



International Abhidhamma Divas

[Source: PIB](#)

Why in News?

Recently, India's Prime Minister addressed a ceremony in celebration of **International Abhidhamma Divas (IAD)** and recognition of **Pali** as a **classical language**.

- It was organised by the **International Buddhist Confederation (IBC)** and the **Ministry of Culture**.

What are Key Facts About International Abhidhamma Divas?

- **About IAD:** Abhidhamma Divas commemorates the **descent of Lord Buddha** from the **celestial realm** of the thirty-three divine beings (**Tāvātimsa-devaloka**) to Sankassiya (Sankisa Basantapur, Farrukhabad) in **Uttar Pradesh**.
 - The importance of this location is highlighted by the presence of the **Asokan Elephant Pillar**.
- **Story behind Abhidhamma:** According to the Pali texts, Buddha preached the **Abhidhamma** first to the **Gods** of the **Tavatimsa heaven**, who were headed by his **mother**.
 - After having returned to the earth again, he conveyed the message to his disciple **Sariputta**.
- **Mark of Event:** Abhidhamma Divas coincides with the end of the **rainy retreat (Vassa)** and the **Pavāraṇā festival**.
 - **Rainy retreat (Vassa)** is an annual **three-month monastic retreat** practised especially in the **Theravada Buddhist** tradition during the **monsoon season**.
 - The **Pavāraṇā festival** marks the **conclusion of Vassa**, where monks come together to **confess any faults or mistakes** made during the retreat and invite their fellow monks to point out any shortcomings they may have noticed.
 - Pavāraṇā festival is celebrated on **full moon day of the 11th lunar month** which usually in October.

What is Abhidhamma Pitaka?

- The **Abhidhamma Pitaka** is the **last of three Pitakas** that constitute to **Pali Canon**, one of the most popular scriptures of **Theravada Buddhism**.
 - Abhidhamma Pitaka is a **detailed scholastic analysis** and summary of the Buddha's teachings in the **Suttas**. It deals with the **philosophy, doctrine, psychology, metaphysics, ethics, and epistemology** of Buddhism
 - The other remaining Pitakas of Tipitaka are **Vinaya Pitaka** and **Sutta Pitaka**.
 - **Vinaya Pitaka** is the **monastic rules of conduct** for monks and nuns of the Sangha.
 - **Sutta Pitaka** contains **suttas (teachings/discourses)** delivered by the Buddha and his close disciples.
- The Abhidhamma Pitaka consists of **seven different books**.
 - **Dhammasangani** (Enumeration of Phenomena)

- **Vibhanga** (Book of Treaties)
- **Dhatukatha** (Discussion with Reference to the Elements)
- **Puggalapanatti** (Description of Personality)
- **Kathavatthu** (Points of Controversy)
- **Yamaka** (Book of Pairs)
- **Patthana** (Book of Relations)

BUDDHISM

Drishti IAS

ORIGIN

- **6th century BC**, based on the teachings of Gautam Buddha

MAIN FEATURES

- **Essence** - Attainment of enlightenment (Nibbana)
- **Supreme Deity** - None

PRINCIPLES

- Avoid the extremes; follow Madhyam Marg (middle path)
- Individualistic component (everyone is responsible for their own happiness)
- **4 Noble Truths:**
 - Dukkha (suffering)
 - Samudya (cause of suffering)
 - Nirodha (suffering could be ended)
 - Atthanga Magga (8-fold path to achieve this)
- **8-Fold Path:**
 - Right - view, intention, speech, action, livelihood, mindfulness, effort and concentration

BUDDHISM REJECTS

- Authenticity of Vedas
- Concept of soul (atman) (unlike Jainism)

MAJOR BUDDHIST TEXTS

- **Sutta Pitaka** (main teachings of Buddha - Dhamma)
- **Vinaya Pitaka** (rules of conduct for monks/nuns)
- **Abhidhamma Pitaka** (philosophical analysis)
- Other imp texts - **Divyavadana, Dipavamsa, Mahavamsa, Milind Panha**

Budhha's teachings were rehearsed, authenticated & divided in 3 Pitakas at the 1st Buddhist Council

These teachings were written down c. 25 BC in Pali

4 BUDDHIST COUNCILS

Buddhist Council	Patron	Venue	Chairman	Year
First	Ajatashatru	Rajgriha	Mahakashyapa	483 BC
Second	Kalashoka	Vaishali	Sabbakami	383 BC
Third	Ashoka	Patliputra	Mogaliputra	250 BC
Fourth	Kanishka	Kundalban (Kashmir)	Vasumitra	72 AD

What are Key Facts About Pali Language?

- **Origin of Pali:** Pali belongs to the **Indo-European language family**.
 - **Initially**, Pali was thought to be **identical with Magadhi**, the language of **Magadha** (modern-day Bihar).
 - Recent studies show **Pali** has a stronger resemblance to the **Prakrits of Western India**.
- **Classical Language:** The Union Cabinet has approved the recognition of **Pali** alongwith Prakrit, Marathi, Assamese, and Bengali as **classical languages**.
- **Connection with Ashoka:** Emperor Ashoka's inscriptions were written **Pali** especially in modern-day **Uttar Pradesh**.
- **Connection with Buddhism:** Pali is the language of the **three Theravada Buddhist canon** i.e., Vinaya Pitaka, Sutta Pitaka and Abhidhamma Pitaka.

- **Scripts of Pali:** Originally it was written in **Brahmi and Kharosthi scripts**. As Buddhism spread, Pali was written in local scripts like **Sinhalese** in Sri Lanka, **Burmese** in Myanmar, **Thai** in Thailand and **Khmer** in Cambodia.

UPSC Civil Services Examination, Previous Year Question (PYQ)

Prelims

Q. With reference to the cultural history of India, consider the following pairs: (2020)

1. Parivrajaka – Renunciant and Wanderer
2. Shramana – Priest with a high status
3. Upasaka – Lay follower of Buddhism

Which of the pairs given above are correctly matched?

- (a) 1 and 2 only
- (b) 1 and 3 only
- (c) 2 and 3 only
- (d) 1, 2 and 3

Ans: (b)

Q. With reference to the cultural history of India, which one of the following is the correct description of the term 'paramitas'? (2020)

- (a) The earliest Dharmashastra texts written in aphoristic (sutra) style
- (b) Philosophical schools that did not accept the authority of Vedas
- (c) Perfections whose attainment led to the Bodhisattva path
- (d) Powerful merchant guilds of early medieval South India

Ans: (c)

Q. With reference to the religious history of India, consider the following statements: (2020)

1. Sthaviravadins belong to Mahayana Buddhism.
2. Lokottaravadin sect was an offshoot of Mahasanghika sect of Buddhism.
3. The deification of Buddha by Mahasanghikas fostered the Mahayana Buddhism.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- (a) 1 and 2 only
- (b) 2 and 3 only
- (c) 3 only
- (d) 1, 2 and 3

Ans: (b)

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