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12. Historicity Of Educational Centers During The Period Of Buddhist

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The most notable centres of learning in India during the period of Buddhist rule: 1. Taxila 2. Nalanda 3. Vikramshila 4. Vallabi. Over time, these locations evolved into educational establishments capable of educating students from pre-kindergarten through college. However, it was during the Buddhist era that the first organised educational institutions were established. Students of all levels and classes, as well as those from various Janapadas or republics, had a free education. Furthermore, students from nations such as South East Asia, China, Japan, and Tibet were also drawn to the educational facilities. Taxila and Nalanda, for example, had the distinction of becoming universities.

In the Buddhist educational centres, democratic principles were followed in the way management was carried out. In most cases, one of the wise monks would take up the role of leader of the establishment. There were a variety of heads responsible for the many divisions, such as admission, examination, curriculum, boarding, and construction of structures. Medicine, the Library, and a variety of other academic subfields. In terms of education, there was no difference between the municipality and the province. There is the case of monk students from the first century A.D. who were on pilgrimage in Bihar at the time when they were offered the position of Chancellor at the University of Nalanda.

On the other hand, these organised institutions, which took the shape of monasteries, viharas, and universities, formed the country's cultural backbone.

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1. Taxila: Taxila was a significant location for the dissemination of brahmanical knowledge. Even throughout the time of the Buddhists, its reputation remained strong in Northern India. When Fa-Hien travelled to Taxila in the fifth century A.D., there was no indication that the city housed any sort of educational centre. Due to its location on the North Western boundaries of India, Taxila was extremely vulnerable to attack from other countries. At various points in history, the Persians, the Greeks, and the Kushanas all founded parts of their empires in this region of the country. Therefore, with the rise and fall of empires, the educational system must have also continued to develop and adapt.

Taxila rose to prominence as one of the most important centres of higher learning in North India as time went on. The students received their instruction from a wide variety of knowledgeable and wise preceptors. The Jatakas make several references to the fact that students from Benaras, Mithila, and Rajagriha were travelling to Taxila in order to receive their education. Students typically needed to be sixteen years old before enrolling in one of Taxila's educational programmes because the city was known as a centre of higher learning.

Princes travelled there to study Dhanurveda and the law at the time. At Taxila, the most prominent academic disciplines and fields of study included the Vedas, Vedanta, Vyakarana, Ayurveda, Crafts, and Military Education. Astronomy, Agriculture, Commerce, Snake bite remedy etc. Taxila gave birth to both Panini, who is considered to be the father of 'Vyakarana,' and Jivaka, who was an expert in both surgery and medicine. There was no differentiation based on caste for the education provided in the many scientific fields.

Because of the significant impact that Greek culture had on Taxila, there was a provision for teaching Greek as well as Greek methods of warfare. Taxila gained a lot of notoriety throughout Indian history for being an important educational hub in the field of military science. Taxila was the location where the famed Indian author Kautilya, who is most known for writing the "Arthashastra," completed his academic education. As a result, for a number of centuries, Taxila was the shining example of excellence and served as a guiding light for the rest of the nation in the field of education. This torch of knowledge was eventually doused for all time by the barbarous Huns, who ensured that it would never be rekindled to clear the cloud of ignorance and bring about enlightenment.

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2. Nalanda: Nalanda was a well-known cultural and educational centre in Northern India. It was located forty miles south-west of modern Patna and seven miles north of Rajagriha. Nalanda was a distance of seven miles north of Rajagriha. In the beginning, it was just a little community that couldn't brag about anything significant in terms of its educational significance. However, during the course of time, it rose to prominence and increased in magnitude. Nalanda enjoyed a large degree of status and importance for Buddhist monks as a result of the fact that it was the birthplace of Sariputta, a preferred student of Lord Buddha.

During his trip to Nalanda to view the Chaitya that Sariputa had built, the great king Ashoka ordered the construction of a "Vihara," which translates to "monastery," at that location. Therefore, Ashoka was the first person to establish Nalanda Vihar. But by the beginning of the fourth century A.D., Nalanda had become an educational powerhouse and was renowned around the world.

Nalanda did not have a great deal of educational significance up until the century when Fa-Hien visited, despite the fact that the value of the location was rapidly expanding. From the year 450 A.D., during the rule of the Gupta dynasty, the actual importance of Nalanda began, and it remained at the height of its reputation and splendour for the next three centuries. This splendour and fame lasted for a total of three centuries. It is clear from the writings of Hiuen-Tsang, who visited Nalanda in the seventh century A.D. and wrote about his experiences there.

He had depicted in great detail the splendour and size of this old cultural hub, and he had described it as follows:

"The priests are individuals of the utmost aptitude and talent, and there are several thousands of them. Their prominence in the industry is extremely high at the moment, and there are hundreds, if not thousands, of them whose notoriety is rapidly growing in more remote areas. Their actions are impeccable and beyond reproach. They adhere to the tenets of the ethical law with complete honesty. All of the priests are required to strictly adhere to the rules that have been established for this convent. They are adhered to and respected by the countries that make up India.

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The time available for asking and responding to serious questions is insufficient. They talk from the early morning till late at night, and those who are older and those who are younger help one another out. Those who are unable to debate matters that are not covered in the Tripitaka are not highly respected and are required to keep a low profile for the same reason. Because of this, learned men from other towns who wish to fast obtain notoriety in discussion travel here in large numbers to have their questions answered, and as a result, the streams of their wisdom flow across a wide area. He also identified a long number of famous professors who resided at Nalanda and not only lectured but also wrote treatises, commentaries, and other works during their time there.

As a result of the royal sponsorship and initiative of many kings from the Gupta dynasty (such as Kumar Gupta, Tathagata Gupta, Narasingha Gupta, Buddha Gupta, etc.), numerous monasteries were built and Nalanda's territory was significantly increased. The entire Buddhist world looked forward to Nalanda as its crowning achievement. According to the findings of the excavations, it occupied an area that was at least one mile long and half a mile broad, and there were around thirteen monasteries that stood on the campus at various times. These religious communities were responsible for the majority of the construction of the university's buildings.

These, according to Huen Tsang, "were impressive in their size and height with beautifully ornamented towers, fairy-like turrets, and observatories lost in the mist of the morning." In the higher apartments, which were located above the clouds, and from the higher caves, one could view the splendours of both the sunset and the moonlight. The grounds were beautifully landscaped with deep translucent ponds, blue lotuses interspersed with Kanaka flowers of a deep crimson colour, and at intervals of mango groves with mango trees spreading their shade over the entire area.

There was only one entrance and exit point into the University district because to the massive wall that surrounded the entire campus. At the entrance, there was a professor who was known as the Dwar Pandit. He was in charge of the examination that prospective students had to take in order to gain entry into the university. At the central campus, there were anywhere from seven to eight large halls where students could be assembled for group lectures. In addition to that, there were three hundred different study rooms. Dr. Spooner has made the observation as a point of emphasis. These structures

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were "far superior to any modern construction that I have seen in recent years," according to the author.

The layout of the structures, in addition to the one-of-a-kind sculpture and architecture of the time period, were all prominently displayed in the Viharas of Nalanda. The entire complex of structures was put up in accordance with a meticulously laid out plan, and the ruins of Nalanda continue to stand as an expressive witness to the art of engineering up to this day.

Following Huen-departure, Tsang's another Chinese scholar known as I-Tsang travelled to India and settled in at Nalanda for a period of ten years. I-Tsang provided a description of more than ten different water tanks in which pupils demonstrated their abilities in the water. In addition, there was a large structure with nine stories that was designed to be a library. This library was comprised of three distinct departments. Known as 'Ratan Sagar', 'Ratnadodhi' and 'Ratan Ranjaka'. The name "Dharmaganja" was given to the entire establishment when it first opened (Abode of religion). The library housed an extensive collection of rare books covering a variety of topics, including arts, sciences, and crafts from throughout the world.

Despite the fact that Nalanda was an institution that solely offered higher education, there were also provisions for secondary and primary education. Because of its reputation as a centre of academic education, Nalanda attracted students from all over the world. By the middle of the seventh century, the University housed a total population of 10,000 students and faculty members. Out of these, there were close to 1510 people working as teachers. The application process to join the institution was challenging. Huen-Tsang makes the point that only twenty percent of those who applied to the University and were accepted were able to pass the admission test that was administered by Dwara Pandit, an authority on controversial religious topics.

The students used to make their homes in the dormitories, and the accommodations for their stay were very well thought out. The student's chambers were furnished with stone seats for sleeping, separate inches for placing hooks and lamps, and separate inches overall. Large kitchens were available for the purpose of food preparation. Free food, clothing, and education as well as medical care were made available to the detainees.



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When compared to the exorbitant costs that are associated with a modern university education, the offer of free education for ten thousand students in ancient times is just astounding. Back then, the burden of providing a quality education was shared between the state and its citizens.

The academic programmes that were pursued at Nalanda were so comprehensive that they covered practically every field of study available at the time. In spite of the fact that it was the centre of Mahayana Buddhism, there were educational opportunities available in Hinayana and Jainism. The subject for which there was provision of instruction included Philosophy, Logic, Tantra, Vedas, Medicine, Grammar, Philology, Law and Astronomy and practical sciences and arts. In addition, there was room for the investigation of all world religions from a comparative perspective. For a genuine philosophical investigator, the profound study of all the religions prior to undertaking any research work was considered essential.

The monks, preceptors and students led a very disciplined and pure life in the Viharas. I-Tsang mentions by name many distinguished teachers whom he met and with whom he conversed, and says, "I have always been very glad that I had the opportunity of acquiring knowledge from them personally, which I should otherwise never have possessed, and that I could refresh my memory, of past study by comparing old notes with new ones".

To speak the truth renowned teachers like Nagarjuna, Dharmapana, Aryadeva, Vasubandhu, Shilabhadra and several others attracted students from far and near. It was considered to be an honour to be associated with Nalanda University. Its students were held in high esteem and commanded respect everywhere.

The system of education was almost identical with that of Brahmanical period. There was considerable development in the art of writing. Along with reading books, the students increased their knowledge by listening to the learned lectures of philosophers and scholars. Everyday nearly hundred lectures were delivered by the teachers and it was obligatory on the part of the students to attend these talks. The practice of learning by heart was prevalent. Adequate emphasis was also given to discussion and debate.

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The work of the monastery was divided between two councils. One looking to the academic aspects and the other to the administrative aspects including the management of the endowed estates. An elaborate code of conduct and rule was prescribed for the sake of harmony and good relations among all.

There was a very sound financial system. From the very inception of the University rich endowments in different shapes came pouring in. Kings, emperors, merchants and also common men contributed bountifully for the smooth maintenance of the University.

As an eminent enter of learning Nalanda flourished and illuminated the country for centuries to come. For the evolution, expansion and refinement of Indian culture Nalanda has made unique contributions. After a glorious career of eight hundred years, Nalanda, the unique symbol of Indian Philosophy, could not evade the barbarous attack of the Muhammedan conqueror Bakhtiar Khilji towards the end of twelfth century A.D.

The magnificent buildings and precious libraries were consigned to the burning flames and the innocent monks and students were ruthlessly butchered. "Thus the light of learning which had been kept aglow, through ages with the fuel of all that is spiritual, pious and noble in human life, was extinguished never to shine again."

3. Vikramshila: King Dharmapala had built the Vihara of Vikramshila on a hillside near Nalanda in Magadha in the 8th century A.D. The Vihara had a one-of-a-kind design. This Vihara was protected by a sturdy wall. Mahabodhi figures ornamented a temple in the heart of the complex.

At least one hundred and eight temples may be seen within the university grounds. King Dharmapala had built a number of teaching rooms and generously funded the Vihara's upkeep and supply of free food and other essentials of life for teachers and students alike.

Teachers and philosophers of the highest calibre were in charge of running the monastery. Because of its renown, Tibetan students began flocking to the college. They spread Indian culture in Tibet by translating holy texts from Sanskrit to Tibetan.

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Excellent management was in place at the university. The University had a panel of experts to review its academic offerings. A well-versed monk served as chairman of the board of directors. For each academic discipline, there was a head of department. The preceptors were responsible with conducting the pre-admission test for entrance to the University. Dwar pandits guarded the doorways, unlike Nalanda. Prospective Buddhist monks and nuns were the only ones allowed to attend the university.

Vikramshila's history can be found in the writings of its former students. From the records, it is clear that in the University there was a strong focus on secular education. Vyakarana, logic, tantra, and philosophy were the primary focus of the curriculum. I found this approach to be unique among contemporary universities, and I found it to be an anomaly within this one.

Vikramashila University, on the other hand, was revered as the pinnacle of educational institutions for a considerable amount of time. Bhaktiar khilji, believing it to be a military stronghold, launched an attack on the institution in the early thirteenth century A.D., thinking it was one. Monks were slaughtered and their sacred texts were set ablaze. Because of Mohammedan savagery, the huge education centre was destroyed.

4. Vallabi: Under the time of the Buddha, another significant educational centre that flourished during his reign was Vallabi. It was established in 475 AD and lasted until 775 AD. Vallabi was considered to be Nalanda's primary competitor from the point of view of both its reputation and the significance of its educational system. During the time that Huen-Tsang visited this centre of study, there were a number of viharas and monasteries there. However, I-Tsang discovered Vallabi in the western side of India to be just as glorious as Nalanda, and students from all over the country travelled there to receive an education.

After graduating from their respective educational institutions, the pupils were given positions of authority and responsibility within the royal courts. It demonstrates that this centre did not place a significant focus on religious education but rather on secular areas such as economics and law. It was also a centre for Hinayana Buddhism, as well as the political and medical sciences. By the first century A.D., Vallabi had established a name for itself as a centre of higher study.

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However, before this took place, it was well known as a commercial centre and was home to a large number of wealthy merchants. Therefore, education was supported financially in Vallabi by these prosperous merchants and also by the Maitraka monarchs. This seat of higher instruction continued to spread the seeds of learning throughout the land until the twelfth century, but shortly after that it suffered the same fate as its sister schools at the hands of vandals and ultimately vanished from the scene.

During the time of the Buddha, there were a great number of smaller centres of learning that thrived in addition to these well-known seats of learning. The teachings of Buddhism were disseminated in part by Odantapuri University, which was founded a considerable time before the Kings of the Paladynasty in Magadha. At a same vein, the educational centres located in Mithila, Nadia, Jagaddala, and other places made significant contributions to the dissemination and dissemination of education and culture throughout the nation.

The Buddhist educational system was successful in fostering the growth of spirituality, the development of personality, the promotion of social efficiency, and happiness in daily life. After receiving an education in Buddhist schools or at universities operating during that time period, pupils were unable to engage in any form of wrongdoing, including theft, murder, or alcoholism, nor were they able to become addicted to these vices. It is possible for each and every one of the pupils to be liberated from avarice, hostility, ignorance, and lust. For this reason, frequent discussion, seminar, and lecture programmes are being organised all over the world addressing the applicability of the Buddhist educational system in the 21st century.

Today's education ignores filial piety. Schools teach merely superficial skills, not education's core. Rotten roots disturb society's basis and generate today's instability. Junior, high schools, and colleges are like flowers and leaves. Early on, teachers should teach youngsters filial piety.

It is time for the underlying assumptions and definitions of education that are held by educators and policymakers to become the primary emphasis of education, rather than what is "out there" in education, such as the curriculum, assessments, classroom arrangement, books, and computers. The

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chassis of a Model T automobile was not used in NASA's efforts to land humans on the moon. In the same vein, education cannot aspire to advance beyond its current stage if it continues to be built on the educational foundations of the 18th century.

Buddhism is an educational practise that will lead to the realisation of truth, virtue, beauty, and wisdom, as well as genuine and lasting happiness. Both teachers and students can benefit from the Buddhist virtues of self-discipline, initiative, compassion, tolerance, and generosity, among others. It will serve as an outstanding educational model for the change that is now being implemented in the education system.

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