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CHAPTER - 6

NEW QUESTIONS AND IDEAS

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❖ **The story of the Buddha**

❖ **Upanishads**

❖ **Jainism**

The sangha

❖ **Monasteries**

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The story of the Buddha

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The story of the Buddha

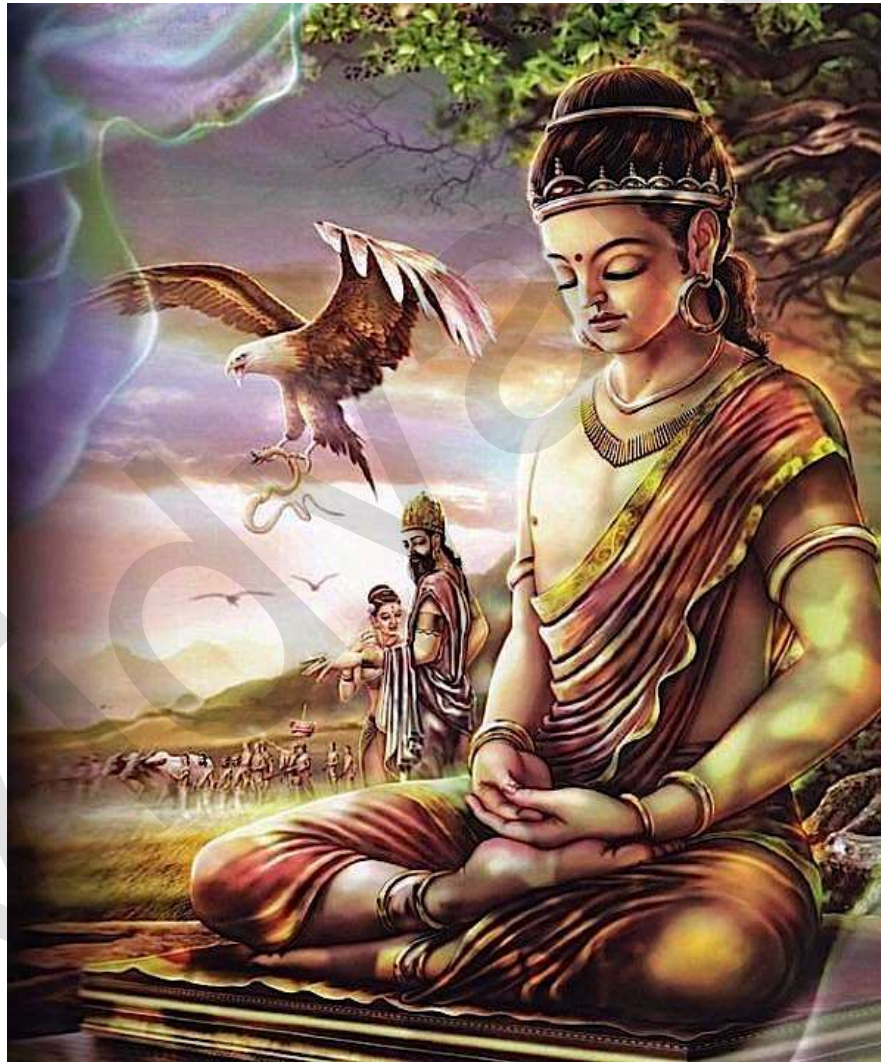
- Siddhartha, also known as Gautama, the founder of Buddhism, was born about 2500 years ago.
- He belonged to a small Gana known as the Sakya gana and was a kshatriya.
- When he was a young man, he left the comforts of his home in search of knowledge.



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YOUNG SIDDHARTHA



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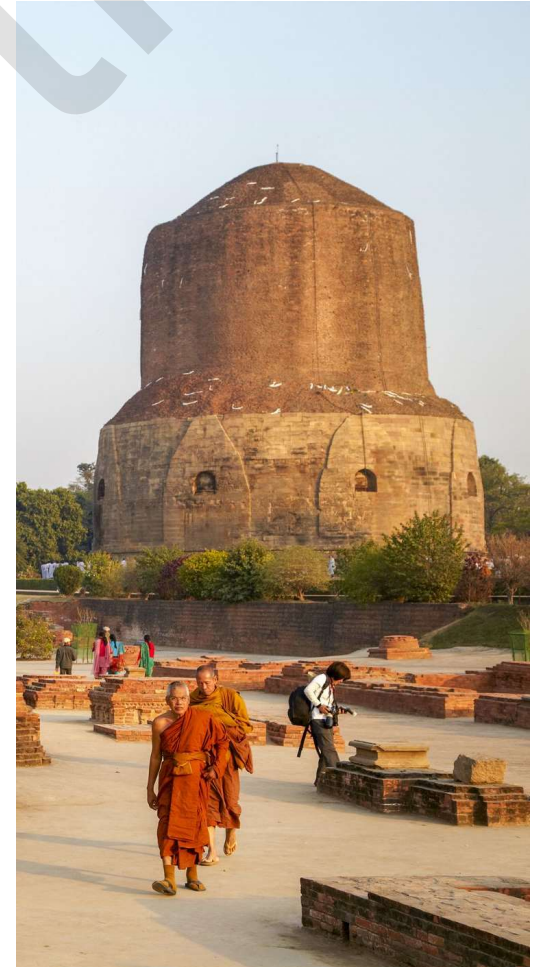
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- He wandered for several years and meditated for days on end under a peepal tree at Bodh Gaya in Bihar, where he attained enlightenment.
 - After that, he was known as the Buddha or the Wise One.

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- He then went to Sarnath, near Varanasi, where he taught for the first time.
- He spent the rest of his life travelling on foot, going from place to place, teaching people, till he passed away at Kusinagar.



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Bodhi tree

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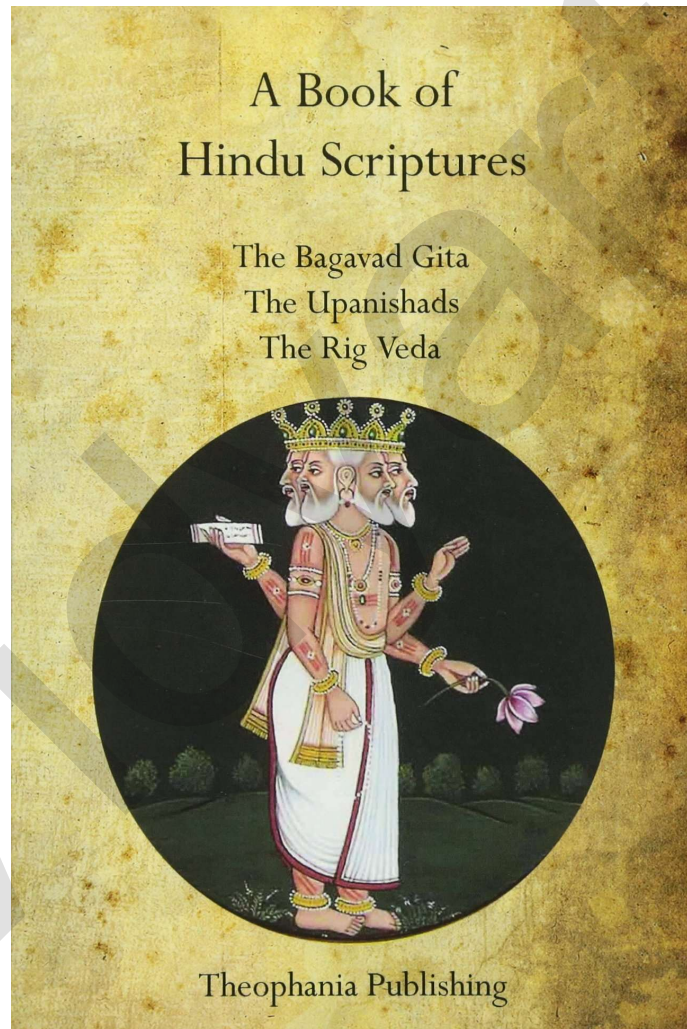
Buddha's teachings

- The Buddha taught that life is full of suffering and unhappiness which is caused because we have cravings and desires.
- The Buddha taught in the language of the ordinary people, Prakrit, so that everybody could understand his message.

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Upanishads

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Upanishads

- These were part of the later Vedic texts.
- Upanishad literally means 'approaching and sitting near'.
- They described the atman or the individual soul and the Brahman or the universal soul that ultimately, were one.

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- Most Upanishadic thinkers were men, especially Brahmins and rajas.
 - There were also few women thinkers such as Gargi, who was famous for her learning, and participated in debates held in royal courts.
- Poor people rarely took part in these discussions.

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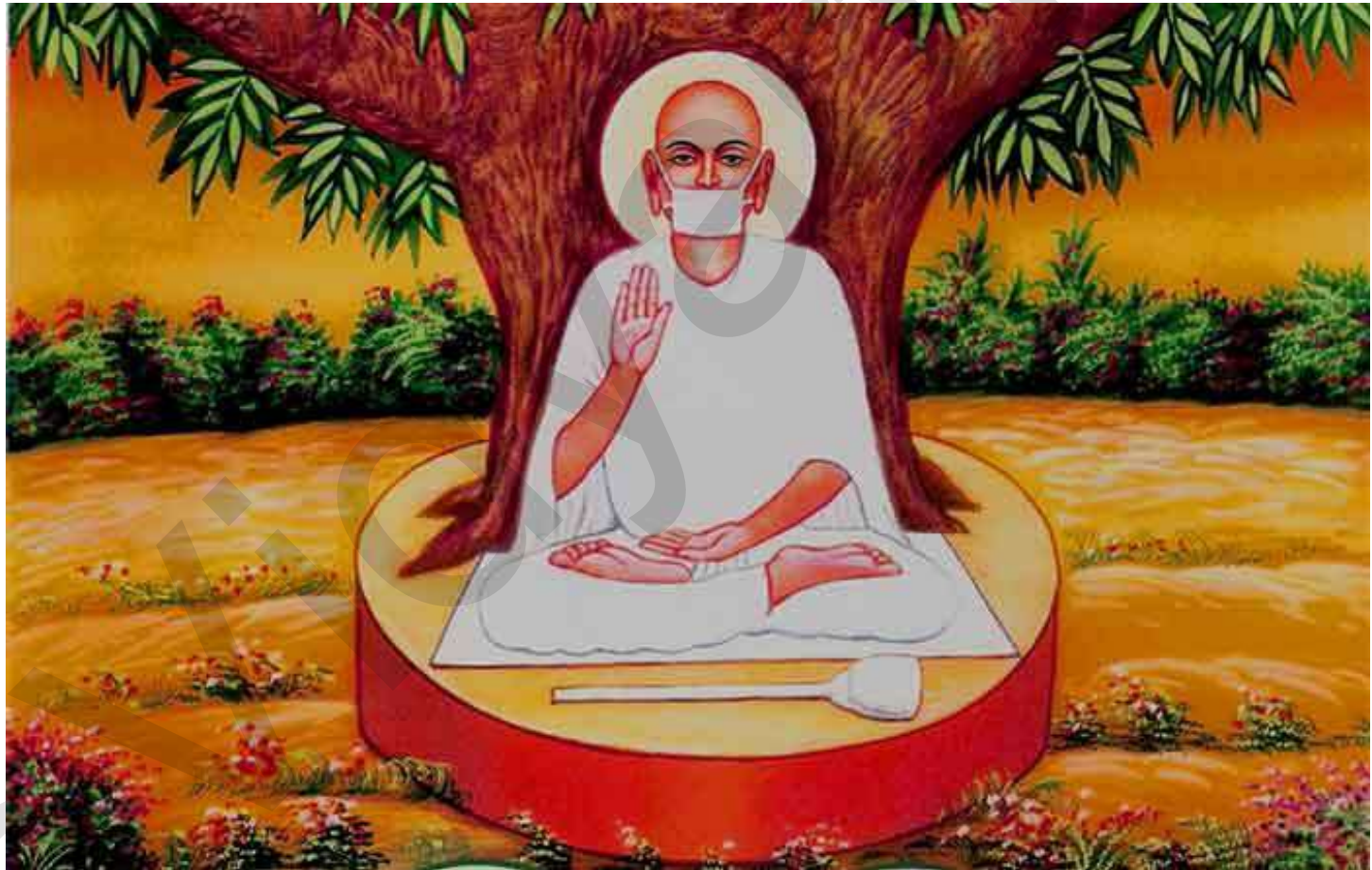
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- One famous exception was Satyakama Jabala, who was named after his mother, the slave woman Jabali.
- He had a deep desire to learn about reality, was accepted as a student by a brahmin teacher named Gautama, and became one of the best-known thinkers of the time.
- Many of the ideas of the Upanishads were later developed by the famous thinker Shankaracharya.

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Jainism



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Jainism

- The last and 24th tirthankara of the Jain's, Vardhamana Mahavira was the most famous among all thinkers.
- He was a kshatriya prince of the Lichchhavis, a group that was part of the Vajji sangha.
- Followers of Mahavira, who were known as Jainas, had to lead very simple lives, begging for food.

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- They had to be honest and were especially asked not to steal.
- Jainism was supported mainly by traders.
- Over hundreds of years, Jainism spread to different parts of north India, and to Gujarat, Tamil Nadu and Karnataka.

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- The teachings of Mahavira and his followers were transmitted orally for several centuries.
- They were written down in the form in which they are presently available at a place called Valabhi, in Gujarat, about 1500 years ago.

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The sangha

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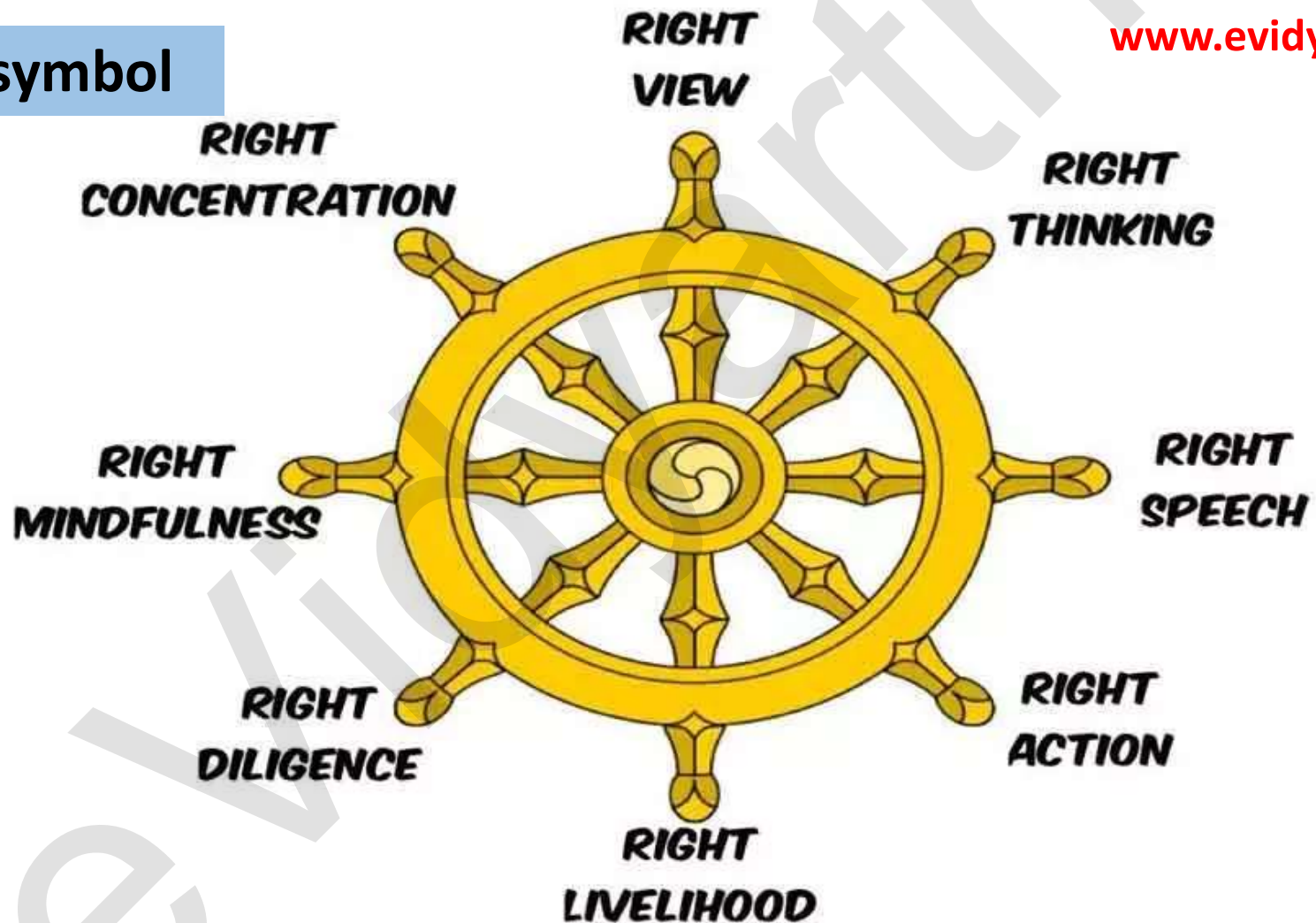
The sangha

- Both the Mahavira and the Buddha felt that only those who left their homes could gain true knowledge.
- They arranged for them to stay together in the sangha, an association of those who left their homes.
- Men and women who joined the sangha led simple lives.

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The sangha symbol

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- They meditated for most of the time and went to cities and villages to beg for food during fixed hours.
- That is why they were known as bhikkhus and bhikkhunis.
- The rules made for the Buddhist sangha were written down in a book called the Vinaya Pitaka.

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Monasteries

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Monasteries

- Both Jaina and Buddhist monks went from place to place throughout the year, teaching people.
- Many supporters of the monks and nuns, and they themselves felt the need for more permanent shelters and so monasteries were built.
 - These were known as viharas.

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- The land on which the vihara was built was donated by a rich merchant or a landowner, or the king.
- The local people came with gifts of food, clothing and medicines for the monks and nuns.

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□ The system of ashramas

- Around the time when Jainism and Buddhism were becoming popular, brahmins developed the system of ashramas.
- Here, the word ashrama does not mean a place where people live and meditate.
- It is used instead for a stage of life. Four ashramas were recognised:
brahmacharya, grihastha, vanaprastha and samnyasa.

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- Brahmin, kshatriya and vaishya men were expected to lead simple lives and study the Vedas during the early years of their life (brahmacharya).
- Finally, they had to give up everything and become samnyasins.
- The system of ashramas allowed men to spend some part of their lives in meditation.
- Generally, women were not allowed to study the Vedas, and they had to follow the ashramas chosen by their husbands