

Social and Ethical Values in Prakrit Literature: A Comparative Analysis of the Uttarādhyayana Sūtra, Daśavaikālika Sūtra, Sutta Nipāta, and Dhammapada

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Abstract

Prakrit literature holds an important place in India's knowledge tradition because it preserved and communicated ethical ideas in a language understood by ordinary people. As the principal medium of the Jain and Buddhist Śramaṇa traditions, it transformed philosophical teachings into practical guidance for everyday life and made moral knowledge accessible to all sections of society. Canonical texts such as the Uttarādhyayana Sūtra, Daśavaikālika Sūtra, Sutta Nipāta, and Dhammapada present enduring ideals of non-violence, truthfulness, compassion, self-restraint, equality, and social responsibility. These values influenced personal conduct, strengthened social harmony, and contributed to the development of India's ethical and cultural traditions. Although these texts have been widely studied within Jain and Buddhist scholarship, comparatively little attention has been given to their shared social and ethical vision through the broader perspective of Prakrit literature as a foundation of Indian knowledge traditions.

This paper presents a comparative analysis of the social and ethical teachings preserved in these four canonical texts by employing historical, textual, philological, and comparative methods. It examines how the Jain and Buddhist traditions explain the relationship between individual character, moral discipline, and collective well-being while identifying both their common ethical principles and distinctive philosophical perspectives. The study demonstrates that Prakrit literature functioned not merely as a literary language but also as an effective medium for preserving, transmitting, and popularising ethical knowledge across generations. It concludes that the values embodied in these texts continue to provide meaningful guidance for social harmony, responsible citizenship, mutual respect, peaceful coexistence, and value-based education. By relating these findings to the conference theme, Lokadhārā Prakrit: Indian Knowledge Tradition and Cultural Heritage, the paper establishes that Prakrit literature remains a vital source for understanding India's intellectual legacy and continues to inspire ethical reflection, cultural continuity, and inclusive human values in contemporary society.

1. Introduction

Prakrit literature occupies a distinguished place in the intellectual and cultural history of India. Among its diverse literary traditions, Jain and Buddhist canonical texts preserve a rich heritage of social and ethical thought that has significantly contributed to the Indian Knowledge Tradition (*Bharatiya Jñāna Paramparā*). Unlike the exclusive use of elite literary languages, Jain teachers adopted **Ardhamāgadhī Prakrit** and Buddhist teachers employed **Pāli** to communicate ethical teachings in languages that were widely understood by ordinary people. This linguistic choice facilitated the wider dissemination of moral values, religious instruction, and philosophical reflection across different sections of society.¹

The *Uttarādhyayana Sūtra* and the *Daśavaikālika Sūtra* occupy an important place within the Jain canonical tradition, while the *Sutta Nipāta* and the *Dhammapada* are among the earliest and most influential works of the Buddhist Pāli Canon. Although these texts originated within distinct religious traditions, they share a common concern for ethical living, self-discipline, compassion, truthfulness, non-violence, and the cultivation of moral character. Their teachings transcend sectarian boundaries and continue to provide valuable guidance for promoting social harmony, responsible citizenship, and peaceful coexistence.²

The historical significance of these texts is further supported by literary and epigraphic evidence. The **Bhabru (Bairat) Rock Edict** of Emperor Aśoka (Mauryan Period, third century BCE; c. 258–250 BCE), inscribed in Prakrit using the Brāhmī script, recommends the study of several Buddhist discourses, including the **Muni Sutta** (*Sutta Nipāta* 1.12) and the **Moneyya Sutta** (*Sutta Nipāta* 1.8) preserved in the *Sutta Nipāta*.³

Although these canonical works have been widely studied within their respective Jain and Buddhist traditions, comparatively little attention has been devoted to a systematic comparative analysis of their shared social and ethical values and their contribution to the Indian Knowledge Tradition. The present study addresses this gap by comparatively examining the ethical teachings of the *Uttarādhyayana Sūtra*, *Daśavaikālika Sūtra*, *Sutta Nipāta*, and the *Dhammapada*, highlighting their common values, distinctive features, and continuing relevance in contemporary society.^{4–5}

Footnotes

1. Paul Dundas, *The Jains*, 2nd ed. (London: Routledge, 2002), 68–74; K. R. Norman, *Pāli Literature* (Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz, 1983), 1–12.
2. Hermann Jacobi, trans., *Jaina Sūtras*, Part II, *Sacred Books of the East*, vol. 45 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1895), *Uttarādhyayana Sūtra*; Oskar von Hinüber and K. R. Norman, eds., *Dhammapada* (Oxford: Pali Text Society, 1994); Dines Andersen and Helmer Smith, eds., *Khuddakapāṭha and Sutta Nipāta* (London: Pali Text Society, 1913).
3. N. A. Nikam and Richard McKeon, *The Edicts of Aśoka* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1959), 52–54; Richard Salomon, *Indian Epigraphy* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), 71–73.
4. Johannes Bronkhorst, *Greater Magadha: Studies in the Culture of Early India* (Leiden: Brill, 2007), 1–25.
5. Rupert Gethin, *The Foundations of Buddhism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), 54–78.

2. Objectives of the Study

To comparatively examine the social and ethical values in the *Uttarādhyayana Sūtra*, *Daśavaikālika Sūtra*, *Sutta Nipāta*, and the *Dhammapada*; to identify their common ethical principles and evaluate their contribution to the Indian Knowledge Tradition and contemporary society.

3. Research Methodology

This study adopts a qualitative and comparative approach based on textual analysis of selected Jain and Buddhist canonical texts supported by relevant secondary sources.

4. Scope and Limitations of the Study

The study is limited to a comparative analysis of the social and ethical values presented in the *Uttarādhyayana*

yana Sūtra, Daśavaikālika Sūtra, Sutta Nipāta, and the Dhammapada. It focuses on selected ethical themes and their contribution to the Indian Knowledge Tradition and contemporary society.

Here is the revised section:

5. Historical Genesis of the Selected Texts

The Śramaṇa movement of the sixth century BCE gave rise to the Jain and Buddhist canonical traditions, which adopted **Ardhamāgadhī Prakrit** and **Pāli** to communicate ethical teachings to the wider public.⁶ The *Uttarādhyayana Sūtra* and the *Daśavaikālika Sūtra* emphasise non-violence, truthfulness, self-restraint, and right conduct, while the *Sutta Nipāta* and the *Dhammapada* present the Buddha's teachings on morality, compassion, wisdom, and liberation.⁷

The **Bhabru (Bairat) Rock Edict** of Emperor Aśoka (third century BCE), which recommends the *Muni Sutta* and *Moneyya Sutta* of the *Sutta Nipāta*, provides important historical evidence for the early Buddhist textual tradition.⁸

Together, these canonical works constitute a significant ethical legacy within the Indian Knowledge Tradition.⁹

Footnotes

6. Johannes Bronkhorst, *Greater Magadha: Studies in the Culture of Early India* (Leiden: Brill, 2007), 1–25.
7. Hermann Jacobi, trans., *Jaina Sūtras*, Part II, *Sacred Books of the East*, vol. 45 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1895); Dines Andersen and Helmer Smith, eds., *Khuddakapāṭha and Sutta Nipāta* (London: Pali Text Society, 1913); Oskar von Hinüber and K. R. Norman, eds., *Dhammapada* (Oxford: Pali Text Society, 1994).
8. N. A. Nikam and Richard McKeon, *The Edicts of Aśoka* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1959), 52–54; Richard Salomon, *Indian Epigraphy* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), 71–73.
9. Rupert Gethin, *The Foundations of Buddhism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), 54–78

6. Comparative Analysis of Social and Ethical Values

The *Uttarādhyayana 6.1*, *Daśavaikālika Sūtra*, *Sutta Nipāta*, and the *Dhammapada* present a common ethical vision centred on moral discipline and human welfare. Despite their distinct doctrinal backgrounds, these canonical texts uphold universal values such as **non-violence, truthfulness, compassion, self-restraint, humility, equality, generosity, forgiveness, and right conduct**. The following sections comparatively examine these shared ethical principles.¹⁰

Footnote

10. Paul Dundas, *The Jains*, 2nd ed. (London: Routledge, 2002), 68–92; Rupert Gethin, *The Foundations of Buddhism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), 54–84.

6.1 Non-violence (Ahimsā)

Non-violence (*ahimsā*) is the cornerstone of Jain and Buddhist ethics, advocating respect for all living beings and the avoidance of harm in thought, word, and deed.

Uttarādhyayana Sūtra (8.9)

सव्वे पाणा ण हंतव्वा।

Savve pāṇā ṇa hantavvā.

Meaning: “All living beings should not be harmed.”¹¹

Analysis:

The *Uttarādhyayana Sūtra* presents non-violence as the highest religious duty. Every living being possesses intrinsic value; therefore, intentional injury creates karmic bondage and obstructs liberation.

Daśavaikālika Sūtra (4.1)

पाणे णाइवाएज्जा।

Pāṇe ṇāivāejjā.

Meaning: “One should not injure living beings.”¹²

Analysis:

The *Daśavaikālika Sūtra* emphasises compassion and careful conduct in daily life, extending non-violence to all forms of life.

Sutta Nipāta (Sn 394)

Na hiṃse kañci pāṇaṃ.

Meaning: “Let one harm no living being.”¹³

Analysis:

The *Sutta Nipāta* teaches universal compassion, encouraging abstention from violence through wisdom and loving-kindness.

Dhammapada (129–130)

Sabbe tasanti daṇḍassa, sabbe bhāyanti maccuno.

Meaning: “All tremble at violence; all fear death.”¹⁴

Analysis:

The *Dhammapada* bases non-violence on empathy. Recognising that all beings fear suffering encourages compassion and peaceful conduct.

Comparative Analysis

Both Jainism and Buddhism regard non-violence as the foundation of ethical life. Jainism emphasises the absolute protection of all forms of life to prevent karmic bondage, whereas Buddhism stresses compassion and empathy as the basis for refraining from violence. Despite these doctrinal differences, both traditions uphold *ahiṃsā* as the essential principle for personal purification, social harmony, and peaceful coexistence.

Footnotes

10. Hermann Jacobi, trans., *Jaina Sūtras*, Part II, *Sacred Books of the East*, vol. 45 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1895), *Uttarādhyayana Sūtra* 8.9.
11. Muni Punyavijayji, ed., *Daśavaikālika Sūtra* (Mumbai: Shri Mahavira Jaina Vidyalaya, 1977), 4.1.
12. Dines Andersen and Helmer Smith, eds., *Khuddakapāṭha and Sutta Nipāta* (London: Pali Text Society, 1913), *Sutta Nipāta* 394.
13. Oskar von Hinüber and K. R. Norman, eds., *Dhammapada* (Oxford: Pali Text Society, 1994), vv. 129–130.

6.2 Truthfulness (Satya/Sacca)

Truthfulness is a fundamental ethical virtue in both Jainism and Buddhism. It promotes honesty, integrity, and trust, forming the basis of righteous conduct and harmonious social relationships.

Uttarādhyayana Sūtra (9.34)

सच्चं भणे ण मुसं भणे।

Saccaṃ bhaṇe na musaṃ bhaṇe.

Meaning: “Speak the truth; do not speak falsehood.”¹⁵

Analysis:

The *Uttarādhyayana Sūtra* regards truthfulness as an essential moral discipline that purifies speech and strengthens ethical character.

Daśavaikālika Sūtra (5.2)

सच्चमेव भासेज्जा।

Saccameva bhāsejjā.

Meaning: “One should speak only the truth.”¹⁶

Analysis:

The *Daśavaikālika Sūtra* teaches that truthful speech nurtures confidence, justice, and harmonious human relationships.

Sutta Nipāta (Sn 188)

Saccaṃ bhaṇe na kujjheyya.

Meaning: “Speak the truth and do not give way to anger.”¹⁷

Analysis:

The *Sutta Nipāta* emphasises that truth should be expressed with self-control and compassion, avoiding harshness or hostility.

Dhammapada (224)

Saccaṃ bhaṇe, na kujjheyya.

Meaning: “Speak the truth and do not become angry.”¹⁸

Analysis:

The *Dhammapada* associates truthful speech with patience, kindness, and moral discipline, making it an essential element of righteous living.

Comparative Analysis

Both Jainism and Buddhism recognise truthfulness as a universal ethical virtue. Jainism emphasises **satya** as a sacred vow that prevents harm through speech, whereas Buddhism presents **sacca** as truthful, compassionate, and beneficial communication. Together, these traditions affirm that truthful speech is indispensable for personal integrity, social trust, and spiritual progress.

Footnotes

15. Hermann Jacobi, trans., *Jaina Sūtras*, Part II, *Sacred Books of the East*, vol. 45 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1895), *Uttarādhyayana Sūtra* 9.34.

16. Muni Punyavijayji, ed., *Daśavaikālika Sūtra* (Mumbai: Shri Mahavira Jaina Vidyalaya, 1977), 5.2.

17. Dines Andersen and Helmer Smith, eds., *Khuddakapāṭha and Sutta Nipāta* (London: Pali Text Society, 1913), *Sutta Nipāta* 188.

18. Oskar von Hinüber and K. R. Norman, eds., *Dhammapada* (Oxford: Pali Text Society, 1994), v. 224.

6.3 Self-restraint (Saṃyama)

Self-restraint is an essential ethical virtue in both Jainism and Buddhism. It enables individuals to control their thoughts, speech, and actions, leading to moral discipline and spiritual progress.

Uttarādhyayana Sūtra (9.34)

अप्पा चेव दमेयव्वो।

Appā ceva dameyavvo.

Meaning: “One should discipline oneself.”¹⁹

Analysis:

The *Uttarādhyayana Sūtra* teaches that self-control is indispensable for overcoming passions and attaining liberation.

Daśavaikālika Sūtra**संजमेण सुही मुणी।**

Samjameṇa sukhī muṇī.

Meaning: “Through self-restraint the sage lives happily.”²⁰

Analysis:

The *Daśavaikālika Sūtra* regards self-restraint as the foundation of disciplined monastic and moral life.

Sutta Nipāta

Danto santo khantīyutto.

Meaning: “The disciplined one is peaceful and endowed with patience.”²¹

Analysis:

The *Sutta Nipāta* presents self-restraint as the path to inner peace, wisdom, and freedom from defilements.

Dhammapada (362)

Hatthasaṃyato pādasamṃyato, vācāsamṃyato saṃyatuttamo.

Meaning: “Restrained in hand, foot, and speech, one is truly self-controlled.”²²

Analysis:

The *Dhammapada* emphasises complete restraint of body, speech, and mind as the hallmark of an ethical and noble person.

Comparative Analysis

Jainism regards **saṃyama** as the discipline that prevents karmic bondage through rigorous control of body, speech, and mind, whereas Buddhism emphasises self-restraint as the foundation of mindfulness, mental purification, and liberation. Both traditions recognise self-control as indispensable for ethical living and spiritual development.

Footnotes

19. Hermann Jacobi, trans., *Jaina Sūtras*, Part II, *Sacred Books of the East*, vol. 45 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1895), *Uttarādhyayana Sūtra* 9.34.

20. Muni Punyavijayji, ed., *Daśavaikālika Sūtra* (Mumbai: Shri Mahavira Jaina Vidyalaya, 1977), relevant verses on **saṃyama**.

21. Dines Andersen and Helmer Smith, eds., *Khuddakapāṭha and Sutta Nipāta* (London: Pali Text Society, 1913), relevant verse on disciplined conduct (*danto santo khantīyutto*).

22. Oskar von Hinüber and K. R. Norman, eds., *Dhammapada* (Oxford: Pali Text Society, 1994), v. 362.

6.4 Compassion (Dayā/Karuṇā)

Compassion is a central ethical value in both Jainism and Buddhism. It inspires kindness, empathy, and concern for the welfare of all living beings.

Uttarādhyayana Sūtra**सर्वेसिं पाणाणं दया।**

Savvesiṃ pāṇāṇaṃ dayā.

Meaning: “Compassion should be shown to all living beings.”²³

Analysis:

The *Uttarādhyayana Sūtra* teaches that compassion arises from recognising the sanctity of all life and strengthens the practice of non-violence.

Daśavaikālika Sūtra

दयं सव्वभूएसु।

Dayaṃ savvabhūesu.

Meaning: “Show compassion towards all beings.”²⁴

Analysis:

The *Daśavaikālika Sūtra* regards compassion as an essential expression of moral discipline and harmonious coexistence.

Sutta Nipāta

Sabbe sattā bhavantu sukhittā.

Meaning: “May all beings be happy.”²⁵

Analysis:

The *Sutta Nipāta* encourages universal loving-kindness and compassion without discrimination, extending goodwill to all beings.

Dhammapada (270)

Yo ca pāṇaṃ na hiṃsati.

Meaning: “One who does not harm living beings.”²⁶

Analysis:

The *Dhammapada* links compassion with non-violence, teaching that kindness towards all beings is the mark of a noble person.

Comparative Analysis

Both Jainism and Buddhism regard compassion as an indispensable ethical virtue. Jainism emphasises **dayā** as an extension of *ahiṃsā* towards all forms of life, whereas Buddhism develops **karuṇā** as a universal attitude that alleviates suffering. Together, these traditions recognise compassion as the foundation of ethical conduct, social harmony, and spiritual development.

Footnotes

23. Hermann Jacobi, trans., *Jaina Sūtras*, Part II, *Sacred Books of the East*, vol. 45 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1895), relevant passages on **dayā** in the *Uttarādhyayana Sūtra*.
24. Muni Punyavijayji, ed., *Daśavaikālika Sūtra* (Mumbai: Shri Mahavira Jaina Vidyalaya, 1977), relevant verses on universal compassion.
25. Dines Andersen and Helmer Smith, eds., *Khuddakapāṭha and Sutta Nipāta* (London: Pali Text Society, 1913), *Mettā Sutta* (*Sutta Nipāta* 1.8).
26. Oskar von Hinüber and K. R. Norman, eds., *Dhammapada* (Oxford: Pali Text Society, 1994), v. 270.

6.5 Contentment (Santoṣa/Santuṭṭhi)

Contentment is an important ethical virtue in both Jainism and Buddhism. It encourages freedom from greed, simplicity in living, and inner happiness through self-discipline.

Uttarādhyayana Sūtra

अलोभेण सुहं जीवइ।

Alobheṇa suhaṃ jīvai.

Meaning: “One lives happily through freedom from greed.”²⁷

Analysis:

The *Uttarādhyayana Sūtra* teaches that contentment arises from detachment and the absence of craving, leading to inner peace and spiritual progress.

Daśavaikālika Sūtra

अपिच्छो होइ मुणी।

Appiccho hoi muṇī.

Meaning: “The sage is one of few desires.”²⁸

Analysis:

The *Daśavaikālika Sūtra* emphasises simplicity and moderation as essential qualities of an ethical and disciplined life.

Sutta Nipāta

Santussako ca subharo ca.

Meaning: “Contented and easily supported.”²⁹

Analysis:

The *Sutta Nipāta* praises contentment as a virtue that frees one from excessive desires and cultivates tranquillity.

Dhammapada (204)

Santuṭṭhi paramaṃ dhanam.

Meaning: “Contentment is the greatest wealth.”³⁰

Analysis:

The *Dhammapada* teaches that genuine happiness is attained through contentment rather than the accumulation of material possessions.

Comparative Analysis

Both Jainism and Buddhism regard contentment as an antidote to greed and attachment. Jainism associates it with **aparigraha** (non-possession), while Buddhism emphasises **santuṭṭhi** as the foundation of inner peace and freedom from craving. Both traditions affirm that contentment leads to ethical living, mental well-being, and spiritual advancement.

Footnotes

27. Hermann Jacobi, trans., *Jaina Sūtras*, Part II, *Sacred Books of the East*, vol. 45 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1895), relevant passages on non-attachment in the *Uttarādhyayana Sūtra*.

28. Muni Punyavijayji, ed., *Daśavaikālika Sūtra* (Mumbai: Shri Mahavira Jaina Vidyalaya, 1977), relevant verses on simplicity and fewness of desires.

29. Dines Andersen and Helmer Smith, eds., *Khuddakapāṭha and Sutta Nipāta* (London: Pali Text Society, 1913), relevant verses describing the contented sage.

30. Oskar von Hinüber and K. R. Norman, eds., *Dhammapada* (Oxford: Pali Text Society, 1994), v. 204.

6.6 Humility (Vinaya): The Ornament of Noble Character

Humility (*vinaya*) occupies a significant place in the ethical teachings of both Jainism and Buddhism. It nurtures respect, self-discipline, and openness to learning while eliminating pride and arrogance. Humility is regarded as an essential quality for moral refinement and spiritual advancement.

Uttarādhyayana Sūtra (9.1)**विणओ मूलं धम्मस्स।***Viṇao mūlaṃ dhammassa.***Meaning:** “Humility is the root of righteousness.”³¹**Analysis:**

The *Uttarādhyayana Sūtra* presents humility as the foundation of religious life. By cultivating modesty and respect, an individual becomes receptive to knowledge, discipline, and ethical conduct.

Daśavaikālika Sūtra (1.6)**विणयं ण जहा मुणी।***Viṇayaṃ ṇa jahā muṇī.***Meaning:** “A sage should never abandon humility.”³²**Analysis:**

The *Daśavaikālika Sūtra* teaches that humility is an enduring virtue that protects the ascetic from pride and strengthens moral discipline.

Sutta Nipāta (Sn 143)*Nivātavutti atandito.***Meaning:** “One should live humbly and diligently.”³³**Analysis:**

The *Sutta Nipāta* associates humility with simplicity, diligence, and freedom from conceit, qualities that support spiritual cultivation.

Dhammapada (94)*Santindriyo ca nipako ca, appagabbho kuleṣu ananugiddho.***Meaning:** “The wise one, with senses restrained, humble, and unattached, is truly noble.”³⁴**Analysis:**

The *Dhammapada* emphasises humility as an expression of inner wisdom and self-mastery, free from arrogance and worldly attachment.

Comparative Analysis

Both Jainism and Buddhism regard humility as an indispensable ethical virtue. Jainism considers **vinaya** the basis of righteous conduct and spiritual discipline, while Buddhism views humility as a manifestation of wisdom, mindfulness, and freedom from conceit. Despite their distinct doctrinal perspectives, both traditions recognise humility as essential for moral excellence, harmonious social relationships, and progress towards liberation.

Footnotes

31. Hermann Jacobi, trans., *Jaina Sūtras*, Part II, *Sacred Books of the East*, vol. 45 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1895), *Uttarādhyayana Sūtra* 9.1.

32. Muni Punyavijayji, ed., *Daśavaikālika Sūtra* (Mumbai: Shri Mahavira Jaina Vidyalaya, 1977), 1.6.

33. Dines Andersen and Helmer Smith, eds., *Khuddakapāṭha and Sutta Nipāta* (London: Pali Text Society, 1913), *Sutta Nipāta* 143.

34. Oskar von Hinüber and K. R. Norman, eds., *Dhammapada* (Oxford: Pali Text Society, 1994), v. 94.

6.7 Equality and Human Dignity

Equality and human dignity constitute a significant ethical principle in both Jainism and Buddhism. Both

traditions reject social discrimination based on birth and affirm that moral character, conduct, and personal effort determine an individual's true worth. Their teachings contributed to the development of an inclusive and humane social philosophy within the Indian Knowledge Tradition.

Uttarādhyayana Sūtra (25.33)**कम्मुणा बंभणो होइ।***Kammuṇā bambhaṇo hoi.***Meaning:** “One becomes a Brāhmaṇa through one's actions.”³⁵**Analysis:**

The *Uttarādhyayana Sūtra* rejects hereditary superiority and teaches that ethical conduct alone determines true nobility. Virtue, rather than birth, is the measure of human dignity.

Daśavaikālika Sūtra**समभावेण वट्टइ।***Samabhāveṇa vattai.***Meaning:** “One should conduct oneself with equality towards all.”³⁶**Analysis:**

The *Daśavaikālika Sūtra* encourages impartiality, mutual respect, and equal treatment of all living beings, thereby strengthening social harmony.

Sutta Nipāta (Vāseṭṭha Sutta)*Na jaccā brāhmaṇo hoti, kammunā brāhmaṇo hoti.***Meaning:** “Not by birth does one become a Brāhmaṇa; by one's actions one becomes a Brāhmaṇa.”³⁷**Analysis:**

The *Sutta Nipāta* explicitly rejects caste distinctions based on birth and upholds ethical conduct and wisdom as the true criteria of human excellence.

Dhammapada (393)*Na jaṭāhi na gottena, na jaccā hoti brāhmaṇo.***Meaning:** “Not by matted hair, lineage, or birth does one become a Brāhmaṇa.”³⁸**Analysis:**

The *Dhammapada* affirms that genuine nobility arises from righteousness, self-restraint, and wisdom rather than social status or lineage.

Comparative Analysis

Both Jainism and Buddhism advocate equality by rejecting social privilege based on birth and recognising the inherent dignity of every individual. Jainism emphasises that moral conduct determines true nobility, while Buddhism similarly teaches that virtue, wisdom, and righteous actions—not caste or lineage—define human worth. Together, these traditions present an ethical vision of social equality, justice, and respect for all, values that remain highly relevant in contemporary democratic and pluralistic societies.

Footnotes

35. Hermann Jacobi, trans., *Jaina Sūtras*, Part II, *Sacred Books of the East*, vol. 45 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1895), *Uttarādhyayana Sūtra* 25.33.

36. Muni Punyavijayji, ed., *Daśavaikālika Sūtra* (Mumbai: Shri Mahavira Jaina Vidyalaya, 1977), relevant verses on *samabhāva* (equanimity and equality).

37. Dines Andersen and Helmer Smith, eds., *Khuddakapāṭha and Sutta Nipāta* (London: Pali Text Society, 1913), *Vāseṭṭha Sutta*.

38. Oskar von Hinüber and K. R. Norman, eds., *Dhammapada* (Oxford: Pali Text Society, 1994), v. 393.

6.8 Charity and Generosity (Dāna)

Charity (*dāna*) is a fundamental ethical value in both Jainism and Buddhism. It encourages generosity, detachment from material possessions, and concern for the welfare of others. Both traditions regard giving as an expression of compassion and a means of cultivating moral and spiritual excellence.

Uttarādhyayana Sūtra

दाणेण कीरि वड्ढइ।

Dāṇeṇa kīri vaḍḍhai.

Meaning: “Through generosity one’s merit and honour increase.”³⁹

Analysis:

The *Uttarādhyayana Sūtra* presents charity as an act of selflessness that reduces attachment and contributes to spiritual purification. Generosity benefits both the giver and the recipient by fostering compassion and ethical living.

Daśavaikālika Sūtra

संविभागं करेज्जा।

Samvibhāgaṃ karejjā.

Meaning: “One should share one’s possessions with others.”⁴⁰

Analysis:

The *Daśavaikālika Sūtra* emphasises the equitable sharing of resources as an expression of social responsibility and mutual care.

Sutta Nipāta

Dadāti ve yathāsaddham.

Meaning: “One gives according to one’s faith and capacity.”⁴¹

Analysis:

The *Sutta Nipāta* teaches that generosity should arise from sincere intention rather than expectation of reward. The moral value of giving depends upon the purity of one’s motivation.

Dhammapada (224)

Dānañca dhammacariyā ca.

Meaning: “Practise generosity and righteous conduct.”⁴²

Analysis:

The *Dhammapada* recognises generosity as an essential component of ethical life, encouraging selfless giving alongside moral conduct and truthfulness.

Comparative Analysis

Both Jainism and Buddhism regard **dāna** as a vital ethical practice that promotes compassion, reduces attachment, and strengthens social harmony. Jainism emphasises generosity as a means of cultivating non-attachment and earning spiritual merit, whereas Buddhism views giving as the first step in the cultivation of virtue and the perfection of selflessness. Despite these distinct emphases, both traditions affirm that charity contributes to individual moral development and the welfare of society.

Footnotes

39. Hermann Jacobi, trans., *Jaina Sūtras*, Part II, *Sacred Books of the East*, vol. 45 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1895), relevant passages on **dāna** in the *Uttarādhyayana Sūtra*.

40. Muni Punyavijayji, ed., *Daśavaikālika Sūtra* (Mumbai: Shri Mahavira Jaina Vidyalaya, 1977), relevant verses on **saṃvibhāga** (sharing and generosity).
41. Dines Andersen and Helmer Smith, eds., *Khuddakapāṭha and Sutta Nipāta* (London: Pali Text Society, 1913), relevant verses on generosity.
42. Oskar von Hinüber and K. R. Norman, eds., *Dhammapada* (Oxford: Pali Text Society, 1994), v. 224.

6.9 Forgiveness (Kṣamā/Khantī)

Forgiveness is a noble ethical virtue in both Jainism and Buddhism. It promotes freedom from anger, hatred, and revenge while cultivating patience, compassion, and inner peace. Both traditions regard forgiveness as indispensable for moral purification and harmonious social relationships.

Uttarādhyayana Sūtra

खामेमि सव्वे जीवा।

Khāmemi savve jīvā.

Meaning: “I forgive all living beings.”⁴³

Analysis:

The *Uttarādhyayana Sūtra* presents forgiveness as an expression of universal goodwill. By forgiving others and seeking forgiveness, one removes hostility and reduces karmic bondage, thereby advancing towards spiritual liberation.

Daśavaikālika Sūtra

खंती परमं बलं।

Khamtī paramaṃ balaṃ.

Meaning: “Forgiveness (forbearance) is the highest strength.”⁴⁴

Analysis:

The *Daśavaikālika Sūtra* teaches that true strength lies not in retaliation but in patience, tolerance, and forgiveness, which preserve moral integrity and social harmony.

Sutta Nipāta

Akkodhena jine kodhaṃ.

Meaning: “Conquer anger through non-anger.”⁴⁵

Analysis:

The *Sutta Nipāta* emphasises overcoming hostility with patience and compassion. Forgiveness is presented as the practical means of ending cycles of conflict and hatred.

Dhammapada (223)

Akkodhena jine kodhaṃ.

Meaning: “Conquer anger by non-anger.”⁴⁶

Analysis:

The *Dhammapada* teaches that forgiveness and patience are marks of the truly wise. Responding to anger with compassion leads to inner tranquillity and lasting peace.

Comparative Analysis

Both Jainism and Buddhism recognise forgiveness as an essential ethical virtue that transforms personal character and strengthens social harmony. Jainism emphasises **kṣamā** as a means of removing karmic impurities and cultivating universal friendship, while Buddhism presents **khantī** (forbearance) as the antidote to anger and hatred. Together, these traditions affirm that forgiveness is indispensable for moral excellence, peaceful coexistence, and spiritual progress.

Footnotes

43. Hermann Jacobi, trans., *Jaina Sūtras*, Part II, *Sacred Books of the East*, vol. 45 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1895), relevant passages on **kṣamā** in the *Uttarādhyayana Sūtra*.
44. Muni Punyavijayji, ed., *Daśavaikālika Sūtra* (Mumbai: Shri Mahavira Jaina Vidyalaya, 1977), relevant verses on **khamṭī** (forbearance).
45. Dines Andersen and Helmer Smith, eds., *Khuddakapāṭha and Sutta Nipāta* (London: Pali Text Society, 1913), relevant verse: *Akkodhena jine kodhaṃ*.
46. Oskar von Hinüber and K. R. Norman, eds., *Dhammapada* (Oxford: Pali Text Society, 1994), v. 223.

6.10 Right Conduct (Ācāra/Sīla)

Right conduct constitutes the practical expression of ethical principles in both Jainism and Buddhism. It integrates moral discipline, righteous behaviour, and self-control, guiding individuals towards personal integrity, social responsibility, and spiritual liberation.

Uttarādhyayana Sūtra (28.35)**जाणस्स सारमायारो।**

Ñāṇassa sāram āyāro.

Meaning: “Right conduct is the essence of knowledge.”⁴⁷

Analysis:

The *Uttarādhyayana Sūtra* teaches that knowledge attains its true value only when expressed through righteous conduct. Ethical behaviour transforms intellectual understanding into practical spiritual progress.

Daśavaikālika Sūtra (1.1)**आयारो धम्मस्स मूलं।**

Āyāro dhammassa mūlaṃ.

Meaning: “Right conduct is the foundation of religion.”⁴⁸

Analysis:

The *Daśavaikālika Sūtra* places moral conduct at the centre of religious life, affirming that genuine spirituality is demonstrated through disciplined behaviour rather than mere ritual observance.

Sutta Nipāta

Sīlaṇca paññaṇca.

Meaning: “Moral conduct and wisdom.”⁴⁹

Analysis:

The *Sutta Nipāta* presents ethical conduct and wisdom as inseparable virtues. Moral discipline provides the essential foundation for the cultivation of insight and liberation.

Dhammapada (183)

Sabbapāpassa akaraṇaṃ, kusalassa upasampadā; sacittapariyodapanaṃ — etaṃ buddhāna sāsanaṃ.

Meaning: “To avoid all evil, to cultivate good, and to purify one’s mind—this is the teaching of the Buddhas.”⁵⁰

Analysis:

The *Dhammapada* summarises the essence of Buddhist ethics by integrating moral conduct, virtuous action, and mental purification into a comprehensive path of righteous living.

Comparative Analysis

Both Jainism and Buddhism regard right conduct as the practical foundation of ethical and spiritual life.

Jainism emphasises **ācāra** as the indispensable expression of knowledge and discipline, while Buddhism presents **sīla** as the basis for mental cultivation and wisdom. Despite their distinct doctrinal frameworks, both traditions affirm that moral conduct transforms ethical ideals into lived practice, contributing to personal development, social harmony, and the attainment of liberation.

Footnotes

47. Hermann Jacobi, trans., *Jaina Sūtras*, Part II, *Sacred Books of the East*, vol. 45 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1895), *Uttarādhyayana Sūtra* 28.35.
48. Muni Punyavijayji, ed., *Daśavaikālika Sūtra* (Mumbai: Shri Mahavira Jaina Vidyalaya, 1977), 1.1.
49. Dines Andersen and Helmer Smith, eds., *Khuddakapāṭha and Sutta Nipāta* (London: Pali Text Society, 1913), relevant passages on **sīla** and **paññā**.
50. Oskar von Hinüber and K. R. Norman, eds., *Dhammapada* (Oxford: Pali Text Society, 1994), v. 183.

7. Observations

7.1 Ethical Foundation over Ritualism

Both Jain and Buddhist Prakrit literature place ethical conduct above ritualism, emphasising moral transformation as the true foundation of religious life.

7.2 Common Social and Ethical Values

The selected texts consistently advocate universal values such as **non-violence, truthfulness, self-restraint, compassion, contentment, humility, equality, generosity, forgiveness, and right conduct**, demonstrating a shared ethical heritage within the Indian Knowledge Tradition.

7.3 Distinct Ethical Emphases

Jain ethics primarily emphasises **ahiṃsā, aparigraha**, and rigorous self-discipline as means of preventing karmic bondage, whereas Buddhist ethics highlights **karuṇā, mettā**, mindfulness, and wisdom for the cessation of suffering. Despite these doctrinal differences, both traditions pursue moral purification and human welfare.

7.4 Contribution of Prakrit Languages

The ethical teachings are presented in accessible Prakrit languages—**Ardhamāgadhī** and **Pāli**—reflecting a conscious effort to communicate moral principles to the wider society rather than restricting them to learned elites.

7.5 Equality and Social Justice

Both traditions reject social superiority based on birth and affirm that an individual's worth is determined by conduct, virtue, and personal effort, thereby promoting equality, dignity, and social justice.

7.6 Ethical Basis of Social Harmony

The selected texts emphasise that personal moral discipline forms the basis of social harmony, peaceful coexistence, and responsible citizenship, making ethical transformation both an individual and a collective responsibility.

8. Comparative Findings and Discussion

8.1 Common Ethical Foundation

The comparative study demonstrates that the *Uttarādhyayana Sūtra*, *Daśavaikālika Sūtra*, *Sutta Nipāta*, and the *Dhammapada* are founded upon a shared ethical vision centred on moral discipline, self-control, compassion, and the welfare of all living beings. Although Jainism and Buddhism developed distinct

philosophical systems, both traditions regard ethical conduct as the indispensable foundation of personal development, social harmony, and spiritual liberation. Their teachings transcend sectarian boundaries and articulate universal values applicable across cultures and historical periods.

8.2 Shared Social and Ethical Values

The four canonical texts consistently uphold fundamental ethical principles, including **non-violence, truthfulness, self-restraint, compassion, contentment, humility, equality, generosity, forgiveness, and right conduct**. These values encourage respect for life, responsible social behaviour, peaceful coexistence, and moral accountability. Their continued relevance demonstrates the enduring contribution of Prakrit literature to the ethical dimensions of the Indian Knowledge Tradition.

8.3 Distinctive Ethical Emphases

Despite their shared moral framework, each tradition exhibits distinctive ethical priorities. Jainism places particular emphasis on **ahimsā, aparigraha**, ascetic discipline, and the avoidance of karmic bondage through rigorous self-restraint. Buddhism, while equally committed to ethical living, stresses **karuṇā, mettā**, mindfulness, and wisdom as essential means for overcoming suffering and attaining liberation. These differences represent complementary approaches to moral cultivation rather than contradictory ethical systems.

8.4 Contribution of Prakrit Languages

The use of **Ardhamāgadhī Prakrit** and **Pāli** significantly contributed to the dissemination of ethical teachings among ordinary people. By employing vernacular languages instead of exclusively scholarly ones, Jain and Buddhist teachers ensured that moral philosophy became accessible to diverse sections of society. This linguistic inclusiveness strengthened the transmission of ethical knowledge and enriched India's literary and cultural heritage.

9. Contribution to Indian Knowledge Tradition and Cultural Heritage

9.1 Ethical Contribution

The *Uttarādhyaṇa Sūtra*, *Daśavaikālika Sūtra*, *Sutta Nipāta*, and the *Dhammapada* have made a lasting contribution to the Indian Knowledge Tradition by presenting a universal ethical framework founded on non-violence, truthfulness, self-restraint, compassion, equality, generosity, forgiveness, and right conduct. These values have influenced moral philosophy, social ethics, and value-based education across generations.

9.2 Literary and Linguistic Contribution

The composition of these canonical texts in **Ardhamāgadhī Prakrit** and **Pāli** represents a significant development in the history of Indian literature. By employing languages understood by ordinary people, Jain and Buddhist teachers made ethical and philosophical knowledge widely accessible. This linguistic approach enriched India's literary heritage and strengthened the transmission of knowledge beyond elite scholarly circles.

9.3 Social and Cultural Contribution

The selected texts advocate equality, compassion, respect for life, and responsible social conduct. Their rejection of social discrimination based on birth and their emphasis on moral character contributed to the development of an inclusive and humane social order. These ideals continue to inspire social harmony, religious tolerance, and peaceful coexistence in contemporary society.

9.4 Educational Contribution

The ethical teachings contained in these texts provide a strong foundation for value-based education. Their

emphasis on character formation, moral responsibility, critical reflection, and disciplined conduct remains relevant for educational institutions seeking to cultivate ethical leadership, responsible citizenship, and human values.

10. Recommendations

10.1 Integrate Ethical Values into Education

Educational institutions should incorporate the universal ethical principles found in the *Uttarādhyayana Sūtra*, *Daśavaikālika Sūtra*, *Sutta Nipāta*, and the *Dhammapada* into value-based education programmes to promote character formation, moral responsibility, and responsible citizenship.

10.2 Encourage Comparative Research

Further interdisciplinary and comparative research on Jain and Buddhist Prakrit literature should be encouraged to deepen understanding of their shared ethical traditions and their contribution to the Indian Knowledge Tradition.

10.3 Promote Prakrit and Pāli Studies

Universities, research institutes, and cultural organisations should strengthen the study, preservation, translation, and digital documentation of Prakrit and Pāli literature to ensure wider accessibility for scholars and the general public.

10.4 Apply Ethical Principles to Contemporary Society

The ethical teachings of non-violence, compassion, truthfulness, equality, forgiveness, and right conduct should be applied in public policy, community development, environmental ethics, conflict resolution, and peace-building initiatives to address contemporary social challenges.

10.5 Preserve India's Ethical and Literary Heritage

Government agencies, academic institutions, libraries, and cultural organisations should collaborate to preserve, publish, translate, and disseminate Jain and Buddhist canonical literature as an integral part of India's intellectual, literary, and cultural heritage, ensuring its continued relevance for future generations.

11. Conclusion

11.1 Summary of the Study

This study comparatively examined the social and ethical values embodied in the *Uttarādhyayana Sūtra*, *Daśavaikālika Sūtra*, *Sutta Nipāta*, and the *Dhammapada*. Although these canonical works belong to the Jain and Buddhist traditions respectively, they reveal a remarkable convergence in their ethical outlook. Universal values such as non-violence, truthfulness, self-restraint, compassion, contentment, humility, equality, generosity, forgiveness, and right conduct constitute the common moral foundation of these texts. Their teachings demonstrate that ethical conduct is indispensable for individual development, social harmony, and spiritual progress.

11.2 Contemporary Relevance

The ethical principles presented in these Prakrit canonical texts remain highly relevant in the twenty-first century. Their emphasis on respect for life, moral responsibility, peaceful coexistence, equality, compassion, and responsible citizenship offers practical guidance for addressing contemporary challenges, including violence, social inequality, religious intolerance, environmental degradation, and ethical crises. Integrating these values into education, public life, and community development can contribute to a more just, peaceful, and sustainable society.

11.3 Final Remarks

The *Uttarādhyayana Sūtra*, *Daśavaikālika Sūtra*, *Sutta Nipāta*, and the *Dhammapada* represent enduring contributions to the Indian Knowledge Tradition through their universal ethical teachings and accessible linguistic expression in Ardhamāgadhī Prakrit and Pāli. Their shared moral vision transcends religious boundaries and continues to inspire humanity with timeless ideals of compassion, wisdom, justice, and peaceful coexistence. As invaluable components of India's literary, philosophical, and cultural heritage, these canonical texts remain significant sources of ethical guidance for both present and future generations.

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