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## Classical Indian Philosophy Buddhism part 2 for Competitive Exams

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### **Ethical Theories of Buddhism**

Four of the theories on which ethics of Buddhism depends upon are;

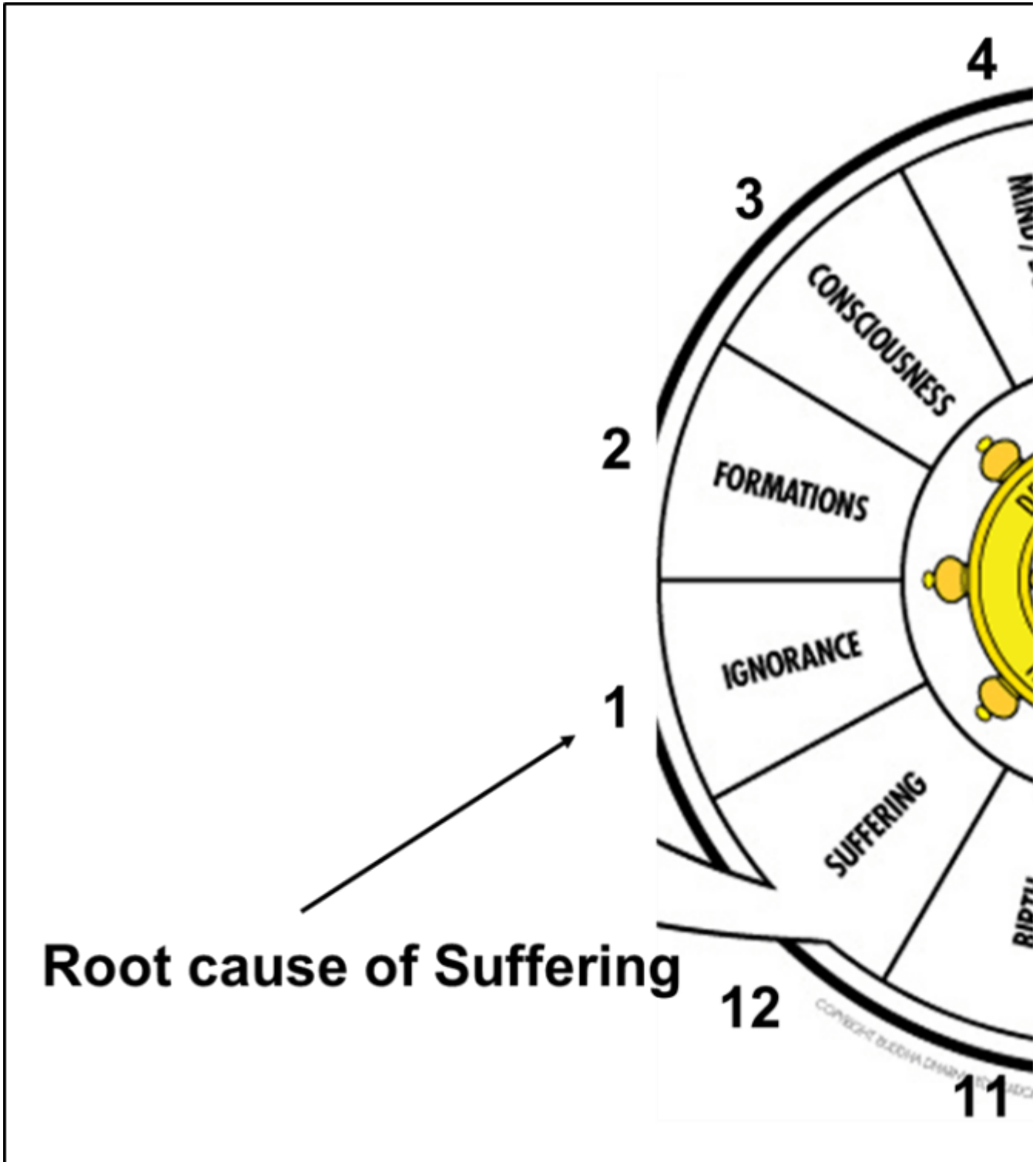
- The theory of dependent origination
- The theory of Momentariness or Kshanabhangavada
- The theory of non-existence of the soul or Anatmavada
- The theory of Karma

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### **Theory of Dependent Origination**

- The doctrine of dependent origination yields the Buddhist theory of the transitory nature of things.

- According to Buddha, whatever exists, arises from some conditions and is, therefore, impermanent in nature.
- Buddha teaches that all things are subject to change and decay.
- There is nothing permanent in the world, so, when the cause ceases to exist, the effect ceases to be.
- Hence, Buddha says that whatever has a beginning will always have an end. Where there is a high, there will be a low, or, where meeting is, parting shall be too, etc. Therefore, there is no notion of permanence in Buddhism.
- Subsequently Buddha thinkers further developed the theory of impermanence into the theory of Momentariness.



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## The Theory of Momentariness

- According to Buddhism, everything has a cause.
- In other words, the criterion of existence (state) of a thing is its capacity to produce some effect.
- This is called Arthurian-karitva-Lakshmana-sat.
- For example, a non-existent thing like a unicorn or a hare's horn cannot produce any effect.

- The theory of dependent origination also yields the Buddhist theory of Momentariness or Kshananbhangavada.
- According to Buddha's late followers, the theory of momentariness or Kshanika-vada means that not only is everything conditional and therefore, non-permanent in nature. But also that things last not for a period or short period of time but exist or last for one part-less moment only.
- For example, a seed grows into a sapling and then into a tree- this shows that the seed has admittedly changed through the course of becoming a tree.
- So, everything lasts only for a moment.
- Now, from this it can be deduced that a thing having existence must be momentary in nature.

## **Theory of Non-Existence of Soul**

- Many schools of Indian Philosophy accept that in a man there is an abiding substance called the soul or atma which persists through changes that overcome the body. It exists before birth and after death it migrates from one body to another.
- Buddha denies the existence of such soul.
- Criticism was raised against Buddha and his denial of the concept of the commonly accepted soul. It was asked as to how would Buddhism then explain the continuity of a person to different births or even to the different states of childhood, from youth to an old age?
- Buddha denies transmigration of soul but does not deny the continuity of the stream of successive states that compose life.
- According to Buddha, life is an unbroken series of steps, each of the states depend on the condition just preceding it and give rise to the one just succeeding it. The continuity of life series is, therefore based on a causal connection running through the different states.
- For example, a lamp burning through the night whose flame of each moment is dependent on its own conditions and is different from that of other moment which is dependent on other conditions. Yet, there is an unbroken succession of different flames because they are connected causally. Similarly, the end state of life causes the beginning of the next.
- Rebirth is therefore, not transmigration of soul but it is the causation of the next life by the present one.
- Therefore, Buddha repeatedly exhorts his disciples to give up on the false notion of the self. It is nothing but an illusion.
- According to Buddha, man is only a conventional name for a collection of different constituents.

- The different constituents are; material body or kaya, the immaterial mind or manas or citi, the formless consciousness or VI jnana.
- Like, a chariot is nothing but a collection of wheels, shafts, wood, etc. Similarly, the man is nothing but a collection of different constituents.
- Therefore, the soul, according to Buddhism denotes nothing more than this collection of constituents.
- From a psychological point of view, Buddhism believes that a man can be analysed into a collection of five groups or panca-skandhas of changing elements.

The panca-skandhas are;

- Form or rupa: it consists of different factors which we perceive in the body having a form
- Feelings or Vedanta: feeling of pleasure, pain, indifference, etc.
- Perception including understanding and naming or Sanjana
- Predispositions or tendencies generated by the impressions of the past experiences or samskaras
- Consciousness itself or VI jnana.

(The last four combined together are called name)

## The Theory of Karma

- According to Buddha, the theory of dependent origination is indispensable for understanding his teachings.
- As he avers, "He who sees the pratityasamutpada, sees dharma and he who sees dharma, sees the pratityasamutpada."
- Buddha says the failure to grasp this principle of causation is the cause of all troubles in life.
- Hence, the belief in the theory of Karma is only an aspect of the aforementioned doctrine (the doctrine of pratityasamutpada)
- In other words, the law of Karma is only a special form of a more general law of causation conceived by Buddha.

## Mcq

1. Arrange the Panca-skandhas in the correct order;

1. Rupa, Vedanta, samskaras, Sanjana, VI jnana
2. Rupa, VI jnana, samskaras, Sanjana, Vedanta
3. Rupa, Vedanta, Sanjana, samskaras, VI jnana

4. Rupa, Vedanta, samskaras, Sanjana, VI jnana

Answer: C

2. Choose the correct code of statements in reference to Buddha's philosophy;

1. Buddha denies transmigration of soul
2. Buddha denies the continuity of the stream of successive states.
3. Buddhism accepts the theory of anatma-vada
4. From a phenomenological point of view, Buddha believes man can be analysed into a collection of panca-skandhas

Code:

- A. All of them are true
- B. All of them are false
- C. Only 1 and 3 are true
- D. 1-3-4 are true

Answer: C

3. Arrange the Ponca-skandhas in the correct order;

- A. Rupa, Vedanta, samskaras, Sanjana, VI jnana
- B. Rupa, VI jnana, samskaras, Sanjana, Vedanta
- C. Rupa, Vedanta, Sanjana, samskaras, VI jnana
- D. Rupa, Vedanta, samskaras, Sanjana, VI jnana

Answer: C

4. Which of the following statements are true in relation with the theory of "Arthurian-karitva-Lakshmana-sat"

- A. Everything has a cause.
- B. The criterion of existence (state) of a thing is its capacity to produce some effect.
- C. A hare's horn cannot produce any effect.
- D. All of these

Answer: D

5. The notion of impermanence is drawn from which Buddhist doctrine

- A. Anatma-vada

- B. The theory of Karma
- C. The theory of dependent origination
- D. All of these

Answer: C

6. According to Buddhism, the belief in the theory of Karma is a form of belief in the theory of

- A. Anatma-vada
- B. Pratityasamutpada
- C. Both A and B
- D. None of these

Answer: B

#Buddhism

#ethics

-Manishika

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