

Buddhist tradition

Introduction of Buddhism

- It was a movement against Brahminism.
- It is more organised than Hinduism.
For the 1st time the concept of church/sangha/monarchy emerged.
- Buddhism is agnosticism.
- Buddhism gave importance to autonomy of individual. Individual can explore the truth.
- Buddhism gave importance to reason.
However the concept of autonomy of individual is not equivalent to the western concept of self centred individual. Individual has to serve the community or society.

Hinduism
dialectic
Buddhism
Rationalist

Key ideas of Buddhism

- There are 3 fundamental principles of this world.
 - Anicca
There is nothing permanent in this world.
 - Anatta
Denial of self interest.
 - Dukkha
This world is full of sorrow.

Comparison betⁿ Hinduism & Buddhism

- Buddhism is against worldly pleasures.
Whereas Hinduism is not against worldly pleasures.

4 Noble Truths in Buddhism

1. World is full of sorrow
2. Desire is the cause of sorrow
3. End of desires will result into the end of sorrow.
4. 8 fold path

If one has to end the sorrow, one has to follow the 8 fold path.

- a) Right Thinking
- b) Right action
- c) Right Speech
- d) Right Living
- e) Right belief
- f) Right efforts
- g) Meditation
- h) Recollection

Traditions in Buddhism

- Theravada

Pali

- It is an oldest tradition
- This is popular in Sri Lanka, Myanmar, Cambodia & Thailand.
- Focus is on self transformation, meditation & attainment of salvation by own efforts.

- Mahayana

Sanskrit

- Focus is on social reform & social transformation.
- Prominent in China, Japan, Vietnam, Korea.

- Vajrayana

- It is more ceremonial.
- Prominent in Tibet, Nepal, Bhutan.

- Navayana

- Dalit Buddhism influenced by Ambedkar's ideas.

Buddhist political philosophy

- Since Buddhism focus on nirvana / moksha, it is believed that, Buddhism does not have much to offer in political philosophy & statecraft.
- In present times, Dalit scholars like Gail Omvedt, Kanha Illaiah project Buddha as political philosopher.
- To understand Buddhist principle of organised & collective life, we have to understand the principles and practices observed in Buddhist monastries.
- Ashokan edicts can also be a source of understanding the governance based on Buddhism.
- Some of the distinctive features of Buddhist political thinking are
 - The rule of law
 - Deliberative democracy
 - Rejection of hierarchy
 - Rejection of inequalities
 - Welfare state

Buddhism is also known as the socialist tradition in Indian philosophy.

Origin of state according to Buddhism

- As settled life started, property came into existence, disputes have arisen. To end these disputes, a state came into existence.

Ideal theory of Origin of state

- The contract is among the people and the king is chosen by the people on basis of consensus.

Buddhism is called as Sammat. The noblest of all is chosen as the king.

~~अद्वितीय~~
not necessarily
अद्वितीय.

- Buddhism also talks about Chakravarti Samrat. Chakravarti Samrat wins by his qualities. He wins the hearts not lands.

- In Buddhism also the concept of wheel is important. However it is not the wheel of chariot but the wheel of morality.

Institution of Kingship

- Buddhism also presents patrimonial authority. King has to treat his people as his children as mentioned in Ashoka's edicts.
- Kingship is not hereditary.
- Decision making is based on active deliberation. Decision is by consensus.
- Buddhism supports republican form of govt.

Principles of governance

- They are based on the functioning of monasteries. There were rules & procedures. The source of these rules & procedures is Vinaya pitaka. Vinaya - set of rules.
- There will be no hierarchy.
- Women were also admitted in Sanghas.
- Decision making is based on free and frank discussions.
- Decision is based on reason rather than blind faith.

- Sanghas represent liberal egalitarianism.

Foreign Policy

- Buddhism promotes non-violence, encourages negotiations, suggests avoidance of war & work in collective interest.

Comparison betⁿ Hinduism & Buddhism

Origin of State

Hinduism

Buddhism

Origin of state

Situation of
matranyaya

Private
Property.

Kingship

King has divine
personality

King is noblest
of all

Kingship is based
on varna

Rejects varna & caste

Kingship is hereditary

Based on qualities

King has absolute
authority with the only

It is based on
consensus

Limitation he has to
observe his dharma

Supports monarchy

Republican form of govt.

Supports imperialist

Supports non-violence

Foreign policy.

- Hinduism does not believe in equality neither among castes nor betⁿ sexes.

Buddhism is an
egalitarian tradition!