CHAPTER II
Buddhist Monasticism and Education System: Genesis and Development
In this chapter I shall provide a brief description of Buddhism and the emergence of monasteries. The different schools within Buddhism had their own notion of salvation and the texts that they followed. As the history of Buddhist system of education was centered in the monasteries and its structures, this will be discussed in the next section and then I shall examine specific aspects of education. The transformation from *avasa* to *arama* and then to *vihara* and *mahavihara*, that is the institutionalization of monastic education will also be discussed. This will be followed by certain aspects of education with particular reference to Buddhism. The spread of Buddhism started during the lifetime of the Buddha himself. Since the Buddha put the responsibility on the monks to spread and propagate Buddhism, it became a religion with a missionary zeal. Thus, the early spread of Buddhism was mainly due to the efforts of the *bhikshus* and there evolved many wandering communities of *bhikshus*, initially in northern India during the lifetime of the Buddha and continued later on. Buddha invested the monks with the responsibility of propagation as their commitment and dedication could not be swayed by political or material considerations. The early impetus for the spread of Buddhism was the organized nature and structure of the *sangha* - the community of monks.

With the passage of time, the patronage to the *sangha* underwent several changes. Early patronage came mostly from the mercantile community for whom patronage to Buddhism was practical since Buddhism preached non-violence and peace; this facilitated the smooth flow of goods and material and encouraged trade. The early spread of Buddhism (3rd century BC to 4th century AD) in India was phenomenal. It was very popular among the merchant communities and this paved the way for the later spread of Buddhism to regions beyond India. The frequent travel of merchants to other regions,
emergence of trade networks and urbanization was responsible for it. There are several references to trade networks in the *Jatakas*, the *Milindapanho* and inscriptions. The other reason for traders’ patronage to Buddhism was the establishment of many monasteries along the trade routes since the Mauryan period which may have provided a resting place for the merchants in areas near the viharas. The need of security must have prompted this move and this also led to closer contact between the traders and the monks. The two main trade routes were the *Uttarapatha* (The Northern route) and the *Dakshinapatha* (The Southern route).¹

The royal patronage extended to Buddhism by the rulers and royal family was another factor in its spread. Emperor Asoka and Kaniska were instrumental in the spread of Buddhism in India and beyond. In addition, the contribution of great scholars and monks, mainly from the great *mahaviharas* of India is worth noting. The great translator monk Kumarajiva traveled to China, Santarakshita, Padmasambhava and Atisa went to Tibet and many unnamed monks, traders and laymen took the *Dhamma* to the distant lands like Korea, Japan and so on.

I

**Brief account of Buddhism**

India has the tradition of renunciation since the Vedic age. There are references to *vanaprasthi, tapasi, yogi, yati, vairagi, muni*, and *sannyasi* in the Vedic texts.² People left their homes and led a wanderer’s life sustaining on

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¹ These terms also refer to the geographical regions. “Uttarapatha was the major trans-regional trade route of northern India...The Dakshinapatha-the great southern trade route- is mentioned in the *Arthashastra*, but was operational from the early historical period.” Upinder Singh, *A History of Ancient and Early Medieval India*, Pearson, Delhi, 2009, p.289. For Uttarapatha, refer Nayanjot Lahiri, *The Archeology of Indian Trade Routes (up to c.200BC)*, Oxford University Press, Delhi, 1992, pp.367-377.

² For details refer M.G.Bhagat, *Ancient Indian Asceticism*, Munshiram Manoharlal, Delhi, 1976
alms offered by common people. They were referred to as *paribbajaka / parivrajaka* (Sanskrit), *samana / shramana* (Sanskrit) and *bhikkhu / bhikshu* (Sanskrit). In the sixth century BC, Buddhism and Jainism gave a fillip to the tradition of renunciation as more people entered monkhood challenging the established Vedic *varnasrama* system.

Buddhism is not marked by any theoretical consensus or by methodological unity. “Buddhism is hardly a single phenomenon. It comprises many schools that have evolved over two and one half millennia. It comprises theory, religious practice and social forms … philosophy, soteriology and even medicine and cosmology.”3 Buddhism in different parts of the world includes different rituals, beliefs, traditions and practices. That is why it is not a monolithic religious tradition. There is a general agreement among scholars that the early Pali texts of Theravada (Hinayana) tradition are the best repositories of the teaching of Lord Buddha. We also have the ideas of emptiness, the bodhisattva ideal and the universal Buddha in the Mahayana tradition. Further, there is the tradition of Vajrayana (the Tantric tradition) and Zen Buddhism. These later traditions also rely on the basic teachings of the Buddha but have their own differences.

The sects that emerged within Buddhism with the passage of time are as shown in the following table (please refer the next page):

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The Original Sangha

The approximate time span of the development of the main schools/traditions within Buddhism is as depicted below:

**Buddha’s Teaching and Philosophy**

One of the best parts of Buddha’s philosophy and teaching was that there was no divergence between theory and practice. Buddha did not believe in anything transcendent or metaphysical. Buddha emphatically stated that discourse on metaphysical questions is an endless venture. The central teaching of the Buddha mainly centers on the Four Noble Truths, the Noble Eightfold Path, the Four *Seals* of Doctrine, the *Triratna* (Three Jewels), the analysis of self, love, kindness, mercy, compassion, meditation and so on. The first sermon *Dharmachakrapravartana-sutra* delivered by Lord Buddha at Sarnath, Varanasi is considered to be very important. Every Buddhist takes
this teaching as fundamental and all Asian traditions read, recite and interpret this sermon and thus share the fundamental teachings of the Buddha. The *Ariya-sachchani* (the Four Noble Truths) which is the center of his teaching states: there is suffering (*dukkha*); the suffering has a cause (*samudaya*); suffering can be removed (*nirodha*); and the way for cessation of suffering is to follow the *Atthanga-magga* (Noble Eightfold Path). The word for suffering in Pali texts is *dukkha* but it also includes disappointment, sadness, tension, depression, uneasiness, feeling hurt, as well as grief, terror and anguish.  

The Noble Eightfold Path is traditionally viewed in three parts: The Wisdom components of the path include Right Understanding, and Right Attitude. The Moral components of the path include Right Speech, Right Action, and Right Livelihood while the Concentration components of the path include Right Effort, Right Mindfulness and Right Concentration. In the Eightfold Path all factors are important and need to be practiced. The Buddha said that he had rediscovered the Eightfold Path rather than inventing or discovering it. “Although the Buddha claimed he did not invent this path, he does seem to be the first person who described it, for we find no mention of the Eightfold Path in any prior documents or teachings.”  

The Four Noble Truths and the Noble Eightfold Path are not to be taken as a dogma rather Buddha asked for an ‘investigative approach’ as his teachings were just reflections and guidelines that needed to be investigated. Regarding the Four *Seals* of the doctrine, Geshe N. Samten writes, “What some tradition call the Four *Seals* of the doctrine characterize all doctrines recognized as Buddhist in any tradition. First, all contaminated phenomena are suffering or of the nature of suffering. Secondly, all compounded phenomena are impermanent. Thirdly, all phenomena are empty of self. Finally, only nirvana is true peace. Diverse traditions differ from

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5 *Ibid*, p.19
one another regarding the ways in which these aspects of the doctrine are understood. But no doctrine that is not characterized by these *seals* in some respect would ever be recognized as properly Buddhist.\(^6\) The *triratna* is taking refuge in Buddha, Dharma and Sangha. The necessity of the refuge in *triratna* forms a precondition of Buddhist practice and a person is considered a Buddhist if he or she takes refuge in Buddha, Dharma and Sangha. All the Buddhist traditions agree on this point. The *triratna* is explained by Ajahn Sumedho\(^7\), a widely renowned Theravada monk in the following words:

“When we take refuge in the Buddha, it doesn’t mean that we take refuge in some historical prophet, but in that which is wise in the universe, in our minds, that which is not separate from us but is more real than anything we can conceive with the mind or experience through the senses… We call it Buddha-wisdom, other people can call it other things if they want, and these are just words. We happen to use the words of our tradition… we’re just using the term Buddha-wisdom as a conventional symbol to help remind us to be wise, to be alert, to be awake”.

When we take refuge in Dhamma we are: “Not taking refuge in philosophy or intellectual concepts, in theories, in ideas, in doctrines or beliefs of any sort. It is not taking refuge in a belief in Dhamma… something we have to find sometime later. The descriptions of the Dhamma keep us in the present, in the here-and-now, unbound by time. Taking refuge is an immediate immanent reflection in the mind…” Finally, taking refuge in Sangha, means that “we take refuge in virtue, in that which is good, virtuous, kind, compassionate and generous… We take refuge in that in all of us that intends

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\(^7\) Ajahn Sumedho is Abbot of a Buddhist Center in England.
to do good, which is compassionate and kind and loving towards ourselves and others." 

Another fundamental aspect of Buddha’s teaching was *patichcha-samuppada*, the law of dependent origination. It sought to explain all phenomena as well as the sorrow (*dukkha*), the prime concern of the Buddha’s teaching. “The elements of this law were presented as a wheel consisting of 12 *nidanas*, one leading to the next: ignorance (*avija*), formations (*sankhara*), consciousnesss (*vinnana*), mind and body (*nama-rupa*), the six senses (*salayatana*), sense contact (*phassa*), feeling (*vedana*), craving (*tanha*), attachment (*upadana*), becoming (*bhava*), birth (*jati*), and old age and death (*jara-marana*). The *nidanas* were later divided into three groups pertaining to the past, present, and the future lives, and *patichcha-samuppada* therefore also became an explanation of how the origins of rebirth lay in ignorance.”

The attainment of *Nibban/nirvana* was the ultimate goal in Buddhism which could be attained in this life too. It stood for dying out or extinction of all desire, attachment, greed, hatred, ignorance and the annihilation of ‘ego’, that is I-ness.

Mahayana Buddhism also rests on the basic teachings of the Buddha as the Theravada but their texts are in Sanskrit. One basic tenet in Mahayana is the ideal of Bodhisattvas and the followers refuse to enter nirvana until all sentient beings achieve enlightenment. In contrast in the Theravada, the ideal is of the *Arhant/ Arahant* (Pali). Mahayana stresses on compassion and

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9 Upinder Singh, op.cit., p.305
believes in visualization meditations whose purpose is to take upon oneself other’s suffering. In Theravada, there is important role of compassion while in Mahayana it is more than important, it is a stage center. Mahayana further lays emphasis on the idea of emptiness. “While recognizing that all phenomenon are impermanent, not-self, and ultimately unsatisfactory, Mahayana texts emphasize that all phenomena are also empty (sunya) and their ultimate nature is emptiness or voidness (sunyata).” During eighth-ninth centuries AD, another version of Buddhism—Vajrayana emerged which had tantric affiliations and was prominent in the Vikramshila University.

Buddhism had its own social implications for the caste structure, the status of women and sudras and so on. Buddhism laid stress on Ahimsa (non-violence) and offered the Middle Path to salvation which suited the Indian psyche of that period. Buddhism was accepted by people and it spread to different parts of India, from north to south and then to various countries. Theravada Buddhism is found in Thailand, Cambodia, Myanmar, Sri Lanka, etc. while Mahayana Buddhism dominates religious life and philosophical thought in China, Tibet, Mongolia, Korea, Vietnam and Japan. In modern times, Buddhism has emerged as a minor but important force in Europe and the Americas. Buddhism did undergo transformations in teachings and practices as it spread to other Asian countries.

It is a historical fact that Buddhism and Jainism contributed towards the development of culture as a whole including the field of education. According

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10 Bart Gruzalski, *On the Buddha*, op.cit. p.71
to Prof. Kapil Kapoor, Buddhism marks a decisive watershed in the history of Indian thought too:

(i) It shifted the Indian mind from ritual to reason (something that happened in the western history of ideas much later at the time of the Renaissance);

(ii) It shifted the Indian code of conduct from individual to social;

(iii) It fore-grounded the path of action (*karma*) relative to the paths of knowledge and devotion.\(^{11}\)

The Pali Canon is the complete scripture collection of the Theravada school. As such, it is the only set of scriptures preserved in the language of its composition. It is called the *Tipitaka* or "Three Baskets" because it includes the *Vinaya Pitaka* or "Basket of Discipline," the *Sutta Pitaka* or "Basket of Discourses," and the *Abhidhamma Pitaka* or "Basket of Higher Teachings". The Pali texts of the Hinayana Buddhism are as given in the chart below\(^{12}:\)

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\(^{12}\) http://www.buddhanet.net/e-learning/history/s theracanon.htm
The major texts of the Mahayana Buddhism\textsuperscript{13} are as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sutra</th>
<th>Other Names</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Amitabha</td>
<td>Shorter Amitabha Sutra. Smaller Sukhavati-vyuha Sutra.</td>
<td>One of the three sutras that form the doctrinal basis of the Pure Land School - the two others are Meditation Sutra and Longer Amitabha Sutra. It describes the blessings and virtues of Amitabha Buddha and his Pure Land, and also discusses rebirth.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Sutra of Amida.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Avatamsaka</td>
<td>Flower Ornament Sutra. Flower Garland Sutra. Flower Adornment Sutra. Gandavyuha Sutra.</td>
<td>Second longest sutra in the Mahayana Canon, (40 chapters). It consists of large important, independent sutras, namely: Gandavyuha Sutra, Dashabhumioka Sutra, Amitayudhya Sutra. It records the higher teaching of the Buddha to Bodhisattvas and other high spiritual beings.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Brahma Net</td>
<td>Brahmajala Sutra.</td>
<td>This contains the Ten Major Precepts of Mahayana followers, and the Bodhisattva Precepts.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\textsuperscript{13}http://www.buddhanet.net/e-learning/history/s_mahasutras.htm
| **Diamond** | Vajracchedika Prajnaparamita Sutra. | One of the two most famous scriptures in the Prajnaparamita group of sutras (the other is the Heart Sutra). The Diamond Sutra sets forth the doctrines of Sunyata (emptiness) and Prajna (wisdom). |
| **Heart** | Prajnaparamita-Hrdaya Sutra. | One of the smallest sutras, and with the Diamond Sutra, one of the most popular of the 40 sutras, in the vast Prajnaparamita literature. Its emphasis is on emptiness. |
| **Heroic Gate** | Surangama Sutra. | Emphasizes the power of Samadhi (meditation) and explains various methods of emptiness meditation. A key text of the Ch'an and Zen traditions. |
| **Jewel Heap** | Ratnakuta Sutra. | One of the oldest sutras, which belongs to the Vaipulya group of 49 independent sutras. Summary: The philosophy of the middle is developed, which later becomes the basis for the Madhyamaka teaching of Najarjuna. It contains sutras on transcendental wisdom (Prajnaparamita Sutra) and the Longer Amitabha Sutra. |
| **Lankavatara** | | A scriptural basis of the Yogacara and Zen Schools. It teaches subjective idealism based on the Buddha's enlightenment, and doctrines of emptiness and mind only. |
| **Longer Amitabha** | Larger Amitabha Sutra. Longer Sukhavativyuha Sutra. Sutra of Infinite Life. | One of the three core Pure Land texts. It explains cause and effect, and describes the Pure Land. |
| **Lotus** | Saddharma Pundarika Sutra. Lotus of the Good Law. | A major text, of which the Tendai (T’ien T’ai) use as a main scripture. It teaches the identification of the historical Buddha, with the Transcendental Buddha. |
| **Meditation** | Amitayurdyhana Sutra. | One of the three core texts of the Pure Land school. It teaches meditation and visualization. |
| **Ten Stages Chapter** | Dasabhumi Sutra. Sutra on the Ten Stages. | This sutra is the 26th chapter of Avatamsaka Sutra, and is also an independent sutra. It establishes the ten stages of cultivation that the Bodhisattva must traverse on the path to enlightenment. |
| **Vimalakirti** | | This is a philosophic dramatic discourse, in which basic Mahayana principles are presented in the form of a conversation between famous Buddhist figures, and the householder, Vimalakirti. |

**Monasticism during Buddha’s Period**
The emergence of Buddhist sangha and the idea of monkhood developed during Buddha’s life and crystallized into an organized structure. King Bimbisara of Magadha was the first to present the bamboo grove - an arama (place to live during rain retreat) for the monks. Buddha was the first to establish universal brotherhood (sangha) of cenobite monks, open to all people of all ranks. Thus, Lord Buddha himself had set up the Buddhist sangha when he accepted five men as his first disciples to whom he preached his first sermon in a park near Varanasi. Yasa, the son of a wealthy merchant became the first lay disciple at Banaras (modern-day Varanasi) and then a fully-fledged bhikkhu.

The first sixty disciple of Lord Buddha were sent to wander among the villages and towns to propagate his dharma. These wanderers renounced the worldly life and lived on alms given to them by the laity in their begging bowl during their daily alms round. They also accepted personal invitation for meals, but were not allowed to take food after midday. The contributions made by laity to the sangha were considered as great meritorious acts. The contributions were in forms of donations, including property and generous contribution. This added to the wealth of some monastic communities and as such the way of life of their members came to differ from the original doctrinal and canonical ideals. This further led to the need of application of the monastic rules or discipline.

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14 The Buddhist sangha in the wider sense of the world consist of four “assemblies”, they are the monks (bhiksu; Pali, bhikkhu), the nuns (bhiksuni; Pali, bhikkuni), the male lay followers (upasaka), and the female lay followers (upasika). In the narrower sense of the word, sangha is the community of monks and nuns only.
During the Buddha’s lifetime, the ideal and practice of the *bhikshus* probably remained mainly eremitical and peripatetic.\(^{17}\) For the whole year (except for three months of monsoon), the disciples of Buddha wandered from place to place taking the message of the Buddha and spreading his teaching. During the four months of the monsoon season, they sat for the practice of temporary retreat known as *vassa*. And it was after the death of Lord Buddha that this temporary settlement turned to its permanency since monks have had the notion that they had developed a collective identity. Thus, mendicancy declined and the *vassa* grew in scale and developed more permanent characteristics as monasteries (*viharas*) or cave dwellings (*guhas*).\(^{18}\) In the early centuries of the Common Era some of the great centers were Nalanda, Vikramasila and Odantapuri in the North and Nagarjunakonda in the South. With this, one witnesses the fully grown educational system of Buddhism.

It is important to note that there was no hierarchical system in the original *sangha*. The Buddha himself was the highest authority during his lifetime and did not encourage the appointment of a successor. Buddha enjoined his disciples before his death to be guided by his doctrines alone be its own interpreters. The last words uttered by Buddha just before his *mahaparinirvana* was “*appa depo vavo* – Be a Light unto Yourself.” The expansion and increase in the number of inmates of the *sangha* necessitated a structured organization. In principle, there were equal rights and duties for all the monks. Though the senior monks received consideration and respect within the *sangha*, some monks were elected by *sangha* for performing several monastic tasks. Such tasks included solution of disputes, the resolution of


\(^{18}\) Ibid
cases of ecclesiastical jurisdictions and many other administrative duties in the monastery. These functions and responsibilities increased when the transformation took place from mendicancy to monastic units with increasing numbers and spatial spread too.

**Origin of nunneries during the early Buddhist period**

With the establishment of *sangha* by Lord Buddha the community of nuns was also organized in similar ways. History also reveals that Lord Buddha was reluctant to recognize an order for nuns. This was out of fear of the disruption of *bhikshu sangha*. However, the lineage of Buddhist nuns began in the early time of the Buddha when the Buddha’s aunt and foster mother Mahaprajapati Gautami approached him for the *Bhikshuni Sangha* after the *Bhikshu Sangha* was created. This will be discussed in detail in chapter four. Like other renunciants during the time of the Buddha, Buddhist monks and nuns lived a simple celibate life, limiting desires, attachments, and worldly distractions in order to focus on spiritual practices and learning.

**Rise of the Mahayana Buddhism**

“Mahayana is a Sanskrit term which literally means the great vehicle (to enlightenment). It refers to a form of Buddhism that developed in northern India when it was facing political disturbance and turmoil. The atmosphere of insecurity and uncertainty contributed to the emergence of a new religious form characterized as the Mahayana. It embraces a wider variety of practices and has more mythological view of what a Buddha is, and addresses broader philosophical issues.”

Mahayana is rendered *Theg Pa Chen Po* in Tibetan, *Ta-Sheng* in Chinese and *Daijo* in Japanese. The meaning of all these terms

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show the reflection of the greater and superior hold of Mahayana, for its teachings is greater than those of Hinayana traditions. Mahayana Buddhism laid emphasis on altruistic attitudes and proclaimed as its goal the universal enlightenment of all beings.\textsuperscript{20} It had its own texts and Sutras written in Sanskrit. It clearly re-evaluates the relative roles of the monastic and lay practitioner, making it clear that the new movement put less stress on formal membership of the monastic community as a prerequisite for pursuit of the bodhisattva path. The principle seems to be that spiritual attainment is not restricted or determined by formal positions and roles within the monastic sangha.\textsuperscript{21} This does not mean that Mahayana Buddhism was started by laymen because innovation in the Mahayana is always associated with monks. Mahayana sutras especially those connected with meditation were undoubtedly the product of a monastic milieu.\textsuperscript{22} Mahayana goes beyond the core doctrine contained in the Theravada Tripitaka in many respect. The most notable Mahayana texts are Saddharmapundarika sutra, the Vimalakirta sutra, the Avatamsaka sutra and the Lankavatara sutra.\textsuperscript{23} Originating in India, Mahayana gradually spread to China, Korea, Japan, Tibet, Central Asia, Vietnam and Taiwan. From this school, another school developed known as Tantrayana School or Vajrayana or Diamond Vehicle which made its beginning in North India and spread to China and Tibet. In India, the hub of the Tantric Buddhism was the region of Bengal and Bihar. Vajrayana promises a fast track to Buddhahood, a path that, in some Vajrayana traditions brings magical powers. It teaches not to suppress energy but rather to transform it.\textsuperscript{24}

\textsuperscript{21} Andrew Skelton, Concise History of Buddhism, Windhorse Publications, UK, 1994, pp.94-95.
\textsuperscript{22} A. L. Basham, The Wonder That Was India, Vol.1,Rupa, Delhi, 1954, p.96.
\textsuperscript{23} Mahayana Buddhism, http://mb-soft.com/believe/txt/mahayana.htm
Ordination: The Initiation to Enter Monastic Life and Education

The word ‘education’ is derived from the Latin word ‘educatum’, a combination of two words ‘e’ and ‘duco’. The two words respectively stand for ‘out of’ and ‘to lead’. Thus, education means to lead from the inside to outside. The word Siksa is derived from the Sanskrit verb siks which stands for learning or teaching. Education has various dimensions; it is perceived as information, as teaching, as schooling, as training, as instruction and as literacy (reading and writing). Education is generally conceived as a tri-polar process involving teacher (guru/acharya), student (vidyarthi/bhikku) and the curriculum or subject matter. The pedagogy (art or method of teaching) is equally important.

The history of education in India can be traced back to Harappa age followed by the Vedic period. As the literary texts available to us date from the Vedic age, the definite history of education in India begins from that time. With the emergence of Buddhism and Jainism, the nature of education underwent some major changes. But there were some similarities too. “For over fifteen hundred years Buddhist education was in vogue, and developed a system of education which was a rival of the Brahmanic system though in many ways similar to it.”25 The Buddha exhorted people to think independently and coherently regarding Dhamma. His own discourses were based on logic and understanding. There was no caste or religious distinction at all unlike the Brahmanical system and everybody was offered admission into the sangha, and into the monastic education which initially was religious. The stress was not on rites and rituals but on the cultivation of sila or morality and character building. With morality and character the next stage was the development of mind through meditation. The Buddhist system of education

25 F.E.Keay, Indian Education in Ancient and Later Times,p.85
centered round the viharas or monasteries. They were residential centers of learning where the monks and novice learned the Vinaya texts and the Dhamma. Later on, with the change in mode of functioning they were transformed into institutionalized educational centers as described by the Chinese travelers. In the early phase, Buddhism attracted people from all strata of the Indian society as it was not bogged down by the rigid varna system of the Vedic religion. “From the very beginning the life of monk-educator was held in high esteem, and it thus attracted creative and talented individuals … The monks’ educational activities were based on the Buddha’s injunction to the monks to go out into the world and teach them dhamma out of sympathy for the world, out of concern for the welfare and happiness of the multitude.”

Buddha said so while addressing the first group of sixty monks: “Go forth, O monks, on tour, for the sake of many people, for the happiness of many people, out of compassion for the world, for the profit, gain and happiness of deities and men...Preach the Dhamma...Propagate the highest life which is pure, complete and endowed with meaning and sound.”

The monasteries were the centers of the sangha, the organizational setup of the Buddhism. The word ‘sangha’ is derived from the Sanskrit root ‘han’ meaning to strike with the prefix sam conveying a sense of togetherness and completeness. Thus, it literally meant ‘that which is well struck together’ and conveyed a sense of togetherness and completeness. Theoretically speaking, it was perceived as an idealized community. The sangha was a miniature republic and had a democratic set up. The decisions were taken through resolutions, mostly unanimous in the regular meetings of the sangha. This may have reflected Buddha’s own republican background and its continuation in the heterodox sect founded by him. The rules and regulation regarding the sangha (order)

27 Vinaya Pitaka, vol.1, PTS, pp.20-21; Andrew Skelton, Concise History of Buddhism, op.cit., p.40
was all decided in the Buddha’s time – admission to the \textit{sangha} as well as the expulsion, its internal management, relation and interaction between the monks and the nuns, the members of the \textit{sangha} and the lay followers, punishments in case of the breach of rules, etc. The Buddhist education was controlled by the monks who resided in the viharas (monasteries) and it included in its curriculum both religious and non-religious subjects. The pedagogy being used within Buddhist monasteries is a matter of exploration. What was the curriculum how was it taught or the methods of teaching, the rules and regulations etc. need to be investigated to understand the nature of monastic education. Although, Buddhism emerged as a challenge to the Brahmanical system but the influence of the latter was very much on the Buddhist system. This is evident in the process of the initiation. The Buddhist initiation was called \textit{pabbajja}.

The process of initiation was the first stage or the entry point in a \textit{sangha}. Buddhism had consistently relied on formal rites of passage like taking refuge in the \textit{Triratna} for the laity; two types of ordination - lower and higher Ordination (\textit{pravrajya} and \textit{upasampada}) for \textit{Bhikkus} and \textit{Bhikkunis} in the Hinayana.\footnote{Charles S Prebish, \textit{Historical Dictionary of Buddhism}, Sri Satguru Publications, Delhi, 1995, p. 206} Mahayana developed a third type of ordination “bodhisattva ordination” (\textit{bodhisattva-upasampada}) for the assumption of the bodhisattva vow: “to gain complete, perfect enlightenment for the sake of all sentient beings”.\footnote{\textit{Ibid.}, p. 207} Tantric Buddhism evolved from Mahayana and incorporated within its techniques “the use of mantras, mandalas, and provocative psychological techniques.”\footnote{\textit{Ibid.}, p. 254} The initiation or ‘consecration’ rite went from a narrative applied to exalted bodhisattvas to a new rite of passage which stood for entrance into a new vehicle, the vehicle of mantras, or the adamantine vehicle (Vajrayana). The person entered into the \textit{mandala} of Buddha families and
visualized himself or herself as some form of Buddha or Bodhisattva. The process of initiation varied in the three main sects of Buddhism but the process was significant.

The process of ordination was important to enter the sangha. It occurred in two stages. First, the novice’s ordination involving ten precepts, and the novice become a sramanera or sramanerika. Second, the full or higher ordination (upasampada), by which one became a bhiksu or bhiksunī. The second stage had an age qualification; it can happen at or after twenty years (dated from conception). The earlier sangha had a generally accepted core of about 150 rules in the monastic code (Pratimoksa). The diversification of ordination lineages led to divergences in many of the minor rules too and there are different numbers of rule to be followed in different Buddhist traditions. But they were important in the monastic education system as to maintain order and discipline within the monastic structure. This also entailed a sense of discipline in the disciple-monk. The Theravada monks in South-east Asia observed 227 rules while the nuns once observed 311 rules, Tibetan monks (Vajrayana) observed 258 rules while the nuns 354 rules of the Mulasarvastivada-vinaya, and Chinese and Korean monks (Mahayana) observed 250 rules while the nuns 348 rules of the Dharmaguptaka-vinaya.31

There should be an assembly of ten or more fully ordained monks (or, five monks in border regions) and a Vinaya master to serve as preceptor during ordination. The ceremony began with the person to be ordained paying reverence to the monks, then entreating the preceptor to confer ordination on him. The person then took possession of his robes, or the cloth for their making, declaring to the preceptor that they are of appropriate material and

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cut. Then, it is ascertained whether the person was free from any of the impediments to ordination. Then followed a series of questions about the individual’s age, gender, genital completeness, and authorization by his parents (if living), and his identity as other than slave, criminal, eunuch, hermaphrodite, or despoiler of nuns. Further questions were asked to confirm that the person was not a member of any other religious group or expelled from another sangha; was not a murderer of his father, mother, or an Arhat; has not caused a split in the sangha; was not a magically created phantom or animal; was not in debt (beyond the ability to pay at the point of ordination); was not suffering from any illness (a long list of diseases was read out); and about the practice of chastity. This long list made it clear that the monastic life within Buddhism was only for the physically, mentally, economically as well as legally a fit person. There was no place for transgender in the Buddhist monastic order. The candidate was then brought forward and, after reverence to the Buddha and the elders of the community, the private instructor entreated the assembly three times to confer ordination on him. The person was then made to affirm that he can maintain his asceticism for the rest of his life, including the four supports (nisraya) of clothing, food, housing/shelter and medicine. This provision seems a bit problematic in the initial phase of Buddhism. One cannot understand how an ascetic was to make provisions for the basic necessities of life by himself. It would have been certainly through the support of their relatives or lay followers. The official finally declared that the person had now entered into the religious life by a preceptor, two teachers, the agreement of the sangha, and a formal action (the ceremony) involving three inviolable motions, and trisarana- the three refuges the Buddha,

32 Vinaya Text, Part I, The Mahavagga, First Khandhaka deals in detail regarding the admission to the order of Bhikkus., pp.73-238. Sacred Books of the East, Vol. 13, tr. From Pali by T W Rhys Davids and H Oldenberg,, Motilal Banarsidass, Delhi, 2008(reprint), 1st published by OUP, 1885. MV I, 64 and 65 specifically deals with matricide and parricide respectively and denies admission to such persons in the sangha and if had been admitted then he be expelled from the fraternity. Refer, ibid, p.230
Dhamma and Sangha. Initially, when the Buddha started preaching and accepting disciples beginning with Yasa, a rich merchant of Banaras, there must have been only two refuges- the Buddha and Dhamma and when the numbers were increasing and order must have been established, the sangha was conceptualized as the third refuge.

The new monk was asked to maintain his training, to treat his preceptor as his father just as the preceptor will treat the monk as son, to respect those senior to him, to strive for the direct realization of Buddhist truths, to learn the monastic rules not covered yet in the fortnightly sangha meeting, and to maintain attentiveness with all aspects of the dharma. Thus, the spiritual training and learning started for the monk. Initially, this process marked the entry of an individual into the sangha as well as the Buddhist learning but later on the great mahaviharas had an elaborate entrance procedure for education as seen in Nalanda and Vikramasila.

In the early years of Buddhism, there was a greater emphasis on the correct ordination of monks and nuns followed by proper training in the vinaya rules-the monastic regulations. This was seen in regions beyond the Indian areas of Buddhist influence (which in the beginning was mainly northern India) – like China, Korea and Japan.

The ordination was a ‘spiritual birth’ of the novice in Buddhism just as the ‘second birth’ or ‘twice born’ ceremony in Brahmanism. But the difference between the two was that unlike Brahmanism, it was open to people of all four varnas and even outcastes. The ordained monk was placed under two elders or
teachers for the purpose of education and learning. They are referred as *Acaryas* and *Upadhyaya*. There was a technical difference between the two designations of the teachers. The two terms were also widely prevalent among the teachers of Brahmanism and many Brahmans in ancient and medieval period were referred to as *acarya* and *upadhyaya* and the latter is a popular surname among the Brahmans of north India. This also substantiates to some extent the greater affinity of North India to Buddhism and its education system in the past. The term *upadhyaya meant* a teacher.\(^{33}\) The *acarya* was the one who initiated the student and imparted education. According to *Visnusmrsti*, an *adhyaapaka* (or a teacher) was of two kinds; he was either an *acarya* i.e. one who invested a boy with the sacred thread and initiated him into the Vedas, or he was an *upadhyaya i.e. one who taught for livelihood.*\(^{34}\) But in the Buddhist monastic tradition, no preceptor taught for livelihood. The two terms denoted two types of teachers within the monastic system who were seniors and highly qualified and were known for their learning, character and standing. According to Buddhaghosa, the *acarya* was a monk of six years standing while the *upadhyaya* was to be a monk of ten years standing. The *acarya* was supposed to look after the conduct of the monk while the *upadhyaya* was entrusted with the duty of instructing the young *Bhikkhu* in the doctrines and sacred texts of Buddhism. The pupil-teacher relationship was also akin to the Brahmanical system. “The unit of the Buddhist educational system was the group of young *bhikkus* or monks living under the guardianship of a common teacher, the *upajjahaya*. They federated themselves into a larger unit called the *vihara* or monastery.”\(^{35}\)

\(^{34}\) V.S. Apte, *The Student’s Sanskrit-English Dictionary*, s.v. adhyapaka; Refer Chitrarekha Gupta, *The Brahmanas of India*, Sandeep Prakashan, Delhi, 1983, p.9
Emergence of Institutionalized Education Centers

The transformation from *vihara* to *mahavihara* saw the emergence of the ancient universities where education was imparted to large number of students through a number of teachers covering a vast curriculum in an institutionalized way. The famous among them were Nalanda, Vikramasila, Odantapuri, Jagaddala etc. There must have also been many smaller centers of learning and Buddhist practices in various viharas scattered all over North India and elsewhere. What was the signification of a *vihara* in the Buddhist tradition? Did it mean monastery or a peaceful place of meditation or an academic institution? The Pali-English Dictionary describes it as staying in one place of living; an abode in forest; lodging for a *bhikkhu*, etc. Prof. Gustav Roth had discussed the meanings of *arama*, *vihara* and *mahavihara* as mentioned in Pali scriptures. He opined about *arama* in Pali scriptures: “It contains a kernel of the Buddhist Order's residential history.”  

The *arama* was meant as a peaceful solitude for meditation and it was recommended by the Buddha. Gradually, it changed into *varsavasa*, a place for monsoon retreat. Early Buddhism allowed two types of dwellings during rainy season: an *avasa* or an *arama*. The former meant a temporary dwelling built and organized by the monks themselves in the countryside while the latter meant a permanent dwelling donated by a patron in or near towns for the use of monks or nuns.

Buddhism, as a religion focused on meditation. Hence, it preferred silent atmosphere in *viharas* and other places outside the cities where monks and laity assembled for meditation and contemplation on various spiritual issues. Thus, *viharas* were places of silence suitable for meditation but gradually it

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36 Gustav Roth, *Arama, Vihara and Mahavihara*, Bauddha Sanskriti Kendra, Patna, 1997, p.6
came to mean a residential educational center of the monastic order. In the final stage, some of the viharas emerged as mahaviharas, the great centers of learning.

The first scriptural reference to an arama being gifted is in Bimbisarasamagamakatha. A bamboo grove (uyyana, arama) Veluvana was gifted by Bimbisara, the king of Magadha, to the Buddha.38 This acceptance of arama- a permanent dwelling place for the monks although initially for the rainy season is a significant event in the history of Buddhist monasticism which had a far reaching impact in the days to come. The earliest inscriptive references to arama are found in Mathura inscriptions where they are referred as a garden or a park.39 In the first stage, there was no settled dwelling for the monks. Lord Buddha initially insisted :“Effort is to be made by monks for maintaining one's life only by taking shelter under a tree for shade, a place of resting and the acquisition of dwelling place, a half lodging, a terraced building, a mansion, a cave, are to be avoided.”40 The monks had to face much difficulty during the rainy season and later, on the plea of a merchant of Rajagriha to donate viharas (dwelling places)41, the monks sought the consent of Buddha who then gave his consent and approved five types of abodes for the bhikkus: viharas, addhayogas a half finished lodging, storied dwellings, attics, caves. 42 The merchant then provided sixty viharas for the monks and this marked the second stage leading to settled dwellings. The gift of a dwelling place was considered as a meritorious act in Buddhism since then. According to the Buddha, the best gift was that of viharas to sanghas where in its safety and peace the monks could meditate and think. He further exhorted

38 M.V., I.22.17-18
39 Refer Luders List. No. 82.
40 M.V., I.30.4; this point is insisted upon in the Mahavastu too, III.1
41 C.V., VI.I
42 C.V., VI.2
able men to build monasteries and lodge learned men there. Buddha gave a
detailed instruction regarding the construction of a vihara. The viharas
which were gifted by the laity varied in terms of space and structure. They
were huts made from grass or sticks, solitary cell or caves leading to huge
structures, some comprising more than one floor having assembly halls, dining
space, residential cells or rooms, place for initiation, etc. These viharas in later
period became centers of learning and repositories for learned men,
philosophers and thinkers. By 3rd- 4th century A.D., the pursuit of secular
knowledge along with the Buddhist knowledge had become the ideal of the
Buddhist monasteries, and the older Sangharamas had turned into monastic
school, which was the starting point of bigger centers of education. They were
established in different parts of India under royal or private patronage and
ultimately turned out to be centers of higher education. In North India there
were many such centers like Odantapuri, Nalanda, Vajrasana, Vikramasila in
Bihar and Somapuri in Bengal, Jaggadalla in Orissa/ Bengal and many more.
The emergence of huge viharas or mahaviharas marks the third and final stage
in terms of settlement and dwellings for the monks and nuns. The eighth
century AD and especially the reign of Pala dynasty (8th -12th century AD) in
eastern India marked the establishment of large monasteris - the mahavihara,
or ‘great monastery.’ They also served as monastic universities in ancient
India. The monasteries housed thousands of monks, trained by eminent
teachers of Buddhist philosophy and practice. The curriculum included
religious theory and grammar, linguistics, composition, debate, rhetoric,
astrology, mathematics, Ayurvedic medicine system, arts of music and
painting. Students were provided with superior educational facilities and these

43 C.V., VI. 1.5. We have descriptions of various types of Viharas in Cullavagga and Mahavagga. Both Fa-hien
& Hiuen-tsang and other Chinese travelers refer to a large number of monastic establishments in Bihar,
Bengal, etc.
44 C.V., V.8.18; VI.1.17; VI.2; VIII.8.2; M.V., I.25.12
centers of higher learning produced some great intellectual thinkers and teachers. We get valuable accounts of many Buddhist monasteries in North India from the travel accounts of the Chinese pilgrims who came in the fifth and seventh centuries A.D. Their long risky journeys would hardly have been undertaken unless the fame of the Indian monasteries as centers of learning had reached as far as China and elsewhere.

It would be worthwhile to mention the general structure of a vihara or monastery. “The residential abodes in great monasteries were comprised of the following: a bathing room, a toilet, a kitchen, a well, store houses for food, clothes, juridical papers, and so on, a store for items that could be accepted by monastics only through the mediation of laypersons, a cloister, an assembly hall, a dining hall, and a pool. Places for different legal acts and ceremonies performed by the Buddhist community- that is, a place for ordination or for the observance – were included in the monastic compound. Whereas the earliest monasteries (cave monasteries of the third century B.C.) were of irregular shape, a certain standard type with few variants had developed in the second century B.C. From a mostly square, sometimes apsidal main room three or more cells branched off, each with one or two beds. Later a veranda, supported by columns, was placed in front of the main room, and the monasteries often had two stories.”

Regarding the genesis of the viharas, we need to mention the three gems of Buddhist doctrine- Buddha, Dhamma and Sangha. “The Pali term, sangha, like its Sanskrit ancestor, sam-gha, means, generally, any close contact or any number of people living together for a certain purpose. Like the English words, society and association, its meaning ranges all the way from a loose but continuing fellowship of two or more persons to any complex, highly

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organized and regulated, permanently established institution." Thus, *sangha* was the Buddhist monastic community, an organized order of yellow-robed monks. Apart from performing meditation, monasteries performed various kinds of rituals intended to safeguard the lay members of the Buddhist community. The creation of monasteries “was facilitated by large-scale gift giving (*Dana*) from lay patrons, such as kings and wealthy merchants. Such gifts promoted the growth of monasteries and temples as centers of missionary work, scriptural study, philosophical speculation, artistic innovation, and retreat. Around the fifth century A.D., large scale monastic centers appeared on the scene, and in many cases they excelled as sites of learning, attracting scholars from various regions across the Buddhist world.”

Donations to the *sangha* were a necessity for its survival and expansion. Buddhism encountered an ideological dilemma as it insisted on a frugal and penniless life for monks on the one hand but on the other hand the *viharas* required money for the maintenance and promotion of the *Dhamma*. The only way out was support from the general public, and this came mostly from the wealthy merchants and royal patronage. The notion of merit (*punya*) for oneself or parents in present life, past or future was the most important factor which motivated the laity to donate. The role of the trading class/merchants was important. If we glance through the spread of Buddhism within India and abroad, it spread along the trade routes. “Buddhist monks travelled the same roads as merchants. Buddhism and commerce became closely linked, and Buddhist monasteries and monks were frequently associated with merchants and guilds.”

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47 Jason A. Carbine, ‘Sangha’, *Encyclopedia of Monasticism*, vol.2, p.1117
48 Ibid., p.1118
49 Michael J. Walsh, ‘Economics: Buddhist’, *Encyclopedia of Monasticism*, vol.1, p.426
activities of Asoka, Kanishka, Harshavardhan, Pala rulers of Bengal etc. We have insessional evidence pointing to *viharas* named after different trading communities like the Pravarika-vihara, Suvanakara-vihara, Kashtikiya-vihara, etc. in Mathura. Such monasteries were probably founded or supported by the guilds of traders. Another inscription refers to *vyavaharis* or *sanghaprakritis* (Commissioners or officials of the *sangha*) pointing to the involvement of merchants in the management of the Buddhist *sangha*. This may have been the situation elsewhere too. Most of the important sites associated with Buddhist *sangha* invariably grew and flourished along major trade routes. This ensured continued support of the laity. For example, the renowned monastic complex at Sanchi in Madhya Pradesh was located near ancient Vidisa, an important trading center since the age of Buddha. Vidisa, located along the trade route between the western coastal regions and the central Gangetic plain of India, remained a primary mercantile and religious center for centuries to follow.

Thus, trade routes and economy were some of the external factors that yielded monastic complexes. Another noteworthy point to note is that the sites were focused within or around a place or object of devotion, such as a *stupa*, a temple, or an image. Important monasteries developed around the sites of the eight transformative events of the Buddha's life - *paribhogaka* relics - each marked by a *stupa*. Secondly, they were located at or near significant political centers and served as pilgrimage sites; the *stupas* attracted the laity who, in turn, economically and religiously supported the Buddhist *sangha*. “Although certain aspects (e.g., political, economics, and religious) of freestanding monastic settlements might appear obvious, specific information regarding the

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50 M.I., pp.110,133, 191
organization, design, and function is less evident. For example, the types of monuments that existed at a site or the precise nature of the activities conducted by the monks and laity are questions that are more difficult to answer."\(^53\)

In general, we can say that specialized structures at monastic complexes were dependent on teachers, the support of the laypersons, and specific traditions prevalent and practiced in that particular region. A monastic complex, architecturally speaking, comprised two types of structures. The first type constituted buildings such as residence cells, halls, assembly halls, and the devotional structures which were a must for the routine functioning of the monastery. The second type was the specialized forms of architecture, such as temples for specific rituals, *mandala* halls, etc. The two types of structures served to create the sacred environment within which the ultimate religious goal as well as the knowledge of Buddhism was sought.

In the beginning, the reference is to four chief centers or cities where the *sangha* owned a number of monasteries serving initially as places of peaceful solitude, and later as seats of Buddhist learning. These were Lattivana, Veluvana, and Sitavana at Rajagaha; Jetavana and Pubbarama at Savatthi; Mahavana with Kutagaha, hall and mango grove at Vesali; Nigodharama at Kapilavastu and Ghositarama at Kausambi.\(^54\)

The transition of *arama* to *vihara* and then into *mahavihara* was a gradual process. One thing is to be kept in mind that all *viharas* did not emerge into *mahaviharas*. The *mahaviharas* which emerged were the centers of learning. R.K. Mookherji refers the *viharas* as 'residential school' and further describes

it as 'the unit of the Buddhist educational system with a group of young bhikkhus or monks living under the guardianship of a common teacher, the upajjhaya or acariya, who was individually responsible for their health and studies, manners, morals, and their spiritual progress.'\textsuperscript{55} The monasteries emerged as the centers of learning. The Buddhist system of education is practically that of the Buddhist sangha or vihara. Buddhism did not offer any educational opportunities apart from or independently of its monasteries. All education, religious as well as secular, was in the hands of the monks. They had the privilege of learning as well as of teaching or imparting knowledge. Initially, the monasteries were administered by the traditional laws of the sangha, but slowly they came under royal control. The office of the sthavira or kulapati, the head of the vihara/mahavihara evolved with the greater institutionalization of the vihara. They were senior monks and highly revered. They acted as the chief monk of the monastery and supervised all important activities of the monastery. Gradually, the royal patrons gained the privilege to recommend a bhikku to the post of sthavira/kulapati of the mahavihara.

Monastic life

The specific moral code for monks and nuns is clearly mentioned in the Vinaya texts. It includes the Patimokkha, a set of 227 rules for monks in the Theravada tradition. The precise content of the Vinaya pitaka differ slightly according to different schools of Buddhism. The precepts within Buddhism are rules and guidelines meant to properly shape the mind and its manifestations in physical and verbal behaviour so as to lead to nirvana. The novice-monks use the ten precepts, considered the basic precepts for monastic life. Buddha constantly reminded his followers that it is the spirit that counts as far as the monastic rules were concerned.

The five, eight, and ten precepts are the most basic moral prescriptions in Buddhism and constitute the moral base of Buddhist teaching. The five precepts address the moral obligations of all Buddhist laity and are sometimes taken along with the three Refuges in a formal ceremony. They are in the form of negative injunctions, one was to abstain from- taking of life, stealing, and sexual misconduct, lying and using intoxicants. The eight precepts further included refraining from eating after mid-day, avoiding singing, dancing, music and use of perfume, and refraining from the use of luxurious beds. Daniel A. Getz writes, “Observance of these eight rules conventionally takes place only for limited periods, often on six days each month, arranged around the full and new moon days that coincide with the bimonthly confessional ceremonies (Sanskrit, posadha; Pali, uposatha) in the monastic community.”

The five and eight precepts pertain to the moral training of laypersons while the ten precepts set forth a basic moral vision for Buddhist monastic life. On entering the monastic order, one has to take these ten precepts in a “going-forth” ceremony (pravraya, pabbaja) through which they become novice (sramanera, samanera). An analysis of the ten precepts reveals that it is an expanded form of the eight precepts, which includes the five precepts, and further entails vowing to refrain: (6) from eating after mid-day, (7) from singing, dancing, and music, (8) from wearing jewelry and using perfume, (9) from sleeping on luxurious beds, and (10) from handling gold and silver. It set a basic moral foundation for the inmates of the monastery.

The monastic disciplinary code, the Patimokkha/ Pratimoksa constitutes the central content of the Vinaya pitaka and functioned at different levels. Many of these precepts were elaboration of the moral principles specified in the ten precepts, and reinforced the continued moral training of the monks and

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nuns after their Ordination. Secondly, these precepts preserved the sangha’s image as a model of rectitude in the eyes of the lay followers. Thirdly, many of the precepts facilitated order and smooth functioning in the everyday affairs of the community. The centrality of the Pratimoksa for the moral discipline of the inmates of monastic order and the cohesion of the sangha was symbolically expressed through fortnightly confessional ceremonies (posadha (Skt.), uposatha (Pali). The monks and nuns in their separate groups met separately for a recitation of the precepts of the Pratimoksa. The Bhiksupratimoksa was recited by fully ordained monks and the Bhiksunipratimoksa by fully ordained nuns in separate observances. Novices and laypeople were not permitted to attend these bi-monthly ceremonies of reviewing the ethical guidelines and rules of etiquette that the monks and nuns voluntarily agree to observe. The recital of each precept was followed by confession before the community in case of any violation or transgression. Rituals of repentance and confession and specific procedures for expiating offences are prescribed. The importance of these precepts is evident in the Buddha’s declaration that the Pratimoksa would guide the sangha after he passed away. “The shared recognition and adherence to a particular articulation of the pratimoksa evident in these ceremonies has been the token of unity for communities of the sangha through history, while disagreement with regard to the precepts has led historically to the creation of new communities with their own separate pratimoksa.”

In the Mahayana tradition, we find its continuation since its establishment. It laid great stress on training in morality and the observance of these precepts. This was incorporated into the bodhisattva path as an essential element of the Paramita (perfection) that the bodhisattva was expected to cultivate. The precepts of the Mahayana were developed in course of time precepts that were unique to the concept of Bodhisattva. The best example is found in Fanwang Jing (Brahma’s Net Sutra), probably written in China. This text contains 48 - 10 major and 38 minor precepts.

57 Ibid., p.674
58 Mahayana monks and nuns have ordinarily followed the full precepts of the Pratimoksa. Mahayana developed in course of time precepts that were unique to the concept of Bodhisattva. The best example is found in Fanwang Jing (Brahma’s Net Sutra), probably written in China. This text contains 48 - 10 major and 38 minor precepts.
second of the six perfections calls for dedication to morality and strict adherence to the precepts. But the difference lies in the fact that these bodhisattva precepts were administered to lay followers and monastic alike. Thus, with the passage from Theravada to Mahayana, we find the monastic discipline being extended to laity too. This was perhaps due to Mahayana’s philosophy of Bodhisattva, one who did not believe in his own salvation but in taking birth again and again to facilitate the spiritual uplift of the laity. The institution of Vassa, the monsoon retreat during which the monks and nuns remained stationary at a particular vihara had its own impact. The monks (and of course the nuns also) were required to say loudly once or twice “I enter upon vassa in this vihara for these three months.” They were to inhabit it as their permanent adobe during this time, yet they could leave it on urgent business. It acted as a great cohesive force within the Buddhist monastic organization, for it brought together the monks and nuns who had renounced the world and entered the sangha. Secondly, it brought them together with lay-votaries of the religion also, to the mutual advantage of both. This regular contact of the monastic order and lay followers contributed in promoting the tenacity and vigour of the monastic system and the general cohesion of the lay-devotes. It helped to increase the facilities for propagating the Dhamma and bringing more people into its fold. Buddha and his disciples were in frequent communication with the laity, instructing them, and assisting them with advice in difficult problems. The laity took great interest in the sangha, and to a large extent was responsible for its material upkeep. The gift of food was not merely confined to the alms put into the alms-bowls during the alms-round. It was customary among the laity to give food regularly, as “bequests perpetual.” The gift of dwellings was made to the sangha, that is, the whole community.

59 M.V., iii, 5, 4 ; iii, 7, 2.
60 M. N., ii, 164, 184, 209
61 S. N., iii, l,§9. Cf Dialogues of Buddha , l, 144
One wonders how they were maintained in the beginning. The laity would almost necessarily have been responsible, since the recluses were bound to poverty.

**Pedagogy**

Pedagogy is the science or art of teaching. It refers to strategies of instructions or a style of instruction. Pedagogy is also sometimes referred to as the correct use of teaching strategies. Regarding its nature, pedagogy is perceived as a process as well as a system. As a process, pedagogy involves various related tasks and activities. In pedagogical process, both teacher and student contribute to each task in varying degree whether conscious, agreed and / or intended. As a system, pedagogy involves various sub-systems such as teacher, learner, method, environment, curriculum, etc. The nature of pedagogy also differs in terms of traditional techniques and modern techniques of instruction. Traditional pedagogical techniques were more teachers centered while the modern techniques are mostly child centered, interactive and democratic. The learning process can be perceived at two levels- theoretical and practical. The former consisted of the mastering of Buddhist literature and other subjects taught in the monasteries. The latter consisted of training in ritual liturgy. Both the process must have led an individual into participating in the intellectual tradition of the particular monastery.

The Buddhist system of education was traditional but also interactive at times and of course democratic as far as admission and the access to education was concerned. Vedic system of education was psychological to a greater extent. Oral education was imparted in such a way that it could be preserved for thousands of years. The main methods of imparting knowledge during the Vedic period were correct pronunciation and meditation facilitating the preservation of the *mantras* in original form. The word ‘*mantras*’ means ‘born
of meditation’. Thus, meditation helped preservation of the meanings of the mantras. The main methods during Later Vedic period (1000-600B.C) were self - meditation and study, Question – Answer method, Enigmatic Method (through puzzles), Aphoristic Method (knowledge being compressed in small aphoristic sentences which required intelligence), Etymological Method (meaning of the word being explained as per its dhatu/ root), Mythical Method (used mainly in Upanishads to teach sciences of causation), Analogical Method, Dialectical Method (widely used method in Upanishads, philosophers gathered at a point and discussed problems), and Synthetic Method (discussion of the dialectical method is replaced by creative synthesis).62

The method of teaching during 600 BC- 300 BC was still oral system like the Vedic period. The guru used to take care of correctness and accuracy of the pronunciations. The subjects composed in verse were taught like the Vyakarana (Grammar), Nyaya Sastra (Law), Jyotisa (Astrology) etc. The students learnt them by heart. Due to the individual centred system of education students were asked questions daily to keep their understanding of the subjects at the required level.

The methods of teaching in Buddhist education aimed at character building. Like the Vedic education it was training for moral character. The education was oral or verbal. The opinion regarding the art of writing is diverse. Even if the script was developed, the shortage and non-availability of writing materials made verbal education the norm in the initial phases just like the Vedic age. Debate and Discussion was another method. To excel in debate or Shastrartha, it was necessary to improve the power of discussion. This was also needed to satisfy the critics and opposing groups and establish one’s own cult. Thus, rules were framed for debate and discussion. This was prominent in

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the Tibetan Buddhism where Buddhism diffused from North India and is still
being followed in awarding the highest monastic degree of Geshe which is
discussed in the next chapter.

To establish the disputed points, the following eight kinds of evidences
were required:

a) Theory(Siddhanta)
b) Cause(Reason)
c) Example(Udaharan)
d) Parallelism(Sadharmya)
e) Contradiction(Vaidharmya)
f) Evidence(Pratyaksh)
g) Argument(Anuman)
h) Induction(Agamana)

The importance of discussion encouraged the prominence of Logic.
Logic developed as an important part of the curriculum of Buddhist education
and prominent logicians emerged among them. Logic was also useful in the
development of mental power and knowledge.

The transmission of the sacred texts within Buddhism was an
established learning act in the monasteries. The scriptures (agama), mainly the
Buddhavacana (the words or sayings of the Buddha) and the commentaries on
them constituted the main texts of study or rather memorization followed by
its understanding in the early phase. Regarding the canonical texts and its
different version in different sects, Ven. Anandajoti, a Sri Lankan monk
opined, “it may be suggested that what was established at the 1st Council was
not a Canon as such, but a set of baskets (pitaka) for the collection of the

63 Ram Nath Sharma & Rajendra Kumar Sharma, History of Education in India, Atlantic Publishers, Delhi,
1996, p.47
materials that were being memorized and passed on from teacher to pupil, and the eventual contents of these baskets, was very much according to the recensions made in the various schools, which were more or less separated in time and location."\textsuperscript{64} The Tripitakas of the Hinayana tradition were transmitted in an oral form (\textit{mukhapatena}) for a considerable period of time. Dipavamsa confirms this: "Before this time, the wise Bhikkus had orally handed down the text of the three Pitakas and also the Atthakatha. At this time, the Bhikkus who perceived the decay of created beings, assembled and in order that the Religion might endure for a long time, they recorded (the above-mentioned texts) in written books."\textsuperscript{65} The fact remains that all Indian religious texts of early period were in oral form and later compiled and written. But there must have been differences in the generation, transmission and reception of these sacred texts. The language being used is important from literary point and certainly gives us clues about the language in use within monasteries. A command over the language of the sacred texts must have been a requirement for the monastic education. The Hinayana texts were in Pali while that of Mahayana in Buddhist Hybrid Sanskrit.\textsuperscript{66} Whether, the learning of the concerned language was a must before entering monkhood or in the monastery itself is not clear in the early phases. The elementary learning of the required language must have taken place within families and post-elementary education in the viharas.

One could acquire education using methods like the \textit{nissaya} and \textit{katha}. The former method was important inside the monastery while the latter

\textsuperscript{65} Dipavamsa (tr. by Hermann Oldenberg), XX. 20,21
\textsuperscript{66} Buddhist Hybrid Sanskrit should not be confused with Sanskrit as they are totally different. Some of the Buddhist texts are in Gandhari Prakrit but are preserved very fragmentarily and till recent times was almost unknown. Work on this is going on at University of Seattle under the Project entitled ‘Early Buddhist Manuscript Project’.

became essential when the vihara transformed into the mahavihara as major and institutionalized center of learning. Nissaya are the methods employed at the beginner’s level in the monastic educational system. In this method, the teacher transfers knowledge to the student. It’s a one-way transmission in which the pupil receives dharma-authority, the rules and regulations of monks (Vinaya), moral stories (Jātaka), or basic tenets of Buddhism. These were to be memorized through chanting and careful hearing. The main purpose of this method of learning and teaching was to make people proficient in the knowledge of Vinaya and Sutta, etc. in the oral tradition. In this way the original text was handed over to the next generation in a pure and authentic version. The practice, done together in a group was called ‘sangiti’. There were several accomplished experts in different texts or work, named for their own expertise like the Dharma-kathika teaching Dharma, Suttantika teaching sutta, Vinaya-dhara teaching vinaya, and Matikadhara for expertise in formulating (matika). Thus, there were different experts specializing in different fields of study.

The Katha method was a complement to the nissaya method. This method allowed the students to understand, and develop the Buddhist texts in a contextual way, through the methods of discussion and debate. It emphasized student’s agility, through problem-identification – looking at reality, and finding the truth. An essential part of this method was to facilitate reflection or dialogue with oneself, reality, and the universe. The student was expected to present it literally or verbally. The proposed writing reflected a discussion with reality as a student needs to understand, evaluate and answer real problems. Buddha himself applied this system to his immediate sangha community to raise the intellects of newer generations of monks. This is

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69 Ibid., p.514
evident in many texts. *Katha-vatthu* (Fundamentals of *Katha*) is composed of debates about the teaching conducted by *sanghayana* (*sanghasamaya*) during King Asoka’s time.\textsuperscript{70} The *Mahagosinga Sutta* depicts a dialogue of *Abhidhamma* between two monks – one asking questions, another answering those questions, and together they conclude *Dhammasangâni* (composition of *Dhamma*) which classifies as *Abhidhamma*. The Katha method, emphasizing intellect-based education, is reflected in the characteristics of Buddhism itself. The Buddha taught the Middle Path, encouraging humans to reflect and think in critical-dialectical ways.

The Buddhist system of education as far as the command over texts was concerned is interpreted by the Russian scholar, Dr. V. V. Vertogradova. According to her the first system of textual practice was concerned with the levels of command over the *Dharmic* texts. Vertogradova talked about five levels as found in many Pali canonical texts. The analysis presented here is based on two short *suttas* of the *Anguttara Nikāya*. The first *sutta*\textsuperscript{71} contains the *mātikā* of what Vertogradova calls ‘a certain kind of levels of teaching and mastering knowledge in Buddhist monasteries’:

1) *sunāti*, to listen;

2) *pariyāpunāti*, to learn by heart (according to Vertogradova) or simply to master, to learn, maybe to pick up a text according to another interpretation;

3) *dhāreti*, to keep in memory;

4) *attham upaparikkhati*, to study the meaning;

5) *dhammanudhammam patipajjati*, to attain perfection in understanding.

\textsuperscript{70} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{71} A.N., iii, 176-177
These are stages of mastery of Dhammic text to be followed in sequence. A student at level 2 (learning by heart or memorizing) can reach Level 4 (studying the meaning) only by completing the level 3 (keeping in memory). Mere crossing the levels one by one is not the way. The action characteristic of each of the stages was to be performed correctly. For example, Level 3 (keeping in memory) to be effective, it must be accompanied by the (preliminary) understanding of the text (attham ājānati). To understand, one need to ask again and again as one should understand a thing properly. One should not misunderstand or not understand at all. The second option is less dangerous as far as acquisition of knowledge is concerned in comparison to the first one. The Buddha suggested all to “ask again” (patipucchatī) either to himself or competent monks (viyatta bhikkhu).

The textual practices thus were crucial to existence of the Dhamma and the monastic education itself, especially when the learning was oral. So, they needed to be carried out carefully and correctly. The preservation of the teaching of the texts depended not on the monks performing the actions in this sequence but solely on the quality of their performance. The correct pronunciation was also of great importance to have a clear understanding of what was being taught. All the five levels of learning texts denoted internal, almost exclusively mental activities; the purpose being to internalize it totally in correct form, essence and meaning.

The Theravāda tradition links the levels of mastery of the Dhammic text with Buddhist soteriology. Majjhima-Nikāya mentions three types of memorization (pariyatti)\textsuperscript{72}, each having a different goal. The first type can be practiced only by an unenlightened being (puthujjana); the second type either

\textsuperscript{72} M.N., ii, 107-108
by a *puthujjana* or by a ‘noble learner’ (*sekkha*), i.e. a person passing through the seven stages leading to arahantship; the third type only by an arahant.

The second System of Textual Practices is ‘External’ or ‘Public Practices’. The Second Sutta\(^73\) contains another five-member *mātikā*,\(^74\) describing a system of standardized actions applied to texts. Superficially, it resembles the one described by Vertogradova, but according to Dar I. Zhutayev, it is totally different in structure and functions:

1) *pariyāpunāti*, to learn;
2) *vitthārena paresam deseti*, to explain (preach) to other in detail;
3) *vittārena paresam vāceti*, ‘to make another person learn, to teach another’; but according to Dar I. Zhutayev it means to recite for others in detail;
4) *vitthārena sajjhāyam karoti* – to learn/memorize (by oneself) in detail.
5) *cetasā anuvitakketi anuvicāreti manasānupekkhati*, to ponder, meditate, study with the reason.

Secondly, “it is not so much important that every monk engage in every single activity described in this list; the main thing is for the samgha to contain at least some monks engaged in them. Thus, this system of textual practices presupposes specialization on the part of monks.”\(^75\)

On the basis of the above analysis, Dr. Vertogradova classified teachers in two categories in early Buddhism (particularly Mahāsāmghika School). On the basis of literary and inscriptional sources (the Mahāsāmghika inscriptions of ancient Bactria), she presents two lists of synonyms denoting teachers. The

\(^{73}\) A.N., iii,177-178  
\(^{75}\) Dar I. Zhutayev, *op.cit.*, p.315
first list denoted persons who were concerned with levels of mastering No. 2 and 3 ("memorizing the text" and "keeping in memory"), while the second list denoted persons who were related to levels 4 and 5 ("studying the meaning" and "attaining perfection in understanding"):  

1) List One – bhānaka, - bhāxanaka, - vācaka, - dhara – ‘reciters and connoisseurs of texts’;  
2) List Two – kathiks, - desaka – ‘interpreters and preachers of texts’.  

Regarding the list One- the bhānaka, T.W. Rhys Davids writes, “The Digha- bhānaka were the monks in Sangha whose duty was to repeat and hand down the Digha Nikaya.” There may have been other four bhānakas for other four Nikayas too.  

Dar I. Zhutayev proposed another pair of synonymic series denoting these practices:  

1) vācet (Sanskrit vācayati) – bhānati = bhāsati (Sanksrit bhāxati) = uddisati (Sanskrit uddisati), etc., to read, declaim, recite;  
2) deseti (Sanskrit desayati) = katheti (Sanskrit kathayati) etc., to teach, instruct, preach.  

The practice of internalizing the text through ‘hearing’ and ‘memorizing’ was a must for both these systems, although they are treated differently in each of them. They are the two initial and lowest members of hierarchy, followed by its higher members in the first system. In the second one, ‘memorizing’ is at par with other activities existing in the samgha. Level of mastery No.3 (dhāreti) of first system which corresponds to “external” textual activity No. 3 of the second system (vācetī “to recite” and its synonyms), Levels of teaching Nos. 4 and 5 (“to study the meaning” and “to

76 T.W. Rhys Davids, Indian Buddhism, Rachna Prakashan, Allahabad, 1st Indian Reprint, 1972, p.50
attain perfection in understanding” of the first system find their counterpart in “external” textual activity No.2 (deseti and its synonyms) of the second system.\(^{77}\)

Thus, in the Mahāsāṃghikas school, we have the reference to the Dharmakathika (Pāli Dhammakathika), ‘preacher of the Dharma’ mentioned in their inscriptions. They were a type of teacher, a “specialist” having command over level No.4 (attam upaparikkhati). The Pāli canon mentions ‘mahājannasa dhammam deseti’ (to ‘preach the Dharma to large number of people’), which corresponded to level No. 2 of the second system (vitthārena paresa, deseti). The activities described by the third number of the second mātikā (‘to read aloud’, ‘to recite for others’) were carried out by teachers specializing in the third level of mastery (dhāreti). The terms bahussuta, Agatāgama, dhammadhara, vinayadhara, mātikadhara denoted connoisseurs of different parts of the Canon.

The system of teaching as discerned from the Pali suttas was central to the early Buddhist sects. But its continuation is seen in the Mahayana texts too. “The Mahayana Dasabhumika-sutra shows the connection between ‘keeping in memory’ (dhārayati) and ‘recitation’ (in this case the term bhānati is used) especially strikingly. Its fifth chapter (29. 19-22) says that the Bodhisattva dwelling in the fifth bhumi, ‘having gone forth becomes a reciter of the Dharma that keeps in memory what he has heard.’ (pravrajitas ca Srutadhāri dharmabhānako bhavati). The Dasabhumika-sutra especially that the Bodhisattva is a ‘reciter of the Dharma’ (dharmabhānaka) especially as (or: ‘to an even greater degree because’, bhuyasya mātrayā), that he remembers what he has heard ‘without forgetting (without corrupting the text) under many hundreds of thousands of koti-niyutas (=1019) of Buddhas, during many

\(^{77}\) Dar I. Zhutayev, op.cit., pp.316-317
hundreds of thousands of koti-niyutas of kalpas.’”78 The teaching system as envisioned in the second system had a social bearing too. Reproducing the sacred texts for the people through recitation was also aimed at better coordination between the monks and the laity as well as preserved the text in its original form.

Some of the methods of teaching discussed above were highlighted by two contemporary foreign scholars Vertogradova and her student Zhutayev. The account of Xuan Zang suggests that the principal method of teaching was tutorial.79 The teacher helped the student in his studies by explaining to him the various difficult passages of books. It seems that group-discussion was one of the important methods of teaching at Nalanda. The system of delivering lectures was also followed particularly for the subjects pertaining to the religious side of Buddhism. The biographer of Xuan Zang says about Nalanda, “Within the temple they arrange every day about pulpits for preaching, and the students attend these discourses without fail, even for minute”.80 It shows, according to Mookerji, “…that a hundred different subjects were daily taught to as many different classes of students, and that work was going on at all the colleges at all hours, except those prescribed for sleep”.81

The teaching-learning in the early phase of Buddhism was mainly based on Buddhavacana, the Tipitakas. This is attested by Buddhaghosa, the greatest commentator of Theravada (4th -5th century AD) in his writing Sumangalvиласini.82 The teaching which was through oral tradition had different teaching objectives for different learners which was based on the level or learning capacity of the learners. The Vinaya pitaka (code of conduct

78 ibid., pp.317-318
79 Hiuen Tsiang op. cit., II, p. 170.
80 Hwui-Li, op. cit., p. 112
82 Sumangalvиласini, Part I, edited by Mahesh Tewari, Nava Nalanda Mahavihara, Nalanda, 1974
for learners) was for systematic teaching for the novice monks/ nuns. It focused on strict code of conduct, behavior and practices like the Patimokkha rules, Upostha, etc. It tries to control the behavior of the learner through proper conditioning.\textsuperscript{83} Sutta pitaka having five Nikayas was meant for the masses. The most famous Anguttara Nikaya’s subject matter is divided into eleven Nipatas like One Dharma, Two types of wise men, Two types of powers / councils / desires, Seven types of power / organs of enlightenment, etc. It was a need based teaching which catered to an individual’s requirements. Abhidhamma pitaka was meant for higher level individuals/ monks leading to ultimate wisdom. The teaching through these three pitakas was aimed at teaching morality (\textit{sila}), mind (\textit{chitta}) and ultimate wisdom (\textit{prajna}).

Buddha taught through oral tradition which continued till the formal codification of his teaching in Sri Lanka. Buddha followed different methods to teach in the oral tradition. He used local language, that is, Pali to put forth his views and it was easily understood by the masses. “The Buddha was very pertinent about the usage of language for the proper communication from the simple to abstruse ideas, e.g. leading to various forms of teaching-learning strategies like the \textbf{Question-Answer} (Questions of Milinda or \textit{Milindapanho}), \textbf{Debate} (\textit{Sutta Nipata}, \textit{Anguttara Nikaya}, etc.) the various approaches of human drives and the various theories of human motivations.” \textsuperscript{84} \textit{Milindapanho} is a dialogue between Menander, the Indo-Greek ruler (Milinda being his Indian name) and Nagasen, the Buddhist scholar-teacher. This particular text throws light on the essentials of Dialogue/Interview through Question-Answer mode. The types of questions raised by Menander are:

\begin{itemize}
  \item i. Questions based on expositions of abstruse theories and concepts.
\end{itemize}

\textsuperscript{83} J Krihnamurti, the modern philosopher talked against conditioning of the mind of the learner. The learning should take place in an environment where the learner is not conditioned to any thought, ideology, etc. and discerns the ‘truth’ on his/her own understanding of the process or phenomenon.

ii. Questions based on doubts over issues, problems and topics.

iii. Complex questions, to test the clarity of the teacher, over the topic.

iv. Questions based on inferences.

v. Questions related to analysis and exposition of the rules of ‘Avadhuta’ and

vi. Questions with similes and examples.85

The answers were meant for the better understanding of Buddhism.

“The Buddha preached the doctrine by means of different concepts. Conceptualized thinking is the basis on which all knowledge is established. In Buddhism, this thinking is broadly classified as right and wrong.”86

**Silence** as a form of teaching-learning mechanism occupies an important position in the Buddhist system of education. Its genesis can be traced back to Upanisads. Meditation as a tool of learning is to achieve ultimate wisdom, a higher level of consciousness, referred as *prajna* or *abhijnana*. Samatha and Vipassana are two methods of meditation in Buddhism. Kamalsila, a distinguished acharya (9th century AD) wrote *Bhavana-krama* in three parts. This text delineates the sequences of meditational practices required to achieve ‘*sarvajnata*’, the true knowledge of things/phenomena. This aspect of Buddhist education will be dealt in detail in a separate chapter on meditation, knowledge and education.

**Curriculum**

The curriculum in the early phase (pre-Mauryan and Mauryan period) was mainly the sayings of Buddha, that is, *Buddhavacana*. The Pali texts especially the Vinaya texts formed the core of the curriculum in early viharas.

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85 Ibid, p.44
86 Ibid, p.45
The second phase comes with the emergence of Mahayana during the reign of Kaniska. It marked the continuation of the Pali texts along with major Mahayana texts written in Hybrid Sanskrit. With passage of time, a number of commentaries written by eminent scholars on different texts also became a part of the curriculum. The third phase is witnessed with the emergence of Tantric Buddhism around 8-9 centuries AD. The curriculum now incorporated many Tantric texts too; they were mainly composed by scholars in renowned educational institutions like Nalanda, Vikramasila, etc. By this time, the viharas had emerged as mahaviharas, a highly institutionalised structure with administrative process, admission process, a well defined curriculum and pedagogy had come into existence. The courses of study were very comprehensive in the Buddhist universities like Nalanda, Vikramisila, etc. It included the Buddhist, Jain and Brahmanical learning sacred and secular. “Pali, Prakrit, Sanskrit and Apabhramsh were included in the courses of language and were the medium of instruction. Shabdvidya (grammar and lexicography) Shilpshastra Vidya (arts and crafts), Chikitsavidya (medicine), Heturvidya (logic), Adhyatmavidya (spirituality and philosophy), Veda, Vedanta philosophical systems, the grammar of Panini and its commentaries including Mahabhashya, Dharmastra, Puranas, Jyotish, Gathas, etc., were the subjects of study. The literature of Mahayana (especially of Nagarjuna, Vasubandhu, Asanga and Dharmakirti), Hinayana and Vajrayana, Tripitakas (Vinaya, Abhidhamma and Sutta), works of Dipanka Shri Gyan, popularly known as Atisa, stories of Jatakas and other Buddhist, Hindu and Jain texts were taught.”

‘the process of learning through silence’ leading to higher and deeper insights where mental faculties work in isolation.

The Buddhist universities were famous for their libraries housed in magnificent buildings, but whether a student was supposed to visit the library during his free time or specific time as part of education is not clear.

The Jataka stories are full of reference to Taksasila as a center of learning. It was the seat of secondary and higher education. The subjects taught included the three Vedas and their eighteen vijjas (vidyas) as referred in various Jatakas like the Bhimsena Jataka, Kosiya Jataka, Dhummedha Jataka and Asadisa Jataka. There are many other Jatakas which mention that the Bodhisattvas studied the three Vedas and the eighteen vijjas. The invariable mention of the three Vedas shows that the study of Atharvaveda was not in the curriculum.

Archery was one of the conventional eighteen vijjas. References to archery are found in Bhimsena Jataka, Asadisa Jataka and Sarabhanga Jataka. Archery was one of the important subjects taught in Taksasila and it is reported that as many as 163 princes coming from various parts of the country learnt archery there. Morning periods were especially devoted to Dhanurveda or the science of archery. Snake charm was another branch of learning taught at Taksasila. The Compeyya Jataka states that a young Brahmin learnt Alambanamantam (the mantras used for charming snakes) at Taksasila. Religious ceremonials and certain occult sciences were also taught.

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88 It describes how a Bodhisattva learnt the three Vedas and eighteen vijjas at Taksasila.
89 It says that a Bodhisattva being born in a Brahmin family studied the three Vedas and eighteen vijjas at Taksasila.
90 It is stated that at the age of sixteen, the Bodhisattva went to Taksasila and mastered the eighteen vijjas.
91 It mentions how a Bodhisattva learnt archery at Taksasila.
92 It says that the Bodhisattva learnt archery at Taksasila and was appointed as the archer of a King at whose orders he brought down a mango from the top of a tree with his bow and arrow.
93 It says that a Bodhisattva learnt archery at Taksasila and exhibited many feats before the King of the country of his place of birth.
Taksasila was especially famous for its study of medicine. Jivaka, the court-physician of Bimbisara, studied medicine here under the great seer Atreya. The study of medicine had both theoretical and practical course. The theoretical course consisted of a study of the texts on medicine and surgery while the practical course included a firsthand study of plants to find out their medicinal values, as shown in the account of Jivaka’s education.

The study centers or the schools at Taksasila used to have a number of sittings every day. A practical approach towards education as a pedagogical principle was witnessed as in medicine, surgery, archery, etc. Many other educational institutions are frequently referred to in the Jatakas.\textsuperscript{94} The Jatakas point towards the fact that some of these institutions were maintained partly by honorariums grants provided by the sons of the wealthy members of society and partly by the scholarships awarded to students by the kingdoms to which they belonged. Sometimes the students had a common mess but when they were too poor a charitable community came forward to provide for their education and sustenance. It is remarkable that not only religious treatises like the three Vedas but secular subjects- arts and science were part of the curriculum at Taksasila. “Instead of the three Vedas, we sometimes find mention of sacred texts, holy books or the law. Some of these terms may indicate the sacred literature of the Buddhists. We find even the direct mention of a Vinaya scholar and a Sutra scholar.”\textsuperscript{95} In the fifth century A.D., the famous Chinese traveler Faxian visited India in search of Buddhist texts. His account is confined to a description of the main centers of Buddhist learning and the rules and regulations. He does not mention any monastery in Taksasila although the Buddhist texts speak of it as a center of learning.

\textsuperscript{94} I. 234 (Losaka Jataka); I. 317; I. 402; I. 447; I. 463; I. 510; II. 48; III.122; III.537 (Tittira Jataka); IV. 391; V.128; V. 457.\textsuperscript{95} B.K.Nigam & S.R.Sharma, *History and Problem of Indian Education*, Kanishaka Publishers & Distributors, Delhi, 1993, p.39
The universities of Nalanda and Vikramshila developed as centres of medical education at a later stage. To be a graduate (*snataka*) from Taksasila was considered a great honour. These *snatakas* were in great demand for royal service; they were sought by kings and appointed at high posts. One point worth noting regarding Taksasila is that there were several locales, acting as settlements of Gurus but this place had not emerged as a big university as some authors write. The individual teachers catered to the needs of the students according to their area of specialisation as well as the economic resources.

Nalanda as a great university offered a wide range of studies as part of its **curriculum** where Philosophy, Theology, Logic, Science and even Medicine and Fine arts were taught. It was not a centre for Buddhist studies alone but for almost all the braches of learning, Buddhist as well as non-Buddhist. The biographer of Xuan Zang writes, “… all study the Great Vehicle, and also (the works belonging to) the eighteen sects, and not only so, but even ordinary works, such as the *Vedas* and other books, the *Hetuvidyā*, *Sabdavidya*, the *Cikitsavidya*, the works on magic (*Atharvaveda*), the *Samkhya*; besides these they thoroughly investigated the miscellaneous works”.96 Xuan Zang himself studied the *Yogasastra*, the *Nyaya-Anusasana-Sastra*, the *Sabdavidya* and works on Mahayana such as the Kosa, Vibhasa, etc. at Nalanda.97

Xuan Zang says that one (a student) must have studied deeply both old and new books before getting admission98. Sanskrit was probably the medium of teaching. Hence, a good knowledge of Sanskrit was a must for admission. Sankalia opines, “It appears that the knowledge of Sanskrit was essential for

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96 Hwui Li, *op. cit.*, p. 112.
97 *ibid.*, p. 121.
all those—whether they were Buddhists or Hindus—who wanted to pursue their studies in university."

The study and development of logic as a discipline was a well marked feature of Nalanda educational system. Buddhist, Jain, Samkhya and other schools of thought had their own systems of Logic. It seems that all these systems were studied by the students at Nalanda. Nalanda Mahavihara made valuable contributions to the development of Logic. The greatest contributors were—Dinnaga, who is credited to have brought logic into prominence through his many compositions on logic; Dharmakirit made a further improvement in Logic. Santaraksita and Kamalasila were other great logicians. Kamalasila writing in the 9th century AD quotes from several Mahayana sutras in his great work Bhavanankrama. The sutras—Arya Lankavatara, Arya prajna paramita, Arya dharma sangeeti, etc. must have been important in the academic and intellectual discourse of that time. He mentioned about logic and states that the logic stated by him has been also endorsed by the Buddha in sutras like Salistamba.

Nalanda was also renowned for Tantric studies which were very popular from 8th-9th centuries onwards. Many of the Tantric works found in China have been ascribed to the scholars of Nalanda. Tibetan texts also refer to Nalanda as a centre of Tantric studies. It also mentions Kamalasila as a great teacher of Tantras. The Nalanda Copper Plate of Devapala mentions: ‘Nalanda was the abode of Bhiksus and Bodhisattvas well-versed in the Tantras’. The development of Tantrayana into Vajrayana, Kalacakrayana

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99 H.D. Sankalia, op. cit., p. 166.
100 I-tsing, op. cit., pp. 186-87.
102 Bhavanakrama of Kamalasila, tr. By Parmananda Sharma, Aditya Prakashan, New Delhi, p.26. This text was the first in Sanskrit to be written in Tibet by an Indian acarya.
103 P. Cordier, Catalogu du Fonds Tibetan de la Bibliothique Nationale.
104 S.C. Vidyabhushan, History of Indian Logic, p. 327.
105 E I, XVII, p. 325.
and Sahajayana marked the progress of Tantric practices within Buddhism. The scholars of Nalanda played an important role in this process. The Nalanda education system also facilitated the development of the Buddhist iconographic school. Many images were made as per the description given in the Mantras or Sadhanas of the Tantric methodology. Thus, it was an important center of training of artists. The sculptural and architectural remains found at Nalanda show that the site underwent a great surge of artistic activities during its long existence and influenced the contemporary sculptural art. The works of Candragomin, a scholar of Nalanda, clearly shows that other subjects besides Tantra were also taught there. He distinguished himself in literature, Grammar, Logic, Astronomy, Music, fine arts and the science of medicine. These subjects must have been taught at Nalanda. Astronomy was also a subject taught there. I-tsing gives a detailed description of a clepsydra (water-clock) and its working at Nalanda.

Transcription of manuscripts was an important literary activity in almost all the Buddhist centres of learning in India and also in China, Tibet, etc. Beside studies, teachers and students of Nalanda were also engaged in copying Buddhist manuscripts. We have a number of manuscripts still preserved which were copied in Nalanda. There is an Asta-sahasrika-prajnaparamita copied at Nalanda in the reign of Ramapala (1077-1120) at the Bodleian Library, Cambridge. The Library of the Asiatic Society of Bengal contains a manuscript, Astasahasrika Prajnaparamita, copied at Nalanda by Kalyanamitra Chintamani in the sixth regnal year of Mahipala which was discovered in Nepal by Mahamahopadhyaya H.P. Sastri. The Library of the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland contains a manuscript Astasahasrika Prajnaparamita copied at Nalanda in the fourth regnal year of

106 S.C. Vidyabhushan, History of the Medieval School of Indian Logic, pp. 121-22.  
Govindapala. The Bodleian Library, Cambridge also has a manuscript *Astrasahasrika Prajnaparamita* copied at Nalanda by Grahanakundu in the fourth regnal year of Ramapala.\(^{109}\)

Vikramasila was all through a royal University as it was fully supported by royal grant. Although, a Buddhist mahavihara, it taught many secular subjects and here studied a large number of students from other parts of India, Tibet, Bangladesh and South-East Asia. Theology was a compulsory subject; it meant learning of Mahayana, its two schools- Sunyavada (Nihilism) and Vijnanavada (Idealism) and all the eighteen schools of Buddhism. The curriculum also included *Hetuvidya, Sabdavidya, Chiktisavidya, Kosa, Vibhasa, Philosophy, Logic, Tantra, Magic, Samkhya, Adhyatmavidya, Silpasthanavidya* and other allied subjects. The medium of instruction must have been Sanskrit as with the emergence of Mahayana, Sanskrit replaced Pali as the medium of written communication.\(^{110}\) Nalanda had only one Gate-Keeper while Vikramasila had six Gatekeepers, each specializing in a particular branch of knowledge. These *Dwarapanditas* maintained the high academic standard of the University. The central hall of the mahavihara was called the House of Science. At the time of its establishment, the mahavihara was furnished with four different establishments, each consisting of 27 bhikkus belonging to four principal sects of Buddhism. Hence, there were one hundred and eight teachers in the beginning.

We also have some references to the study of poems and tales as a part of the education process in the early medieval period. Verse 7 of the Stone Votive Stupa Inscription found at Antichak, Vikramsila says:

‘*Tatra sthitas prahata-vairi-vadhu-vilaso Ganga ca-nana- Vidagdha-jana-kavya-katha-prasangabih kalam ninya sucira (m) ra-/rasarah.*’

\(^{110}\) S.R.Goyal, *A History of Indian Buddhism*, Part II, p.190
(Two feet of which are damaged, speake of one (probably Sahura or Sahvara) who was stationed at a particular place and put a stop to the alliance of the enemy’s wife (or the enemies’s wives). It also refers to the Ganga and says that the said person spent a long time in folks on kavya (poems) and katha (tales) with various learned people.)

At Vikramasila, we find the assemblage of scholars from different parts of the country. It represented the cultural tradition of the India as a whole. “Jetari was a native of Varendra (Bangladesh), Ratnavajra and Sakyasribhadra were from Kashmir, Vagiswara from Benares, Nag-Tsho and Gyan-Tso were from Tibet and Buddhhasri from Nepal… The works of teachers like Buddajnanapada, Vairocana, Jetari, Ratnavajra, Ratnakarasanti, Naropa, Rahulabhadra, Dharmapala, Jnanesrimitra, Vidyakokila, Silakara, Kamalasila, Kalyanaraksita, Abhayakaragupta, Atisa and others are available even today mostly in Tibetan Translation. Their work not only acted as inspiration for others but also attracted scholars from abroad. They wrote on Buddhist philosophy and logic, tantra, occult power and various other subjects.”

The scholars from here went to various parts of Asia for the dissemination of knowledge. They went to Suvarnadwipa, Ceylon, Tibet, Nepal and various other places. Vairocana, Ratnavajra, and Atisa had visited Tibet.

Around 12th century AD, there were about 3000 students residing at Vikramsila and there was a big library attached to it. The medieval Persian text Tabaqat-i-Nasari provides the following information on the collection of books: “There were great number of books on the religion of Hindu (Buddhist) there; and when all these books came under the observations of the Mussalmans, they summoned a number of Hindus that they might give them

111 Antichak Excavation Report, pp. 63,65
information respecting the import of these books; but the whole of the Hindus had been killed. On becoming (with the contents of these books) it was found that the whole of that fortress and city was a college and in the Hindu tongue, they call a college Bihara or Vihara.”

Jagaddala Mahāvihāra was established by King Rāmapāla of Pala dynasty (1084-1130 AD) in the city of Rāmāvati in Varendra. The Mahāvihāra of Jagaddala may have maintained a very good library, though there is no direct reference in this regard. Besides teaching, there were regular works emphasizing on writing, editing and translating manuscripts. It was a great center of scriptural activity, possessing a great collection of manuscripts. This may point to the existence of libraries as seen in other contemporary universities. The famous scholars and authors at this university were: Mahapandita Vibhutichandra, Danasila, Mokshakara Gupta, Subhankar Gupta, Dharmakaras Gupta, etc. Mahapandita Vibhutichandra was author and translator of a large number of books on Vajrayana and Kalacharyana. Pandita Danasila was a famous author of Tantric Buddhism. He wrote Pustakapathopaya ‘the means of reading a book’ in Sanskrit. He also translated it into Tibetan named Glegs blam bklug pahi thabs. The original text is lost but the Tibetan one survives. Mokshakara Gupta was a great logician. A special feature of this monastery was that many Tibetan scholars (locavas) thronged there and translated Sanskrit books into Tibetan.

The Buddhist education focused on hearing, contemplation and meditation in succession leading to wisdom. The fundamental aim of Buddhist education was the inculcation of values and the transformation of the individual and not the development or training in skills alone. The notion of

114 Bimal Kumar Datta, op.cit., p.30
Tri-shiksha (the three educational training) is important and it denotes the development of ethics, concentration and wisdom, in sequence – as wisdom depends on concentration, and concentration on ethics. Education comprising study of literature, grammar, logic, medicine, astrology, astronomy, poetry, arts, etc. are secondary as they have only instrumental value and not the intrinsic value that virtue has. The ultimate objective of Buddhist education is to bring peace, and this requires realization of ultimate truth and the cultivation of the virtues. Thus, transformation of personality is the core purpose of the educational system. The perception of reality is necessary and sufficient for getting out of the web of suffering. Therefore, the study of philosophy is regarded as a means to understand reality and in particular, the study of logic and epistemology are regarded as the methods to understand reality.

III

Concept, Meaning and Aims of Education

In ancient Indian texts, the terms, shiksha and vidya generally refer to education. Shiksha according to many Indian and Western scholars was only the sastra or branch of knowledge concerned with correct pronunciation (uchcharan) or recitation of the Vedic mantras or hymns. But shiksha also stood for different meanings. “Besides, uchcharan, it means vidyopadane (teaching and learning), vidyadane (imparting knowledge), adhyapane (teaching), abhyase (practising), adhyayane (learning), dande (punishing) and upadeshe (preaching). Vidya (Latin Videre) is used for gyane (Knowledge), labhe (usefulness), vicharane (thinking), sattayam (existence), etc. Education in ancient India was the process of the acquisition of knowledge by applying
one’s own mind. It was synonymous to learning.”⁵¹¹ The main purpose of education in ancient India was self-realisation (atma sakshatkar or swarupanubhuti).

Students in ancient India were referred as shishya (disciple), vidyarthi (student), and vidyarati (devoted to learning). Shravanam (listening to Guru and remembering what was taught by him), followed by mananam (reflection, deliberation and argumentation) by the pupil himself and then the stage of nididhyasan (meditation and concentration on the theme of shravanam and mananam) for understanding the true essence or hidden meaning were part of education. In this process of teaching and learning the Guru acted as the guide or facilitator but the the students themselves obtained mastery.

The aims and ideals of ancient Indian education derive from its epistemology, ethics and world view. Education was viewed not only as a means of salvation and self realization, mukti or moksha but also as part of one’s quest for atma jnana or brahma jnana.

The Buddhist system of education was purely monastic and their centres were monasteries. In the beginning, it was concerned with the education of novices and monks but later it took up the education of the laity and common people. The Buddhist system of education was more formal and organised but in its ideals and methods it did not deviate much from the Brahmanical system like the ceremony of initiation or ordination as the beginning of education. Unlike the Brahmanical system, Buddhist education was not influenced by the caste system and the ascendancy of the Brahmans. Buddha was against the caste system and argued that the status of man was determined by the actual merit and not by descent or family status. Buddhist education aimed at helping one to realize the ultimate truth, acquire status of arhat in Mahayana and nirvana in Hinayana (Theravada).

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Teacher-student relation

Buddhism tried to define the idea of ideal teacher and student, as they were and still are the most important stakeholders in any educational system. Teachers, students, and their relationship play a prominent role in determining the value of any educational system. There are many references in the Buddha’s teachings and canonical works of the later masters alluding to criteria for being a good teacher. Asanga (4th century A.D.), the founder of the Yogacara School wrote about the qualities of a teacher in his work *Sutralankara*:

One should rely on a teacher, who is calm, peaceful and pacified through the practice of discipline, concentration and wisdom,

Who has more knowledge than the taught, who is industrious and learned,

Who understands the core elements of the subject to be taught?

Who is compassionate and skilled in articulation and

Who is not tired of teaching repeatedly?

Development of moral values is treated as the key to developing an integrated person. A person with a sound grounding in moral values and equipped with other knowledges and skills would be the most suitable person to teach, and the production of such persons is the goal of education. Such people would be instrumental in bringing peace in society in whatever capacity they find themselves.

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116 *Mahayana-Sutralankara* of Asanga, ed. by S. Bagchi (1st edition), Baudhha-Samskrita Granthavali (Buddhist Sanskrit Text) No. 13, Mithila Institute of Post Graduate Studies and Research in Sanskrit Learning, 1970
Prof. R.K. Mookerji discusses in detail the qualification of a teacher (upajjhaya) and the student monk (bhikkhu); application to upajjhaya by a bhikkhu for his studies; daily duties of a upajjhaya and a bhikkhu; specification of the number of bhikkhus in a vihara; and framing the rules governing the vihara establishment as a whole, binding upon all members, the teachers and the taught alike; rules for governance of bhikkhus under a upajjhaya, for taking care of one monk by another, etc. were prescribed by the Buddha. Thus the sangha, constituting the collective life of monks, got federated into a larger unit called vihara/monastery; the latter developed its own codes of discipline and regulations binding upon all its units. It was important to maintain a harmonious relation between different groups as the students and teachers hailed from different communities, from various parts of the country. This arrangement was meant to avoid the intrigues of the teachers in the vihara with disciples and preserve a proper standard of academic etiquette, and decorum governing the delicate relations among the staff and their students.

As all monks could not be put on the same pedestal with reference to their learning capacity, some who were lagging behind in their learning were given some kind of work to take care of the maintenance of the vihara as well as the fruit gardens, corn-field, etc. of the sangha. This system is still prevalent in the Tibetan monasteries where the monks who are unable to go higher in monastic studies are engaged in various daily chores of the monasteries. The Tibetan monasteries since their inception in the 8th century AD were deeply influenced by the great mahaviharas of North India, especially Bihar. In Korea, the monasteries had agricultural fields and gardens attached to them. This must have significance for both the maintenance of the monastery as well as the

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117 R.K. Mookerjee, *op.cit.*, pp.541-542
importance given to agriculture, the primary occupation of man and inculcated a sense of dignity for manual labor among the student and monks.

Aryadeva (3rd century A.D.) has defined the nature of student in his book Catuhsataka:

He is the proper vessel of teaching who has interest, has the intelligence to grasp what is taught and has an impartial attitude.

This interest is not a mere interest in listening so as to acquire information; it is an interest to go through the three stages and to cultivate realization of the content of the teaching. Yijing in the 7th century mentions that students submit to the teachers to acquire knowledge. He says, “He goes to his teachers at the first watch and at the last watch in the night. First the teacher bids him to sit down comfortably. Selecting some passage from the Tripitakas, he gives a lesson in a way that suits circumstances and does not leave any fact or theory unexplained. He inspects his pupil’s moral construct, and warns him of defects and transgressions. Whenever he finds his pupil at fault, he makes him seek remedies and repent. The pupil rules the teacher’s body, folds his clothes or sometimes sweeps the apartment and the yard. Then having examined water to see whether there are insects in it, he gives it to the teacher. Thus if there is any things to be done, he does all on behalf of his teachers”.118 The custom of serving the preceptor was introduced by the Buddha. It also shows a very cordial relation between the teacher and the taught. The personal relationship between a worthy teacher and his disciple allows a level of guidance and intimate communication of truth beyond what may be attained by the private study of scripture or through personal prayer and meditation. The teacher should have a mature faith, rich experience, and accomplishment by which he can set an example for his students and convey

118 I-tsing, op. cit., p. 120
to them the insights born of his experience and mastery. The students, for their part, should be obedient to the teacher and willing to be disciplined. The Dhammapada advises:

“Should one see a wise man, who, like a revealer of treasure, points out faults and reproves; let one associate with such a wise person; it will be better, not worse, for him who associates with such a one. Let him advice, instruct, and dissuade one from evil; truly pleasing is he to the good, displeasing is he to the bad.”

This applies to both lay followers as well as the monks. The teacher also has a responsibility towards the student. The Mahavagga says:

“The teacher, brethren, should regard the pupil as his son. The pupil should regard the teacher as his father. Thus these two, by mutual reverence and deference joined, dwelling in community of life, will win increase, growth, progress in the Norm-discipline.”

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119 Dhammapada, 76-77
120 M.V., iii.1
In the Brahmanical system of education the varna system empowered Brahmans to inherit and transmit knowledge. Most of the occupations practiced by the masses did not require any formal learning except on the job or vocational training which they acquired at home through observation and imitation. The elite character of education changed with the advent of Buddhism. The Buddhist monks and viharas did not differentiate people on the basis of caste and were open to all irrespective of the caste taboos. ‘Buddhism envisaged the democratization of education.’ The sermons of Buddhist monks were the main source of education to the masses that flocked to their assembly. The Buddhist philosophy recognizes the potential of all human beings to develop their resources to their ultimate till one reaches the final state of perfection. The teachings of Buddha which were inscribed on pillars, stones and rocks served as non-formal channels of education for the common people, especially during the reign of Asoka. As the monastic organization expanded and spread to different parts of India, literacy must have spread among the common masses.

**Language Education and the Practice of Writing**

The way language was used underwent some changes in the period 700 BC to 500 BC. This is evident from the use of Ardhamagadhi and Pali as against Sanskrit by Mahavira and Buddha respectively for their religious discourse. These languages were developed and cultivated as literary languages and used for religious and philosophical discussions at higher levels of education within Jainism and Buddhism respectively. In addition to Vedic and worldly Sanskrit, they were studied respectively in Jain and Buddhist educational institutions between 600 B.C. and 200 B.C. and then they lost their academic importance. Jain and Buddhist scholars and poets adopted Sanskrit as a medium of their writings. Mahayana Buddhism accepted Sanskrit in place of Pali for its religious and philosophical writings. Sanskrit, therefore, once again dominated the educational system. Methods of teaching language

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121 Refer M.G.Chaturvedi & Satvir Singh, *Languages and Media of Instruction in Indian Schools*, NCERT, New Delhi, 1981
122 Ibid., p.12
and its content were more or less the same as in the Vedic period, although different types of educational institutions had come into existence in rural and urban settings in place or along with forest ashrams. The Chinese pilgrim Faxian writes that the Brahmanical system of oral instruction was the method of teaching even among Buddhists. Sanskrit was studied in Buddhist monasteries also. Faxian stayed for about three years in Pataliputra monastery and studied Sanskrit speech and writing. Similarly Xuanzang who called India a country of Brahmans, says that the four Vedas were studied even in Buddhist schools. \textit{Milind Panha}, a non-canonical Buddhist text corroborates this by stating that Vedic Literature was studied in Buddhist viharas.

There is no unanimity among scholars regarding the origin and practice of writing in the historical period in India. Writing needs a script and writing is a prerequisite of urban culture. Sculptural evidences do point to the existence of writing. A Gandhara sculpture (c. 2\textsuperscript{nd} century A.D.) shows Gautama at school practicing writing. Similarly, in Nagarjunakonda (c. 2\textsuperscript{nd} century A.D.) a sculpture depicts three soothsayers interpreting to king Suddhodana the dream of Queen Maya. Below is seated a scribe recording the interpretation. This is perhaps the earliest available pictorial record of the art of writing in India and is kept at National Museum, New Delhi. These are some of the evidences linked to Buddhist themes. It is generally perceived that writing started in the early Mauryan period. A. L. Basham writes, “In the four \textit{Nikayas} the only reference (to writing) I have found is \textit{Anguttara}, I, 283, and it is doubtful if it means more than a mark or line. Drawing is referred to in \textit{Majjhima}, i, 127. The \textit{Vinaya Pitaka} and \textit{Jatakas}, on the other hand, seem to take writing for granted (e.g. \textit{Vin.}, iii, 76; iv, 7; iv, 305; \textit{Jat.} ii, 174; vi, 369 etc.). This gives

\begin{itemize}
\item\textsuperscript{123} R.K. Mookerji, \textit{op.cit.}, p. 498
\item\textsuperscript{124} \textit{ibid.}
\item\textsuperscript{125} Swami Dwarikadas Shastri (ed.), \textit{Milind Panho}, Baudhha Bharati, Varanasi, 1998, p.10
\end{itemize}
further evidence of the lateness of these texts.”126 Basham takes the references in these Buddhist texts to mean the lateness of the texts and not the antiquity of the practice of writing in India. In the Lalita-vistara, it is mentioned that Buddha studied sixty-four scripts at school including the Chinese script.127 It may point to the age of Buddha or the period of the text which happens to be somewhere in the 1st century A.D. Secondly, this also meant that Buddhism treated all languages as equal and accorded an equal status to all languages and the concerned people.

According to Xuan zang students were admitted on completion of elementary education in Sanskrit into the Buddhist monasteries which by the seventh century had emerged as colleges of higher learning.128 He writes that a child was first introduced to ‘Siddham’ (Sanskrit alphabets were called Varnasamamnvaya consisting of 63 or 64 letters in Vedic Shikshas and Pratishakhyas, but in the Devanagari, alphabets were called Siddhamatrikas and had fifty letters as we have even today). He further says that after Siddham, a child was introduced at the age of seven to the “great Sastras of Five Sciences”, namely, Vyakarana (grammar) Shilpasthanavidya (the science of Arts and Crafts), Chikitsavidya (Science of Medicine), Hetu-vidya (Nyaya, logic, Science of Reasoning), and Adhyatmavidya (Inner Science).129 Yijing also gives a description of the general and elementary education which was in existence prior to specialization and higher education in Buddhist Viharas.

**Character Development**

127 Lokesh Chandra, ‘Sharing the Aisles of the Future’, in S.R. Bhatt(ed.), Buddhist Thought and Culture, Originals, Delhi, 2005, p.28
128 R.K. Mookerji, op.cit., p. 528
129 ibid.
The term ‘character’ is closely related to Dharma in Indian culture and tradition. Dharma is not religion in true sense but refers to being and becoming of an individual and encompasses a wide spectrum of life – individual, social and spiritual. Character development was considered to be of utmost importance in Hindu, Buddhist and Jain traditions. Dhammapada, contains the basic teachings of Buddhism and speaks about the nature of good character and its expression in social life: ‘Do not have evil doers for friends, do not have low people for friends: have virtuous people for friends, have for friends the best of men.’

Dhammapada is the “most interesting collection of a trustworthy picture of Buddhist thought, particularly in its practical and moral character.” Self control is one of the essential marks of good character in the Dhammapada. It says, ‘One’s own self conquered is better than all other people; not even a deva (God), a Gandharva (celestial musician), not Mara with Brahma could change into defeat the victory of a man who has vanquished himself, and always lives under restraint or self control.’

The Dhammapada is the Buddhist text for all-round development of human personality and character. Its regular study has been encouraged in the past. In the Buddhist tradition great importance is given to moral conduct. The training of moral conduct was imparted to remove the cause of sufferings and pain. The Noble Eightfold path of the Buddha is essentially a scheme of character development. This scheme is practical and is in three parts, known as Sila, Samadhi and Panna. The training of Sila develops morality, purity of vocal and physical actions, right speech, right action, and right livelihood. The training of Samadhi means developing concentration and control of one’s own mind. This enables an individual to make right effort, right awareness and right concentration. The training of panna is composed of wisdom and insight.

130 Dhammapada, verse 78
132 Dhammapada, verse 104, 105.
which totally purifies the mind. It leads to right thought and right understanding and true education of the mind and body.

**Education and Philosophy**

The philosophical system in Indian literature is known as *Darhsana*. The word is derived from the root *drsir*, which means to show the way, i.e., to *Moksha*. Indian philosophy has twelve systems divided into two groups – theistic and atheistic. Those systems that accept the testimony of Vedas are theistic while those who don’t accept its testimony are atheistic. *Vaisesika, Nyaya, Samkhya, Yoga, Purva-Mimamsa* and *Vedanta* are the theistic systems while Baudha, Jaina, Carvaka, Arhata, Digambara, Sowma are atheistic systems. *Darsanas* accept six ways of acquiring knowledge (the six *Pramanas*) – *Pratyaksham* (Perception), *Anumanam* (Inference), *Upamanam* (Analogy), and *Sabdah* (Verbal testimony), *Arthapatti* (Presumption), and *Anupalabdhi* (Negation).\(^{133}\)

The contribution of Darsanas to Education including the modern education is as stated below:

1. A theory of Learning viz. learning by *Aptavakyam*,

2. A Theory of Teaching viz. *Anubandhacatusthayam*, and

3. Development of Consciousness by *Upasana* and *Vipasana*

The development of Consciousness by *vipasana* is very much emphasized in Buddhist system of education. In fact, all *darsanas* in their core contain the study of consciousness and its development. It is pertinent to note that *Samkhya* system laid a firm theoretical base while *Yoga* could develop a

\(^{133}\) *Encyclopedia of Education*, vol.I, NCERT, Delhi, pp.418-419.
Hierarchical technique to the development of consciousness. Buddhist Vipasana is one of the best techniques for the development of consciousness. Assagilio\textsuperscript{134} has shown seven states of consciousness in which the seventh one is the ‘cosmic consciousness.’ He refers to it as the ‘cit’ of Advaita Vedantins of India. Yoga proposed samadhi technique for the development of consciousness to reach the fourth stage. Upasana of theistic and vipasana of Buddhist (atheistic darsana) are worth mentioning in this context. This has been dealt in detail on chapter dealing with meditation.

Buddhists have dealt with the theory of knowledge quite extensively. Philosophically speaking there are four distinct schools of thought (a) Vaibhasikas, who propound the doctrine of ‘direct realism’ in Western epistemology, (b) Sautrantikas, who propound the doctrine of ‘critical realism’, (c) Yogacaras, who propound the doctrine of ‘subjective idealism or pure subjectivism’ and (d) Sunya-vadins or Madhyamikas, advocating the doctrine called ‘indeterminism’ having no Western analogue.\textsuperscript{135}

\section*{IV}

In this section, we will be focusing on two major themes of studies in the Buddhist system of education - Medical Education and Logic. They were not new and were present in the earlier Brahman system of education but the approach may have been different.

Medical Education

First, let’s take up the Medical Education-the Ayurveda System. Ayurveda is the traditional medical system of India and the word is derived

\textsuperscript{134} R. Assagilio, \textit{Psycho-synthesis}, Viking, New York, 1971
from two Sanskrit words ‘ayur’ and ‘veda’ meaning the ‘Science or knowledge of life’. It is undoubtedly world’s oldest system of treatment in continuous use.\textsuperscript{136} The National Center for Complementary and Alternative Medicines (NCCAM) has classified Ayurveda as an alternative medical system as “…it is based on a set of theories about health, illness, and treatment; it is not simply a collection of isolated practices without an underlying rationale.”\textsuperscript{137} The emphasis is on positive health, a blending of physical, mental, social, moral and spiritual welfare. Ayurveda is supposed to have originated around 3500 BC and the earliest reference is in the Vedic literature.

Caraka, Sushruta and Kashyapa considered Ayurveda as an ‘upaveda’ of Atharvaveda while Brahmavaivarta Purana considered it to be the fifth Veda. Traditionally, Ayurveda is attributed to a divine revelation from Brahma, the Hindu god of creator. It then passed on to some deities and then to human gurus like Atrey, Agnivesha, etc. The principles and practices of Ayurveda percolated down from gurus to disciples orally for some centuries; Caraka, Sushruta gave us the great Ayurveda texts \textit{Caraka Samhita}, a treatise on internal medicine and \textit{Sushruta Samhita}, a book on surgery respectively. Vagbhata (c.500-600AD), considered to be a Buddhist physician wrote \textit{Ashtanga Samgraha}\textsuperscript{138} and \textit{Ashtanga Hridaya}\textsuperscript{139}.

The Buddha recommended this medical system and supported the study of Ayurvedic medicine.\textsuperscript{140} It is suggested that Ayurveda to some extent owed its origin to the heterodox sects like Buddhism. The medical knowledge which was collected by the wandering ascetics’ was compiled in the early sections of

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\begin{enumerate}
\item \textsuperscript{136} Cf. K. Pelletier, \textit{The Best Alternative Medicine}, Simon & Schuster, New York, 2002
\item \textsuperscript{137} Albert Ellis et.al., \textit{Personality Theories Critical Perspectives}, Sage, California, USA, 2009, p.530
\item \textsuperscript{138} \textit{Astanga Samgraha} of Vagbhata(3 vols), tr from Sanskrit to English by K R Srikanta Murthy, Chaukhamba Orientalia, Varanasi, 2012.
\item \textsuperscript{139} \textit{Ashtanga Hridaya}, ed. by Pandit B.H. Paradkar Vaidya, Pandurang Jawaji, Bombay, 1969.
\item \textsuperscript{140} Cf. R. Svoboda & A. Lade, \textit{Tao and Dharma: Chinese Medicine and Ayurveda}, Lotus Press, Twin Lakes,WI,1995
\end{enumerate}
the Bhesajjakhandha of the Vinayapitaka. Medicine gradually became integral to Buddhist doctrine. The Pali canons provide two types of medical information: materia medica and stories of treatments of different diseases. The focus was on concrete therapies rather than the theory of disease and medicine. By the 7th century AD, medicine was a part of the educational curriculum at major Buddhist centers of learning like Nalanda. Even prior to this, Taksasila was a famous center of learning in Ayurveda. Jivaka, the royal physician during the Buddha’s time did a seven year course at Taksasila and after the completion of the course, he was asked by the examiner: ‘Take this spade and seek around Taksasila, a yojana on every side and whatever plant you see which is not medicinal, bring it to me.’ Jivaka examined all the plants and came back empty handed as all plants were having medicinal properties.

The study of herbal plants and herbal cures for diseases was very much a specialized learning in ancient India and it continued under Buddhism too. Medicine occupied a part of the curriculum within the monastic education too. During medieval period Rasa-Sastra evolved. Nagarjuna is considered the father of Rasa Sastra or Alchemy. Ayurveda in the later period began using Mercury and other metals as important ingredient of medicinal drugs.

Medicine and medical knowledge grew and expanded as a branch of knowledge along with Buddhism in India. Medical knowledge in Buddhist Monasteries is known from their meditational process too. Many monastic communities in ancient India practiced meditation on the physical elements of earth, water, fire, and air in the body. Indian Buddhists developed a uniquely Buddhist form of meditation - the cultivation of mindfulness of body (kāyagtāsatibhāvana). This thought of breaking the body down into its 32 constituent parts, including internal organs such as the heart, the liver, the

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141 M.V., viii,3
spleen, and the kidneys. The anatomic analysis of the body in this form of meditation is quite detailed. This led scholars’ to credit members of the early Buddhist monastic order (sangha) with a decisive role in the development of ancient Indian anatomic theory. Member of the Buddhist sangha garnered a great deal of empirical knowledge of bodily processes and led the way in medical advances. Zysk who has worked on Buddhist medical system\textsuperscript{144} is correct in asserting that Buddhist monastic communities in India were less hampered by stricture concerning the handling of bodily wastes and dead bodies.

The excavation report of Nalanda may point towards the study of medicines. The monastery referred as I A was situated on the south west corner of monastery I. “In the centre of the courtyard there are two parallel rows of what appears to be hearths, 7 in number and connected by a common corbelled duct, about 2 feet in height. The same feature is to be found in eastern verandah also. It is not unlikely that here there was a medical seminary or bhishak-sala where rasas of sorts were manufactured and the medical students were given practical lessons in pharmacy, unless of course, they were meant to be culinary hearths”\textsuperscript{145}

The correlation between the four Noble Truths of Buddhism and medicine\textsuperscript{146} is worth viewing as it puts forth the Buddhist preoccupation with medicine. Buddhism views ‘suffering’ as primary noble truth that can be correlated to diagnosis. Successive noble truths can be equated to medical concepts as well. The second noble truth ‘the causes of suffering is in attachment’ can be equated to Etiology or cause of disease; the third ‘there is a path to overcome it’ to therapeutics and the fourth ‘cessation of suffering’ to

\textsuperscript{144} Kenneth Zysk, \textit{Asceticism and Healing in Ancient India: Medicine in the Buddhist Monastery}, Motilal Banarsidass, Delhi, Indian edition 1998
\textsuperscript{145} Hiranand Sastri, \textit{op.cit.} p.23
Recovery. Nirvana, the state of relief from all the suffering is the state of arogya. Buddha is equated to a physician who leads and heals the mankind. An analysis of the biographies of Indian monks in China reveals that they had learnt the five secular sciences or Pancavidya consisting of astronomy, script, mathematics, medicine and tantra or alchemy in childhood.\textsuperscript{147} This clearly shows medicine as a vital component of education. The monks were trained in medicine to attend the sick among them and also the laity whenever required.

“Early Buddhism’s incorporation of medicine into its religious doctrine was unique and contributed to the religion’s development. The practical care and medical attention that was given to all who required it helped provide the support and popularity necessary to sustain a religious movement through its various transformations in Asia”\textsuperscript{148} and of course India.

A study of Agriculture can be understood in the sense that it was intimately related to herbal plants. Since early days of the Aryans up to the formation of villages and the rise of Magadha as an empire, a solid foundation was laid in undertaking agricultural operations on more systematic lines. The phase of second urbanization in India beginning 6\textsuperscript{th} century B.C. saw paddy transplantation and new techniques in agriculture. Considerable interest was shown by the rulers like Asoka and others, who promoted gardens, planting of trees and herbal plants along the roads, flowers, fruits and vegetables. Thus, arboriculture and horticulture received greater attention. In Taksasila, Nalanda, and Vikramasila, there was some indirect teaching about plants particularly medicinal and aromatic plants which provided the needed Ayurvedic medicines for cure of several diseases.\textsuperscript{149}

Logic


\textsuperscript{149} P.N.Jha,‘Agricultural and Veterinary Education’, \textit{Encyclopedia of Education}, vol.I, NCERT, p.42
The importance of logic was very much evident in Indian education system since the time of Brahmanical system - Nyaya (Logic) being one of the six philosophies (*darsanas*). “Indian Logic has been differently defined in different ages but the definition generally accepted is the science which ascertains valid knowledge either by means of six senses or by means of the five members of syllogism; in other words, perception and inference is the subject-matter of Logic.”150 Logic is central to the understanding of Buddhist philosophy. But the fact is that Buddhist Logic is not evident in Indian Pali sources. The trace of Nyaya is not evident in the Indian Pali texts. The Tibetan sources, especially *Bstan-hgyur* allude to it. The Buddhist text *Kathavatthu* furnishes several logical terms like *upanayana*, *nigamana*, etc. of syllogistic reasoning. Logical methods came to be emphasized in Buddhist thought due to the need to provide greater rigor for the epistemologies of the Mahayana tradition especially against the Brahmanical school like the Nyaya. Thus, in Mahayana Buddhism, we find a greater development of Logic. The critical questioning of the scriptures was encouraged in order to dispel any doubts concerning the validity of the teachings since the inception of Buddhism. So, it was emphasized that one’s belief should be based upon conviction of the truth of doctrine and not merely upon blind faith or mere adherence to a philosophy or religion. Thus, an essential feature of Buddhist education was the practice of debate and this is found in all Buddhist tradition. Debates on various topics lead to two effects- first, it sharpens the mind’s intelligence and secondly, it clears the dichotomy between the truth and non-truth and makes the understanding of the truth subtle and clear. The Buddha himself asked his followers: ‘examine my words as a goldsmith would gold ore.’ In Buddhist tradition, philosophical views need not be proved by scriptural authority alone. The individual or student must rely solely on logic and reasoning to gain faith

150 S.C.Vidyabhusan, *Indian Logic*, p.xiii
and conviction in Buddhist thought. The objects of knowledge according to Kamalsila, the famous Buddhist scholar of 8th century, can be broadly classified as obvious phenomena, partially concealed phenomena and completely concealed phenomena. Logic is not required for obvious phenomena as one can experience them directly ascertaining their existence. The partially concealed phenomena have to be established by the method of logic because they cannot be ascertained through direct experience. “Logic will need several lines of reasoning as the object of analysis is understood by inferential cognition based on experience.” The completely concealed phenomena cannot be examined through the science of logic, especially by people whose understanding is at an initial level of development. They can hardly be established in relation to our experience too. Here, one has to rely on valid scriptural authority and here one has to establish first the reliability or authority of the scriptures first.

Buddhism just like other Indian religion maintains that reliable knowledge is the key to spiritual liberation. By 4th century AD, it involved basic questions like what constituted reliable knowledge and what types of reliable knowledge are there. Buddhists came up with their own thought on these issues. Dignaga gave the first systematic presentation, but Dharmakirti and his followers provided the form that became widespread in India and Tibet. Buddhist logic holds that there are just two kinds of reliable knowledge, each with a corresponding type of object: (1) perception, which cognizes particulars, and (2) inference, which cognizes universals. Madhyamaka thinkers generally employ the Buddhist logicians’ theory of inference.  

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152 *Encyclopedia of Buddhism*, pp.469-470 on Logic.
Development of Logic was witnessed in the major centers of Buddhist learning. Buddhist logicians flourished in universities like Nalanda, Odantapuri and Vikramasila in north India. Nalanda Mahavihara made valuable contributions to the development of Logic. Dinnaga, one of the greatest pandit of Nalanda,\(^{153}\) has been credited with bringing logic into prominence. He composed many works on logic - *Nyayadvara*, *Nyayapravesa* and *Pramanasamuccaya* regarded as very important.\(^{154}\) Yijing mentions eight of his works.\(^{155}\) The principal contribution of Dinnaga appears to be the rejection of *Upanaya* and *Nigmana* as superfluous. He discussed for the first time the significance of the middle term for inference and hence for the theory of reasoning. As a result, the doctrine of the “Three phase of *Hetu*, enumerated in *Paksadharmanvatam*, *Sapaksa sattvam* and *Vipaka Ca-asattvam*, was propounded by him.\(^{156}\) However, Dinnaga belonged to the idealist school of Asanga and Vasubandhu. Yijing informs us that after Dinnaga, “Dharmakirit made a further improvement in Logic”.\(^{157}\) The “improvement” seems to be complete formulation of the *Trairupa* theory, advanced by his predecessor Dinnaga, and wrote *Nyaya-bindu*.\(^{158}\) Santaraksita and Kamalasila continued to champion this aspect of logic.

Vasubandhu is regarded as the progenitor of Buddhist logic, although Dignaga gave its first full formulation. Vasubandhu was one of the most prominent figures in the development of Mahayana Buddhism in India and his

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154 H.D. Sankalia, op. cit., p. 85.
works were also on logic and related topics of Buddhist education.\textsuperscript{159} Vada-Vidhi was a work on logic, followed by Vadavidhana, Vadakausala and Tarkasastra (thr provenance of this last work is disputed). His other works were Panca-skandahaka-prakarna dealing with the ‘aggregates’ making up ‘personality’, Karma-siddhi-prakarna, explaining psychic continuity and questioned many of the features of the earlier Buddhist psychology. The other works were Vimsatika and Trimsika on Buddhist psychology; Tri-svabhavanirdesa showed a way for ridding consciousness of ensnaring mental constructions.

The Indian philosopher Nagarjuna (ca. 2\textsuperscript{nd} century A.D.) is probably the single most important Buddhist philosopher. Nagarjuna was enormously influential in India. The Madhyamaka School of Philosophy, which he probably founded, was the earlier of the two great Indian schools of Mahayana thought. In Tibet, Madhyamaka is said to represent the highest philosophical standpoint, the final truth. In East Asian Buddhism, the influence of emptiness can be seen in Chinese and Japanese art, in poetry, in the martial arts, and even, ostensibly, in Japanese business practice.

\section{V}

In this section, some of the contemporary notions in education and its prevalence in Buddhist system of education are discussed.

\textsuperscript{159} Cf. Stefan Anacker, \textit{Seven Works of Vasubandhu: The Buddhist Psychological Doctor}, Motilal Banarsidass, Delhi, 1998(reprint)
Monitorial System

The monitorial system was used in India in ancient period in Gurukulas. The cooperation and help of advanced and senior students were enlisted in the cause of education in order to make personal supervision effective. They guided the studies of junior students under the overall supervision of teachers. Apastamba lay down that such seniors were to be respected in the same way as the teachers. The prevalence of this system is attested at Taksasila and Valabhi. At Taksasila, the Kuru Prince Sutasome, who acquired proficiency earlier, was entrusted with the teaching of his brother prince, the heir apparent of Banaras. Senior students at Taksasila were often put in-charge of their gurukulas during the temporary absence of their teachers. Yijing observed in 7th century AD at Valabhi that the students used to pass two or three years, ‘instructed by their teachers and instructing others’. This method of entrusting teaching work to brilliant students provided them an opportunity to learn the art of teaching.

In Jatakas, we have ample evidence that one of the ways of recruiting teachers was through the ‘monitorial’ system. Senior pupils were asked to take charge of younger pupils in groups. Those who proved competent with their maturity and knowledge were permitted to become teachers. Thus in ancient times, the teacher was chosen by the students on the basis of ‘gyan’ (knowledge). Their ability to explain, expand, expound and reinterpret was under life long examination because the students flocked only to reputed teachers who were spiritually enlightened and not only teach percepts but also practice them. The monitorial system later became a method of inducting

pupils to the position of teachers and evolved as a method of training teachers.\textsuperscript{161}

In ancient India, the teacher was an institution in himself. Around him was the educational institution called the Gurukuls, literally Teacher’s Family, where lived together his own family as well as students. In the same metaphorical sense, there existed the teacher education institution in the guru-shishya parampaa- teacher-pupil tradition. The guru identified a suitable disciple to take charge after him. The teacher’s methods and ways were picked up by the disciples and handed over from one generation to another. The criteria of suitability as teacher were qualities of intellect, character and scholarly outlook, embodiment of morality and culture.

Monks were the teachers in the monasteries, which functioned like regular educational institutions, with laid down discipline, rules and regulations. After the completion of studies, some disciples/students stayed back as teachers by their own choice and acceptance by their teachers. They were specialists in various branches of knowledge. Thus were prepared teachers of specific subjects.

**Experimental Education**

Experimental education or learning is defined as learning in which the learner or student is in direct touch with the realities being studied. This is a modern concept but its historical roots are deep being traced in Greece and India, two cradles of ancient civilization. Aristotle who studied biological phenomena first hand initiated the experimental educational in Greece. In

\textsuperscript{161} Lokesh Koul,'Monitorial System' in *Encyclopedia of Education*,NCERT, pp.1153-1155
India, the Buddha taught his followers to leave their habitual ways of living and follow the Noble Eightfold Path in actual daily life. In fact, this form of education goes beyond the Buddha to the primitive hunter and gatherers who taught their sons to track and kill game in actual hunts.\textsuperscript{162}

**Physical Education**

The physical exercises which were common in India are breathing exercise, \textit{Pranayam}, physical activities, archery and bodybuilding, etc. prevalent since ancient period. The physical education in Buddhist system is described by the Chinese scholars who came to India. They state that the following games and physical activities were current in the Buddhist universities like Nalanda: (1) swimming, (2) hopping over diagrams marked on the ground, (3) removing substances one by one from a heap without disturbing the remaining, ones, (4) trap-ball games, (5) tossing of balls, (6) competitions at ploughing with miniature ploughs, (7) archery contests, (8) shooting marbles, (9) guessing other people’s thoughts, (10) chariot driving, (11) elephant-riding, (12) sword-fighting, (13) wrestling, and (14) boxing with fists.\textsuperscript{163}

Yoga was another aspect of physical activities and was popular in Buddhism as Buddha had practiced it. Yoga in its literal sense was a system of religious meditation, which connoted the Vedic doctrine of the supreme soul. Yoga as it is known in modern India is different from that practiced by the Buddha in search of truth. \textquote{Yoga is a deep spiritual experience and as it is spiritual, it is total. Yoga does not mean \textit{asanas} (postures) or \textit{pranayama} (breath control). For ordinary people, yoga usually means Ashtanga Yoga-
Eight Fold Path of Yoga. *Asanas* and *pranayama* are only two limbs of this eightfold path. Yoga is concerned with body, mind and atma. But it is least concerned with body, more with mind and most with atma.¹¹⁶⁴ Yogic exercises do possess certain therapeutic value but more research is needed to assess their possibilities and to establish them on a more solid and scientific base.

Taksasila was a famous seat of education where several subjects related to physical education were taught. Archery was one of them and as many as 163 princes coming from various parts of the country learnt archery there. Dhanur Veda or the science of archery was especially taken up during the morning periods. Swimming must have been a favorite pastime and a part of physical training in those days.

**Patronage and Education**

In ancient India, providing education was considered a noble and sacred work. The Brahman guru or preceptor was responsible for the education of disciples who submitted to guru whole-heartedly. At the end of his studies a student was expected to give *dakshina* (token fee) to guru in the form of cash or kind depending on his capacity. This is described in *Gautama Dharmasutra* and *Manu Smriti*. During Gupta age (AD 319 to AD 550) education was promoted by public benefactions in the form of cash or kind. This is evident from inscriptions recorded on stones and copper plates. Sanchi Stone Inscription mentions the gift of cash as permanent fund (*aksaya-nivi*), and the interest of this fund was to be spent. The grants were generally land grants in the form of an *agrahara* or village to learned Brahmans for the purpose of furtherance of their religious pursuits. This practice was prevalent from fourth

to seventh century AD and we have numerous grants given to Brahmins who were well versed in different branches of Vedic knowledge. These grants were perpetual and marked the feudalization of the political structure as well as the economy and society. These grants were accompanied by administrative and fiscal powers to the donee.165

Besides the Brahmans, other religious groups also received land and other endowments in donation. The Shahpur Stone Image Inscription of 672-73 A.D. of the reign of Adityasena recorded that Salaaksa who was a Baladhirika, made Nalanda a Mahagramrahara. So, Nalanda appears to have been a great agrahara. The Gunaigadh Inscription of Vainya Gupta records the gift to a Mahayana sangha sakyabhikshus for provision of their civare (clothing), pindapata (food) asana and medicine. It was followed by another gift of agrahara to the same sangha.166 Educational benefactions made in the form of grants of lands helped to generate income by profitable cultivation and this income was used to maintain them. The Sarnath Buddhist Stone Image Inscription of Kumaragupta II, dated 473-74 AD proves the dominance of Buddhist education in that region. Thus, in ancient period, Hindu and Buddhist education systems co-existed and were supported by educational benefactions from royals and nobles.

Examination

In the ancient time the process of education was so informal that there could hardly be any place for formal examinations with stress on grading and ranking. Only the individual judgment of the teacher was the prevalent practice. Nevertheless there was some evidence regarding examination especially for entrance to monasteries which were major centers of Buddhist education. Buddhism shifted the education from Gurukuls to monasteries. Some of the monasteries became reputed centers of learning and excellence. They attracted students and scholars from distant places. Nalanda had devised a system for admitting students through a test, which was conducted by the Dwar pandita (gatekeeper). According to Xuanzang, these Dwar panditas used to test through tough questions and the students were supposed to discuss them. The success rate was hardly seven or ten out of a large number of aspirants seeking admission. However, in Vikramsila, the approach was slightly different. There were six gatekeepers who were in fact the principals of six colleges and they constituted the managing board with a high priest as chairman to conduct the admission test. These processes reveal that by early medieval period, examinations evolved as quality control measure, but the nature of examination was individualized. Earlier, the student was judged orally by the teacher both in the Brahmanical system as well as the Buddhist system. During the Gupta period, the royal patronage was forthcoming to these monastic centers and the curriculum extended to include secular subjects like arts, medicine, literature, etc. With the increased pressure of students from all parts of India and abroad, the centers of learning perhaps took to entrance examination.

**Reward and Punishment**
Reward and punishment as a means of maintaining discipline and modifying the behavior of students was very much present in India since the early Vedic period till today. It was a way to ensure learning on one hand and develop the desired behavior or eliminate undesirable behavior. In the Buddhist education system, the teachers and students were united by mutual reverence, confidence and communion of life. Reward and punishment were meant for character building, maintaining discipline, and inculcating higher moral values among the students. According to the Buddhist system of education, after Pabbajja, a candidate became a ‘novice’. Each novice was required to be under an Uppajjhaya and an acarya. A pupil was called Saddhiviharika. There were strict regulations for the conduct of the pupil towards the preceptor. But there were also defined rules for the punishment of the pupil by the teacher. In cases of indiscipline, Saddhiviharika ought to be turned away: when he does not feel great affection or reverence for his Uppajjhaya. Disciplinary action could be taken against novices or fully ordained monks for the following offences: destroying life, stealing, committing impurity, lying, and consuming intoxicating liquors, defaming the Buddha, Dhamma or sangha, holding false doctrines and misconduct with Bhikunis. These offences were punished with immediate expulsion of the monks from the monastery or sangha.167

Vocational Education

In the Buddhist literature, we have references to several vocations. The Jatakas show that at Taksasila, Brahmins used to impart education in several practical professions like the military art, medicine, surgery, snake charming,
etc. The content of education is not a body of knowledge alone. It is a cluster of attitudes, feelings, perceptions, insights, abilities and skills. Knowledge as far as education is concerned, is a means to this end and not an end in itself. Paintings, sculpture, dance and music are forms of knowledge, even though they do not express themselves in words. The important thing is the experience of them. Excavations carried out at Buddhist monasteries have revealed sculptures on a large scale. The sculpture - whether they were carved by the monks or lay worshippers attached to Buddhism or by non-Buddhist artists is a matter of speculation. The making of Buddhist sculptures within the monastic set up as a part of vocational training or ritual activities is still not very clear. But we have some indirect evidences from the mahaviharas like Nalanda. Taranatha informs about a father-son duo, Dhiman and Bitpalo who were skilled artists during the Pala dynasty who specialized in cast-metal, sculptures and paintings.\(^{168}\) R.K. Mookerji suggests, “Dhiman and Bitpalo were associated as teachers of Arts and Crafts with Nalanda, where has been discovered the largest number and variety of the cast models for which they were known”.\(^{169}\) Paintings at Nalanda assigned to the Pala dynasty have been found during late 1970s or early 1980s and this in a sense corroborated the statement of Taranatha.\(^{170}\) On the basis of these evidences, a scholar writes, “It appears that the artists in the pursuit of right knowledge flocked at Nalanda due to the presence of master craftsmen and permanent residential workshops there. From the master artists there they could gain iconographic and technical training. The trained artists might have moved to different contemporary monastic centers to diffuse their acquired knowledge.”\(^{171}\) The making of sculptures at many Buddhist sites like Bharhut, Sanchi, etc. is an

\(^{168}\) Taranatha, \textit{op. cit.,} Chapter 44 The History of Image-makers, p.348
archaeological fact. Many of the statues were carved out of the donations given by the Buddhist monks and nuns. This is again contrary to the literary evidences which speak of austerity for the monks and laity. They were supposed to live in poverty, then how they managed to make donations for the construction of statues. The situation may be that they possessed property or the donation was made by their relatives or benefactors in their name. The second option seems improbable. Sculpture making was an established vocation. Different schools of art including sculptures emerged in Mathura, Sarnath, Gaya and Gandhara in north and north-west India. The Buddhist themes and images are predominant in these centers of art.

As far as music is concerned, it may have been confined to the melodious chanting of mantras or the *triratna* within Buddhism. Phonetics or sound was considered important in religious chanting. The chanting of hymns was a common feature of Brahmanism and other religious systems too. Music was an important vocation since Vedic period as mentioned in the *Sama Veda* or may be even before. The question whether music as a discipline existed within the Buddhist monastic system needs some exploration. *Lalita-vistara* (1st century AD) mentions Buddha as a prince received training in playing *vina*, singing and dance.\(^{172}\) There are several references to music in the *Jataka* tales like in *Dadhivahana Jataka*, *Guttyla Jataka*\(^ {173}\) and many more. In one of Jataka stories, the Bodhisattva is depicted as a professional player of *bheri* (a drum like instrument) and *sankha* (conch) in two lives.\(^ {174}\) *Milindapanha* contains many references to *vina*. The *Jatakas* mention many musical instruments. Asvaghosa, the author of the epic *Buddhacarita* is said to have


\(^{173}\) *Jataka*, Book II, (English translation), p.70 & pp.172-176 respectively

\(^{174}\) *Jataka*, Book I, (English translation), p.146
roamed from place to place with a group of musicians singing songs in praise of Buddha\textsuperscript{175} and through this medium spread the message of Buddhism among the common masses. The \textit{Jatakas} refer to other professions mentioning Brahmans as physicians (iv, 361), goat-herds (iii, 401), merchants, hunters, snake-charmers (iv, 457), archers, and even Cartwright (iv, 207).

The vocation to be chosen by a person is clearly alluded to in the Buddhist texts. It also throws light on the economic life of that period. In Vinaya texts, parents are discussing the various profession such as Writing (\textit{Lekham}) - the occupation of the Scribe or Clerk, Accountancy (\textit{Gananam}), and Money-changing (\textit{Rupam} to be learnt from the treatises called \textit{Rupa-sutta}) for their sons.\textsuperscript{176} \textit{Cullavagga}\textsuperscript{177} mentions that the \textit{Bhikshus}, with all their preoccupations of religious life, are allowed ‘the use of looms and of shuttle strings, tickets and all the apparatus belonging to a loom,’ presumably because it was considered that a Monk should be able to produce the scanty clothing prescribed for him, ‘the triple clothing’ comprising the upper and lower cloth and a towel, so as to make the whole brotherhood and Vihara self-contained in regard to a primary requisite of clothing.

\textbf{Education and role of state}

What was the role of the state or what was the perceived notion regarding the state’s participation in imparting of education as per the Buddhist perspective needs to be looked into. Nagarjuna in his book \textit{Ratnavali} speaks on the role of the state. Here, we are not going into the intricacies of the

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\textsuperscript{175} \textit{Sacred Book of the East}, vol. XIX, Introduction
\textsuperscript{176} Vinaya texts, I, 77 ; IV, 128
\textsuperscript{177} C. V., v. 28
\end{flushright}
notion of state or the concept of state in ancient or early medieval India. The role of kings and kingdoms is evident in from the royal grants to various Buddhist *mahaviharas* like Nalanda, Vikramasila, Valabhi, etc. In *Ratnavali*, Nagarjuna takes it to be the responsibility of the state to further some of the basic human values including an endorsement of the value of learning and education:

As a way to increase wisdom

Wherever there is a school

Provide for the livelihood of teachers

And bestow estates upon them.\(^{178}\)

The state is asked to provide for the livelihood of teachers and bestow grants to centers of education. Many rulers like Harsavardhan, the Pala rulers, etc. are known to have given grants to Buddhist viharas. He further asks for the establishment of hostels or residential premises for the students so as to facilitate learning.

Please act with good wisdom and provide

**Hostels**, amusement centers, dikes,

Ponds, rest houses, water vessels,

Beds, food, hay and wood.\(^{179}\)

Regarding the professionals, he asks for the doctors to root out sufferings in the kingdom. The provision for the welfare of the unfortunate is

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\(^{178}\) Nagarjuna’s *Ratnavali*, 238

\(^{179}\) *Ibid.*, 241
taken as a good act, and as the responsibility of the state. He endorses a generous public health programme and it must have required medical teaching and profession being endorsed by the state:

In order to root the suffering

Of sentient beings, the old, young and infirm,

You should establish through your influence

Barbers and doctors in you kingdom.\(^{180}\)

What was the role of barber and why they were clubbed together with doctors or physicians need more exploration. Probably, barber as an agent of cleanliness may have played the role of semi-physicians in the rural areas.

Nagarjuna explicitly endorses the state establishment of and support of religious institutions, especially the Buddhist:

“With respect and without stint you should construct. Images of the Buddha, reliquaries and temples And provide abundant riches, Such things as foods and other necessities.” “You should sustain with all endeavor

The excellent Dharma and assembly Of monks and decorate reliquaries With gold and jeweled friezes.”\(^{181}\)

\(^{180}\) Ibid., 239

\(^{181}\) Ibid., 231-232
The Buddhist viharas were the centers of intellectual endeavors and learning. So, they required proper provisions related to teaching and learning like books, pen and ink.

You should make donations of the word of the transcendental lord and of the treatises He presented, as well as pages and books, along with their prerequisites, the pens and ink.182

Nagarjuna is of the view that Dharma is essential for the successful establishment of the state. He is advocating the establishment, maintenance and propagation of particular religion, that is, Buddhism by the state as the vehicle for the advancement of humanitarian values. Nagarjuna is perhaps putting forward a set of egalitarian and humanitarian values within the Mahayana Buddhism that any state ought to respect, but it is up to the state to advance these values.

182 Ibid., 240