Though the system of monastic education had a place in the ancient system of Hindu education still it could not occupy any prominent place in the residential system of education in the house of the preceptor living there as a member of his family. In fact Buddhist monasteries became special centres of monastic education. Sangham Saranam Gachhami, Padham Saranam Gachhami, Dharmon Saranam Gachhami, (I shall seek the shelter in the society of monks, I shall seek the shelter of Buddha, I shall seek shelter in religion.) These three mantras guided the lives of Buddhist students towards acquisition of knowledge. Each monastery was turned into a centre of learning and every student had to lead a regulated life and receive training to do so. The universities of Taxilla and Bikramasila which had been previously centres of teaching works on Hinduism became influential universities for the study of Buddhist scriptures in the Eastern and Northern India.
The student community of these universities had to obey certain special rules and regulations. The mode of begging and taking food was guided by the principles of Buddhist religion. The Buddhist students had to wear dress dyed with yellow pigment and the system of education was conducted having an eye to monastic life. It is said in the Upanishads that the different stages of life will follow one after another. The first stage of life is Brahmacharya the life of continence and practice of austerities of life, then comes the second stage of life namely domestic life, the next stage of life is Vanaprastha the life of retirement from worldly life and the last stage in order is the life of renunciation. Adherence to this sequence was the common practice in life. If any one felt the urge of other worldliness he could take to asceticism that very day. He would not have adhered to any order if he wanted to take to asceticism direct from the first stage of life of continence or from the second stage of life namely domestic life. According to the religious principles.
of Buddhism, all are competent to take to asceticism whether he feels any urge for it or not. One may take shelter in Buddha and take to asceticism while leading the life of a Brahmachari. The doors of asceticism were open to all. As a result of this announcement, all irrespective of whether they were Brahmins or Shudras were attracted towards Buddhism.

There was a stir in the whole of India among a large number of people to embrace this religion of renunciation. Since the message of Buddha touched the hearts of all irrespective of their status in the society, whether they were rich or poor and also irrespective of their caste and creed a large number of students got themselves admitted into different monasteries inspired by the sacred texts:

"Buddha Saranam Gachchami, Sangham Saranam Gachchami and led their lives along the path of renunciation. The closed doors were thrown wider open to all by Buddhism. If people find a new way of life, they feel an urge to go along that path out of curiosity. This eagerness is natural to man. As the right to lead a life of asceticism was
recognised an universal by Buddhism, even people belonging to lower strata of society became devoted to the religion and in course of time Buddhism became famous as an extremely popular religion. Still it was very difficult to practice this religion as it was based on renunciation. Owing to the continuance of the conflict between the life of enjoyment and that of renunciation for a long time, Buddhism gradually deteriorated after the lapse of many years. This is the ultimate fate of all religions, based on the principles of renunciation.

(II) RIGID LAWS AND REGULATIONS FRAME FOR STUDENT LIFE. LADY STUDENTS WERE ALLOWED TO JOIN

Rigid rules and regulations were introduced for the Buddhist students of olden times to follow them in Buddhist monasteries. Every student had to beg alms. There were various rules that had to be followed while begging. As it was obligatory on the part of a Buddhist monk to beg, the Buddhist monks were called
Bhikshus. The peculiar manner in which a Bhikshu wore his dress was that the cloth descending from the upper part of his body would reach below his knees. He would have to wear a girdle (belt) round his waist and the scarf being folded was to remain on the upper part of the body and it had to be kept steady by tying it to the two elbow joints so that the two arms could be moved at ease and taking the begging bowl in his left hand he will proceed slowly and carefully towards the village. He must not deviate from the straight path towards any other direction or try to pass over a Bhikshu senior to him in age. He must walk all the way with his eyes fixed to the ground. His wearing apparel must not be raised above his knees. He must not laugh or shake his head or limbs or walk on his heels. The Bhikshu must announce his entrance and departure before entering or departing from a house. The Bhikshu must not stand at a distance from the house or very close to it or stand there for a long time. He must not also leave the place for trivial reasons without taking alms when the alms is given to him he must not cast an eye on the person giving alms especially if she is
a woman. While receiving alms, he must bring out the alms-bowl from inside the cover of cloth underneath which he was holding it with his hand and hold it with his two hands before the giver and receive the alms. After receiving the alms the Bhikshu should cover the alms-bowl with his cloth again and with slow and cautious steps return to the monastery. It was the common practice with both the communities, Vedic Hindus and Buddhists, to take to mendicity as a vow, still there was some difference between the manner of begging of the Brahmacharins and the Buddhist monks of the two communities. The Brahmacharins had to ask for alms using different languages according to the caste of the person giving alms but the Buddhist Bhikshus had to ask for alms without uttering a single word and keeping silent all the while.

The alms-bowl of a Buddhist mendicant had to be either earthen or made of iron and it must not be made of any other material. This begging-bowl was kept hanging from the shoulder in a covering made of cloth. If the Bhikshu had to undertake a long journey to beg alms, he was allowed to take with him
needles, scissors, a strainer for filtration of water and also to use a pair of slippers if he had to move along rugged terrain. The food of these student monks was of two kinds, solid food and soft food. Biscuits, cakes, meal and fruits were some of the solid food and boiled rice and curry were the soft food. Buddhadev before his enlightenment and realisation of truth took milk-rice from the hands of Sujata and just after his supreme enlightenment took rice cakes with honey from two merchants Tapasa and Bhakika. According to Aswa Ghosh, the biographer of Buddha, he took three kinds of honey namely sugar, honey and clarified butter. Following the example set by Buddha, the Bhikshus preferred highly these items of food. Highly religious-minded Bhikshus regarded their dinner as Paindya Fatika which means filling the belly anyhow with the rice collected as alms and boiled over fire. He who returned to the monastery after collecting alms from the villages, regarded it as his first and foremost duty to make necessary arrangements for the feeding of other Bhikshus, his fellow students. He had to spread the carpet seat, keep water to drink and to wash their hands and feet as well as towels to wipe them. He who came
last of all after begging alms had to clean
the dinning hall after taking his meal if he
had not taken his meal in the meantime.
Occasionally enough foodstuff was given to
a Bhikshu but he did not use more than two
bowl-ful of food-stuff because in the store
room of a monastery maximum quantity of food-
stuff had to be kept stored for distribution.
Every member of the fraternity of monks
residing in the monastery could not beg as
some of them might be ill, a few of them
might be mere boys and some of them might be
maimed. One was not allowed to beg alms of
any and every house-holder as it was
strictly forbidden to beg alms of those
who spoke of Buddha in disparaging terms
or were disrespectful to him. Alms could only
be collected from houses of persons who were
respectful to Bhikshus. So at first Bhikshus
who were mere boys were not allowed to go
about to beg alone. Somebody must accompany
them. He would point out to him the
houses which they could approach for alms.
III) STUDENTS ARE TO OBSERVE CELESTACY
FOR WHOLE LIFE

The students had to lead a celebutate life all through their lives. The main characteristic of Buddhism is the organization of its monks into a fraternity or order. This basic principle of ascetics in Buddhism had its origin from Brahmanism. According to the Brahmanical Scheme of life, life is divided into four stages called Ashrams some of which are based on the practice of asceticism. A Brahmachari is of two classes (i) Upakurvana or one who is a student for a fixed period of time (ii) Naiothika one who is a life long student. A Brahmachari of the second class was ascetic like a Buddhist Bhikshu. People in the third and fourth stages of life named Banaprastha and Sannyas were as good as ascetics in like Buddhist monks. Buddhism adopted almost all the rules of Brahmacarjya for its monks. The first and foremost duty of a Brahmachari is begging alms and the very term Bhikshu in Buddhism means one who begs for one's livelihood i.e. a religious mendicant. The third stage of life or Ashram is also similar to the life of a Bhikshu. According to, the opinion
by legal authorities like Gautama and Apastamba. The rules of Brahmacharya regarding alms bowl, manner of begging, eating, sleeping, hair cutting, clothing to be used and abstinence from all luxuries like wearing garlands, using scents and perfumes, oils and sporting in water etc. were all adopted in toto by Buddhism for its Shikshas. Even the doctrine of non-violence in Buddhism is Brahmanical.

Just as a confirmed Brahmachari had to practice continence and abstain from all sensual pleasures according to principles of Brahmanism similarly Buddhist students who intended to be a monk had to enter a monastery with that end in view. Just as in Brahmanical system of education more stress was laid on bodily purity and the formation of character of the students and the moulding of their lives into a fixed pattern than on mere study of the Vedas similarly Buddhist students were trained in the maintenance of purity of their bodies and observance of the rules of conduct. In the systems of Brahmanical education fasting on particular days was prescribed similarly even in the systems of Buddhist and Jaina education fasting was also prescribed.

Ancient Indian Education by Dr. B.K.Nukherjee, Pp. 392-393.
Buddhist students for the most part resided in monasteries and could get admission into the order of monks. They were given such training as would enable them to pass their lives as a Shikshya observing Brahmacarya all through their lives and form their own fraternity. All students were directed to lead the life of an ascetic in order that they might be spiritually elevated by the observance of appropriate rules of conduct. They had to live in the monastery under the supervision of a teacher and received training in the doctrines of Buddhism.

It is for this reason the initiation into Buddhism was called (Prabajya) which means literally going forth. It denotes that any student coming to be initiated is like one going out of his previous state. A layman, a house-holder or any person belonging to any other community could all be initiated i.e., given prajya. The doors of admission to Buddhism were wide open to all irrespective of their previous caste or creed. If a student came to get himself admitted he had to abandon all visible symbols of caste used by him previously such as the sacred thread or a piece of white cloth which served as the
symbols of his caste. As soon as he came he had to promise that he was a votary of the principles of equality and fraternity.

Buddha has said, "just as the rivers such as the Ganges, Jambha and Achiravati are known by different names so long as they do not flow into a sea and as soon as they flow into the sea, they come to be known as sea similarly whatever may be the caste designation by which you may be known previously, you are equal with all other students as soon as you embrace Buddhism. Be you a Kshatriya or a Brahmin or a Sudra you would be known as a Sakya as soon as you come renouncing your caste and customs and practices of your forefathers. You must desert your home and become homeless.

Ordinary students still in their teens intending to themselves admitted into an institution of Buddhistic studies, must first of all present themselves at a monastery of his choice with three pieces of cloth dyed yellow to serve as their underwear, outer-garment and scarf. They would pray to an aged monk to initiate them. Thereafter the monk would make them change their clothings and utter this religious vow.
"I seek refuge of Buddha, I seek refuge in religion, I seek refuge of the order." Then he would make him read out ten commandments: (1) enjoining abstinence from taking animal life (2) forbidding to take away what has been once given (3) prescribing abstinence from all intoxicating drinks (4) forbidding to tell a lie (5) and not to eat out of time (6) and enjoining to give up all impure practices (7) seeing shows dancing and singing (8) the use of garlands, scents, (9) the use of a high or large couch or seat and last of all (10) forbidding to receive gold and silver. Then the ceremony of initiation would be over. Thereafter this new seeker of knowledge would be handed over to an aged person or a teacher and would remain under his training so long he did not become fit to be a student of a teacher of higher calibre and eventually fit to be regarded as a teacher of higher rank. Receiving education and training in this way the student, if possible might be a life-long ascetic and all through his life think of the welfare of the monastery, order of monks and his countrymen in a non-violent way.
(IV) NON-VIOLENCE OR AHIMSA WAS THE MAIN CRITERION OF STUDENT LIFE

Of the above mentioned ten commandments of Buddhist principles of life the first and foremost is Ahimsa which means abstinence from killing living animals. There is some significance of these ten commandments. The ten religious principles to be followed by Brahmins have been mentioned by Manu. Buddhists have also ten commandments to be obeyed and in later period there were ten commandments in Christianity which are still being followed by Christians. Besides, there, ten types of sin have been mentioned by Manu. As a bath in the Ganges absolves one of all these ten kinds of sin, the Ganges is called Pashupata (one who absolves one of the ten kinds of sin).

In Manu Sanghita there is the mention of a religion of five characteristics. In that religion also Ahimsa has the first place. But there is great difference between Ahimsa of the Brahminical religion and Buddhism. As sacrifice of animals was sanctioned by the Vedas at the time of performance of a sacrifice it is not a sinful act. This is the characteristics of Brahminism. Kapila, the author of Sankhya Philosophy expressed
his views against killing of animals while performing sacrifices. It is admitted on all hands that Kapilmuni was prior to Gautama Buddha. In the Mahabharat (Santiparba) Kapilmuni expressed his opinion against sacrifice of any material thing. He had a bias towards attainment of one's knowledge. The word Buddha too means enlightenment or knowledge the Buddhistic doctrine is also based on gnosticism.

Though the doctrine of Ahimsa or non-violence in ancient India had its origin from the Vedas, the sacrifice of animals was sanctioned at the time of performing sacrifices. It was Kapil Muni who was the first man to establish his ideology that it would be a sin even if any animal is sacrificed during the performance of a sacrifice. It has been clearly mentioned in the Sankhya Philosophy. At long last under the strong influence of Buddhism, the doctrine of Ahimsa was propagated widely and animal sacrifice even in the performance of religious sacrifices became reprehensible.

The doctrine of Ahimsa in Jainism was more rigidly followed than in Buddhism. Though there was provision for restriction of food in
Buddhist religion, fish and meat were not totally forbidden food that should not be taken under any circumstances. For sick students, even non-vegetarian food was prescribed but the Buddhists themselves did not kill animals. They took fish and the meat of dead animals. The killing of animals was strictly forbidden everywhere but in Jainism it was strictly forbidden to take any kind of non-vegetarian food.

However, the establishment of the doctrine of Ahimsa or non-violence introduced a new era in India. Military power and armed raids and invasions remained under check and peace prevailed everywhere. During the reign of Ashoka, the people of this country lived happily in a peaceful atmosphere on account of the observance of the principle of non-violence.

Many think that the military power in India lost its vigour on account of the propagation of the doctrine of Ahimsa of Buddhism and being incapable of withstanding foreign invasion India lost her independence. But it is the concern of the Administrators of the
country. In fact it is described that students who seek knowledge should be gentle, polite and docile and non-violent. There is no doubt that the attempt that was made through Buddhism to tame the spirit of violence in men and keep its dormant or extinct is undoubtedly praiseworthy.

(v) MISSION IN LIFE OF BUDDHIST STUDENTS

The only mission on life of a Buddhist student was the highest ordination of Upasamadā or the attainment of the full status of Konkholdd, i.e., of a Bhikshu and that of a full fledged member of the order of the monks (Sangha). Acceptance of Pradajya or going out of family life did not mean escape discharging the obligations to the family, state and the society. It was recognised as well as emphasised by the fact that these moral, political, social and economic obligations were inviolable and sacred. The development of the innerman in one must correspond to the peaceful process of development of the outer body visible to external nature or the objective world. There is an important
point of difference between the two systems of education Brahminical and Buddhist. A student Brahmachari in Brahminical system, returns home to his family on completion of his studies as a Snataka or graduate and marries immediately and becomes a house-holder and leads a domestic life. Hence going out of his house and living apart from his family in his Prajapya is for a temporary period whereas in the case of a Buddhist student his going out of his home and away from his life means going into a state of homelessness i.e. retiring from family life for good. However, in the Brahminical system there were exceptional cases. A Brahmachari student after his graduation is given the option to remain as such all through his life at his preceptor's house and with his family after his death, if he so chooses (Kama II). As a mark of distinction the special designation of Vaisisthina is applied to them. But in the Buddhist system the exceptions became the rule. Even the final goal of life in the former differs from that in the latter. According to Buddhism the final goal of life is to arrive at the stage of annihilation of the soul or Nirvana after going through births and rebirths.
whereas according to Brahminism the final goal of life is the attainment of the state of realization of the soul. The Buddhist system acknowledges transmigration of soul and according to their doctrine soul is also perishable like a water stream consciousness flows on till it reaches its last state, the state of salvation. According to Buddhism in this state there would exist no feeling of the existence of the soul but according to the Brahmanical doctrine emancipation of the soul brings immense pleasure to the soul.

The result of both the doctrines, Buddhism and Brahminism are however the same i.e. the soul that is emancipated does not undergo any rebirth. According to Buddhist doctrine the world is full of sorrow and sufferings and if any human being wants to mitigate the sufferings he must not give any pain to any creature. Every action has its reaction. Simple living and high thinking was the motto of life of the Buddhist monks. Tolerance, succouring the distressed are the general ways of life that had to be followed by Buddhist students.
It has been mentioned before that in the Buddhist monasteries equality and fraternity had to be observed generally in the admission of students. So in the educational institutions there was no caste barrier. It goes without saying that in the sphere of higher spiritual culture people belonging to higher castes were found to be more successful. A very significant number of students succeeded in fulfilling their Buddhist mission of life. However, the popularity of Buddhism was great and spread over many parts of Asia.

The mission of Buddhist scholars was fulfilled as Buddhism was embraced by a large majority of people from Burma to Japan including China and Indo-Asia.