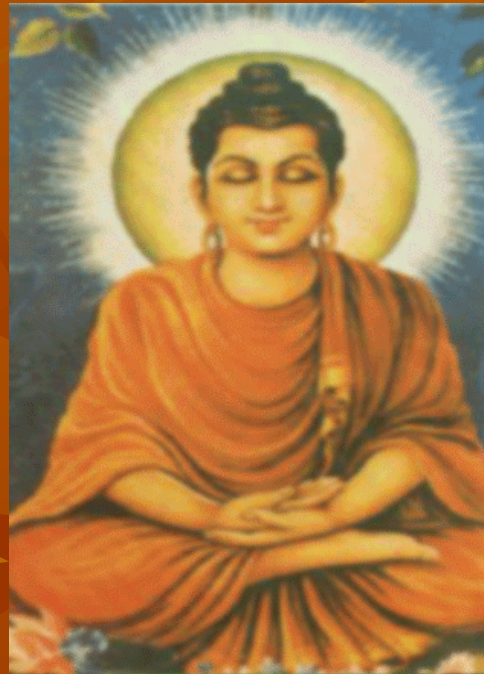


Evolution of Buddhism



K J SHARMA

BUDDHISM

- **Buddhism** is a set of beliefs and practices, based on the teachings of Gautama Buddha earlier known as Prince Siddhartha and is considered by many to be a religion.
- Buddha was born a prince of the Sakya Caste Nepal, in the city of Lumbini approximately 563 BC., and was raised in Kapilavastu.
- When he was twenty-nine years old, he left the comforts of his home to seek the meaning and reasons of sufferings he saw all around.

HISTORY OF BUDDHA

- At the age of 29, Siddhartha ventured outside the palace several times despite his father's wishes.
- As a result he discovered the suffering of his people, through encounters with an old man, a diseased man, a decaying corpse and an ascetic.
- These are known among Buddhists as "The Four Sights"

HISTORY OF BUDDHA

- Buddha got enlightenment in Bodha Gaya in India and traveled thereafter to preach his Philosophy extensively. He died in Kushinagar, Nepal from food poisoning at the age of 80.
- Buddha had 5 strong followers who accompanied him for 45 years in his journey along the Ganges to spread his philosophy against certain social practices of Hindus during that time.
- Later his disciples continued the crusade. King Ashoka of Magadh, from Bihar (Patliputra) became ardent follower of Buddha and power to spread Buddhism in main-land India and to the far East.

HISTORY OF BUDDHA

- Emperor Ashoka inspired many manuscripts written by monks and had got many Stupas (pillars) erected with engravings of Buddhist teachings. This was done to spread Buddhism and to pass on to future generations to be aware of.
- In order to spread the doctrines of Buddhism like the Roman emperor Constantine did to spread Christianity, Ashoka sent his son and daughter to far east of India and many monks to north of India such as Tibet, China, Tashkant, Samarkant, Turkmenistan, Mangolia etc.

CHRONOLOGY OF BUDDHISM

- Buddhism was founded in the 6th century B.C.
- Buddhism went to Ceylon in 3rd and 2nd century B.C.
- During Christ's time 2008 years ago, Buddhism spread to Turkmenistan.
- In the 1st century A.D., Buddhism was rooted in China and Mangolia.
- In 384 AD, it is believed to have spread to Korea.
- In 552 AD, Buddhism reached Japan.

CHRONOLOGY OF BUDDHISM

- In the 6th century it spread to Burma and between the 7th and 8th century to Tibet.
- In the 8th century Buddhism began merging back into Hinduism due to the Muslim invasions that brought onslaughts on Hindu religion and culture.
- By the 14th century Buddhism became the dominant religion of Nepal, Burma, Cambodia, Thailand (Siam), Malaysia, Vietnam and Laos.
- It is estimated that by the 1960's the Buddhist population reached 350,000,000 in those regions.

CHRONOLOGY OF BUDDHISM

- Some oriental scholars treat Buddhism as reformed Hinduism rather than a radically different religion.
- During the Muslim rule of 600 years and almost 200 years of British, Buddhism shrunk and Buddhist monks from mainland India began to settle down in their respective monasteries being more confined.
- Adi Shankara's Vedantic wisdom and culture, which was deeply rooted from time immemorial of Vedic culture in Hinduism did not let Buddhism spread in India like it did in other parts of the world.

EVOLUTION OF BUDDHIST PHILOSOPHY

- Buddhism originated from Buddha during 563-483 B.C.E.
- Prince Siddhartha after attaining enlightenment was called Gautam Buddha.
- During his lifetime Buddha's doctrines were followed by his disciples.
- After Buddha's death, his philosophy to lessen human sufferings became more popular.
- Though Buddha was born and brought up in Hinduism, his followers created a separate identity.

MAJOR DEVIATION FROM HINDUISM

- Buddha did not confirm the existence or non-existence of God (presumed on Anand's question and Buddha's silence).
- People from any caste or creed coming into the fold of Buddhism were treated equal unlike in Hindu society.
- Buddhism opposed the permanence of the self / Atma or Brahman (absolute being).
- Universal charity and sympathy as against Brahmanism (like Christianity).
- Buddhism regarded many Hindu ceremonies as unnecessary.

BUDDHISM – SCHOOLS OF PHILOSOPHY

- Mahayana – greater vehicle
- Originated in India as early as 100 B.C.
- Preserves original philosophy.
- It is presently found in Northern Asiatic countries like China, Tibet, Mongolia and Japan.
- Most of its manuscripts are in Tibetan, Chinese languages also translated from Sanskrit.

BUDDHISM – SCHOOL OF PHILOSOPHY

- Hinayana – also known as Theravada (Doctrine of Elders).
- It is a more primitive form of Buddhism.
- Got continuously transformed later on.
- It is found more in the Southern Asiatic countries – Ceylon, Burma, Thailand, Laos, Vietnam and Cambodia etc.

BUDDHISM – SCHOOL OF PHILOSOPHY

- The sacred scriptures or the manuscripts of Hinayana are originally in Pali language and are called Tipitaka or “Three Baskets” of the Doctrine .
- Others are Seethapitaka, Vinaypitaka and Abhidhammapitaka.

Buddhist Philosophy

- Buddhism is actually based on human experience more than any strict doctrine like any other religion.
- Buddha shared his awakening experience rather than propagating set of doctrines.
- His Bodha was a transformation of consciousness similar to a mystical experience (Mysticism).
- Reality in neither life or death. Reality has no opposite like living beings or non-living beings etc. (“It sounds very vedantic”)

Buddhist Philosophy

- Bodhi is self realization of which nature is free from all bondage.
- Neither subject nor object/living or dying.
- Buddha summarized his dharma concept/ doctrines in a very simple way through the –

4 Folds of Noble Truths

Buddhist Philosophy

- **4 Noble Truths**
 - Suffering (dukha)
 - Origin of suffering
 - Cessation of suffering
 - Way to cessation

Buddhist Philosophy

- **Suffering** - life is ordinarily lived with suffering/frustration, impermanence and anatma (no-self-ness), should be understood that no individual or anything exists of itself, but in relation to all other things.
- **Origin of suffering** – is the result of Trishna or holding on to any object or desire which are not permanent. This is based on avidya or ignorance.

Buddhist Philosophy

- Buddha accepted Vedantic concepts of re-incarnation or re-birth based on karma with continued desires (motivated action).
- **Cessation of suffering** – is cessation of ignorance or holding on to desires of impermanence called – “Nirvana”.
 - Buddha gave an example: as the breath cannot be held forever, it has to be blown out or be given up. In a state of Nirvana, one does not see his or her individual identity yet all as one (Vedantic).

Buddhist Philosophy

■ Way to Cessation –

■ “8 Fold Path

- 2 – with understanding
- 4 – with conducts
- 2 - with meditation

1.Right view

2.Right Understanding

3.Right Speech

4.Right Action

5.Right Vocation

6.Right Application

7.Right Mindfulness

8.Right Contemplation

In Buddha’s words, Middle way or path (Right = Samyak)

EVOLUTION OF MAHAYANA

- It developed in India, deriving the Vedantic view of Nirvana.

Nirvana can be attained only here and now in samsar, in the cycle of birth and death.

It cannot be left for the future. Only the present is for Nirvana which is so short lived to hold on to anything since it will be snatched away soon.

EVOLUTION OF MAHAYANA

- Buddha or Bodhisattva (aspirant to Buddhahood) reveals Karuna (compassion).
- Being free from self concern, energy flows outward with boundless love for all based on Buddha's philosophy.
- It provided power to save others who put faith in it. This resulted in the worship of Buddha and Bodhisattva followers.

EVOLUTION OF MAHAYANA

- In China and Japan, Buddha is also known as Buddha Amitabh, meaning Buddha of boundless light which became a cult to believe and be freed from ignorance and suffering in this part of the world.
- In 2nd century A.D., Nagarjuna the greatest proponent of Buddhism of his time intellectually and logically tried to elaborate on Buddhism.

EVOLUTION OF MAHAYANA

- In 280-360 A.D., Yogasharya School of Asanga and Vasu-bandhu studied the influence of ideas upon perception.
- The school of Vajrayana (diamond vehicle) emphasized on meditations, rituals, incantations, dhyana etc.
- Ch'an or Zen school fused Mahayana with Taoism in China.

BUDDHIST PRACTICES AND BELIEFS

- No priest hood in Buddhism.
- Chanting of hymns and doing certain rituals like reading the scriptures of the relics of Buddha are the orders of practices.
- Buddhism is for self emancipation or self realization by adopting Monk-hood.
- Truly there had been no practice of rights in Buddhism except meditation.

BUDDHIST PRACTICES AND BELIEFS

- Later in different parts of the world, mixed with local culture and influence of old habits some rights and rituals were adopted.
- Buddha is believed to be the 23th and the last incarnation in the cycle.
- However, he is believed to incarnate again when human sufferings will increase and the knowledge of salvation will diminish or perish with all things.

Continued