

Bhaskara Biography

Bhaskara

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Contents

Bhaskara Biography.....	1
Contents.....	2
Biography.....	3

Biography

Bhaskara, or Bha-skara-cha-rya as he is sometimes known, was the leading mathematician of the 12th century. He applied the concept of **zero**, decimal notation, the use of letters to represent unknown quantities in **equations**, and he developed rules for equations for **trigonometry**.

Bhaskara was born in Biddur, in India, although his mathematical work was carried out whilst he was head of the astronomical observatory at Ujjain (where he eventually died). The three most important books he published were *Lilavati* (The Beautiful), which is about mathematics; *Bijaganita* (Seed Counting), which is about **algebra**; and an astronomical work, *Karanakutuhala* (The Calculation of Astronomical Wonders). *Lilavati* is the first known published work that uses the **decimal position system**.

Bhaskara spent much of his working life studying diophantine equations, and more specifically he studied what we now know as Pell's equation: $x^2 = 1 + py^2$ (in which $p = 8, 11, 32, 61, \text{ and } 67$). For $p = 61$ he found the solutions $x = 1776319049$ and $y = 22615390$.

Bhaskara was a mathematician whose work predated much of what was to be achieved in Western mathematics by several centuries, and many of his principles are in wide use today.