



CONTRIBUTION OF NALANDA UNIVERSITY IN HIGHER EDUCATION

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Abstract

There are very good universities in different parts of the world today. Some of them like Sorbonne or Paris university in France oxford and Cambridge in England have been in existence for a very long time. There are others like Harvard Wisconsin and Philadelphia in America and yet other in others parts of the world but none commands as much respect as Nalanda did, none has got that prestigious and privileged position as it skill enjoys today, although the Nalanda mahavihara the name of the ancient university was demolished as far back as in the beginning of the thirteenth century. A small Institute started in 1951 by lovers and patrons of culture in order to resuscitate the ancient glory of Nalanda is regarded as the nalanda university by all Buddhist countries and even by those western scholars who are greatly interested in Buddhists studies.

Introduction:

Before Nalanda university came into existence there was only once university in the whole world. It was Takshashila university in India. In pali literature we find its name mentioned with great reverence. Jivaka komarabhacca who was the personal physician of lord Buddha received his education both theoretical and practical at Takshashila which at that time was a great center of medical training besides other secular subjects.

In the Ancient university of Nalanda the admission was so difficult that only two or three out of ten were selected by the rest were rejected by the learned dwarpandit some of them who were rejected around Nalanda and equipped themselves so that they could not be rejected next time. The present Nava Nalanda mahavihara enjoyed the same prestige and distinction at least in its early years of establishment.

Nalanda mahavihara remained a centre for higher Buddhist education for centuries we have got names of a host of scholars of Nalanda who had been credited with the composition of texts on Buddhist logic, epistemology, drama, and on such other topics the most shining names include Dharmakirti, Dignaga, Asvaghosa, prabhakaramitr, Dharmadeva, Santarakshita, padmasa Amoghavajra and Rahulsribhadra.

Teachers and student of Nalanda :- Out of the total number of 10,000 resident monks at Nalanda as many as 1510 belonged to the ranks of teachers of these "there are 10 men who can explain twenty collection of sutras and sastras; 500 who can explain thirty collection and perhaps 10 (including Hiven-Tsiang) who can explain fifty collection over them all and over the entire establishment presided Silabharda unique in learning and character. Subjects of study at Nalanda University.

Hiuen-Tsang refers to the five branches of traditional subjects such as sabda vidya (grammar and philosophy) Cikitsavidya (medicine) Hetuvedya (logic) Silpoasthanavidya (fine arts) and Adhyatma vidya (metaphysics) when Hiuen-Tsang was a student the curriculum contains the great vehicle (Mahayana) the works belonging to the eighteen sects the vedas the works on magic (Atharva vidya) and the sankhya system of philosophy.

The style of academic life of the university that it gave itself up to lively discussions among students for their doctrines and practices. They also made their own contribution to its harmony and discipline in all fields. Almost all affairs of the university were left as their own against the fraternity and brotherhood and against expulsion of recalcitrants. Dictatorship was applied in the sphere of teaching and democracy in the matter of day today physical needs.

Nalanda was a kind of university where monks came from each corner of the country and abroad as well and they do feel sense of pride and prestige to have opportunity to study here at Nalanda. To be a student of Nalanda was really the highest academic distinction of the day. As per the description pen down by Hiuen-Tsiang in his narrative Learned men from different cities countries who desire to a renown in discussions come here in multitudes to settle their doubts and the streams of their wisdom spread far and wide. Hiuen-Tsiang a keen student of Mahayan, himself had spent five years here of his stay of sixteen years (629-645) in India. While I-tsing, a keen student of Hinayana for a full decade (675-685) And both had solid grounding of scholarship before they joined here.

A vivid idea of the daily life of the student at Nalanda \can be had from the accounts given by Hiuen- Tsiang. In describing the normal tempo of the academic and intellectual life of Nalanda he has written “the day is not sufficient for the asking and answering of profounded questions. From morning to night they engage themselves in debate and discussions, they mutually help each other to perfection the old and the young the junior and senior admonished each other day and night. Those who cannot discuss question out of Tripitaks are little esteemed and are obliged to hide themselves for shame.”

Instruction were imparted orally and characterized by much earnestness and painstaking labour on the part of the teacher. The pedagogic method followed was that of trying to quickness and raise the latent powers of thinking in the student and led him to conclusion. “Teachers explain the general meaning and teach the minutes; they raise them to activity and skillfully win them to progress; they instruct the insert and sharpen the dull. When discipline, intelligent, and acute, are addicted to idle shirking, the teachers doggedly preserved repeating instruction until their training is finished.”

Education as conceived and understood by the custodians and professors of Nalanda university did not mean only passing information to students but is meant their all round development i.e. intellectual, moral spiritual and aesthetic, it also meant physical development but not the kind of development as is exemplified by Mike Tyson, but physical fitness enough to put in strenuous efforts and hard work. The

education imparted here enabled the student of the university to develop self-confidence and thinking capacity in depth. For developing these qualities in students the great professors (the majority of them were renowned) adopted tutorial and discussion method besides lecture method. The tutorial system enabled them to take individual care of students as the ratio between the teachers and the taught was one to seven. It also enabled them to develop a sense of morality and a sense of greater and sweeter values of life, which men live by. It was borne in on them that a student who clutters his mind with a lot of information and does not live a moral and religious life and care for his spiritual well-being is just like a cowboy who counts the cows of his master but does not and cannot drink their milk. This type of education is meaningless, the professors of Nalanda did not only teach philosophy but inspired the student to live it.

Conclusion:-

We hope that in a very near future the Nav Nalanda mahavihara will be a full-fledged university of on international status and well disseminate humanistic scholarship of a high order and thereby the Institute well accrue the marvel of ideals of the ancient Nalanda university which was judged to be the foremost university in Asia. In the words of I-Tsing Nalanda could claim to be the most magnificent Temple of learning in Jambudvipa or to use a modern phrase the premier and pioneer National university in India. This is why it is skill regarded as the university of all universities.

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