

# The Ancient University Of Nalanda (Part-4)

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# Teachers (अध्यापक)

All educational institutions, it is said, are extended shadows of its great teachers and students, of which they are the makers and the destroyers. Nalanda, for instance, was like the extended shadow of its *pundits* (generally scholars and particularly teachers) and students. In Nālandā, It appears that *pundit* was a distinctive title bestowed on the head of the institution. out of the total number of 10000 resident monks at Nalanda, as many as 1510 belonged to the rank of teachers.

# Teachers (अध्यापक)

Hiuen Tsang mentions, “Of course there are 1000 men who can explain twenty Collections of Sutras and Śāstras; 500 who can explain thirty collections and perhaps 10 (including HiuenTsang) who can explain 50 collections. The number of students residing at Nalanda accounted to 10,000 in HiuenTsang’s time while in I-Tsing’s time; the number of students exceeded three thousand more. Basham believes that no tall figures are compatible with the findings of the excavations and thinks that the number could have exceed 1000.

# Teachers (अध्यापक)

Sankalia had already considered the number of 10,000 too high, but he having closer to the number given by I Tsing, he assumed approximately 4000 students lived there.

The teachers were divided in the two categories

- (1) Acaryas
- (2) Upajjhayas (professor)

Monk teachers performed different tasks:  
teaching, reading, writing, administration

## Upajjhaya:

- Primary duty was to teach or deliver lectures

# Teachers (अध्यापक)

- Basically worked like the modern guide or supervisor in the sense to guide or supervisor a monk towards the achievement of nibbana or salvation.
- Almost every professor have written either commentary on earlier Buddhist scriptures or translated those into various languages.
- They also travelled abroad to propagate Buddhism. Example, Santrakkhita, Kamalashila, Atisa dipankar and Padmasambhava were the first among many

# Teachers (अध्यापक)

to visit Tibet, where they learnt the Tibetan language and translated Buddhist and Sanskrit works into Tibetan and consequently transformed the inhabitants into Buddhism.

- The senior most Upajjhayas also succeeded as the abbot of Nalanda Mahavihara. The abbot had to run the administration of the Mahavihara and also control and regulate the moral, pious and spiritual life of the monastery, when Hiuen-Tsang visited Nalanda in 635 A.D., Silabhadra was head.

# Students (ছাত্র)

The fame of Nalanda's teacher helped in attracting students and scholars from abroad and all parts of India. Some of these came from China, Tibet, Mongolia and Korea. It was an international educational centre in the 7<sup>th</sup> Century.

- No fixed period of residence in the university, determined by the time taken by the learner to complete his study of subjects.
- Two types of students
  - (1) *antevasikas* ( in training to be a monk under acaryas)

# Students (ঔত্র)

(2) *saddhiviharikas* (full monks under the guidance of upajjhaya)

- Most of the students who came to Nalanda belonged to Buddhist places or they were believers of Buddhism
- No reference of Jaina students at all
- Few students from Brahmanic religion, who were admitted for the initial training under acaryas
- No reference of female students or teacher.



# Relation between teacher and students ( शक्षक और छात्रों के बीच संबंध)

There was intimate relationship between the professors and students. This has been corroborated by the account of I-Tsing when he says “ **I used to converse with these teachers so intimately that I was able to receive invaluable instructions personally from them.**”

- ***Tutorial system:*** individual care of the students, ratio between teacher and taught was one to seven.

# Relation between teacher and students ( शक्षक और छात्रों के बीच संबंध)

- They believe in the theory that the teacher ought to consider the pupil as a son; the student ought to consider the teacher as a father.
- The student owed his teacher respectful behaviour, attentive study and small personal services, such as rising early and bringing his teacher tooth-cleanser and mouth water; preparing his seat and giving him rice-milk; then washing the cup; preparing his garments when the teacher goes on his begging round.

# Relation between teacher and students ( शक्षक और छात्रों के बीच संबंध)

- Each had to take care for the other in the case of illness
- Punishment to the students consisted in restrictions that barred them from their favourite places in the monastery for minor offences
- In the case of ten severe offences or outright crime, a novice was to be expelled but a ban could not be imposed on a novice without the consent of his *upajjjhaya*

# Library (पुस्तकालय)

A library is a potential instrument of educational institution to shape the student's reasonable thinking individually. After Hieun Tsang, the two Korean monks *Tche Hong* and *Hoeiye*, and another Chinese monk named *Ke-ye* came to Nalanda monastery to study by utilizing its unique libraries, which were rich containers of Buddhist texts.

The library comprised of three huge buildings called Ratnasagara, Ratnodadhi and Ratnaranjaka , of which Ratnasagara was a nine-storied building and was specialized in the collection of rare sacred works. According to Hieun –Tsang the manuscripts were arranged on stone shelves digged out on the walls.

# Library (पुस्तकालय)

Copying of sacred works was a part of the study at Nalanda. Library was a grand storehouse of priceless manuscripts.

The university received liberal grants from the king, royal officers, merchants and rich people. Hieun Tsang mentions that the Mahavihara of Nalanda had grants of 100 villages. Later I-Tsing records that the monastery possesses more than 200 villages. The villages undertook to supply the daily food for its population. The landgrants made in favour of Nalanda affected its management and study.

# Summary (सारांश)

Growth of Nalanda Mahavihara marked the beginning of institutional learning in ancient education system. It admitted students from all classes and who studied various branch of knowledge and lived in a confined boundary under strict discipline. Its syllabus included both professional and theoretical such as religion, philosophy, logic, grammar, architecture, medicine and imagery etc. It was the first educational institution to witness innovative knowledge generation methods like lecture, tutorial, discussion, debate, conference, writing and translation at large scale.

# Summary (सारांश)

It has its own contribution to the development of Buddhist philosophy and logic and in the expansion of Buddhism. Later Nalanda Mahavihara emerged as the coordinator of monastic education system. In a limited sense, it had features of modern residential universities or research institutions or higher educational centers in the sense of its academic activities and day-to-day life.