

STUDY MATERIAL

UNIT-1

PAPER: INTRODUCTION TO SYSTEMS OF INDIAN PHILOSOPHY

BAUDDHA:

The story of Buddha's life as familiarly known, is for the most part, based on tradition long posterior to the time when he lived. According to this account, he was born at Kapilavastu, his father being the ruler of a principality. Buddha was of royal descent. The date of his birth is now generally taken as 563 B.C. He is represented as a greatly accomplished prince. He was married at the age of 16, and a son was born to him in course of time. It was about this time that he began to react upon the vanities of life and upon the tragedy of death, disease and old age which afflict mankind. This is picturesquely represented in the story as his meeting an old man, a sick man and a corpse in succession. Those sights were followed by that of a recluse who had completely renounced the world; and it led to his resolve that he would free himself from all worldly ties and strive his utmost to discover the way out of life's unending miser. In pursuance of this resolve, he left the palace the same night, looking upon it as "place of dust", and went away to distant forest. There, in the company of five others, he practiced severe penance, mortifying his body as it was the common practice at the time for intensely religious -minded people to do. He led this kind of life for six years; but not succeeding in his object thereby, he began a fresh course of self-discipline characterized by less severity. Then his companions left him, dissenting from his view. In this second attempt, he was successful and he became fully enlightened (buddha) and reached, as it is expressed, "the end of craving".

He did not, however, remain content with this personal illumination, but decided to teach the way to it to others also. His first disciples were the five ascetics who had earlier parted from him, and were at the time in a place near Benaras known as Saratha or the "Deer Park". It is in the first sermon which he delivered to them, after converting them to his way of thinking, that, as tradition has it, he dwelt upon the Four Noble Truth to which we shall refer later. He thereafter succeeded in converting many others, including his own family. His activities, however, were confined to a relatively limited region which comprised portions of modern Behar, the United Provinces and Nepal. He died 483 B.C. at the age of 80 t Kusinara on the day, it is said, which was the anniversary of his birth, as also of the attainment by him of complete enlightenment. This event took place between two sala trees, a circumstance which is piously depicted in the sculptures and bas -relief s relating to the closing scene of his life. Buddha is undoubtedly one of the great religious teachers of the world. In the third century B.C. the famous emperor, Asoka, became a Buddhist; and it is commonly believed that through the impetus he gave to it, Buddhism began to spread not only in other parts of India but also beyond it. [Source Book of this material: The Essence of Indian Philosophy by M. Hiriyanna]

SOURCE BOOK:

The Buddhist Pali Scriptures contain three different collections: the Sutta (relating to the doctrines), the Vinaya (relating to the discipline of the monks) and the Abhidhamma (relating generally to the same subjects as the suttas but dealing with them in a scholastic and technical manner). Scholars of Buddhist religious history of modern times have failed as yet to fix any definite dates for the collection or composition of the different parts of the aforesaid canonical literature of the Buddhists.

The suttas were however composed before the Abhidhamma and it is very probable that almost the whole of the canonical works were completed before 241 B.C., the date of the third council during the reign of King Asoka. The suttas mainly deal with the doctrine (Dhamma) of the Buddhist faith whereas the Vinaya deals only with the regulations concerning the discipline of the monk. The subject of the Abhidhamma is mostly the same as that of the suttas, namely, the interpretation of the Dhamma. Buddhaghosa in his introduction to Atthasalini, the commentary on the Dhammasangani, says that Abhidhamma is so called (abhi and dhamma) because it describes the same Dhammas as are related in the suttas in a more intensified (dhammatireka) and specialized (dhammavisesatthana) manner. The Abhidhammas do not give any new doctrines that are not in the suttas, but they deal somewhat elaborately with those that are already found in the suttas.

The suttas contain five groups of collections called the Nikayas. These are: 1. Digha Nikaya, called so on account of the length of the suttas contained in it; 2. Majjhima Nikaya (middle Nikaya), called so on account of the middle extent of the suttas contained in it; 3. Samyutta Nikaya (Nikayas relating to special meetings), called samyutta on account of their being delivered owing to the meetings (samyoga) of special persons which were the occasions for them; 4. Anguttara Nikaya, so called because in each succeeding book of this work the topics of discussion increase by one; 5. Khuddaka Nikaya containing Khuddaka patha, Dhammapada, Udana, Itivuttaka, Sutta Nipata, Vimanavatthu, Petavatthu, Theragatha, Therigatha, Jataka, Niddesa, Patisambhidammagga, Apadana, Buddhavamsa, Caryapitaka.

The Abhidhammas are Patthana, Dhammasangani, Dhatukatha, Puggalapannatti, Vibhanga, Yamaka and Kathavatthu. There exists also a large commentary literature on diverse parts of the above works known as atthakatha. The work known as Milinda Panha (questions of King Milinda), of uncertain date, is of considerable philosophical value.

[Source Book of this material : A History of Indian Philosophy Vol-1 by S.N. Dasgupta]

- **BASIC DIVISION OF BAUDDHISM:**

