

## Monastic Education System Depicted in Early Buddhism

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### **Introduction to Early Buddhism**

Gautama, the Buddha was born in 566 B.C. a son of a wealthy and powerful king, Suddhodana, ruler of the Sakya clan, at Kapilavastu in the current state of Nepal, India. He was named Siddhartha, which means “He who has attained his aim”. At the age of 29 he left this comfortable environment to find salvation for himself and his fellow men. For six years he resolved to ascetic practices subjecting his body to severe disciplines, he realized that the extremes of asceticism led one nowhere. The truest path to enlightenment, he found, lay in patient and systematic examination of all aspects of life and discovering the solution to its sufferings. Quietly meditating under the Bodhi Tree, he developed a deep spiritual insight into the nature of existence. Gautama attained enlightenment and became the Buddha. He spent his remaining forty five years in a labor of love and compassion, spreading the Teachings throughout India.

The confirmation from the details of the Buddha’s own career as preserved in the traditional texts. The details also had already shown how largely the Buddha himself used to educate in Brahmanical System. Therefore, we have already seen how the Prince Siddhatha in the very first step that he takes towards as the Buddhahood, the renunciation of the home and everything he has had as the prince. Even the day he had gone to become a monk, the Mara came to ask him to go back the royal palace to be a king, but he never sorrowed about everything in this world.

## **Buddhist Education purely Monastic**

The Buddhist education system is practically of the Buddhist order or a group of monks who know as the group of Sanghas. Buddhist education and learning centered round monasteries as Vedic culture centered round the sacrifice. The Buddhist world did not offer any educational opportunities apart from its monasteries. All education sacred as well as secular was in the hands of the monks. They had the monopoly of learning and of the leisure of impart it. They were the only custodians and bearers of Buddhist culture. The Buddhist education is referred to the rules which are in Pali word known as Vinaya. The rules of Buddhist education are those of the Buddhist Orders. The rules as have been already point out are not the invention of the Buddha but the modeled upon those of numerous other monastic orders professing other faiths and also of Brahmanism itself, the common source from which all such sects arose. As similarly, the Buddhist monastic order began as a union of master and his disciples after the Brahmanical model. The finding teacher was a condition of the ordination and the teacher must be an individual person and a fictitious one like the Sangha as a corporate body. What is more, the idea of the individual responsibility of the teacher for his pupil's training and conduct was rightly emphasized. Related to the Buddhist ordination which is called *Pabbaja* or going forth. A person who would like to become a Buddhist monk, he has to presents himself for the admission first by going out of his previous state in whether they used to be of a layman, a householder, a wandering ascetic or a monk who belong to a different sect. For Buddhism, the admission was thrown open to all castes. The candidates for the admission to order have to leave of their all visible mark of life and they have left and their castes. So when they become a Buddhist monk, they have lose everything they used to have in they laymen

life. For instance, they have to lose their castes, old name, their old descent and they bear only one name. The principle of their living as a Buddhist monk in Buddhism is equality and fraternity. What is more, when they in accordance with the law and doctrine which is perfect, one has preached forsake their home go into homelessness. Then they had become the son of the Sakya house who known as Samana SakyaPutta.

Beyond this, the layman who had come first for the admission to the ordination has to follow the rules of the Buddha. In this case of a layman who has less than twenty years of age have to approaches, to tonsure the Vihara or monastery of his choice with a suit of the yellow robes of the monk in his hands and presents himself before an elder of monastery for initiation. The elder then invests him with the yellow robes and call upon him to take the following oath as he has to takes refuse with the Buddha and religion. After that, the Ten Commandments (*Dasa Sikkhapadani*) are administered to him. Later on, he had become as a Buddhist monk in a life of a Brahmachari. Then the ceremony of the ordination is over and the novice has to stay with the elder monk or preceptor who brings him up till he is fir for the higher ordination.

### **The Restrictions to Admission**

The restriction to admission to the order was the most important thing during the Buddha's time. It was not permitted to the youths seeking it without the consent to their parents, thus showing the laudable concern of an Order of homeless ascetics for the integrity of home, for discipline of family life and the respect due to its obligations without which family as well as society would be disintegrated and disorganized. This the restriction was first introduced by the Buddha at the request of his father, the king Suddhodana who grieved over the loss of his

male heirs by adoption of the Order by all of them including his grandson, Rahula. As the rules of the Buddha stated that the adult or the person who would like to ask the admission to the order must be asked the permission from their parents first, and then they could ask the admission to the order as well. Otherwise, the Upadhyaya was not permitted to someone who did not ask the permission from their parents or their family to be the Buddhist monks. The next restriction upon admission was on the ground of gross and glaring physical defects such as serious sicknesses or bodily deformities of which contagious diseases, consumption, leprosy, boils, itches and fits are given by the rules of the lord Buddha. The foregoing chief limitations of admission to the Order the texts lay down a few minor ones. What is more, the persons who were found to be shameless and duly modest were not to be admitted. This was to be ascertained by the regulation of keeping the proposed pupils under observation for the first four or five days until it was seen how they behaved to the other Bhikkhus of the Order.

### **The *Upasampadā* Ordination**

The *Upasampadā* Ordination is the highest Ordination in Buddhism. The preliminary ordination is known as *Pabbajja* (*Sāmanera*). It is the first Ordination in Buddhism. The period between the two ordinations was twelve years at its maximum and was not continued beyond the twentieth year of the postulant. The period of novitiate was, however, reduced to the four months in the case of the postulant being previously a member of another monastic order. *ASāmanera* completes his course of probation and enters upon the full membership of the Sangha for which he is destined and has been prepared since his ordination (*Pabbajja*), marks an important point of distinction between the Brahmanical and Buddhist systems of education. In the case of Buddhist, the outgoing from home into the homeless is the final

of the Ordination. Within this, there were two different things between Brahmanism and Buddhism. The Brahmanical system, however, provided for exceptions. The *Brahmachāris* were given the option to remain as such through life at his teacher's and after his death with his family according to his choice the special destination, but the exception was became the rules of Buddhist system. In the Brahmanical system, the Brahmans who had become older they were let to left home and everything to go forth into the forest. Otherwise, Buddhism permitted all youth and adults and all people who would like to be ordination as *Sāmanera* and *Upasampadā* as the Bhikkhus. So these systems are very different from each other, because of different doctrines and different teachers.

In addition, the *Upasampadā* Ordination was considered as the final Ordination in Buddhism. The person who would like to be *Upasampadā* Ordination must be has twentieth years old in maximum of age. Moreover, they have to ask the permission from their householder and the families. Likewise the *Upasampadā* consisted of the ceremony which has to be completed before the Order and by their participation.

### **The *Upādhyāya* and *Ācariya***

The two superiors qualified by learning, character and standing were called The *Upādhyāya* and *Ācariya*. There were different functions between The *Upadhyaya* and *Āchariya*. Within this, the *Upādhyaya* was the higher authority entrusted with the duty of instructing of the Ordination and the young Bhikkhus in the sacred texts and the Buddha's doctrines.

There fore, the *Ācariya* have to respond for teaching the ordination and the young Bhikkhus in Buddhism. According to Buddhaghosha stated that the *Upādhyaya* is to be of ten years and

the *Ācariya* of six years' seniority. In the Brahmanical education, however, the *Ācariya* ranks are higher than the *Upādhyaya*. In Buddhism, it depends on Nissaya of Upasampada ordination. Higher ordained (*Upasampann*) Bhikkhu has to live under the control of the two teachers, *Upādhyaya* and *Āchariya* for his mental and moral training. This period of training was depending on nissaya which is for at least ten years.

Moreover, the *Ācariya* ought to be considered his *Antevāsika* as the son and *Antevāsika* has to be considered his teacher as the father who live together for long life. The corresponding to the *Ācariya* and his *Antevāsika* are the *Upādhyaya* and his *Siddhivaharika* with very similar relations between them. The *Upādhyaya* and *Ācariya* were considered as the teachers of the Ordination and the young Bhikkhus in Buddhism. They have to teach to their pupils for long life.

### **The Duties of Pupils and Teachers**

The pupils and the teachers have to complete their individual duties to each other. It is the good action that they had done during the Buddha's time till even today. The young Bhikkhu has to make a formal application to his propose preceptor for accepting him as his pupil. They have to say: 'Venerable sir, please be my *Upādhyaya*, three times'. Then the *Upādhyaya* will indicate by nodding or words his accepting of the applicant as his pupil.

In system Buddhism, the pupils who had become the ordination as the Buddhist monks have to live with their teachers and also have to do everything for their teachers as follow: "The pupils have to wake up in the early morning and give his teacher teeth cleanser and water to rinse his mouth. Then the pupil has to preparing a seat for his teacher, serve him rice-milk in rinsed

jug. After that he has to wash the vessel and sweep the place etc. Afterwards, the pupil has to equip him for his begging round by giving him fresh undergarment, girdled, his two upper garments and his alms-bowl rinsed and filled with water. The pupil has to get back ahead of the teacher to be ready with necessary things and help him to change his clothes. After serving him with some food, the pupil has to help him in bath by getting him cold or hot water as may be desired. Within this, the pupil has to clean *Vihāra* where his teacher dwells by removing all furniture in the room for purpose including the bedding and bedstead, carpet and mattress which were to be sunned and dusted. He has also to clean out the other apartments of *Vihāra* such as a store-room, refectory and the fir-room etc. Beyond this, the pupil could not go to anywhere without asking the permission from their teachers. The permission might be granted if he would travel with a learned *Bhikkhu* in his company to control him. Within this, when the teacher is sick the pupil has to be a nurse and protect him and wait until he has recovered. The pupils have to live with their teachers for ten years. At least, they have to live with their teachers for five years which is referred to the Buddha's time. Then they have to do everything for their teachers as mention above. The teachers, actually, have to complete their duties and also corresponding to their pupils as: First, the teachers have to give the Bhikkhus under his charge all possible intellectual and spiritual help and guidance by teaching, by putting questions to him, by exhortation and by instruction. Second, the teachers have to supply them when the pupils lacked his necessary articles such as an alms-bowl or a robe. Third, the teachers have to be the nurses when the pupils had got ill as long as his life last and wait until he has recovered. During the period of his illness, the teachers should be the ministers of his pupils in the same way as the pupils serves him in health and also prepare everything for his pupils.

## The Teaching Methods for Education

The Buddhist Education is a combination between individual and classroom education. The curriculum was spiritual in nature. Mental and moral development was emphasized. Following were the teaching methods of Buddhist Monastic Education:

- 1) *Verbal of Education*
- 2) *Discussions of Education*
- 3) *Prominent of Logic*
- 4) *Conferences of Education*
- 5) *Meditation in Solitude*
- 6) *Medium of Instruction*

The teachers, likewise, inspected the disciple's moral conduct and warned him of defects and transgressions. The Buddhist monks, furthermore, observed the precepts and followed them according to the Vinaya texts. Then they also have to learn the Sutta and Abhidhamma (metaphysics) which are considered as the most important method of Buddhist studies. The Method of Buddhist Monastic Education, on the other hand, not only described in Buddhist studies, but also described in Brahmanical studies which referred to the learning of the four Vedas which known as:

- 1) *Ayur Veda: is told of nourishing life and keeping the contribution on in order.*
- 2) *Yajur Veda: is told of the making of offerings and supplications*
- 3) *Sāma Veda: is described the ceremonial etiquette, the divination and military tactics.*



4) *Atharva Veda*: **described about the various skilled arts, exorcisms and medicine.**

So the Brahmanical teachers have to explain how to learn these Vedas to their students with an exhaustive comprehension of all that is abstruse in them. The Brahmana teachers, likewise, appreciated the method of learning and also mental development to their students by explaining the general meaning, teach them the minutiae, rouse them to activity and skillful win them to progress, instruct the inert and sharpen the dull to them.

According to the Teaching Method, The Buddha used many ways to spread his doctrine. He generally had given the public discussion at the evening in the suitable places. Beyond this, he has also had the private discussion with individual householders who he might come across in the daily course of his begging round every morning. During that time, many ancient Indian were converted by the Buddha. For instance, a householder of Sāvathi, seeing the Buddha approach him for arms, accosts him in the following words of contempt, but presently she was converted by the Buddha on listening to his discourse on the question that put to him. He sometime approached in his place of rest by circles of wandering scholars for the solution of their doubts followed by conversion. For example, a Brahman who knows as Adhinapubbaka of Sāvathi discussed with the Buddha by asking him with many questions. Then he was converted by the Buddha on listening to his warmly reply.

The Buddha, Dhamma and Sangha formed the Trinity of the Monastic Education System. The Method of Buddhist Education System has also made important contribution in the field of methodology by employing different modern

psychological methods of modern education. For instant, KissaGottamí illustrates the successful use the discovery method where in a grieving mother brings her dead son to the Lord Buddha for bringing him back to the life. The Lord Buddha asked her to bring some of mustard seeds from some house where no one death had taken place. When she fails to bring them, the Lord Buddha explains her about the universality of death. The Lord Buddha also used heuristic method to explain the things taught by which were less than what remained untaught. While going on his way along with his disciples and picking some leaves from the bush in his fist asked the question to the mother whether leaves in his hands were less or more than which were in the bush.

### **Conclusion**

The Buddhist monks who got higher education will educate all of the devotees such as moral education through their knowledge. They can solve social problem which is related to spiritual one. In short, the Buddhist monks and also all devotees who got the higher education from the monasteries were considered as the main resources for developing, propagating and preaching the Buddha's doctrines into the world.

Beyond this, Monastic Education is very important to build up the relationship between Nationalities. Also, it provides us with many benefits such as communication, education and research. On the other hand, we can study and promote our tradition, culture and Buddhist Monastic Educational civilization to each other. The Buddhist Monastic Education in Theravada Buddhist countries, therefore, will provide the new understanding the about the ancient and modern of the above system to the Buddhist students as well.

## End Notes

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