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Education and Psychology Extension Series
No. 11

Universities in Ancient India

D. G. APTE

FACULTY OF EDUCATION AND PSYCHOLOGY
Maharaja Sayajirao University of Baroda

Re. 1

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Editor's Note

The ancient western world may fairly be said to have possessed universities in which all the higher learning of the time was imparted. Such institutions existed during 200 B.C. in Alexandria, Athens and Constantinople and later at Berut, Bordeaux, Lyons, etc. But the growth of Christian supernaturalism and mysticism, and the inroads of the barbarians from the north and south had mostly put an end to these before 800 A.D. After that the Eastern Muslims founded universities in Bagdad, Basra, Cairo and other places, but most of these centres of learning came to an end early in the twelfth century. Then arose in Spain at Cordova, Toledo, Sevilla, the universities of the Western Muslims which after lasting for about a century were suppressed by orthodox fanaticism about 1200 A.D.

The Muslim universities had taken a broad sweep including in their curriculum not only the liberal arts, but also medicine, philosophy and theology. When they were closed, Christian Europe felt the need for universities of their own and established them during the middle ages. The oldest among them which received official recognition were the Universities of Paris and Bologna founded in the twelfth century. It is, however, claimed that the University of Oxford dates back to the ninth century and its foundation has been attributed to King Alfred. This is not unlikely though the claim is not substantiated by sufficient documentary

evidence. The majority of the present universities in Europe and America are the offsprings of the medieval universities of Europe.

The universities of ancient India have a prouder history than that of their counterparts in the ancient western world. At least one of them, *viz.*, Takshaśilā, flourished several centuries before the Universities of Alexandria, Athens and Constantinople. The universities of ancient India had also a more impressive teaching and research programme. The teachers who taught in the hallowed precincts of Takshaśilā, Nālandā and Vikramaśilā were scholars of high eminence and repute. This is not all. The cordial relationship that existed between them and their students was indeed sublime. Such ideal teacher-student relationship has no parallel in the long history of educational thought and practice.

Today we have in India over thirty universities with an enrolment of about 400,000 students. It is doubtful whether our university students have any knowledge of the universities in ancient India, their teachers and students and the studies pursued in those centres of learning. This brochure dealing with these aspects of universities in ancient India is meant primarily for our own university students. It is hoped that it would be useful also to the general reader.

T. K. N. Menon,
Dean.

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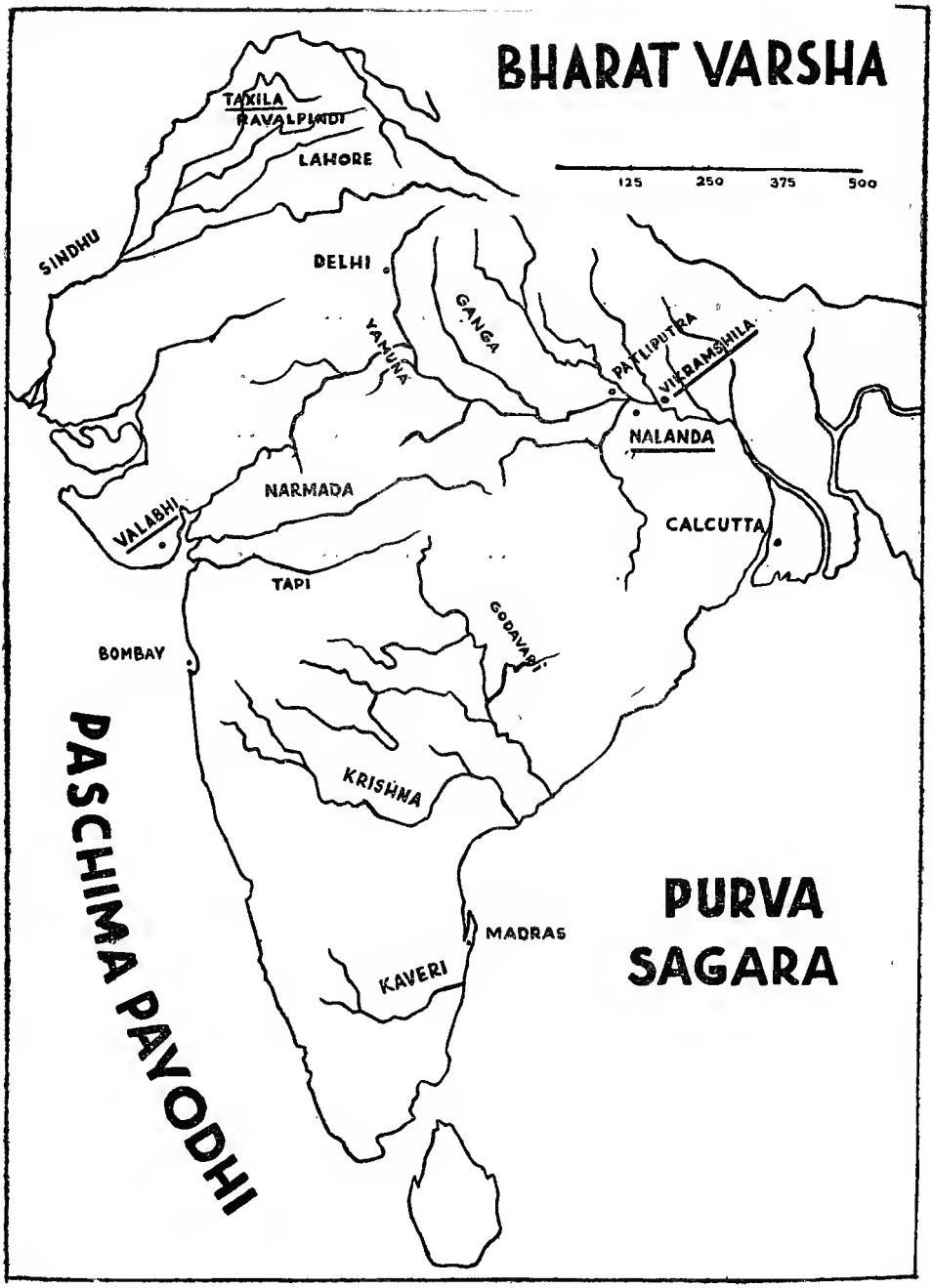


UNIVERSITY CENTRES IN ANCIENT INDIA

Universities in Ancient India

Introduction

The brochure contains a brief account of the famous universities in Ancient India. The term "university" as used here simply means a centre where higher education was imparted to aspiring students. It does not connote all the different features possessed by the universities in the East and the West to-day. There were a number of important features in these universities, which do not find a parallel in our modern institutions going under the name. The following brief account of these universities will enable the reader to have some idea of education imparted in these institutions during the long period of about 2,000 years beginning with the 10th century B.C. and ending with the 12th century A.D. It is hoped that a perusal of this booklet will enable him to compare our present institutions with those of ancient India and realise that the centres of higher learning in ancient India were unique in their organization and scholarship during those distant times when elsewhere in the world very few had thought of organised education at the university level.

Takshaśilā (1,000 B.C. to 500 A.D.)

History

Takshaśilā is the oldest among the universities in ancient India. It was well known as a centre of learning as early as during 700 B.C. The educational activities at this place must have started at least a few centuries earlier. The place derived its name from Taksha, a son of Bharata. The Rāmāyaṇa narrates how Bharata, after defeating the Gandharvas, founded the two famous cities—Takshaśilā in the Gandharva Deśa for Taksha and Pushkalāvata for the other son Pushkala in the Gāndhāra. This is also the place where king Janamejaya performed his famous serpent-sacrifice * to avenge the death of his father Parīkshita. Until very lately it was not possible to locate the place exactly. Pliny has pointed out that the place was situated at a distance of about fifty-five miles to the east of the river Sindhu. With the help of the numerous Stūpas, Vihāras and temples as found out by Cunningham, the situation of the city has now been exactly located. Archæological findings show that the city covered an area of six square miles. A copper-plate inscription bearing the name of Takshaśilā has also been unearthed from the site. The place is situated twenty miles to the west of Rāwalpindi, somewhere near Shah-

* Sarpasatra

A TAKSHAŚILĀ TEACHER WITH HIS STUDENTS

dheri at a distance of one mile to the south-east of Kalaksarai.

Administration

Takshaśilā came to be known as a famous centre of higher education because several learned teachers who were recognised as authorities on various subjects resided at the place. It was because of their excellence that they could attract hundreds of students from distant parts of the sub-continent, in spite of the long and dangerous journey which they had to undergo. There was nothing by way of co-ordination of the work done by teachers nor was there any external authority like the king or the local leaders to direct their activities. Each teacher was an institution in himself and enjoyed complete autonomy in his work. His authority was final in fixing up the duration of the course, in directing the courses of studies, in selecting or rejecting students and in laying down rules for guiding the day-to-day work. As each teacher was an authority on the subject of his specialisation, there was little scope for any conflict of interests or competition among them. The knowledge of all these teachers put together represented everything that was worth knowing in those days. The studies terminated when the teacher was satisfied with the achievement of his student and there was no rigid regulation of any sort to regiment the duration of the

course. Normally specialisation in various subjects of study took eight years, but the period could be reduced or lengthened in accordance with the intellectual capacity of the students and the amount of energy and application shown by them. There were also some cases where teachers advised students to leave their studies, because they could not fit themselves in the social, intellectual or moral atmosphere of their schools, which were invariably located in the teachers' private houses. The completion of studies was not marred by any formal examination nor was there any convocation for conferring degrees. Examinations were treated as superfluous, because the procedure of teaching subjects was critical and thorough and unless one unit was very thoroughly mastered by the student, he was not allowed to proceed to the succeeding portions. The students who completed their studies did not receive any written certificates or diplomas because it was believed that knowledge was its own reward and using it for earning bread or for achieving any selfish end was a sacrilege.

Only higher education was imparted

As has already been pointed out before, only higher courses were taught in these institutions. These institutions therefore took students to the end of the knowledge of some particular subjects, taking it up from the secondary stage which the

student had already finished elsewhere before joining these institutions. The process of education which began at home with primary education and widened in extent in the education in the Āśramas which imparted what corresponded to secondary education reached its culmination in these places which imparted education at the university level. According to the system prevalent in ancient India, primary education was imparted to children upto the age of eight and secondary education covered from eight to twelve years more. So the students who came to learn in ancient Indian universities were approximately sixteen to twenty years of age. Takshaśilā was so well known for its teachers that hundreds of students went to this place in search of knowledge, leaving aside the comforts and safety of their home. Their parents' sacrifice in sending them to this place was indeed great, particularly when one takes into consideration the risk involved in long journeys in those days when travel was slow, dangerous and uncertain. Numerous references show that students in hundreds used to flock to this city from distant places like Banāras, Rājagṛha, Mithilā, Ujjaín, Kośala, Madhya Deśa and from the Kuru Kingdoms in the north. Takshaśilā was thus the intellectual capital of India, a central university that exercised suzerainty over the world of letters in India. All the other centres of learning in different parts of the country were affiliated to it.

Courses taught

There was a wide variety of courses offered at Takshaśilā, both in literary and scientific or technical subjects. The terms used to denote these two types of courses were the Vedas and the Śilpas. The number of Vedas studied in this university is mentioned as three, but it is difficult to explain why the fourth Veda and most probably the Atharvaveda should have been dropped from the list. It was so perhaps because the content of the Atharvaveda was more or less secular in nature and the topics treated therein were also included in the various other branches of study. In fact it is impossible to drop the Atharvaveda, because the minister for religious affairs—the Purohita—according to Manu Smṛti had to be an expert in Atharvaveda. The study of the Vedas probably meant learning them by heart for that was the most important service the Brāhmaṇas rendered to the preservation and propagation of the Hindu culture. It is very likely that the study of the Vedas also included the interpretation and exposition of the content of these sacred books. A number of books had already been written by this time to facilitate the comprehension of the content of the Veda and as the author of Nirukta, a treatise on Vedic etymology says a man who knew merely the chanting of the Veda but did not know its meaning was like

a pillar merely carrying the burden and that all prosperity attended upon those who knew the meaning. Probably the term Veda also included the study of its six auxiliary sciences, the Science of correct pronunciation, Aphoristic literature guiding the performance of various rites and sacrifices, Grammar, Astronomy, Prosody and Etymology. The study of these auxiliary sciences had necessarily to precede the comprehension of the meaningof the Vedas.

There is no precise mention of what the eighteen Śilpas were, indicating a craft or vocation based on practical skill as contrasted with religious and literary subjects. According to one source, the Śilpas or crafts were as follows: Holy tradition and secular law, Sānkhya, Nyāya (Logic), Vaiśeshika (Atomic theory of creation), Arithmetic, Music, Medicine, four Vedas, Purāṇas (Antiquities), Itihāsas (History), Military Art, Poetry and Conveyancing. But this list includes the Vedas and many other subjects which cannot be termed as crafts and seems to be very loosely given. A study of various references shows that the following crafts were taught in this university: Conveyancing or Law, Mathematics, Accountancy, Agriculture, Commerce, Cattle breeding, Smithy, Carpentry, Medicine and Surgery, Archery and allied Military arts, Astronomy, Astrology, Divination, Magic, Snake charm-

ing, Art of finding hidden treasures, Music, Dancing and Painting. It is obvious that the number eighteen need not be taken too literally.

These courses must have remained unchanged throughout the period of existence of the university. There were certainly some additions made to the list of subjects taught whenever a need was felt for the same as a result of religious, political and social changes which came during its existence of about fifteen hundred years. The place was conquered by the Persians in the sixth century B. C. as a result of which the Brāhmī script that was in vogue was replaced by the Kharoshtrī script. In the second century B. C. it was conquered by the Indo-Bactrians, who were the inheritors of the Greek culture. This must have brought about some additions to the courses taught at the university. It is difficult to decide what these subjects were, but it has definitely been ascertained that the Greek language began to be taught and that even among neighbouring places, the Greek language could be understood by a number of people. The teachers at the place had no objection to collecting knowledge from whatsoever source it was available and they were sufficiently broad-minded to honour even foreign savants like *Ṛshis*. The place was overrun by the Sythians in the first century B. C. and by the Kuśāns in the first century A. D. Both these had no culture

and civilization worth the name and the curriculum in the university was little affected as a result of their invasions. In the fifth century A. D., the Huṇs also overran the part of the country where the University was situated. It is not possible to ascertain the extent to which the curriculum was affected by their invasion, because the university met with its ruin in the same century.

One other influence which was mainly religious in nature must also have affected the curriculum at Takshaśilā. It was the influence of Buddhism which was born in about the middle of the sixth century B.C. The place of the birth and development of Buddhism was, however, far removed from Takshaśilā, which continued to be the stronghold of Vedic learning. But as the number of students coming from the Eastern parts of the country was very considerable, the principal tenets of Buddhism must have found place in the curriculum. It is also probable that the study of Buddhist tenets must have received more critical attention, particularly after the birth of the assertive Mahāyāna Buddhism in about the second century A. D. The object in including Buddhism as a subject must obviously have been not to support the spread of Buddhism or to justify its tenets, but chiefly to enable the scholars studying at the place to disprove effectively Buddhist teaching.

In sciences, arts and crafts, both the theory and practice of the different subjects had to be studied. Usually every theoretical discussion followed a practical performance leading to a more skilful attempt on the part of the student. But actual practice of every art reveals certain important principles and as such these had to be postponed and the student had to be left to his own capacities and resourcefulness to find out these. In special sciences like medicine where incompleteness of knowledge could result in a disaster, special care was taken to see to it that the student had become a thorough master of the science.

Finance

All the necessary financial assistance was supplied by the society to teachers who as a general rule provided free boarding and lodging to all the students. No student was required to pay any fees on a compulsory basis. The non-payment of fees never resulted in expulsion from the institution nor in any differential treatment. In fact, stipulation that fees should be paid was vehemently condemned. Knowledge was considered too sacred to be bartered for money and Hindu scriptures contain specific injunctions against those who charge money to students. A salaried teacher, *i. e.*, a teacher who charges fees on a compulsory basis is to be treated, according to the scripture of Manu, as unfit for

company at the table. There were, however, no financial difficulties that affected the smooth working of institutions for higher learning, because everything that was necessary became easily available. The spiritual standing, renunciation and deep knowledge of the teachers inspired many rich persons to give voluntary help in various ways to these institutions. Some well-to-do parents also gave generous monetary help. This was given either at the beginning or at the end of the studies of their children. Those who had no convenience could without any restraint, conduct their studies as long as they liked and enjoyed the same rights, privileges and duties as those who were monetarily better placed. A completely democratic spirit thus reigned in these sacred places. The number of students studying with every *guru* was large enough to be counted in hundreds, yet all monetary conveniences were supplied in various ways by people who appreciated the selfless work of the teachers, for balanced development in morals and attainment of knowledge of the capable youths of the country. Kings also helped the cause by direct and indirect monetary help without exercising any control over these institutions. The teacher's authority was complete and absolute. It is true that every student at the termination of his studies paid something to his teacher by way of Dakshiṇā, but the sum thus paid was never sufficient to cover the

expenses of his education. Many times it was only a turban, a pair of sandals, an umbrella or an upper garment. The dominating idea was that every qualified student had a right to free education and that it was unholy to associate knowledge with any monetary gift as the price of knowledge and conveniences received. The Dakshiṇā offered was simply an indication of the recognition of the deep debt of gratitude that the student owed to the *guru*.

The community also was conscious of its duty to the cause of education. Moneyed people very often used to make arrangements for the food of the students all throughout their courses of education. Sometimes kings of various places sent students to the university for education and made all the necessary arrangements for boarding and lodging for them at State expense. As the teacher was not a money-monger, even poor families considered it their duty to maintain students studying under him by regularly offering him some part of their cooked food. There were certain occasions when money was offered to the Brāhmaṇas who were custodians of learning and knowledge for enabling them to continue their charitable work. Poor students after finishing their education approached kings for getting money for the Dakshiṇā to be offered to the *guru* and their requests were always granted by kings. One well-known example in this respect is

that of King Raghu of Ayodhyā who, in spite of his having renounced everything, supplied fourteen crores of golden coins to Varatantu's disciple Kautsa, who had approached him for money. Failure to help a student in need of money for paying the teacher's honorarium was regarded as the greatest slur on a king's reputation. On the occasion of the performance of various sacrifices, the teachers were offered ample money. They were also given exemption from payment of taxes. All these means facilitated the work of giving free education, lodging and boarding to every student who came to learn in this university.

Admission

Admission was free to all castes except the Chāndālas (the fifth caste). There was no restriction about the choice of subjects which was entirely left to students. What the pupil learnt at the university was based on the dictum "Knowledge for knowledge's sake". The accomplishment had not to be used as an instrument for earning one's livelihood which never was a problem in ancient India. This is how we find a complete democracy reigning in this university. The different classes and castes merged in the democracy of learning. The democracy was strengthened by the existence of a common code of rules and observances prescribed for students irrespective of their social or economic

status. The students could be admitted freely to any course provided they had the necessary background. Although we have no record of instances where incompetent students were asked to return without admission, the very fame of the teachers of Takshaśilā must have forced the aspirants for admission to make a very serious scrutiny of their own capacity to comprehend the high level of knowledge imparted at the place. Admission never became a problem for those who had the requisite qualifications, namely, freedom from jealousy, straightforwardness and self-control. In fact, teachers were thirsting for pupils and offering prayers for receiving such pupils. One such prayer when translated stands thus, "O Creator, just as water flows to the lower level, just as months pass incessantly, so may Brahmachārins (young pupils) come to me."

Some famous students

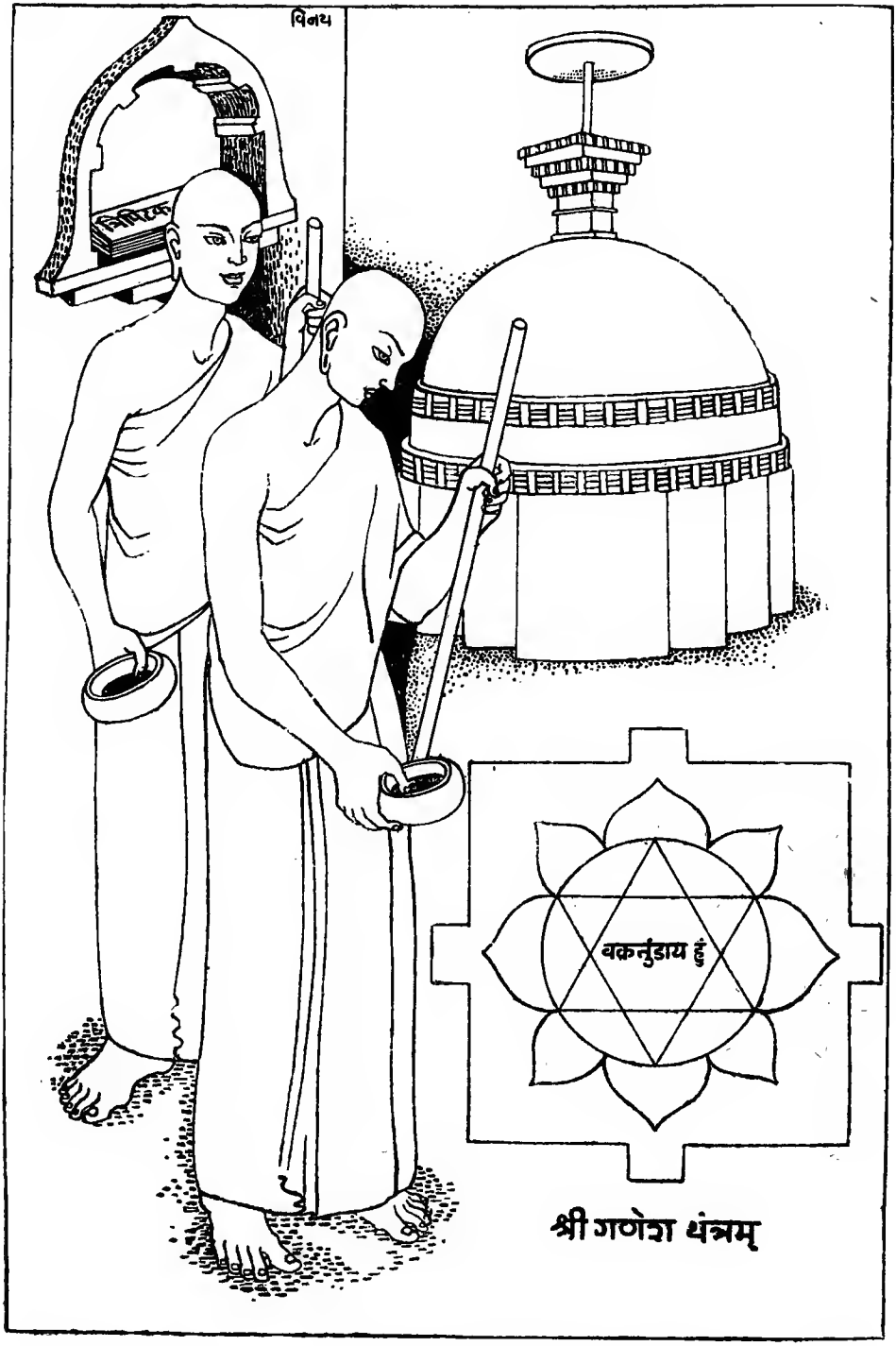
It is unfortunate that we are completely in the dark about the names of the renowned teachers who adorned the hallowed precincts of Takshaśilā. Even the Jātakas which have supplied to us most of the information regarding this university are completely silent on this point. Traditions mention that Pāṇini, the greatest grammarian of the Sanskrit language, was a student of this university; so also was Chāṇakya, (known also as

Kautilya) the minister of Chandra Gupta Mourya, who reduced the Nanda dynasty of Magadhà to ashes. Jīvaka, the famous physician, is also described as a student of this university. He was an expert in medicine and had studied under a 'world-renowned physician' for a period of seven years. It is said that Jīvaka cured Emperor Bimbisāra of his fistula and, as a result, was appointed a physician to the King and to the Buddhist saṁgha. He is also said to have cured King Pradyota of Ujjayini of jaundice. He was very well known for his surgical operations. In the case of one rich merchant who was suffering from a head disease, it has been pointed out that he tied him fast to his bed, cut through the skin of the head, drew apart the flesh on each side of the incision, pulled two worms out of the wound, then closed up the sides of the wound, stitched up the skin on the head and anointed it with salve. He is also said to have successfully cured cases of twisted intestines.

The end

It has already been pointed out before that the Kuśāns conquered that part of the country in the first century A. D. and ruled over it upto about 250 A. D. As these people were little cultured, those times must have been most unfavourable for the propagation of education. The rule of Kuśāns was followed by that of the little yuch-chis. They also

were foreign to any kind of culture and learning. The final blow was struck by the Hūṇas in the middle of the 5th century. A.D. when the dying embers of this proud seat of learning got completely extinguished.



Nālandā (425 A. D. to 1205 A. D.)

History

There are various explanations showing the significance of the name given to the place. According to one theory Nālandā was the name of a Nāga (cobra) who lived in a tank near the mango-tree to the south of a Sanghārāma. A second account says that the name was the result of the incessant charity given by Bodhisattva who was living at this place. The third explanation is based on an etymological analysis of the word which means that endowments incessantly flowed to the institution, but donors had not had the satisfaction of having given sufficiently. Its prosperity as described later shows that the third explanation is more acceptable than the remaining two.

Long before the Christian era the place was noted as a religious centre. This was the place which was sanctified by the stay of Buddha and his disciples (522 B. C.—477 B. C.) and had witnessed a number of discussions on Buddhist doctrines. This was also the place where Mahāvīra, the Jain Tirthankara, met Gośāla. This was the place of discussion carried on by Nāgārjuna and others in the early centuries of the Christian era. Aśoka had built a temple and a Vihāra at this place, because it was only a little way from thickly populated Rāja-

gṛha and therefore convenient for religious practices. The University was founded by Śakrāditya and extended by his son, Buddhaguptarāja, and his successor, Tathāgataguptarāja. This was followed by the destruction of the place by Mihirakula in the course of his pursuit of Narasinhagupta, in 500 A.D. But after this destruction the place flourished with greater radiance and prosperity. Thus although the place had been a great religious and educational centre in the days of Nāgārjuna in the second century A.D. and even earlier in the days of Buddha, it became a university only in the earlier half of the fifth century when a stream of scholastic pilgrimage began to flow towards the place. Almost throughout the whole period of existence of this university, it had the rare privilege of enjoying royal patronage.

Buildings at Nālandā

The first Sanghārāma was built by Śakrāditya (415-455 A.D.). His son Buddhaguptarāja built another Sanghārāma to the south. Tathāgataguptarāja, his successor, built one more to the east of this. Bālāditya (468-472 A.D.) built one more to the north-east. He also built another great Vihāra, three hundred feet in height, which was 'erected as if with a view to seeing the Kailāsa mountain surpassed'. His son Vajra built another Sanghārāma to the west. Later a king of Central India, Śrīharsha

built another Sanghārāma to the north of it as well as a high wall round these edifices with one gate. New buildings continued to be erected by Hindu and Buddhist donors down to the eleventh century. Hiuen Tsiang mentions six monasteries constituting the Nālandā establishment in his time. All these buildings "were majestic in their size and height with richly adorned towers, fairy-like turrets appearing like pointed hill-tops, and observatories lost in the mist of morning. The upper rooms towered above the clouds and from their windows one could see the winds and clouds producing ever new forms and from the soaring eaves the sunset splendours and the moonlit glories. All the outside courts in which were the priests' chambers were of four stages. The stages had dragon-projections and coloured eaves, pearl-red pillars, carved and ornamented, richly adorned balustrades while the roofs were covered with tiles that reflected the light in a thousand shades." The grounds were beautified by deep translucent ponds, with blue lotuses intermingled with Kanaka flowers of deep red colour. The place was shaded by mango groves.

Archæological excavations carried out at this place amply bear out the description of the artistic wealth of Nālandā. Three monasteries have so far been unearthed along with one temple building. The description of one of these will suffice to give a

rough idea of the vastness of the monasteries. The north wall of the most southerly of the big monastic complexes measures 203 feet and is 6 feet 6 inches thick. The side walls measure 168 feet and are 7 feet 6 inches thick. The walls are "composed of most superior bricks, of a light yellowish tint and admirable texture, fitted together so perfectly that in some places the joints between the bricks are altogether inconspicuous. As brickwork the construction is remarkable, far superior to any modern work." The rectangle formed by the main walls contains cells measuring 9'-6", 10'-11" and 12'. Each single seated cell has one stone bench, a double seated one having two. Each room has one niche for a lamp and another for books. Ovens of large sizes that have been unearthed show that there was common messing. In a corner of the courtyard of each monastery a well has been unearthed. Excavation has shown that at least thirteen monasteries stood at this spot during different periods. The university covered an area at least one mile long and half a mile broad, all buildings being arranged according to a pre-conceived plan. The central college had seven halls attached to it with three hundred rooms for teaching work.

Admission

Nālandā, like other universities of its type was an institution which imparted only higher education

and accordingly admission was restricted to those who had the necessary background to follow post-graduate studies. In particular the institution was known as a place where learned men from all parts of the country as well as from neighbouring nations gathered for getting their doubts solved and for gaining mastery in the art of disputation. Such scholars came in large numbers from Mongolia, China, Korea, Tibet and Tokhara. Although some of the scholars came for securing manuscripts on Buddhism, there were many who came to get a stamp of approval for their doctrines from the authorities in the University. It was because of this that those who wanted to get entrance to the university had to undergo a very strict examination. Hiuen Tsiang has pointed out that only twenty per cent of those who came seeking for admission came out successful at the examination and the remaining had to go back in disappointment. Those who examined the candidates seeking admission were experts in religious controversies and were always ready with difficult problems to try the competence of aspirants for admission. The probable age of admission, therefore, must have been not less than twenty. It is also mentioned that the university conducted a department for secondary and primary education where young pupils were freely admitted. For all these students a very high standard of morality was prescribed and students

at Nālandā were taken as models of morality, and during the long existence of seven centuries not a single case of guilty rebellion has been reported.

Boarding and lodging arrangements for students

In all Buddhist institutions boarding and lodging were offered free except in such institutions as were intended for imparting education to the laity. Inasmuch as there is much that is common to Hinduism and Buddhism, it is natural that in this respect also, things should have been much the same as in Hindu institutions. It has been pointed out in some places that 'the teacher as he took no fees, made the student work in his Āśrama or Vihāra.' This should apply only to Buddhist teachers and that too in the earlier days of Buddhism when donations were not pouring in. In later days perhaps fees were not insisted upon; nor was any preferential treatment given to students who were rich and paid fees. There were periods in the history of Buddhist education when Vihāras or monasteries offered every facility because they owned excessive wealth and it is impossible to speak of fees being charged on a compulsory basis. That Buddhist students were required to go for begging alms does not indicate the poverty of the institutions where they received their education. The institutions were rich in wealth and materials. So there must have been some other reason behind it.

Begging was prescribed because of its educational advantages as was the case in Hindu institutions. There the student begged not for himself but for the support of his school. Its educative value lay in the fact that it produced in the pupil a spirit of humility and renunciation. "But its moral effects may be examined more closely. First the contrast between his own life and that of the world at large brings home to him the value of the scheme for which he stands, which he will now all the more try to consolidate. This makes for a more complete organisation of the personality, a deeper loyalty to his system. Further the daily duty of begging makes the ego less and less assertive, and with it all unruly desires and passions which do not shoot forth as their roots wither. Thus there is reached a greater balance of the inner life. A sense of balance and harmony further brings out the contrast between the behaviour of his own group and that of the men of the world, and this further confirms his faith in his own group or order. Again an acquaintance through begging with worldly life and its trials make him realise more vividly the security of his own life. Lastly, begging makes the pupil feel how unaffected he is to any ties and a sense of independence contributing to a sense of selfhood. It is like a ritual for the cultivation of impersonal relations in life. The contact of the recluse with the world is a valuable corrective to the exaggerated

subjectivity of isolated meditative life in the hermitage. Isolation and intercourse thus lead to a higher synthesis of the inner and the outer, Purusha and Prakṛti, self and the world."

Courses of study

The curriculum of the university was very exhaustive and embraced all subjects, Buddhist as well as non-Buddhist, Mahāyāna as well as Hīnayāna. Only a few of these many subjects were treated as compulsory. Study of Mahāyāna and acquaintance with all the eighteen schools of Buddhism were prescribed as compulsory subjects. The Mahāyānists propounded the doctrines of Sūnyavāda and Vijnānavāda. The doctrine of 'Sky-flower' which means that all objective phenomena are, like sky-flowers, unreal and vanishing was popular among the Mahāyānists but was held in contempt as a heresy by the Hīnayānists. Among the subjects that were taught on a voluntary basis Logic played an important part. Yet looking to the important place that dialectics occupied during those days, it must have played a very important role in the university. The systems of logic acceptable to various other schools of thought were also studied. Astronomy was taught and for this purpose an observatory and a clepsydra were specially maintained by this university. According to Hiuen Tsiang this clepsydra gave correct time for

all Magadha. Tantra was a very popular subject at this university because we hear of many scholars writing works on Tantra, others studying them and still others copying and translating them into the languages of the north. Tantras deal with the use of mystic syllables and words as well as magic. The practice of Mudrās, Mantras, Dharaṇīs, Yoga and Samādhi were not there in primitive Buddhism, nor did it prescribe any worship of Buddha or different gods and goddesses. The Tantras became specially popular, because they allowed liberty of action which was forbidden by early Buddhism to the followers of the new cult. Other subjects studied in this University were the Vedas and their six auxiliaries, Medicine, Grammar, Sānkhya, Philology, Law, Philosophy and other miscellaneous subjects. The subjects were drawn from different fields of learning, Brāhmanical and Buddhist, sacred and secular, philosophical and practical, sciences and arts. There were some institutions for primary education run by the university where six-year olds were admitted. Such students learnt Śabda-vidyā or Grammar of the Sanskrit language because knowledge of Sanskrit was essential both for Buddhists and Hindus who were studying at the university. After studying elementary course in Grammar for six months, the student was required to study the Sūtrapātha and Dhātupātha from Pāṇini's grammar. At the age of ten he was taught

the book on three Khilas which gave a thorough knowledge of grammar. The student could master this in three years. This was followed by more subtle and abstruse studies of Grammar which generally lasted five years. The book used for this purpose was Vṛtti-sūtra which contains a discussion of subjects other than Grammar comprising "everything under the sun". All this was for training of memory and was to be learnt by heart. This was followed by study of prose and verse, logic and metaphysics. At the advanced university stage some students followed advanced courses in Grammar and learnt Chūrṇi of Patanjali and Bhartṛhari's Śāstra. Kshatriya students could learn the art of archery along with other Śāstras like Medicine, Veda, Vedāngas, Sānkhya, Nyāya (Logic) and Vaiśeshika (Atomic theory of the world) mentioned before.

Administration of the University

At the head of the university was a Bhikkhu possessing character, scholarship and seniority, who was elected by the various Sanghas comprising the federation. This Bhikkhu controlled and directed the work of administering the affairs of the university, academic and otherwise through two councils appointed for the purpose. The former looked to affairs like admitting students to the university, regulating the courses in various subjects, distribu-

tion of work among teachers, holding of examinations at proper intervals, looking after the securing and maintenance of manuscripts and the arrangement for copying manuscripts which were greatly in demand in those days. The other council attended to the financial aspect, construction and repairs of buildings, securing and supply of food to the inmates, arrangements of clothes and medicines, allocation of rooms to students and teachers according to their standing and the distribution among the residents of the menial work connected with the working of the university. This council was required to pay meticulous attention to the landed estates belonging to the Sanghas. Leasing out the land to farmers, collecting and storing of corn received from tenants and the distribution among various messes was an important duty of the council. In spite of this method of control on federated basis the independence and efficiency of each constituent group was maintained. The constituents of the federation were individual teachers, each with a group of students of his own living under his guardianship and responsible for the health and studies, manners and morals and the spiritual progress of his students. These students, because they formed a part of larger federation, could partake of a wider academic and collective life with its own advantages. Unlike Hindu institutions which were isolated and independent of each other and which depended upon ideal

succession of teachers and disciples, these schools had federated themselves into larger units called Vihāras or monasteries. The independence and efficiency of each constituent school was maintained and relations between the constituent groups were adjusted by means of rules provided for the purpose. Rules for both the teachers and the taught were framed by the federation for maintaining harmony of relations, for preventing controversies among professors and for maintaining academic etiquette. Every teacher Upajjihāya or Āchāriya was independent of the federation in regard to the maintenance of discipline and the federation could inflict punishment upon his pupils directly only in the case of serious offences like destroying life, stealing, committing impurity, lying, drinking, defaming the Buddha, Dhamma and Sangha, holding false doctrines and misconducts with Bhikkhunīs (Buddhist nuns). Thus there was a judicious mixture of independence and restrictions.

Finance

Buddhism was strictly speaking an order of ascetics and mendicants and no Bhikkhu was allowed to receive gold or silver or any gift in cash. The violation of this interdict was regarded as a serious offence. Things offered in kind could be accepted. This rule was observed very rigorously in the earlier days of Buddhism and the rigour of

renunciation which alone could save one from worldly contamination was maintained in its pristine purity. But the Buddha, during his life-time allowed the Sanghas to grow rich by permitting them to receive benefactions from lay well-wishers which kept continuously flowing to the monasteries even under Buddha's direct encouragement. Among the gifts accepted for the Sangha were parks, pavilions, ponds, buildings and Vihāras with all appurtenances for healthful life, materials for buildings and property by bequests for the dead. The Buddha encouraged such donations by declaring them as meritorious deeds. Sometimes standing invitations for meals were given to Bhikkhus. Lay devotees many times supplied provisions to the Sanghas in the form of ghee, butter, oil, honey and molasses and sugar.

Even from its beginning the place was rich in money as its very name indicates.* Right from 425 A.D. endowments for the university were pouring in. The list of such donors contains the names of kings Kumāragupta I, Buddhagupta, Tathāgatagupta, Bālāditya, Vajra and Harsha Vardhana. Like the Guptas and Vardhanas, Varmans, also showed interest in the university. It is stated that Pūrṇavarman and Yaśovarmadeva donated

* The name meant, "however much one may give, one never feels satisfied ".

money equal to the price of the whole Nālandā institution. The Pāla King of Bengal, Devapāla by name is said to have donated five villages for the assembly of venerable Bhikkhus and for the upkeep and repair of monasteries. The kings of the far-off Suvarṇadwīpa and Yavadwīpa (Sumatra and Java) had also patronised these institutions. On account of such bountiful benefactions, the university never experienced any financial difficulty and could develop to its fullest capacity.

Teachers and students

It is stated that at one time there were 10,000 monks staying at Nālandā. Of these, 1,510 were teachers and the remaining 8,500 were students belonging to various levels of attainments and studying various subjects. It has been pointed out that there were on an average a hundred lectures or discussions every day. On an average the number of students per teacher was seven or eight and it must have been very convenient to give individual attention to students.

Libraries

The university had a large collection of manuscripts on various subjects in various languages stored up in three splendid buildings appropriately called Ratnasāgara, Ratnodadhi and Ratnaranjaka. This was greatly helpful in the dissemination of knowledge, because we find numerous mentions of

scholars from abroad copying out manuscripts in hundreds from these libraries and taking them to their countries. It-sing is said to have got copied from Nālandā, 400 Sanskrit works amounting to 5,00,000 verses.

Teachers at Nālandā

Learned men from Nālandā were famous all over the country. They defeated many Panditas belonging to other faiths and converted them to Buddhism. Among the list we may also include the Chinese traveller Hiuen Tsiang who acquired in this university the knowledge of the doctrines of Bhūtas, Nirgranthas, Kāpālikas, Jūtikas, Sānkhyas and Vaiśeshikas over and above those of Buddhism. The fact that a distinguished king like Śrī Harsha sent for Panditas from Nālandā bears ample testimony to the depth of their learning. The Panditas of this place were accepted as authorities even on Hīnayāna doctrines of Buddhism although the university championed the cause of the Mahāyāna doctrine. It is said that one thousand Panditas from Nālandā University were present at the assembly held at Kānyakubja (Kanoj) by Śrī Harsha to investigate the treatise of Hiuen Tsiang.

We give below some important information about famous teachers who lived at or were associated with Nālandā.

The names of Nāgārjuna, Vasubandhu, Dinnāga, Padmasaṁbhava, Shāntarakshita, Āryadeva, Rāhulabhadra, Asanga, Jayadeva, Chandrakīrti, Dharmapāla, Guṇamati, Sthiramati, Prabhāmitra and Jinamitra are traditionally associated with this famous university. We have detailed information only about some of them.

(1) Nāgārjuna : He was a colleague of Āryadeva. Both of them discovered a deeper meaning in Buddha's preaching and founded and popularised a new form of Buddhism called Mahāyāna and gave it a philosophy named Mādhyamika. This occurred in the later half of the second and the earlier part of the third century.

(2) Āryadeva : He was one of the scholars of Nālanda who lived in the 4th century A.D. He was the author of three works; all of these were translated into Tibetan. His last work known as Mādhyamika-bhramaghatānāma was written at the request of the king of Jaṁbudwīpa and was translated into Tibetan by Upādhyāya Dīpankara Śrī Jnāna. He was the follower of Nāgārjuna and assailed the Sānkhyas, Vaiśeshikas and twenty other doctrines.

(3) Vasubandhu : Anecdotes point out that Vasubandhu composed the Paramārtha-

saptati to oppose the doctrine of Sānkhyas contained in the Sānkhya-saptati and reconverted king Bāliditya (Narasinhagupta) from Sānkhya to Buddhism. He commented upon a number of works on Mahāyāna. He flourished between the years 420 and 500 A.D.

(4) Asanga : He completely evolved the doctrine of Yogāchāra. It is he who grafted on the Mahāyāna the practices of Yoga, union of the individual and the universal spirit and mystical and other practices of abstract meditation. He wrote three works on Mahāyāna.

(5) Sthiramati : Hiuen Tsiang speaks of him as the founder of a monastery at Valabhī and describes him as a person the streams of whose superior knowledge spread about even now. He played an important role in spreading Buddhism to Tibet. He is supposed to have written a number of books on Mahāyāna. He flourished between the years 460 and 550 A. D.

(6) Dharmapāla : He was the son of a high official at Kānchīpura in the South but embraced Buddhism even in his youth. His services to the cause of Buddhism are of inestimable value. It is said that he

vanquished a heretic adversary who had defeated all the Buddhist Panditas and converted them to Buddhism. He also defeated one hundred champions of Hīnayāna Buddhism. After coming to Nālandā he became the chief Pandita of the place. He was the author of a grammatical work called Varṇa-sūtra-vrittināma. He wrote four Buddhist works in Sanskrit which are all translated into Tibetan. He flourished between 550 and 650 A.D.

(7) Shīlabhadra: He became the head Pandita of Nālandā after Dharmapāla. He was the son of a king in East India and a Brāhmaṇa by caste. In pursuit of newer realms of knowledge he renounced his regal honour and comfort as well as his caste. In the course of his wanderings he came to Nālandā which was not far off from his place where he was initiated into the principles of Buddhism by Dharmapāla. At the early age of thirty, he defeated a reputed heretic of South India by his profound and subtle arguments. Much against his will he had to accept the donation of a village from the king of the land as an appreciation of this victory. From out of the proceeds of this gift he built a magnificent monastery. As

the head of Nālandā, he received Hiuen Tsiang and appointed Jayasena to teach Yogaśāstra to the Chinese visitor. It was at his insistence that Hiuen Tsiang visited Kāmarūpa (Assam) for converting Kumāra-rāja and his family to Buddhism. Only one work is assigned to him *viz.*, Ārya buddha-bhūmi-vyākhyāna although he must have written many books.

(8) Śāntideva: He lived between the years 695-743 A.D. He was the son of King Manjuvarman. His mother advised him to go to the country of Bodhisatvas. He entered the Nālandā University where, as a result of his sobriety and solemnity he was given the name Śāntideva. He studied three Pitakas (religious books of Buddhists) at that place.

(9) Śāntarakshita: He was the first Pandita who was officially invited to Tibet by king Khri-son-den-tsan. His presence there was not welcomed by the people, so he was sent to Nepal. Later along with Padmasaṁbhava, he erected a monastery in Tibet of which he was the first head. After propagating the cause of Buddhism in Tibet for a period of thirteen years he died in 762 A.D.

(10) Padmasambhava: He was the son of Indrabodhi, the king of Udayana. He was a prominent expounder of the Yogāchāra school and went to Tibet at the invitation of the king. He founded Lamaism in Tibet and is deified and worshipped like Buddha himself. He spread Tantrism that deals with magic and sorcery in Tibet known as the roof of the world.

(11) Kâmaśīla: He was a great disciple and contemporary of Śāntarakshita and lived between 720-780 A.D. He is said to have written a commentary on Tatvasangraha. It was because of his unique scholarship that Śāntarakshita invited him to vanquish an adversary named Hoshang who was a Pandita from China and taught doctrines contrary to those taught by Śāntarakshita. He could easily defeat Hoshang.

(12) Candragomin: He is supposed to have written no less than sixty books on Tantraśāstra. He was also a distinguished scholar of literature, grammar, logic, astronomy, music, fine arts and the science of medicine. He was the first from the Bengal school of logicians to attract the attention of the literary world.

(13) Buddhakīrti: He was the connecting link between Nālandā and Vikramaśilā. He was the last great scholar produced by Nālandā. He flourished towards the end of the eleventh century and the beginning of the twelfth century.

Decline and fall of the university

The university worked with great vigour upto 1100 A.D. when its greatness began to be eclipsed by Vikramaśilā which began to receive a greater share of royal patronage. The university received the final tragic blow at the hands of the Muslim invaders under Bakhtiyar Khilji at the end of the twelfth century and not one of the monks remained to narrate the sad tale of its destruction. The priceless library of the university was also wantonly set on fire and destroyed.

Valabhī (600 A.D. to 1200 A.D.)

History

The University of Valabhī was situated in Saurāshtra in Western India. The place is identical with the old Walā State. It was an important centre of Buddhist learning and championed the cause of Hīnayāna Buddhism. For some time it had become a rival of Nālandā in the academic field. Valabhī was the capital of Maitraka kings during the period 480-775 A. D. and was born from the benefactions of these kings. Situated on the seashore, it was then an important port for international trade.

Courses

Although Valabhī championed the cause of Hīnayāna Buddhism, it was not exclusive and parochial. Along with instruction in the Buddhist doctrines Brāhmanical sciences also used to be taught at this place. We find references to Brāhmaṇa students coming from the Gangetic plains to learn at this university. Over and above religious subjects, there was also instruction imparted in subjects like Nīti (Political science, Statesmanship), Vārtā (Business, Agriculture), Administration, Theology, Law, Economics and Accountancy. In some cases students, after studying at this university were employed by kings for assisting in the government of their kingdom.

Fame

The fame of Valabhī had spread over the whole of northern India to such an extent that the Kathā-saritsāgara narrates the story of a Brāhmaṇa who preferred to send his son to Valabhī rather than to Nālandā or Banāras. Very little, however, is known to us about the famous teachers and scholars who lived at the place, excepting names of two of its Panditas, *viz.* Guṇamati and Sthiramati. Yet it is certain that the stamp of approval of the doctrines preached by various scholars by the authoritative Panditas of Valabhī was much valued in learned assemblies.

Students

In about the middle of the 7th century when Hiuen Tsiang visited the place, there were 6,000 monks studying in the university. 100 monasteries were provided for them.

Finance

The funds necessary for running the University were made available by the citizens of the place, many of whom were very rich and generous. The Maitraka kings who ruled over the country from 480 to 775 A.D. were the patrons of this university and gave bountiful grants for the working of the University as well as for equipping the libraries of the institutions.

Closure of Valabhī

The patron kings succumbed to an Arab attack in 775 A.D. as a result of which, the university received a temporary set-back. The work of the university, however, continued unabated even afterwards, because the successors of the Maitraka kings continued to patronize the university with rich donations. But nothing much is known about the university after this period. Probably the defeat of the patron kings must have given a death-blow to all its educational activities which continued upto the twelfth century.

Vikramas'ilā (800 A.D. to 1203 A.D.)

History

The Vikramaśilā Vihāra (Buddhist monastery) was a famous seat of learning situated on a hillock on the banks of the Gangā in northern Magadha (Bihar). The place was just near Nālandā although the exact location of the Vihāra cannot be ascertained. Dr. S. C. Vidyābhūshaṇa identified it with Sultanganj in Bhagalpur district and Cunningham, with the village Silao near Badagaon. It was founded by king Dharmapāla in the eighth century A.D. (circa 775-800). He gave liberal endowments to the university so as to provide for free boarding and lodging to resident and non-resident monks studying at the place. All throughout the existence of the university, *i.e.*, upto 1203 A. D. when its tragic end came, the successors of King Dharmapāla continued to give bountiful donations to the institution.

Buildings

The buildings at Vikramaśilā were well planned and accommodative. There were one hundred and eight temples and six college buildings, spread out like lotus-petals, with a beautiful Mahābodhi temple in the centre with its six gates leading to the six colleges. Each of those six buildings had spacious

halls for lectures. All these buildings were surrounded by a strong wall.

Courses taught

Like the other universities, this university also provided only specialised instruction in various subjects at the collegiate level. The standard of attainment expected of the *alumni* must have been very high, because admission was restricted only to those who aspired to become Buddhist monks who were to preach Buddhist gospel in far-off lands. The institution represented the Mahāyāna form of Buddhism, a more assertive cult as the name itself indicates. As the Mahāyāna form, however, presupposes the Hīnayāna and is a development of the same, Buddhist text-books belonging to both these branches of Buddhism must have been taught here. Along with these all the important branches of Hindu learning were also taught, although they could not be classified as Buddhist in nature. This can be explained by the fact that Buddhism is not an entirely new religion as some believe. It is merely a phase of Hinduism and in most of its religious and social aspects resembles its parent faith. Some of the details common to Buddhism and Hinduism are: Brāhmanical practices of asceticism, begging, non-violence, insistence on right habits and dominance of ceremonies. The courses did not cover all the branches of Hindu sciences

but special stress was laid on Grammar, Logic, Metaphysics and Ritualism. A special significance was attached to Tantras which consist of religious doctrines teaching magical and mystical formularies for the worship of deities or the attainment of supreme power. It is not difficult to understand why many of the important subjects included in Hindu education were dropped out. The courses taught in Hindu institutions covered subjects like the fourteen Vidyās, the eighteen Śilpas and the sixty-four arts which embrace all the knowledge necessary for a house-holder. Buddhism was generally speaking averse to any worldly pleasure or to the life of a house-holder. It laid great stress on the evanescent nature of the worldly existence and believed that all existence was a mere shadow and a source of sorrow and that whatever was seen or felt was an "airy nothing". In these circumstances, it is no wonder that they should have rejected the subjects leading to enrichment of worldly life and stressed the renunciatory aspect of education. It is significant to note also that the institutions were meant for prospective Bhikkhus (Buddhist monks) and Bhikkhuṇīs (Buddhist nuns) and the knowledge of items that create fetters for human beings should have been avoided.

It is not possible to decide with any amount of precision the duration of the courses. As in Hindu

schools, perhaps the time required for mastering the subjects depended upon the intelligence and application of students and that it was normally twelve years. They believed in the inherent differences of intelligence and of other capacities of students and did not prescribe any definite uniform length of time for learning various courses. In Hindu institutions, the practice of giving degree parchments to students successfully finishing off their courses was not in vogue. That was not the need of the day, because knowledge was treated as its own reward. The conferring of degrees in the existing Pāthaśālās which run on ancient lines and teach the same ancient subjects, is of a very recent origin. The authorities of this university used to confer the title of ' Pandita ' on those who had finished their courses at the university. This function was usually presided over by the patron king. Tibetan authorities inform us that Jetāri and Ratnavajra had received degrees at this university at the hands of Kings Mahīpāla and Kanaka respectively. It was also customary in this university to exhibit on walls the portraits of such of the *alumni* as possessed outstanding merit. The object of course must have been to pay a grateful tribute to their scholarship as well as to place before other students examples worthy of emulation. In accordance with this custom, two portraits of Nāgārjuna

and Atiśa were exhibited on the walls of the university.

Administration

There were boards in charge of different duties connected with the day-to-day working of the university; one chief abbot worked as the president of these various boards. There was complete academic autonomy and the teachers in charge of various departments were responsible for the academic work conducted in their departments. In order to ensure a high standard of learning students were admitted to the university only if they satisfied the tests given by eminent authorities in charge of various subjects. Six erudite teachers guarded the six gates leading to the university. During the reign of Chanaka (955-983 A.D.), the following six eminent logicians were posted for the work. Ratnākaraśānti was placed at the east gate, Vāgīśvarakīrti at the west, Naropa at the north, Prajnākaramati, at the south, Ratnavajra at the first central gate and Jnānaśrīmitra at the second gate.

Teachers and students

The teachers working at the university were well known not only in India but even beyond her frontiers for the depth and the width of their learning. It is as a result of this that the university had developed literary and cultural contacts with Tibet. Scholars from Tibet were particularly interested in

the Tantras, for the teaching of which special arrangements were made at the university all throughout the four hundred years of its existence. It was Vikramaśilā scholars who, as the custodians of piety, knowledge and religion have practically built up the culture and civilisation of Tibet. Many of these scholars wrote books on various sciences in Sanskrit and translated quite a few in Tibetan. It is said that Atiśa alone wrote two hundred books, some originals and other translations. It has been pointed out that when the university was started, King Dharmapāla of Bengal, its first patron, had appointed one hundred and eight teachers and other specialists making up a total of one hundred and fourteen teachers. Scholars in large numbers poured in from Tibet for whom a special arrangement for boarding and lodging was made. The number of scholars coming from other parts of India also was not small. It has been mentioned that in the twelfth century there were 3,000 monk scholars studying at this university. We give below a list of names of selected scholars from Vikramaśilā who have influenced Tibetan culture.

(1) Āchārya Buddha Jnānapāda: He was appointed first as the priest of King Dharmapāla and later as the Āchārya for ordination at Vikramaśilā. He became the founder of a new cult of which Vikramaśilā was the only centre in those days. He

wrote nine books on Tantra in Sanskrit. But now only their translations in Tibetan are available.

(2) Vairochana Rakshita : He wrote several books in Sanskrit and translated into Tibetan several Tāntrika works. Later he went to Tibet where he was given the titles of Mahāpandita and Mahāchārya.

(3) Jetāri : He completed his studies at Vikramaśilā and was given the title of Pandita. Later he worked as a professor at Vikramaśilā. He taught Sūtra and Tantra to Ratnākaraśānti, who was appointed as a gate-keeper of the Vihāra in about 983 A. D.

(4) Prajnākaramati : He was one of the gatekeepers of the Vihāra and wrote several works, two of which are in Tibetan.

(5) Ratnākaraśānti : He received his ordination in Sarvāstivāda school at Odantapurī. Later he joined Vikramaśilā. He wrote thirteen works in Sanskrit and preached Buddhism in Ceylon, where he was invited for that work.

(6) Jnāna Śrī : He first belonged to Śrāvaka school, but later became a Mahāyāna. He wrote several books and translated one of them, the Pramāṇaviniśchayatīkā into Tibetan.

(7) Ratnavajra: He was a resident of Kāśmīra. After studying Buddhist Sūtras, Mantras and sciences, he joined Vikramaśilā University at the age of thirty-six. There he won the title of Pandita and the honour of becoming a gate-keeper. He returned to Kāśmīra and defeated in argument some Tīrthajas and converted them to Buddhism. Later he went to Tibet, learned the Tibetan language and translated into Tibetan fourteen works on Tantra.

(8) Vāgīśvarakīrti: He was a gate-keeper at Vikramaśilā. He belonged to Banāras, was a worshipper of Tārā Devī and wrote a work in Sanskrit named Mṛtyubanchanopadeśa.

(9) Dīpankara Śrī Jnāna *alias* Āchārya Atiśa: He was one of the greatest missionaries of Buddhism who travelled to foreign countries. Born in a royal family in 980 A.D., he took the sacred vow at nineteen. At thirty-one he received the highest ordination. He was the master of both Hīnayāna and Mahāyāna, Vaiśeshika and Tantras. After completing his education he sailed to Suvarṇadwīpa (Pegu) and was further initiated into the mysteries of Buddhism by Āchārya Chandrakīrti. There he studied for twelve years. On his return to India he defeated many scholars and was appointed head at Vikramaśilā. Later he went to Nepal at the invitation of King Chan Chub of Tibet who was

anxious to purge Tibetan Buddhism of its corruptions which were many and gross. There he founded the new religion of Lamaism. He worked in Tibet for thirteen years and died at the age of seventy-three. About two hundred works on Vajrayāna are ascribed to him. He also translated twenty two Sanskrit works into Tibetan.

(10) Vīryasinha: He helped Atiśa in translating Sanskrit works into Tibetan.

(11) Abhayakaragupta: He was a native of Gauda (Bengal). He became a monk and was appointed by King Rāmapāla of Magadha (Bihar) to perform religious ceremonies at the palace. He belonged to the Mahāyāna school. He was an eye-witness of the first Turuksha (Turks) invasion of Magadha. He was a great authority on Tantra cult and translated seven works into Tibetan.

(12) Tathāgata Rakshita: He was born in a family of physicians in Orissa. At Vikramaśilā he received the titles "Mahāpandita" and "Upādhyāya" and was a professor of Tantra. He translated a number of books into Tibetan.

(13) Ratnakīrti: He became an "Upādhyāya", "Pandita" and "Mahāpandita" at Vikramaśilā and translated a number of books into Tibetan.

(14) Manjuśrī: He was a Pandita at Vikramaśilā and a worshipper of Tārā.

(15) Dharmakīrti: He was a native of Tibet. He learnt Sanskrit at Vikramaśilā and translated many Sanskrit works into Tibetan.

(16) Śākyasūribhadra: He was a native of Kāśmīra. He was a witness of the tragic destruction of Vikramaśilā by Moslems.

Destruction of Vikramasila

The tragic end of this university came in 1203 A.D. at the hands of Bakhtiyar Khilji, an officer of Kutub-ud-din. All the Buddhist monks residing at the place had their heads shaven and they were all slain. It has been reported that when the invading Musalmans came across the library of the university, they wanted to know the contents of the books and searched for some one to give them the necessary information. But the carnage had been so mercilessly thorough that not one was available for the purpose. It is said that the invaders mistook the buildings for a fortress (and perhaps the yellow-robed clean-shaven Bhikkhus for soldiers of war!) and only later they realised that it was a Vihāra.

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