

Jnana

One of the 12 Paramita goddesses, knowledge personified. Daughter of Ratnasambhava.

<http://www.mythologydictionary.com/buddhist-mythology.html>

ज्ञान Jñāna

ג'נָאנָה

על העולם והלב: מאי 2010

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جنانا

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جنانا

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Jnana

Jnana (Sanskrit ज्ञान, *jñāna*; Pali: *ñāṇa*; often pronounced: [*gja.n*]) a term for “knowledge” in Indian religions and Hindu and Buddhist philosophy.

The idea of *jnana* centers on a cognitive event which is recognized when experienced. It is knowledge inseparable from the total experience of reality, especially a total or divine reality (Brahma).^[1]

The root *jñā-* is cognate to English *know*, as well as to the Greek γνῶ- (as in γνῶσις *gnosis*). Its antonym is *ajñāna* “ignorance”.

1 In Buddhism

In Tibetan Buddhism, it refers to pure awareness that is free of conceptual encumbrances, and is contrasted with *viñana*, which is a moment of 'divided knowing'. Entrance to, and progression through the ten stages of *Jnana*/*Bhims*, will lead one to complete enlightenment and *nibbana*.^[2]

In the *Vipassanā* tradition of Buddhism there are the following *ñanas* according to Mahasi Sayadaw.^[3] As a person meditates these *ñanas* or “knowledges” will be experienced in order. The experience of each may be brief or may last for years and the subjective intensity of each is variable. Each *ñana* could also be considered a *jhāna* although many are not stable and the mind has no way to remain embedded in the experience. Experiencing all the *ñanas* will lead to the first of the Four stages of enlightenment then the cycle will start over at a subtler level.^[3]

1. Analytical Knowledge of Body and Mind (*namarupa-pariccheda-ñana*) (corresponds to 1st *jhana*)
2. Knowledge by Discerning Conditionality (*paccaya-pariggaha-ñana*)
3. Knowledge by Comprehension (*sammasana-ñana*)
4. Knowledge of Arising and Passing Away (*udayabbaya-ñana*) (corresponds to 2nd *jhana*)
5. Knowledge of Dissolution (*bhanga-ñana*) (corresponds to 3rd *jhana*)
6. Awareness of Fearfulness (*bhayatupatthana-ñana*)
7. Knowledge of Misery (*adinava-ñana*)
8. Knowledge of Disgust (*nibbida-ñana*)

9. Knowledge of Desire for Deliverance (*muncitukamyata-ñana*)
10. Knowledge of Re-observation (*patisankhanupassana-ñana*)
11. Knowledge of Equanimity about Formations (*sankhar'upekkha-ñana*) (corresponds to 4th *jhana*)
12. Insight Leading to emergence (*vutthanagaminivipassana-ñana*)
13. Knowledge of Adaptation (*anuloma-ñana*) (one-time event)
14. Maturity Knowledge (*gotrabhu-ñana*) (one-time event)
15. Path Knowledge (*magga-ñana*) (one-time event)
16. Fruition Knowledge (*phala-ñana*) (corresponds to *Nibbāna*)
17. Knowledge of Reviewing (*paccavekkhana-ñana*)

2 In Hinduism

Sahu explains:

Prajnanam iti Brahman - wisdom is the soul/spirit. *Prajnanam* refers to the intuitive truth which can be verified/tested by reason. It is a higher function of the intellect that ascertains the *Sat* or Truth in the *Sat-Chit-Ananda* or truth-consciousness-bliss, i.e. the *Brahman/Atman/Self/person* [...] A truly wise person [...] is known as *Prajna* - who has attained *Brahmanhood* itself; thus, testifying to the *Vedic Maha Vakya* (great saying or words of wisdom): *Prajnanam iti Brahman*.^[4]

And according to David Loy,

The knowledge of Brahman [...] is not intuition of Brahman but itself *is Brahman*.^[5]

Jnana Shakti is “the power of intellect, real wisdom, or knowledge”.^[6]

Jnana yoga (Yoga of Knowledge) is one of the three main paths (*margas*), which are supposed to lead towards

moksha (liberation) from material miseries. The other two main paths are Karma yoga and Bhakti Yoga. Rāja yoga (classical yoga) which includes several yogas, is also said to lead to moksha. It is said that each path is meant for a different temperament of personality.

A notable mantra within the International Society for Krishna Consciousness refers to the transition from (spiritual) ignorance to (spiritual) under the guidance of a guru:^[7]

*om ajñāna-timirāndhasya / jñānāñjana-
śalākayā / cakṣur unmīlitaṁ yena / tasmai
śrī-gurave namaḥ*

“from darkest ignorance / with the torch of knowledge / he has opened [my] eye / honour be to [my] venerable teacher”

3 See also

- Jhāna
- Vipassanā-ñāṇa
- Advaita Vedanta
- Mahāvākyas
- Gnosis
- Mysticism
- Nondual
- Vidya
- Enlightenment

4 References

- [1] “jnana (Indian religion) - Britannica Online Encyclopedia”. Britannica.com. Retrieved 2012-05-15.
- [2] Gampopa’s “Jewel Ornament of Liberation”, especially the ten bhūmis, where the absorption state or non-dual state, which characterizes all ten bhūmis, in this well-respected traditional text, is equated to the state of jnana
- [3] The Progress of Insight: (Visuddhiñāna-katha), by The Venerable Mahasi Sayadaw, translated from the Pali with Notes by Nyanaponika Thera (1994; 33pp./99KB)
- [4] Sahu 2004, p. 41.
- [5] Loy 1997, p. 62.
- [6] Helena Petrona Blavatsky (1893 - 1897), *The Secret Doctrine*, London Theosophical Pub. House, 1893-97, ISBN 0-900588-74-8
- [7] vaniquotes.org

5 Sources

- Anna Dallapiccola, *Dictionary of Hindu Lore and Legend* (ISBN 0-500-51088-1)
- Loy, David (1997), *Nonduality. A Study in Comparative Philosophy*, Humanity Books
- Sahu, Bhagirathi (2004), *The New Educational Philosophy*, Sarup & Sons

6 External links

- Jnana definition and other relevant text
- What Is Jnana? (Jiva Institute)

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