

Buddhist Councils:

1. First Buddhist Council (483 BCE):

- Held shortly after the passing of Buddha in Rajgir.
- Mainly focused on preserving and reciting the Buddha's teachings (suttas) and the monastic rules (Vinaya).
- The council was convened by King Ajatashatru and presided over by monk Mahakassapa.
- The Theravada tradition recognizes the decisions made during this council.

2. Second Buddhist Council (383 BCE):

- Held at Vaisali.
- A schism occurred over certain monastic practices, particularly regarding the strict adherence to the Vinaya rules.
- The outcome was the division of the Sangha into two schools: the Theravada (conservative) and the Mahasanghika (liberal).

3. Third Buddhist Council (250 BCE):

- Convened during the reign of Emperor Ashoka at Pataliputra.
- Purpose was to settle disputes within the monastic community, particularly regarding the interpretation of the Vinaya rules.
- It led to the expulsion of certain monks who held unorthodox views.
- The council also played a role in the dissemination of Buddhism beyond India, as Ashoka's missionaries were dispatched afterward.

4. Fourth Buddhist Council (1st century CE):

- The exact date and location of the fourth council are disputed among different Buddhist traditions.
- One of the key accomplishments was the preservation of the Theravada Pali Canon, which is the oldest Buddhist scripture.
- Some scholars suggest that this council may have been held in Sri Lanka.

Buddhist Texts:

1. Tripitaka (Three Baskets):

- The Tripitaka, also known as the Pali Canon, is the primary collection of Buddhist scriptures.

- It consists of three sections:
 - Vinaya Pitaka: Rules and regulations for the monastic community (sangha).
 - Sutta Pitaka: Discourses and teachings of Buddha.
 - Abhidhamma Pitaka: Philosophical and doctrinal analysis of Buddha's teachings.

2. Mahayana Sutras:

- Mahayana Buddhism has its own set of scriptures, including the Mahayana Sutras.
- These texts include the Lotus Sutra, the Heart Sutra, and many others.
- They emphasize the concept of the Bodhisattva, one who seeks enlightenment for the benefit of all beings.

3. Jataka Tales:

- Jataka tales are stories about the previous lives of Buddha (when he was a bodhisattva).
- These stories illustrate moral lessons and virtues.

4. Buddhist Commentaries and Treatises:

- Various Buddhist scholars and philosophers have written commentaries and treatises elaborating on Buddhist teachings.
- Notable works include the Abhidharma-kosa by Vasubandhu and Nagarjuna's writings on Madhyamaka philosophy.