

SIX SYSTEMS OF THE INDIAN PHILOSOPHY

The Six systems of the Indian Philosophy are Nyaya, Vaisesika, Samkhya, Yoga, Purva Mimamsa and Uttara Mimamsa. Each of these systems differs in one way or the other in terms of its concepts, phenomena, laws and dogmas. Each system has its own founder as well. Each system of Indian philosophy is called a Darshana. Thus, the Sanskrit word 'Shad-Darshna' refers to the six systems of philosophy'.

Nyaya

Gautama is known as the founder of the Nyaya system of philosophy. Nyaya belongs to the category of Astika

Darshanas. Astika Darshanas realise the significance of verbal testimony or the authority of the Vedas, Gautama, who is also called Akshapada is thought to have lived during the mid-fifth century BC. He was the first philosopher to stress the importance of the valid means of knowledge and hence, the Nyaya system of philosophy is said to have laid the firm foundation to the development of the Science of Hindu logic. Gautama's Nyaya System of Philosophy is called by names such as Nyaya Sastra and Tarka Sastra.

Vaisheshika

The Vaisheshika System of Indian Philosophy was founded by Kanada or uluka. That is why it is called Aulukya Darshana. Vaisheshika System followed the Nyaya System very closely and hence, experts in the study of philosophy often combine the two schools as Nyaya-Vaisheshika.

The Vaisheshika System recognises seven 'Padarthas' or categories which are: substance, quality, action generality, particularity, relation of inherence and non-existence.

Samkhya

Sage Kapila founded the Samkhya System of Philosophy. The Samkhya system laid the firm foundation for the Advaita Vedanta later on. The dogmas put forth by Kapila were further expounded by

his disciples Asuri and Panchashikha. The Samkhya system accepts only three Pramanas or the valid means of acquiring knowledge. They accept Pratyaksha or perception, Anumana or inference and Shabda or verbal testimony. The Samkhya Sutras compiled by Kapila were commented on later by Ishvara Krishna of the fifth century AD.

Yoga

The Yoga System of Philosophy was founded by Patanjali. He authored the Yoga sutras or the aphorisms of Yoga. Yoga aims at the final state of spiritual absorption through eight component parts together called Ashtanga Yoga. According to Patanjali, the eight limbs of yoga are Yama, Niyama, Asana, Pranayama, Pratyahara, Dharana, Dhyana and Samadhi. All the eight are jointly called Raja Yoga. The Yoga System of Philosophy accepts three fundamental realities namely Ishvara, Purusha and Prakriti or the Primordial matter. Patanjali names some obstacles to the path of Yoga. They are called 'Antarayas' and they include Vyadhi (illness), Styana (apathy), Samsaya (doubt), Pramada (inadvertence), Alasya (laziness), Avirati (incontinence), Bhrantidarshana (wrong understanding), Alabdha Bhumikatva (nonattainment of mental plane) and Anavasthitatva (instability).

Purva Mimamsa

The Mimamsa Darshana believes firmly in the performance of rituals and supports the view that the body is perishable but the soul survives even after the death of the body and it reserves the right to enjoy the fruits of the rituals in heaven. The school firmly believes in the preservation of the effect or the fruits of the rituals by a remarkable power. This philosophical system of Purva Mimamsa was founded by Jaimini. He accepts two types of knowledge namely Pratyaksha (immediate knowledge) and Paroksha (mediate knowledge). Mimamsa does not speak about the existence of God. Performance of daily duties or the Nitya Karmas is the ultimate goal of man.

Uttara Mimamsa

The Philosophical System of Uttara Mimamsa does not have a specific founder because it is a conglomeration of three different schools of thought

namely Advaitu, Visishtadvaita and Dvaita. The Philosophical system of Uttara Mimamsa is otherwise called Vedanta. All the three schools of Vedanta had different teachers. Adi Sankara was the head of the Advaita system, Ramanuja was the architect of the Visishtadvaita system and Madhva was the head of the

Dvaita system of Vedanta Philosophy. It is important to note that all the three teachers accepted Vedas as a valid means of knowledge.

The Upanishads At the end of the Vedic period, we notice that there was a strong reaction against the

TABLES 1.1 The Six Schools of Philosophy of Hinduism

Doctrines	Priest/Teacher	Important information
1. Nyayasytra (Logical Doctrine)	Gautama Maharishi	Hindu doctrines based on logic
2. Vaisheshika (Monic Doctrine)	Kanad and Ramanuja	This is the basis of Vishishtadvaita
3. Yogasutra (Yoga Doctrine)	Maharshi Patanjali	A harmonic doctrine that deals with harmony between the mind and the body through Yoga
4. Sankyasutra (Numerical Doctrine)	Kapilamaharshi and Madhvacharya	Dwaita Siddantha which deals with numerals
5. Uttara Mimamsa	Badarayana	Major Upanishad the work taken up by the rishis of that time
6. Poorva Mimamsa	Jaimini Maharshi	About worship via Yajna (rituals) and also became the basis of Karmamarga

Domination of priests, cults and rituals, particularly in the regions of the Panchalas and the Videha. In this background, in about 800 to 500 BC the Upanishads were compiled. The Upanishads were philosophical texts that criticised the rituals and stressed on the value of right belief and knowledge. They also criticised the ceremonies and sacrifices. The Upanishads are the major source of Indian philosophy. There are nearly 108 Upanishads. Of these, 10 have been greatly appreciated at a global level because they deal with the philosophy and theology of the Aryans. These ten Upanishads are Ishopanishad, Kenopanishad, Kathopanishad, Parshnopanishad, Mandukopanishad, Koushikopanishad, Thaittiriyaopanishad, Aitareyaopanishad, Chandogyaopanishad and Brihadaranyakopanishad. These are in form of commentaries attached to the Aranyakas and associated mainly with philosophy and religion.

The Brahmanas They present the socio-political life of the Aryans. They also explain their religion, particularly the sacrifices. They also involve ritualistic formulae for the respective Vedas and the priests.

The Aranyakas These are the forest books on mysticism and philosophy and are the last parts of the

Brahmanas. They are associated with the metaphysics and symbolism of sacrifice. They do not emphasise on sacrifice but on meditation. They oppose sacrifices and a number of the early rituals. They stress on tire moral virtues. They form a bridge between the way of works (karma) and the way of knowledge (gyan).

The Smritis The Smritis are the additional. Treatise or the supplementaries of the Vedas. Smritis refer to the literature that has been carried on from one generation to the other. It is a derivative word and considered less authoritative than 'Shrutis', which is considered authorless and literally means that 'which is heard'. Manusmriti is the most important of all the smritis. It deals with the laws of inheritance, duties of kings and their subjects. Manusmriti or 'Laws of Manu', served as a foundational work on Hindu law for the ancient Indian society.

The Puranas There are 18 Puranas totally. The Bhagawat Parana and Vishnu Purana are the most important.



A Note on Vedas and Puranas

It is well known that ancient India did not produce any historical work, but even the Vedas and Puranas contain some data on political history, while they

have great value for reconstructing the social, religious and cultural history of India. They have preserved not only the names of the kings and tribes, but also of important events as well, for example, the Dasarajna, the battle, of 10 kings.

The Pariplavaakhyanas (cyclic tales), which were recited by the lute players during the Asvamedha sacrifice, included the Vamsanu-charila or the dynastic history. The Pariplavaakhyanas also contained all the elements of parica laksanas of the puranas, and it is possible that the puranas (in the Vedas this term usually occurs with Itihaasa or history) continued the tradition of the Vedic Age, and gave the dynastic lists a permanent form by reducing them to writing. The dynastic list is not free from mistakes, but they make useful framework, the practice of compiling dynastic lists persisted for a long time particularly in Nepal and Western India.

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