

JAINISM BEFORE MAHAVIR

A Presentation based on
Jainism and the New Spirituality
by
Dr. Vastupal Parikh

Two Beliefs

1. Jain Belief

1. Jainism is millions of years old.
2. Adinath – 1st of 24 Tirthankaras.
3. Adinath invented agriculture, helped nomads settle, established family system, law, art, etc.
4. Adinath achieved nirvana in the Himalayas (Astapada, Kailash).

Two Beliefs

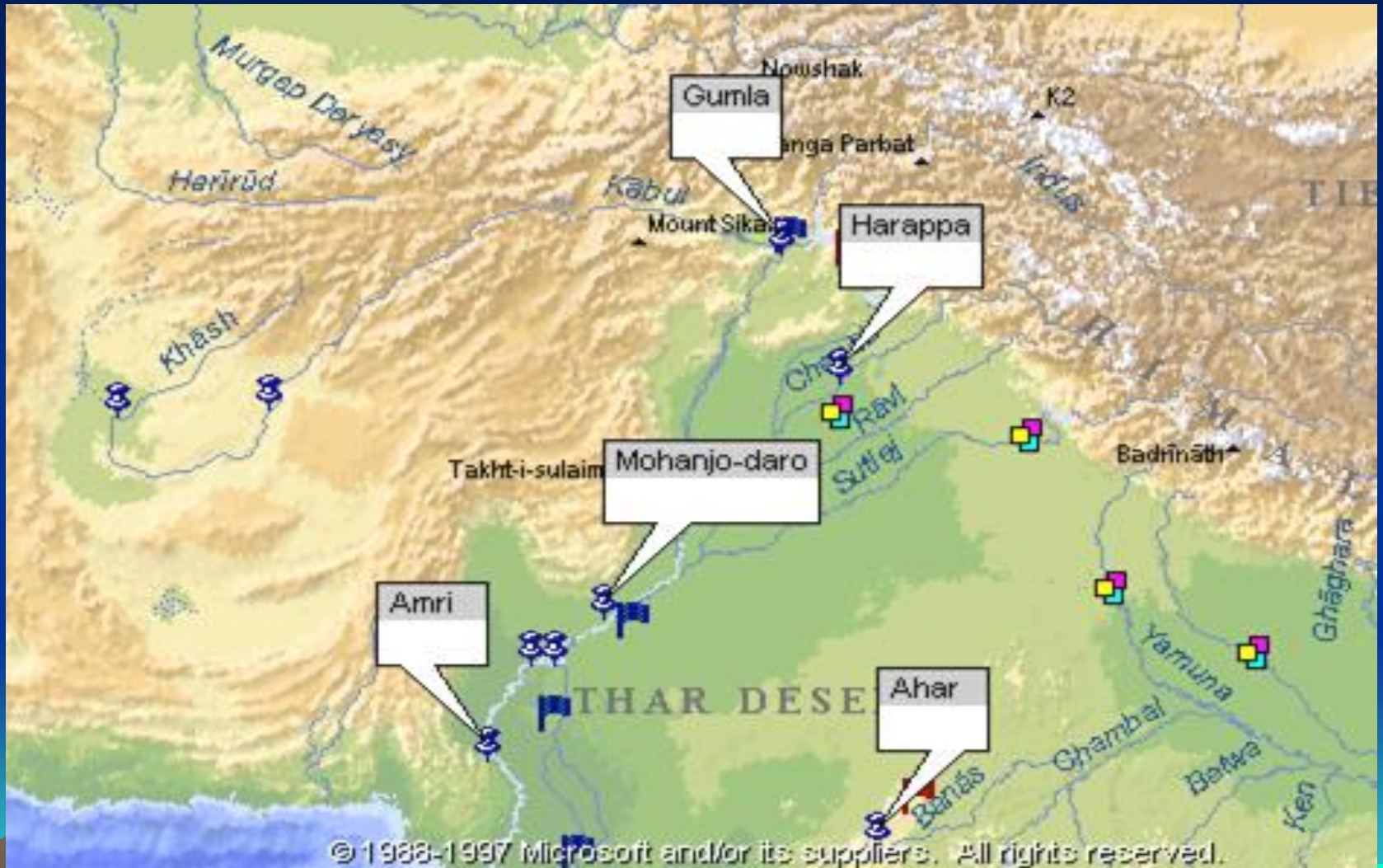
2. Taught in Indian Schools

1. Hinduism is the oldest religion of India (*Sanatan-Arya Dharma*).
2. Jainism is an off-shoot of Hinduism.
3. Mahavir and Buddha started their religions in the 6th century BCE. as a protest to Vedic practices.

Historical Facts - 1

- **Agriculture Begins in India** 8500 - 7000 Yrs ago
- **Regionalization Era (Rural)** 7000 - 4600 Yrs ago
- **Indus Civilization (Urban)** 4600 - 3500 Yrs ago

Indus Civilization ca 4500 BCE



Indus Valley Seals

(Puru alphabets are now deciphered)



The Ascetic King



- Hindu texts: “the thick-lipped, broad nosed, dark skinned inhabitants of India built mighty citadels. But they were eventually overwhelmed by the Aryan armies under the banner of Indra”
- - *The Art of India* by Nigel Cawthorne, Laurel Glen Pub. 1997, Pages 11, 14

Sraman (Dravidian) Civilization

- **Social Order, Family System, Marriage, Law and Order, Justice, Government**
- **Built Villages, Towns and Cities**
- **Land Cultivation, Arts and Craft, Brahmi Script, Reading & Writing**
- **Metallurgy - Gold, Silver, Copper**
- **Sraman culture from Afghan to Lanka**

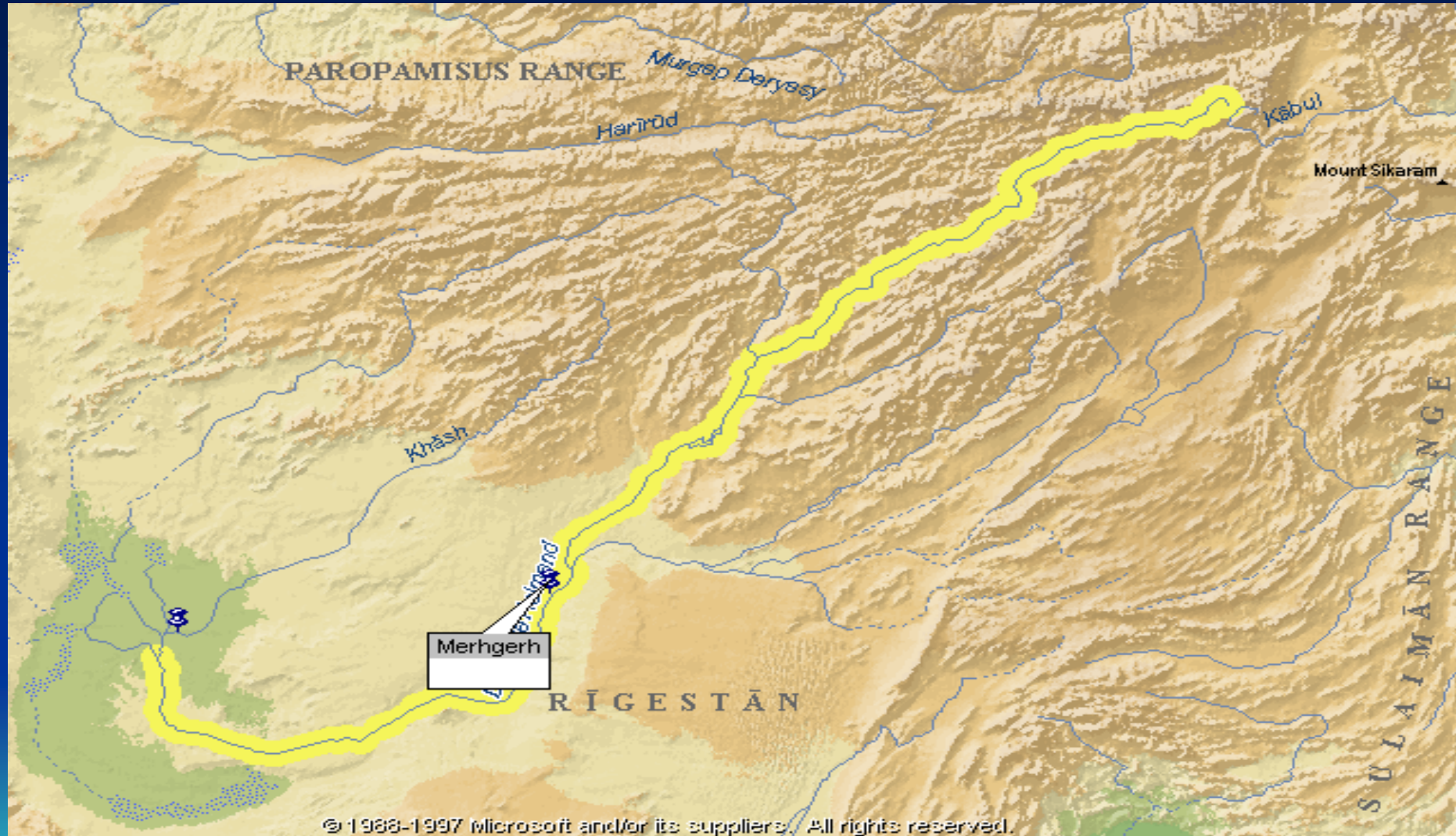
Sraman (JAIN) Philosophy

- **Living Beings have Body and Soul**
- **Pure Soul is Bliss, Impure Soul is Misery**
- **Soul purification reduces Misery**
- **Soul purity requires self-control through Meditation, Yoga & Vows**
- **Meditation in seating (Padmasan) or Standing (Kayostarg) Positions**

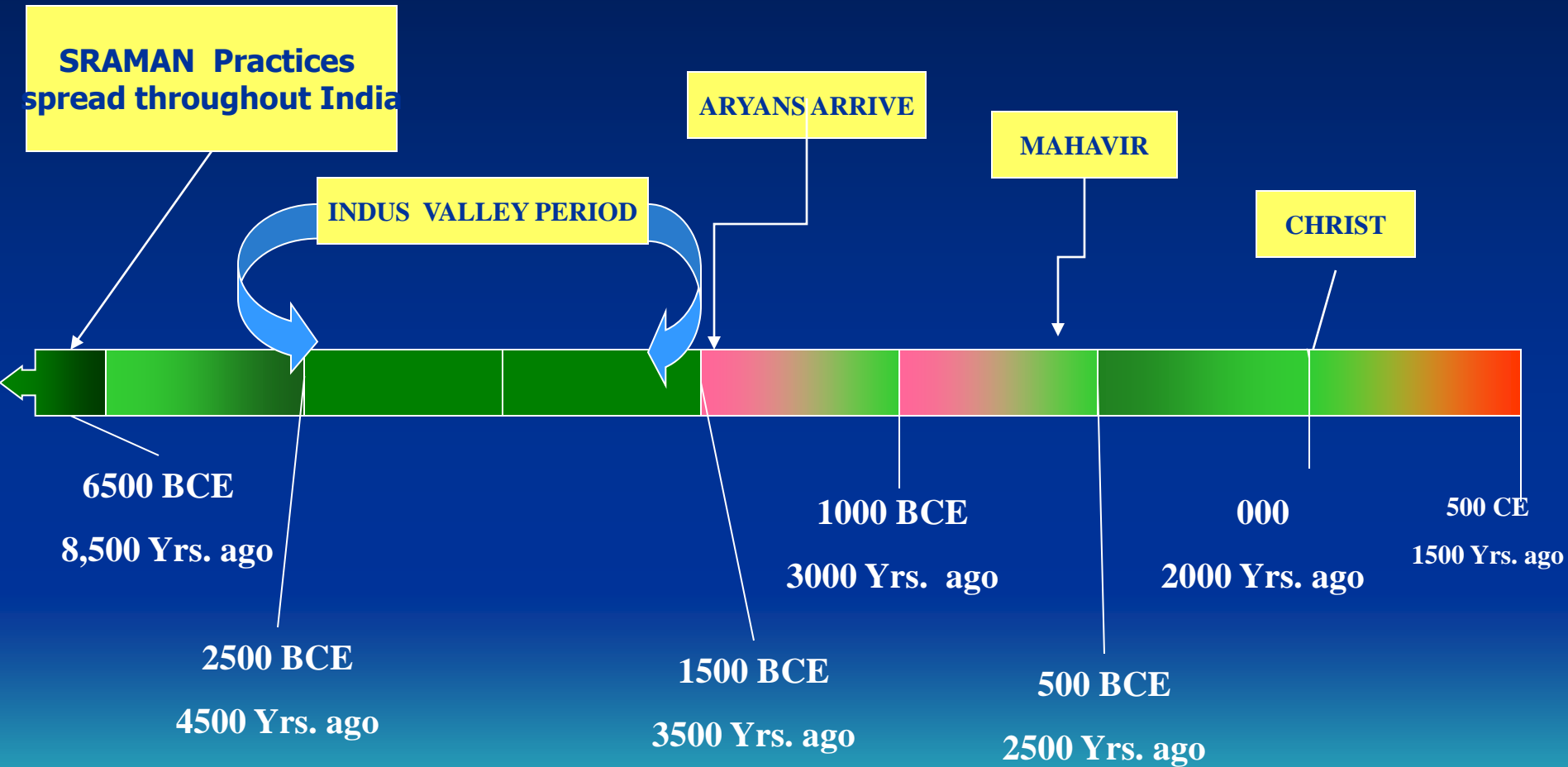
Historical Facts - 2

- **Aryan Arrivals** 3500 - 3300 Yrs ago
- **Rigvedas (Hinduism Begins)** 3300 - 3000 Yrs ago
- **Brahmana, Aranyka** 3000 – 2800 Yrs ago
- **Upanishad Composed** 2800 - 2600 Yrs ago

Aryan Route To Indus



Time Chart



Evolution of Vedic Philosophy

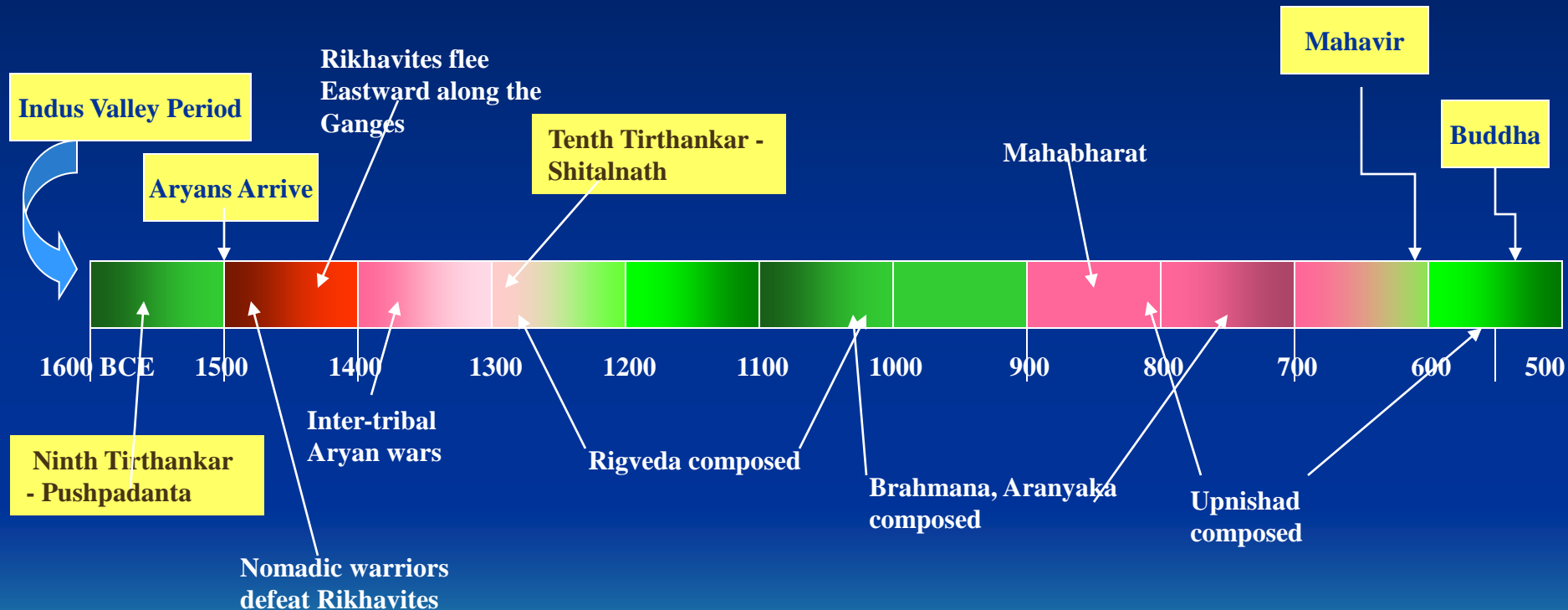
- Early Migration period (Rigveda 1300-1150 BCE)
- Worshiped powers of Nature (Varuna, Indra, Agni, Surya)
- Not concerned with the meaning of life.
- Reference to Rikhavites as 'Vratyas', 'Yogins', etc.
- Later Vedic period Brahmanas & Aranyakas 1000-700 BCE
- Insecurity, skepticism of the *mythical* powers of Aryan gods.
- Paved the way for *magical* sacrificial rites
- Start of caste (varna) system made Brahmin priests most powerful.

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Evolution of Vedic Philosophy

- Sacrificial rites questioned, Attention to shraman philosophy of karma and sansara.
- **Upnishadic Period (800-500 BCE)**: Identifies individual soul 'atman' with the soul of the universe 'brahman' (tat tvam asi). Idea of rebirth and transmigration.
- Upnishads document the transition from **mythical** (gods of Nature, Rigveda) and **magical** (rituals, Brahmana) thought to the **mystical** philosophy of salvation.
- Acceptance of Rikhavdev - renamed Rishbhadev - as Mahadev (later called 'Shiva' or Shankar)

Expanded Time Chart



Comparison Of Cultures-1

INDUS CULTURE

SETTLEMENTS: Urban, large brick houses, public sanitation system

METALS: Gold, silver, copper, bronze, and lead but iron unknown

WEAPONS: Stone/wood weapons of offense but **no defensive shields, coats, helmets**, etc.

ANIMALS: Bulls, cows, elephants but **no horses**

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RIGVEDIC CULTURE

SETTLEMENTS: Rural small thatched houses of bamboo

METALS: Gold, copper, bronze and **iron**, silver known but less common

WEAPONS: Stone, wood, iron, defensive shields, helmets and coats of nail, chariots.

ANIMALS: Sheep, cows, **horse**

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Comparison Of Cultures-2

INDUS CULTURE.

ART: Well developed Brahmi script and artistic talent in drawing, sculpture, figurines, jewelry, pottery, etc.

RELIGION: Means of spiritual development was through meditation, yoga Diksha, & self-purification.

RIGVEDIC CULTURE.

ART: No achievements in art and writing skills. Verbal poetry developed in immediate post-Aryan invasion.

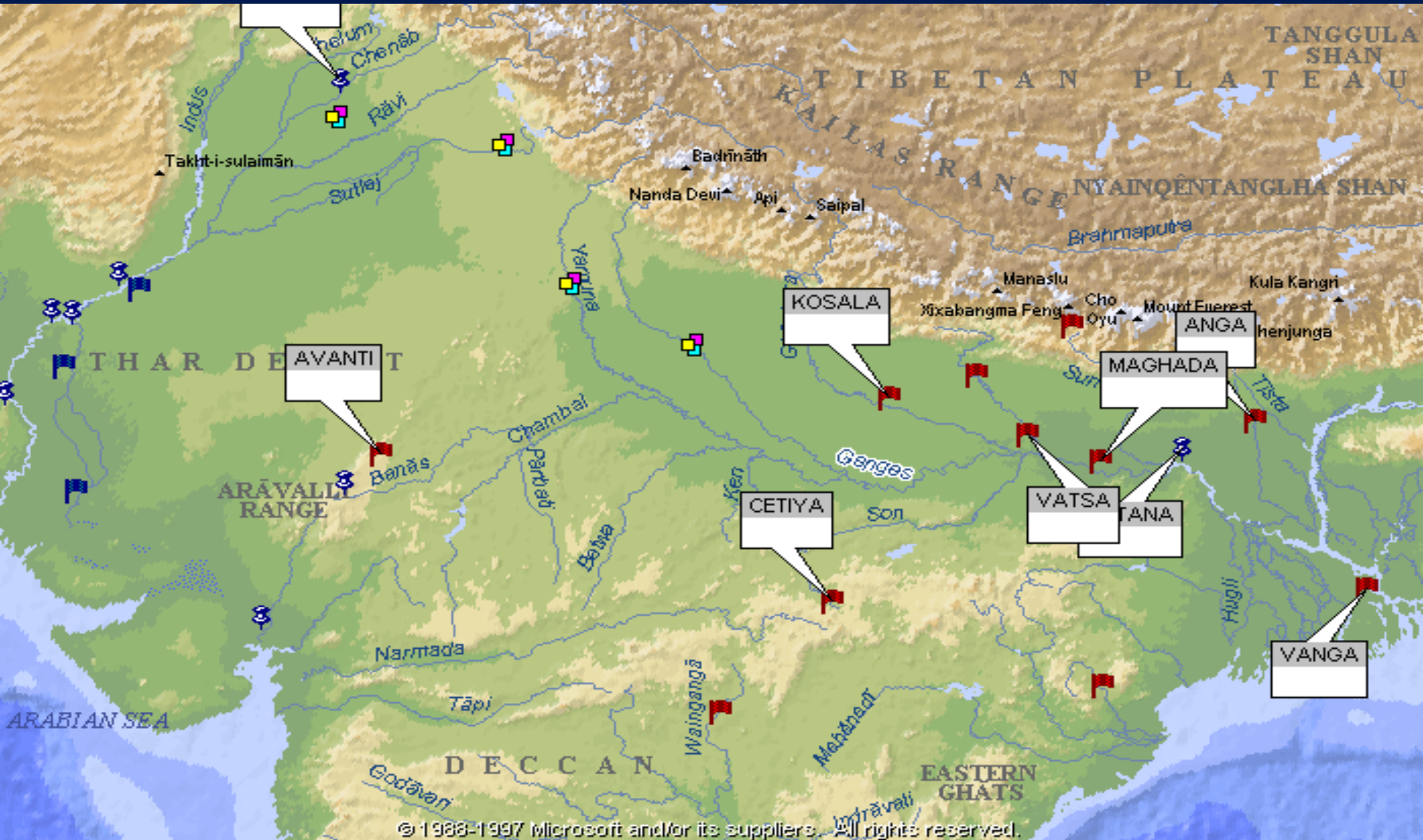
RELIGION: Worship, offerings and invocations to the powers of Nature to bestow spiritual favours.

CONCLUSION: Rigvedic culture was unrelated to the earlier Indus (Sraman) culture and had an independent origin and development.

Historical Facts - 3

- **Ganges Valley Invasions** **2950 - 2600 Yrs ago**
- **Shraman Reforms** **2600 - 2500 Yrs ago**

Dravidian Kingdoms – 700 BCE



Aryan March Eastward

“Agni thence went burning along this earth towards the East... and Videgha Madhava followed after him. He (Agni) burnt over (dried up) all these rivers. Now that river, which is called Sadanira (Gandak) flows from the northern mountains. That one he did not burn over. That one the Brahmins did not cross thinking, ‘it has not been burnt over by Agni Vishvanara’. Videgha then said to Agni “Where am I to abide? Oh lord Vishvanara, purify thy now the land of Niganthis to the South.”

“To the East of this river be thy abode!” said the Lord.

Shatpath Brahmana, Aryan March Eastward and founding of Videha to the northeast of Patna by prince Videgha-Madhava. Translation: J. Eggeling - Sacred Books of the East (1882-1900)

Sramana Reforms

“Seven Recorded Attempts in 600 B.C.E.

- 1. Kassapa**
- 2. Mikkhali Gosala**
- 3. Ajit Kesakambala**
- 4. Pakudha Kacchayana**
- 5. Sanjaya Belathiputta**
- 6. Vardhaman Mahavira**
- 7. Gautama Buddha**

Results

Only two reforms survived

1. Vardhaman Mahavira maintained links with his sramana roots and became the Twenty fourth Tirthankara of **JAINISM**
2. Gautama Buddha severed ties with his past and became the founder of a new religion - **BUDDHISM.**

Comparing Two Religions

JAINISM

Roots: Shraman System

Basic Belief: No creator

God, Six eternal Dravya
form Universe

Philosophy: Work hard to
purify soul and achieve
Moksha

Origin: Aborigines of India
(Dravidians)

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HINDUISM

Roots: Vedic System

Basic Belief : GOD

Generates, Orders and
Destroys Universe

Philosophy: Pacify GOD
and achieve nirvana as His
mercy

Origin: Aryan tribes from
Russian steppes

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Conclusion

- **Jainism and Buddhism have roots in at least 8,500 years old Sraman Philosophy of India's Pre-Harppan aboriginals (Dravidians)**
- **Hinduism developed from Vedic Philosophy of Aryans after their arrival in India in 1500 BCE.**

The Myth Continues...

August 2005

Indian Supreme Court declared that Jainism is just a reformist movement amongst Hindus like Brahamsamajis, Aryasamajis and Lingayats.

August 2006

The same court under pressure declared that Jainism is indeed a separate religion.

October 2006

Gujarat Govt. passed a legislation announcing Jainism to be a branch of Hinduism. This legislation was challenged and rejected by the courts.

The Jain Apathy

The Supreme court verdict was challenged by a school-girl in M.P., **NOT** by any Jain leader or organization.

Gujarat legislation was taken to courts **NOT** by the Jains but by the Indian Christians.

Indian Supreme Court Verdict

- 29. There is a very serious debate and difference of opinion between religious philosophers and historians as to whether Jains are of Hindu stock and whether their religion is more ancient than the vedic religion of Hindus. Spiritual philosophy of Hindus and Jains in many respect is different but the quintessence of the spiritual thought of both the religions seems to be the same.
- It signifies (A Jina is) a person who has attained victory over himself by the process of self-purification. 'Jain' is a religious devout who is continuously striving to gain control over his desires, senses and organs to ultimately become master of his own self.

Indian Supreme Court Verdict

- 30. This (Jain) philosophy is to some extent similar to the vedic philosophy explained by Lord Krishna in 'Bhagwat Geeta', where Lord Krishna describes qualities of a perfect human as 'Stithpragya'.
- 31. In philosophical sense, Jainism is a reformist movement amongst Hindus like Brahamsamajis, Aryasamajis and Lingayats.
- 34. The Hindu society being based on caste, is itself divided into various minority groups. Each caste claims to be separate from the other. In a caste-ridden Indian society, no section or distinct group of people can claim to be in majority. All are minorities amongst Hindus.