

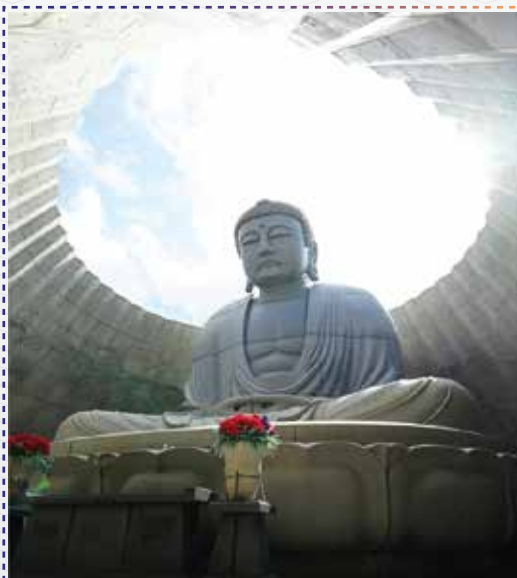


## Sects of Buddhism

Buddhism is divided into multiple sects based on philosophical interpretations, practices, and propagation methods.

### Major Sects of Buddhism

Sect	Key Characteristics	Subsects/Key Features
Hinayana	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Orthodox, conservative.</li> <li>Focuses on Arahantship (individual salvation).</li> <li>Rejects Buddha's deification and idol worship.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sthaviravada: Strict adherence to original teachings.</li> <li>Sautrantika: Emphasized Buddha's discourses.</li> </ul>
Theravada	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Developed in Sri Lanka (~3rd BCE).</li> <li>Preserves the Pali Canon.</li> <li>Focuses on Vibhajjavāda (analysis-based teaching).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Key Text: Visuddhimagga by Buddhaghosa.</li> <li>Practiced in Sri Lanka, Myanmar, Thailand, Cambodia, and Laos.</li> </ul>
Mahayana	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Liberal, focuses on Bodhisattva path and universal salvation.</li> <li>Introduced Buddha deification and idol worship.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Madhyamika: Founded by Nāgārjuna; emphasizes śūnyatā (emptiness).</li> <li>Yogācāra: Focused on Consciousness-Only Doctrine.</li> </ul>
Vajrayana	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Evolved from Mahayana (~5th CE).</li> <li>Incorporates Tantric rituals, mantras, and meditation.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Prominent in Tibet, Nepal, and Bhutan.</li> <li>Features deities like Tara and Avalokitesvara.</li> <li>Focused on esoteric enlightenment.</li> </ul>
Zen Buddhism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Offshoot of Mahayana.</li> <li>Focuses on meditation and spiritual experience over formal doctrines.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Popular in Japan.</li> <li>Practices include Zazen (seated meditation) and simplicity.</li> </ul>



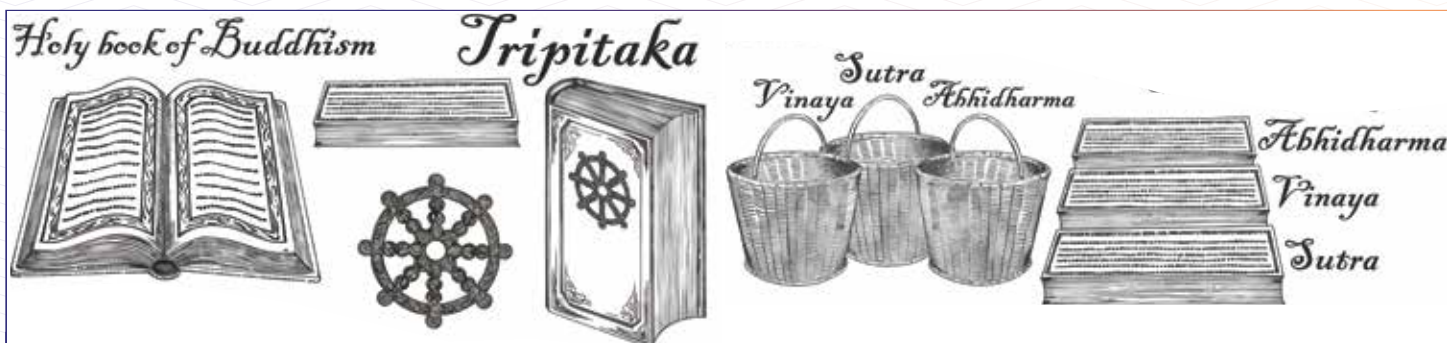
## Evolution and Division of Buddhist Sects

The division of Buddhism into various sects **began after the Buddha's death (c. 483 BCE)** due to **differences in interpretation of teachings, monastic code, and philosophy**. The **Second Buddhist Council (~383 BCE)** marked the first major split into **Sthaviravada** (followers of traditional teachings) and **Mahasanghika** (a more liberal group). Over time, further divisions emerged, evolving into major traditions like **Theravada, Mahayana, and Vajrayana**, each with distinct beliefs and practices.

Below is a detailed table summarizing the key sects, their philosophies, and features:

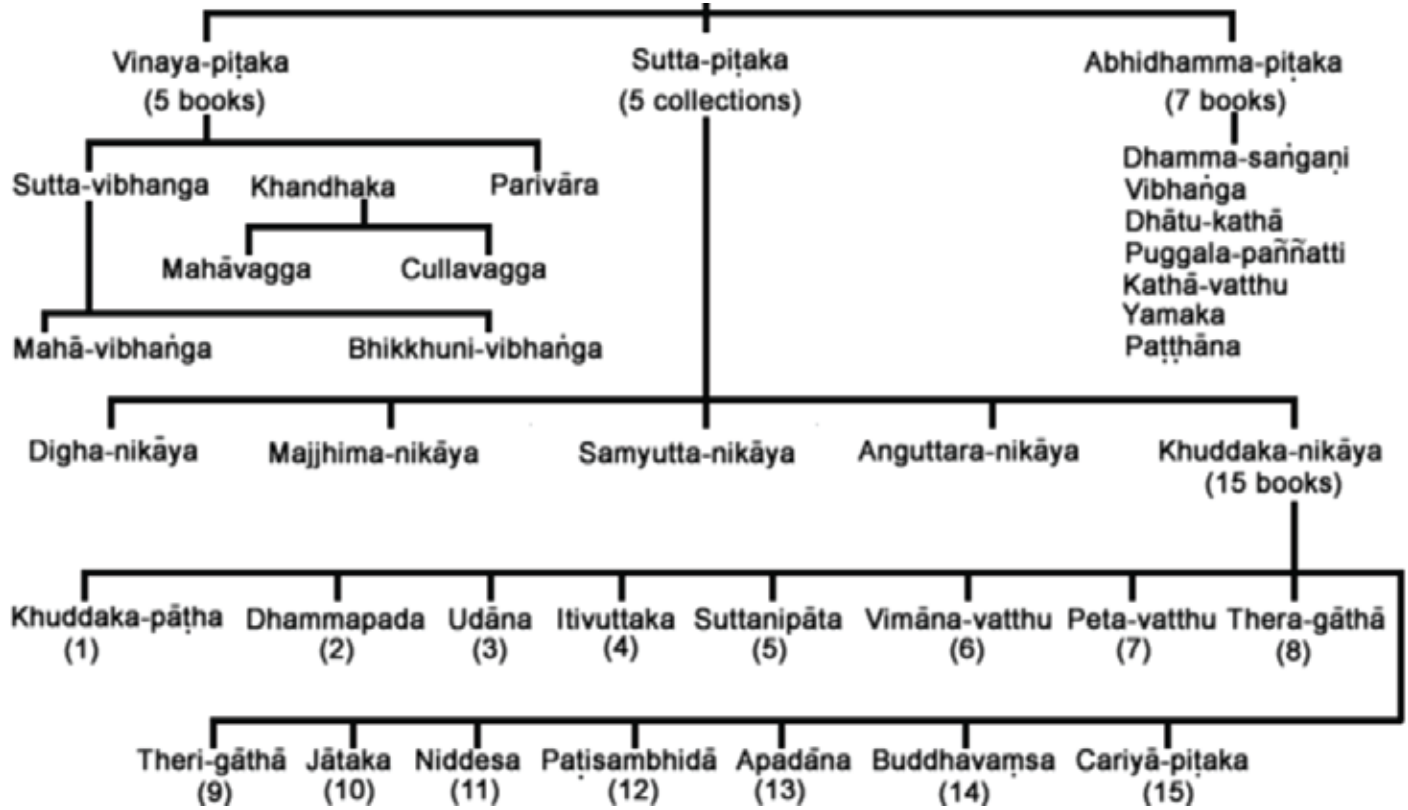
Sect/Sub-Sect	Time/Origin	Key Teachings & Beliefs	Key Features
Sthaviravada	After 2nd Council (~383 BCE)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Realist philosophy: All phenomena exist as unstable compounds of elements.</li> <li>Emphasized Arahantship (liberation from Samsara).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Rejected transcendental nature of Buddhas.</li> <li>Root of Theravada.</li> <li>Strict adherence to Vinaya (Monk's Code).</li> </ul>
Mahasanghika	After 2nd Council (~383 BCE)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Mind's original nature is pure but contaminated by passions.</li> <li>Buddhas are supramundane and transcendental.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Introduced Buddha divinity and anthropomorphic art.</li> <li>Mahayana Buddhism evolved from this sect.</li> <li>Represented majority after the 2nd Council.</li> </ul>
Lokottaravadin	Sub-sect of Mahasanghika (~1st CE)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Concept of Lokottara Buddha (Supernatural Buddha).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Buddha's teachings transcend worldly reality.</li> <li>Highlighted Buddha's supernatural qualities.</li> </ul>
Ekavyavaharika	Sub-sect of Mahasanghika	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Emphasized unity of teachings (Ekavyavahara).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Focused on the transcendental nature of Buddha.</li> </ul>
Kaukkutika	Sub-sect of Mahasanghika	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Conservative interpretation of Mahasanghika teachings.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Focused on scriptural analysis and doctrinal adherence.</li> </ul>
Sarvastivada	Split from Sthaviravada (~3rd BCE)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Doctrine of Sarvam asti (everything exists).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All phenomena (past, present, future) exist.</li> <li>Influential in Abhidharma texts.</li> <li>Spread across Central Asia and China.</li> </ul>
Pudgalavada	Split from Sthaviravada (~3rd BCE)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Doctrine of Pudgala (self/person) distinct from aggregates.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Proposed a quasi-self concept.</li> <li>Criticized and declined after 7th century CE.</li> </ul>
Dharmaguptaka	Split from Sarvastivada (~3rd BCE)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Emphasized monastic discipline and merit-making.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Spread Buddhism to China and East Asia.</li> <li>Developed own Vinaya (monastic code).</li> </ul>
Navayana	Modern (~20th CE)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Focused on social equality and justice.</li> <li>Reinterpretation by Dr. B.R. Ambedkar in India.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Popular among Dalits and marginalized communities.</li> <li>Addressed modern social issues.</li> </ul>

## Key Texts in Buddhism



Text	Description	Author/Attribution
<b>Tripitaka (Pali Canon)</b>	Core Buddhist scripture divided into three parts: <b>Vinaya Pitaka</b> (monastic rules), <b>Sutta Pitaka</b> (discourses), and <b>Abhidhamma Pitaka</b> (philosophy and psychology).	Compiled by early Buddhist disciples.
<b>Milindapanha</b>	Dialogue between King Milinda (Menander) and monk Nagasena on Buddhist philosophy and concepts.	Nagasena.
<b>Nettipakarana</b>	Guide for presenting Buddhist teachings to others, providing interpretive methods for teaching.	Kaccana.
<b>Divyavadana</b>	Collection of Buddhist legends and stories emphasizing karma.	Hinayana origin, 4th Century CE.
<b>Avadanashataka</b>	Collection of 100 stories (Avadanas) about the past lives of Buddha, emphasizing karmic deeds.	Anonymous, 2nd Century CE.
<b>Lalitavistara</b>	Biography of Buddha, detailing his life from birth to enlightenment.	Sarvastivada tradition.
<b>Buddhacharita</b>	Epic poem on the life of Buddha, portraying him as a historical and divine figure.	Ashvaghosha, 1st-2nd Century CE.
<b>Visuddhimagga</b>	Philosophical treatise on meditation, ethics, and the path to purification.	Buddhaghosa, 5th Century CE.
<b>Mahavamsa</b>	Historical chronicle of Sri Lanka; mentions Buddhist councils and Ashoka's missions.	Mahānāma, 5th Century CE.
<b>Dipavamsa</b>	Earliest historical chronicle of Sri Lanka, detailing the arrival of Buddhism in the region.	Anonymous, 3rd-4th Century CE.
<b>Jataka Tales</b>	Stories of Buddha's past lives, emphasizing moral lessons.	Included in Sutta Pitaka.
<b>Saddharma Pundarika (Lotus Sutra)</b>	Mahayana scripture emphasizing Bodhisattva ideals and the six Paramitas.	Mahayana tradition.
<b>Abhidhamma Kosha</b>	Treatise on Buddhist psychology and metaphysics.	Vasubandhu, 4th-5th Century CE.
<b>Suvarnaprabhasa Sutra</b>	Mahayana text focusing on rituals, mantras, and merits of worship.	Mahayana tradition.

## Tipitaka



## Avadana Texts

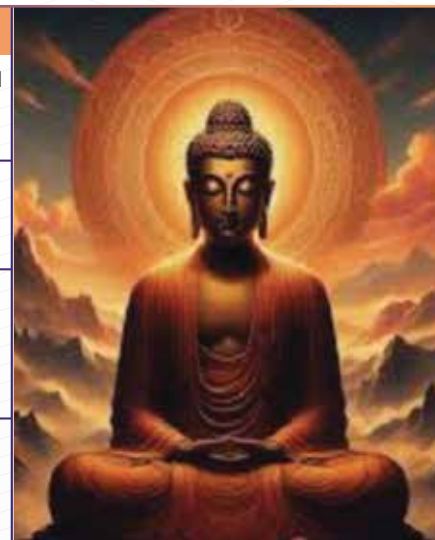
Avadanas are non-canonical Buddhist texts written in Sanskrit, focusing on stories of previous lives and karma, often linked to the Buddha. These texts were compiled between the 2nd and 11th centuries A.D.

- ♦ **Hinayanic Avadanas:** Early texts like Avadana-Sataka (2nd century) and Divyavadana (4th century).
- ♦ **Mahayanic Avadanas:** Later works, including Suvarnavarnavadana, Kalpadrumavadanamala, and Vratavadanamala.

They emphasize moral lessons through narratives, reflecting the evolution of Buddhist thought over time.

## Philosophical Contributions

Philosopher	Time Period	Contribution
Nāgārjuna	1st-2nd Century CE	Founder of the Madhyamika School (Middle Path); developed the concept of Śūnyatā (emptiness).
Āryadeva	3rd Century CE	Disciple of Nāgārjuna; expanded Madhyamika philosophy; emphasized dialectical reasoning.
Dignāga	5th-6th Century CE	Founder of Buddhist logic (Hetu Vidya); focused on perception (pratyakṣa) and inference (anumāna).
Vasubandhu	4th-5th Century CE	Proponent of the Yogācāra School (Consciousness-only); authored Abhidharmakosa.
Asanga	4th Century CE	Brother of Vasubandhu; co-founder of Yogācāra; wrote treatises on Mahayana philosophy.
Buddhaghosa	5th Century CE	Theravada scholar, authored Visuddhimagga on meditation and ethical practices.
Dharmakīrti	7th Century CE	Refined Buddhist logic and epistemology; emphasized pramāṇa (valid means of knowledge).
Ashvaghosha	1st-2nd Century CE	Author of Buddhacharita; integrated Mahayana philosophy with poetic tradition.
Shantideva	8th Century CE	Mahayana philosopher, wrote Bodhisattvacharyavatara on Bodhisattva ideals and ethics.



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