and agricultural settlements.
 - ✓ **Chandravalli (Karnataka):** Megalithic settlements, copper, and iron implements.
 - ✓ **Junapani (Maharashtra):** Stone circles and megalithic graves.
 - ✓ **Gufkral (Kashmir):** Neolithic-Megalithic transition, early agriculture.
 - ✓ **Rajan Kollur (Karnataka):** Dolmens and cairn burials.
 - ✓ **Nagarjunakonda (Andhra Pradesh):** Cairn burials, dolmens, and iron tools.
 - ✓ **Mangadu (Kerala):** Major Mesolithic site that yielded carnelian beads, pottery.

Pottery Cultures in Ancient India

- **Ochre Coloured Pottery (2600–1200 BCE):** Rural culture with copper hoards, found in Uttar Pradesh and Haryana.
- **Black-and-Red Ware (2600–1000 BCE):** Wheel-based pottery with painted designs, found in Madhya Pradesh and Maharashtra (Jorwe).
- **Painted Grey Ware (1200–600 BCE):** Associated with early Vedic culture, found in Hastinapur, Bhagwanpura and Atranjikhhera.
- **Northern Black Ware (700–200 BCE):** Glossy black pottery associated with urbanization, found in Pataliputra and Taxila.
- **Red Ware with Ochre Wash (300 BCE–200 CE):** Pottery used for storage, found in Vidarbha region, Gujarat, and Andhra Pradesh.
- **Black Ware and Buff Ware (200 BCE–300 CE):** Simple utility pottery, found in Central and South India.
- **Gupta Period Pottery (300–600 CE):** Fine red ware with stamped designs, found in Mathura, Nalanda, Ujjain, and Kaushambi.

India's early history showcases a gradual evolution in thought, society, polity, and culture, forming the foundation for later empires like the Mauryas and Guptas. The values and diversity of this period continue to shape India's identity today.

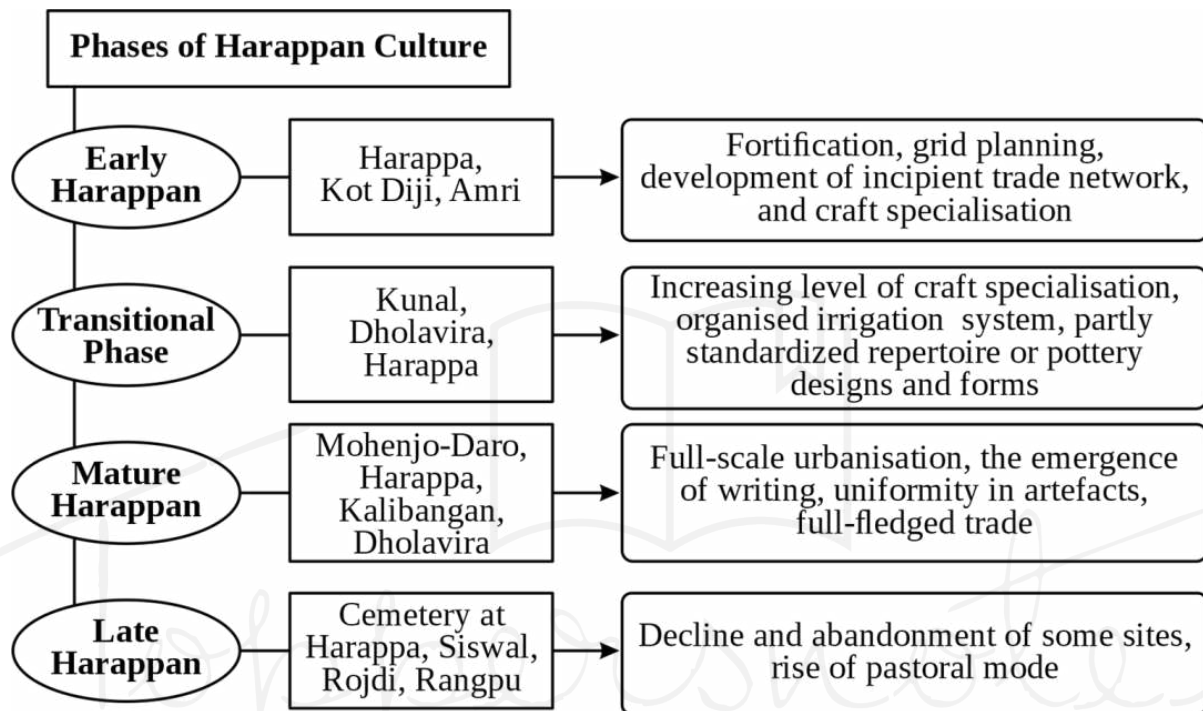
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CHAPTER

Indus Valley Civilisation



- The Indus Valley Civilization, also known as the Harappan Culture, flourished around the third millennium BC in the northwestern parts of India and Pakistan, marking the first phase of urbanization in the Indian subcontinent.
- The civilization gradually evolved from Neolithic villages that existed around 7000 BCE, notably at Mehrgarh in Balochistan, Pakistan.



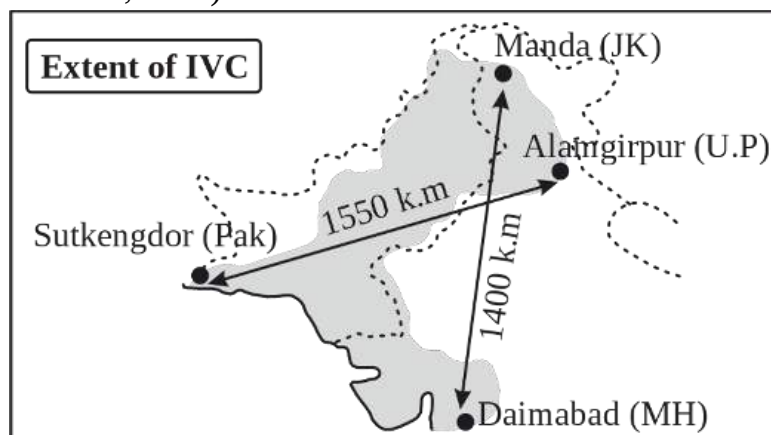
Geographical Extension of IVC

- The Indus Valley Civilization (IVC), one of the world's oldest urban civilizations, spanned across a vast region, covering parts of present-day India, Pakistan, and Afghanistan.

North: Shortugai (Afghanistan) **West:** Sutkagendor (Pakistan–Iran border)

East: Alamgirpur (Uttar Pradesh, India)

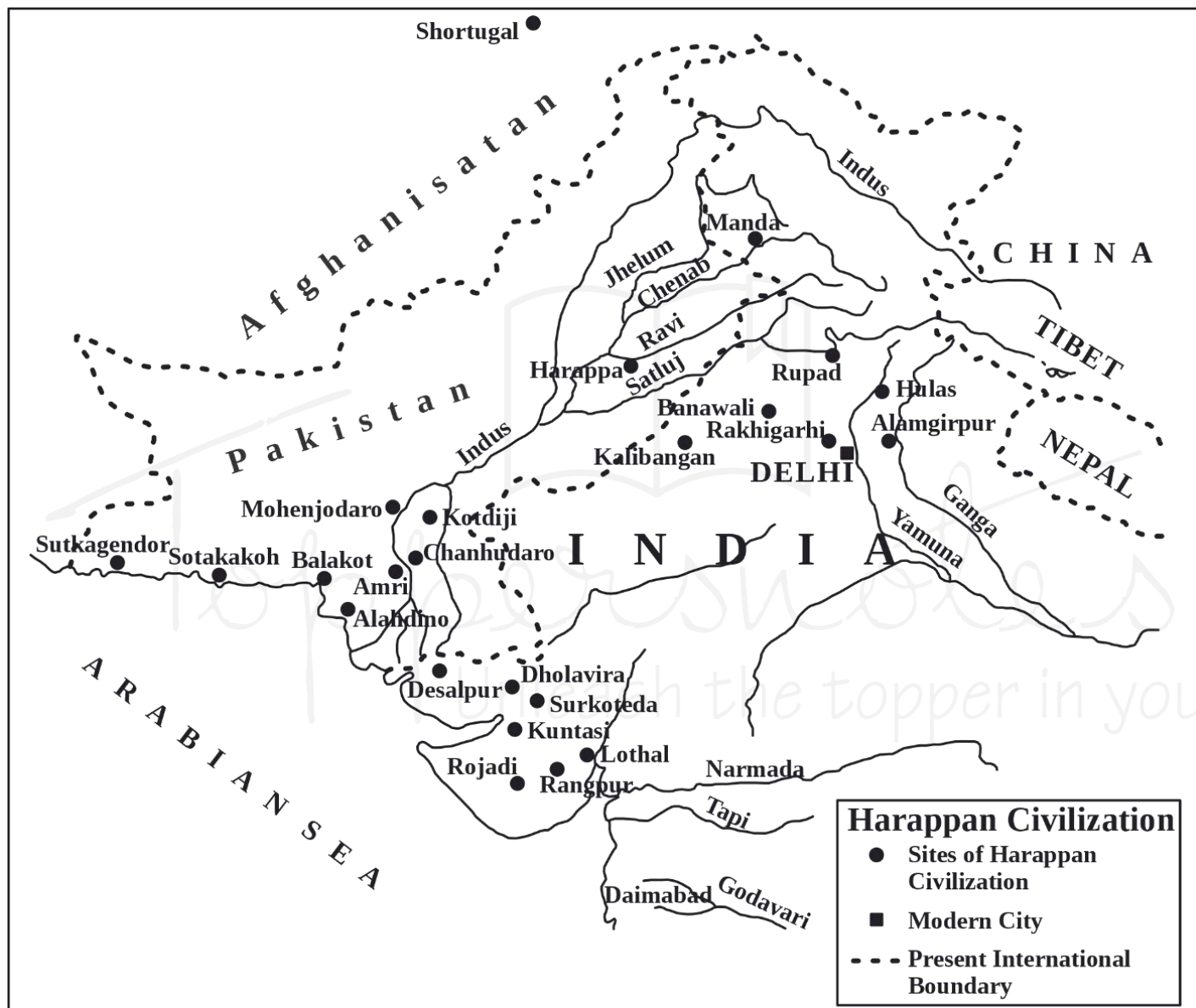
South: Daimabad (Maharashtra, India)



Key Harappan Sites & Their Features

Site	Location	River / Water Source	Key Features
Harappa	Punjab (Pakistan)	Ravi	First-discovered IVC site, two rows of six granaries; red-sandstone male torso; stone lingam & yoni symbols; Mother-Goddess figurines; dice, cemetery R-37.
Mohenjo-daro	Sindh (Pakistan)	Indus	Post-cremation burials; Great Granary; Great Bath (largest building); Pashupati & Mother-Goddess seals; bronze statue of "Dancing Girl" & buffalo; bearded-man statue; planned citadel & lower town.
Chanhudaro	Sindh (Pakistan)	Indus	Dedicated craft hub: bead-making, shell-cutting, metal-working, seal- & weight-making; dog-paw brick imprint; terracotta bullock-cart model; bronze toy cart.
Lothal	Gujarat	Bhogava–Sabarmati confluence	Port with dockyard & granaries; rice-husk remains; male-female double burial; elevated (unwalled) citadel; fortified town with internal walls, Ivory scale
Surkotada	Gujarat	Shadi Kaur river	Oval graves; pot burials, bone of horses
Kalibangan	Rajasthan	Ghaggar	Bangle factory; ploughed-field surface; camel bones; fire altars; bronze bull figure.
Banawali	Haryana	Rangoi	Pre-, Mature & Late Harappan phases; oval settlement; barley grains; lapis lazuli; fire altars; radial streets; lack of systematic drainage.
Dholavira	Gujarat	Luni	UNESCO World Heritage; ingenious water-harvesting & storm-drainage systems; megalithic stone circle; specialized drills; large reservoirs; stone architecture; ancient inscribed signboard; three-part (Citadel, Middle town, Lower town) fortified layout. Rock cut excavation.
Ropar	Punjab	Sutlej	First post-Independence excavation; dog-and-human burials; oval pit graves; copper axe.
Suktagendor	Sindh (Pakistan)	Dasht	Ash-filled pot; copper axe; earthen bangles & pottery; originally a port (linked to Babylon), later cut off by coastal uplift.
Rakhigarhi	Haryana	Ghaggar	Largest known IVC site; two mounds discovered c. 2016; evidence of all three Harappan phases.
Rangpur	Gujarat	Madar	Pre- and Mature Harappan remains; yellow & grey pre-Harappan pottery.
Alamgirpur	Uttar Pradesh	Hindon	Late Harappan phase; broken copper blade; cloth impression on trough.

Kot-Diji	Sindh (Pakistan)	Sindh	Mud-brick & stone fortification; well-fired red & buff wares with horned-deity, pipal-leaf & fish-scale motifs.
Amri	Sindh (Pakistan)	Sindh	Pre-Harappan settlement; transitional culture; rhinoceros remains.
Mandi	Haryana	Sahibi/Sabi	Late Harappan phase; reflects rural Harappan life, with evidence of pottery, mud structures, and subsistence agriculture.
Daimabad	Maharashtra	Pravara	Bronze images of charioteer with chariot, ox, elephant & rhinoceros.



Town Planning and Structures

- **Harappan cities** followed a systematic grid planning with right-angled streets, dividing the city into rectangular blocks.
- **Civic Infrastructure:**
 - ✓ Cities were divided → Lower Town (residential) & Citadel (public buildings, granaries).
 - ✓ The Great Bath in Mohenjo-Daro was most likely used for ritual purification.

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- ✓ Granaries in Harappa and Mohenjo-Daro, used for storing grains.
 - ✓ Kalibhangan had houses which had walls, often in a room that could be reached from the outside and even used by the passers by.
 - ✓ Drainage system connected all houses to street drains, made of bricks & set in mortar.
 - ✓ The citadel was constructed on a mud-brick platform and physically separated from the lower town.

Faith-based practices

- **Secular civilization:** Religion was inferred from symbols like lingams, yoni, and Mother Goddess figurines
- **No temples found** - worship was inferred from statues & figurines.
- **Pasupati Seal** depicts a three-headed figure surrounded by animals, interpreted as a proto-Shiva figure.
- **Zoolatry** (animal worship) & **fire altars** were important in religious rituals.

Harappan Script

- The **script** remains undeciphered and is the oldest script in the Indian subcontinent.
- Pictographic in nature, it contained 250-400 symbols and was written from right to left.
- Used primarily on seals for marking goods and ownership.

Agriculture and Animal Domestication

- Agriculture was the primary source of sustenance, with wheat, barley, rice, and millets being cultivated.
- Evidence of rice cultivation found from Rnagpur and Lothal while models of plough have been found from Banawali. Cereals were also received as taxes from the peasants.
- Animal domestication included cattle, buffaloes, goats, sheep, pigs, dogs, and cats. Also, the people were mainly engaged in Pastoralism.
- Irrigation was practiced through both canals and wells.
- Excavations at Banawali (Haryana) revealed terracotta models of ploughs, indicating knowledge of agricultural tools.
- Kalibangan (Rajasthan) is noted for the earliest evidence of a ploughed field in the world.
- Shortughai (Afghanistan), showed traces of canal irrigation, indicating agricultural planning.

Trade and Commerce

- Extensive trade with regions like Mesopotamia, including cotton, beads, terracotta figurines, and gold.
- Barter system was used, as there was no metallic money.
- Trade imports included gold, tin, jade, and copper.
- Exports included copper, gold, cotton goods, beads, and lapis lazuli.

Garments and embellishments

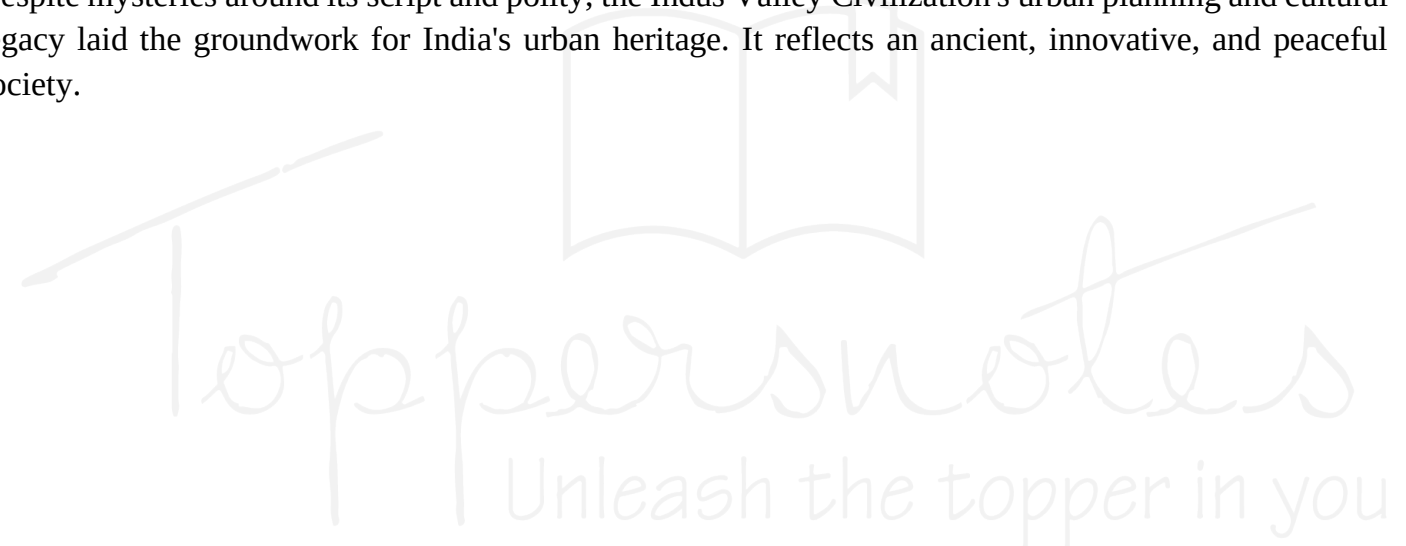
- Harappans had knowledge of cotton and silk fabrics.
- Cotton and wool spinning was widely practiced.
- Beads & ornaments were made of carnelian, jasper, crystal, steatite, copper, bronze, gold, shell, faience, terracotta, and burnt clay.
- The red color of carnelian was produced by firing yellow chalcedony.
- Mesopotamian excavations show Indus bead exports.
- The Farmana cemetery (Haryana) had bodies buried with ornaments.

Decline of the Harappan Civilization

- The decline of the Harappan Civilization, also known as the Indus Valley Civilization, is a subject of much debate among historians and archaeologists.
- Several factors may have contributed to the collapse, and it is likely that a combination of internal and external influences led to its downfall:
 - ✓ **Climate Change:** Reduced rainfall and changing river courses impacted agriculture.
 - ✓ **Natural Disasters:** Earthquakes, floods, and possibly tsunamis damaged settlements.
 - ✓ **Decline in Trade:** Disruption of trade routes, especially with Mesopotamia, weakened the economy.
 - ✓ **Aryan Invasions:** Possible migration of Indo-Aryans contributed to societal changes.
 - ✓ **Internal Conflict:** Social disintegration, political instability, and the breakdown of centralized authority.
 - ✓ **Urban Decline:** Abandonment of cities and decline in urban planning.
 - ✓ **Craft Decline:** Reduced production of crafts and technology reflected economic downfall.

The **oldest known civilization in the world** is the **Sumerian Civilization**, which emerged in **Mesopotamia** (modern-day Iraq) around **4500 BCE**.

Despite mysteries around its script and polity, the Indus Valley Civilization's urban planning and cultural legacy laid the groundwork for India's urban heritage. It reflects an ancient, innovative, and peaceful society.



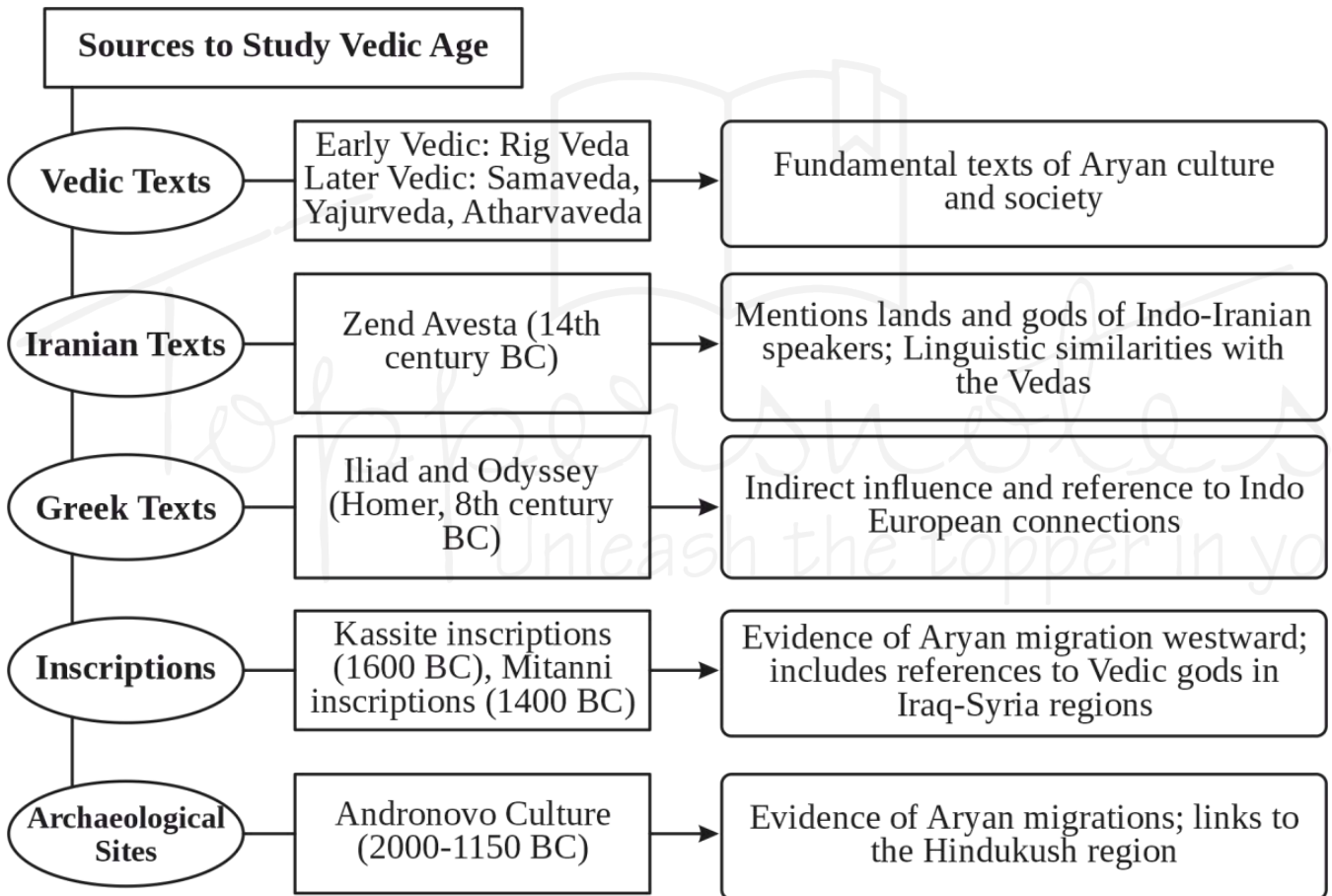
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CHAPTER

Vedic Age (1500–600 BCE)



- The Vedic Age (1500–600 BCE) spanned the late Bronze and early Iron Ages in India, situated between the decline of the Indus Valley Civilization and the rise of the second urbanization around 600 BCE in the Indo-Gangetic plains.
- Agricultural surplus, expanding crafts and trade, and rising population led to new town formations in the Gangetic basin, marking the second wave of Indian urbanization.
- The term 'Vedic' originates from the Vedas, a collection of sacred texts authored by people identifying as Aryans.
- The Vedic Age is divided into:
 - ✓ **Early Vedic Period** (1500–1000 BCE)
 - ✓ **Later Vedic Period** (1000–600 BCE)



Indo-Aryans: Identity and Theories

- 'Indo-Aryans' refers to speakers of Indo-Iranian languages.
- 'Arya' is derived from 'ar' (to cultivate), meaning noble or companion.
- Theories on Aryan origin:
 - ✓ **European Theory:** Migration from north of the Black Sea (William Jones, Morgan).
 - ✓ **Central Asian Theory:** Emphasized linguistic ties to Indo-Iranians (Max Muller, Meyer).

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- ✓ **Arctic Theory:** Tilak posited Arctic homeland based on references to six-month days/nights.
 - ✓ **Tibetan Theory:** Dayanand Saraswati linked flora-fauna in Rig Veda with Tibet.
 - ✓ **Indian Theory:** Sampurnanand and A.C. Das highlighted Sapta Sindhu as homeland; Sanskrit closest to original Aryan language.

Early Vedic Period (1500–1000 BCE)

1. Geography

- ✓ Aryans inhabited Sapta Sindhu (Jhelum, Beas, Chenab, Ravi, Sutlej, Saraswati, Indus)- the land of seven rivers.
- ✓ Territories spanned modern Afghanistan, Punjab, and Haryana.
- ✓ Saraswati was the holiest river & Sindhu, most frequently mentioned.
- ✓ Brahmavarta referred to Saraswati Valley; Himavanta referred to the Himalayas; and Munjavanta referred to Hindu Kush.

2. Political Life

- ✓ Major tribes: Bharatas, Matsyas, Yadus, Purus were prevalent.
- ✓ Rajan (tribal chief): Head of tribe, called Gopati or Gopa (protector of cows).
- ✓ The position of the King also appeared hereditary, but some traces of elections by tribal assembly were also prevalent.
- ✓ Women had access to Sabha and Vidatha.
- ✓ Assemblies:
 - **Sabha:** Elite elders.
 - **Samiti:** Common assembly.
 - **Vidatha:** Ritual and administrative forum.
 - **Gana:** Clan organization.
- ✓ No judicial structure; use of spies prevalent to deter theft.

3. Officials and Functions:

- ✓ **Purohita:** Chief priest, motivator of the tribal chiefs.
- ✓ **Senani:** Army commander skilled in weaponry.
- ✓ **Vrajabapati:** Head of pasture lands and battle unit.

4. Military

- ✓ No permanent standing army; depended on tribal units (Vrat, Gana, Grama, Sardha).
- ✓ **Battle of Ten Kings (Dasharajna):** Sudas of Bharatas defeated a coalition of ten tribes on the Ravi river. Bharatas later merged with Purus to form Kurus (ancestors of Pandavas and Kauravas).
- ✓ Aryans overpowered Dasas (enslaved) and Dasyus (possibly original inhabitants).
- ✓ Use of horse-drawn chariots and protective mail (Varman).

5. Society

- ✓ Initial varna was based on color: Aryans (fair) vs. Dasyus (dark-skinned).
- ✓ No caste rigidity; occupation was flexible.
- ✓ Slavery existed during the period (mainly women).
- ✓ Varna hierarchy introduced in Purusha Sukta (10th Mandala of Rig veda).

6. Family & Marriage:

- ✓ **Kula:** Family unit headed by Kulapa.
 - ✓ **Griha:** Household led by Grihapati, wife = Sapatni.
 - ✓ **Vis** (clan), **Jana** (tribe); multiple **Vis** formed **Jana**.
 - ✓ **Samgrama** = War (Grama vs. Grama).
 - ✓ Monogamy was prevalent; but polygyny & polyandry were also seen.
 - ✓ Rig Veda reflects preference for sons, not daughters.
-

7. Status of Women:

- ✓ Patriarchal yet egalitarian society.
- ✓ Women received education, chose spouses & even remarriages allowed.
- ✓ Female sages: Apala, Viswavara, Ghosa, Lopamudra.
- ✓ Practices like sati, purdah were absent; marriageable age: 16–17.

8. Economy

- ✓ Pastoralism was dominant; (cattle = wealth)
- ✓ Barter economy was prevalent (Cow chief item of exchange); no private land.
- ✓ Agriculture used fire-clearing, wooden ploughs (Langala, Sura).
- ✓ Crops: Barley (Yavam), Wheat (Godhuma) were cultivated.
- ✓ Water drawn via cattle-driven pulley.
- ✓ Professions: Spinning (Siri), Carpentry (Takshan), Chariot-making.
- ✓ **Bali**: Tax/contribution.
- ✓ **Metals known**: Ayas (copper/bronze), Hiranya (gold).

9. Religion

- ✓ Nature worship via Yajnas was prevalent.
- ✓ **Henotheism**: One deity supreme in each hymn.
- ✓ **Major Gods**:
 - **Indra: Purandhar** (Breaker of forts), **Vritrahan** (Slayer of Vritra) – 250 hymns (Maximum times mentioned)
 - **Agni**: Fire, intermediary – 200 hymns attributed to him.
 - **Varuna**: The God of water, maintain Cosmic Order (Rita)
 - **Soma**: Intoxicating Deified drink
 - Others: Rudra, Yama, Pushan, Vishnu, Maruts
- ✓ **Major Goddesses**: Aditi (Goddess of eternity), Usha (Goddess of Dawn), Savitri (Gayatri Mantra), Sinivali (Goddess of fertility)

Later Vedic Period (1000-600 BCE)

- The Later Vedic period is known through texts written after the Rigvedic era and saw major shifts in society, economy, politics, and religion.

1. Geography

- ✓ The Aryans, after establishing their dominance in the northwestern regions of India, expanded eastward towards Bengal.
- ✓ Their core area of settlement initially centered around the **Kuru-Panchala region**, which included the important cities of **Hastinapur** and **Indraprastha**. **Hastinapur**, considered the capital of the Kuru dynasty
- ✓ 3 divisions of India in later vedic texts as: Aryavarta (north), Madhyadesa (central), Dakshinapatha (south).

2. Politics

- ✓ Tribal assemblies declined with increasing royal power; Vidatha disappeared completely.
- ✓ **Janas** → **Janapadas**; references to Nagara (towns).
- ✓ Proto-urban sites: Hastinapura, Kausambi.
- ✓ King's titles: Samrat, Ekraat, Ahilabhuvanapati.
- ✓ Rituals:
 - **Ashvamedha**: Horse sacrifice.
 - **Rajasuya**: Royal consecration.
 - **Vajapeya**: Royal chariot race.

3. Society

- ✓ Varna system formalized: Brahmana, Kshatriya, Vaishya, Shudra.
- ✓ **Dvija** (twice-born) initiated via Upanayana which was limited to the upper sections of the society.
- ✓ Shudras and women- denied from Vedic education & chanting Gayatri Mantra.
- ✓ **Chandalas**: Outside varna (untouchables).
- ✓ **Rathakaras** (chariot-makers) earned ritual status.

4. Women's Status:

- ✓ Declined: Negligible participation in assemblies or rituals. Role became limited to domestic tasks.
- ✓ Rise of Sati, child marriage. Also, Aitreya Brahmana devalues daughters.
- ✓ Exceptions: Gargi, Maitreyi (great women philosophers of that time).
- ✓ Daughters even labelled as a source of sorrow (Aitreya Brahmana)

5. Economy

- ✓ Farming intensified: wheat (Punjab), rice (Ganga-Yamuna).
- ✓ Iron (Krishna Ayas) by 1200 BCE; tools widespread by 800 BCE.
- ✓ Mixed farming was common.
- ✓ Land: community-owned; Grihapati = owner.
- ✓ Trade via Shrenis (guilds); head = Shreshthi.
- ✓ Barter system continued using Nishka.
- ✓ Collecting taxes was made mandatory, primarily from the vaishyas, facilitated by Sangrihitri (Tax collector)

6. Arts and Crafts

- ✓ Pottery types: Painted Grey Ware, Black & Red Ware were prevalent. Use of burnt bricks was not commonly known.
- ✓ Crafts: Pottery (Kulala), spinning (Urna sutra), smithy (Karmara).
- ✓ Professions: Boatmen, cooks, goldsmiths, astrologers, elephant trainers (Atharva Veda).

7. Religion

- ✓ Indra & Agni replaced **Prajapati, Vishnu, Rudra**.
- ✓ Ritualism intensified; Dakshina (offerings) increased.
- ✓ Rise of idolatry, caste-based deities could be seen. Pushan was now considered as the God of Shudras.
- ✓ Upanishads countered ritual excesses, emphasized Atman.
- ✓ Sacrificial gifts were more prevalent. Sometimes even some portions of territory was claimed as Dakshina by the priests
- ✓ Dissatisfaction → Jainism, Buddhism (moral reform).

8. Education and Literature

- ✓ Vedic education male-centric, oral tradition.
 - ✓ The discipline of Philosophy, literature, & science developed in this period.
 - ✓ **Upanishads** - The literal meaning of 'Upanishad' is 'to sit near someone' They are records of philosophical dialogues and discourses between teachers (Gurus) and students (Shishyas)
 - ✓ There are 108 Upanishads, of which 13 are the most prominent,
 - **Mandukya Upanishad** – the largest of all Upanishads, mentions "Satyamev Jayate".
 - **Chhandogya Upanishad** – Refers to the first three ashrams
 - ✓ Teachers = Gurus, pupils = Shishyas.
-

Vedic Literature

Vedic Literature is the earliest sacred literary record of the Indo-Aryans, composed in Vedic Sanskrit during 1500–600 BCE. Transmitted orally for centuries, it forms the foundation of Indian philosophy, religion, and culture, and is a key source for understanding ancient Indian history and society.

➤ ‘Veda’ from ‘Vid’ = knowledge.

➤ Four Vedas:

Veda	Core Themes & Structure
Rig Veda	➤ Oldest text describing the universe’s origin ➤ 10 Mandalas: II–VII (earliest); I & X (added later, X includes Puruṣa Sūkta on the four varṇas) ➤ VIII: Kaṇva family hymns; IX: Soma-hymns ➤ Collection of hymns to deities (Agni, Indra, Mitra, Varuṇa) by various poet-families (“family books”) ➤ Oral chanting tradition inscribed as UNESCO Intangible Heritage ➤ Preserves many Munda & Dravidian loan-words. ➤ Basic script of Rigveda is Brahmi & word Stupa used for the 1st time.
Sama Veda	➤ Musical rendition of Rig-Vedic verses (Saman = melody) ➤ Basis for ragas & raginis ➤ Includes the Dhruvad melody later popularized by Tansen
Yajur Veda	➤ Ritual formulas for sacrifices in prose and verse ➤ Two recensions: White (Shukla Yajur Veda) contains only mantras; Black (Krishna Yajur Veda) intersperses mantras with explanatory prose
Atharva Veda	➤ Charms, omens & spells ➤ Practical knowledge on agriculture, crafts & cattle-rearing ➤ - Early material medica: cures for diseases and life-rituals

Associated Texts

➤ **Brahmanas:** Sacrificial rites; key: Shatapatha Brahmana (attached to yajur veda).

➤ **Aranyakas:** Forest meditations, mystical philosophy.

➤ **Upanishads:** Teacher-student discourses.

✓ Translated to Persian by Dara Shikoh (1657).

✓ Total 108 Upanishads, of which 13 are the most prominent.

➤ **Vedangas (Limbs of Vedas)**

✓ **Shiksha:** Pronunciation of the words; education.

✓ **Chhanda:** Metrics used in Sanskrit verses

✓ **Vyakarana:** Sanskrit grammar

✓ **Nirukta:** Origin of the words

✓ **Jyotisha:** Astrology

✓ **Kalpa:** Knowledge of rituals (Dharma sutras).

According to Shankracharya- Prasthanatrayi refers to the three authoritative texts of Vedanta: the **Upanishads**, **Brahma Sutras**, and the **Bhagavad Gita**.

The Vedic Age shaped the spiritual and cultural framework of India through the composition of the Vedas, development of the varna system, and early forms of statecraft and political assemblies. Its legacy continues to influence Hindu philosophy, rituals, and societal norms, making it a cornerstone of Indian civilization.



Origin of Buddhism and Jainism

- Buddhism and Jainism emerged during the post-Vedic period as heterodox sects.
- **Causes for emergence:**
 - ✓ Growing scepticism toward ritualism and orthodoxy.
 - ✓ Kshatriyas opposed Brahminical dominance.
 - ✓ Opposition to animal sacrifice, especially cattle, which hindered agrarian economy.
 - ✓ Supported by Vaishyas due to emphasis on non-violence, easing trade and reducing wars.
 - ✓ These sects rejected Dharmasutras ban on interest-based lending.
 - ✓ Rejected the Varna system; elevated the status of Vaishyas.

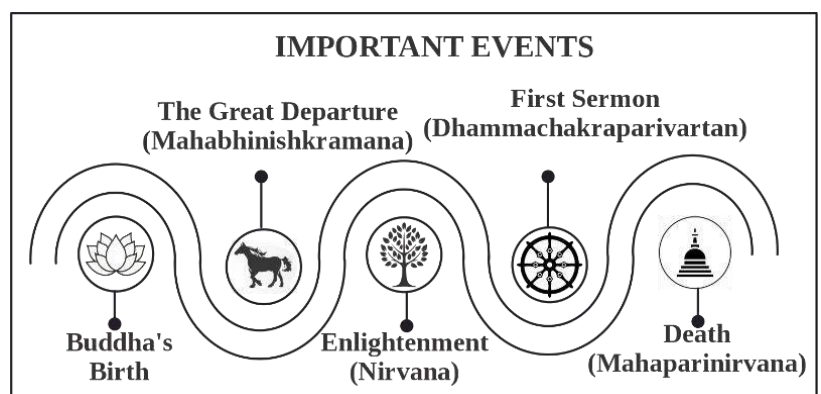
Buddhism

1. Life of Gautama Buddha

- ✓ Born in 563 BCE at Lumbini (Nepal) in the Sakya clan; father: Suddhodana (Kapilavastu ruler); mother: Mahamaya of Kosala.
- ✓ Fostered by Mahaprajapati Gautami (first Bhikkhuni).
- ✓ Married Yashodhara; son: Rahula.
- ✓ Encountered: old man, sick man, corpse, ascetic → Led to renunciation at age of 29 (Mahabhinishkramana).
- ✓ Practised austerities under Alara Kalama and Uddaka Ramaputta. Also Subhadda was the last person to get enlightenment from Gautam Buddha.
- ✓ The doctrine of momentariness is said to have been propounded by Buddha which explains the relevance of existence within time.
- ✓ Attained Nirvana under Bodhi tree at Bodh Gaya at the age of 35. The present Bodhi tree in Bodhgaya belongs to the 5th generation located on the banks of Niranjana river.

2. After Enlightenment

- ✓ First sermon: Sarnath (Dharmachakrapravartana).
- ✓ The Lion Capital of Ashoka at Sarnath marks this event.
- ✓ Prominent disciples: Ananda, Sariputta, Mahamoggallana, Mahakaccayana.
- ✓ Maximum sermons of Buddha were given at Sravasti.
- ✓ Passed away at Kushinagar in 483 BCE (Mahaparinirvana).
- ✓ Last words to his followers: "Be lamps unto yourselves."



3. Symbolism in Hinayana vs Mahayana

Event	Hinayana (Symbolic Form)	Mahayana (Figurative Form)
Birth	Elephant and lotus	Maya's dream
Renunciation	Horse	Buddha (in monk dress) along with Horse
Enlightenment	Peepal tree	Bhumisparshamudra
First Sermon	Wheel (8 spokes showing 8 paths)	Dharmachakra Pravartana Mudra
Death	Stupa	Mahapariniravana mudra Lying on one side and head resting on the palm

4. Philosophy & Core Doctrines

- ✓ World is transient (Anicca), soulless (Anatta) & full of suffering (Dukkha).
- ✓ Rejected extremes of luxury and asceticism → Middle Path.
- ✓ Rejected authority of Vedas; upheld rationalism.
- ✓ Rejected Varna system; advocated equality.

5. Four Noble Truths & Eightfold Path

- i. Dukkha: the truth of Suffering
- ii. Samudaya: origin of suffering
- iii. Nirvana: cessation of suffering
- iv. Magga: path leading to cessation of suffering

6. Code of Conduct

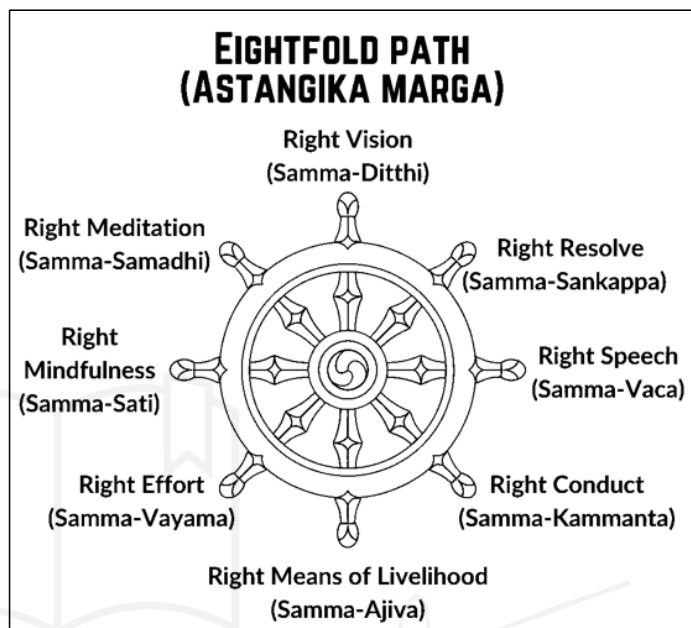
- ✓ Laypeople: Avoid theft, lies, intoxication, violence, immorality.
- ✓ Monks: No sexual conduct, no property; lived communally.

7. Special Features

- ✓ Triratna: Buddha, Dhamma, Sangha
- ✓ Sangha open to all (men initially, later women via Ananda)
- ✓ Kutagarashala: Assembly hut for discussions.
- ✓ Buddha didn't name his successor. He said his teachings would be the guide for his followers.

8. Buddhist Councils

Council	Date & Location	King	President	Key Events
First Buddhist Council	483 BC (After Buddha's death) Rajagriha (Sattapani Cave)	Ajatashatru	Mahakassapa	Upali recited Vinaya Pitaka; Ananda recited Sutta Pitaka.
Second Buddhist Council	383 BC (100 yrs after Buddha) Vaishali	Kalashoka	Sabbakami	Buddhism split into two groups: Sthaviravadins (Teachings of the Elders) Mahasanghikas (Great Community).



Third Buddhist Council	250 BC Pataliputra	Ashoka	Moggaliputta Tissa	Added Kathavatthu to Abhidhamma Pitaka; missions sent abroad, notably to Sri Lanka; Buddhism expanded beyond India for the first time.
Fourth Buddhist Council	72 AD Kundalvana, Srinagar	Kanishka	Vasumitra (Sarvastivada School) Ashvaghosha (Vice-president)	Pitaka commentaries written; Sarvastivadin doctrines compiled as Mahavibhasa; Buddhism formally divided into Mahayana and Hinayana sects.

9. Buddhist Sects

- ✓ **Theravada & Sthaviravada:** meaning "Way of the Elders," is an orthodox tradition aiming for Nirvana through ending Kleshas (defilements).
 - It emphasizes personal insight and critical analysis (Vibhajjavada), prevalent mainly in Myanmar, Cambodia, and Sri Lanka.
 - Key texts include Visuddhimagga by Buddhaghosa (5th century AD). Notable early offshoots are Sarvastivadins, Sammatiyas, and Vatsiputriyas (Pudgala theory).
- ✓ **Mahasanghikas:** emerged during Buddhism's first major division at the Second Buddhist Council, separating from the orthodox Sthaviravadins ("Way of the Elders").
 - Their distinct perspectives on the nature of Buddha and the concept of Arhat anticipated the development of Mahayana Buddhism.
 - Prominent later branches included Lokottaravadins, Ekavyavaharikas, and Kaukkutikas.

10. Differences between Hinayana, Mahayana and Vajrayana Buddhism

Aspect	Hinayana Buddhism	Mahayana Buddhism	Vajrayana Buddhism
Meaning	Lesser Vehicle	Greater Vehicle	Vehicle of the Thunderbolt
Geographic Spread	Sri Lanka, Burma, Thailand, Southeast Asia	China, Japan, Korea, Vietnam, Tibet	Bengal, Bihar, Nepal, Tibet
Goal	Self-nirvana, individual salvation	Collective salvation through Bodhisattvas	Enlightenment through rituals and Tantrism
Buddha	Ordinary human, not deified	Deified Buddha, divine being	Buddha is divine; Tantric deities are central
Key Concept	Focus on Arhatship, personal effort	Bodhisattvas helping others, compassion over karma	Tantrism, rituals, and mantras
Bodhisattva	Not emphasized	Central to Mahayana; compassionate beings helping others	Powerful figures like Tara, Vajrapani
Key Texts	Pali Canon (Tripitaka)	Mula Madhyamika Karika, Sutralankara	Tibetan Tantras, Vajrayana scriptures
Philosophy	Focus on individual meditation	Emphasis on compassion (Karuna) and emptiness (Shunyata)	Tantric practices, combining wisdom and compassion

Schools	Theravada, Sthaviravada	Madhyamika, Yogacara, Pure Land	Tantrism, Tibetan Buddhism
Rituals	Simple meditation, self-discipline	Complex rituals, devotion to Bodhisattvas	Elaborate rituals, mantra chanting, visualization
Prominent Locations	Sri Lanka, Burma	Nalanda, Tibet, China, Japan	Vikramashila, Tibet
Patronage	Emperor Ashoka	Patronized by emperors and Tibetan rulers	Supported by Tibetan rulers, particularly in the 11th century

11. Bodhisattvas and Mahayana Deities

- ✓ **Avalokiteshwara:** The Bodhisattva of Compassion, often depicted with multiple arms, symbolizing the ability to reach out to help all sentient beings.
- ✓ **Manjusri:** The Bodhisattva of Wisdom, often shown holding a sword that cuts through ignorance and delusion.
- ✓ **Tara:** The Bodhisattva of Protection, commonly represented in two forms. Green Tara (protective action) and White Tara (compassionate and healing qualities).
- ✓ **Ksitigarbha:** The Bodhisattva of Children and protector of those suffering in hell realms, often shown holding a staff to help beings out of suffering.
- ✓ **Maitreya:** The Future Buddha, who is prophesied to appear on Earth to teach the Dharma once the teachings of the current Buddha, Sakyamuni, have been forgotten.
- ✓ **Amitabha:** The Saviour Buddha, often associated with Pure Land Buddhism, believed to save beings who call upon his name and take them to his pure land.
- ✓ **Vajrapani:** The Bodhisattva of Power, often depicted holding a **vajra (thunderbolt)**, symbolizing the power to overcome obstacles and protect the dharma.
- ✓ **Akasagarbha:** The Bodhisattva of Space, symbolizing the boundless nature of wisdom and understanding, and associated with infinite wisdom and vastness.
- ✓ **Vasudhara:** The Bodhisattva of Wealth, prosperity, and abundance, often worshipped for material and spiritual well-being.
- ✓ **Skanda:** The Guardian Bodhisattva, often associated with protection & defense, depicted as a warrior and protector against evil.

12. Buddhist Literature

i. Tripitakas (Pali):

- **Vinaya:** It outlines the discipline (Vinaya) required for leading a monastic life.
- **Sutta:** Contains Sermons delivered by Buddha (Divided into 5 Nikayas: Digha, Majjhima, Samyutta, Anguttara, Khuddaka)
- **Abhidhamma:** Deals with the systematic analysis of mind, matter, and consciousness

ii. Other Texts:

- **Ashvaghosha:** Buddhacharita, Saundarananda
- **Nagarjuna:** Prajnaparamita, Madhyamika Karika
- **Vasubandhu:** Abhidhamma Kosh
- **Dignaga:** Pramanasamuccaya
- **Sattana:** Manimekalai
- **Nagakuthanaar:** Kundalakesi
- **Milinda Panha:** Menander–Nagasena dialogue
- **Kaccana:** Netti Pakarana
- **Lalitavistara:** Buddha's life
- **Samannaphala Sutta:** discourse attributed to Buddha