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Jainism in Indian History – History Study Material & Notes

In the sixth century BC, India witnessed the rise of two new religions – Jainism and Buddhism. The primary reason for the rise of these religions was the religious unrest at that time in the country. This unrest was attributed to the rituals and sacrifices advocated by the Later Vedic period which were not understood by a larger section of people. The Rise of Jainism in India was a result of a mixture these factors.

The Jain Tradition:

- The Jain tradition had a succession of tirthankars (religious leader).
- The first Tirthankar was Rishabha Dev.
- The 23rd Tirthankar was Parshavanath who founded Jainism.
- According to the Jain tradition, time is infinite and constituted by upward and downward movements. The tirthankars appear in succession in time, to teach the about the way of release of soul from material entanglements of this world.

Vardhaman Mahavira (539- 467 B.C.)

- Vardhamana Mahavira was the **24th Tirthankar** of the Jain tradition. He is considered the last tirthankar.
- He was born at Kundagrama near Vaisali in about 546 BC.
- He was born to Kshatriya parents Siddhartha and Trisala.
- He was married to Yasoda and had a daughter from his marriage named Anojja or Priyadarsana.
- He renounced the world at the age of thirty to become an ascetic and wandered for twelve years. He also practiced self-mortification for these years.
- In the 13th year of his penance, he attained the highest spiritual knowledge by triumphing over himself. This knowledge is called **Kevala Gnan**.
- Thereafter, he was called Mahavira, Jina, Kevalin.
- His followers were called the Jains and this religion came to be known as Jainism.
- From this time till his death, he preached his doctrines for 30 years.
- He **died** at the age of 72 at **Pava** near Rajagriha (now in Patna district).

Teachings of Mahavira:

- Jainism rejects the authority of Vedas and Vedic rituals.
- It discards the belief in God.
- Therefore, Jains don't worship God, but instead worship their tirthankars (their souls have attained salvation).

- The 3 principles of Jainism are also known as **TriRatnas** (three gems) are:- – right faith, right knowledge, right conduct.
- **Right faith** – It is the belief in the teachings and wisdom of Mahavira. Followers of Jainism are expected to have right faith.
- **Right Knowledge** – It is the acceptance of theory which says there is no God and that the world has been existing without a creator, all objects possess a soul.
- **Right conduct** – It refers to the observance of the five great vows:- not to injure life, not to lie, not to steal, not to acquire property, not to lead immoral life.
- Everyone had to strictly follow the doctrine of Ahimsa.
- Mahavira considered all objects, both animate and inanimate, to have souls and different degrees of consciousness.
- He considered all objects to possess life and feel pain when they are injured.
- Mahavira advocated a very holy and ethical code of life.
- He considered even the practice of agriculture as sinful because it causes injury to the earth, worms and animals.
- The doctrine of asceticism and renunciation was considered the shortest path to salvation by going to extreme lengths for the practice of starvation, nudity and other forms of self-torture.

Spread of Jainism:

- Mahavira had organised the Sangha to spread his teachings, much like Buddhism.
- He admitted both genders men and women in the Sangha.
- Sangha consisted of both monks and lay followers.
- The rapid rise of Jainism has been attributed to the dedicated work of the Sangha members who caused the spread of Jainism in Western India and Karnataka.
- Jainism was patronised by rulers like Chandragupta Maurya, Kharavela of Kalinga and the royal dynasties of south India like the Gangas, the Kadambas, the Chalukyas and the Rashtrakutas.

Division of Jainism:

- The division in Jainism happened by the end of the fourth century B.C.
- A serious famine occurred in the Ganges valley. Various Jain monks led by Bhadrabahu and Chandragupta Maurya went to Sravana Belgola in Karnataka. These came to be known as Digambaras (Sky-clad or Naked). They follow the tenets of religion strictly.
- The monks who stayed back in north India were led by Sthulbahu, he changed the code of conduct for the monks. This sect became more liberal and started wearing white clothes. Hence, they came to be known as Svetambaras (white-clad).

Jain Councils/ Sangeeti:

1. In 3rd century B.C , the first Jain Council was convened at Pataliputra headed by Sthulbhadra.
2. In 5th century A.D , the second Jain Council was held at Vallabhi in Gujarat under the Devardhigani. Here the compilation of Jain literature called Twelve Angas was completed.

Difference between Hinayana And Mahayana Buddhism – History Study Material & Notes

For many centuries after Buddha's demise, Buddhism strived in its earlier form. But by the advent of 1st century AD, anew doctrine emerged which was different and distinct in ideas and practices from the previous orthodox Buddhism.

These schools have been divided into the two Yanas or 'Vehicles' or 'Paths'. These two are: the Hinayana and Mahayana. A 'Yana' is referred to the vehicle that one takes to reach from the sufferings to enlightenment. In layman's terms, a Hinayana is a lesser vehicle while Mahayana is a Greater vehicle.

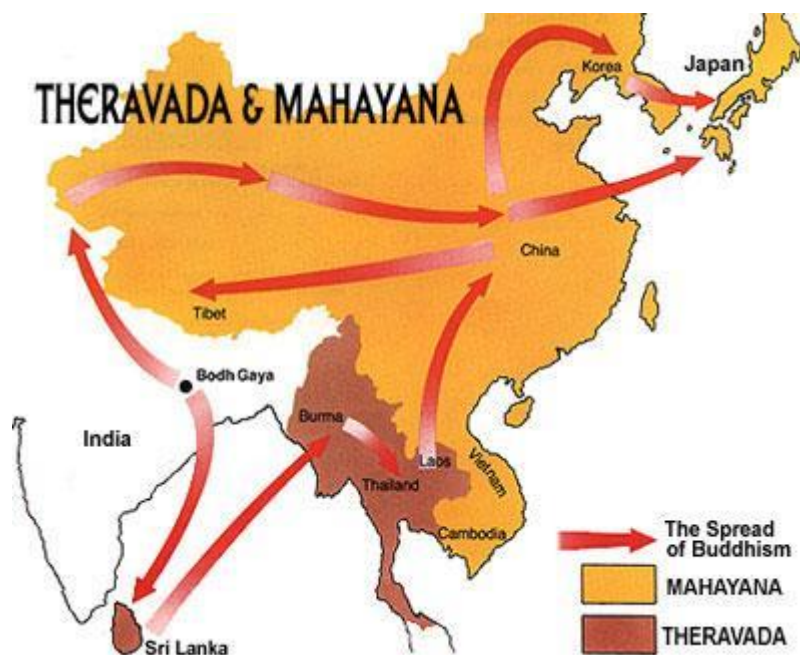
Hinayana:

- Early Buddhist teachings gave more importance to self-realization and effort in achieving *nirvana*.
- the ideal of Hinayana is individual salvation, thus it is considered lesser vehicle.
- The Hinayana or Theravada doctrine believes in the original teaching of Buddha, or the old, respected path of *theras*.
- They doesn't believe in Idol Worship.
- Hinayana teaches that, to attain individual salvation the path goes through self discipline and meditation.
- It should be noted here that Asoka patronized Hinayana
- Pali, the language of masses was used by the Hinayana scholars.
- It is also called the "Deficient Vehicle", the "Abandoned Vehicle", *Stharvivada or Theravada* meaning "doctrine of elders".
- Hinayana stresses on righteous action and law of karma.
- The Hinayana ideal is *Arhat*, the one who strives for his own redemption.
- Hinayana regards Buddha as a man, of extraordinary knowledge, but just a man, therefore, do not worship him.
- It is developed around the acts of Buddha.
- Hinayana believes in salvation by works, that each man should work for his own salvation.
- Hinayana scriptures are written in Pali, and founded on the *Tripitakas*.
- Hinayana or Theraveda traditions are followed in SriLanka, Laos, Cambodia, other South-east Asian countries.

Mahayana:

- Mahayana believes firmly in the spirit of Buddha's teachings.

- Mahayana scriptures are written in form of Sutras in Sanskrit.
- This form of Buddhism gained recognition at the time of Kanishka. The Third Buddhist Council recognised these two forms of Buddhism.
- It believes in salvation by faith.
- Mahayana is developed around the symbolism of Buddha's life and personality.
- The Mahayana ideal is salvation for all, that is why it is called as greater vehicle.
- Mahayana holds the law of karuna / compassion over and above the law of karma.
- Mahayana upholds the ideals of Bodhisattva / the saviour – who is concerned about the salvation of others.
- This sect believes in the divine qualities of Buddha and thus believes in Idol Worship.
- It is also known as the **Bodhisattva Vehicle**.
- Mahayana Buddhism is spread across India, China, Japan, Vietnam, Korea, Singapore, Taiwan, Nepal, Tibet, Bhutan, and Mongolia. Tibetan Buddhism is a tradition of Mahayana only.
- The fundamental principles of Mahayana doctrine are based on the possibility of universal liberation from suffering for all beings. Therefore this is considered the "Great Vehicle".
- The doctrine of Bhakti has evolved as a characteristic feature of Mahayana Buddhism.
- "Nagarjuna" was the most outstanding exponent of Mahayana Buddhism.



Hinayana and Mahayana are two major branches of Buddhism that emerged around the same time. The term "Hinayana" is sometimes used to refer to:

- a) Theravada Buddhism
- b) Mahayana Buddhism
- c) Vajrayana Buddhism
- d) Zen Buddhism

Solution: a) Theravada Buddhism

Hinayana, as a term, is considered derogatory by some followers and scholars. It literally means:

- a) Lesser Vehicle
- b) Greater Vehicle
- c) Diamond Vehicle
- d) Golden Vehicle

Solution: a) Lesser Vehicle

Hinayana Buddhism is primarily prevalent in:

- a) Sri Lanka, Myanmar, Thailand, and Cambodia
- b) Tibet, Bhutan, and Mongolia
- c) China, Japan, and Korea
- d) Nepal, India, and Bangladesh

Solution: a) Sri Lanka, Myanmar, Thailand, and Cambodia

Mahayana Buddhism emphasizes the concept of the bodhisattva, who is:

- a) An enlightened being who has achieved Nirvana
- b) A compassionate being on the path to enlightenment
- c) A monk or nun in the monastic community
- d) A teacher or guru

Solution: b) A compassionate being on the path to enlightenment

The term "Mahayana" literally means:

- a) Lesser Vehicle
- b) Greater Vehicle
- c) Diamond Vehicle
- d) Golden Vehicle

Solution: b) Greater Vehicle

Mahayana Buddhism developed in which region?

- a) India
- b) Sri Lanka
- c) Tibet
- d) China

Solution: a) India

One of the key differences between Hinayana and Mahayana Buddhism is the attitude towards the concept of the arhat. In Hinayana Buddhism, an arhat is:

- a) An enlightened being who has achieved Nirvana
- b) A compassionate being on the path to enlightenment
- c) A monk or nun in the monastic community
- d) A teacher or guru

Solution: a) An enlightened being who has achieved Nirvana

In Mahayana Buddhism, the focus is not only on individual liberation but also on:

- a) Attaining Nirvana for oneself
- b) Becoming a bodhisattva and helping all sentient beings attain enlightenment
- c) Following the teachings of the historical Buddha
- d) Renouncing worldly desires and becoming a monk or nun

Solution: b) Becoming a bodhisattva and helping all sentient beings attain enlightenment

One of the significant Mahayana sutras is the "Lotus Sutra." It teaches the concept of:

- a) Impermanence

- b) Compassion and skillful means
- c) Emptiness and non-self
- d) Mindfulness and meditation

Solution: b) Compassion and skillful means

Hinayana Buddhism is often associated with the early teachings of the Buddha, known as the:

- a) Pali Canon
- b) Lotus Sutra
- c) Diamond Sutra
- d) Heart Sutra

Solution: a) Pali Canon

The doctrine of "Sunyata" (emptiness) is a central concept in:

- a) Hinayana Buddhism
- b) Mahayana Buddhism
- c) Vajrayana Buddhism
- d) Zen Buddhism

Solution: b) Mahayana Buddhism

The "Heart Sutra" is a revered Mahayana text that emphasizes:

- a) Impermanence
- b) Compassion and skillful means
- c) Emptiness and non-self
- d) Mindfulness and meditation

Solution: c) Emptiness and non-self

The Mahayana concept of "Upaya" refers to:

- a) Skillful means
- b) Liberation from suffering
- c) Non-attachment
- d) Emptiness

Solution: a) Skillful means

The concept of the "Three Bodies of Buddha" (Trikaya) is primarily associated with:

- a) Hinayana Buddhism
- b) Mahayana Buddhism
- c) Vajrayana Buddhism
- d) Zen Buddhism

Solution: b) Mahayana Buddhism

The Mahayana text "Diamond Sutra" is known for its emphasis on:

- a) Impermanence
- b) Compassion and skillful means
- c) Emptiness and non-self
- d) Mindfulness and meditation

Solution: c) Emptiness and non-self

The bodhisattva Avalokiteshvara is particularly revered in which form of Buddhism?

- a) Hinayana Buddhism
- b) Mahayana Buddhism
- c) Vajrayana Buddhism
- d) Zen Buddhism

Solution: b) Mahayana Buddhism

The famous Tibetan Buddhist scripture "Tibetan Book of the Dead" is associated with which form of Buddhism?

- a) Hinayana Buddhism
- b) Mahayana Buddhism
- c) Vajrayana Buddhism
- d) Zen Buddhism

Solution: c) Vajrayana Buddhism

The concept of "Bodhicitta" in Mahayana Buddhism refers to:

- a) The enlightened mind
- b) Compassionate action
- c) Mindfulness and awareness
- d) Non-attachment and renunciation

Solution: a) The enlightened mind

The Tibetan Buddhist practice of "Tonglen" involves:

- a) Mindful breathing
- b) Compassionate meditation
- c) Chanting of mantras
- d) Prostrations

Solution: b) Compassionate meditation

The Chinese Buddhist school associated with the practice of Pure Land Buddhism is:

- a) Tiantai
- b) Chan/Zen
- c) Huayan/Avatamsaka
- d) Amitabha Pure Land

Solution: d) Amitabha Pure Land

The famous Japanese Buddhist monk who played a crucial role in the spread of Pure Land Buddhism is:

- a) Honen
- b) Dogen Zenji
- c) Nichiren
- d) Hakuin Ekaku

Solution: a) Honen

The concept of "Buddha-nature" is central to which form of Buddhism?

- a) Hinayana Buddhism
- b) Mahayana Buddhism
- c) Vajrayana Buddhism

d) Zen Buddhism

Solution: b) Mahayana Buddhism

The Zen practice of "Koan" involves:

- a) Chanting of mantras
- b) Contemplation of sacred images
- c) Question and answer dialogues
- d) Walking meditation

Solution: c) Question and answer dialogues

The Chinese Zen master who is credited with the transmission of Zen Buddhism to China is:

- a) Xuanzang
- b) Bodhidharma
- c) Huineng
- d) Linji

Solution: b) Bodhidharma

The Tibetan Buddhist practice of constructing intricate sand mandalas is a visual representation of:

- a) Impermanence
- b) Compassion
- c) Emptiness
- d) Enlightenment

Solution: c) Emptiness

The concept of "Nirmanakaya" in Mahayana Buddhism refers to:

- a) The ultimate reality
- b) The historical Buddha
- c) The physical manifestation of a Buddha
- d) The enlightened mind

Solution: c) The physical manifestation of a Buddha

The Lotus Sutra teaches the concept of "Skillful Means" (Upaya) to help sentient beings attain enlightenment. One example of skillful means mentioned in the sutra is:

- a) Using compassionate words and actions
- b) Practicing mindfulness meditation
- c) Renouncing worldly desires
- d) Following a strict monastic lifestyle

Solution: a) Using compassionate words and actions

The concept of "Nagarjuna's Middle Way" (Madhyamaka) is associated with which form of Buddhism?

- a) Hinayana Buddhism
- b) Mahayana Buddhism
- c) Vajrayana Buddhism
- d) Zen Buddhism

Solution: b) Mahayana Buddhism

The Chinese Buddhist monk who is known for his teachings on the Pure Land and Amitabha Buddha is:

- a) Xuanzang
- b) Bodhidharma
- c) Huineng
- d) Huiyuan

Solution: d) Huiyuan

The concept of "Bhikshuni" refers to:

- a) An enlightened being
- b) A compassionate being on the path to enlightenment
- c) A fully ordained Buddhist nun
- d) A female Bodhisattva

Solution: c) A fully ordained Buddhist nun

Jainism is an ancient Indian religion that traces its origins to:

- a) Gautama Buddha

- b) Mahavira
- c) Ashoka the Great
- d) Emperor Chandragupta Maurya

Solution: b) Mahavira

Mahavira, the 24th and last Tirthankara of Jainism, was a contemporary of:

- a) Siddhartha Gautama
- b) Ashoka the Great
- c) Emperor Chandragupta Maurya
- d) King Harsha

Solution: c) Emperor Chandragupta Maurya

The followers of Jainism are known as:

- a) Jains
- b) Buddhists
- c) Hindus
- d) Sikhs

Solution: a) Jains

The central teaching of Jainism is the belief in:

- a) Dharma
- b) Karma
- c) Nirvana
- d) Moksha

Solution: b) Karma

The ethical principle of Jainism that emphasizes non-violence and non-injury is called:

- a) Ahimsa
- b) Satya
- c) Aparigraha
- d) Brahmacharya

Solution: a) Ahimsa

Jainism divides reality into two categories: Jiva (soul) and:

- a) Dharma (duty)
- b) Karma (action)
- c) Samsara (cycle of birth and death)
- d) Moksha (liberation)

Solution: b) Karma (action)

The sacred texts of Jainism are known as:

- a) Vedas
- b) Upanishads
- c) Agamas
- d) Puranas

Solution: c) Agamas

The founder of the Digambara sect of Jainism, who believed in nudity as a means of renunciation, was:

- a) Mahavira
- b) Rishabhanatha
- c) Acharya Kundakunda
- d) Acharya Hemachandra

Solution: b) Rishabhanatha

The founder of the Svetambara sect of Jainism, who allowed the use of white robes, was:

- a) Mahavira
- b) Rishabhanatha
- c) Acharya Kundakunda
- d) Acharya Hemachandra

Solution: a) Mahavira

The Jain practice of fasting unto death, known as "Sallekhana," is undertaken when:

- a) A person is terminally ill
- b) A person has achieved enlightenment
- c) A person wants to attain Moksha
- d) A person wants to practice self-discipline

Solution: a) A person is terminally ill

The Jain principle of non-possession and non-attachment is called:

- a) Ahimsa
- b) Satya
- c) Aparigraha
- d) Brahmacharya

Solution: c) Aparigraha

The first Jain Tirthankara, who is considered the founder of Jainism, was:

- a) Mahavira
- b) Rishabhanatha
- c) Parshvanatha
- d) Ajitanatha

Solution: b) Rishabhanatha

The ancient Jain rock-cut caves in Maharashtra, known for their beautiful sculptures, are called:

- a) Ajanta Caves
- b) Ellora Caves
- c) Karla Caves
- d) Udayagiri Caves

Solution: c) Karla Caves

The symbol of Jainism, representing the Fourfold Jain community, is called:

- a) Swastika
- b) Om
- c) Dharmachakra

d) Jain Prateek Chihna

Solution: d) Jain Prateek Chihna

The holy city of Jainism, known for its ancient temples and pilgrimage sites, is:

a) Varanasi

b) Ayodhya

c) Mathura

d) Palitana

Solution: d) Palitana

The Jain concept of "Syadvada" teaches:

a) Non-violence

b) Multiple perspectives and relativity of truth

c) Asceticism and self-discipline

d) Non-attachment and renunciation

Solution: b) Multiple perspectives and relativity of truth

The Jain festival that celebrates the birth anniversary of Mahavira is called:

a) Diwali

b) Holi

c) Paryushana

d) Mahavir Jayanti

Solution: d) Mahavir Jayanti

The 16th-century Jain saint and poet who composed the famous work "Shantinatha Charitra" was:

a) Mahavira

b) Rishabhanatha

c) Acharya Kundakunda

d) Acharya Hemachandra

Solution: d) Acharya Hemachandra

The Jain concept of "Anekantavada" teaches:

- a) Non-violence
- b) Multiple perspectives and relativity of truth
- c) Asceticism and self-discipline
- d) Non-attachment and renunciation

Solution: b) Multiple perspectives and relativity of truth

The 24th Tirthankara of Jainism, who achieved enlightenment and liberation, was:

- a) Mahavira
- b) Rishabhanatha
- c) Parshvanatha
- d) Ajitanatha

Solution: a) Mahavira