



The Value of the Buddhist Educational System

Dang Thi Phuong, Le Hong Linh

¹Research Scholar, ²Post-Doctoral Fellow

¹Center for Mahayana Buddhist Studies, ²Department of Education
Acharya Nagarjuna University, Nagarjuna Nagar, Guntur, Andhra Pradesh

Abstract: Because a system of education is based on a system of knowledge, and because knowledge cannot function without wisdom, acquiring wisdom should be the primary objective of any education system; it follows that education should focus on developing students' learning. Understanding constantly cultivates the appropriate cetana or volition in order to construct the proper value system to direct our behavior. As a result, the value system based on wisdom needs to be deeply embedded in the educational system. Buddhism is one of the most influential systems of thought for its rational and systematic approach to investigating the world around them. Buddhism has always emphasized an education system that is wisdom-based and value-oriented, or in a broader sense, an education system that is wisdom-based and leads to the proper understanding of everything. For us to know the reality or the genuine truth, we need to have the appropriate vision or adequate knowledge of it, and as a result, we need to behave by it. Because of this, Buddhism always starts with the correct image, also known as Samma-Ditthi, which is thoroughly defined in the Buddhist philosophy of the Eight Fold Path, also known as Atthangiko Maggo.

Introduction

Buddhism is an extensive and fruitful intellectual tradition that, until quite recently, was subject to minimal influence from western philosophy. This school of thought offers a wide range of instructions on how to conduct one's life and what one should do in various predicaments. Buddhism teaches that to cleanse our minds and the minds of all other creatures, we should work on developing loving-kindness and compassion. In the current piece of writing that I'm working on, I'm going to put a lot of emphasis on the significance of Buddhist education, both in terms of studying Buddhism as a subject and its function within the education system. However, there are a significant number of schools of thought that discuss the significance of our educational system and how it relates to our day-to-day lives. Buddhism is one of these world religions, and it has significantly contributed to the educational system's development. It has a constantly value-oriented conception of education. But before getting into the specifics of it, the issue is whether or not Buddhist studies are considered a discipline. In point of fact, how do disciplines come into being? What kinds of social, institutional, and rhetorical activities do they use to generate a sense of coherence and unity? How do different fields of study develop, and how do such areas adapt to shifting trends in the intellectual landscape? What kind of interactions do they have with one another? These are some of the topics discussed in the academic subfield that is now often referred to as "Disciplinary Studies." Reflecting on Buddhist studies in the context of this more recent body of literature ought to be the primary objective of everyone who calls themselves a contemporary Buddhist researcher, including us. This ought to be the primary emphasis of modern Buddhist academics.

Education in the Buddhist Tradition's Function

Knowledge, wisdom (Prajpa or Panpa), and the ability to reason or construct concepts (Manasikara) are the three most important aspects of education in Buddhism. Knowledge is not merely a storage system of information (Abhisankhararana) and intentionality (Cetayita) behind our reasoning or idea-building process to generate an opinion, as indicated by Professor Chandra B. Varma in his paper titled "What went wrong with our education system." He said knowledge also has an operational mode, which builds a value system by changing our comprehension or reasoning into the correct understanding of the excellent vision. He mentioned this in relation to the idea that knowledge possesses an operational mode. As a result, it vehemently contradicts even the widespread sense at the foundation of our conviction that the sun rises in the east and sets in the west. Knowledge is an active process because it activates the operational mode of mind to cultivate correct understanding, correct reasoning, and correct conceptions to discover the actual value regarding an object or an idea that we cognize either by way of mind when it merges with the senses; or independently when it relates to an abstraction or an idea. This discovery of the truth value about an object or an idea we cognize can occur either by way of mind when it relates to an idea or argument independently when it connects. Wisdom leads to knowledge with a complete comprehension of reality. Values are defined by the information that lies behind the proper understanding, as shown by the many instances Buddhists provide. In the context

of correct comprehension, knowledge also refers to the characteristics and patterns of behavior that are inherent to an item and that underlie its beginning, ability to persist, and either its change or degeneration. When knowledge is applied to articulation, it honestly expresses what our mind is while simultaneously validating the criteria of correct understanding.

The way of operation for knowledge is known as wisdom and Prajpa. It makes itself known in the disclosure of reality, much like the light that breaks through the shadows to illuminate an item for the purpose of revealing it or making it visible. Therefore, the operational mode of knowledge, on the one hand, employs the power of illumination (obhasana lakkhana) to view reality. On the other hand, it serves all of the defiling factors (Chedana Lakkhana) that may impair our right vision to differentiate between right and wrong. Wisdom and logic are two very different things in a lot of ways. The reasoning process is an example of an active way of knowing that may even be found in animals. In the Questions of King Milinda, Nagasena illustrates the distinction between the two by providing an explication of reasoning. The hallmark of sound thinking is comprehension, whereas the sign of sage judgment is the ability to recognize when to draw the line. After penetrating the shadowy or corrupting influences that obscure the truth, wisdom sheds light on the situation and shows the reality's authentic nature. It cultivates in us what the Buddhists refer to as "right understanding" or "right vision." Having the appropriate vision helps mold our volition, which in turn guides the whole of our behavior, and it also duplicates the suitable mental templates, also known as Sankar.

On the other hand, avijja, also known as ignorance, is one of the fundamental reasons why people experience suffering. Ignorance always operates towards the delusive understanding, also known as the wrong understanding or the wrong vision. This is because the operational mode of ignorance, also known as Sammohana, is a delusion. It prevents the truth from ever being exposed in any circumstance. Ignorance can maintain awareness in a dormant state. Consequently, we will have a skewed knowledge of the world around us or a distorted perspective of it, and we will behave irresponsibly. When we look at the statutory warning printed on a cigarette packet, viz., SMOKING IS INJURIOUS TO HEALTH, we are pretty vulnerable to the ignorance, and we become mentally blind or insensible to notice any evil behind the act of smoking, regardless of what our qualification or level of education is. This is just one example of an action done by us out of ignorance. Another example is when we look at the statutory warning printed on a cigarette packet, viz., Even if we have normal vision and can read the statutory warning on the front of the cigarette box, we are nevertheless susceptible to the effects of smoking. Even if we are highly educated and informed on the language and the meaning of such warnings, we continue to smoke despite this knowledge. We give in to our ignorance and become oblivious to things like statutory warnings or the actual reality of the situation, even though so many individuals have already written several books on the adverse effects of smoking. The Buddhist solution to this problem is that the information behind the statutory warning cannot be considered knowledge since it is not operational. This is the Buddhist explanation. In this instance, the method of operation of knowledge known as wisdom is not being used. Because of this, we cannot perceive the realities, and as a result, correct comprehension will not be attainable for us. This is the sole reason we cannot witness the repercussions of the nuclear holocaust, or the beginning of the Anthropocene Epoch on our planet, and the implications of all of our harmful deeds.

Therefore, we can see that knowledge operates under the mode of wisdom or the proper sensitivity, either of which illuminates the reality in preparation for its genuine revelation to construct the knowledge system to forge the appropriate volition in preparation for our right action. When we gain information, we not only activate and develop insight (Vipassana), but we also grow correct cetana, also known as awareness, which allows us to construct a knowledge system that helps us identify the path our actions will go.

Educational Objectives for Buddhists

Through attaining moral, intellectual, and spiritual perfection, Buddhist education's ultimate goal is always to develop a person's individuality into the most excellent possible form of humanity. These three aspects of human existence are unquestionably the key to elevating a person's level of pleasure from the mundane to the supramundane level, which is the pinnacle of accomplishment and the thing that we are all aspiring to reach. The development of wisdom is intended to be the result of Buddhist education. Buddha instructed us that the primary goal of our meditation was to realize the perfect ultimate knowledge, referred to as Anuttara-Samyak-Sambodhi, and translates to "ultimate wisdom that is flawless." The complete and balanced development of a person's personality is the primary focus of Buddhist education. This covers the person's physical development as well as their mental, moral, and intellectual growth. The story of a free, bright, intelligent, honest, non-honest, and secular man are some of the other goals of Buddhist education. Education in the Buddhist tradition was not restricted in any way and was made accessible to individuals from all walks of life. The purpose of the education provided by Buddhists was to help us reconnect with our essential selves. It also teaches total equality, which originated from Buddha's realization that all sentient beings possess this underlying knowledge and nature in some form or another. The teachings of Buddha help us become aware of our inherent perfection and ultimate wisdom. Then, if we know, we may find solutions to all of our difficulties and transform our misery into bliss.

During the Buddhist period (which occurred earlier), the religious practice took precedence, and education was gained by participation in it. This primary purpose of education was to disseminate and instill religious beliefs, and it was also intended to serve as a means to obtain nirvana or emancipation. Preparation for life, there was a provision for teaching worldly and practical knowledge with religious education, so that when the student joined regular life, they could make their living. This was done so that the student might prepare for life.

During the early periods of Buddhism, access to education was severely restricted. The practice was confined to the monasteries, and only its members were allowed to participate. However, in subsequent years it became accessible to anybody and everyone; even the general populace was allowed to get an education at such schools. Education in the Buddhist tradition has become much more accessible in contemporary times, welcoming participants from all areas of life. Buddhist Education opened doors that had never been opened before in the society. The Buddhists were the first people in the world to make education available to everyone.

Discipline, meditation, and wisdom are the three essential tenets that comprise the essence of Buddha's teaching. Wisdom is the end objective, and the most crucial step on the path to obtaining that end is to practice profound meditation or concentration.

When one practices self-discipline by adhering to the precepts, which is the approach used to assist one reach profound meditation, wisdom will then emerge on its own. These are the three main themes throughout the whole of Buddha's teaching as it is presented in the sutras. The Buddhist educational system evolved based on several guiding principles. This education-focused not only on the students' cerebral, spiritual, and physical growth but also on directing their attention to the Sangha rules and directing them to follow them. A distinct comprehension of the Tripitaka, which includes the Sutta Pitaka, the Vinaya Pitaka, and the Abhidhamma Pitaka, was the primary focus of the instruction. The complete collection of the Tipitaka is comprised of the Buddha's teachings, discourses, and philosophical tenets, as well as the laws that govern Bhikkhus and Bhikkhunis. The emphasis throughout the course was mainly on developing spirituality. This was because achieving freedom was the primary objective of education. Therefore, the study of the sacred texts was of the utmost significance. Only the monks were allowed to participate in this particular sort of education. In addition to these, additional topics included in Buddhist teaching included weaving, printing on clothing, tailoring, drawing, accounting, medicine, surgery, and coinage. In the early stages of education, the mother tongue was used as the teaching medium. Later, Pali and Prakrit were added to the curriculum, and Sanskrit was finally introduced as a language that could be studied. Particularly noteworthy was the accomplishment of the Mahayana Teachers regarding the Buddhist practice of Sanskrit. There was a distinct body of Buddhist literature written in Sanskrit. Mention might be made here of the significant strides achieved in Buddhist philosophy and literature via the use of Sanskrit by Nagarjuna, Asanga, Vasubandhu, Shantideva, Aryadeva, and Chandrakirti. These individuals were responsible for using Sanskrit. In subsequent times, in response to the needs of society as well as the requirements of professional education, the curriculum expanded to include subjects such as painting, sculpture, architecture, and medicine. The Buddhist educational system emerged from the realm of religious practice and spread across the world for the sake of humanity.

Conclusion

During ancient times, Buddhist monasteries played a significant part in developing Buddhist Education. During the later period, Buddhist universities took on this responsibility. The primary objective of Buddhist Education is to create a man who is not only free but also bright, wise, moral, peaceful, and secular. An education in Buddhist philosophy instills wisdom, humanism, reasoning, and liberation from superstitions in its students. They never stop considering the well-being of others in addition to their own. It is a source of immense satisfaction to know that Buddhist education has spread beyond the boundaries of the Indian subcontinent and can now be found in China, Japan, Sri Lanka, Korea, Thailand, Tibet, Mongolia, Myanmar, Cambodia, Laos, Vietnam, Malaysia, and Singapore. In conjunction with the propagation and growth of Buddhism in those nations. In such countries, Buddhist education has made significant strides towards modernization by incorporating contemporary topics into curricula.

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