

# A Study of Insights of Teachings Method and Educational Practices in Buddhist Literature

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- **Article History:** Submitted 21 February, 2025; Reviewed 1 March, 2025; Revised 16 March, 2025 • **Corresponding Author:** Tilak Ram Acharya
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## Abstract

*This research investigates the educational framework which existed during the Buddha's Era based on the teaching practices found inside Buddhist monastic institutions. The Buddha alongside his disciples applied different teaching approaches which led to an understanding of their knowledge transfer along with ethical learning and intellectual growth. Buddhist texts from Vinaya Pitaka and Sutta Pitaka and Jataka tales serve as the foundation for the researchers to interpret their study on Buddhist learning. The research explains how the Buddha used sermons and dialogues combined with parables as his teaching methods to develop both conceptual understanding and practical experience in his learners. Buddhism maintains open access to and storage of knowledge through oral traditions for educational benefit of all monks and the general public. This part highlights the open-door nature of Buddhist education which welcomes all social groups such as women and marginalized individuals. Different instructional methods from the Buddhist era are discussed, such as the Shravan method (listening and memorization), the imitation method (learning through observation and repetition), the demonstration and practice method (experiential learning), the interpretation method (understanding via discussion), the lecture method (structured knowledge delivery), the debate and logic method (analytical discourse), the seminar and Shāstrārtha method (formal intellectual debates), the self-study method (autonomous learning through reflection), and the excursion method (learning through travel and observation of nature and society). Describing educational establishments known as Viharas and Mahaviharas showed their status as centers for scripture study which had organized yet flexible structures for teaching scriptures alongside moral and philosophical and meditative student growth.*

*The research establishes that educational practices used during the time of Buddha contribute to enriched ancient civilizations through their ability to generate moral communities which still have value in modern educational settings.*

**Keywords:** *Buddhist education, Buddhist literature, Gurukul system, Buddhist teaching methods, Guru-disciple relationship, Meditation techniques, Moral parables*

## **Introduction**

Education in ancient India, particularly during the era of the Buddha, was a well-structured and holistic system aimed at fostering the intellectual, ethical, and spiritual development of individuals. The education system of the Buddhist period differed from contemporary approaches since it focused on complete personal development by combining moral training with mental development and intellectual learning. Transformation of character served as the main goal besides factual education because the ancient system focused on developing character virtues such as compassion together with mindfulness and self-discipline. Under Buddhist educational philosophy the complete acquisition of knowledge needed ethical and moral refinement thus ethical conduct stood as the foundation of the educational system. Moral principles formed the basis for social acceptance so those who strayed from ethical standards became targets of social criticism until they were deemed unfit for all social activities because education and ethical life were inseparable.

Under Buddhist influence Ancient Indian educational methods helped establish a highly developed civilization across the world. Some of the first historic educational institutions existed in the Indian subcontinent with Takshashila among the most prominent as well as Nalanda so did Vikramashila and Valabhi. Multiple educational institutions from across Asia drew scholarly minds to become leading global centers of knowledge that specialized in philosophy, logic, medicine, astronomy and linguistics. The educational methods of this period surpassed monasteries and formal educational institutions because they included both oral traditions and debates as well as practical subject-based learning. Our investigation of these traditions reveals important information about the intellectual along with cultural and social aspects that shaped ancient Indian civilization.

The history of educational development in India originates from the Vedic period when a defined educational structure was established. Throughout the Vedic tradition,

the transfer of knowledge happened through oral learning methods which required strict memorization and repetitive recitation between Teachers and their disciples. When Buddhism arrived on the scene this original educational system developed into a method that focused on intellectual reasoning as well as dialogue while strengthening critical thinking abilities. During the Buddhist period, education became a universal opportunity since every social group including people from all social statuses and genders could access this opportunity. Buddhist education stood apart from traditional practices because it welcomed everyone into the learning process which made it an exceptional tool for social equality and intellectual development.

Historically education has been regarded as a valuable instrument that creates both personal growth and progress in society. Human civilization as well as behavior and thinking transformed this central educational institution. Buddhist educational philosophy declared that wisdom development (*prajñā*) needed partnership with ethical discipline (*śīla*) and mental concentration (*samādhi*) training. The three-fold method of Buddhist education combined theoretical learning with practical applications to educate students into virtuous enlightened individuals.

The research article explores Buddhist educational principles by analyzing the teaching methodologies of this period. This work explores Buddhist teaching effects on Indian ancient culture while studying the pedagogical approaches along with monasteries as knowledge distributors. The study permits us to understand how education served as a tool for personal enlightenment and social progression which continues to offer applicable knowledge to present-day educational discussions.

## Objective

The main purpose of this research article is to provide a thorough examination of educational instruction that happened during the era of the Buddha. Specifically, it intends to:

1. To investigate the varied instruction methods Buddha along with his followers practiced through oral delivery and interactive dialogues as well as practical demonstrations.
2. To evaluate how these teaching approaches enhanced growth in both knowledge and morals.
3. To demonstrate an inclusive nature because it removed social barriers to learning and enabled an equal education for both patricians and plebeians.

4. To continue influencing ancient Indian education and they function as vital components within present-day educational systems.

## **Limitation**

This study depends mainly on Buddhist primary sources from the Pāli Tripiṭaka because these contain the most complete information about Buddhist education methodology. The study investigates only the educational practices mentioned within *Theravāda* Buddhist literature sources. Only educational perspectives from Mahāyāna and Vajrayāna texts are excluded because of the research's specific analytical approach. The discoveries from the Buddha's time provide important knowledge about teaching techniques but may not reflect the complete diversity of educational methods throughout Buddhist teachings.

## **Materials Collection and Analysis Methods**

This study employs a qualitative research approach, while drawing most information from secondary resources for its research and evaluation procedures. The study retrieved diverse resources that stem from scholarly articles, books, newspaper publications, and reputable online sources to analyze the subject thoroughly.

The library research method enables the collection of appropriate data through a process of identifying and evaluating literary resources that focus on Buddhist education and pedagogy. The investigation focuses on the textual evaluation of historical Buddhist writings together with academic scholarly interpretations.

A descriptive analysis method has been applied to evaluate the examined research materials to allow for deep interpretation. The chosen approach delivers comprehensive insights into traditional teaching methods from the Buddha's time so the research can extract critical findings from original historical literature. The research uses this framework to create a detailed explanation of Buddhist classroom teaching from ancient times.

## **Teaching Methods Employed by the Buddha:**

In the 6th century BC, Shakyamuni Buddha revolutionized the art of teaching by introducing a distinctive approach that emphasized individual engagement and personal transformation. Buddha applied different teaching methods through sermons and parables while conducting interactive dialogues with answers and questions according to early Buddhist scriptures known as Pāli texts (Acharya 18–24). The

diverse education model worked on multiple psychological areas to capture students' intellectual capability emotional states and spiritual interests.

### **The Role of Parables and Storytelling:**

The Buddha successfully taught his moral lessons by using parables as storytelling tools which helped his followers understand his teachings better (Guruge 29). The Buddha used “Jātaka stories” as essential teaching vehicles which both illustrated his principles and demonstrated practical applications for disciples (Cowell, *The Jataka* / 12). His use of narratives allowed the Buddha to connect distant ideas to daily life thus creating a practical understanding for his listeners. Through Jātaka tales spiritual wisdom became accessible to all people so that they could connect with the ethical teachings and understand how to put them into practice as part of their daily lives.

### **Interactive Teaching: Questions and Answers:**

Besides storytelling the Buddha used a teaching technique that consisted of engaging his disciples through question-answer formats (Warder 144). The teaching method enabled the Buddha to have individualized interactions that resolved the particular questions and doubts of his students (Batchelor 58) The dynamic encounter helped students stay active participants in their learning process because they received the chance to actively engage with education. The students asked trigger questions to the teacher that allowed them to sharpen their critical thinking while deepening their involvement with classroom lessons. Through this reflective method disciples acquired the opportunity to evaluate their beliefs while developing their knowledge independently, both intellectually and spiritually (Harvey 83-85).

### **Focus on Personal Insight and Experiential Learning:**

The Buddha based his teaching practice primarily on the development of personal understanding alongside experiential learning. Disciples of Buddha received critical thinking guidance from their master who taught them to question all ideas before accepting them passively (Walpola, *What the* 12). Developing personal understanding superseded the reliance on external authority in the Buddha's teachings which resulted in his followers acquiring deeper experiential understandings of his presented truths. Through teaching his followers to look inward and experience things firsthand the Buddha strived to create moments of transformative education. As a part of his teachings, the Buddha used knowledge as a pathway to personal wisdom achievement through self-realization. The experiential teaching method allowed

students to develop personal wisdom as they learned wisdom through experience instead of remembering it academically. Through his teachings, the Buddha empowered followers to independently find solutions to the challenges they faced on their spiritual paths.

### **Tailored Teaching and Flexibility:**

The Buddha adopted a teaching approach that displayed flexible adaptability in his methods. The Buddha adapted his teaching methods to match individual learning abilities because he understood people differ in their understanding potential. In his teachings, the Buddha adjusted his communication methods to suit the different development levels and thinking abilities of a king, a common citizen, a monk, or a woman (Bodhi 175). Throughout his teachings, the Buddha provided customized content that aligned perfectly with what each disciple required according to their individual needs. The Buddha adjusted his teachings to suit each individual disciple depending on their spiritual evolution point by giving advanced philosophical understanding to some students yet simple ethical instructions and meditative methods to others. The Buddha's flexible approach to teaching allowed him to offer relevant lessons while proving his care for what his students required individually. His teaching approach grew from his ability to view each person through human empathy and practical understanding of their individual circumstances (Ñāṇamoli and Bodhi 25-30).

### **Pedagogical Approaches of Buddhism:**

During the Buddhist era educators established an equal learning system that extended across socioeconomic divisions including social class and caste system wealth and privilege (Gombrich, *Theravada Buddhism* 137-40). Educational practices in Buddhism delivered open access to learning opportunities for every person beyond social distinctions (198). This educational approach made decisive changes by breaking down the hierarchical system that characterized other schooling models of that time period (Singh 112). As a central principle in Buddhist pedagogy, the Guru-disciple relationship developed through a bond of mutual respect as well as affection and spiritual instruction. The Gurus received respect from their disciples because they provided education together with spiritual and ethical instruction. Through this relationship, students participated in learning transformations that went past knowledge transfer into developing ethical and moral virtues. Buddhist educational institutions united society by expanding their educational openings to both female students and Shudras as well as students from previously uneducated social classes

(Poudyal 264-66)). The Buddhist perspective of education prioritized equality because this belief was central to Buddhism which allowed people to acquire spiritual wisdom no matter their social or birth position (Singh 115). Buddhism assisted in the social changes of ancient Indian society by creating educational expansion that included marginalized populations (Gombrich, *What the* 142).

## **The Transition from Vedic to Buddhist Education**

Buddhist education kept its roots in ancient Vedic tradition yet established fundamental differences in terms of educational content and approach (Cowell, *The Jataka I* 100). The Vedic period prioritized correct pronunciation of holy texts during memorization and the performance of religious ceremonies (101). Education under Buddhism expanded its content by including wider subjects that included teaching ethics and providing instruction in meditation and conducting philosophical discussions. Education focused on personal understanding of the Four Noble Truths and the Eightfold Path while shifting its importance from pronunciation to critical thinking and self-realization (103).

A vital section of Buddhist education emerged when the procedure to assess disciples for advanced ordination (upasampadā) was incorporated as an essential component. A disciple attained full monastic commitment through ordination which presented an integrated approach for developing control over actual body and mental activities and spiritual awareness (Singh 131). The Buddhist ordination created moral and philosophical thinkers through its training process to develop individuals for deep meditation and service and ethical conduct toward the community instead of the Vedic system's structuring of ritualistic practices (133).

## **Diverse Educational Approaches for Children**

Buddhist education accepts diverse childhood development stages while understanding students need teaching techniques that match their different cognitive and emotional abilities. Buddhist education adopted child-based growth and natural curiosity to develop children intellectually along with their moral and spiritual character across their life stages (Poudyal 268-70). Designed teaching methods for different age groups emerged because of the emphasis on developmental appropriateness thus maintaining student engagement across all age ranges. In this context, Buddhist teaching methods are divided into two distinct groups in this teaching context.



- a. Individual Teaching Method: Emphasized personal study through which students were prompted to think independently about their thoughts and observe their spiritual journey (Singh 140). Self-directed learning practices enabled disciples to gain intellectual independence along with a self-encouraged motivation to explore deeper understandings. The individual teaching method guided students to develop critical thinking skills while allowing them to understand lessons from their personal thoughts and inner self-exploration.
- b. Collective Teaching Method: Focused on group learning through which major groups of pupils listened while the Guru or qualified specialists delivered training sessions and sermons (Narendradev 93). As part of this educational approach students experienced joint learning and shared moral disciplines through corporate instruction. The educational approach permitted students to exchange insights from different viewpoints and developed both dialogue and cooperation among them.

## **Interdisciplinary Thinking in Buddhist Education**

Students participating in Buddhist education were guided toward interdisciplinary thinking by learning to apply various intellectual approaches when solving problems (McGuire 5). Students received encouragement to examine issues through perspectives of historical analysis, philosophical investigation and critical theory, and literary scholarship so they could view the world from various angles. The education focused on delivering diverse intellectual methods to help students experience more complete knowledge of the world. The education system sought to create conditions where students could handle complex questions through multiple disciplinary perspectives during complete engagement. According to McGuire, Buddhist education trained students to connect ideas from various knowledge areas which developed their thinking abilities with enhanced empathy together with profound comprehension of human experiences (57).

## **The Egalitarian Nature of Buddhist Pedagogy**

In its essence, Buddhist teaching inherently accentuated freedom and equality. Instead of attaching great importance to status sex is the most important value for improving each single person. Women, who in other systems were normally excluded from formal education, had equal access to hearing the teachings of the Buddha. By setting up the *bhikkhuni sangha*, an order for nuns, Buddhism showed that women



deserved educational opportunities and could be encouraged in both their spiritual development and leadership within a community (Gombrich, *Theravada Buddhism* 148). This egalitarian stance also applies to people of all classes and walks of life. By not confining the Buddha's true message to an elite group, but making it available to all including low-born people who are traditionally marginal and those who had been forced into poverty through no fault of their own.

## 1. *Shravan* Method (Hearing Tradition)

In the ancient era, we didn't understand the concept of literacy. Education was oral rather than written and transmission was listening, memorization and recitation (Singh 92). Its exact source could be, by listening again and again practicing to recite it. Pupils were not only expected to know all the teachings by heart, they had to understand how the teacher learnt them. "*Shravan Bidhi*", as this method is known, was the main means by which knowledge was taught.

### a. Role of Oral Transmission in Buddhist Education:

In the Buddhist tradition, monks and disciples would gather around their teachers, listening attentively to the words of the Buddha and their Gurus. The method of orally reciting, repeating, and chanting teachings ensured that knowledge was deeply embedded in the minds of the learners (Gombrich, *The Pali* 67). Since there were no written scriptures initially, all teachings were preserved and transmitted exclusively through oral means. The Vinayapitaka, which contained rules for monastic discipline, was memorized and passed down orally by generations of monks before it was eventually documented (69). This underscores the significance of the hearing tradition as the foundational pillar of Buddhist education.

### b. Repetition as a Tool for Knowledge Retention:

An integral part of the *Shravan* technique was repetition. As the saying goes "The more you listen continuously the more it gets imprinted into your mind and consciousness" The same technique did not only used for primary teachings, it was played an important role of collection and protection of entire Tripitaka (Singh 97). "The Three Baskets," or Tripitaka, the Buddhist canon, was meticulously memorized and recited before it was written down centuries later. It was a commonly accepted truth that memorizing texts fortified one's intellect and sharpened one's thoughts. In fact, this particular approach was found to enhance the mental sharpness of the scholars in a matter of ten days of continuous usage (Mishra 47-49). The connection

between thoughts and letters of the alphabet led to the idea that oral repetition had to be devisive in structuring knowledge and sharpening intellect.

### **c. Impact and Enduring Legacy of the *Shravan* Method:**

The *Shravan method* turned into the prevalent educational system throughout the Buddhist period as it kept the transmission of knowledge in one tuitiooon across the consequitive generations (Gombrich, *The Pali* 75). The method was especially useful in a time without written records, enabling Buddhist monks to keep a doctrine consistent and spreading teachings to various areas across the board.

Even in modern times, quotable oral tradition are still an essence of many religious and philosophical cultures. In Buddhist monasteries and Hindu Gurukuls, chanting, recitation, listening to discourses are still essential practices indicating the continuing influence of the hearing tradition today. The *Shravan* method was not just a method to learn- it was a way for developing disciplines, deep listening and mindfulness – qualities which are still badly required in today's pedagogical practices (Mishra 52).

## **2. Imitation Method**

The imitation method represents a standard and instinctive educational approach which humans have used throughout history until present day. During Buddhist education this method served as the essential teaching tool for students to learn basic language skills and mathematical concepts together with ethics (Gombrich, *Education in* 82). Through clear pronunciations the teaching monks would write letters and numbers on boards which students needed to follow. Children learned both sound elements and written symbols through this practice that strengthened their writing skills at the same time.

Through the imitation method students gained fundamental discipline and ethical values as well as traditional education. Students learned essential moral values along with respectful conduct and monastic discipline through observing their teachers while performing their actions and behaviors (88). As a comprehensive teaching method this technique fostered the growth of both intellectual knowledge and moral values in students including monks and lay students.

Additionally, imitation-based learning was applied beyond basic literacy and numeracy. It was widely used for practical skills training, including the art of debate,

meditation techniques, and religious rituals. The method's emphasis on learning through observation and repetition made it a highly effective pedagogical tool that ensured long-term retention and mastery of skills.

### 3. Demonstration and Practice Method

The demonstration and practice method functions as an evolved imitation method which puts its emphasis on experiential hands-on skill development (Jha 4). Students would observe teachers both explaining and physically performing particular actions through which students could memorize and duplicate the demonstrated movements.

The main focus of this method depended on firsthand learning activities. Students needed to practice on their own after seeing the teacher demonstrate until they demonstrated adequate skill mastery. This method was particularly valuable for training in arts, crafts, and practical subjects, including:

1. Meditation techniques (proper posture, breathing, and mindfulness practices)
2. Handicrafts and monastic skills (such as painting, calligraphy, and manuscript preservation)
3. Physical discipline and martial arts (as seen in later Buddhist traditions)
4. Ritualistic practices (including chanting, ceremonial procedures, and temple duties)

The demonstration and practice method actively involved students in their learning activities thus closing the theoretical-practical knowledge divide. Through active engagement students developed valuable problem-solving abilities as well as profound understanding while learning practical uses of their knowledge (36).

### 4. Interpretation Method

Through the interpretation method Buddhist education rose to higher sophistication by focusing on both abstract understanding and clear concept definition. Buddhist teachers used spoken instruction to pass educational material since the method helped students grasp concepts by utilizing metaphors and examples and analogies (Rahula, *What the* 45). The use of this method helped create practical connections between complex notions so students could better understand them.

One defining characteristic of this teaching style presented the teacher taking an active role to explain student confusions. The learning process continued only when teachers verified that all students mastered the lesson content. Students participated in discussions as well as dialogues that allowed them to ask questions and seek clarity while engaging in critical thinking activities during the interpretation approach.

This method was particularly effective in Buddhist education because (Gombrich, *Education in* 116-18):

1. It promoted analytical thinking – students were not expected to blindly accept teachings but were encouraged to question and reflect on them.
2. It strengthened oral traditions – monks relied on spoken discourse to explain, clarify, and transmit knowledge.
3. It enhanced retention and comprehension – by using stories, allegories, and examples, teachers made complex teachings easier to grasp and remember.

Throughout his discourses the Buddha employed the interpretation method to simplify complex philosophical and ethical concepts for better comprehension. His dialogues with disciples together with kings and laypeople provide examples of how he conducted discussions which involved questioning methods and interpretative guidance to guide people toward enlightenment.

Thus, the interpretation method was a dynamic and student-centered approach, confirming that learning was not just passive reception but an interactive and reflective process (Cowell, *The Jataka* 110).

## **5. Lecture Method**

The lecture method employed by Buddhist monks during the era of the Buddha was significantly different from the modern lecture approach (Gethin 132). The teaching style of ancient Buddhist monks differed from contemporary conventional classrooms by combining dialogue and flexibility to resemble academic guest lectures.

Specialized topics received instruction in Buddhist Higher Education Centers through knowledgeable senior monks and distinguished scholars who had extensive training in their fields. Expert lecturers delivered information by creating spaces for deep analysis alongside collaborative dialogue. Students gained clarification through discussion sessions after lectures as a fundamental element of this educational approach. The learning experience avoided passive absorption through an interactive

approach that fostered intellectual exchange between students and instructors (Rahula 97).

Additionally, through lecture classes students were given opportunities to experience multidisciplinary learning because teachers integrated lessons from various subjects thus enabling students to see different fields of knowledge in context. Students can explore expanded intellectual perspectives when an ethical lecture combines philosophy theories with psychology principles and social harmony information.

Moreover, the practical teachings of Buddhist lectures focused on real-life applications as monks presented ethical guidelines and practical significance of their teachings to students. The teaching approach emphasized this educational method to strengthen Buddhist dedication toward learning wisdom (*prajñā*) alongside moral(*śīla*) conduct (Harvey 149).

This educational method proved effective because it spread through Buddhist universities such as Nālandā, Vikramaśīla, and Takṣaśilā where lectures became the fundamental element of academic discussions (Chakrabarti 173). Through its continued inspirational effects the pedagogical method has become fundamental for both contemporary Buddhist academic discussions and worldwide monastic training.

## 6. Debate and Logic Method

Buddhist scholars placed a profound emphasis on logic and reasoning, with a strong association with the Mādhyamika Nyāya School of Buddhist philosophy. As a result, Buddhist education developed a rigorous system of debate and argumentation, designed to train students in critical thinking, analytical reasoning, and persuasive discourse (Davidson, The Eightfold 213).

The debate method was not merely an intellectual exercise; it was a structured process of inquiry, helping monks refine their understanding of the Dharma while also testing the validity of various doctrines. Monks engaged in dialectical discussions, where participants would present their viewpoints and support them with rational arguments (216). These arguments were not arbitrary but followed eight types of valid reasoning,

The Mādhyamika Nyāya School of Buddhist philosophy had a strong connection at Buddhist institutions which emphasized intellectual reasoning with deep commitment to logical deduction. Through this approach Buddhist education launched

an official argumentative system which educated scholars in analyzing problems and engaged them in effective debate skills.

Buddhist inquiry through debate constituted a systematic inquiry which allowed monks to develop their Dharma knowledge while verifying different religious doctrines. The dialogues conducted by monks were dialectical because participants showed their positions and used rational logic to back up their claims. Eight types of valid reasoning structures supported every argument presented by the monks which included (220):

1. Principle (Tattva) – establishing a fundamental truth
2. Hetu (Reasoning) – providing logical justification
3. Example (Dr̥ṣṭānta) – using analogies or cases to support the argument
4. Sādharmya (Similarity) – drawing parallels between concepts
5. Validity (Pramāṇa) – ensuring authenticity and correctness
6. Direct Perception (Pratyakṣa) – relying on empirical evidence
7. Inference (Anumāna) – deriving conclusions from observed facts
8. Scriptural Authority (Āgama) – referring to Buddhist texts and teachings

This debate tradition followed a particular format which took place in formal assembly rooms where monks debated philosophical matters in front of both their teacher and peer audience (Maitreya 45). The structured debate process developed their capabilities in rhetoric, as well as logical analysis, together with philosophical doctrine protection.

Buddhist education structured its teachings about debate and argumentation through Maitreya's "Shaptadasabhoomishastra" because this text outlines debate training in seven chapters (50). These works demonstrate the elaborate-focused teaching of Buddhist logic along with debate instruction and its effect on subsequent Indian and Tibetan and East Asian monastic educational development.

Furthermore, the debating processes established intellectual standards which matured into official Buddhist disputations performed at major institutions such as Nālandā between scholars representing Buddhist and non-Buddhist institutions for detailing religious teachings. This intellectual practice functioned as a cooperative

mode to discover truth which matched Buddhist principles of practical wisdom through upāya and right understanding through samyak-dṛṣṭi.

Tibetan Buddhist monastic institutions maintain a centuries-old tradition which involves daily academic discussion between monks for enhancing their analytical abilities and doctrinal comprehension along with mind clarity (Davidson, *The Eightfold* 235). Through centuries the practice of non-hostile intellectual discussions has maintained its essential role in Buddhist teaching about the lasting significance of thought-based inquiry in spiritual and intellectual maturation.

## 7. Conference and *Shāstrārtha* Method

As an essential element of Buddhist advanced education the *Shāstrārtha* method established itself as the major intellectual pursuit through religious debates between scholars. Through this method philosophers conducted discussions which enabled both philosophical analysis and doctrinal harmonic development (Davidson, *The Shāstrārtha* 1). The method provided an organized system for intellectual exchange beyond pure argumentation by allowing its participants to develop their Buddhist doctrine understanding through logical analysis.

Scientists from different Buddhist thought schools gathered at conferences which Buddhist teachers regularly organized for intellectual discourse and debate according to Davidson (5). Buddhist philosophy received major influence from these events because they created opportunities for discussions that combined insights from Buddhist and non-Buddhist religious traditions.

### 7.1 Structure of a *Shāstrārtha* Session (Narendradev 92):

1. Lecture by an Expert – Subject-matter experts such as respected monks and teachers presented discourses about particular philosophical and doctrinal topics to the audience.
2. Inquiry and Debate – Students alongside scholars would then pose questions followed by query sessions that led to rational discussion with their expert instructor after the lecture.
3. Resolution through Rational Discourse – The discussions would persist until everyone obtained satisfactory explanations. The main objective was to achieve the most developed comprehension regardless of winning the argument.



4. Documentation and Transmission – Buddhist scripture collection preserved vital information from these debates which scientists used to keep their knowledge flowing from one generation to the next.

## **7.2 Historical Significance of *Shāstrārtha***

*Shāstrārtha* has been an integral part of intellectual traditions across different historical periods, including:

The Buddhist Era – Buddhist monasteries during their early stages employed the process to make Dharma teachings and principles more refined (Davidson, *The Shāstrārth* 8).

The Mauryan Period (Ashoka's Time) – Ashoka the Great supported doctrinal debates between his subjects to enhance the uniformity of Buddhist beliefs and refute misinterpretations of Buddhist teachings (Singh 160).

The Harsha Period (7th Century AD) – Mahāyāna scholars together with Hīnayāna scholars conducted noteworthy debates which led to the development of Buddhist philosophy (Davidson, *The Shāstrārth* 13).

## **8. The Sangosthi (Seminar) Tradition in Buddhism**

The training session known as Sangosthi served as a seminar equivalent in Buddhist education even though it operated differently from contemporary academic seminars. The traditional Buddhist Sangosthi event differed from modern seminars since it existed exclusively within an academic gathering for scholars and focused on:

1. Only students specializing in a particular subject and their teacher participated.
2. Research participants conducted ordered dialogue sessions by studying various viewpoints until reaching a unanimous agreement on their conclusions.
3. The group adopted logical discussion to arrive at their shared wisdom through collective minds rather than personal choices for their final interpretation.

## **9. Self-Study Method**

Buddhist education developed the self-study method parallel to the evolving

written literature because Buddhist monks led the text development (Gethin 114). When written manuscripts became available learning transformed because they granted students access to independent study methods.

Buddhist monks took multiple substantial actions which included text translation alongside preserved documentation of texts and text reproduction. Religious scriptures along with philosophical treatises were translated into Pāli to enhance accessibility beyond monks. Buddhist monks devoted their time to hand-copy manuscripts for knowledge preservation and transmission throughout the ages. As a result, monastic institutions established libraries where scholars sought advanced education.

Advanced students in Buddhist education conducted deep study of Buddhist texts by reading extensively to achieve comprehensive comprehension of Buddhist teachings (Lopez 132). Students had the freedom to engage in self-study yet equally benefited from teacher-guided discussions for getting clarification on complicated subjects and improving their understanding (Strong 81). Students received clarification through their relationship with teachers so self-study would not cause misunderstandings of the teachings.

The practice of self-study developed intellectual independence through which students learned critical thinking and deep reflection along with a personal understanding of Buddhist teachings (Skilton 92). The extensive study of this method enabled scholars to develop into educators who distributed Buddhist philosophy across various countries.

Even today, Modern Buddhist educational institutions alongside current Buddhist monasteries use self-study as a fundamental learning approach. The present-day core elements of Buddhist learning include student-driven inquiry together with critical involvement and enduring education pursuits.

## **10. Excursion Method (Demonstration and Practice Method)**

The excursion method that Buddhist monastic students used as a standard educational practice stood as a central component of their learning approach (Gethin 132). Through this educational experience monks learned by directly experiencing the world instead of traditional classroom education so they obtained practical knowledge about Buddhist teachings.

Monks undergoing training were given the opportunity to embark on study visits to different places (Johnston 210). These excursions served multiple purposes:

Spiritual Contemplation (Gethin 137): The practice of observing outside monastic grounds enabled monks to study the impermanence of things thematically while strengthening key Buddhist teachings about impermanence (*anicca*) and suffering (*dukkha*) and non-self (*anatta*).

4. Societal Engagement (Johnston 213): Through their visits with various communities monks gained experience studying the detailed characteristics of social systems and traditional customs and ethical behavioral standards. Monastic experience at Wat Pao Jaray aligned monks to perform essential religious preaching and demonstrate ethical leadership competencies.
5. Practical Training (Skilton 97): The practical Buddhist teachings at excursions enabled monks to refine their communication techniques while performing Buddhist ritual activities including meditation sessions and missionary outreach.

## **Excursions and Buddhist Literary Studies**

During this era, Studying Sanskrit grammar and Buddhist philosophy represented a main educational priority within Buddhist education (deJong 45). The students studied different classical Sanskrit documents in great detail during their educational journey, including:

1. Pāṇini's Sūtras – A foundational text on Sanskrit grammar.
2. Dhātupāṭha – A compilation of verbal roots.
3. Aṣṭadhyāyī – A treatise on linguistic structure.
4. Unādi Sūtras and Kāśhikāvṛtti – Additional grammatical commentaries.
5. Churni and Patanjali Mahāmānya – Advanced Sanskrit literature deals with linguistic philosophy according to de Jong (Lopez 151).

Additionally, students explored the philosophical and literary works of the era, such as:

- i. Bhartṛhari's *Vakyapadiya* and *Bhagavritti* – Texts on linguistic philosophy and semiotics.
- ii. *Hetuvidya* and *Abhidharmakosha* – Buddhist intellectuals explored basic metaphysical and logical research which taught both reasoning and analytical

methods.

- iii. *Jātakamālā* (Garland of *Jātaka* Stories) – As an educational resource the collection presented moral parables to students for developing creative skills together with ethical comprehension and story-telling abilities.
- iv. *Vinaya* (Monastic Code) – Through the study of *Vinaya* Buddhist students received stronger discipline training to become committed to the rules of monastic ethics and behaviour.

## 10.1 Significance of the Excursion Method

Under this teaching format theory learned in books linked directly to practical application so monks became proficient in Buddhist philosophy and its application in their daily routines. Students achieved full development through their experience of traveling with observation and meditation alongside scholarly work which created individuals who possessed practical alongside intellectual knowledge (Davidson, *Buddhist Systems* 15).

The excursion approach which Buddhist monks used in monastic education continues being practiced today in Buddhist monastic communities (Gethin 143). Living monks in Buddhism today practice the same communal observations through travel experiences as their predecessor monks from ancient times. The excursion method demonstrates the complete approach of Buddhist education that requires students to integrate their knowledge into practical life experiences.

## Conclusion

This study uses a qualitative approach that evaluates Buddhist education through secondary research based on scholarly articles and books together with newspaper publications and reliable online sources. This study uses historical Buddhist textual analysis together with academic interpretations through descriptive methods to identify critical information from original literature. Analysis shows that during the 6th century BC the Buddha used teaching methods which created progressive changes focusing on individual participation along with personal growth and practical classroom experiences. Using parables and interactive dialogs with specific instruction methods allowed the Buddha to provide intellectual and emotional and spiritual education which cultivated both critical thinking and self-realization among his disciples.

The practice of Buddhist pedagogy dismantled social divisions and established complete educational equality between different social classes and between both genders. The Guru-disciple relationship between students and their instructors formed an essential core element of this teaching method because it consisted of spiritual guidance which received equal value from both participants. Buddhist education evolved from its Vedic origins to include three major elements which centered learning on ethics alongside meditation and philosophical debates to foster knowledge in personal development and moral standards.

The research presents multiple educational teaching methods starting with *Shravan* (hearing) through imitation to demonstration followed by interpretation and ending with debate to develop independent thinking and practical skills. Through the excursion method students gained additional educational value through combining classroom learning with practical applications of theory to real world examples. These educational methods from the past affect contemporary teaching approaches because they encourage flexibility alongside adaptability to develop students' mindfulness and deep listening abilities and interdisciplinary mindsets.

Historical evidence demonstrates that Buddhist education teaches students intellectual and spiritual protocols alongside moral directives through complete development. Contemporary educational systems can find meaningful insights by applying the focus on equality and personalization alongside experiential learning which Buddhist education system established many centuries ago.

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