

CHAPTER – III

Centres of Learning in the Vedic and Buddhist period

Centres of learning in Vedic and Buddhist Period :

The basic institution of learning in Vedic age was the *Gurukula*. Before the *Gurukula* no reference for existence of any educational Centre or institution would have been traced. *Gurukula* functioned as an educational institution in Vedic age. This *Gurukula*, the residence of the teacher was the most significant Centre of learning in ancient India. This unique institution was a very vital part of the Vedic community for several centuries. Its origin cannot be traced. But it is necessary to point out that, the entire progress achieved by Indians throughout the ages in various fields of life and knowledge is the fruit of the *Gurukula* system of education and training.

As a matter of fact in the initial age of the *Vedas*, there was no existence or evidence of any educational Centre. During the age of the *Vedas*, the *R̥ṣis* attained knowledge through deep meditation. When they acquired the highest knowledge through meditation then they transferred the knowledge to other members of the society¹. They first orally delivered their knowledge to his sons and disciples. In Vedic period the orally transmitted education was popular². In course of time the disciple tried to codify the orally transmitted instructions of his teacher. This difference led the growth of some *Śākhā*, *Charaṇa*, *Gotras*, and *Pariṣats*. But these *Śākhā*, *Charaṇa*, *Gotras*, and *Pariṣats* was not educational Centre. During the Vedic age these *Śākhā*, *Charaṇa*, *Gotras*, and

¹ *Yajñena bācaḥ padavīyamāyantāmanvavindannṛṣiṣu praviṣṭāṁ |*
Tāmābhṛtyā vyadadhuh purutrā tāṁ sapta rebhā abhi saṁ navante || RV.X.71.3.
² *Yadeṣāmanyō anyasya vācaṁ śāktasyeva vadati śikṣamāṇaḥ |*
Savaṁ tadeṣāṁ samṛdhevaparva yatsuvāco vadathanādhysu || Ibid.VII.103.5.

Pariṣats came into existence. In the Brahmanic and Upanisadic age, these *Śākhā*, *Charaṇa*, *Gotra*, and *Pariṣat* helped a great deal in the expansion of education. The *Śākhā* denotes the text and the caterers of these *Śākhās* are known as *Charaṇa*. The *Jagaddhara*'s commentary of *Mālatimadava Charaṇa* is defined as "a number of men who are pledged to the reading of certain *Śākhā* of *Veda* and who have in this manner become body"³. The term *Gotra* indicates blood relationship. But *Pāṇini*⁴ mentioned that, the *Vaidik mantras*, religious traditions and sacrificial customs which came to be associated with the name of a particular *Ṛṣis* becomes the property of the *Gotra* in later times. When the number of *Gotra* becomes too large, the *Gotras* were likely to face a lot of confusions and ambiguity. The *Pariṣat* was a settlement of the learned *Brāhmaṇas*, a community to which members of the *Charaṇa* belong. In fact, *Pariṣat* was a group of various *Charaṇa*, an assembly of the learned and wise person. In the *Vedas* we also find the references of this *Pariṣat*. The *Ṛgveda*⁵ mentioned that the *Pariṣats*, where scholars and philosophers gather from far off places of the country for the sake of philosophical and religious discussions. *Sāyana* calls this *Pariṣats* as *Brāhmaṇa Saṁgha*⁶. Like the *Vedas*, the *Bṛhadāranyaka Upaniṣat*, the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* and the *Mahābhārata* also mentioned about this *Pariṣats*⁷. The *Pariṣat* is developed for the propagation

³ Mookerji, R.K. *Ancient Indian Education (Brahmanical and Buddhist)*, Motilal Banarasi Dass Publishers, Delhi 2011, P 80.

⁴ *Pāṇini*.4.58-61.

⁵ *Hrdā taṣṭeṣu manaso javeṣu yad brāhmaṇāḥ saṁnyajante sakhāyah | Atrāha tvarṁ vi jahurvedyabhirohabrāhmāṇo vi carantu tve || ṚV.X.71.8*

⁶ *Atra asmin Brāhmaṇasaṁghe tvrṁ avijñātārthamekarṁ puruṣarṁ vedyābhiḥ veditavyābhiḥ vidyābhiḥ pravṛttibhirvā vi jahuḥ viśeṣeṇa parityajanti |(Sāyana Bhāṣya)Ibid. X.71.8.*

⁷ *Śvetaketurah vā āruṇeyah pañcālānārṁ pariṣadarṁ ājagām |B. U.VI.2.1; Janako ha vai vaideha |Brāhmaṇairdhāvayadbhi samājagāma ||ŚR.B.XI.6.2.1;*

of learning. In the post Vedic period these *Pariṣats* have played a very important part in the progress of education. In the initial stage of the *Pariṣats*, the member of the royal families came forward to participate in the learned discussion and themselves volunteered their patronage for its propagation. But later *Pariṣats* become the association of teachers and students. The famous teachers attracted the students. And the students from different parts of the country regularly attend these *Pariṣats* for advanced learning. Slowly these *Pariṣats* become popular and developed as an important seat of learning.

But it is also noticeable that where the *Pariṣats* were frequently called some other educational colonies also developed in the places. Different types of temples, *Agrahāra* and *Chatuṣpāthi* or Tols grew up there. Basically in the *Sūtra* period these temples, *Agrahāra* and *Chatuṣpāthi* or Tols were developed. Famous teachers attracted student from all over India to these places. These corporate colonies of teachers and student were like ancient Indian Universities.

A note on these ancient Indian education Centres from the point of view of their importance and hoariness is being presented:-

1) ***Gurukula*** :

In ancient time *Gurukula* was the most important of Centre of learning. In the Vedic literature we get references of numerous *teachers* (*Ācāryas*) and the students (*Śiṣyas*). The *Atharvaveda* and the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa*⁸ gives the

Na tatsadh sat pariṣad sabhā ca sā|M.Bh.226.18.

⁸ *Brahmacāriṣṇaṁścarati rodasī ubhe tasmin devāḥ sarṁ manaso bhavanti.....sa snāto babhruḥ piṅgalaḥ pṛthivyām bahu rocate*|| A.V.XI.5;
Brahmacaryamāgāmityāha | *brahmaṇa evaitadātmānnivedayati brahmacāryasānītyāha*

graphic picture of the initiated student entrance to the preceptor's residential institution, and the primary injunctions are recorded therein. *Chāndogya Upaniṣat* mentioned that the *Brahmacārins* residing in the *Gurukulas* are called 'kulavāsi', one who dwells in the house of his preceptor⁹. The great epics like *Rāmāyaṇa* and the *Mahābhārata* also give the references of *Gurukulas*¹⁰. There the *Gurukulas* are regarded as famous institutions. During that period students assembled in body and acquired knowledge. The *Gurukulas* were not always situated in forests. In the majority of the case they were in villages and towns. The students came to *Gurukulas* from far off lands and in this manner, the residential institution were grown up¹¹. The curious student acquired knowledge from the teacher residing in the *Gurukulas*. In the *Upaniṣats* we find the reference of the hermitage of *Satyakāma Jābāla* where *Upakosala Kāmalāyana* acquired his education observing celibacy for long twelve years¹². *Satyakāma Jābāla* himself also studied remaining in the residential hermitage of sage *Gautama Haridrumata*¹³. Like that *Kṛṣṇa* and *Balarāma* staying in the hermitage of the sage *Sandipani* got schooling¹⁴. In the similar manner *Kacha* also learnt spiritual knowledge staying in the hermitage of *Śukracārya*¹⁵. From

*brahmaṇa evaitadātmānaparidadātyathainamāha ko nāmāsīt prajāpatirvair kaḥ
prājāpatyamevainantatakr̥tvopnayate.....yathā ha vā ṛcaṁ vā yajuṚVā
sām vābhīvyāharettādṛktadya evaṁ vidvānabrhamacārī sannamadadhvaśannāti tasmādu
kāramevāśannīyāt ||ŚR.B.XI.5.4.*

⁹ *Brahmacaryācāryakulavāsī ||Ch.U.II.23.1.*

¹⁰ *vasana gurukule nityaṁ nityaṁadhyayanerataḥ ||M.Bh.Śalya.40.3.*

¹¹ *evaṁ māṁ brahmācārīṇaḥ|dhātarāyantu sarvataḥ svāhā|| |T.U.1.4.3*

¹² *Upakosalo ha vai kāmalāyanaḥ satyakāme jābāle brahmācaryamuvāsa tasya ha dvādaśa
varṣāṇyagnīn paricacāra ||Ch.U.IV.10.1.*

¹³ *Sa ha hāridrumataṁ gautamametyovāca brahmācaryāṁ bhagavati vatsyāmyupeyāṁ
bhagavantamiti||Ibid IV.4.3.*

¹⁴ *Sandīpanirasarṁbhāvyam tayoḥ karmātimānuṣam|vicintya tau tadā mene prāptau candra-
divākaraū||Viṣṇu Purāṇa.3.11.19-20.*

¹⁵ *Kaca susvāgataṁ teōstu pratigrhanāmi te vacaḥ|ṛicayaṣyeōhamaracayāṁ tvamarcitoōstu
bṛhaspatiḥ||Matsy Purāṇa.25.24*

the aforesaid discussion it appears that in ancient time *Gurukulas* had reputation as educative Centres. In the *Dharmasūtras* and *Smṛti* literature too the importance of *Gurukulas* as the Centres of learning has delineation.

Accepting the command of the preceptor with regard the disciple acquired knowledge and observed celibacy. The vow of celibacy was very strict. In the *Vedas* the *Brāhmaṇas*, the *Upaniṣats* and the *Sūtra* the vow of celibacy is mentioned. The period of *Brahmacārya* or student life was like a prolonged sacrifice¹⁶. At that time, a student had to study the *Vedas* and its accessories daily. He had to control his sense organs and many other things¹⁷. He had to beg alms, keep the sacred fire burning and tend the cattle of his preceptors' house. He had to rise earlier and go to bed later than the Preceptor. His hours of study were fixed. Above all he had to observe the vow of celibacy. Though the vow of celibacy was very hard, the life of celibate became very nice. With sincere affection the *Guru* gives all the instruction of his student. Without the instructions of *Guru* nothing was possible to achieve. Therefore, it can be said that *Gurukula* was the basic educational institution in Vedic India. In the residential institution the disciples led their life in a systematic way, and molded their character according to the instructions of the *Guru*. Thus, in the long run, the disciples became perfect men for worldly life in future.

¹⁶ *Dīrghasatrahṃ vā eṣa upaiti | yo brahmacaryamupati|ŚR.B.XI.3.3.2*

¹⁷ *Sa yadmṛgājīnani vaste, sa yadaharāharācāryāya karma karoti, sa yat suṣupsur nidrāṃ ninayati..... noparisāyī syād na gāyino na nartanī na saraṇo na niṣṭivet||G.B.II.2-7; Sevetemaṃstu niyamān brahmacārī gurau vasan | Sarānīyamīnidriyagrāmaṃ tapovṛḍyarthamātmanaḥ ||M.S.II.175.*

In the *Rāmāyana* the hermitage of the sages *Bhāradvāja* and *Vālmīki* were important Centres of education. *Bhāradvāja*'s hermitage was situated in between the confluence of the *Gaṅgā* and the *Yamuna*¹⁸. There the celibates constantly remained in chanting the Vedic hymns along with performing sacrificial rites and worships. In the *Rāmāyana* while *Rāma* proceeding towards *Citrakuta* *Rāma* took repose in the hermitage of *Bhāradvāja*¹⁹. This hermitage was covered by forests. *Puruṣottama Rāma* was highly influenced by the purity and serenity of this hermitage. The hermitage of the great sage *Vālmīki* was also a great Centre for learning. The students from distant land came to study residing in the hermitage of *Vālmīki*. From the *Rāmāyana*²⁰ and other treatises we learn that *Lava* and *Kuśa* live in this hermitage and got schooling under the guidance of *Vālmīki*. During that period the hermitage of the sage *Agastya* was also another Centre for learning. The hermitage of *Agastya* was located in *Daṇḍakaraṇya*²¹. There the students remained absorbed in prosecuting studies. Side by side they also performed different kind of sacrifices. In the *Mahābhārata* the hermitage of the sage *Kaṇva* and *Vyāsa* were also the great Centres for studies. The hermitage of sage *Kaṇva* was situated on the bank of the river *Mālinī*²². The atmosphere of the said hermitage

¹⁸ *Nunārṇ prāptāḥ sma sambhedharṇ gaṅgāyamunāyoRVayam bharadvājāśrame caita dṛśyante vividhādramāḥ || Rām.Ayodha 54.6-7.*

¹⁹ *Bharadvājōovravīdīdarṇ – madhumūlafalopetarṇ citrakutarṇ vrajeti ha || Ibid.Ayodha 54.38.*

²⁰ *Kuśīlavau tu dharmajñāu rājputrau yaśasvināu | bharātarau svarasārṇapatro dadarśāsramavāsināu || Ibid.Bāla.4.5; Raghuvārṇsam,XV.33.*

²¹ *Tatrāgamanamekāgro daṇḍakānapraviveśa hasutīkṣṇarṇ cāpyagastyarṇ ca agastyabhrātararṇ tathā|| Rām.Bāla.1.40-41.*

²² *Mālinīmabhito rājan nadīrṇ puṇyārṇ sukodakām|| Tasyāstīre bhagavataḥ kāśyapasya mahātmanah| āśramprvararṇ ranyarṇ maharṣigaṇasevitam||M.Bh.1.70.21,27.*

was so pure that even the King when entering the hermitage had to leave his band of soldiers at the outskirts. The hermitage of sage *Vyāsa* was located in the foot hill of the *Himālayas*²³. It was a famous seat of learning. In that hermitage the learned personalities like *Sumanta*, *Vaiśampāyana*, *Jaimini* and *Paila* get their schooling²⁴. The hermitage of sage *Śaunakas* located in *Naimiṣāranya* was also an important Centre for learning²⁵. The *Mahābhārata* and the *Purāṇas* mention that there was always gathering of the learned in *Naimiṣāranya*. There the students always remained eager to learn new knowledge. There was a hermitage of *Bhāradvājas* near the confluence of *Gangā*²⁶. There the students used to learn the science of weapons along with *Vedas* and *Vedāṅgas*. In the *Mahābhārata* it is narrated that *Drupada*, the King of *Pāñcāla* and preceptor *Droṇācārya*²⁷ got their schooling residing in that hermitage. The hermitage of great sage *Paraśurāma* was also an important Centre for learning of the science of weapons. *Paraśurāma* was a versatile scholar in *Vedas* and very proficient in the art of war. *Droṇācārya*, the son of *Ṛsi Bhāradvāja* and the guru of *Kauravas* and *Pāṇḍavas* received *Dhanurveda Śikṣā*, *Divyāstra Śikṣā* and *Nitiśāstra* from *Paraśurāma*²⁸.

²³ *Evamadhyāpayanśiṣyān vyāsaḥ putraṁ ca viryavān |
Ubāsa himavatprṣṭa pārāśaryo mahamuniḥ || M.Bh. Śhānti.327.33.*

²⁴ *Vedānadyāpayāmāsa vyāsaḥ śiṣyān mahāmatih ||
Sumantu ca mahabhāgarṁ vaiśampāyanameva ca |
Jaiminiṁ ca mahāprājñāṁ pailaṁ cāpi tapasvinaṁ || Ibid. Śhānti .327.26.27.*

²⁵ *Naimiṣāranye śaunakasya kulapatedvārdaśavarṣike satre | Ibid.1.1.1.*

²⁶ *Gangādvārāṁ prati mahān babhuva bhagvānṛṣih|
bharadvāja iti khyātaḥ satataṁ saṁśīta vrataḥ||Ibid.1.129.33.*

²⁷ *Sa nityamāśramaṁ gatvā droṇena saha pārthivaḥ|
cikṛiḍādhyayanaṁ caiva cakāra kṣatriyārṣabhah ||Ibid.1.129.40-42.*

²⁸ *Sa rāmasya dhanurvedaṁ divyānyastrāṇi caiva ha|
śrutvā teṣu manaścakre nītiśāstre tathaiva ca||Ibid.Ādi.129.52;
tathetyuktvā tatastasmai prādādasrtāni bhārgavaḥ| sarhasyavrataṁ caiva
dhanurvedamaśeṣataḥ||Ibid.Ādi.129.66.*

In the ancient Buddhist literature also have come across the narration of *Gurukulas*. The stories of the *Jātaka* mentioned that the curious students residing in the *Gurukulas* prosecuted their studies. The great dramatist *Bhāsa* and the court poet of king *Harṣa Bāṇabhaṭṭa* also mentioned *Gurukula*. During the age the head of the hermitage was called *Kulapati*. All the disciples obeyed *Kulapati* as family members²⁹. *Kulapati* means a learned *Brāhmaṇa* who would provide ten thousands pupils of his institution with free food, clothes, education and accommodation³⁰. In *Abhijñānaśakuntalam*³¹ we get the reference of the *Āśrama* of *Kaṇva*, distinguished as a *Kulapati* or teacher of ten thousands pupils on the banks of the *Mālinī* River. Likewise Alberuni of the eleventh century too in his book mentioned the system of education of the *Gurukulas*. He wrote that the students of those days residing in the *Gurukulas* acquired different knowledge by means of strict principle and also by rendering services to *Guru*. In this way, *Gurukula* maintained its importance from one century to another century.

2) *Pariṣat* :

The next Centre of learning in ancient period was *Pariṣats*. Generally for spreading education these *Pariṣats* were developed or constituted. During the *Samhitā*, *Brāhmaṇa*, *Upaniṣats* and in the *Sūtra* period these *Pariṣats*

²⁹ *Pratīmānātaka . Act 6.*

³⁰ *Munīnārṇ daśasāhasraṁ yo 'nnadānādipoṣaṇat adhyāpayati vipraṣīrasau kulapatiḥ smṛtaḥ||
Abhijñānaśakuntalam P.17-18.*

³¹ *Eṣa khalu kulapateranumālinūtīramāśramo drśyate | Ibid.Act.I.*

helped great deal in the expansion of education. These *Pariṣats* were also called ‘assembly of learned’ (*Vidvat sabhā*) or (*Brāhmaṇa Saṁghas*)³².

In ancient time *Pariṣats* were here and there. Learned scholars for the improvement of their knowledge regularly searched such types of *Pariṣat*. The *Śatapata Brāhmaṇa* and the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣat*³³ mentioned that *Uddālaka Āruni* went to the north, where he challenged the northern scholars. Like that *Śvetaketu*, *Somaśushma Sātyayajñi* and *Yājñavalkya* to *Videha* for learned discussion. In the *Upaniṣat* these *Pariṣats* has been used for the assembly of the learned and the wise persons where great philosophical and spiritual problems were discussed (mooted) and solved. Later on, it came to be applied to those places where learned *Brāhmaṇas* lived in a large number. In fact, *Pariṣats* was group of various *Charaṇas* for the purpose of discussion on tough educational, philosophical problems and evolving new facts. In the age of *Sūtras* it is described as the cultural assembly of the learned in which narrow and difficult problems were decided³⁴. There were the three categories of *Pariṣats*. *Pāṇini*³⁵ referred to these three categories of *Pariṣats* as-

- *Pariṣat* relating to education.

³² *Hrdā taṣṭeṣu manaso jabeṣu yad brāhmaṇaḥ saṁnyajante sakhāyah | Atrāha tvarṁ vi jahurvedyābhirohabrāhmāṇo vi carantu tve ||ṚV.X.71.8; Atra asmin Brāhmaṇasaṁghe tvṁ avijñātārthamekaṁ puruṣaṁ vedyābhiḥ veditavyābhiḥ vidyābhiḥ*

pravṛttibhiḥṚVā vi jahuḥ viśeṣeṇa parityajanti |(Sāyana Bhāṣya)Ibid. X.71.8.

Misra, Babulal. Mahābhārata kālīn sikṣā praṇālī, Prathibhā prakāśan, Delhi, 2003, P. 142.

³³ *Kaurupāñcālo vā ayambrahmā brahmaputraḥ.....svaidāyaneneti śaunako ha svaidāyana āsa |ŚR.B. 11. 4. 1. 2;*

Janako ha vai vaidehḥ| brāhmaṇairddhāvayadbhiḥ samājagāma śvetaketunāruṇeyena somaśuṣmeṇa sātyayajñinā yājñavalkyena tānnhovāca

kathaṅkathamagnihotraṅjuhitheti.....||Ibid.XI.6.2.

³⁴ *B.G.S.I.1.1.12.*

³⁵ *Pāṇini IV.4.100;*

Misra, Babulal. Mahābhārat Kālīn Sikṣā Praṇālī, Prathibhā prakāśan, Delhi, 2003, P. 144.

- *Pariṣat* relating to the group of societies.
- *Pariṣat* relating to administration.

The *Pariṣat* relating to education was like a type of assembly of learned, where the Vedic Pronunciation, *Padapāthas* and many other things were discussed. But the *Pariṣat* was not confined only to discussion since the *Pariṣat* was a higher organization relating education where abstruse topics were also discussed³⁶.

A *Pariṣat* was constituted with learned *Pandits*. According to *Gautama*³⁷, a *Pariṣat* should consist of at least of the ten following members, viz.,

- a) Four members - well versed in knowledge of the four *Vedas*.
- b) Three Representative member – Representative of the *Brahmacārya*, *Gārhashtya* and *Vānaprastha Āśrama*.
- c) Three members – Expert in Laws.

*Manu*³⁸ also agreed in regard to the names of the members in the *Pariṣat* but he distributed them in the following :

- | | | |
|------------------|-----------------------------|---|
| a) Three members | Scholars of <i>Ṛgveda</i> | 1 |
| | Scholar of <i>Sāmaveda</i> | 1 |
| | Scholar of <i>Yajurveda</i> | 1 |
| b) Four members | Master of Logic | 1 |
| | Scholar of <i>Mīmāṃsaka</i> | 1 |

³⁶ Dutta, R.C. *Civilization in Ancient India, Vol I, Motilal Banarasi Dass Publishers, Delhi, 2007, P.163.*

³⁷ *Catvaracaturṅgām pāragā vedānām prāg uttamātraya āśramiṇaḥ pṛhga dharmavidasya etandaśāvaranapariṣadityacakṣate* //G.D.S. XXVIII.49.

³⁸ *Daśāvarā vā pariṣad yaṁ dharma parikalpayet.....trayaścāśramiṇaḥ pūrve pariṣat syāddaśāvarā* || M.S.XII.110-111.

	Scholar of <i>Nirukta</i>	1
	Master of Law	1
c) Three Representative Member	<i>Brahmacarya</i>	1
	<i>Gārhastya</i>	1
	<i>Vānaprastha</i>	1

Total Members		10

Herein there was the difference of *Parīṣat* from *Gurukula*. The *Parīṣat* was constituted with teachers, students and learned men. It was the small replica of a University of this age³⁹.

In those days, *Pāñcāla pariṣat* was a remarkable one. King *Janaka* developed this *Parīṣat* for the propagation of learning. In the *Bṛhadāranyaka Upaniṣat* ⁴⁰ we find that the King *Janaka* invited all the *Brahmanas* of *Kuru – Pāñcāla* country on the occasion of horse sacrifice for the learning discussion. During the occasion the King offered a prize of 1000 cows with horns covered with gold to the most learned Scholars. These *Parīṣats* were the most important body of the community. The talented scholars represented these *Parīṣats*. But in this *Parīṣat* any person could not be able to take part even though they belonged to *Brāhmaṇa* family. Those who have fulfilled the sacred duties would be able to take part in the *Parīṣats*⁴¹. Many scholars, student regularly

³⁹ Mookerji, R.K. *Ancient Indian Education (Brahmanical and Buddhist)*, Motilal Banarasi Dass Publishers, Delhi 2011, P.222.

⁴⁰ *Janako ha vaideho bahudakṣiṇena yajñeneje tatra ha kurupāñchālānārṇ Brāhmaṇā abhisametā babhūvustasya ha janakasya vaidehasya vijijañsā babhūva kaḥsvideṣām brāhmaṇānāmanūcāntam iti sa ha gavārṇ sahasramavarurodha daśa daśa pādā ekaikasyāḥ sṅgayorāvaddāḥ babhūvuḥ ||B.U.3.1.1*

⁴¹ *Avratānāmamantrāṇārṇ jātīmātropajīvinām | Sahasraśaḥ sametānārṇ pariṣattvaṇ na vidayte||M.S.12.114; B.D.S.I.I.I.16.*

attend there *Pariṣats* for advanced learning. After the completion of studies *Śvetaketu* attended these *Pariṣats*. So the *Pariṣats* were the debating circle, where the scholars meet together and give instruction about any doubtful points of law⁴².

3) Temple Colleges :

The temple Colleges played a very important role in education. But there were not so much evidence about Hindu temples. The early history is difficult to trace. Inscriptional records indicate these types of colleges started from the tenth century A.D. The name of some temple colleges are—*Saltogi* temple college, *Ennāyiram* temple college, *Tirumukkudal* temple college, *Tiruvorraiyyūr* temple college⁴³. These temple colleges were famous Centre of learning in tenth century A.D. The temple colleges were the residential colleges providing free boarding and lodging. These temple colleges functioned in a spacious hall specially built for the purpose for accommodating a large number of students. The local villagers also used to give endowment to the development of these temple colleges. The teachers were generally not receiving any fee from the student. Education was imparted by teacher in free of cost. But for their primary requirements like food, shelter and cloth, they receive some amount of fee from their students. The normal allowance for the teachers was about sixteen seers of rice per-day. Sometime king also give some

⁴² *Śvetaketurhāruṇeyah pāñcālānāṁ samitimeyāya.....sa ha gautamo rajñodharmeyāya tasmai ha prāptāyārahāñcakāra sa ha prātaḥ sabhāga udeyāya taṁ hovāca mānuṣasya bhagvan gautama vittasya varaṁ vṛnīthā iti sa hovāca tavaiva rājan mānusaṁ vittāṁ yāmeva kumārasyānte vācamabhāṣathāstāmeba me brahīti sa ha kṛcchībabhūva ||Ch.U.V.3.1-6;*

Śvetaketuraha vā āruṇeyah pāñcālānāṁ pariśadamājagāma.....tāṁ tvhaṁ tubhyaṁ vakṣyāmi ko hi tvaivaṁ bravantarmahati pratyākhyātumīti ||B.U.VI.2.1-7.

⁴³ *Nārāyaṇoḥbhīdhāna nārāyaṇa ivāparaḥ.....bhojyettu yathāśakti pariśatpariśajjanam ||Epigraphia .Indica.IV.P.60.*

allowances to these teachers. He was receiving this salary for his normal family responsibilities. For the development of society he dedicated his whole life. Owing to the spread of fame the college attracts students from distant part of the country. Like the other institution, these temples were also very famous and popular in those days. These temple colleges started imparting education in much earlier times but much evidence could not be traced out to this point⁴⁴.

4) *Agrahāra* :

The donation of land to the learned *Brāhmaṇas* from the kingdom is called *Agrahāra*. In those *Agrahāras* the learned *Brāhmaṇas* imparted education as teachers. Being pleased the king donated land to the *Brāhmaṇas*. In the *Chāndogya Upniṣat*⁴⁵ we find references of the donation of village to the *Brāhmaṇas* like *Raikva* and *Jnanaśruti*. In the *Dharmasūtras*⁴⁶ also the donation of land was regarded as pious act. In the *Jātaka*⁴⁷ stories too we find mention of donation of land.

The king used to donate land to the learned *Brāhmaṇas* for the development of his country. Upon those donated lands, the learned *Brāhmaṇas* generally used to establish institutions for imparting education, where students could study their subjects. In those institutions or respective *Agrahāras* the domiciled *Brāhmaṇas* were learned in *Vedas*, *Purāṇas*, Logic, and Administrative Science. Therefore they taught those subjects to the students

⁴⁴ Altekar, A.S. *Education in Ancient India*, Vishal Kaushik Printer, Delhi, 2009, P.133; Mookerji, R.K. *Ancient Indian Education (Brahmanical and Buddhist)*, Motilal Banarasi Dass Publishers, Delhi 2011, P.325.

⁴⁵ *Te ha ate Raikvaparnā nāma mahāvṛṣeṣu yatrāsmā uvāsa* | *Ch.U.IV.2.5*.

⁴⁶ *bhr̥tyānām anuparodhena kṣetrar̥ṇ vīttar̥ṇ ca dadad brāhmaṇebhyo yathā arham anantār̥ṇ lokān abhijayati* ||*Āp.D.S.II.10.26.1*.

⁴⁷ *tesar̥ṇ soḷasannam pi soḷasahi vāhagonihi saddhim pasatar̥ṇ pasatar̥ṇ.....tesar̥ṇ vatthābharaṇāni datvā vissajjāpesi* ||*Sar̥ṅkhapāla Jātaka 524*.

without taking any fees. This practice was more in vogue in the Post Vedic period. In the *Smṛti* literature⁴⁸ also the free hand donation of land was praised as pious work for the all round development of state.

Such *Agrahāras* was established generally by the side of a river. In a state more than one *Agrahāras* were established since, the King donated land to different learned *Brāhmaṇas*. In the Pre-medieval period the numbers of these *Agrahāras* were tremendously increased. According to the *Harṣacarita*, King *Harṣa* while going out for his world conquest donated lands round about one thousand Halas and hundred villages to the learned *Brāhmaṇas*⁴⁹. Gradually these *Agrahāras* turned in to the institutions called Toll for imparting higher education.

5) ***Chatuspāthi Tol :***

In the *Sūtra* period a special type of school came in to existence namely *Sūtra* schools. This *Sūtra* school subsequently developed as *Chatuspāthi*.

In the *Chatuspāthi* all *Varṇas* of students were eligible for education. But in majority of the case the teacher and students both were exclusively *Brahmins*. The *Chatuspāthi* provided specialized courses. Grammar, *Kalpa*, *Purāṇa*, and Philosophy were generally offered as fields of specialization. There were three types of Tols. Subjects offered in the first type were *Vyākaraṇa*, *Kāvya* and *Purāṇa*. Those of second type were *Kalpa* and *Purāṇa*. In the third type were offered philosophy and *Nyāya*. Like that of *Agrahāra*, these Tol provide education for children. Basically the Tols provide primary

⁴⁸ *Bhūmido bhūmimāpnoti | M.S.4.230.*

⁴⁹ *Agarwal, V.S. Harṣacarita ek Sanskritik Adhyayana, Parshava Publication, Lucknow, 1942, P.203.*

education. But those learned *Brāhmins* who work in the Tol, were not given any specific endowment. The *Chatuspāthi* Tol totally depended on voluntary gifts or grants of lands by rich people. The student received their food and clothing from the local land lord. In the beginning of 19th century *Chatuspāthi* Tol were found large numbers in Bengal. Now days these Tols are in existence all over India. In present days the management of the Tols are now run by Government. The responsibility of the *Chatuspāthi* Tol are no longer rested with *Sanskrit Panditas* only. Today the traditional method of *Sanskrit* teaching has lost its previous height. No doubt the condition of the *Chatuspāthi* Tol are not so good but these Tols continued to maintain the historical tradition⁵⁰.

Buddhist Period :

Buddhist system of education was one of the phases of Brahmanical system of education. But when we discuss about the educational Centres in Buddhist India then we find that the Buddhist system of education was based on Monastic system of education and the Monasteries functioned as educational institution. At the initial stage the Monasteries or *Vihāras* were established as a Centre of meditation. But gradually these *Vihāras* were established as a Centre of education. From these *Vihāras* there were large numbers of educational Centres developed during the ancient period. These educational Centres were world renowned. In the ancient period many student from different parts of the country came to these famous Centres for education.

1) Buddhist *Vihāra* or Monastery :

⁵⁰ F.E, *Keay Indian Education in Ancient India and later times*, Baptist Mission press, Calcutta, 1942, P.145.

In ancient times the Buddhist Monastery –known as ‘*Vihāra*’ played a very important role in Indian life and thought. The word *Vihāra* means the dwelling place especially for the Monks. This *Vihāra* deserve much credit as they gradually turned in the institutes of higher learning. During the life time of Buddha these *Vihāra* or the dwelling place of the Monks were in vogue. Numerous Pali text and the epigraphically records shows that *Vihāras* came in to existence in a very early period. During the earlier period the *Bhikṣus* generally used to live by the side of the tree root in the forest and gradually some *Vihāras* were established for *Bhikṣus*. The *Bhikṣus* used to take rest in these *Vihāras*⁵¹. Buddha himself stayed with group of disciples in *Vihāras*. At first these *Vihāras* or Monasteries were used during the rainy season. Because in the rainy season, it was difficult for mendicants to travel outside⁵². From the *Mahāvagga*⁵³ we learn that King *Bimbisāra* of *Magadha* offered *Veluvana Vihāra* to *Buddha* and followers, and this was the first *Vihāra* ever presented to the *Samgha*. But gradually or after the death of *Buddha*, these Monasteries or *Vihāras* were transformed in to educational institution. There were many *Vihāras* or Monasteries developed on Northern and Western part of India. But it is not possible to locate all these *Vihāras*. Now we shall mention some of the famous Monastic Centres or *Vihāras* of Buddhist period. Of these Monastic Centres *Takṣaśilā*, *Nālandā Vihāra*, *Valabhī*, *Vikramśilā Mahāvihāra*, *Odantapuri Mahāvihāra* and *Jagaddala Mahāvihāra* deserve special reference.

⁵¹ *Te'dha bhikkhū tahaṃ-tahaṃ viharanti araṇṇe rukkhamaṇṇe pabbate kandarāyam...../ / Culavagga.VI.1.1.*

⁵² *F.E, Key Indian Education in Ancient India and later times, Baptist Mission press, Calcutta, 1942, P.147.*

⁵³ *Magadho Senīyo Bimbisāro.....Veluvanāṃ buddhapamukhassa bhikkhusaṃghassa dammiti| Mahāvagga,I.22.18.*

2) *Takṣaśilā* :

From time immemorial *Takṣaśilā* had been an important Centre of learning in ancient India. *Takṣaśilā* had originated in the Brahmanic era and existed till the Buddhist era. It had functioned as a link between the two systems of education. It was situated about twenty miles away of *Rawalpīndi*. It was the metropolis of *Gandhāra* province⁵⁴. The *Rāmāyana*⁵⁵ mentioned that it was founded by King *Bharata* who named it after his son '*Takṣa*'. It was situated where the king *Janamejaya* performed his Serpent sacrifice. Though the *Rāmāyana* and the *Mahābhārata* mentioned *Takṣaśilā* as a Centre of learning, but unfortunately we know very little about its educational activities from the *Rāmāyana* and the *Mahābhārata*. It is from the *Jātaka* we learn more about the *Takṣaśilā* as a Centre of learning.

The fame of the *Takṣaśilā* was unrivalled, because several learned teachers resided at this place. It was because of their excellence that they could attract hundreds of students from different parts of the countries. But it is unfortunate that we are completely in the dark about the names of the renowned teachers. Even the *Jātaka* which have supplied to us most of the information regarding this university are completely silent on this point. But *Jātaka* mentions some renowned students, who had their education in *Takṣaśilā*. *Pāṇini* the greatest grammarian of *Sanskrit* and *Chāṇakya* the minister of *Chandragupta Maurya* were the students of this university⁵⁶. *Jīvaka*

⁵⁴ *Gandhāraratṭha Takkasilānagare |Pañcāvudha Jātaka.55;Telapatta Jātaka.96; Pañcāvudha Jātaka.55.*

⁵⁵ *Takṣam takṣaśilāyām|Rām .Uttara.101. 11.*

⁵⁶ *Das.S.K, The Educational System of the Ancient Hindus, Gyan Publishing House,*

the world renowned physician was educated in medicine and surgery at *Takṣaśilā*⁵⁷.

Takṣaśilā was famous for its world renowned teachers. So, the teachers enjoyed complete independent in their work. The teacher was an institution in himself. His authority was final in directing the course of studies, in selecting or rejecting the students. There were no formal examinations. The student who had completed his studies did not receive any written certificate. It totally depended on the teachers' shoulder that if he was satisfied with the performance of the student then the student studies terminated.

Takṣaśilā was famous educational Centre. But *Takṣaśilā* experienced many political ups and downs. Several times it had been captured and destroyed by invaders. It was more than once destroyed. During the political disturbance their educational systems have continued to change.

Takṣaśilā faced many political problems but its fame did not go downwards. We find references in the *Jātaka*⁵⁸ that *Takṣaśilā* attracted different scholars from distant parts of the country. Students from *Benaras*, *Rājagṛiha*, *Mithilā*, *Ujjayini*, *Kosāla*, *Śivi* and *Kuru*, flocked to *Takṣaśilā* for higher learning. At the age of sixteen students would go to *Takṣaśilā* to complete their education⁵⁹. *Takṣaśilā* was mainly the Centre of secondary and higher education. After the admission in *Takṣaśilā*, the students resided in

New Delhi.1996.P.308.

⁵⁷ *Upasaṅkamtivā tarṇ vejjaṃ etad avoca:icchāṃ ahaṃ ācariyo Sippaṃ sikkhitunti*|*Mahāvagga.VIII.I.6.*

⁵⁸ *Kuto āgata si tāta-tica vutto, Bārāṇasito ti*|*Tila-Muṭṭhi Jātaka.252;*
Kosalarañño pano putto chatto nama kumāra atti,.....Takkasilaraṃ gantvā||*Brahāchatta Jātaka.336; Suruci Jātaka.489.*

⁵⁹ *Viññutam patva soḷasavassapadese*|*Pañcāvuddha Jataka 55.*

teachers' house. Sometimes, the rich students like *Junha* from *Benaras*, used to engage special house for his residence⁶⁰. The licensed hostels were also available in *Takṣaśilā*. The students used to stay in these hostels.

A system of tuition fee was prevalent in *Takṣaśilā*. A fixed of sum thousand pieces of money had been specified for the fee⁶¹. But there were another classes of students who could not pay their tuition fee, had to undergo the menial services for the teacher's house. For these students the special classes were held for them at night⁶².

All ranks and classes of students were admitted in *Takṣaśilā*. But the *Candālas*, however, were not admitted as students of *Takṣaśilā*. *Cittasambhuti Jātaka*⁶³ mentioned two *Candāla* boys who disguised as *Brāhmaṇas* came to *Takṣaśilā* to study law but betrayed themselves by their coarse language and manner. For this reason, the *Candālas* were not able to take admission in *Takṣaśilā*.

Takṣaśilā offered wide variety of courses for studies. The three *Vedas*, and eighteen *Sippas*⁶⁴ were the principal subjects of studies. *Milindapañha*⁶⁵ enumerates the following subjects viz., *Śruti*, *Smṛiti*, *Samkhya*, *Yoga*, *Nīti*, *Vaiśesika*, Arithmetic, Music, Medicine, *Purāṇa*, *Itihāsa*, Astronomy. Magic, *Hetu Vidyā*, Polity were also included in *Takṣaśilā's* curriculum. Among these

⁶⁰ *andhakāre ācariyagharā nikkhamitvā attano nivasantṭhānaṃ vagena gacchanto || Junha Jātaka.456.*

⁶¹ *Sahassam | Pañcāvudha Jātaka.55.*

⁶² *Mahāsutasama Jātaka.537.*

⁶³ *jātim paṭicchadetvā brahmaṇamāṇavavaṇṇana Takkasilam gantvā sippam ugghanhissam || Citta-Sambhūta Jātaka.498.*

⁶⁴ *Tayaveda sabbasippāni | Thusa Jātaka.338; Takkasilāyaṃ Sippam Ugghanhitva tinnam Vedānam pārāṃ gantvā aṭṭhārasannaṃ vijjaṭṭhānam | Dummedha Jātaka.50.*

⁶⁵ *Milindhipaṇha.IV.3.26.*

subjects many other subjects like Medicine, Surgery, Archery, Military Science, Astronomy, Astrology, , Magic, Snake Charming, the Art of finding treasures, Law, Music, Dancing and Painting were also included in the curriculum.

For several centuries this university served as the beacon –light to the country in educational sphere. But when Fa-Hien visited *Takṣaśilā* in fifth century A.D, there was no sign of University there and when Hiuen Tsang, visited it in seventh century he was very much disappointed to see the last relics of this important university.

3) *Nālandā* :

Nālandā Vihāra was the largest Buddhist Monastic University in ancient India. The fame and glory of *Nālandā* go beyond in ancient India.

Nālandā was a typical Buddhist University. Some scholars mention it was a Brahmanical educational Centre and not as Buddhist educational Centre⁶⁶. But whatever the case, as a University, it became famous in Buddhist period. It was situated in forty miles away of *Patna* and seven miles north of *Rajgriha* in *Bihar*⁶⁷.

In the beginning *Nālandā* was a small village. People called this place as *Nāla* and had no identity. But by and by the place was famous and *Aśoka* was the founder of *Nālandā Vihāra*⁶⁸. *Nālandā* was not a royal capital of any state and it also was not connected with the *Buddhas* life. But it suddenly rising and

⁶⁶ Mookerji, R.K. *Ancient Indian Education (Brahmanical and Buddhist)*, Motilal Banarasi Dass Publishers, Delhi 2011, P. 558.

⁶⁷ Choudhary, R.K. *History of Bihar*, Motilal Banarasi Dass Publisher, Delhi, 1958, P.78, 79.

⁶⁸ Mookerji, R.K. *Ancient Indian Education (Brahmanical and Buddhist)*, Motilal Banarasi Dass Publishers, Delhi 2011, P XXIV, 558.

became famous sit of learning in fifth century A.D. is still a mystery. There were various explanations to this point. According to one theory that *Bodhistava* was living at this place. The second explanation is that, *Nālandā* was the birth place of *Śāriputta*, a favourite disciple of Lord *Buddha*⁶⁹. The second explanation is more acceptable than the first one. Because when *Asoka* the great visited the place in connection with seeing the *Chaitya* of *Śāriputta*, he got a *Vihāra* to be constructed there. But as an educational Centre, the place did not become important. By the beginning of fourth century A.D, it became educationally important. The two important Buddhist person named *Nāgārjuna* and his disciple *Ārya Deva*, lived at *Nālandā* which indicates the importance of the place for growing up⁷⁰. But at first *Nālandā* had not achieved paramount educational importance in India. Its real importance began with 450 A.D. For the next three centuries, it remained at the highest point.⁷¹.

In the description of Hiuen Tsang, we find that *Nālandā* was a very big Monastic University. The University covered large area. According to the report of archaeological excavations, the university actually covered an area of one mile long by half mile broad⁷². The entire Monastic buildings were constructed according to pre-conceived plan. The entire university area was marked off by a big and strong enclosing wall having only one gateway. The central college was provided seven large halls and three hundred rooms. Other monastery buildings were arranged in row according to plan. The *Yaśovarman*

⁶⁹ Barua, Dipak Kumar. *Viharas in Ancient India*, Indian Publications, Calcutta, 1969, P.139.

⁷⁰ F.E, Keay *Indian Education in Ancient India and later times*, Baptist Mission press, Calcutta, 1942, P.147.

⁷¹ Chaudhuri, Rachita. *Buddhist Education in Ancient India*, Punthi Pustak, Kolkata, 2008, P.178.

⁷² Altekar, A.S. *Education in Ancient India*, Vishal Kaushik Printer, Delhi, 2009, P.117.

inscription tells us, toward to such great heights that they appeared to reach the clouds⁷³.

The admission in *Nālandā* was very strict .The quality of education in *Nālandā* was a very high level. The students from all parts of India and also from foreign countries were anxious to study in *Nālandā*. According to Hiuen Tsang the entrance examination of *Nālandā* was so hard that only twenty percent student could succeed and remaining had to go back in disappointment. The probable age of admission in *Nālandā* was twenty because *Nālandā* generally provided higher education or post graduates studies. The highest academic degree of *Nālandā* was ‘Fellowship of *Nālandā*’. The *Nālandā* also provided primary education where young pupils were freely admitted. These pupils had to attend preparatory courses for several years⁷⁴.

After the admission in *Nālandā*, the students were provided with food, clothes, education and medicine free of charge. No tuition fee or any other fee was collected for the student. All these were managed both by the state and the people⁷⁵.

I Tsing, a Chinese traveler who had stayed at *Nālandā* for a period of ten years, described that *Nālandā* was a very big University. The number of scholars studying at any time at *Nālandā* was the order of several thousand. The fame of *Nālandā* was mainly due of its teachers⁷⁶. Hiuen Tsang mentions

⁷³ *Yasyāmbudharavalehiśikharaśreṇī vihārāvalī | mālevordhvavirājini viracitā dhātrā manojñā ||Epigraphia Indica.,XX,P.43.*

⁷⁴ *Mookerji, R.K. Ancient Indian Education (Brahmanical and Buddhist), Motilal Banarasi Dass Publishers, Delhi 2011,P 564.*

⁷⁵ *Altekar, A.S. Education in Ancient India, Vishal Kaushik Printer, Delhi, 2009, P.119.*

⁷⁶ *Das.S.K, The Educational System of the Ancient Hindus, Gyan Publishing House, New Delhi.1996P.354.*

some famous teachers' name like *Dharmapāla* and *Chandrapāla*, achieved unparalleled perfection in their respective field. Nālandā had a very huge library called *Dharmagañja* (Mart of Religion). This library had three departments known as *Ratna-Sāgara* (Ocean of Jewels), *Ratnaodadhi* (Sea of Jewels) and *Ratnarañjaka* (Jewel adorned)⁷⁷. The library had large collections of manuscripts on various subjects in various languages. Hiuen Tsang mentioned that the work belonging to the eighteen sects and other books such as, the *Vedas*, the *Hetuvīdyā*, *Sabdavidyā*, the *Chikitsāvīdyā*, the works on Magic, the *Sāṃkhya* and the *Nāyāya* and 'miscellaneous' works were also available in the library. This referred to the fact that library possessed a very rich collection of books – both Buddhist and non Buddhist works⁷⁸. According to I Tsing when a Buddhist monk expires at *Nālandā*, his collection of books was added to the library. This information showed that how gradually *Nālandā's* Monastic library became a grand store house. After I Tsing, the two Korean monks and another Chinese *Bhikṣu* named Ke-Ye came to *Nalanda* Monastery to study by utilizing its libraries which were rich of the Buddhist as well as non Buddhist works.

Nālandā had a huge library. That is why the curriculum of *Nālandā* was so interesting. The *Nālandā* was basically the specialized in the study of *Mahayana* Buddhism⁷⁹. But all the non Buddhist works were also included in the curriculum. Almost every branch of knowledge included in the curriculum

⁷⁷ Bokil, V.P. *The History of Education in India, Bombay, 1925, P.199-200;*

Mazumdar, N.N.A History of Education in Ancient India, Cotton Press, Calcutta, 1916, P.93.

⁷⁸ Apte, D. G. *Universities in Ancient India, Maharaja Sayajirao University of Barod, P.30.*

⁷⁹ Barua, Dipak Kumar. *Viharas in Ancient India, Indian Publications, Calcutta, 1969, P.143-144.*

of *Nālandā*. A wide range of subjects like the *Vedas*, the *Hetuvidyā*, *Sabdavidyā*, the *Chikitsāvidyā*, the works on Magic, the *Sāṃkhya*, the Philology, Law, Astronomy, Philosophy, the Sanskrit Grammar of *Pāṇini* were included in the curriculum. Hiuen Tsang mentioned that he himself studied *Yoga-Śāstra* under the *Ācārya Śilābhadrā*. He also studied *Nyāya*, *Hetuvidyā*, *Sabdavidyā*, and the like. But it is also interesting to mention here that *Nālandā* not only provided these above mention subjects but the Monastery also provided education in *Hinayāna* Buddhism. This was the work of the rival school of Buddhism⁸⁰.

So, *Nālandā* was a principal Centre of learning and illuminated our country for centuries. In the thirteen century, when Muslim invaders came to India, they destroyed the whole University. They did not understand the value of this famous University and destroyed the whole University⁸¹.

4) **Valabhī** :

Valabhī was another famous Buddhist Monastic University. In the seventh century A.D, *Valabhī* had achieved paramount educational importance. *Valabhī* was the rival to the University of *Nālandā*. The University generally provided education in *Hinayāna* Buddhism⁸². It was situated in *Saurashtra* in Western India. The place is identical with *Wala* state. It was the capital of *Maitraka* kings during the period of 475-775 A.D⁸³.

⁸⁰ Mookerji, R.K. *Ancient Indian Education (Brahmanical and Buddhist)*, Motilal Banarasi Dass Publishers, Delhi 2011, P.566.

⁸¹ Altekar, A.S. *Education in Ancient India*, Vishal Kaushik Printer, Delhi, 2009, P.125.

⁸² Dutta, Sukumar, *Buddhist Monks and Monasteries of India: their history and their contribution to Indian culture*, Motilal Banarasi Dass Publishers, Delhi 2015, P.226.

⁸³ Barua, Dipak Kumar. *Viharas in Ancient India*, Indian Publications, Calcutta, 1969, P.60-61.

The first *Vihāra* of *Valabhī* was erected by the Princes *Duḍḍa*, niece of King *Dhruvasena*. *Duḍḍavihara* was a large *Vihāra* and it was called '*Vihāramandala*'⁸⁴. In the inscription it is mentioned that other *Vihāras* like *Yakṣasura Vihāra* and *Gohaka Vihāra* were also built within its boundary. Again in five hundred eighty A.D, King *Dharasena* I made a grant in favour of another *Vihāra* called *Sri Bappapada*, which was founded by *Ācāryas Bādanta*. It was situated on the Seashore and an important port of International trade. Many wealthy Merchants were dwelling in this place. And these wealthy Merchants patronized education at *Valabhī*. The *Maitraka* kings made large donation to the University especially for the library⁸⁵.

In the seventh century A.D *Valabhī* occupied paramount educational importance. But unfortunately we do not have enough information about *Valabhī*. Hiuen Tsang mentioned that when he visited the place, there were six thousand monks studying in the University and hundred Monasteries or *Samgharamas* provided for them. Like Hiuen Tsang, I-Tsing too had found *Valabhī* in the western side of India as glorious as *Nālandā*. Many students from every part of India would flock there for education. Even *Brāhmaṇas* from the distant Gangetic plain used to send their sons to that place for higher Education. In *Kathāsaritsāgar*⁸⁶ we find that a *Brāhmaṇa Vasudatta* of *Antaravedi* sends his son *Viṣṇudatta* for education in *Valabhī*. But it is

⁸⁴ Dutta, Sukumar, *Buddhist Monks and Monasteries of India: their history and their contribution to Indian culture*, Motilal Banarasi Dass Publishers, Delhi 2015, P.226.

⁸⁵ Mookerji, R.K. *Ancient Indian Education (Brahmanical and Buddhist)*, Motilal Banarasi Dass Publishers, Delhi 2011, P. 586.

⁸⁶ *AntarVedayāmbhūtpūRVaṁ vasudatt iti dvijaḥ | Viṣṇudattabhīdhānśca putrastasyopapadyata || Sa viṣṇudatto vayasā pūrṇaṣoḍaśavatsarah| Gaṁtarṁ pravavṛte vidyāprāptaye valbhīpuram || Kathāsaritsāgar,XXXII,42-43.*

interesting to mention here that the students of *Nālandā* also visited *Valabhī* for advance learning. Hiuen Tsang mentioned that *Sthiramati* and *Gunamati*, the teachers of *Nalanda* were once in charge of the Monastery at *Valabhī*. They were both the disciples of *Ācārya Vasubandha*. Those students who take admission at *Valabhī* should reside the place for two or three years to complete their education. After the completion of education, the students of *Valabhī* used to present themselves at the royal court to prove their capacity. They demonstrate their administrative talent at the Royal court to be employed in the Government services⁸⁷. This point clearly indicates that *Valabhī* not only provided education in *Hinayāna* Buddhism but also provided secular subjects such as *Arthaśāstra*, Law, Politics, *Vārtā*, Theology, *Chikitsāśāstra* and Accountancy⁸⁸.

So, it clearly indicates that, like *Nālandā*, *Valabhī* was also a famous seat of learning in Buddhist period. But it is our fault that we do not know too much about *Valabhī* as we do about *Nālandā*. But from the Chinese Pilgrims' accounts, we assumed that *Valabhī* illuminated our country for centuries.

5) ***Vikramśilā* :**

The *Vikramśilā Mahāvihāra* was founded by King *Dharmapāla* in the eighth century A.D. It was the late contemporary of *Nālandā Vihāra*. The name of *Vikramśilā* had faced many debates. Different authorities have different opinion about its name. According to life of *Atisa* translated by *Śarat Chandra Das*, the Monastery was named *Vikramśilā* because of the high moral character

⁸⁷ Dutta, Sukumar, *Buddhist Monks and Monasteries of India: their history and their contribution to Indian culture*, Motilal Banarasi Dass Publishers, Delhi 2015, P.230.

⁸⁸ Apte, D. G. *Universities in Ancient India*, Maharaja Sayajirao University of Barod, P.44.

of the Monks. The Tibetan sources mention that the *Vihāra* was named after a *Yakṣa* called *Vikrama* suppressed here. But R.C.Mazumdar mentions that it was another name of *Dharmapāla* who founded *Vikramśilā*. It was known as the Royal University of *Vikramśilā* in that period⁸⁹.

The place of *Vikramśilā* had been variously identified by different scholars. According to one authority it was started on a hillock on the banks of the *Ganga* in northern *Magadha* (*Bihāra*). Another authority mentioned that it was situated about three miles from *Baragaon*, the village named *Silao*, near ancient *Nālandā* and sixth miles to the north of *Rajgir*. But this identification of the site was uncertain. Dr. S.C. Vidyābhuṣan and S.C.Das identified the *Vikramśilā* was located in *Sultanganj* in *Bhāgalpur* district. This identification of the site was best identification. Many of the authorities support this identification⁹⁰.

King *Dharmapāla*⁹¹ constructed *Vikramśilā Vihāra* in a very good design. Like *Nālandā* the buildings of *Vikramśilā Vihāra* was also constructed in a very well planned way. The whole *Vihāra* was enclosed on all sides by strong wall. There were one hundred and eight temples, six college buildings, a central hall called the House of science and free broad Hostels. There was also a large quadrangle which could accommodate an assembly of eight thousand persons. Like *Nālandā*, these colleges' buildings were so beautiful that all the outer wall of Monastery was adorned with the beautiful paintings. In its front

⁸⁹ Barua, Dipak Kumar. *Viharas in Ancient India*, Indian Publications, Calcutta, 1969, P.152.-154.

⁹⁰ Dutta, Sukumar, *Buddhist Monks and Monasteries of India: their history and their contribution to Indian culture*, Motilal Banarasi Dass Publishers, Delhi 2015, P.358; Mookerji, R.K. *Ancient Indian Education (Brahmanical and Buddhist)*, Motilal Banarasi Dass Publishers, Delhi 2011, P 587.

⁹¹ Mazumdar, R.C. *Ancient India*, Motilal Banarasi Dass Publishers, Delhi 2007, P.268.

wall was adorned with beautiful paintings of *Nāgārjuna*, once the head of the *Nālandā* Monastery. The other walls of the Monastery were also adorned with the paintings of the famous teacher's images, who earned fame for learning and character⁹².

The administration of the University of *Vikramśilā* belonged to a very high order. The administrative work of *Vikramśilā* was under the control of Board of eminent scholars. The administrative board decided the rules and regulations of the Monastery. The different departments were under the control of this administrative board. The different eminent scholars were the members of this administrative board. These members of the board were assigned to different administrative duties like – the ordination of the novices, supply and supervision of servants, distribution of food and fuel, assignment of monastic work and many more. But it is very interesting to mention here that *Lāmā Tārānāth* mentioned that, this board of *Vikramśilā* University also administered the affairs of the *Nālandā* University. Many distinguished authorities did not accept this statement⁹³. But *R.K.Mookerji*⁹⁴ in his book *Ancient Indian Education* mentions that, it was probably the time, when King *Dharmapāla* being the head of both the Universities. So, the administrative boards of both the Universities were same. They were the sisters Universities. The administrative work of both Universities was controlled by one board. Like the administrative board, the academic administration of the *Vikramśilā* University,

⁹² Apte, D. G. *Universities in Ancient India, Maharaja Sayajirao University of Barod*, P.47-48; Das, S.C. *Indian Pandits in Tibet*, in *Journal of Buddhist text Society*, I, P1-11.

⁹³ Bose, Phanindranath. *Indian Teachers of Buddhist Universities*, Theosophical Pub. House, Madras, 1923, P.35.

⁹⁴ Mookerji, R.K. *Ancient Indian Education (Brahmanical and Buddhist)*, Motilal Banarasi Dass Publishers, Delhi 2011, P. 587.

was vested in a council of six *Dwāra-Paṇḍitas*. These six *Dwāra-Paṇḍitas* (Gate Keeper) were the guards of six gates of *Vikramśilā* University⁹⁵. During the reign of *Canaka* (955-983 A.D), the following eminent scholars, acting as *Dwāra- Paṇḍitas* viz.:

- *Ranākaraśānti* was placed at the East Gate.
- *Vāgīśvarakīrti* of *Benaras* at the West Gate.
- *Naropa* at the North Gate.
- *Prajnākaramati* at the South Gate.
- *Ratnavajra* of *Kaśmīra* at the Central Gate.
- *Jnānaśrīmita* of *Gauḍa* at the Second central Gate.

They were all the erudite scholars of *Vikramśilā* University. These six *Dwāra-Paṇḍitas* examine the candidates. So, it is not easy for the learner to enter in to the University, without the permission of the *Dwāra- Paṇḍitas*. Like *Nālandā*, the students were also had to give a Pre-admission test, before they admitted to the University. The capable students satisfying the *Dwāra- Paṇḍitas*, had to clear the test and take admission in *Vikramśilā* University.

For a long period *Vikramśilā* was regarded as the queen of educational institution. But we are very unfortunate that we do not know much about the *Vikramśilā* University. *Vikramśilā* was not as fortunate as *Nālandā*. But from the Tibetan scholars or from foreign pilgrims we learn something of the history of this *Vikramśilā* University. Tibetan scholars would take *Vikramśilā* as a model monastery. They used to come *Vikramśilā* to learn at the feet of Indian

⁹⁵ Dutta, Sukumar, *Buddhist Monks and Monasteries of India: their history and their contribution to Indian culture*, Motilal Banarasi Dass Publishers, Delhi, 2015, P.361.

Panḍits. Almost for four centuries, the Tibetan scholars used to come *Vikramśilā* for the sake of education. The *Tāntrik* Buddhism was the main specialized subject of *Vikramśilā* University. The other subjects like Grammar, Logic, Metaphysics and Ritualistic literature were some of the subjects also popular at the *Vikramśilā* University. But nothing is definitely known of the curricula at *Vikramśilā*. It may be assumed that the curricula, rules and regulations closely resembled those to *Nālandā*. But according to Tibetan scholars we further learn that in the *Vikramśilā* University, the teachers and students engaged themselves with the task of copying manuscripts and translating books. The copying and translating works were done by the teachers. *Dīpaṃkara Śrījñāna* himself translated many books in native language of Tibet with the help of learned monk named *Vīryasiṃha*. Tibetan used to propagate Indian culture in their own country. *Dīpaṃkara Śrījñāna* was a versatile scholar of *Vikramśilā* University composing several works on Tibetan Buddhism and translating Sanskrit works in Tibetan. Many other scholars like *Ācārya Buddha*, *Jnānapāda*, *Ācārya Vairochana Raksita*, *Ācārya Jetārī*, *Ācārya Ratnākara-Śānti*, *Ācārya Jñāna-srī-mitra*, *Ācārya Ratnavajra*, and *Ācārya Vāgīśvara Kīrti* also worked in Tibet and propagated education in that Himalayan country⁹⁶.

But at the end of thirteen century, *Bukhtyar Khilji* at the time of *Muhammad Ghori* destroyed the Monastery. But after this destruction, *Vikramśilā* continued to live a long life in the history of Tibet. Some scholars

⁹⁶ Altekar, A.S. *Education in Ancient India*, Vishal Kaushik Printer, Delhi, 2009, P.128.; Mookerji, R.K. *Ancient Indian Education (Brahmanical and Buddhist)*, Motilal Banarasi Dass Publishers, Delhi 2011, P.589-595.

like the Monk *Sri Bhadra* (the head of the *Vikramśilā* University) and a few others, who escaped the general slaughter started their life and propagated education.

6) ***Odantapurī* :**

Another Buddhist Monastic University was *Odantapurī* or *Odantapura*. It was the contemporary of *Vikramśilā* University. During the decline period of *Nālanda Mahāvihāra*, the *Odantapurī Mahāvihāra* was established by certain *Gopāla* or *Lokpāla*⁹⁷. It was located near the *Pataliputra* in *Magadha*. *Odantapurī* basically spread the tenets of Buddhism. It was famous for its strong hold of *Tantric* Buddhism. Many Tibetan eminent scholars came to *Odantapurī Mahāvihāra* to learn something new in *Tantrism*. It had a very splendid library of Brahmanical and Buddhist work⁹⁸. *Atīśa* or *Dipankara Śrījñāna* was the most famous and eminent scholar of *Odantapurī Mahāvihāra*. He studied at *Odantapurī* for two years under a Hinayantist teacher *Dharmrakṣita*. At the age of nineteen he obtained the sacred vows from *Śīlarakṣita*, the *Mahāsaṅghika Ācārya* of *Odantapurī*, who gave him the name of *Dipankara Śrījñāna*. From this place *Atisa* passed on to *Vikramśilā* where he became the head of the institution⁹⁹. Besides this, there were not less than one thousand Buddhist monks and students resided at *Odantapurī* and received education.

⁹⁷ *Keay, F.E. Indian Education in Ancient and Later Times: An Inquiry into its origin, development, and ideals, Baptist Mission Press, Calcutta, 1942, P.106.*

⁹⁸ *Mazumdar, Nath Nogendra. A history of education in ancient India, Cotton press, Calcutta, 1916, P.97.*

⁹⁹ *Das, S.C. Indian Pandits in the land of Snow, Firma K.L. Mukhopadhyay, Calcutta, 1965, P.53.*

But it is a matter of great regret that the *Odantapurī* had a high reputation in learning but it could not attain to that level of fame and repute. This University at the end of the eleventh century had gone far in to decline. The *Muhammad-i-Bakhtiyar* and his troops destroyed the *Mahāvihāra* in 1199 A.D.

7) ***Jagaddala***:-

Jagaddala Mahāvihāra was the last glory of Buddhism in ancient Bengal. It was founded in the city of *Rāmāvati* on the banks of *Gaṅgās* and the *Karatoyā* in the country of *Varendrī*¹⁰⁰. The historical work *Rāmacarita* also gives us description of *Varendra* and its capital *Rāmāvati* and mentions its great *Jagaddala* Monastery¹⁰¹. But different authorities express different opinion regarding the location of *Jagddala Mahāvihāra*. The Tibetan sources clearly point out that the *Jagddala* University was actually situated in Orissa, which became a resort of scholars of *Tantric* Buddhism¹⁰². At the time of *Rāmapāla* it became a great Centre of learning. And for a period of hundred years this University remained famous Centre of Buddhist education. It has a very good library. Students from distant parts of the country regularly visit *Jagddala* University for education. Many students from Tibet come to *Jagddala* to translate Sanskrit works. It was noted for its teachers as *Mahāpaṇḍitas*, *Upādhyāyas* and *Ācāryas*. Of all the scholars *Vibhūticandra*,

¹⁰⁰ Das.S.K, *The Educational System of the Ancient Hindus*, Gyan Publishing House, New Delhi, 1996 P.354; Majumdar, R.C. *Ancient India*, Motilal Banarasi Dass Publishers, Delhi, 2007, P.318.

¹⁰¹ *Rāmcārīta*, III.5.7.

¹⁰² Barua, Dipak Kumar. *Viharas in Ancient India*, Indian Publications, Calcutta, 1969, P.174.

Dānśīla, *Subhakara* and *Mokṣākaragupta* were the famous and outstanding to be named.

Vibhūticandra won the title of *Mahāpaṇḍita*. He was a great Tibetan scholar. He translates six *Sanskrit* texts in Tibetan. He also translated about eighteen *Sanskrit* books written by others in to Tibetan. The other renowned scholar *Ācārya Dānśīla* or *Dānaśrīla* also belonged to this University. He won several titles like *Paṇḍita*, *Mahāpaṇḍita*, *Upādhyāya* and *Ācārya*. He composed four books in *Sanskrit*, one of which was in Logic and translated fifty four Tantric books in to Tibetan. *Śubhakara* or *Śumbhakara* was the renowned scholar of *Jagaddala* University. He was a great saint. *Śākya Śrī* probably *Śākya Śrī Bhadra* was the disciple of *Śubhakara*. He composed *Ādikaramaracanā* which was recognised as Buddhist Law-Book. Another scholar of *Jagaddala* was *Mokṣākaragupta*. He was the last monk belonging to the great *Jagaddala* university. He was a master of Mahayanist learning. He composed *Sanskrit* work in *Hetuvidyā* (Science of Logic) called *Tarka- bhāṣā* which was translated in Tibetan¹⁰³. But like the other Buddhist Centre of education *Jagaddala* too was destroyed by *Turuskas* in 1203 A.D¹⁰⁴.

Besides these above mentioned famous educational Centres, there were other small Centres of learning also flourishing during the Buddhist period. Chinese travelers like Hiuen Tsang and I Tsing made wide tours in Northern India and discovered small Monasteries and *Vihāras* established at different places. These Monasteries and *Vihāras* were historically not so famous. But as

¹⁰³ Bose, Phanindranath. *Indian Teachers of Buddhist Universities*, Theosophical Pub. House, Madras, 1923, P.145.

¹⁰⁴ Barua, Dipak Kumar. *Viharas in Ancient India*, Indian Publications, Calcutta, 1969, P.176.

a Centre of education they also contribute much more than any other famous Centre of learning. These small monasteries were situated throughout the country, Bihar and Bengal being the main regions thereof¹⁰⁵.

¹⁰⁵ Altekar, A.S. *Education in Ancient India*, Vishal Kaushik Printer, Delhi, 2009, P.121.