

*Ancient Indian Buddhist Pedagogies: A Theory of Multiple Intelligences  
for Home Schooling and Distance Learning Environments*

BY

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Claremont, California  
2008

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We, the undersigned, certify that we have read this dissertation of Richard Kaplan and approve it as adequate in scope and quality for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

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Abstract of the Dissertation

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Claremont Graduate University: 2008

There is a growing need in contemporary Western Buddhist communities for quality multimedia multiple intelligence home schooling and distance learning. Religious, pedagogic, economic, geographic and security issues are motivating Western Buddhist parents to request and create home schooling and distance learning educational environments that will support Buddhist pedagogic values and incorporate appropriate technologies for pre-School through University platforms..

In part, this increased need for quality multimedia home schooling and distance learning has intensified due to the increasing number of westerners converting to Buddhism. In addition, these Buddhist educational environments require the integration of Buddhist values and practices with the demands of secular governments for standardized curriculum and evaluation.

Multiple intelligence pedagogies, in a sense, are continuations of the ancient Vedic and Buddhist use of skillful means to meet the needs of a diverse demographic. The integration of Buddhist and Multiple Intelligence pedagogies will employ intuitive

methods to learn about meditation, Buddhist *sutras* and *shastras* for ethical paradigms, spatial viewpoints to learn about *mandalas*, musical awareness to enter more deeply into the practice of chanting, and interpersonal perspectives to further explore the Buddhist ideal of compassion.

An integral part of this study is the use of a Moodle.com website shell, which will house an interactive model of a multimedia distance learning and home schooling 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> grade curriculum for an *Introduction to Psychology* course.. This curriculum will be based on the content standards adopted by the California State Board of Education with the integration of traditional Buddhist pedagogies within a multiple intelligence and multimedia web environment. This distance learning and home schooling website will demonstrate a successful integration of traditional Buddhist pedagogy with contemporary Western pedagogies as exemplified by the California State Board of Education.

Another purpose of this study is to lay the groundwork for the development of The Buddhist Educational Network (TBEN). TBEN will be an educational intranet and internet-based pedagogic portal designed to serve the American and international Buddhist communities. TBEN will also be available to non-Buddhist communities. TBEN offers a Buddhist-oriented Virtual Campus learning environment for distance learning home schooling and traditional home schooling.

## Acknowledgements

A doctoral dissertation may appear as a solitary endeavor. However, for this author, it is another demonstration of the Lord Buddha's principle of dependent origination. To bring to fruition a project of this magnitude requires the support and guidance of numerous kind and generous individuals. First, I wish to express my deep gratitude to my *Tsaway* (root) *Lama*, The Very Venerable 4<sup>th</sup> Karma Thinley Rinpoche, who directed my return to academia after a three-decade hiatus. Rinpoche envisions the completion of my Ph.D. program as a very important and useful modality for transmitting the teachings of the Buddha Dharma.

The Doctoral Studies program requires a skilled and compassionate counselor and dissertation chairperson. I am very fortunate and thankful that Professor Lourdes Arguelles embodies those qualities. Her patience, kindness, direction and innovative scholarship were vitally important to the completion of this work. I am very appreciative of the two other members of my dissertation committee, Professor John Regan and Professor Sharon Snowiss. They have continually supported and creatively engaged me in the process of completing this dissertation.

Special thanks to the Professors, Administration and Staff of Claremont Graduate University's School of Educational Studies and School of Religion for the quality and unique breadth of courses, and diligently insuring that I followed and completed the correct and timely procedural standards in my doctoral program. The generosity of Katherine Endacott and Jeremy Nash of the Class.com **Corporation**, facilitated the use of their company's State of California approved online curriculum for an 11<sup>th</sup>/12<sup>th</sup> grade

*Introduction to Psychology* course. I am utilizing a Moodle.com web shell to house their course and to upload ancillary Buddhist written, audio and video materials to demonstrate, on a limited scale, the ability to integrate State-approved multiple intelligence and multimedia online curriculum with traditional Buddhist pedagogies. My appreciation and thanks to Professors Emeritus (CSLUB) Danielle Guerriere and Steven Davis, who patiently assisted me in unpacking the ontological and epistemological views of the pre-Socratics, Plato, Aristotle, Hegel, and Heidegger, as well as the philosophies of hermeneutics, existentialism and phenomenology, in a manner most useful for translating the Buddha's teachings into the English language and in preparing me for my doctoral studies program at Claremont Graduate University. Lastly, to Professor Christopher Wilkinson, my dear friend of over thirty years, and a most excellent Vajrayana Buddhist scholar and translator; my heartfelt gratitude for your patient tutelage in Buddhist scholarship, hermeneutics, translation theory and academic matriculation.

## Preface

I am an American Vajrayana Buddhist Lama whose *ngakphang* (pronounced *ngakpung*) lineage (**of** **the** male (*ngakpa*) and female (*ngakmo*) order of householder *yogins* founded in Tibet, Bhutan, Nepal and surrounding areas during the 8<sup>th</sup> century CE by the *Maha Guru* Lord Padmasambhava. The *ngakphang* ordination is based on Tantric vows, and is therefore different in its character to the ordination taken by monks and nuns. In the *Nyingmapa* tradition, the oldest *Vajrayana* Buddhist lineage in Tibet, the *ngakphang* ordination is understood as being equal with the monastic ordination.

The *ngakphang* lineages are part of the stream of householder traditions that manifested in the 6<sup>th</sup> to 10<sup>th</sup> century CE (predominantly Indian Mahasiddhi tradition), in the 4<sup>th</sup> century CE of the householder lineage of *Vimalakirti* (the sage of the *Licchavis*), and in the *upasaka* tradition established in the 6<sup>th</sup> century BCE by Lord Shakyamuni Buddha.

There is great emphasis in our tradition on developing pure view, meditative realization and ritual practice for the benefit of sentient beings. These abilities empower the *ngakphang* Lama to thrive in the daily activities of a householder and to benefit his or her fellow townspeople. In addition to yogic realization, the *ngakphang* lineages have and continue to produce profound scholars. The 20<sup>th</sup> century was blessed by His Holiness Jigdral Dudjom Dorje Rinpoche, His Holiness Dilgo Khyentse Rinpoche, His Holiness Dodrupchen Rinpoche, His Holiness Nyoshul Khen Rinpoche, His Holiness Dungse Thinley Norbu Rinpoche, His Eminence Chagdud Tulku Rinpoche, His Eminence BhakhaTulku and many other highly realized yogin/scholars.

The monastic paradigm created by Buddha Shakyamuni in the 6<sup>th</sup> century BCE, has been an important vehicle for transmitting the Buddha Dharma for more than two millennia. Current Buddhist monasticism, as it manifests in Western countries, seems to be having difficulty establishing and sustaining its infrastructure and traditional activity modes. Many monastics are taking monks' and nuns' vows as they enter their middle and senior years. This is reminiscent of one of the Vedic *ashramic* stages of life, that of the forest dweller. The householder yogin tradition, especially in Western countries, is becoming the new model for the transmission and continuation of the Buddha's teachings.

The Buddhist householder yogin tradition initially manifested in the West through the work of many great adepts from the Japanese and Korean *dhyana* or Zen Buddhist tradition. The Tibetan diaspora to Western countries, following the 1959 Lhasa uprising, was initially monastically transmitted. It was immediately followed by a wave of *ngakphang* Lamas that included the following 20<sup>th</sup> century luminaries: Chogyam Trungpa Rinpoche, Tarthang Tulku Rinpoche, His Holiness Jigdral Yeshe Dorje Rinpoche, His Holiness Dungse Thinley Norbu Rinpoche, The Venerable Gyatrul Rinpoche, His Eminence Chagdud Tulku Rinpoche, His Eminence Bhaka Tulku Rinpoche and the Venerable Lama Tharchin Rinpoche. Many *ngakphang* lineages, centers and retreat areas have been successfully established in North America, Mexico, South America, Europe and Great Britain. They are many Western householder yogins. Some are lineage holders, tantric adepts, artists, scholars, etc. The householder Dharma social paradigm is proving to be more useful and facile than the traditional Buddhist monastic life style within the

context of Western societies. A highly respected and realized Tibetan monastic states that we are now entering the age of the *ngakpa* and *ngakmo*.

It is important to mention the Vajrayana Home schooling curriculum (pre-school through high school) developed and supervised by the sublime ngakphang Lama, H.H. Dungse Thinley Norbu Rinpoche. Dungse Rinpoche is my Dzogchen *Tsaway* (root) *Lama* and I have been fortunate to observe, on occasion, his blending of traditional Dzogchen Buddhist pedagogy with contemporary American public educational systems. Dungse Rinpoche's wisdom and skillful means are developing children of various racial, ethnic and linguistic backgrounds, who are respectful, morally grounded and intelligent practitioners and meditators. Rinpoche's daily tutelage of the children is reminiscent of and a continuation of Vedic, ancient Indian Buddhist and Tibetan Vajrayana householder *Guru* Disciple relationships. Dungse Rinpoche is offering western society a much needed new pedagogical paradigm for our contemporary age.

The Buddha's teachings, from their inception, have been based on openness and flexibility. The Buddhist metaphor of 108,000 Dharma doors illustrates the infinite number of skillful methods (*upaya*), arising and inseparable from aimless compassion, to meet the needs of countless sentient beings on the path to enlightenment.

May all beings be happy and have the causes of happiness

May all beings be free from suffering and the causes of suffering

May all beings be inseparable from the great happiness devoid of suffering

May all beings dwell in the great equanimity free from passion, aggression and prejudice

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## Chapter 1: Introduction and Background

### *Rationale for the Study*

There is a growing need in contemporary Western Buddhist communities for quality multimedia home schooling and distance learning. Religious, pedagogic, economic, geographic and security issues are motivating Western Buddhist parents to request and create home schooling and distance learning educational environments that will support Buddhist pedagogic values and incorporate appropriate technologies.

In part, this increased need for quality multimedia home schooling and distance learning has intensified due to the increasing number of westerners converting to Buddhism. In addition, these Buddhist educational environments require the integration of Buddhist values and practices with the demands of secular governments for standardized curricula and evaluation.

### *Guiding Questions*

Buddhists venerate Shakyamuni Buddha as the greatest teacher of gods and men. After Lord Buddha's Enlightenment at Bodhgaya he journeyed through the Indian sub-continent and surrounding areas for more than fifty years, giving his teachings to a vast multitude of monastics and householders. He developed and adapted a variegated pedagogy that resonates with the intellectual aspirations and spiritual understandings of the individuals who had come to him for teachings on the Dharma; that is, teachings on the path to and fruit of an Enlightened state of being.

How was the Buddha able to lead thousands of his students of varied linguistic, intellectual, physical and cultural backgrounds from mundane happiness to successive stages of spiritual realization, culminating in the ultimate soteriological goal of liberation

from samsara (the vicious cycle of endless pleasure and pain)? How was the Buddha able to integrate the individual's soteriological quest for Enlightenment and assist him/her in developing great compassion for all beings? Are the Buddha's teachings relevant in our post-modern technological world? What pedagogic insights may be gleaned from the history of Buddhist pedagogy? How may we practically integrate the teachings of the Buddha into distance learning and home schooling? What pedagogic approaches and technologies are needed in this effort? This dissertation seeks to disclose the answers to these questions.

*Vedic Pedagogy, The Precursor to Buddhist Pedagogy*

Many of the philosophical and religious concepts fundamental to Buddhism and Buddhist pedagogy, such as impermanence, non-substantiality of the self, reincarnation, karma, and self-liberation have roots in the Vedic culture of ancient India. Vedic culture began to emerge around 1500 BCE. A very important characteristic of ancient Vedic civilization was its religious ordering of its society (one of the meanings of the Sanskrit word *Dharma*).

Vedic society attempted to answer the following important questions: How was it possible to create a workable social contract between different nationalities and social systems as the individuals from the various groups pursue their soteriological quests? What type of pedagogical methods are most effective in creating the appropriate causes and conditions for individual liberation and social harmony? These questions were also seminal to the evolution of Buddhist pedagogy.<sup>1</sup>

The Vedic ideas derived from *Dharma* where the foundational principles permeating social, political and economic life. These principles were also integrated into ancient India's religious worldview.<sup>2</sup> Although India, from its early beginnings, was an

interwoven quilt of races, ethnicities and a variety of religious traditions, it created a world-spirit and an international culture that transcended the incredible variegations of the many individual threadlike expressions. The political history of India is paradigmatic for our contemporary world situation; it raises the question of how to create a workable compromise between different nationalities and social systems each engaged on their own various soteriological quests.<sup>3</sup>

The individual's search for liberation (*moksha-nirvana*) from death and impermanence was, from a Vedic perspective, best served by creating a stable economic and political polity. It is this tension between the individual, group(s) and the state that calls forth the ideal of a spiritual homeostasis. The cyclic nature of time and its decay of both psycho-physical organisms and cultures is set in the metaphor of four yugas (ages): the Golden Age, the Silver Age, the Bronze Age, and the Iron Age (Kali-yuga). According to Vajrayana Buddhists, in the most degenerate Age, the Kali Yuga (our current era), it is possible to attain liberation (which is equivalent to a state knowing {*vidya*-a cognate of *ved*} without ignorance (*avidya*) quite rapidly; equally, one may also degenerate at an accelerated pace.

Vedic India emphasized learning and education as means to liberation (*moksha-nirvana*). Learning and education were seen as religious methodologies. The arts, music, sex and literature were also religious modalities used for realizing Vedic Enlightenment.<sup>4</sup> Ancient Indian Education is epistemologically based, meditatively realized and ethically manifested.

The wonders of life perceived through the five (*pancha*) senses or gates (*indriyas*) are always tempered by change, impermanence and an individual's corporal demise.

### *Ancient Buddhist Pedagogy*

Buddhist pedagogy refined and expanded upon its Vedic educational foundations, but there were some differences. The Buddha's teaching denied the fixity of caste and its relation to the soteriological quest for enlightenment, while Vedic pedagogy, although not completely dominated by caste, was *de facto* structurally modeled after the caste system. Another important difference was the concept of *Bodhicitta*, the Enlightened Mind that spontaneously expresses loving kindness for all sentient beings.

*Bodhicitta* may be considered a sublime refinement and deeper revelation of the Vedic Guru's desire and commitment to give back to other individuals and to harmonize the social order. The Buddha also emphasized the equal status of women in relationship to Dharma teachings and the goal of Enlightenment. Even during the period of decline of Buddhism in India the education system continued to expand within the Vajrayana *Siddha* tradition (600 CE to 1000 CE).

Lord Shakyamuni Buddha only allowed his monks and nuns to congregate in monastic settlements during the monsoon or "rainy season." After the Buddha's *parinirvana* (death), the "rainy season" retreat evolved into sophisticated monastic environments. Gradually Shakyamuni Buddha's pedagogic techniques, including meditation practice and instruction, dialogue, debate, the memorization of Dharma canons and allegory became institutionalized in permanent monastic settings.

As they were produced and codified, copies of the corpus of the *sutras* (direct teachings of the Buddha), *shastras* (commentaries on the Buddha's teachings) and *tantras* (esoteric teachings of the Buddha) became part of the educational curriculum of the Buddhist monastic institutions. They also gradually became adapted into the curriculum of householder (*upsaka*) schools. The combination of the fixed geographical locations of

Buddhist monastics and a standardized pedagogy gave birth to large-scale monastic universities with thousands of students. These universities attracted students from India, Asia and other parts of the world. Universities such as Nalanda, Vallabhi, Vikramasila, Jaggadda and Odantpuri were the culmination of a thousand years of Buddhist pedagogic development.

Ancillary to the development of Indian Buddhist monastic pedagogic institutions were the small intimate groups of Vajrayana Buddhist practitioners (usually non-monastics) centered on an individual teacher (*Guru*). These small groups developed in homes and retreat environments. Although these Vajrayana groups were few in number, they greatly influenced the development of Vajrayana monastic institutions in India and Tibet.

#### *Contemporary Buddhist Education*

Contemporary Buddhist education in Western countries is generally centered on university level students. Naropa University in Colorado and West University (formerly His Lai) are two examples of Buddhist universities in the US. Although the Land of 10,000 in Northern California has a very successful ongoing elementary and high school program, its primary focus is on higher level undergraduate and graduate education. By contrast, in India, Sri Lanka, Taiwan, Nepal, Cambodia, Malaysia, Thailand and other South Asian countries, the emphasis is on elementary and high school level students. Some examples are the Ananda School in Sri Lanka, The Alice Project in India, Tibet Charity's Multi-Education Center in India, and The Tibetan Children's Villages in India and Bhutan.<sup>5</sup>

The original, and in some ways, still valid paradigm for contemporary Buddhist Education is the Ananda School and College in Sri Lanka, which was founded in 1886.

Buddhist leaders, both householder and monastic, were focused on creating a system of education that suited the needs and aspirations of the Buddhists of Sri Lanka. Their interest in this goal led to the search for Buddhist pedagogies and the establishment of institutions to sustain and impart Buddhist education.

In 1890 two important leaders in this movement arrived in Sri Lanka. They were the Theosophists, Colonel Henry Steel Olcott and Madame Blavatsky. The Theosophists were instrumental in founding the Buddhist Theosophical Society in Sri Lanka, which had as its main aims the preservation of the heritage of Buddhism and the promotion of Buddhist education. The first educational institution to be established was Ananda College. A century later, Ananda has become the premier Buddhist educational institution in Sri Lanka.<sup>6</sup>

Buddhist education, in the view of Ananda's founding fathers, was two-fold: the teaching of Buddhism in a scientific and rational way, and the imparting of the system of Buddhist values. The Theosophists held Buddhism in great esteem; for them it was not merely a religion but a philosophy with a rational appeal. Due to this reliance on reason, however, they did not emphasize the contemplative and meditative yogic skills, which are foundational to the Buddha's teaching.

The Buddhist leaders who were inspired by the Theosophists to re-examine the philosophical value of Buddhism in light of contemporary modes of thought wanted this body of philosophy to be taught in the schools so that the new generation of Buddhist youth would be able to defend themselves against inroads from external powers. The second goal of Buddhist education was to impart the system of values fostered by Buddhism.<sup>7</sup>

The founding fathers of Buddhist education thought that it was necessary for Buddhist children not only to be aware of this system of Buddhist values, in an academic sense, but also to grow up in an environment in which these values were put into practice. Tolerance, for instance, acquires real meaning only when it is practiced in everyday living, both in school and outside in the real world.

Thus new educational institutions such as Ananda have a special role to play in promoting Buddhist education in Sri Lanka and other Asian countries -- a role different from that of public schools molded by the colonial masters to suit their needs and aspirations.<sup>8</sup>

## Chapter 2: Historical Origins of Vedic Pedagogy

Vedic pedagogy has its origins in the ancient Vedic culture of India. The philosophical and religious concepts and lifestyles that were foundational to Vedic pedagogy appeared around 1500 BCE. A very important characteristic of Ancient Vedic civilization was its religious ordering of its society (one of the meanings of the Sanskrit word *Dharma*). Vedic Indian society attempted to answer the following important questions: How was it possible to create a workable compromise between different nationalities and social systems as they work out their various soteriological quests? What types of pedagogical methods are necessary to create the appropriate causes and conditions for individual liberation and social harmony?

*Dharma*, or the basic principles of social, political and economic life, was integrated into ancient India's religious worldview.<sup>9</sup> Although India, from its early beginnings, was an interwoven quilt of races, ethnicities and a variety of religious traditions, it created a world-spirit and international culture that transcended the incredible variegations of its individual threadlike expressions. The political history of India is paradigmatic for our contemporary world situation; that is, how to create a workable compromise between different nationalities and social systems as they work out their various soteriological quests.<sup>10</sup>

The individual's search for liberation (*moksha-nirvana*) from death and impermanence was, from a Vedic perspective, best served by creating a stable economic and political polity. It is this tension between the individual, group(s) and state that calls forth the ideal of a spiritual homeostasis. The cyclic nature of time and its decay of both psycho-physical organism and cultures is set in the metaphor of the four yugas (ages):

The Golden Age, The Silver Age, The Bronze Age, and The Iron Age (Kali-yuga). It is interesting to note that in the most degenerate Age, The Kali Yuga (our current era), it is possible to attain liberation (which is equivalent to a state knowing (*vidya*-a cognate of *ved*) without ignorance (*avidya*) quite rapidly; equally, one may degenerate at a most accelerated pace.

The Katho Upanishad declares, “Arise (*attisthah*) awake (*jagratah*) from the slumber of ignorance (*avidya*) realize that the Self (*Atman*) having approached the excellent teachers (*varan*)”.<sup>11</sup> The *Rishis* (Sages/Seers) realized that all stages of one’s life (*ashramas*) were part and parcel of a continuous pedagogic journey leading to spiritual realization. Education was not the mere acquisition of particular objects of knowledge, but also included gaining knowledge of the vast opening space inseparable from its particular manifestations. In several places in the Upanishads the terse declaration *tattvam asi* (thou art that) is promulgated as the ultimate truth of human existence. The method given for this ultimate quest is: *atma va are drastavyah srotavyo, manauya nididhyasitavyah* (Self should be realized, heard of, reflected on, meditated upon...by the realization of the Self...through hearing, reflection and meditation, all this is known). This is the method of yoga (literally meaning yoke to Self). One hears the truth via a *Guru* (enlightened teacher). One reflects (contemplates) on the heard truth. The final phase of realizing the truth or nature of reality is through meditative realization, that is, directly perceiving the nature of reality (mind). The *Rishis* of the Upanishads spoke of a sublime, ultimate state of being and awareness (*sakrddiva*), what Buddha later termed a realization of the true nature of reality was vast unobstructed opening space (*Dharmakaya*) inseparable from luminous clarity (*bhava*) and great bliss (*mahasukha*).<sup>12</sup>

The attainment (*Madhu Vidya*) of an enlightened state of being through yogic means was accomplished by two paths: meditation without support (direct perception of the true nature of mind) and meditation with support (utilization of techniques, e.g., breathing, postures, mantra and visualizations). The first method of meditation was very rarely attainable by novices. Thus, the *Rishis* prescribed nearly twenty techniques (*upasana vidhi-San*). These were the pedagogic aides that would illumine the mind of the yogic aspirant while initiating him into the “art of right living”.<sup>13</sup>

The Vedic tradition emphasized filial respect from the child and parental responsibility to the child. Under the Vedic system of education, every boy had to leave his parents’ hearth and home and move to the home of his spiritual teacher (*Guru*). This was the stage (*asharama*) known as the “second birth” or the stage of *brahmacaryam*.

The son must undergo this change of surroundings and live under a stricter discipline than that of an affectionate father and indulgent mother. This is the pupil’s first step towards self-denial (*tapas*) and renunciation as the foundation of an enlightened education leading to liberation (*mukti*) from *samsara*. The *brahmacari* (one who practices the vow of *brahmacarya*) is a disciple who dwells with a *Guru* or Master {Antevasi} and is devoted to Vedic studies.<sup>14</sup>

When a student lives within close proximity of his preceptor, it allows the teacher to observe the students' habitual tendencies and spiritual aptitudes. The Master has the opportunity (from close observation of the student) to develop and implement the most skillful method(s) for the student’s progress on the path to liberation.

According to the Mundaka Upanishad, the student received the initiation of the “second birth” when he reached his 12<sup>th</sup> birthday. The student should supplicate the

Master and offer various fuels (coconuts, ghee, flowers, honey etc.) for the *hoama* or fire ceremony (*puja*). This is the student's first stage of purification (*samskara*) and offerings (*punya*) on his path to liberation.<sup>15</sup> Fire (*agni*) was considered sacred. After assembling the sacred fuels the student ignited the fire by rubbing two sticks together (*abhimanthati*). This particular duty of the student may last up to 12 years (Chandogya Upanishad, 4-10-1,2). This external purification was also symbolic of the internal winds (*vayus-prana*) and subtle nerves (*nadis*), which is a very important part of the Vedic, Buddhist, Tantric and Hindu pedagogies' psycho-physical transformation of the individual into a liberated being.

The next duty of the student was to beg for alms. This activity produces a sense of humility and is counter to the spiritual *hubris* of the student. The disciple should beg and gather large amounts of food (*annam bahu kurvita*). No food should be rejected or denigrated. Food should be perceived as *Brahman* (*annam brahma*). (Tait3-2, 3-9).

The third duty of the student was to tend the cattle. In Ancient India, as in many parts of contemporary India, the cow furnished milk, ghee, yogurt, urine (medicine) and fuel from their dung. Cows were gentle and provided sustenance for families and villages.

The final duty was vowing to continuously study the Vedic scriptures, which was considered the foundation for achieving the highest good (Vedahyayana *svadhyaya*) (Chandogya 6-1-2, 8-15-1). These studies are done under the supervision of the Guru. Here, the student is free from all filial obligations and his only obligation is to follow the instructions of his Guru to complete his soteriological quest. This involved household

duties and study of the Vedas, and thus was a synthesis of theory and practice, daily life and sublime reality.

An integral part of the student's Vedic studies was prayer and mantra. On the level of external phenomena, mantric supplication and praise were used to set up a positive environment and conditions beneficial to the student's environment and psycho-physical state of being. The following are a compendium of the most common daily Vedic prayers utilized by the student: The first prayer begins: "May Mitra be propitious to us and so also Varuna. May Aryaman be propitious to us, may Brhaspati and Indra be propitious to us and so also the all pervasive Vishnu. Adoration to Brahman, adoration to thee, Oh Vayu, thou art verily the visible Brahman and verily will I declare thee as visible Brahman, the right (*rtam*) will I speak and I speak the truth (*satyam*). May that Brahman protect me (*avatu*). May that protect the teacher, peace, peace, peace (Tait. 1<sup>st</sup> Anuvak)." <sup>16</sup>

The word *Mitra* indicates the deity of the day as well as *prana* (life force). *Varuna* is the presiding deity of the night and water. *Aryaman* denotes the Sun and human eyes. *Indra* represents strength, lightning and rain and the hands. *Brhaspathih* is the deity of speech and the intellect. Vishnu represents the deity of the thigh and the highest heavenly realm. *Brahman* is invoked as *Vayu*, the all-pervasive reality that permeates all phenomena. In the Brhadaranyaka Upanishad (3-7-2), Yajnavalkya describes *Vayu* as *Sutratma* (*all pervasive universal life*). In this and all life times, all creation is interdependently linked. When the student thrice utters peace (*Om shanti, shanti, shanti*) he removes the threefold obstacle to attaining knowledge of the earthly, heavenly and ultimate reality. The syllable *Om* invokes the Supreme Brahman. <sup>17</sup>

In the above peace and blessing invocation if the pantheon of important gods (elemental energies) have been propitiated (*tasu hi sukhkrtsu*) at the beginning of a spiritual practice session, then the process of “hearing knowledge” (*vidya sravana*) and retaining the knowledge from the Guru will have little or no obstacles and the spiritual aspirant will attain uninterrupted knowledge (*apratibanhena*).<sup>18</sup>

Gods and local deities (*asparsas, yakshas, etc.*) are jealous of human beings’ ability to attain liberation, and if not propitiated and respected they may cause negative situations to arise for the student. Therefore it behooves the seeker of liberation to utilize the appropriate mantras and pujas (ceremonies) to increase the success potential of his or her spiritual quest. Also, the gods preside over different bodily functions and when propitiated will sustain the spiritual aspirants health and longevity.<sup>19</sup>

The next prayer is for the attainment of *Medha* (intelligence) and *Sri* (good fortune):

May he, the Supreme among all Vedas (*yaschandasadamrabho visvarupa*), the One of Universal form, born of the Immortal Veda, the Lord enliven me with Intelligence (*chandobhya adhyantrasanabhava sa mendro medhaya sprnotu*). Of the Immortal Oh God, may I be the possessor (*amrtasya deva dharana bhyasam*). May my body be fit (*Sariram me vicarsanam*). May I with ears, listen abundantly (*bhuri visvaram*) so that I may learn. The sheath of *Brahman* art thou enveloped by intelligence (*medhaya pihita*). May thou protect what I have heard (*srutan me gopaya*).<sup>20</sup>

One meaning of mantra is protection. This prayer invokes protection of the hearing of the sublime truth, diligence and energy when listening to the *Dharma*, and strengthening the human body for its hermetical transmutation into an immortal vessel (*amrita kosha*).<sup>21</sup>

The third prayer begins: “May my tongue be sweet (*madhuattama*).” This implies that the student’s speech be sweet and gentle when asking questions from his Guru and in their answering of questions that are put forward by his teacher. The student then prays

that his hearing of the teachings be clear and unobstructed. The Vedic education was a tradition that was handed down in a lineage, that is, from teacher to student over a period of many generations.

What the student wishes to hear and realize is *prajna* (subtle knowledge of the world). This requires the development of the power of retaining the meanings of the sacred books (*granthartha dharana sakti*), that is, memory (Aitareya {3-1-2} and Kathopanisad {1-2-23}).<sup>22</sup> Although memory is a valuable aid in realizing the teaching, it is not an end in itself. The realization of the ultimate nature of reality is directly perceived.

The last prayer makes the following supplication:

May my limbs, speech, energy, eyes, ear as well as all other senses become more vigorous (*balam apyayantu*). All are that Brahman of the Upanishads. May I never deny Brahman, nor may Brahman deny me. Let there be no denial at least from me (*nirakuryam*). May all the virtues that dwell in the Upanishads reside in me who am devoted to the *Atman* (Keno-1).<sup>23</sup>

The above mentioned prayers were invoked by the student to set up auspicious causes and conditions for the student as he begins his study of the Vedas and the ultimate goal of the attainment of Immortality (*amrtasya dharana*).

Many scholars consider the Rig Veda not only as the earliest literature of Brahmanic and Hindu culture but of all Indo-European languages and humanity.<sup>24</sup> According to Max Mueller, there is “nothing more primitive, more ancient than the hymns of the Rigveda.”<sup>25</sup> Although it marks the dawn of Indic culture, it is complete in its epistemic and metaphysical reflections.<sup>26</sup> According to the Hindu orthodox view, the Rigveda is the source of all Indic religious thought and culture.

The Rigveda was compiled over a few hundred years.<sup>27</sup> The Rigveda Samhita refers to the works of the earlier and later authors (*purvai* and *nutanai*), to Agni being propitiated in bygone ages (*purve*) by Rishis in their hymns (*girbhi*) {x, 98, 9}, and to extemporaneous hymns (*stomam janayami navyam*) {I, 109, 2, etc.}.<sup>28</sup> The hymns utilized to express various human needs and expressions were: faith; meditation; poetry; ritual; practical guides to daily living; funerary rites and transmigration; cosmology; metaphysics and epistemology.

In his *Nirukta* (700 BCE), Yaska, the earliest Vedic commentator, divided the Rigveda into the period of the hymns of creation and the period of compilation and critical analysis. Yaska stated that the first period was marked by the *Rishis*, who perceived the true nature of mind through the meditative processes of *tapas* (ascetic austerities) or the most sublime form of *yoga* (meditative insight into the nature of mind). They were followed by those of lesser capabilities (*avara*) who were incapable of directly perceiving the true nature of the mind. The *Rishis* had to transmit the true nature of mind through *mantras* (holy sounds), *mudras* (gestures) and *upadesa* (oral instructions).

Thus, the Rigveda Samhita reveals two stages and types of pedagogy. The first stage, the pursuit of the highest truth and its direct realization, is based on *tapas* and *yoga*, which delineates the path of the *Rishi* (Seer). The second stage relates to various worldly disciplines, for example, astrology, music, martial arts and healing arts. In the Rigveda (x, 109, 4) seven *Rishis* are absorbed in *tapas* (*tapase ye nishedduh*), from the lowest to the highest stage. The Rigveda Samhita (x, 154, 2) refers to the various forms of *tapas* as interpreted by Sāyana. For example, (1) austerities like (*krichchhra-chādrāyana*) whereby the yogi-ascetic becomes invincible; (2) sacrifices enabling the

yogi-ascetic to attain the higher of 33 heavenly realms and profound penances (*mahat*), for example, *Rajasya Asvamedha*, forms of *Upāsana* (yoga) like *Hiranyagarbha* (*Rigveda Samhita*, x, 136, 2) refers to the *Munis* (the seers of Truths penetrating through the transparency of the senses). They are “clad in the barks of tress (*piśangā vasate malā*), shining with the flow of *tapas*, attaining godly forms, and the free movement of the subtle body winds (*prana-vayu*).”<sup>29</sup> These subtle body winds become a very important skillful means (*upaya*) for advanced practices in Vajrayana Buddhism.

The *Munis* are living in a state of divine afflatus, ecstasy, or supreme bliss (*Unmaditā*). Ordinary people see their (*nirmanakāyā*) human form but do not see their subtle body resembling the wind (*Vātan ā tasthimā*) that pervades all phenomenal display realms (*nirmanakāyā* and *sambhogākāyā*), and the *Dharmakāyā* or vast unobstructed opening space. The next verse of the *Rigveda Samhita* refers to the *Muni*, who becomes all pervading like the *Vāyu*, all-seeing like the sun (via worship) and the equal of the gods (*deva-sakhā*) by *sukriti* (pious and compassionate deeds). The following verse describes the *Munis* as attaining to the forms of the gods (*Vāyu or Sūrya*) or as one whom the gods themselves wish to attain (*deveshita*).<sup>30</sup>

The *aryankaya* or forest (*vane*) dwelling tradition of *Rishis* and *Yogis* is referenced in the *Rigveda Samhita* (I, 55, 4). The concept of *Sannyāsa* (ascetic {*tapas*} renunciation) is mentioned in the *Rigveda Samhita* (viii, 24, 26). The *Rishi* Bhikshu and the praises for those who give alms to religious renunciants are referenced in verse X, 117. The highest realization through *tapas* culminates in the realization of the truth (*satya*) of speech (*Rita-Vak*) and being able to see into the true nature of all of the gross and phenomenal display worlds or realms. Besides *Rishis* and *Muni*, other terms that

reflect the highest state of spiritual practice are *Vipra*, *Vedhas*, and *Kavi* (*Rigveda Samhita*, I, 127, I ; 129, 1, I. II ; 162, 7 ; iv, 26, I).<sup>31</sup>

*Manīshīs* are special types of *Rishis* who comprehend the four forms of *Vāk* or speech (*Brahma*) {The creative aspect of God} as *Shabda* {holy sound} as categorized in the *Rigveda Samhita* (I, 164, 45). Three of the four forms of *Vāk* are hidden (*guha*) in the primordial depths of the psyche. The fourth aspect of *Vāk* manifests as ordinary human speech (*laukikī bhāsā*). The epistemic implications of what is rendered explicit in the phenomenal as *shabdā*, which is only a fragment of what is implicit, is foundational to the sacred mantric science of sound. A similar explanation is *shabd*, unfolding itself in gradual stages as *Ekapaī*, *Dividpadī*, *Ashtapadī*, and *Navapadī*, which evolve into the ultimate all-pervading sound that creates, sustains and destroys universes and world systems (*Rigveda Samhita*-41<sup>st</sup> verse). One might also induce from the above citations that Vedic Sanskrit was an outgrowth of demotic Sanskrit.<sup>32</sup>

#### *Ancient Vedic Pedagogical Methods*

The Vedic Seers became a storehouse of the knowledge contained in the sacred hymnals, which needed to be acquired, conserved and transmitted to future generations. Thus, every *Rishi* was responsible for transmitting the profound and sublime pedagogy of the ancient Vedas. The *Rishi* first transmitted his spiritual realization of the sacred texts to his son and then to other worthy students. This sacred knowledge would become a family lineage. Each family of *Rishis* was thus functioning in the manner of a Vedic school, making privy to the students the sacred texts and the familial commentaries.<sup>33</sup>

The pedagogical methods of the *Rishis* varied in relation to the needs and capacity of the student. The more profound methods of *tapas* would be the very rare student

whose ability to see into the nature of mind had been honed by previous lifetimes of intense practice of *tapas* and ethical conduct coupled with compassion.<sup>34</sup>

The Rigveda speaks of the importance and need of the *Guru* in imparting appropriate and useful knowledge to the student: Class mates (*sakhās*, i.e., those of the same knowledge {*samānam khyānam jñāth yeshām*}) or who have studied the same *Śāstras*, that is, commentaries on the Vedas or Upanishads (*samāneshu śāstreshu kritaśtreshu*) may have an equality regarding their sensory organs, but display an inequality to speed, power (*aasamāh manojabeshu = manasām praajveshu* {Yāska, *Nirukta*, I, 9); primordial and discriminating awareness born from wisdom (*jñānaIn, prajñā* and *nam*) and the knowledge or wisdom which attained by the mind (*Sāyaña*).

Some students are like tanks whose mouths open from the unfathomable depth of mind itself (as explained by *Guru* Durgacharya, others up to the breast (shallow with their bottom in sight). Some are fit for a bath and others are only to be seen. As the sage *Sāyana* points out in the previous paragraph, the above passage refers to three levels or abilities of students, the *Mahāprajñān* (level of great discriminating wisdom), *Madhyamaprajñān* (middle level of discriminating wisdom) and the *Alpaprajñān* (lower level of discriminating wisdom).<sup>35</sup>

In the Rigveda (I, 112, 2), pupils are those who approach the teacher for instruction (*dniyah*). The teacher is named as the one who is possessed of sound learning (*Vachas*).<sup>36</sup> The Rigveda (1,8,6) mentions those who are instructed in the supreme knowledge as seekers (*dhiyāvavah*).<sup>37</sup>

The unvarying rhythmic monotonous of sacred chanting pervading Vedic schools was so familiar as to have inspired a hymn of the Rigveda (vii, 103): The hymn

prosaically compares the monotonous chanting of the words by the Guru and his disciples (*yadeshāmanayo anyasya vācham śktasyeva*) to the croaking of frogs in exhilarated expectation of a coming rain.<sup>38</sup>

The Vedic pedagogy of sacred sound (*mantra*) was firmly grounded in recitation. The letters and syllables and the concomitant sounds were considered of supreme value and potency. Individual or natural pronunciation was not valued. The sacred art and science of mantric and dharanic recitation was based upon regulated meter and tone. The Rigvedic passage (I, 164, 24) is very explicit regarding the regulation of meter and tone. The conjunction of letter/syllables is produced in a seven meter format (*sapta chhandāmsi*): (1) *Gāyatrī*, (2) *Pamkti*, (3) *Anushtup*, (4) *Brihatī*, (5) *Virāj*, (6) *Trishtup*, and (7) *Jagati*, which are respectively composed of 24, 28, 32, 36, 40, 44 and 48 syllables. The same verse describes a meter (*Chhandas*) as made of *Padas* (literally ‘feet’ or divisions) and *Pādas* of *Aksharas*. According to Sāyana, the *Akshara* is the root division of the Rigveda into *Varga*, *Sūkta* or *Anuvāka*.<sup>39</sup>

The student would begin his day with the recitation of Vedic Texts ‘before birds announced break of day’ (*purā-vayabhyah*, *Taitti. Sam.*, vi, 4, 3. I). The *Aitareya Aranyaka* (viii) describes three methods of reciting the Rigveda: *pratrinna*, *nirbhujā*, and *ubhayamantarena*. These methods take words individually, as in *Pada Pātha*, or in pairs, or in the continuous manner of *Krama Pātha*. The Vedic *Rishis* had developed a sophisticated phonology, conservatively dated to around 1500 BCE. The *Brahmanas* categorized sounds as *ghosha* (dental), *ūshman* (lingual) and *vyñjana* (sibilant). The *Rishis* also discussed rules for the combination of words (*sandhi*), and the *Upanishads*

(e.g. *Taitti*, I, 1, 2) recognized the phonological factors like *matra* (quantity), *bala* (accent), *sama* (euphony) and *santāna* (relation of letters).<sup>40</sup>

The first step in transmitting Rigvedic textual pedagogy was for the Guru to give the student daily sessions of recitation with the prescribed pronunciation in which the student would attentively listen to (*Sruti*) and commit to memory. In Sāyana's *Introduction to Rigveda Commentary*, he quotes the saying that "the text of Veda is to be learned by the method of hearing it from the lips of a teacher and not from a manuscript." The non-substantial sounds emanating from the Sanskrit alphabet are what create the possibility of all phenomenal displays. The non-inherency or the lack of the solid substrate of the Sanskrit alphabet makes possible the seemingly solid and tangible manifestation of the Universe(s). We hear sound and feel it; yet we cannot grasp it like a flower, a rock or human hand. Sound becomes a primordial metaphor for the unsubstantial nature of magical illusions of display (*maya*). The *Rishi* perceives himself and all phenomena as non-substantial radiant luminosity.

The *Akshara*, according to Max Mueller, is used for letters and syllables, and means indestructible and non-substantial root of the Rigveda.<sup>41</sup> The Hindu sage Shankara, in a manner similar to his Buddhist predecessors, denies any inherency or attributes to *Akshara*, whether the holy Sanskrit alphabet or any manifestation in our psycho-physical continuum.<sup>42</sup> Although the *Akshara* has no inherency, it is the foundation for all that manifests in the universe. The Sanskrit alphabet combines in infinite variegations to produce all phenomenal display.

Although, in the Rigvedic age, orality was the pre-eminent form of pedagogy, writing did exist. The *Rishis* favored the methods of direct mind-to-mind transmission of

knowledge, transmission by listening (*Sruti*), and gestures (*mudras*). These types of transmission of knowledge were also supportive of the secret and sacred nature of Vedic knowledge.

These three traditions were promulgated exclusively until the 8<sup>th</sup> century CE when writing became a prominent adjunct to Vedic pedagogy. In reaction to growing dependency on the word, an 8<sup>th</sup> century CE Vedic Guru, Kumāriḷa Bhatta, denounced the writing of the Vedas as sacrilege.<sup>43</sup> The mighty Indian epic, *The Mahābhārata*, condemns to hell those who put the Vedas into a written format (*Vedānām Lekhakāh*).

According to Max Mueller (*Ancient Sanskrit Literature*, p. 507), the *Akshara* is used for letters and syllables; it represents the indestructible and non-substantial root of the Rigveda.<sup>44</sup> In a manner similar to his Buddhist predecessors, the Hindu sage Shankara denies any inherency or attributes to *Akshara*, whether the holy Sanskrit alphabet or any manifestation in our psycho-physical continuum.<sup>45</sup> Although the *Akshara* has no inherency, it is the foundation for all that manifests in the universe. The Sanskrit alphabet combines in infinite variegations to produce all phenomenal display.

Although writing may have become a pedagogic aid for an age that relied upon memory for the purity and rules of pronunciation, the knowledge of writing or alphabets was used in the ancient Vedic times for generally secular purposes (similar to the age of Homer in Greece). Verses vi, 533, 5-8 of the Rigveda use metaphors which we may infer from a writing practice then in vogue.<sup>46</sup>

The efficacy of the correct oral recitation of a text was the prerequisite as a preparation for other Vedic studies. The dictum *Vākyaniyamāt* as prescribed by Jaimini in his *Pūrva-Mīmāṃsā* (1, 2, 32) held that the first step in Rigvedic pedagogy was the

correct recitation of the Vedic texts. Mantras must be recited in the prescribed manner to realize the potency and efficacy of the process. There is a power and blessing in merely reciting the texts in their prescribed order (*Nīyatapāthakramasāphayāya uchhāranameva antraprayojanam*). This tradition of the independent efficacy of the word (syllables) and correct recitation of the Vedic text later (*Pānini-śikshā*) eventually created an extreme position: The slightest error in uttering a letter or word of the Vedic mantra by a Guru could condemn him to utter ruin (*Mantra hīnah svarato varnato vā mithyāprayukto na tamarthamāha...sa vāgvajro yajamānam hinasti yathendraśatruh svaratoparādhāt*).<sup>47</sup>

However, Rigvedic pedagogy was not merely the rote learning of sacred texts. The contemplation and comprehension of their meaning was valued as more important and vital to their education than mere mechanical recitation and correct pronunciation. Silent contemplation and penetrating insight into mantras and texts are exemplars of Vedic pedagogy.

In the Rigveda (VII, 103, 1) there is a reference to extended periods of silent meditation and contemplation (sometimes many years) in which *Brāhmanas* realize enlightenment. When the period of silence ends, the burst out into speech (*vācham avādishūh*) is likened unto frogs quickened into activity by the clouds ( *parjanya*) after a year of slumber.<sup>48</sup> The students (*Brāhmanā vratachārīnah*) who utilize this pedagogical method of maintaining a vow of silence do so in order to profoundly expound the sacred texts.<sup>49</sup> Again: “I ask: what is the source of *Vāk*, Speech? Speech or Word is God (*Brahmāyam Vāchah*). That Word I cannot comprehend so long as I am bound by the senses and objectivity (*ninyah sannaddho manasā charāmi*). It is the dawn of *Rita*

(Supreme Knowledge) which alone leads to the comprehension of *Vāk* (Rigveda I, 164, 37).”<sup>50</sup>

The mere recitation of mantra without realizing the ultimate ground from which the *Rīk* (word) and *Akshara* (letter) arise (as do all phenomena) leads to the danger of perceiving the *Rigveda* as a vehicle of *aparā* (inferior) *vidya* (knowledge). The *Rishi Yāska* metaphorically describes this inferior way of knowing: Among pupils studying together “there may be one who merely sees the Word but does not see its meaning. Another who hears it...but does not hear it fully. He only utters the sound without understanding its sense (*dhvanimātramevochchārati*). But to a worthy pupil it fully unfolds itself like the devoted wife appearing in her best dress before her husband who can ‘see’ and ‘hear’ her fully ( *Nīrukta*, x, 71 ,4 and *Durgāchārya*).”<sup>51</sup> It is like a tree not bearing any fruit (*phala*) or flower (*pushpa*). The sage Sāyana (in his Introduction to the *Rigveda* commentary) likens the *pushpa* to mean knowledge of *Dharma* as expounded in the *pūrva-kānda* of *Rigveda*, and *phalam* as knowledge of *Parabrahma* as elucidated in the its *uttara-kanda*. He further explains that, as fruit brings us satiation, knowledge of *Brahma* fulfils all our desires.<sup>52</sup>

Those who do not understand the meaning of the sacred word (*arvak*) and of wisdom (*aprajajñayah*) are fated, by their cultivation of imperfect speech (*Vācham abhipadya pāpayā*=*Vācham laukikīm prāpya layā pāpayā pāpakārinyā vāchā*) to plough the fields or work the loom.<sup>53</sup> The sage Yāska (*Nirukta*, I, 18) acerbically condemns mere recitation of the *Veda* as he quotes from the *Samhitaupanishad Brāmana*: “He is only the bearer of a burden, the blockhead (*sthānurauam bhāraharah*), who having studied the *Veda* does not understand its meaning (like an ass, *sthānu*, carrying a load of sandal-

wood whose weight it feels without enjoying its fragrance).” Yāska continues with another metaphor, “Learning without understanding is called cramming (*nigadenaiva sabyate*); like dry wood on ashes, which can never blaze.” Sāyana interprets the last metaphor as follows: “...the words of the Veda which are received from the teacher without their meaning, and repeatedly recited as texts, do not kindle and reveal their inner essence (*yad vedavākyaāchāeyāt grihitam arthjñānarahitam pātharūpenaiva punah punaruchchāyate tat kadāchidapi na jnalati svārtham na prakāsayati*).”<sup>54</sup> Vedic and Upanishadic pedagogy is based on a direct mind-to-mind transmission from Guru to disciple. The epistemic acts of name (*namo*) and form (*rupa*) and coherency of meaning (*prāmana vartikā*) have their origin and validity from the direct perception of truth, that is, the realization of the ground of Being, *Brahman*.

The *Brāhmana-Samghas*, X, 71, I (The Work of Learned Assemblies) states that the first step in education is the cultivation of popular or demotic speech by which individual objects are named (*nāmadheyam dadhānāh*). This act of naming the objects of experience (in its mundane understanding) cannot give expression to the profound ground of Being from which both name and form have arisen. Through acts of *tapas* and *yoga* the *Rishis* have refined demotic Sanskrit into the holy liturgical form of Sanskrit. Human beings, according to the Vedantic and Upanishadic tradition, have the ability to articulate and understand speech (*vak*), whereas animals lack this capability. Aristotle’s famous phrase, *zoon echon logon*, about the animal that possesses articulate speech and understanding, expresses an idea that is closely related to the Indian traditions. Consequently, the attainment of human birth with the auspicious qualities of a healthy body (not deaf, dumb or diseased), being born in a land where the Dharma exists, finding

a qualified Guru and having the leisure time to practice the Dharma is what makes possible the realization of the nature of Mind - the ultimate goal of yogic practice.

The evolution of demotic Sanskrit into liturgical Sanskrit was dependent on the learned assemblies of *Rishis* (*dhīrāh*) (sober sages). The Rigveda (x, 71, 2) likens this refinement of language unto grains passing through a sieve (*sāktumiva tita unā punanto*). These groups of *Rishis* were fellow seekers of the highest reality to which they gave expression in the liturgical form of Sanskrit. These assemblies of experientially realized *Rishis*, through the process of philosophical debate and discussion (*Vidyat-Samghe vachamakrata*), revealed the sublime import of the Vedic Hymns.<sup>55</sup>

These learned assemblies were held at the time of Vedic sacrifices (Rigveda x, 71, 3) and described as “opening up the way which the wise (*dhīrāh=viditārthah*) tread for finding speech.”<sup>56</sup> These sacrifices (*Yajnas*) were offerings to create conducive circumstances for revealing the Dharma. Individual *Rishis* were repositories of sacred speech and revealed their sacred commentaries on the Vedas, which were collected and codified. These sacred commentaries were spread throughout the Indian sub-continent for students studying the Vedas.<sup>57</sup>

The different processes in Vedic pedagogy are indicated by the words *āyan*, *avindan*, *ābhṛitya* and *adadhuh*; that is, attainment, mastery, collection and propagation. The manner of teaching the above processes is also mentioned in the Rigveda (I, 164, 24). Liturgical Sanskrit was to be studied in the form of meters. “Seven meters embraced Vedic speech and made it articulate, like warbling birds flocking to the speechless tree.”<sup>58</sup> The mnemonic superiority of poetic meter was found to be an easier and more efficient method of inculcating Vedic knowledge.

The Guru's meter style recitation of the Vedic texts included the exact pronunciation of every letter, syllable and word according the standardized rules regulating accents and stresses and giving a pervasive view to the vibrations of every sound to reveal its inner sense. The students repeated and attempted to mirror the chanting qualities and sounds of that emitted from the lips of their Guru.<sup>59</sup>

But the mastery of the recitation of the holy texts (*akshara-prāpti*) was the crucial step in Vedic pedagogy. Sāyana, in his *Introduction to Rigveda Commentary*, states that mastery of sacred texts is followed by perception of their meaning.<sup>60</sup> This mastery of meaning was a difficult and prolonged endeavor requiring profound contemplation and yogic absorption. Students underwent a strenuous discipline when they took their practice vows (*vratachārinah*). The sage, Yāska, interprets this *vrata* as a vow of silence and meditation that enables the student to realize the truths transmitted to him or her through the sacred texts. The period of silent meditation is likened to the hibernation period of frogs until they are quickened by the rains. After realizing enlightenment the students burst forth with teachings and commentaries (*vācham avādishuh*), ready to assume their role as pedagogues in the Vedic tradition. Yāska describes this pedagogic process as the *Rishis upadesa* (teaching), which transforms their students into *Srutarshis* (seers who have heard the Truth from the lips of their Guru).<sup>61</sup>

At an early stage, the Rigvedic educational system was comprised of small home schools run by a Guru who admitted resident pupils. They took prescribed vows and were known as *vratachāris*. These vows include the *Upanayana* (2<sup>nd</sup> birth) and *Brahmachāri* (renunciate) or in the case of a female adept (*Brahmavādinis*). After the *Upanayana* ceremonies which unfolds his mind and body (*Āchāryah upanayamāno brahmachārinam*

*krinute garghmantah*) as mentioned in Rigveda (x, 109, 5 and iii, 8, 4 and 5) the teacher recreates a new body of learning in the student (*Tam rātristisrah udare bibharti*).<sup>62</sup>

The *Brahmachāri*'s external and internal behavior has been transformed. He wears a girdle (*mekhalā*) of Kusa grass, the skin of the black antelope (*kāshnam*), and long hair (*dīrghasmasru*), and carries fuel for morning and evening fire *pujas* (offerings) to *Agni*. Besides these external marks, the *Brahmachāri* is distinguished by certain inner attributes and disciplines: (1) *Srama* (self-restraint), (2) *tapas* (ascetic practices) and (3) *Dikshā* (consecration to a life of discipline through prescribed regulations such as begging and rituals). He is an example of that discipline and detachment which have created and sustained the universe.<sup>63</sup> In the tradition of Hermes Trismetigus (the thrice blessed) the saying “as is above, as is below” conveys the same idea about the identity of self and the universe. The microcosm and macrocosm are an equivalency. The Upanishads state it in the following way: *Tat vam asi* (thou art that).<sup>64</sup> All creation is the outcome of *Brahmacharya* and *Tapas*.<sup>65</sup>

The *Āchārya* (preceptor) is similarly extolled and praised. According to the sage *Sāyana*, he is compared to Yama (the god of Death, who kills the sinner) or the *guru* of the *Nachiketas* (students of the finest spiritual sensibilities); to *Varuna* (either the *guru* of *Bhrigu* or protector against sins {according to *Sāyana*}); and to the Sun and Moon as givers of illumination and happiness, from whose pleasure is derived all prosperity. The *Achārya* is to receive sustenance from the devoted disciple who performs his prescribed duties (*Tapasā piparti*) as did the god *Mitra*, who was the disciple of the god *Varuna*, who gave *Mitra* gifts to the limit of his resources. According to the *Yajurveda* (*Taiti. Sam.*, vi, 3, 10, 5), regarding the teacher student relationship, there are three debts the

student owed the preceptor: (1) the *Brahamacharya*, the commitment to acquire and disseminate the knowledge that was transmitted to him by his Guru; (2) his offerings to gods through Vedic sacrifices (*yajñas*), and (3) his respect and obligations to his family through the continuation of his genetic and spiritual lineage.<sup>66</sup>

Although Rigvedic education emphasized the realization of the ultimate nature of reality, it also developed into a secular pedagogy for the majority of the population for whom the highest path was unattainable. The Rigvedic Age developed a thriving economic, political and cultural world aside from its religious vitality. This progressive society had its foundations in a highly developed system of technical, industrial and commercial pedagogy. The following selections from the Rigveda give us a small window of illumination into the vibrant world of that age (ix, 112):

1. We different men have different tastes and pursuits (*dhiyo vi vratāni*). The carpenter (*Taskhā*) seeks something that is broken (*rishtam*), the physician (*Bhishag*) a patient (*rutam*), the priest (*Brahmā*) someone who will perform sacrifice (*suvantam ichchati*).
2. With dried-up faggots (*jaratībhiroshadhībhih*), with birds' feathers (*parnebhīh sakunānām*, with stones (*asmabhīh*) and fire (*dyubhīh*), the artisan (*kārmārah*) continually seeks after (*ichchāti*) a man with plenty of gold (*hīranavanantam*).
3. I am a poet (*Kāruh aham*), my father is a physician (*Bhishag*) and my mother (*nanā*) a grinder of corn (*Upalaprakshinī*).
4. The draught horse (*asvo volhā*) wishes for an easy-going chariot (*sukham ratham*); merry companions (*upamantrinah*) a laugh (*hasanām*); the female sex, the male; and frogs a pond.

This hymn illustrates the power of desire for material things, even in the age when Dharma teachings and sacred mantra pervaded the lives of Vedic Indians. Even a *Rishi* householder could not ensure that all the members of his household would seek the highest path. The mother of a *Rishi* was an illiterate woman who behaved like a good

housewife, grinding corn, while his father cured the physical ills of his patients. Each was after a worldly gain (*vasūyavah*).<sup>67</sup>

The body of the Rigveda cites various references<sup>68</sup> to the diverse pursuits of the times, which implies a diffusion of industrial education in the country. Considerable progress was made in animal husbandry and agriculture. Cattle, sheep, goats, horses and donkeys were domesticated. Dogs were utilized for hunting, herding, and guarding. The plough was drawn by teams of oxen (6, 8 or 12 in number). Fertilizer (*sakan* or *karīsha*) was employed in farming. Lakes (*hrada*), canals (*kulyā*) and wells supplied the water for sophisticated irrigations systems. For example, water was drawn out of wells by buckets (*kosa*) tied to leather-strings (*varatrā*), pulled round a stone pulley (*asma-chakra*) and then emptied into broad channels for irrigation.<sup>69</sup>

Industry and handicrafts flourished in Vedic India. The carpenters made carts, chariots, draught wagons and artistic carvings. The blacksmiths turned out a variety of farming and ancillary utensils. The art of the goldsmith created an exquisite variety of ornaments. Those adept in tanning were in great demand, and supplied bowstrings, slings, thongs, reins, whips and bags. The advanced arts of textiles, including weaving (*Vāya*), spinning and dying were a prominent fixture in Rigvedic India.<sup>70</sup>

There was extensive trade and commerce in Rigvedic India. A money based economy including the modalities of barter, debt and interest was an important aspect of daily life. Sea borne trade was carried out in boats (*nau*) and ships (*plava*) propelled by oars (of up to 100 oars). There was also a great deal of large-scale architecture, and cities or fortified places (*Pur*) were very common. The Rigveda makes reference to a hundred cities of stone (iv, 30, 20: *Satam asmanmayīnam*). Iron cities or fortifications (*purah*

*āysdīh*, RV i, 58, 8 ; ii, 20, 8 : iv, 27, I) and cities with a hundred enclosures or fortifications (*satabhujī*, RV. I, 166, 8 ; vii, 15, 14) are also mentioned. It seems reasonable to infer, from all of the art and craftsmanship mentioned in the Rigveda and anthropological evidence, that a high degree of education in the training of apprentices was produced either by individual mentors and/or art or craft type schools, some of which were perhaps affiliated with local or regional guilds.

The later Vedic *Samhitas* of *Sāma*, *Yajuh*, *Atharva* ushered in the age of a different type of literary genre, the *Bhrāmanas*. The principle that governs their method of compilation is quite distinct from the Rigveda. Ceremonial order regarding a fixed delineation of sacrifices became of prime importance. In the Rigveda the order of the hymns has nothing to do with the order of sacrifices. Many of the hymns do not utilize sacrifices. The later Vedas developed a more complicated ceremonial activity and priesthood.<sup>71</sup>

The priesthood now consisted of 16 members under 4 divisions: (1) *Hotri*, (2) *Udgātri*, (3) *Advaryu* and (4) *Brahman*. Collectively, these priests were known as *Ritvij*. In addition, assistant priests of inferior status were also mentioned. The *Kaushitakins* added a seventeenth *Ritvij* called the *Sadasya*, who is to oversee the whole sacrificial puja.<sup>72</sup>

The higher aspect of Vedic education began its devolution into the study and application of external, material and mechanical aspects of worship and sacrifice.<sup>73</sup>

This brief overview of ancient Vedic pedagogy suggests that a majority of the philosophical and religious concepts and lifestyles that Vedic pedagogy developed were based on harmonizing the religious ordering of society and the quest for individual

liberation between a variety of racial, religious and linguistic groups as they proceeded on their particular paths toward spiritual realization. The stages of an individual's life path (*asharamas*) were mediated by the primary goal of personal liberation and creating balance and compassion in the social order. Liberation, social harmony and compassion were the inseparable ideals for the Vedic system of education and became the foundational concepts for Indian Buddhist pedagogy.

### Chapter 3: Ancient Buddhist Pedagogy: From the Time of Shakyamuni Buddha to 1200 CE

#### *The Emergence of Buddhism; The Three Jewels*

Buddhism is formed around three basic ideas: the life of the Buddha; the collected teachings of Buddha, called the *Dharma*; and the community of Buddhists, called the *Sangha*. Collectively, these are known as the Three Jewels.<sup>74</sup> Buddhist education is based on all of the above and the motivation to make the Three Jewels accessible for all sentient beings. Buddhist education, like Buddhist meditation practices, has its roots based on the more ancient traditions of education represented by Vedic philosophy, Brahmanism and Hinduism. Although, being from the noble/warrior caste (*Kshatriya*), the Buddha was the beneficiary of a Brahmanical education. Buddhism adopted the use of Sanskrit as the primary language for recording mantras, *dharanis*, literature and pith instruction. Like the Vedic practices, Buddhism stressed the ritualized memorization of primary texts (*sutras*) and their ancillary commentaries (*shastras*). Students were orally examined by their masters and were trained in logic and debate. Although it developed monasticism to a much greater degree than during the Vedic period, monastic practices were also present during the earlier period, and Buddhists built on these practices. Buddhist education utilized and coexisted with earlier non-Buddhist traditions. Buddhist universities often taught Vedic, Brahmanic, Jainist and other philosophies as well as their own.<sup>75</sup>

A major difference between Shakyamuni Buddha's teaching and that of the other Indic approaches to liberation, was Buddha's egalitarian soteriology. The potential for liberation did not depend upon the socio-religious status of the seeker; instead, the Buddha argued that all sentient beings are innately Buddhas.

Gautama Buddha's teaching transformed the conceptions of a rigid birth lineage caste that had begun to become prevalent during the later Vedic period into a lineage of self-realization potentiality innate for human beings. Although the Buddha presence and doctrine magnetized a multitude of disciples and students, there were a plethora of Indian schools of self-realization.

Shakyamuni Buddha was not the only well known spiritual teacher in ancient India. Mahavira, the founder of Jainism, seems to have slightly predated him.<sup>76</sup> Both of these experiential philosophers emerged during a worldwide golden age of experiential and speculative metaphysics. These traditions heralded in a new era manifesting great advancements in teaching and education. The Buddha was roughly a contemporary of the axial age of luminaries, including Confucius in China and Socrates in Greece, both of whom shared his interest in child and adult pedagogy.

One of the important functions of traditional ancient Indian public debates was to elucidate and educate the villagers, townspeople, yogins and ascetics about the spiritual teacher and his/her teachings. This led to comparing and contrasting their personae and dogmas. It was often the case that the loser of a grand debate was sent into exile or forced to join the sangha of the debate winner. Public and University debates became very important pedagogic devices for Buddhist teachers.

At the core of Indian education, inclusive of Buddhist **pedagogy(,)** was the teacher-student relationship. Although literacy, writing and scholarship were practiced and admired, the primary methodology was grounded in yogic meditative practices and the all important personal relationship between a Master (*Guru*) and his students.<sup>77</sup> This

relationship was a very deep and personal one-on-one when oral pith instructions and transmissions were given and received.

In the seminal and later stages of ancient Indian Buddhist education, oral transmission of knowledge was emphasized. These were primarily *sutras* (teachings given directly from Shakyamuni Buddha) and *shastras* (commentaries by noted scholars and practitioners). While notable for its spiritual and religious heritage, India is not so noted for its historical scholarship. There were very few formal histories written in India over the centuries.

The ancient Chinese tradition of history is quite different from ancient India. In China, history was one of the most respected forms of scholarship, a country where historical events were always carefully noted and periodically compiled into larger, more formal histories. There is no similar tradition in India. Therefore most of what we know about Indian history is gleaned from facts noted in passing, within its own literature or in descriptions written by others, and Buddhist history is no exception. Fortunately, there were a few visitors at different times, especially from China, who carefully noted what they saw as they journeyed. These accounts, in particular those of the great Chinese Buddhist pilgrims Hiuen Tsang and I Ching, provide most of the documented sources for the study of the history of Buddhist education, and in particular, for the larger universities.<sup>78</sup>

### *Life of the Buddha*

Siddhartha, of the Shakya clan, was a spiritual teacher from ancient India. He was the founder of Buddhism and is generally recognized by Buddhists as a tenth stage Bodhisattva, who after countless incarnations, realizes complete total Enlightenment (*Samma-sambuddha*) as the historical Gautama or Shakyamuni (sage of the Shakyas)

Buddha of our age..<sup>79</sup> The dates of his birth and death are open to some dispute, but the general scholarly consensus places his birth around 563 BCE and his *paranirvana* (dissolution of his five element corporeal body), at the age of 80, in 483 BCE. Some scholars suggest slightly later dates (410 to 400 BCE.)<sup>80</sup>

In Sanskrit, the word Buddha means one who has awakened (*Buddhi*) or becomes enlightened to the truth (*Dharma*) of *samsara* and *nirvana*. It does not refer to any single being, but rather to anyone who has become fully awakened/enlightened, and who has realized Nirvana. The Buddha was not the first or only Buddha; he was one of innumerable Buddhas manifesting in countless chilikosmic world systems. The meaning of “Buddha” is used in a variety of hermeneutical modalities depending on the views and needs of Buddhist communities and their traditions. In the *Thervada* tradition, the Buddhism practiced mostly in southern India and Southeast Asia, it refers to any being who has become enlightened *without* a teacher. Of course, within this context, a caveat needs to be understood; that is, that the Shakyamuni Buddha had spiritual teachers during his ontogenesis as a Prince of the Shakya clan, and when he left his kingdom, wife and child to study under various ascetic and yogins.

Those who have received instruction from an Enlightened One are called *Arahants* or *Arhats*. In the Mahayana tradition, practiced mostly in the north of India, as well as in Tibet, China, and other northern parts of Asia, the definition of Buddha refers to *any* being that has completely awakened (in one or thousands of lifetimes,) regardless of method. In the above sense, an *Arahant* may also be considered a Buddha.<sup>81</sup> The Mahayana and Vajrayana tradition also includes the five Buddha families, each representing a different color (red, white, green, yellow and blue), the five transforming

elemental energies (earth, water, fire, air and space), the five cardinal directions (also representing the Sambhogakaya Buddha realms), and the five Wisdoms (Mirror Like Awareness, Discriminating Awareness, etc.), In Vajrayana Buddhism, the meanings, colors and directions may vary in accordance with the mandalic vision utilized by the yogin and his/her tradition. **According to Theravadan, Mahayana and Vajrayana scriptures, the future Buddha has already been given the name Maitreya (loving kindness).**<sup>82</sup>

The origins of Buddhist education lay in Buddha's own habit of discoursing on his ideas to his disciples, and to others who expressed interest in the teachings of the Buddha Dharma. The Buddha's teaching on education and soteriology continue to be contemporary twenty-five centuries after their initial presentations.

The fundamental daily activities of the Buddha, over four decades of walking the plains of central India, included begging for food, designing and creating the rules for the monastic Sangha, giving teachings, and performing blessings. He taught that one should realize that one's and all sentient beings' mental and physical sufferings are due to identifying with habitual tendencies or volitional formations (*samskaras*) of one's mental continuum instead of realizing that all composite phenomena are impermanent, that is, subject to change and decay. Composite phenomena continually arise and dissolve, reflecting as continuous change, creating mental and physical states of suffering. This change leads to dissatisfaction with *samsaric* cycling and the initial inspiration to begin pursuing the quest for enlightenment. From this dissatisfaction, disgust with *samsaric* existence and the development of loving kindness and compassion for all sentient beings

arise. All Buddhas begin their quest for Enlightenment with a profound disgust and distrust of *samsaric* existence and by generating *Bodhicitta*.

The sage of the Shakyas, during over fifty years of wandering throughout the Indian subcontinent, compassionately offered guidance, innumerable techniques of transformation, and maps of consciousness identifying the important landmarks along the path. The Buddha contended that it was an individual's choice to travel the *Bodhisattva marga*, based on their own penetrating insight (*vipassana*) into the nature of suffering.<sup>83</sup>

In the Buddha's view, the formal teachings were only the beginning of knowledge. They must then be studied and reflected upon; and tested in the real world of personal experience. One of the metaphors used in the Buddhist traditions is that of a boat or raft. The raft signifies the gross and subtle modalities of the relative teaching techniques. When practitioner navigates to 'the other shore,' the boat (mind training techniques) is no longer needed. The mind is no longer conditioned by *samsaric* existence.

It is only through this process of continual refinement that the mind is educated and trained to see through all forms of self-deception. The mind is able to realize higher levels of knowledge leading to total Enlightenment. Furthermore, the Buddha, experientially understood that if one's knowledge was entirely derived from and dependent on others, it would not be an ultimately satisfying state of being, and one would have little power to transform one's own life and mind. Knowledge did not reside "elsewhere"; but within one's own heart/mind. The mind has an innate disposition for the experience of awakening. One's penetrating insight (*vipassana*), experientially realized, guides the practitioner successfully on the path to Enlightenment.<sup>84</sup>

Buddha's teachings had two parts, explanation (view) and realization (practice). The explanations are the transmission of the texts, while the realization is one's personal experience of the teachings transmitted orally or through the sacred texts.

The importance of oral transmission, was established in the early Vedic tradition. This transmission was dependent on a realized teacher.<sup>85</sup> Buddhist ideas have changed over the years, and a wide variety of different schools and sects have emerged as Buddhism has spread around the world, a process that continues today.

### *Dharma*

After Buddha's death, accounts of his life, discourses or teachings, and the monastic and householder vows and rules he established were summarized, and memorized by the *Sangha*, the community of Buddhists. The teachings that conveyed the path to knowledge were known as the *Dharma*. This refers to the collected teachings of the Buddha, the discourses traditionally attributed to him, and the commentaries on those written since his death. The teachings are organized into the *Tripitaka*, or three baskets. These are the *Abhidharma* (works on metaphysics), the *Vinaya* (monastic rules and works on disciplines), and the *Sutras* (doctrines, aphorisms, and self). The process of creating the *Tripitaka* took place primarily between the 2nd century BCE and the 2nd century CE. By this time additional commentaries (*shastras*) and teachings had begun to be added to the list of important Buddhist texts, over time greatly modifying many aspects of Buddhist philosophy.<sup>86</sup>

Originally passed on as oral traditions, most of these were not written down until about 400 years after his death.<sup>87</sup> The original teachings are extremely difficult to reconstruct or to separate from later writings, and there is some disagreement about some of the more esoteric points as well as the specifics about the rules for monks and

monasteries. Nevertheless, there is general agreement over the basic points and principles.

The basic teachings of Buddha were the Four Truths, and the Noble Eightfold Path. The Four Truths establish that all sentient beings suffer mentally and physically, that the causes of suffering are the three Poisons (ignorance, desire and aversion), that there is the possibility of the cessation of suffering, and that the path that leads to the cessation of suffering is the Noble Eightfold Path (*arya stangah margah*). The Noble Eightfold Path describes the basic principles for following the Middle Way, avoiding the extremes of pleasure and pain and laying the foundations for perfecting a lifestyle conducive to integrating meditative realization within a societal context. Other basic concepts, such as dependent origination, the rejection of the infallibility of accepted scripture, and the Three Dharma Seals (*Anicca* {impermanence of all composite phenomena}, *Anatta* {non-substantial impermanent persona/self}, and *dukkha* {uneasy, unsteady, disquieted, pain or suffering}) are very important to explaining the Buddha's teachings.<sup>88</sup>

The Buddha's teaching on dependent origination or arising (*pratītyasamutpāda*) is one of the profound foundational aspect of Buddhist metaphysics, and consequently an important pedagogic device for perfecting the metaphysical and epistemological view, meditation and conduct of a Buddhist student. Each phenomena **manifests** as a condition for the totality of all phenomena. The totality of phenomena manifests in a complex net or web of cause and effect covering time; past, present and future. This metaphor of a net is utilized in a famous Mahayana sutra, *The Magical Net of Appearances*, where all sentient beings have, are and will manifest, each as precious jewels with infinitely

reflecting facets; each jewel reflecting upon all of the other sentient being jewels simultaneously. This metaphor attempts to point toward an experiential view of reality that recognizes that there is no solid ground or substrate to phenomenal existence. All composite phenomena/things are conditioned and transient/impermanent (*anicca*); they have no real independent separate solid nature. Twenty five hundred years after the Lord Buddha promulgated his view regarding the non-substantiality and interdependence of all phenomena, modern western science revelations in Quantum physics, Heisengberg's denial of objectivity in scientific experiments and recent theories of multi-dimensional **universe**, corroborate Buddha Shakyamuni's teachings.

**The following Buddhist doctrines and terms are utilized as necessary and pedagogic road maps for the Buddhist student:**

*The Four Noble Truths:*

- 1) The Truth of Suffering (*dukkha*) is an inherent part of existence.
- 2) The Truth of the origin of suffering (*samudaya*) is ignorance (*avidya*) which gives rise to the vicious cycle (*samsara*) of attachment/craving and aversion/anger (collectively known as the Three Poisons-*Avidya*, *trsna* and *dvesa*). This cycle is also termed the cycle of birth and earth. These Three poisons give rise to a multitude of mental/emotional afflictions.
- 3) The possibility of the cessation (*nirodha*) of ignorance, desire and aversion.
- 4) The path (*marga*), The Noble Eightfold Path, which leads to the cessation of suffering (ignorance, desire and aversion).

*The Noble Eightfold Path:*

- 1) Perfect View, Perspective or Understanding (*samyag-drsṭi*)

Morality, Ethical Discipline, or Precepts (*sila*)

2) Perfect Intention, resolve or aspirations (*samyak-samkalpa*)

Meditative Awareness (*samyag samadhi*)

3) Perfect Speech (*samyag-vāc*)

4) Perfect Action or Conduct (*samyak-karmānta*)

5) Perfect Livelihood. (*samyag-ājīva*)

6) Perfect effort or endeavor (*samyag-vyāyām*)

7) Perfect mindfulness or awareness (*samyak-smṛti*)

8) Perfect concentration and meditative absorption/awareness combines with the seventh stage of the path (*samyak-smṛti*) and the *four Jnanas* (increasingly perfecting states of meditative absorption/awareness.

It should be noted that in the Great Forty Sutta (*Mahācattārīsaka Sutta*), which appears in the Pali Canon, Lord Shakyamuni Buddha discourses on cultivating the Eightfold Path in order to realize two further perfecting stages on the path once Enlightenment (the fourth *jnana* has been realized). These stages also fall under the category of *jnana* and are termed Perfecting Knowledge (*sammāññāna*) and Perfect soteriological realization {*sammāvimukt*}.<sup>89</sup>

#### The 12 Nidanas (links)

The term *pratitya* has three different meanings -- meeting, relying, and depending -- but all three, in terms of their basic import, mean dependence. *Samutpada* means arising. It is that which arises in dependence, reliance and through the power of conditions. On a subtle level, it is the main reason why phenomena are not inherent or solid. The student reflects on the non-substantiality of the arising and cessation of all

phenomena, which produce pleasure and pain, help and harm, etc. Here, the student reflects causal relations of phenomena based on the Buddha's penetrating insights to the cause and effect of actions in cyclic existence.<sup>90</sup>

The Buddha sets forth, in detail, the twelve links of dependent-arising in the *Rice Seedling Sutra*. Buddha, in his usual manner, teaches by responding to questions. In this sutra the Buddha speaks of dependent-arising in three ways: The student, through the teaching on the twelve *nidanas*, first learns that there arise, sequentially from ignorance/obscuration, the following: action consciousness, name and form, the six sense spheres, contact, feeling, attachment, grasping, existence, birthing, and aging and death. The second, subtler level of dependent-arising that applies to all phenomena; they are dependent upon their composite parts.<sup>91</sup> The third, more profound level, states that phenomena are merely imputed by terms and conceptuality in dependence upon their bases of imputation. The objects arise from non substantial mental constructs, the bases of their imputation. The imputed object has no foundational substrate and cannot be found. It follows, that all phenomena have dependently arisen.<sup>92</sup>

The twelve links of dependent-arising are **explicated** in terms of a process of originating from **obscuration**/ignorance and in terms of a process of purification. They may be presented in forward, reverse and other orders. The forward order is initiated from ignorance:

- due to the condition of ignorance, action arises;
- due to the condition of action, consciousness arises;
- due to the condition of consciousness, name and form arise;
- due to the condition of name and form, the six sense spheres arise;
- due to the condition of the six sense spheres, contact arises;
- due to the condition of contact, feeling arises;
- due to the condition of feeling, attachment arises;
- due to the condition of attachment, grasping arises;

due to the condition of grasping, the potential of existential **presencing** (karma acquisitions) arises;  
 due to the condition of existence, birth arises;  
 due to the condition of birth, aging and dying arise.

*Rejection of the infallibility of accepted scripture*

Teachings should not be accepted unless they are borne out by our experience and are praised by the wise. See the Kalama Sutta for details.

*Anicca (Sanskrit: anitya)*

That all things are impermanent.

*Anatta (Sanskrit: ana-tman)*

That the perception of a constant "self" is an illusion.

*Dukkha (Sanskrit: duh.kha)*

That all beings suffer in all situations due to an obscured mind.

*The Middle Path.*

Integrating the view, meditation and action of the Buddha's teaching may be summed up in his Middle Path doctrine, Buddha's discourse on how to approach one's life, stressing the necessity of moderation, and the importance of avoiding extremes, in particular either excessive asceticism or excessive hedonism. Throughout Buddhism, there is an emphasis on personal knowledge and experience, and not on formal teachings. This concept is core to understanding the central approach of Buddhist education.<sup>93</sup>

The Buddha emphasized calming the mind (*shamatha*) and its concomitant state of *vipassana* (penetrating insight), in conjunction with appropriate speech and ethical behavior. He questioned the commonly held notions of fixed caste, depending on the God(s) for liberation, and dependence on Brahmanic ceremonials. The Buddha emphasized the individual's effort<sup>94</sup>

These teachings are the basis for the core *Theravadan*, *Mahayana* and *Vajrayana* teachings. While the teachings of the first turning emphasized the non-substantiality of the self, the second and third turnings of the wheel (wheel) emphasized the non-substantiality and vast openness of all of phenomena. The essence of the second turning was Lord Nargajuna's *Prajñāpāramita*, the perfecting wisdom that "crosses over" the way to fully enlightened knowledge (*samyak sambudhha*). This is the view that no phenomenon has individual existential presencing in and of itself. Ultimately there is no separation between relative (*samsara*) and ultimate reality (*nirvana*).<sup>95</sup>

The corollary to the inseparability of relative and ultimate reality is Lord Buddha's (not previously promulgated in the Vedic tradition) teaching on the dependent origination of all phenomena. This interdependence of phenomena, in particular, sentient beings, is foundational for developing compassion for all sentient beings. When the student experientially realizes that he/she is inextricably linked with all sentient beings, absolute and relative *bodhicitta* arises. The suffering of others is a continuing openness to the phenomenal display of the world. These teachings are contained in the lengthy *Prajñāpāramita Sutras*. Shorter versions of them are extant in the Mahayana Diamond and Heart Sutras.<sup>96</sup>

The third turning teaches that the path toward realization and enlightenment is open only to those who have fully and well trained in wisdom, and who have completely and totally directed their minds towards enlightenment of all beings. They teach the vastness of the path, and the inexpressible wonder of being. These teachings are called the *Tathagatagarbha* (womb or space that is suchness or womb of all the Buddhas) and Dharmakaya (the vast space or unmanifested Truth body), representing the potential for

enlightenment within all sentient beings. The essence of the Third Turning is that the ultimate nature of reality can only be understood through analysis of the three natures (the imaginary, the dependent, and the absolute), and that underlying all realities, from the most material to the most sublime, is a great purity. Sutras of the Third Turning include the *Avatamsaka*, the *Samdhinirmocana*, the *Ratnakuta*, the *Lankavatara*, and the *Tathagatagarbha* Sutras. Many of the original teachings have been lost over the years. Some have been preserved in Sanskrit, but mostly through the Chinese and Tibetan canons.<sup>97</sup>

*Sangha: The Buddhist Order, and the Monastic Roots of Buddhist Education.*

The Buddhist inner *sangha* was the community of Buddhist practitioners and the outer *sangha* were householder material sponsors for the inner *sangha*. The inner *sangha* may also be described as the “Buddhist *ecclesia*.” It consisted of monastics and some householders. It was dedicated primarily to the promotion of Buddhism and Buddhist ideals, although over time it took on many secular characteristics and functions. In particular, as Buddhist universities developed it became the major source of formal learning throughout India. It also took on many administrative and management functions for royal households, such as managing hospitals and supervising construction.<sup>98</sup>

However, the largest and most important part of the *sangha* was its duty to train the younger monks. Every *Bhikku* (fully ordained Buddhist monk) was expected to accept a pupil, “to provide himself with a *Sāmaṇera* (a novice monk under twenty), to give a *Nissaya* (monastic apprenticeship for at least 5 years), and to confer the *Upasamapdā* (higher ordination).”<sup>99</sup> Jack Carbine did a case study of a *Shwegyin* ordination that took place in April of 2000. He demonstrates how the *Upasamapda* is believed to mark the

"official" point at which a man is communally defined as a religiously exemplary monastic, a lineage holder of the Buddha and his successors.<sup>100</sup>

*Influences of Vedic Traditions, Brahmanism and Hinduism*

Buddhist education in ancient India, like Buddhist thought, built on and developed from earlier practices and institutions. It was greatly influenced by older Vedic and Brahmanical practices, and in fact Buddha himself was the beneficiary of a Brahmanical education. In particular, the Buddhists adopted the use of Sanskrit as the primary language for recording literature and instruction. Like the older Vedic practices, Buddhist teaching stressed the ritualized memorization of texts, but stressed that if they did not deal with revealed character then Vedic texts should be treated as any other. Although the Buddhists developed monasticism to a much greater degree than during the Vedic period, monastic practices were also present during the earlier period, and Buddhists built on these practices.<sup>101</sup>

The Buddhists did not entirely replace earlier educational practices, but coexisted with them. Buddhist universities often taught Vedic, Brahmanical, Jainist and other philosophies as well as their own.<sup>102</sup> One of the principal ideas of Buddhist education was the concept of "multiple intelligences," the idea that there were many different paths that one could follow to Enlightenment, and that the object of education was to help students find the path that was most appropriate for them. In particular, they looked for the method that suited their student's family background and individual abilities, which would not only guide them on the path to enlightenment, but assist them in their secular livelihood. Mastery of a secular craft was considered an important part of Buddhist education, and students were not only encouraged to learn a trade, but were required to do so.<sup>103</sup>

Memorization was the major technique used in traditional Indian education, especially before the advent of written texts and the emergence of libraries. Before writing, of course, there was no other way to study and learn. One had to find a teacher who themselves had memorized the ancient texts and teachings, and learn from them. In fact, for a long time, and until several centuries after the Buddha's paranirvana, the study of written literature was severely frowned upon. It was only after writing became widespread, and adequate libraries became available, that learning from written texts became the common method of teaching. Despite this, for a long time students continued to be expected to memorize the essential teachings, and to know them well enough to be able to, in turn, teach them to the next generation.<sup>104</sup>

The emphasis on oral presentation of the teachings is reflected in one of the most common educational practices in traditional Indian education and philosophy, which was the learned debate. A pre-requisite for a capable debater was memorization of *sutras* and *shastras*. Public debates with other kinds of thinkers played a prominent role in the educational process. Students were not taught Buddhist doctrines as a dogma, but were encouraged to question them, and to learn to compare them to other philosophies. They were required to defend their beliefs against Vedic, Jainist and other philosophers in public debates. Those who succeeded in the debates were rewarded, and, in fact, success in this area was required in order to reach advanced status in Buddhist monasteries and universities.<sup>105</sup>

Of all the traditional methods of education, however, there was none more important than the focus on the teacher-student relationship. The guru or teacher was highly revered, then as now, and there was no substitute for direct teaching by an

experienced teacher or master of whatever philosophy or learning a student was interested in. Motivated students would travel a long way to find a master that would teach them. They were also generally expected to offer something in return for their instruction, either in the form of money or goods, or, more commonly, in the form of personal service. Students were expected to wait on their teachers, perform daily chores for them, and do whatever was asked of them. On the other hand, the teachers were also expected to do their duty of teaching, and of passing on their knowledge. It was a symbiotic relationship, and one that was, and still is, at the very core of Indian concepts of education.<sup>106</sup>

The Buddhists, however, also made some significant improvements to traditional Indian ideas. A major difference between Buddhist education and the older forms was that Buddha stressed the practice and realization of ideas and virtue, rather than the religious status gained by birth. Thus, the Buddha would address a person of experiential religious realization as an Aryan, that is, a sublimely noble human being.

Buddhism was democratic in many ways, quite the opposite of the ideas of caste that had begun to become prevalent during the Vedic period, and this democratic spirit permeated ancient Indian Buddhist educational ideals. Nevertheless, it had to compete with these other schools of thought.<sup>107</sup>

#### *Development of Monastic Schools*

As the Buddha became better known and his ideas became more popular, the number of students wanting to study with him increased. Gradually larger groups began to coalesce and become more formally organized. The common practice of Buddhist *bhikhus* was to continually wander, while begging for their food, but gradually the practice of remaining in one place during the three-month rainy season became accepted.

These periods were generally devoted to the disciplined study of Buddhist teachings, and the transmission of the teachings by the older and more experienced monks to the younger ones.<sup>108</sup>

After the Buddha's *paranirvana*, the practice of wandering except during the rainy season continued, but gradually more permanent centers (*vinayas*) became established, eventually forming formal monasteries, which received extensive support from the people as well as royal patronage. A lineage of patriarchs was developed, and these centers grew up around them.<sup>109</sup> Different traditions developed in west and east India. In the west the centers emphasized very strict *Vinaya* observance, the importance of the monastic life, and the ideal of the *Arhat* as a perfect being. In the east, however, the rules were interpreted more flexibly, and householder practice was also emphasized. "The two groups also looked to different lineages of transmission: the western *Sanghas* traced their lineage to the Buddha through the seven patriarchs, while the eastern *Sanghas* maintained a lineage that extended from *Sarvakarman* to *Uttara* and *Yasas*."<sup>110</sup>

The history of Buddhist education is intimately connected with the Buddhist monastic system. Buddhist learning and formal education centered on the monasteries in the same way that Vedic culture centered on the sacrifice.<sup>111</sup> In fact, India during the Buddhist period offered very few educational opportunities apart from or independent of its monasteries. Most monastic institutions were Buddhist; although there were some Jainist and other monastic communities. The monks were in charge of all education, both religious and secular, and supervised nearly all schools from the elementary levels to the highest universities. They were the ones who had both the means and the leisure to engage in the field of education. And, as the primary custodians of Buddhist culture, they

felt that had a responsibility to society as a whole. It was their duty to make the teaching available to India and the rest of the known world.<sup>112</sup>

Since the study of Buddhism required a formal teacher, these monasteries gradually became schools, with the best libraries around, and the major sources of education in India. Some of them grew quite large and developed into some of the world's first substantial universities. The university at Nalanda, in particular, which flourished throughout the first millennium, became known throughout Asia for the quality of its teachings in Buddhist and other philosophies, and especially for the size and quality of its libraries. They also became a center to which Buddhists from other countries could go to make copies of manuscripts for their own libraries.<sup>113</sup>

The rules of Buddhist education were essentially the same as those of the Buddhist monastic orders. Although there were householder (*upasaka*) students as well as monks. The householder students were required to follow the same basic dictates. A majorit of these monastic rules were not the invention of the Buddha, or of his later followers, but were built upon the traditions handed down by the monastic orders of other faiths.<sup>114</sup>

The process of initiating a novice monk into the Buddhist *sangha* closely followed the rubrics used under the Vedic and Brahmanical systems. In that system, the student was required to find a teacher, apply for admission to studentship to that teacher, and then follow a prescribed set of rules to begin their training. Mookerji described the practice:

Under the Brahmanical system the youth had to find his teacher to whom he has to formally apply for admission to studentship in the following words: 'I am come for the *Brahmacharya*. I desire to be a *Brahmcharin*.' Then the teacher 'ties the girdle round him, gives him the staff into his hand, and explains to him the

*Brahmacharya* (the rules of conduct of a religious student), by saying: ‘Thou art a *Brahmacharin*; drink water; perform service; sleep not by day; study the Veda obediently to thy teacher’.<sup>115</sup>

Buddhist practices were much the same, in particular stressing the importance of having a teacher, and entirely forbidding the ordination of anyone who did not have one. It was required that the teacher be an individual, and not a fictitious or nominal one such as a particular monastery or other corporate body. ‘Let no one, O Bhikkus, who has no *Upajjhaya* (spiritual preceptor who emphasized ethical conduct), receive the *Upasampada* (ordination leading to become a Bhikku) ordination.’ ... ‘Let no one receive the *Upasampada* ordination with the Samgha as *Upajjyaya* [Mahavagga, i, 69]’<sup>116</sup> The primary idea was to stress the individual responsibility of the teacher for his pupil’s training and that the teacher must have experiential realization. Training in proper conduct was just as important, if not more so, than academic learning.

There were eight levels of participation in the Sangha; six that were within the monastic communities, and two that were for householders. The six monastic levels were: *bhiksus* and *bhiksunis*, who were fully ordained monks and nuns; *sramanas* and *sramanis*, men and women who had taken the novice’s vows; *siksamanas*, those not old enough to receive formal ordination; and *upavasthas*, who were householders who had taken temporary vows. *Upasakas* and *upasikas* were the men and women who observed the teachings of the Dharma and combined them with their responsibilities as householders.<sup>117</sup>

### *Paramitas*

A basic Buddhist concept is that realization is attained through the application and meaning of the paramitas (perfections) and through rigorous study. There are ten basic stages of meditative absorption, leading to Buddhahood, each of which acts to increase

the infusion of mind and body. The first six stages or *paramitas* are giving, moral conduct, patience, vigor, meditation, and *prajna*. After these basic levels have been accomplished, a certain level of intensity and realization will be achieved, making the student ready for the final four stages, which are skillful means, vows, power and primordial wisdom. In some traditions these are seen as nine stages, but the principles are the same.<sup>118</sup>

### *Three Gates: Body, Speech and Mind*

Another of the basic principles of Buddhist study and practice is the concept of the “three gates,” which are the body, speech and the mind.<sup>119</sup> For a healthy and successful life (the middle way), and to achieve enlightenment, all aspects of the mind and body must be trained to integrate and work together. This is a very fundamental concept of Buddhism, also expressed in the Eight-fold Path, which describes the eight basic parts of life and how one must achieve mastery of each of them. There is no one single truth in Buddhism, and no single lesson that can be learned to achieve enlightenment.

### *Mahacittas or Mahasiddhas*

The importance of training in household crafts is also expressed by the idea of the 84 Mahacittas. They represent Vajrayana Buddhist study household traditions. Each of whom represents one craft or profession, which can anything from doctor to archer to builder.<sup>120</sup> While all professions and crafts were respected and taught, none were so highly honored as that of healers and doctors. All Buddhist monks were required to master the basics of medicine as part of their training.<sup>121</sup> They reflect the multiple intelligence Buddhist approach to pedagogy. Buddhists teachers begin with the premise of multiple paths to enlightenment, and that each student has to find their own way

(*marga*). The Buddhist concept of 84,000 dharma doors is another metaphor for the infinite paths to enlightenment. There is not a single path that is right for every student. Teachers must always be aware of this, and direct their students toward their path/method on the way to Enlightenment.

### *Bodhicitta*

In the Mahayana Buddhist traditions there are individuals who do not wish to become awakened or to achieve complete enlightenment for their own sake, but rather in order to be of benefit to others. They see all sentient beings as being trapped in a cyclic existence (*samsara*) and thus not yet able to reach Buddhahood. A person whose primary wish is to enlighten all others is called a *Bodhisattva*. The wish to relieve the suffering of all sentient beings is called *Bodhicitta*. Etymologically the word *bodhicitta* is a combination of the Sanskrit words *bodhi* or awakening/enlightening, and *citta*, which means mind. It thus means 'mind of enlightenment' or 'the spirit of awakening.'<sup>122</sup>

The concept of *bodhicitta* is a large part of what distinguishes the Mahayana and Vajrayana (or *tantric*) schools of Buddhism from the Theravada schools. The main difference is that those in the Theravada schools wish to be liberated from the cycle of *samsara*, while those in the Mahayana and other later traditions are willing to undergo countless cycles of rebirths in order to enlighten all sentient beings. Thus, generally, if one develops *bodhicitta*, then one is more Mahayana than Theravadan, although there are exceptions among both schools.<sup>123</sup>

There are two primary types of *bodhicitta*; relative *bodhicitta*, in which the object is to free all beings from suffering through wishing prayers and concrete action, and absolute *bodhicitta*, where the practitioner clearly realizes that all bondage and suffering are illusory, yet manifests spontaneous and aimless compassion for the needs of all

sentient beings. The spiritual and creative tension between the two types is an important part of many of the later Mahayana and Vajrayana traditions. An example is the Vajrayana training practices of *tonglen* (sending out love and compassion and taking into oneself the suffering of all sentient beings) and *lojong* (mind training techniques; for example, Jamgon Kontrul the Great's *7 Point Mind Training* teaching).<sup>124</sup>

Absolute and relative bodhicitta are at the pedagogic root of Mahayana and Vajrayana Buddhist education. These Buddhist teachers generally understood that *bodhicitta* does not arise spontaneously in the vast majority of people. It must be cultivated and taught. Students must be inculcated to not only concern themselves with their own suffering, but with those of all beings. Buddhism then becomes both an individual soteriological journey and a means for liberating all sentient beings. The generation and application of *bodhicitta* is termed the two great benefits (self and other). In addition, applied relative *bodhicitta* becomes a method for solving and ameliorating societal disfunctions.<sup>125</sup>

#### *Householder Education*

Besides the Buddhist monks, the universities also admitted householder students, those who had no intentions of taking Buddhist vows or of renouncing their householder responsibilities. These were called *Brahmacharins*. They studied Dharma teachings as well as householder trades and crafts. It is also clear that the *Bhiksunis* (fully ordained Buddhist nuns) made a point of mastering both Dharma and mundane subjects, in order to become competent teachers of both subject matters. It should also be noted, under the Buddhist tradition and the rules of the *Sangha*, that *Bhiksunis* were free to renounce their vows and return to secular life at any time. And apparently many did so. This return to secular life was not uncommon among *Bhikkhus*. The renouncing of vows was not

uncommon among Bhikkhus. Mookerji cites the case of a man who “became seven times a priest, and seven times returned to the laity”.<sup>126</sup> I-tsing also notes that monks “can follow whatever occupation they like.”<sup>127</sup> Perhaps this sets the stage for the Mahayana/Vajrayana *mahasiddha* tradition.

### *Medical Education*

While the primary focus of education at the monastic universities was always on the religious and spiritual materials, practical training in different trades and professions was also emphasized, especially medicine.<sup>128</sup> Healing of the mind and body was an integral part of Buddhist philosophy, and the healing arts were of prime importance to Buddhist educational institutions. At least some knowledge of basic medicine and common healing techniques was required for *Bhikkhu* ordination. The universities were noted centers for the best doctors, and indeed often functioned as public hospitals. The extent of the formal training available there makes them some of the world’s first organized medical schools. India had a very sophisticated knowledge of medicine (*Ayurvedic*) by this time, and much of this heritage was spread throughout Asia and the Middle East through the travels of Buddhist monastics and householders. It may, in fact, be a very significant, far-reaching and lasting contribution of the ancient Buddhists to the world of medical science.

### *Other Sciences, Arts and Trades*

Monks were also required to learn a secular trade or craft. This reflected the multiple intelligence tradition carried over from the Vedic period. There were traditionally eighteen sciences and sixty-four arts in India, and there was extensive study of the sciences necessary to support all of these.<sup>129</sup> Some of the sciences and crafts that were pursued throughout Indian society, including at Buddhist institutions, were

medicine and nursing (considered two different tasks), astronomy, psychology, mineralogy, jewelry making, working with stone, building and architecture. Gardening, agriculture and the culinary arts were studied, as well as weaving, dying and other textile crafts. The fine arts were also studied, including music, painting, sculpture, theatre and dancing. Building was an especially important profession generally associated with Buddhists, who were often appointed by the royal courts to supervise construction of new buildings and public works.<sup>130</sup>

The traditional sixty-four arts and sciences were known as *Kalas*.<sup>131</sup> Although these were divided up in different ways at various times and places, they cover nearly the full range of civilized activities, from dancing to arithmetic to accounting to architecture. There were various guilds that specialized in certain areas, and which had formal processes for selecting and training apprentices. Parents went through considerable efforts to be sure to choose the appropriate type of profession for their children.<sup>132</sup>

Besides acknowledging the necessity for these various arts and other skills, Indians realized that not everyone was suited for every task, and that children needed guidance to help them choose work that they were best suited for. To a certain extent this was established by one's caste or state of birth as well as circumstance, but there were also opportunities to choose one's own work, and vocational guidance was given based on one's own innate ability. Social mobility was not an uncommon phenomena. It was considered important for a person's health and happiness that they had work (and by extension, lives) that matched their nature and disposition. This is a core concept in early Vedic and Indian Buddhist philosophy.<sup>133</sup>

## *Buddhist Universities in India*

### *Nalanda*

Probably the greatest of the Buddhist universities was that at Nālandā, located in northeastern India.<sup>134</sup> Originally a small village, it has been identified with the modern Baragaon, which is seven miles north of Rajgir in Bihar. It is first mentioned in Buddhist scriptures as early as Buddha's time, but Jaina texts appear to record it even earlier. It appeared to be a center for Brahmanical study before it became famed as a Buddhist center.<sup>135</sup>

Over time donations resulted in a number of large monasteries being built there, as early as the reign of Asoka (304-232 B.C.E.), gradually making it a major center for religious, educational and artistic pursuits. It did not however become significant as a major educational center until the rise of Mahayana Buddhism around the beginning of the Christian era.<sup>136</sup> By the fourth century it was apparently well enough known to attract scholars from throughout India, including the south. Chinese pilgrims of the fifth and later centuries describe it in detail. One of them, Hieun Tsang, stayed there for a total of five years, and left us detailed accounts of what he saw.<sup>137</sup> It's greatest period was apparently between the 4<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> centuries, mostly under the Pala Empire, after which it declined due to the result of foreign invasions and the general decline of Buddhism in India.

Mookerji reports that Nalanda functioned primarily as an institution of higher learning, primarily concerned with graduate and post-graduate work.<sup>138</sup> Over time it acquired a very large endowment from royal and other donations, which allowed it to offer free education to all of its students.<sup>139</sup> Students were provided with the necessary clothing, food, bedding and medicine (the so-called 'four requisites'). Hiuen Tsang

reports that there were as many as 10,000 monks and other students in residence there.<sup>140</sup> Students came from as far away as Mongolia, Korea, Tibet, China, and other areas. Some, such as **Hieun** Tsang, came there to study and copy from its enormous library of Buddhist and other literature, and it was an important source of the literature that was then transmitted throughout Asia.

Given the four requisites (food, clothing, shelter and medical care), which were “abundantly supplied”,<sup>141</sup> students were able to focus full-time on their studies. The Chinese observers were quite impressed with this practice, which they thought quite remarkable. They felt this support contributed highly to the quality of Indian education. Very high and rigorous standards were maintained, both in the rules of daily living and in academic matters.

In a manner quite similar to modern universities, there was a clearly delineated hierarchy of monks, who received different benefits depending on their seniority and level of learning. They seem to have been ranked more according to the extent of their knowledge rather than the intensity of it, and were judged more by the range of their studies rather than their depth of knowledge on any particular subject.

The highest rank was *Kulapati*, the term for the head of an institution numbering at least 10,000 monks. The second highest was *Pandita*, probably the origin for the term *pundit*. Later this was a term applied to any successful graduate, but at Nalanda it seemed to have been reserved for only the head of the entire *Vihara*.<sup>142</sup> Like a modern Ph.D., a graduate of Nalanda was formally honored, and was highly respected throughout India, and indeed throughout most of Asia.

Much like modern schools, activities at Nalanda were ordered quite strictly, with a formal eight-hour day of study established. Each hour was divided into four smaller periods, each of which was indicated by one stroke of a drum. The hours themselves were announced by four strokes of a drum, two blasts of a conch-shell, and then another drumbeat. Baths and meals were also formally regulated and scheduled.<sup>143</sup>

As in modern universities, there was a carefully established hierarchy of academic ranks. The highest academic degree or distinction available at the time was a “Fellowship of Nalanda.”<sup>144</sup> “There eminent and accomplished men assemble in crowds, discuss possible and impossible doctrines, and after having been assured of the excellence of their opinions by wise men, become far famed for their wisdom.”<sup>145</sup> There was a formal admission procedure, which was quite strict, and rigidly enforced. Only about 20 percent of those applied were apparently able to pass it. Yet, there were enough students who did so to maintain a steady enrollment of over 10,000 students. Because it was primarily a post-graduate school, and because of the strict admission requirements, it would appear that the average age of the students was 20 or more.<sup>146</sup>

The range of studies was quite extensive and remarkable, and included all areas of learning, both Buddhist and otherwise. According to Mookerji, the students there “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 *Heturvedya*, the *Sabdavidya*, the *Chikitsavidya*, the works on magic or *Atharvaveda*, the *Samkyha*; besides these, they thoroughly investigate the ‘miscellaneous works.’”<sup>147</sup> Hieun Tsang, the Chinese scholar, already an acknowledged Master of the Law, stayed there for five years, studying a wide variety of other fields.

There were reputedly as many as hundred formal lectures or classes given each day at Nalanda, indicating that there were this many different subjects regularly taught.<sup>148</sup> Besides Buddhism itself, one area that was particularly emphasized was the study of medicine. All monks were expected to master at least the basics of this art, and were known for their expertise as healers and even surgeons. An additional area of expertise was in building and construction. Buddhist monks were often hired by various royal courts to supervise the building of new structures of all kinds.

### *Curriculum*

Nalanda also accepted younger students, and had a Department of Secondary Education for them.<sup>149</sup> Hieun Tsang and I-tsing both described the curriculum at Nalanada, including general and elementary education. Education began at the age of six. Pupils were given a strong foundation in grammar and spelling, essential for success in advanced study. The first book read was the *Siddhiratsu*, which teaches the 49 letters of the Sanskrit alphabet, and then 10,000 syllables arranged in 300 slokas. This primer generally took six months to learn. “The second book of reading is the *Sutra of Panini*, containing 1,000 slokas which the children begin to learn when they are eight years old and can repeat in eight months’ time.”<sup>150</sup> Next follows the book on *Dhatu*, and that on the three *Khilas*, which the boys would begin when they are ten years old and hopefully master after three years’ diligent study. The book to be read next is the famous *Kasikavritti*, ‘the best’ of all the commentaries on *Panini’s Sutra*, comprising 18,000 sloaks, and composed by the learned *Jayaditya*. “Boys of fifteen years begin to study this commentary and understand it after two years. If men of China go to India for study, they have first of all to learn this grammatical work, then other subjects; if not, their labour will be thrown away.”<sup>151</sup> They also studied composition, logic (*hetuvidya*), metaphysics

(*abhidharmakosha*) and philosophy. The basic introduction to Buddhist philosophy and history was through the *Jatakamala*, which contained the *jatakas*, the accounts of the lives of the earlier Buddhas. Another work highly regarded at Nalanda was the *Suhrillekha*, an epistle in verse, written by the great scholar Nagarjuna. It was considered a masterpiece of style, and a marvelous exposition of the middle path.<sup>152</sup>

This was the basic elementary and general education. Once that was completed, students began to properly study the *Vidyas*, the five subjects. These were: 1) *Sabdavidya* (grammar and lexicography); 2) *Silpasthanavidya* (arts); 3) *Chikitsavidya* (medicine); 4) *Hetavidya* (logic); and 5) *Adhyatmaavidya* (**the science of understanding the self**). These were the major fields of focus for advanced students. Note especially the inclusion of medicine as one of the core subjects. After the basics of these general fields were understood, there was a wide range of specialized study offered in all fields, very much like at today's universities.<sup>153</sup>

On the subject of medicine, I-tsing mentions eight different basic subjects being taught: 1) sores, both inward and outward; 2) diseases above the neck; 3) diseases below the neck; 4) demoniac diseases due to the attack of evil spirits; 5) the Agada medicine, i.e. antidotes or medicines for counteracting poisons; 6) children's diseases, from the embryo to the sixteenth year; 7) the means of lengthening life; and 8) the methods of invigorating the legs and body, including massage, yoga and exercise in general. (Daily walks were a required part of the monastic life).<sup>154</sup>

In the course of discussing these subjects I-tsing describes the contributions of a well-known doctor, illustrating both the method in which the universities operated as well as the advantages of medical knowledge to Buddhist monks, which included financial

security: “These eight arts formerly existed in eight books, but lately a man epitomized them and made them into one bundle. All physicians in the five parts of India practice according to **this book**, and any physician who is well versed in it never fails to live by the official pay.”<sup>155</sup> He also discusses why medicine should be a compulsory part of any monk’s training. “Is it not a sad thing, that sickness prevents the pursuit of one’s duty and vocation? Is it not beneficial if people can benefit others as well as themselves by the study of medicine?”<sup>156</sup> He also describes the principal herbs used, the rules on giving medicine, the effectiveness of fasting, the beneficial uses of tea, and the importance of avoiding onions, thought in ancient India to be quite unhealthy.<sup>157</sup>

### *Valabhi*

Another famous university was Valabhi. It was located across India, in the western regions. Valabhi was the capital of the Maitraka kings for the period from 475-775 C.E. Like Nalanda it was founded through royal benefactions. According to I-tsing, Valabhi and Nalanda were the two major places in India where scholars would go to reside for two to three years in order to complete their higher education. Unlike Nalanda, however, the monks at Valabhi appeared to have focused more on the Theravadayana tradition of Buddhism, rather than the “greater vehicle” or Mahayana form, which dominated at Nalanda and generally in the eastern sections of India.<sup>158</sup>

There were a number of other fairly well-known universities in the ancient Buddhist world, although none as large or as well-known as Nalanda. Vikramasila was located on the banks of the Ganges in Northern Magadha, near Nalanda. It was much smaller though, with only six colleges and one central hall, and in that sense can be considered more typical of the standard monastic center. It had an official roster of 108 teachers. While its history is not as well-known as that of Nalanda, there were a number

of famous scholars and monks associated with it, and whose reputations were known throughout the Buddhist world.<sup>159</sup>

Jagaddala was located in the Bengal plain, between the Ganga and Karatoya rivers. It was founded by King Rama Pala of Bengal, who reigned between 1084-1130 C.E. Although it lasted only a hundred years before it was destroyed in the Mongol invasions in 1203 C.E., it made substantial contributions to learning through the works of some of its most famous scholars.

Other well known universities were Odantapuri, Mithila, and Nadia. Each of them had their own specialties and traditions. Mithila, for instance, was known for its expertise in scientific subjects, and from the twelfth to the fifteen century, flourished under masters known for their mastery of the arts of logic.<sup>160</sup>

Nalanda, however, was the primary center from which Buddhist texts and teachings, and even monks and teachers, traveled to the rest of Asia, most directly to Tibet. During the 8<sup>th</sup> century C.E. the Buddhist ruler of Tibet, King Tsisongdetsen, sent to Nalanda for learned sages to settle some debates. Those who came included one who was chancellor of Nalanda university at the time.<sup>161</sup> The Tibetans were quite impressed by their wisdom and learning, and many more monks were invited to come and teach in Tibet.

#### *Later Years of Universities, and Their Eventual Destruction*

Buddhism, in general, declined in India after 1000 CE. Hinduism and other religions gradually replaced it. In northern India, Islam rapidly replaced Buddhism as a popular religion. The golden age of the Indian Buddhist universities came to an end with the Muslim invasions from the 8<sup>th</sup> to the 12<sup>th</sup> centuries. Many of the libraries, the accumulations of centuries, were burned. Though they were periodically rebuilt, they

were generally destroyed again sooner or later, gradually declining and eventually disappearing over time.

In an age where all manuscripts could only be copied by hand, the loss of the library collections that had been built up over time was a great one that could not be easily recovered from. It also resulted in a significant decline in the level of science generally in northern India, especially mathematics, astronomy, alchemy and medicine. The destruction of these universities did, however, cause many monks to immigrate to other places, where they brought much learning. Tibet, in particular, benefited from the scholars who went there, and they helped establish significant libraries and schools throughout Tibet.<sup>162</sup>

## Chapter 4: Contemporary Buddhist Education

Contemporary Buddhist education in Western countries is generally centered on university level students. Naropa University in Colorado and West University (formerly His Lai) are two examples of Buddhist universities in the US. The Land of 10,000 Buddhas in Northern California has a very successful ongoing elementary and high school program, but their primary focus is on the college level, focusing on both the traditional training for monks as well as the academic subjects necessary for serious study of Buddhist scriptures. However, there is currently a reorientation and equalization of emphasis towards younger students.

By contrast, in India, Sri Lanka, Taiwan, Nepal, Cambodia, Malaysia, Thailand and other South Asian countries the emphasis is on elementary and high school level students. Some examples are the Ananda School in Sri Lanka, The Alice Project in India, Tibet Charity's Multi-Education Center in India, and The Tibetan Children's Villages in India and Bhutan.

### *The Theosophists and the Ananda School.*

The original and in many ways, still valid paradigm for contemporary Buddhist Education is the Ananda School and College in Sri Lanka, which was founded in 1886. Buddhist leaders, both lay and monastic, were focused on creating a system of education that suited the needs and aspirations of the Buddhists of Sri Lanka. This led to the search for Buddhist pedagogies and the establishment of institutions to sustain and impart Buddhist education.

In 1890 two important leaders in this movement arrived in Sri Lanka. They were the Theosophists, Colonel Henry Steel Olcott and Madame Blavatsky. The Theosophists

were instrumental in founding the Buddhist Theosophical Society in Sri Lanka, which had as its main aims the preservation of the heritage of Buddhism and the promotion of Buddhist education. The first educational institution to be established was Ananda College. A century later, Ananda has become the premier Buddhist educational institution in the Sri Lanka.

#### *Goals of Buddhist Education*

The purpose of Buddhist education, in the view of Ananda's founding fathers, was two-fold: the teaching of Buddhism in a scientific and rational way, and the imparting of the system of Buddhist values. The Theosophists held Buddhism in great esteem; for them it was not merely a religion but a philosophy with a rational appeal. Due to this reliance on reason, however, they did not emphasize the contemplative and meditative yogic skills, which are foundational to the Buddha's teaching.

The Buddhist leaders who were inspired by the Theosophists to re-examine the philosophical value of Buddhism in the light of contemporary modes of thought wanted this body of philosophy to be taught in the schools so that the new generation of Buddhist youth would be able to defend themselves against inroads from external powers. The second goal of Buddhist education was to impart the system of values fostered by Buddhism. The founding fathers of Buddhist education thought that it was necessary for Buddhist children not only to be aware of this system of Buddhist values, in an academic sense, but also to grow up in an environment in which these values were put into practice.

Tolerance, for instance, acquires real meaning only when it is practiced in everyday living, in school and outside. Thus new educational institutions such as Ananda have a special role to play in promoting Buddhist education in their countries -- a role

different from that of those public schools molded by the previous colonial masters to suit their needs and aspirations.

The Buddha taught that there were five qualities or ideals that one should hold as hallmarks and remain focused on, whether one is a monk or a **householder**. These five qualities are faith, virtue, generosity, learning, and wisdom. Of the five, two — faith and generosity relate primarily to the heart: they are concerned with taming the emotional side of human nature. Two relate to the intellect: learning and wisdom. It is important to point out that from the Enlightened view of the Buddha, feeling and thinking arose co-terminously and with no ontological difference from the *tathagathagarbha* (*the womb of all Buddhas*), that is, the vast unobstructed openness of space

The entire system of Buddhist education must be rooted in faith (*saddha*) — faith in the Triple Gem, and above all in the Buddha as the Fully Enlightened One, the peerless teacher and supreme guide to right living and right understanding. Based on this faith, the students must be inspired to become accomplished in virtue (*sila*) by following the moral guidelines spelled out by the Five Precepts and later the complete observance of rules promulgated in the Buddha's *Vinaya* (rules for the monastic *sangha*).

The Buddha developed these rules in a very pragmatic and compassionate manner. From the time he began teaching the Dharma, students would come to the Enlightened One with their day-to-day individual and communal problems. He invariably, would spontaneously develop the needed moral behavior paradigms for the individual and the general monastic community. In most cases, the Buddha's monastic rules were very specific; yet were flexible enough to deal with the omnipresent anomalies

of human behavior. His students came to know the precepts well, to understand the reasons for observing them, and to know how to apply them in the difficult circumstances of daily human life. Most importantly, they should come to appreciate the positive virtues these precepts represent: kindness, honesty, purity, truthfulness, and mental sobriety. They must also acquire the spirit of generosity and self-sacrifice (*caga*), so essential for overcoming selfishness, greed, and the narrow focus on self-advancement that dominates in present-day society. To strive to fulfill the ideal of generosity is to develop compassion and renunciation, qualities, which sustained the Buddha throughout his entire incarnation. The student begins learning that cooperation is greater than competition, that self-sacrifice is more fulfilling than self-aggrandizement, and that our true welfare is to be achieved through harmony and good will rather than by exploiting and dominating others.

The fourth and fifth virtues work closely together. Learning (*sutra*) is meant a wide knowledge of the Buddhist texts which is to be acquired by extensive reading and persistent study. But mere learning is not sufficient. Knowledge only fulfills its proper purpose when it serves as a springboard for wisdom (*jnana*), direct personal insight into the truth of the Dhamma. Of course, the higher wisdom that consummates the Noble Eightfold Path does not lie within the domain of an academic school environ. This wisdom must be generated by methodical mental training in the meditational practices of calm abiding (*shamatha*) and penetrating insight (*vipassana*), the inseparable skillful means (*upaya*) of Buddhist meditation. Buddhist education practically demonstrates that a calm, relaxed and spacious mind lays the foundation for deep penetrating insight to plumb the profound depths of suchness, with the ultimate goal of complete, total and

perfect Enlightenment. Wisdom and skillful means are closely interwoven; the former is the ground from which the latter arises. It is wisdom's vast spaciousness, wherein, primordial awareness spontaneously arises, which gives birth to name (*namo*) and form (*rupa*). This process may lead to spiritual liberation or a deeper understanding of the reality of Wisdom Mind. The Buddha held up as the direct instrument of final liberation, as the key for opening the doors to the Deathless, and also as the infallible guide to success in meeting life's mundane challenges. Thus wisdom is the crown and pinnacle of the entire system of Buddhist education, and all the preliminary steps in a Buddhist educational system should be geared toward the flowering of this supreme virtue. It is with this step that education reaches completion, that it becomes illumination in the truest and deepest sense, as exclaimed by the Buddha on the night of his Awakening: "There arose in me vision, knowledge, wisdom, understanding, and light."<sup>163</sup>

Many modern Buddhists share these traditional goals, but also see a more important social purpose in education. Bhikkhu Bodhi has written about some of the challenges facing modern education, and what the aims of Buddhist educators should be (Bodhi, 1997). He feels that modern educators have often lost sight of what education should be about. It should be about human growth, and helping children transform themselves into mature and responsible adults. In his view classroom instruction has become routine to the point where children feel that education is something to be endured rather than an adventure in learning. It also frustrates teachers, who find themselves trapped into serving a system that in many ways represents the very opposite of what Buddhism (and other religions) are about.

Many Buddhist educators feel that there has been a loss of vision regarding the proper aims of education. “The word ‘education’ literally means, ‘to bring forth,’ which indicates that the true task of this process is to draw forth from the mind its innate potential for understanding. The urge to learn, to know and comprehend is a basic human trait, as intrinsic to our minds as hunger and thirst are to our bodies” (Bodhi, 1997). Education should be a source of mental nutrition, as it were, but is now become the intellectual equivalent of fast food, quick and easy, but without much useful content, and which actually ends up damaging the child’s health.

This is not to suggest that education should not be concerned with material goals, or with preparing children to take their place in a modern, affluent, industrial society. On the contrary, Buddhism has always recommended the “middle path,” as much opposed to too much emphasis on spiritual growth as it is to too much materialism.

Buddhism emphasizes that the practical side of education must be integrated with principles and practices that transform the grosser aspects of an individual into spiritual modalities for his/hers liberation. (*arya*).<sup>164</sup>

### *Types of Education*

Different Buddhist sects, however, have different and more specific ideas about the purpose of education. We must distinguish between schools that teach strictly Buddhist ideas, and those that do general education. Most of them focus on Buddhist material. There is however a different tradition. Ancient Indian and Chinese Buddhist monks incorporated astronomy, mathematics, medicine, other sciences, translation, art, literature and crafting skills into the traditional Buddhist liturgical education.

Unfortunately this practice does not seem to be well represented in modern Buddhist education, although there are some Buddhist institutions of higher education that offer modern programs in such areas as psychology, business administration and so on. Nevertheless, many modern Buddhists seem to believe that the primary purpose of education is to promote Buddhism itself, not to instruct young people in the various skills they will need to function in life. And they define knowledge as the acquisition of knowledge about Buddhist texts and spiritual practices, rather than such subjects as mathematics, history and so on. Many of the Buddhist seminaries teach various languages, such as Chinese, Japanese, Pali or Sanskrit.

### *Zen Education*

Another difference in the modern world is that there are now many different sects and varieties of Buddhism. While they all share some common ideas and values, the varying perspectives result in establishing different goals for education. Zen Buddhists, for example, see things in quite a different light. In particular, they distinguish between formal and informal means of education. They stress the value of informal means of education, and emphasize that not everything important can or should be learned in a structured classroom. Indeed, the very notion of a structured education is to a certain extent in opposition to the essential nature of Zen philosophy.

**From a Zen perspective, modern education has become an occupational training program to promote financial interest. Capitalism, science and technology have formed a new worldview; to wit, occupational training has become more essential to one's way of living than the spiritual quest. Today, most students are concerned with finding financial stability and material gain. Against this trend, Zen education encourages students to seek spiritual stability. Because of Buddha nature, this is a natural human inclination, while not everyone is talented to become a computer specialist or an investment banker. Zen education guides students to grasp the "twist and turn" of the *samsaric* world, teaching them to be compassionate, understanding, patient listeners and well-balanced individuals.<sup>165</sup>**

The experiential discovery of the true nature of one's mind goal of Zen. The Rinzai Sect of Zen utilizes either a non verbal or seemingly nonsensical poetic expression containing a very formalized structure. The non verbal method traces its lineage back to Lord Shakyamuni Buddha's giving a teaching by holding up a flower. This enigmatic gesture created a great confusion among the Buddha's *sangha*. The exception was the *maha Bhikkhu Kasyapa*. Kasyapa did not speak. He smiled. This is the non verbal mind transmission. This is most sublime teaching of the Buddha. In the *Vajrayana* lineages of *Dzogchen* and *Mahamudra* it is called the introduction to the *Dharmakaya* true nature of the mind. This is meditation without support. One of the techniques of meditation with support is utilization of an enigmatic expression to incessantly contemplate on until the nature of mind suddenly is exposed and realized. The Zen term is called *Satori*.

As a result of Zen pedagogy's emphasis on mind training, a well-educated person demonstrates compassion far beyond ordinary measure; an educated person is endlessly open minded, and his humility reflects this vast spaciousness. These characteristics come about when one penetrates into the essential nature or Buddha nature. Thus, it is clear that in Zen education, receiving more information or merely conventional learning is not regarded as a healthy approach to educating children or adults. On the other hand, an educational process based on skillful means and compassion will develop creative children within a monastic or a householder lifestyle. This leads to students manifesting superior intelligence, compassion and equanimity. Reading, writing, and conventional knowledge are necessary, but so are "Drawing water and carrying firewood," as Pang yun claimed. In other words, the life of a scholar and the life of an auto mechanic are equally meaningful and essential.

### *Tibetan Education in Exile*

For over a millennia, Tibetan monastic and householder yogic educational traditions (essentially of Vedic and Indian Buddhist origins) have been viewed by indigenous Tibetans and surrounding nations as superlative vehicles for developing and inculcating intelligence, compassion, character, discipline and wisdom in children. Tibetans and persons from surrounding areas would undertake long and arduous journeys to matriculate in monastic or householder Yogic learning environments. Tibetan educational systems were well known for their profound transmissions of meditative realization and scholastic rigor, which resulted in a population of spiritually accomplished beings; who had the skill, patience and

wisdom, to develop the Wisdom Mind of a large number of children within a spiritually charged community and country.

Since the Tibetan diaspora, the generosity of the Indian government has made possible land and citizenship status for the resettlement of many thousands of Tibetan refugees. This has made possible the development of a pre-school through high school curriculum for Tibetan children and adolescents.

Jawaharlal Nehru, the first prime minister of independent India, could not have known in 1960 that the location he offered to Tibetan exiles had rich Buddhist roots dating back 2,700 years. The Kangra Valley is a cornucopia of virgin archaeological sites of great importance to understanding Indian Buddhism; in 635 AD the Chinese monk-pilgrim Hsuan Tsang noted fifty monasteries with a population of over 2,000 monks in the Kangra region. Alas, a century later, Buddhism and all its sites were purged from the valley during a period of Brahminical revivalism.<sup>166</sup>

The Tibetan Department of Education (in India) was established with the premise that the future of preserving Tibetan culture and the possibility of a free Tibet would be in the hands of the Tibetan children educated in India. This required the development and implementation of an educational system that would provide a contemporary education to the Tibetan children while maintaining their linguistic and culture heritage. In 1960, under the name 'Council for Tibetan Education', the

**Department of Education (DOE) became one of the seven major departments of the Central Tibetan Administration (CTA).<sup>1</sup>**

**His Holiness, the 14<sup>th</sup> Dalai Lama, expresses the wish to continue imbuing Buddhist multiple intelligence pedagogy, based on compassion for others and discipline for the samsaric mind, within the contemporary Tibetan Educational pedagogy inculcated in India:**

**Education and knowledge are like an instrument. Whether that instrument is put to use in a constructive or destructive way depend on each person's motivation. An education system that cultivates smart brains alone can sometimes create more problems than it solves. However, it is noticeable that if a child with a good intellectual education happens to have parents with a warm heart and a sense of responsibility for both caring and discipline, than these can go together well and be very constructive. It is my hope that in future, not only the Tibetan educational system, but those in other places too, will pay specific attention to the development of human warmth and love.<sup>167</sup>**

The aims and objective of Tibetan pedagogy in India are:

- To oversee the educational and welfare needs of Tibetan refugee children in exile;
- To provide primary education for every Tibetan refugee child in order to achieve one hundred percent literacy among the Tibetan refugee community;
- To provide modern scientific and technical education and skills, while preserving and promoting the Tibetan language and culture;
- To inculcate values of personal integrity and universal responsibility; and to address the human resource requirements of the Tibetan community in exile **and future** Tibet.

Initially, the DOE's activities were limited to schools. Now its services have been enlarged to facilitate the care of three to five year old children, support and guidance for high school graduates, and either academic or non-academic education for adults. This expansion includes the DOE's collaboration with other Tibetan institutions such as the

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Central Institute for Higher Tibetan Studies (CIHTS), Varanasi; the Institute of Buddhist Dialectics (IBD), Dharamsala; the Tibetan Institute of Performing Arts (TIPA), Dharamsala; and the Tibetan Cultural Printing Press (TCPP), Dharamsala, in order to integrate their activities for Tibetan culture's preservation and promulgation.<sup>168</sup>

According to Tibetan DOE statistics, for the past thirty years (as of 1994), the following achievements should be noted:

- DOE and some Tibetan institutions (e.g., Tibetan Children's Village and Tibetan Homes Foundation) have been able to establish their own schools, which now enroll about 60 percent of the student population within the Tibetan school network.
- During the ten-year period (1984-1994), there was an increase of 42 percent in the enrollment of students in Tibetan schools in India, Nepal and Bhutan. Currently, about 70 percent of school-age (6-17) Tibetan children receive formal education within the Tibetan school network.
- The literacy rate of the Tibetan Community in exile has increased from 30 percent in 1986 to about 40 percent in 1994. The rate is expected to go much higher with the rise in school enrollment during the coming years.
- About 90 percent of the officials in the Central Tibetan Administration (CTA) have received their education in the Tibetan school systems.
- Up to 1994, over 3,000 students in exile had completed their university education. Many among them were professionals (e.g., doctors, engineers, lawyers, teachers, journalists, computer programmers, etc.)
- Up to 1994, over 4,200 students had completed secondary school education. About 600 students finish school each year. When the students have left school, they have acquired the highest quality modern secular education while retaining their traditional language and culture.<sup>169</sup>

### *Buddhist Colleges and Universities in the United States*

#### *Naropa University in Colorado*

Naropa University in Colorado is the largest and most diversified Buddhist university in the United States. It was founded by Chögyam Trungpa, Rinpoche, a Tibetan Buddhist, and a lineage holder of both the Kagyü and Nyingma Buddhist

traditions. He left Tibet after the Chinese takeover in 1959, but continued to teach and transmit the Tibetan vision of the Buddhist Dharma. In 1963 he received a scholarship to study at Oxford University, where he became fluent in English and familiar with western educational practices. In 1970 he moved to the United States, and subsequently established a number of meditation centers in both the U.S. and Europe.

In 1974, Trungpa Rinpoche established the Naropa Institute in Colorado, which has subsequently become Naropa University. They built on the traditions of Nalanda University, an institution founded on Mahayana principles, and which flourished in India between the 5<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> centuries. They are well known for their tolerance of different traditions, and for providing an environment in which scholars, artists and healers from many different Asian countries could come study together and learn from each other. The name Naropa derives from the name of a famous 11<sup>th</sup> century abbot and *Mahasiddhi* at Nalanda.

Trungpa Rinpoche was interested in combining what they call “contemplative education” with modern western academic subjects. At Naropa they attempt to combine the best of both western and eastern academic traditions. They offer both undergraduate and graduate degree programs, along with distance learning and education abroad programs. They have a wide variety of courses and programs, offering an MA degree in psychology, an MFA in Visual Art, Expressive Arts Certificates in Dance, Theater and Poetics, and several other degrees. The Jack Kerouac School of Disembodied Poetics is also part of the University, and was established during the 1970s with the help of Allen Ginsberg, Anne Waldman and other American poets. They offer a very popular summer

writing program. They were formally accredited by the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools in 1986.<sup>170</sup>

*The University of the West (formerly Hsi Lai University)*

The University of the West, which was formerly known as Hsi Lai University, is a Buddhist university located in Rosemead, California. It was founded by the Venerable Master Hsing Yun, who was the founder of the Taiwan-based Buddhist order Fo Guang Shan. He established the University of the West at the Hsi Lai Temple in Hacienda Heights, California, which moved to its current location in 1996.

The University of the West offers a variety of degree programs, more so than any other Buddhist university except perhaps Naropa. Unlike most other Buddhist universities they offer Bachelor's and Master's programs in business administration, as well as an executive MBA. They also offer Bachelor's, Master's and Doctoral degrees in Buddhist Studies and Religious Studies. In addition, they offer programs in language studies, including a Bachelor's in English, a Bachelor's in Chinese Language and Literature, and a Master's in Chinese, with the choice of concentrations in Chinese Language and Literature, Teaching Chinese as a Foreign Language; and Chinese-English Translation and Interpretation. Other languages they teach include biblical Hebrew, Sanskrit, Pali, canonical Chinese, and Tibetan. Finally they offer a Bachelor's in History, and both Bachelor and Master programs in English.

*City of Ten Thousand Buddhas*

Master Hsüan Hua was the most recent and ninth Patriarch of the Wei Yang lineage of Chinese Chan Buddhism. He came to the United States in 1959, establishing the Dharma Realm Buddhist University (DRBU) in San Francisco in 1962 in order to promote the orthodox teachings of the Buddha. It now has over one hundred thousand

members. The DRBU has schools and monasteries worldwide, including Taiwan, Malaysia, Hong Kong, Singapore, Indonesia, the United States and Canada. They offer a wide range of educational programs dedicated to the spread of Buddhist teachings, including academic work in Asian languages and history.

They have a variety of monasteries offering varying levels of Buddhist education. Some of these are the International Institute for the Translation of Buddhist Texts (1973), the Sagely City of Ten Thousand Buddhas in Talmage (1976), Gold Wheel Sagely Monastery in Los Angeles (1976), Gold Buddha Sagely Monastery in Vancouver (1984), Gold Summit Sagely Monastery in Seattle (1984), Avatamsaka Sagely Monastery in Calgary (1986), and the Proper Dharma Buddhist Academy in Taiwan (1989).

In 1976 Master Hua established the Sagely City of Ten Thousand Buddhas, which is now a large monastery encompassing almost five hundred acres of land at Wonderful Enlightenment Mountain in northern California. They are one of the largest Buddhist institutions of higher education in the United States. Their primary focus is strict monastic living and training:

The activities of DRBU are offered through a federally approved four year Sangha (monastic) and four year Laity Training Program. The Sangha Training Program is partial fulfillment of requirements for receiving the Complete Precepts of a Bhikshu/Bhikshuni (celibate Buddhist monk/nun) through traditional ordination procedures. In 1972 DRBU held the first Complete Precept Platform in the United States at Gold Mountain Monastery in San Francisco. Since that time, the full ordination for Bhikshus and Bhikshunis has been held at the Sagely City of Ten Thousand Buddhas every three or four years.<sup>171</sup>

But they also offer an impressive variety of educational programs at all levels, elementary, secondary and university. The Sagely City of Ten Thousand Buddhas also houses the Dharma Realm Buddhist University (DRBU), Developing Virtue Secondary School, and Instilling Goodness Elementary School.

DRBU offers a variety of programs and degrees. They have a very sizable faculty of scholars with expertise in the full range of Asian languages and doctrines. DRBU offer classes in two languages, Mandarin and English. They currently offer the Bachelor's and Master's degrees in both Buddhist Study Practice and Translation and Language Studies. They also offer a Bachelor's Degree in Chinese Studies. Students study both Buddhist and traditional academic subjects. It is a year-round residential program, in which students are expected to become a part of the community, and to "to apply wisdom and virtue in daily life. ... At the University, emphasis is placed on quickening the virtues of constancy, filial piety, humaneness, and integrity."<sup>172</sup> A major goal is to provide ethical as well as academic instruction, and to see the students launched on careers that benefit the world.

The Mission of Dharma Realm Buddhist University is to educate individuals who exemplify excellence in scholarship and excellence of character, who are aware of their individual and civic responsibility as world citizens, and who understand and appreciate a diversity of cultural traditions. The University community is dedicated to fostering a spirit of shared inquiry and the free exchange of ideas that encourages students to utilize skills of communication, critical analysis, synthesis, quantification, aesthetic perception, and creativity along with the intuitive, experiential, and contemplative dimensions of learning that are the hallmarks of an educated person. Further, DRBU seeks to cultivate those aspects of character consistent with the values and ideals of the Buddhist tradition in which it is rooted: self-discovery, personal virtue, compassionate service to humanity, and sincerity in all endeavors.<sup>173</sup>

#### *Institute for World Religions*

Another institution established by the DRBU is the Institute for World Religions. Located in the Berkeley Buddhist Monastery, The Institute for World Religions is dedicated to providing a sanctuary for interfaith study of common religious beliefs, theological principles and spiritual practices. It is the result of a joint effort by the Buddhist Master Hsüan Hua and the Roman Catholic Cardinal Yu Bin. It seeks to serve

both traditional Buddhism and contemporary society. Its primary purpose is to interpret and present essential aspects of Chinese religions and cultures so that interfaith dialogues are possible.

Cardinal Yu Bin became the Institute's first director in 1976. The Institute for World Religions moved to its Berkeley location in 1994, greatly benefiting from its proximity to the University of California at Berkeley and to a community with a strong Buddhist presence and open to new ways of thought. They have a variety of programs, ranging from public lectures to sessions for public dialogue that bring together contemporary thinkers in the sciences, arts and technology with spiritual and religious leaders. They offer a Vispassana Meditation group, Prajna Yoga and Meditation Sessions, a Chan Meditation group, Buddhist women's seminars, lectures on the Sutras, and a variety of community programs.

*Institute of Buddhist Studies*

Another example of the type of graduate programs offered is that by the Institute of Buddhist Studies in Berkeley, California, which is both a seminary and a graduate school. They are affiliated with the Graduate Theological Union, and associated with the Buddhist Churches of America. They offer a complete educational program in Contemporary Shin Buddhist Studies as well as a chaplaincy program.

The Institute of Buddhist Studies is dedicated to preparing women and men for lives of ministry in the tradition of the Jodo Shinshu Hongwanji-ha, and to fostering the understanding and development of Shin Buddhist thought in engagement with the issues and perspectives of contemporary life. The Institute seeks to nurture a harmony of academic excellence with the deepening religious awareness of its students and the greater community.<sup>174</sup>

The Institute of Buddhist Studies offer graduate programs for both men and women, primarily to prepare them for lives of ministry. They offer two degrees, a Master

of Arts (MA) in Buddhist Studies and a Master of Buddhist Studies (MBS). The MA program is described as follows:

Students in the program are required to take a breadth of courses in Buddhist Studies, while also gaining an exposure to other religious traditions and a variety of approaches to the study of religion. The course of study culminates in a thesis in which the student demonstrates his/her grasp of a specialized area of study within a broader context, either Contemporary Shin Buddhist Studies or Buddhist Studies generally.<sup>175</sup>

The Master of Buddhist Studies (M.B.S.) degree is aimed at those pursuing a systematic education in Buddhist Studies for professional or personal purposes. The M.B.S. degree program is offered under a license issued to the Institute by the Bureau for Private Postsecondary and Vocational Education, Department of Consumer Affairs, State of California.

Students in the program are required to take of breadth of courses in Buddhist Studies, developing an understanding of the doctrinal, historical and cultural development of the tradition as a whole. The course of study culminates in a thesis in which the student demonstrates his/her grasp of a specialized area of study within a broader context, either Contemporary Shin Buddhist Studies or Buddhist Studies generally.<sup>176</sup>

Both programs are designed to take two or three years, depending on areas of emphasis. There is also a chaplaincy program, designed to provide the practitioner, “with both breadth and depth of understanding of the Buddhist tradition — its philosophy, psychology, and practices, historically contextualized.”<sup>177</sup> It is a professional, accredited program that meets the certification requirements of the Association of Professional Chaplains (APC).

## Chapter 5: Methodology

This dissertation will initially consist of, in part developing and enriching a pre-existing multimedia, web-based learning system for an online high school (11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> grade) *Introduction to Psychology* course. The Dissertation's future goal is materialization of *The Buddhist Educational Network* (TBEN) Online Virtual Campus (pre-school through University). Action research is the Dissertations methodology. This approach may be viewed as a microcosmic analogue of the Buddhist 12 spoke wheel of dependent origination. The researcher, teacher(s) and the student(s) work interdependently to develop an experientially verifiable approach for the development , implementation and maintenance of the TBEN virtual campus.

The course utilizes Class.Com's online web shell software for a high school (11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> Grades) *Introduction to Psychology* course, which is imbedded in a "Moodle" online web shell. The course is in compliance with the State of California's curriculum **Social Sciences'** grade level guidelines and SLOS (student learning outcomes). The course will be integrating Buddhist pedagogical principles and support materials. This approach is complex, since it requires incorporating feedback from all participants throughout the process, and a cycle of continual revising. This results in a more usable and effective *Online Virtual Campus*. The advantage is that, by the end of the process, real-world solutions may be developed that have already met real-world challenges.

### *Home Schooling and the Virtual Campus*

For example, the Introduction to Psychology (see above) course will study the Buddhist concepts related to the five-element theory, the non-substantiality of all phenomena, **interdependent** origination and self-transformation. **I uploaded Buddhist**

**related materials to the ‘resources’ section of the Class.com website for The**

**Introduction and Aggression chapters. ....** The integration of Buddhist and Multiple Intelligence pedagogies will employ intuitive methods to learn about meditation, spatial viewpoints to learn about *mandalas*, musical awareness to enter more deeply into the practice of chanting, and interpersonal perspectives to further explore the Buddhist ideal of compassion. **Introductory Chapter (# ) and the Chapter (# ) on Aggression.**

.....The course material will also utilize *state-of-the-art* animation and other multimedia technologies for pedagogical enrichment.

### *Action Research*

What is action research? It is known by many other names, including participatory research, collaborative inquiry, emancipatory research, action learning, and contextural action research; but all are variations on a theme. Put simply, however, action research is “learning by doing” - a group of people identify a problem, do something to resolve it, see how successful their efforts were, and if not satisfied, modify their theories and techniques in response to what they have learned, and then try again.<sup>178</sup>

What separates this type of research from general professional practices, consulting, or daily problem-solving is the emphasis on scientific study. The researcher studies the problem systematically and ensures the intervention is informed by theoretical considerations. Much of the researcher’s time is spent on refining the methodological tools to suit the exigencies of the situation, and on collecting, analyzing, and presenting data on an ongoing, cyclical basis.

The difference between action research and most other methodologies is that action research is not aimed only at the acquisition of theoretical knowledge, but towards directly using the methodologies to improve real-world situations. "Action

research...aims to contribute both to the practical concerns of people in an immediate problematic situation and to further the goals of social science simultaneously.”<sup>179</sup>

Action research is an ongoing learning experience. It brings theory and knowledge to a situation and comes away from it with those theories and knowledge enhanced and enriched. The essence is collaboration, understanding that “co-learning” is a fundamental part of the process, and truly incorporating all parties’ knowledge and experience into the process.

The basic process of action research is cyclical in nature, composed of a series of steps that is repeated over and over until the final result is obtained. The cycle developed by Kemmis (as described in O’Brien) has four steps: planning, acting, observing and reflecting. The end results of the reflection, both positives and negatives, are then incorporated into the next planning stage and the cycle begins anew. Others have added a diagnostic step to the process, which begins with simply identifying a problem that needs to be solved, although this step may not be necessary with every cycle. Sometimes a final step of specifying or formalizing any lessons learned is included at the end.

One five-step description<sup>180</sup> is diagnosing, action planning, taking action, evaluating, and specifying learning. Some researchers<sup>181</sup> stress that there are often multiple solutions hypothesized during the course of the process, and that each of these has to be incorporated into a single plan of action. Data must be collected at each stage so that the methodology can be further refined, and the degree of success objectively analyzed.

Action research is only used in real-world situations, not laboratory experiments, since its primary purpose is to develop workable solutions. In the end, the research is

secondary, a means to an end. Since the 1970s four major approaches to action research have emerged.

Traditional Action Research stems primarily from the history of labor-management relations and focuses on efforts to develop methods of settling disputes and, perhaps more importantly, on methods of avoiding future confrontations. It encompasses such fields as Organizational Theory, Field Theory and Group Dynamics. It is rather conservative, more focused on creating incremental improvements and on preserving the status quo than developing dramatic new solutions.

Contextual Action Research is sometimes referred to as Active Learning or Group Learning. It focuses on making sure that each participant sees the whole picture, and understands the group goals, and on getting all participants to get involved as project designers and co-researchers. It may be considered as somewhat of a “liberal” approach, with the emphasis on achieving consensus and on incremental progress. Organizational ecology and search conferences are some of the concepts that have come out of contextual action research.<sup>182</sup>

Radical Action Research has its roots in Marxist and other similar approaches that focus on overcoming social, economic and political power imbalances that may prevent the solution to other problems. It is based primarily on the assumption that small problems are generally connected to larger ones, and that one cannot solve one without dealing with the other. It aims to “emancipate” and “liberate” certain parties, presumably at the expense of others, although the more successful practice of it would enhance the positions of all concerned. Its focus is on the social development that underlies personal development. It generally involves taking a very pro-active approach in reaching out to

all members of the group, including minorities and others more peripheral to the mainstream.

Educational Action Research, the method this project will primarily use, stems from the work of the great American educator John Dewey and his belief that educators should be intimately involved with their entire communities, not just the schools, and that they should take an active role in community problem solving. This is the method that most professional educators use to develop curriculums and teaching methods, as well as methods of keeping education relevant to social concerns. It often involves university-level researchers working closely with elementary or secondary school teachers on projects, with the idea of combining theory with practical experience.

Action research is based on a holistic approach to problem-solving, incorporating a number of different tools and perspectives. It is not a single method for collecting data. Therefore it may incorporate a number of different tools: learning conferences, participant interviews and questionnaires, case studies and others.

The primary tool is the basic cycle of planning, acting, observing and reflecting, as outlined above. This is an example of the “hermeneutic circle,” a continuous openness, probing (Derrida’s excisioning), reflecting and returning to openness.

Regular feedback from everyone is essential to this method. Educational software is extraordinarily effective at tracking and analyzing user experiences. One of the goals of this study, as in all computer-based learning systems, is to incorporate feedback not only into the development process, but into the learning process itself. As the system learns more about the student, it could gradually tailor its content to the students’ abilities and

interests. This process is closely related to the integration and development of multiple intelligence pedagogies.

*Integrating Multiple Intelligences and Buddhist Pedagogies.*

In one common pedagogical model, the Kantian *Aufklärer* (or in many cases, his teaching assistant) speaks to endless rows of students facing him. There is literally no interfacing between students, and there is an implicit architectonic hierarchy. Modern academia, in general, postulates a Cartesian dualism, or perhaps, antagonism, between the human mind and body. As Emerson espoused in his essay, “The American Scholar,” the archetype of “the thinker” is contrasted with that of “Man thinking.” Cartesian rationalism pre-supposes the primacy of the intellect, of content, information, and analysis. The body is at best a secondary inconvenience that needs to be seated in a Kafkaesque classroom setting that includes chairs without any redeeming ergonomic benefit. Moreover, the repeated practice of methodological rigor (derived from the natural sciences) tends to minimize meditation and contemplative anecdotal evidence as well as the suggestive power of myth and metaphor.

This type of pedagogy devalues embodied forms of religious life: ritual, meditation, social engagement, and non-liturgical lifestyles. It wishes to emphasize the supremacy of Cartesian disembodied individuality. The Buddha, under the above rubric, becomes a human anomaly that somehow was brought into being and existed *in vitro*. The communal aspect of Buddhism and responsibility of all Buddhas to turn the wheel of Dharma, that is to teach suffering beings, is neglected or avoided by the *Aufklärer* pedagogues. Discussions of the sangha are often undertaken regardless of the abilities and desires of the student.

For twenty years Howard Gardner has worked on multiple intelligence pedagogies at the Harvard School of Education. Multiple intelligence pedagogies, in a sense, are continuations of the ancient Vedic and Buddhist use of skillful means to meet the needs of a diverse demographic.

Gardner and his colleagues have been arguing that a comprehensive education needs to acknowledge a broad spectrum of intelligence: verbal/linguistic, mathematical/logical, spatial, kinesthetic, musical, and interpersonal to name but a few. To date, humanistic education on the college and university level (and hence the way Buddhist traditions are studied and taught) focuses almost overwhelmingly on the verbal and mathematical models.

The integration of Buddhist and Multiple Intelligence pedagogies will employ intuitive methods to learn about meditation, spatial viewpoints to learn about mandalas, musical awareness to enter more deeply into the practice of chanting, and interpersonal perspectives to further explore the Buddhist ideal of compassion.

## Chapter 6: Conclusion

### *The Buddhist Educational Network*

One of the purposes of this study is to lay the groundwork for the development of The Buddhist Educational Network (TBEN). TBEN will be an educational Intranet and Internet-based pedagogic portal designed to serve the American and International Buddhist communities. TBEN will also be available to non-Buddhist communities. TBEN offers a Buddhist-oriented learning environment for distance learning home schooling and traditional home schooling.

The advent of the world-wide web, coupled with multiple intelligence pedagogies, places increased demands on students, teachers, and the ways in which they process and participate in the web's unique methods of knowledge acquisition, storage and integration. How does the learning institution best utilize computers, curriculum, staff and faculty to enhance the teaching and learning process, whether it be a Virtual University, College, High School, Grade School, pre-School, Home School or Distance Learning.

The web is now being understood as a multiple intelligence teaching and learning tool and not just as a delivery medium. The web has changed the way that we conceive of computers. They are no longer machines which have to be conquered or commanded, but have become transparent via operating systems and browsers, windows into an information *lebenswelt*.

The initial TBEN course offerings will be for K-12 students and utilize the California Department of Education's curriculum guidelines. TBEN will also develop a Buddhist pre-school program. In addition, TBEN will interface with various

contemporary and traditional American and International Buddhist Universities and Colleges for the purpose of facilitating higher distance learning degrees. TBEN understands the need and pedagogical utility advanced by web technologies that are based upon multiple intelligence views, many of which have epistemic premises that are similar to those that underlie Buddhist pedagogy.

TBEN will demonstrate the Lord Buddha's teaching regarding dependent origination, skillful means and the accumulation of wisdom and merit for the benefit of all sentient beings. The Buddhist families (*Upasaka Sangha*) are turning the 12 spoke wheel of Dharma and inculcating a life style of loving kindness and meditative realization based on The Noble Eightfold Path, the Six *Paramitas* and *upaya* that seeks to open a learning portal based on the student's inherent gifts and interests.

#### *Integrating Buddhist and Contemporary Psychology*

Traditional Buddhist psychology and contemporary Western psychology are founded on experiencing phenomenal reality. Notwithstanding the Buddhist view of the impermanence of the *lebenswelt* or lived world of phenomenal manifestation, the Buddhist and Western (for the most part) psychological approaches are grounded in the self or awareness' perception of experienced phenomena.

Modern scientific based psychology decries pure theoretical constructs and insists on empirical verifiability. This mutual concern for direct experience and the concomitant hermeneutical analysis of the phenomenological data is a fecund focal point for the two traditions. The website that accompanies this dissertation utilizes Buddhist insights into psychology to enrich the State of California's lesson plans, course material and student learning outcomes for eleventh and twelfth grade students' *Introductory to Psychology* course. The following basic Buddhist psychological insights and practices will be used as

supplementary material to the eleventh and twelfth grade California educational online Introduction to Psychological course.

Buddhist psychology, according to Chogyam Trungpa Rinpoche in his introductory essay in the book, *Buddhist And Western Psychology*,

is developed through the practice of meditation, a first hand observation of mind. Meditation in Buddhism is not a religious practice, but rather a way of clarifying the actual nature of mind and experience. Traditionally, meditation training is said to be threefold, including *sila* (discipline), *samdh*i (the actual practice of meditation), and *prajna* (insight).<sup>183</sup>

*Sila* is an *upaya* (one of many skillful means) utilized by Buddhist teachers and practitioners to first train the mind to see how it continually weighs itself down by the unnecessary complicating of one's life. This is the initial process of developing a genuine mental discipline and the fundamental ground for meditation practice. In traditional Buddhist countries *sila* could involve adhering to monastic or householder Buddhist codes of conduct. In the West, traditionally overwhelming householder based, *sila* might manifest as the cultivation of simplified lifestyle.<sup>184</sup>

Simplification allows the mind to begin the second and most seminal experiential stage, *samadhi* (meditation). One is able to more easily enter into state of mental calmness (*shamattah*) where one has more precise insights (*vipassana*) into suffering, the cause of suffering, the cessation of suffering and the path to the cessation of suffering are realized.

Various schools of western psychology, from those of Sigmund Freud, Carl Jung, and William James, to those of the behaviorists, self actualistionists, Gestaltists, etc., deal with the mind or mind/body within the context of human bodily and mental suffering, mortality, ego defense mechanism and societal comportment. Yet, from a Buddhist

perspective, without the student's mind being able enter into a meditative state of calm abiding, the student cannot develop the necessary experiential ground for his or her mind to experience insight into the mind's gross and latent processes. It is at this stage that western psychology and Buddhist psychology part company.

The fruition of a simplified disciplined lifestyle coupled with the calm abiding experience of the student's basic nature, denuded from habitual patterns, is *Prajna* (discriminatory awareness) or the direct insight into the nature mind's functioning. The student begins, first, moment by moment, to directly perceive (non-conceptually) the actual functions of mind's mechanisms and reflexes. *Prajna* is the discriminating awareness arising and inseparable from wisdom that identifies neurotic and confused mental states. They are liberated immediately upon discovery or through a variety of individual or combined methods which utilize breathing, *mantras*, *yantras* (visualizations), yogic postures, etc.

The accompanying website for this dissertation will incorporate material related to *sila*, *samdhi* and *prajna* reflecting the Buddhist student's lineage or style of meditation practice and Buddhist scholarly dealing with psychological states and modalities. Thus, the same State of California material may be augmented by Buddhist ancillary pedagogy according to the specific needs of the student and his or her own Buddhist tradition.

### *The Future*

The development and implementation of The Buddhist Educational Network (TBEN), a virtual campus/support system, is becoming a necessity for Westerners and Buddhists worldwide. TBEN is an educational intranet and internet virtual campus which will serve the American and International Buddhist communities. TBEN will also be available to non-Buddhist entities.

The tremendous increase, in America and other countries, in prison populations, gang violence, the homeless, single parent households, child abuse, inferior public school systems, racism, ethnic and religious discrimination, terrorist threats, environmental disasters, infra structure collapses, corporate greed, the resurgence of monopolies and other deleterious social phenomena, seem to indicate a need for new paradigms for developing socially engaged wise and compassionate human beings.

As a consequence of the above negative (and other) social conditions, the field of education, including home schools, charter schools, religious schools and virtual campuses, is on the rise worldwide. The worldwide Buddhist communities are part of this educational reformation and reorientation.

TBEN will offer a general and lineage specific Buddhist oriented virtual learning environment for distance learning, home schooling and hybrid curricula. In addition, TBEN will develop and integrate ancillary Buddhist related pedagogic materials for secular learning institutions. TBEN will also invite all Buddhist educational pre-school through University level institutions and related venues to interface with and utilize the resources of TBEN for their own pedagogic and related needs.

The initial projected TBEN course offerings and ancillary material for secular institutions will be for pre-school through high school age students, utilizing the State of California Curricula guidelines. As TBEN grows, based on the needs of the Buddhist and other communities, it will create virtual doors into a vast array of educationally related support systems. These supports system will include, but not be limited to, online courses, consultation, material resources and interfacing with a variety of Buddhist countries and lineages.

TBEN understands the need and pedagogical utility advanced by technologies that are based on multiple intelligence advocates, many of which hold similar epistemic and psychological premises that underlie Buddhist pedagogy. The advent of the web, coupled with the above views, places increased demands on students and teachers, and on the ways in which they process the web form of knowledge acquisition, storage and integration.

In contemporary pedagogic environs, there are important questions related to how learning institutions best utilize computers, curricula, staff and faculty to enhance their teaching and learning process; whether pre-school, grade school, high school or college teaching venues. This applies to public schools, as well as home, private, distant learning and teaching facilities. TBEN will address these and other issues related to formulating and implementing a variety of Buddhist oriented pedagogies.

The web is now being understood as a source and means of supporting multiple intelligence teaching and learning, not just a delivery medium. The web has probably been the main influence that has changed the way we conceive of computers and their related technologies. They are no longer machines which have to be conquered or commanded. They have become another example and extension of the human mind's utilization of vast unobstructed opening space, inseparable from the 'magical net of appearances' manifesting as operating systems, browsers, transparent windows and repositories of information and communication that may become skillful means (*upaya*) for the benefit of sentient beings in the *Kali Yuga* (Iron Age-432,000 year period of material and spiritual degeneration).

Students need a sense of this world. They are a participating audience attempting to understand the mostly unwritten rules that govern its behavior. The successful utilization of this new medium requires that students and faculty equip themselves with the conceptual models and practical skills that will enable them to participate in the global web learning communities. TBEN's faculty, advisors, staff and students will be equipped with these conceptual models and practical skills.

TBEN understands the growing need in the worldwide Buddhist and non-Buddhist communities for quality traditional home schooling and distance learning. These, in the majority of cases, require Web and computer-based technologies which can amplify the Buddhist soteriological pedagogies related to wisdom and method. The western notions of multiple intelligence pedagogies and meta-cognitive learning can facilitate the integration of Buddhist and Western educational concepts and their applications.

TBEN will be offering a variety of Buddhist pedagogies as stand alone modalities along with their ancillary integrations into existing curricula. In addition, the TBEN virtual campus will encourage the sharing of curricula and accreditation among the rich variety of Buddhist traditions. These offerings, technologies and counseling will be supervised and maintained by an internationally renowned Board of Directors, faculty, advisors and staff.

**Sarvam Mangalam**

**Blessings to All**

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<sup>169</sup> <http://www.tibet.com/Govt/does.html>

<sup>169</sup> <http://www.tibet.com/Govt/does.html>

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<sup>169</sup> <http://www.tibet.com/Govt/does.html>

<sup>169</sup> <http://www.tibet.com/Govt/does.html>

<sup>170</sup> [www.naropa.edu/](http://www.naropa.edu/)

<sup>171</sup> Dharma Realm Buddhist University (DRBU), <http://www.drbu.org/>

<sup>172</sup> Ibid.

<sup>173</sup> Ibid.

<sup>174</sup> Ibid.

<sup>175</sup> Ibid.

<sup>176</sup> Ibid.

<sup>177</sup> Ibid.

<sup>178</sup> O'Brien.

<sup>179</sup> O'Brien.

<sup>180</sup> O'Brien.

<sup>181</sup> Susman, 1983.

<sup>182</sup> O'Brien, 1998.

<sup>183</sup> Nathan Katz (ed.), *Buddhist and Western Psychology*, (Boulder: Prajna Press, 1983), 1-2.

<sup>184</sup> Ibid.