

BUDDHIST EDUCATION IN INDIA



Introduction

- Racial discrimination was followed in India based on the birth of a person and profession.
- Strict religious practices were practised.
- Animal sacrifices took place in the name of religion.
- A religious revolution started in ancient India in 600 B.C.
- A new doctrine or system developed which is called Buddhist doctrine or Buddhist philosophy.

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- Started by the great monk and philosopher named Siddhārtha Gautama or Gautama Buddha.
- Born in the 623 B.C. In Lumbini, Nepal.
- Prince of Kapilavastu



The Core of Buddha's Teachings

- Contains three major points:
- Discipline, meditation and wisdom
- 'Wisdom' is the goal and 'deep meditation' or 'concentration' is the crucial step, 'discipline' is the method that helps one to achieve deep meditation.



General Features of Buddhist Education

- System of admission
- Aims of Education
- Curriculum
- Methods of teaching
- Teacher-Pupil Relationship
- Women Education

System of Admission or Pabajja Ceremony

- Admission in monastery/monasteries was the centre for imparting education
- Pabbaja was an accepted ceremony
- Means ‘The Going Forth’ from home to homeless life of a monk.
- Leaving behind all family and social ties to live the pure life of a monk to achieve ‘Nirvana’
- Performed when a child was eight years old
- Admission was refused if a child suffered from any kind of infections and communicable diseases like leprosy

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- Three advices were administered on him. They were:
- I take refuge with Buddha.
- I take refuge with religion.
- I take refuge with the Order.
- Young student (Shraman) had to shave his head and then put on yellow clothes.

Rules for Sharman—

- Not to kill any living being
- Not to accept anything given to him.
- Live free from the impurity of character.
- Not to tell lie
- Not to take food at improper time
- Not to use luxurious things

Upasampada ceremony

- Final ordination ceremony.
- Performed when a student was twenty years old.
- A life-long strict binding on the disciplined life of a monk.
- After Upasampada ceremony a student was regarded as a full-fledged monk.

Four Noble Truths of life

- There are sufferings in life. (Dukha)
- There are the causes of sufferings. (Samudaya)
- Sufferings can be removed. (Nirodha)
- There is the Eight-fold Path of removing sufferings. (Astangika-marga)
- He said that the cause of suffering is 'trishna' or 'desire' for material enjoyment and earthly things.
- Responsible for the birth and rebirth of man.
- It is possible for the individual soul to attain 'Nirvana' or salvation' i.e. freedom from the unending cycle of birth and rebirth.

Eight-fold Path

- **Right view:** an accurate understanding of the nature of things
- **Right intention:** avoiding thoughts of attachment, hatred, and harmful intent
- **Right speech:** refraining from verbal misdeeds such as lying, harsh speech, and senseless speech
- **Right action:** refraining from physical misdeeds such as killing, stealing, and sexual misconduct

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- **Right livelihood:** avoiding trades that directly or indirectly harm others, such as selling slaves, weapons, animals for slaughter, intoxicants, or poisons.
- **Right effort:** abandoning negative states of mind and sustaining positive states of mind.
- **Right mindfulness:** awareness of body, feelings, thought, and phenomena
- **Right concentration:** single-mindedness.

Aims of education according to Buddhism

- All around development of child's personality.
- The formation of character
- Propagation of religion and inculcation of religious feelings to attain Nirvana.
- Prepared students for life: by imparting practical knowledge
- The teaching of Ahimsa

Curriculum

- The curriculum of the Buddhist monks included the subject matter contained in the ‘Tripitakas’.
 - ❖ Dharma Pitaka
 - ❖ Vinaya Pitaka
 - ❖ Abhidharma Pitaka
- The curriculum was chiefly spiritual in nature.
- The study of religious books was considered necessary.
- Secular in outlook
- Spinning, weaving, sketching, medicine, accountancy, Ayurveda etc. (vocational education)

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- The medium of instruction was Mother-tongue. Later it included languages like **Pali and Prakrit**.
- **Primary Education:** imparted in the smaller monasteries.
- Knowledge of 3 R's (reading, writing and arithmetic), basic religion instruction and nature study.
- **Higher Education:** Importance on spiritual training. Comprised of religious teaching, philosophy, economics, medicine, etc
- Most important centres of learning in India: 1. Taxila 2. Nalanda 3. Vikramshila 4. Vallabi



Methods of Instruction

- Verbal Method
- Discussion
- Prominence of Logic
- Importance of Religious Tours
- Meditation in solitude
- Conference

Teacher-Student Relationship

- Similar like the Vedic Period.
- A very strong relationship between the teacher and his pupil
- Respected their teacher very much.
- Kept his teacher's room clean, served him with water and food, cleaned his utensils and accompanied him wherever he went to preach.
- The duties of the teachers were imparting education to the students, writing books, propagation of religion, discussion, and arrangement of debate etc.

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- Teachers loved the students and helped them in every affair.
- Took care of them during their diseases and agony.
- Responsible for their food, accommodation and other necessities of livelihood.
- Kept eyes on the all round development of the students.
- Serious about the abeyance of the sangha rules, meditation and concentration to their learning.

Women Education

- Lord buddha had regarded them as the source of all evils.
- Not to admit women in monasteries
- Due to the insistence of his dear pupil **Anand**, Buddha had permitted about 500 women monks (bhishunis)
- Strict rules were enforced for women monks and separate monastic schools were set up
- Sheelbhattarika, Prabhudevi and Viyanka were famous in those days as poets and writers
- Sister of the Emperor Asoka **Sanghamitra** travelled to Ceylon to spread the words of Buddhist religion.



MERITS OF BUDDHIST EDUCATION

- Well organized centres
- Free from communal narrowness
- Simple and strict life
- Total development
- Student-teacher relationship
- International importance