

Ancient India

Origins of Hindu India

Beliefs + Practices of Hinduism

The Origins of Buddhism

Central Ideas of Buddhism

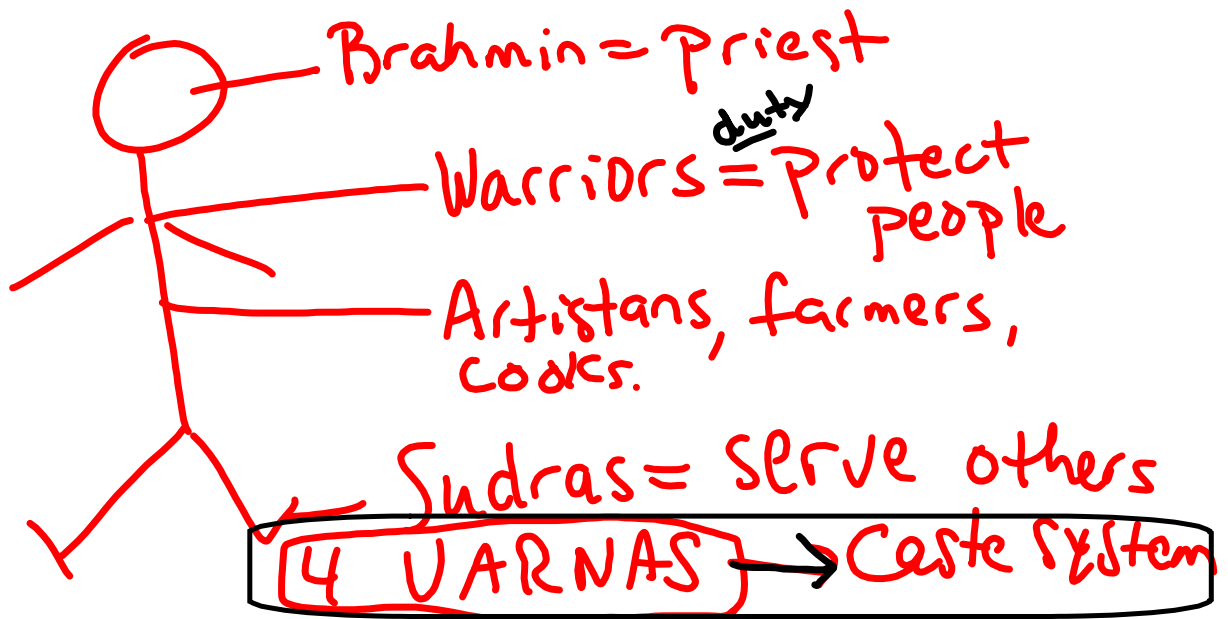
The Maurya Empire

The Gupta Golden Age

Ancient India . . .

- Home of Hinduism + Buddhism.
- Religion had a huge influence on Ancient India's gov't + culture.
- Peninsula / surrounded by water / lots of trade → wealth

Yoga is a spiritual exercise that has been practiced in India and elsewhere for over two thousand years. Through yoga, practitioners learn to focus their minds away from the material world and achieve a spiritual connection with Brahman, the ultimate reality in the universe.



Beliefs of Hinduism

1. Reincarnation - after death, one is reborn into another being
2. Karma = what goes around
good karma → better
life next life
3. dharma = duty - if you do your duty, you generate good karma.

Origins of Buddhism

- Philosophy, not a religion.
- No God
- Focus on the mind →
Complete peace and compassion.

Siddhārtha Gautama

Siddhārtha Gautama came from a small kingdom in the foothills of the Himalaya (in what is today part of southern Nepal). Born around 563 b.c., he was the son of a ruling princely family. The young and very handsome Siddhārtha was raised in the lap of luxury and lived a sheltered life. Like others of his class, he was also trained to be a warrior. At the age of 16, he married a neighboring princess and began to raise a family.

Siddhārtha appeared to have everything: wealth, a good appearance, a model wife, a child, and a throne that he would someday inherit. In his late twenties, however, Siddhārtha became aware of the pain of illness, the sorrow of death, and the effects of old age on ordinary people. He exclaimed, “Would that sickness, age, and death might be for ever bound!” He decided to spend his life seeking the cure for human suffering. He gave up his royal clothes, shaved his head, abandoned his family, and set off to find the true meaning of life.

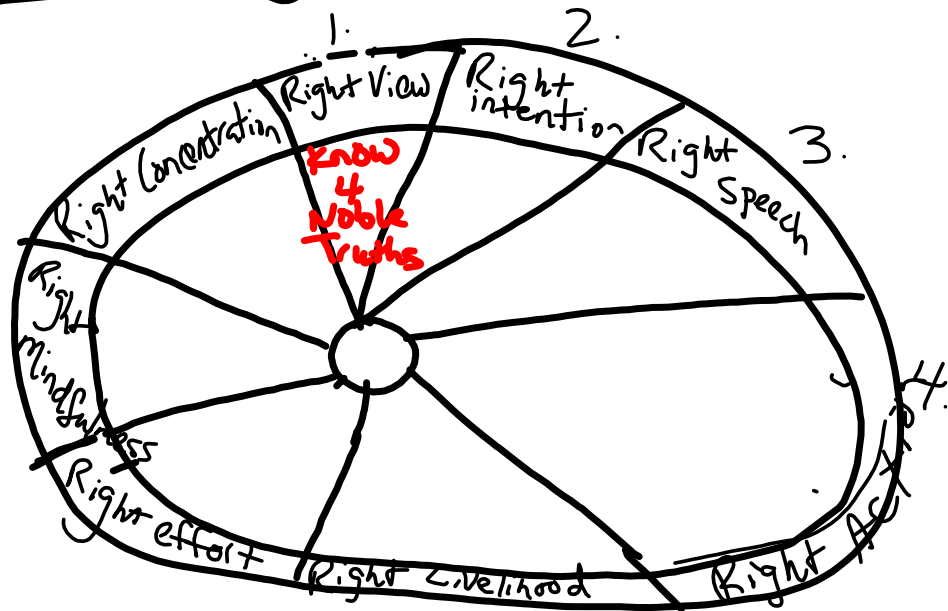
He wandered around India and meditated under a Bodhi tree and eventually Siddhārtha reached enlightenment as to the meaning of life. He spent the rest of his life preaching what he had discovered. Buddhism begins with his teachings.

4 Noble Truths

1. Life is suffering.
2. Suffering is caused by desire.
3. To end suffering, you must end desire.
4. To end desire, follow the Eight-Fold Path.

The Eight-Fold Path

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The Maurya Empire

- King Ashoka spread Buddhist ideas with his “Pillars of Ashoka.”
- Ruled with compassion: built schools, took care of the poor, and ended the slave trade.
- King Ashoka converted to Buddhism after seeing all the dead soldiers after the Battle of Kalinga.
- The **historical circumstances** that caused King Ashoka to make the Pillars were that he felt great remorse after seeing so many dead bodies on the battlefield after the Battle of Kalinga and he decided to become a Buddhist and spread Buddhism and peace.
- King Ashoka put the pillars in trading posts because he wanted to spread Buddhist ideas.

The Gupta Golden Age

(see next slide)

- Samudra Gupta gained power by winning many battles.
- The Gupta Empire will achieve a Golden Age with cultural achievements in
 - Literature - The Vedas, The Bhagavad Gita, Mahabharata (Hindu holy books)
 - Architecture - Stupas - places for prayer / temples
 - Science - astronomy / realized the earth was a sphere and rotated on an axis.
 - Math - algebra, the concept of zero, Arabic numerals.

- Gupta gained wealth through trade.