

Quadrant II – Transcript and Related Materials

Programme: SYBA

Subject: Philosophy

Paper Code: PIC 104

Paper Title: World Religions: Concepts and Practices II

Unit: 2

Module Name: Anti-Brahmanical Ideology and Schools of Buddhism

Module No: 7

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Notes

The learning outcome for this module are as below;

1. Students will able to identify the difference between Brahmanical and Anti-Brahmanical ideologies in Indian Philosophy.
2. Students will able interpret practically being atheistic school Buddhism approach to religion.
3. Students will able to compare and classify the different schools of Buddhism.
4. Students will able to correlate the Buddhism as religion is ethically useful and intellectually certain in today's world.

Anti-Brahmanical Ideology:

Buddhism was founded by Gautam Buddha in 6th C. (B.C.E.) soon after his enlightenment under the Banyan tree. As Indian philosophical School, Buddhism is heterodox in nature as they do not accept the scriptural knowledge of Vedas. As a religion, Buddhism is atheistic school as they do not believe in the existence of God; rather Buddhism as a religion, have elevated the image of 'Buddha' as a "statue of Godhood". Buddha's teaching is primarily ethical in nature as he was

more concern how world ignores the real truth of the world which is an ultimate cause to worldly sufferings. He never discussed metaphysical and epistemological issues.

Buddhist philosophers were of the opinion that our common sense world is not ultimately real, it is always changing and change is the only real thing. All Buddhist philosophers denied the reality of the world of our everyday experience, and all Brahmanical philosophers accepted it. The teaching of Buddhism states, the source of the world is 'self-existence' which has no beginning and no end. Everything seems to be existed because of 'self-existence' hence there is no requirement of God for the creation of world.

The Brahmanical ideology which is rooted in the writings of Vedas deal with metaphysical and epistemological issues which are intellectually uncertain and ethically useless according to Buddhism. This approach of Buddhism is anti-Brahmanical ideas. Hence Buddhism aims at four Nobel or fundamental truth of life that teach the paths to free from sufferings.

Schools of Buddhism:

As a religion Buddhism has two religious sects or schools namely *Hinayana* and *Mahayana*. This division of 'Buddhist Sangha' formed after Buddha's death. '*Hina*' means inferior or lesser and '*yana*' means vehicle. '*Maha*' means superior or great and '*yana*' means vehicle. These two schools of Buddhism differ fundamentally from each other in its ethics, doctriens, monastic life and conception of Buddha.

1. **Hinayana:** Hinayana school follows the real old Buddhism i.e. conservative by its nature. It denies God hence atheistic but worship Buddha in its practices but Buddha is not taken as devotion rather Buddha is living aspiration which its teaching helps to attain 'Nirvana'. Hinayana considers 'arhat' as the highest stage of perfect knowledge that emphasis on self-dependence. It accepts the non-existence of a substance or self. Hinayan believes that everything in this world is momentary as in the existence of the worldly things are very short and they are temporary. The Hinayana Buddhism seeks '*Nirvana*' which is cessation of consciousness that does not depend on the grace of God. It accepts the law of '*Karma*' and theory of 'Re-birth', which is more rigid and negative in its approach. The religion and philosophy of Hinayana was not popular, because it gives us neither a warm faith for which to live nor real ideal for which to work.

Philosophically, Hinayana school was divided into two classes:

1. Vaibhasika : It accepts both external world and cognition of mental phenomena as realities i.e. matter and mind respectively which are regulated by Dharma. They are 'Pratyakshavadinis' means.
2. Sautrantika : It admits cognition but the existence of world can be only inferred through testimony of other people. They state there is no causal relation between two things or two things are not connected to each other causally. Hence there is no past or future besides present. The knowledge is self-evident and self-enlightened like a lamp and requires nothing to prove.

2. Mahayana: Mahayana school was progressive and accommodating with optimistic understanding of God, soul and human destiny. It worships idol of Buddha as a ultimate existence of knowledge (God), the worshippers are known as Buddha-hood or '*Bodhisattava*'. This particular sect believe that compassion and grace of Buddha aims at universal liberation of man or 'nirvana'. Buddha is considered as transcendental reality and not the ultimate one as for Mahayana the world is phenomenal and not ultimately real.

▪ Philosophically, Mahayana school was divided into two classes:

1. Madhyamika (Shunyavada) : It means universal voidness or nothingsness. It denies the absolute existence of the external world and of cognition. According to the founder Nagarjuna, ultimate reality is neither existent nor non-existent.
2. Yogachara (Vijnanvada) : This class praise Guru's teachings. Practical yoga is the key to understand existence of cognition and ideas as a mental phenomena. They believe that all things are conscious where '*citta*' pervade all living beings. Because of its focus on conscious reality it is known as *Vijnyanvada*.