Prama, Prameya and Pramana

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Introduction

The Nyaya philosophy was founded by the great sage Gotama who was also known as Gautama and Aksapada. This philosophy is primarily concerned with the conditions of correct thinking and the means of acquiring a true knowledge of reality. Here we will discuss the concept of Prama, Prameya and Pramana according to Nyaya philosophy.
Definition of Prama

- Knowledge or cognition (jnana or buddhi) is the manifestation of objects. Just as the light of a lamp reveals or shows physical things, so knowledge manifests all its objects.

- Valid preventative knowledge (prama) is a definite or certain (asandigdha), faithful or unerring (yathartha), and non-reproductive experience (anubhava) of the object.
Classification of Prama

- There are two kinds of knowledge, anubhava (preventative cognition) and smriti (memory) i.e. representative cognition, each of which may be valid or non-valid.
- Each of the two can be valid (yathartha) or non-valid (ayathartha). Valid preventative knowledge is called prama. It is divided into perception, inference, comparison and testimony.
- Non-valid preventative knowledge (aprama) is divided into doubt (sansaya), error (bhrama) and hypothetical argument (tarka).
Prameya

Prameya literally means a knowlegable or an object of true knowledge, i.e. reality. The objects of such knowledge, according to Nyaya are:

- Self (atma), Body (sarira), Senses (indriya), Their objects (artha), Cognition (buddhi), Mind (manas), Activity (pravritti), Mental defects (dosa), Rebirth (pretyabhava), Experience of pleasure and pain (phala), Suffering (dukha), Liberation (apavarga).
Meaning of Pramana

- Pramana is the way of knowing anything truly. It gives us true knowledge and nothing but true knowledge. It thus includes all the sources or methods of knowledge.

- Of the philosophical topics, pramana is the most important and so it will be treated in details in Nyaya philosophy too.
Pramana in Nyaya Philosophy

- Nyaya philosophy consider following FOUR pramanas in its epistemology:
  - **Perception/Prayksha**: Perception is a definite and true cognition of objects produced by sense-object contact.
  - **Inference/Anumana**: Inference is the process of knowing something not by observation, but through the medium of a mark that is invariably related to it.
  - **Comparison/Upamana**: Upamana is the process of naming objects through a given description.
  - **Testimony/Sabda**: Sabda consists in understanding the meaning of the statement of a trustworthy person.
Conclusion

Here we discussed prama, prameya and pramana in short. In the next part of the unit pramanas will be considered in detail.

REFERENCE:
Datta & Chatterjee: An Introduction to Indian Philosophy,, University of Calcutta, 1984.