

Buddhism and education

[Religion](#), [Buddhism](#)



This paper, Buddhism and Education, reviews the history, development, and problems in education of today's world and aims to establish the importance of Buddhism in the context of education. Books, periodicals, and online publications were the main references used for the development of this paper. This dissertation is divided into eight sections: 1) Survey of History and Definition of Education Concept- this section recaps the milestones in the course of human development throughout history and incorporates the education background in each significant point in history.

2) The Problem of Education in the World- this section identifies the general problems in the education systems all over the world 3) Differences in the Policies and Systems of Education- this section reviews different education systems by country and by religion 4) Western Understanding on Buddhist Education- this section cites the different views from the West on Buddhist teachings 5) Buddhist Perspective on Different Areas- this section cites the Buddhist principles on different areas such as business, government, science, and others

6) Buddhist Education- this section contains the core of Buddha's teachings that serve as the foundation of education in Buddhism 7) Future Direction of Buddhism and Education in the World- this section involves discussion on the future perspectives on the course of Buddhist Education 8) Conclusion- this section reviews the paper and asserts the importance and superiority of Buddhist education

INTRODUCTION Buddhism is a world religion originating from India and was founded by Siddhartha Gautama, later called Buddha.

It is said that through careful meditation, he had achieved Nirvana, the perfect state of enlightenment and freedom from the endless cycle of death

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and rebirth. He spread his teachings on the Four Noble Truths and the Noble Eightfold Path so that others may also on a personal basis attain Nirvana and freedom from the sufferings of this world. The new religion spread across Asia from India to China, Japan and Southeast Asia. Today, it is widespread in Thailand, China, Japan, Taiwan and other places across the globe. Unknown to many in the West, Buddhism is both a religion and an educational system.

Buddhism is organized in such a way that followers are encouraged to realize their own potential and receive knowledge in accordance with the Noble Eightfold Path in the pursuit of the wisdom of Nirvana. The potential of the Buddhist educational system as an alternative or supplement to traditional educational methods remains virtually untapped and unexplored. This paper aims to explore this potential and explain Buddhism as an educational system. CHAPTER ONE: SURVEY OF HISTORY AND DEFINITION OF EDUCATION CONCEPT I. 1 History of Developmental Progress of Man The history of man ps millennia in the making.

Mankind has gone a long way from first walking ancestors to the men today capable of things our ancestors could only dream of. This overview covers the four traditional eras of the history of human life on Earth and will delve into its development from its humble beginnings to what it is today. Education is a social construct, artificially made and developed by society for its own purposes. Therefore, the history of education is inevitably interwoven with the history of man and society. Society determines education. Thus, the history of society influenced the history of education.

Prehistory Prehistory covers the period of human life before the start of the formal history with the beginning of writing. Because of the lack of historical <https://assignbuster.com/buddhism-and-education/>

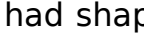
written records, primary sources for this period is heavily reliant on archaeological findings such as tools, crafts, skeletons and other objects. It covers the years from the first walking humans to the start of writing around 3000 BC. The beginning of bipedal movement was before the Stone Age. There were two types of hominids that evolved into separate two separate genres: the Homo and the Australopithecus.

We can trace our ancestry from Homo habilis, through Homo rudolfensis, Homo erectus, Homo neanderthalensis to who we are now, Homo sapiens. 1. Perry, M, 1988, A history of the world, Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 25. Stone Age This period of human development is distinguished by the utilization of stone as the primary raw material for tools and other implements. Although the term may still be used for certain tribes existing today that have no capability for metalworktechnology, it is broadly accepted that it began some 2.

5 million years ago and ended in some areas of the world around 5, 000 years ago. (from Encarta) It is in this period that humanity spread from the savannas of East Africa to the rest of the world. Covered in this age is the most recent ice age that lasted from 1. 8 million to 11, 500 years ago with glacial and warm interglacial stages known as the Pleistocene Epoch. It was during this time that human evolution progress undergoing continuous biological and chemical changes both externally and internally.

It ends with the development of agriculture, domestication and smelting of copper ore. 2 Paleolithic period Also known as the Old Stone Age, it was in this period that humans first learned to use stones to make primitive tools for different uses. Their main source offoodwas hunting and foraging and <https://assignbuster.com/buddhism-and-education/>

they used these tools to allow for more efficient food collection. They were predominantly nomadic and had no permanent residences. They lived as clans of 25 to 40 members. Men hunted in packs while the women were left to care for the children. Mesolithic period

This period, also known as Epipaleolithic, is characterized by more refined tool-making techniques applied by the early humans. Instead of crude and roughly cut stone tools, the instruments the humans in this period used were more refined and had shapes such as crescents, 2.  Perry, M. 25. triangles, rectangles, trapezoids and rhomboids that are later attached to pieces of wood or antler for spears. Pottery also began to develop at this time. This period covers the gradual change in the way of life of humans from nomadic hunting-foraging to settled farming-husbandry.

3 Neolithic period This final period of the Stone Age saw the most refined tools made from stone and other indigenous materials such as bones, ivory from tusks and others. Permanent settlements began to develop along river banks because agriculture had begun to develop. Crafts and pottery became more prevalent as well as cloth-making from hides of animals. Husbandry also became more common. The domestication of both plants and animals led to social changes during this period. The concept of wealth began to develop because of surpluses of food that could be stored.

This caused social differentiation that was before unheard of in a society with everyone contributing to the clan's hunting and foraging operations. The settling of these early humans necessitated the construction of houses and other buildings necessary for farming and husbandry. Catal Hayuk, a late Neolithic village in Asia minor, was a farming community whose people grew

wheat and barley and domesticated sheep and cattle. A part of the village also engaged in hunting. Their people had skilled artisans that could work with wool and linen in weaving clothes.

Traders brought alabaster and marble in exchange for obsidian, a glass like volcanic rock. It was used for making jewelry, mirrors and knives. 3. Perry, M. 25. Before the invention of writing, people inhabited environments that required them to struggle with natural forces, animals and men for survival. It was important to develop the necessary survival skills for humans to flourish. These skills became the cultural and educational patterns of the early humans. For the perpetuation of culture, it must be passed on from adult to child.

The earliest education processes included information sharing on food gathering and shelter, tool and weapon making, language learning and acquiring values, ethics and religious rites. The lessons gained through informal education given by parents, elders and priests eventually were used to establish a moral code that influenced social behavior. Oral tradition became the vehicle by which culture was transmitted from generation to generation before the invention of writing. 4 The two other ages of the three-age system of prehistory are the Bronze and Iron ages.

The Bronze Age is characterized by the use of bronze as the dominant material for tools and other implements. Similarly, the Iron Age is distinguished by the utilization of iron in the tools, weapons and equipment of a given society. These developments in tool making allowed for developments in other aspects of their way of life such as agriculture, crafts, religion and education. However for the purposes of this historical overview,

it is more beneficial to not delve into Bronze Age and Iron Age societies since they emerged in different times in different situations.

Furthermore, most of these societies developed their own writing systems thus ushering the start of history. 4. Perry, M. 25. Ancient history This period of history covers the beginning of writing around 3300 BC to the fall of the Western Roman Empire in 476 AD. Because of the immense p of this period and the simultaneous emergence of some civilizations, it is more proper to divide the discussion based on the region where a civilization started. South West Asia South West Asia or Near East in the Europe-centric system is theorized as one of the earliest birthplaces of civilization.

It is the breeding ground of several empires that dominated the ancient world for centuries at a time. Mesopotamia Mesopotamia, sometimes referred to as the fertile crescent, is bounded by the two great rivers Euphrates and Tigris. It is the birthplace of many diverse peoples and civilizations. Sumerians (3000 BC – 1800 BC) In the area now part of Kuwait and Saudi Arabia, one group of people of a language different from any other known at the time, started to settle in huge cities that were ruled by monarch and began to write.

They were known as the Sumerians and around 3000 BC, they had constructed several city-states in southern Mesopotamia such as Ur, Lagash and Eridu. These cities grew to considerable size and Sumerian culture flourished. However, scarcity of water and constant war among rival factions in the region limited this growth. This growth also changed from internal expansion to the conquest and annexation of smaller city-states. The Sumerians, at one point, fought with another people, the Akkadians that
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came from the Arabian Peninsula. They were Semitic, with a language related to that of the Hebrews and the Arabs.

The Akkadian Kingdom based in Akkad (later Babylon) conquered most of the Sumerian city-states. However, eventually the Akkadians adopted Sumerian culture, including religion, writing, government structure, literature and law. Because of this, Sumerians once again regained control of the region and in 2125, Ur rose up against the Akkadians finally bringing the Akkadian domination of southern Mesopotamia to an end. However, by 1800 BC, the Sumerians were finally swallowed and overwhelmed by more migrations of the Semitic people.

The government structure adopted by the Sumerian city-states is a kind of divine monarchy. Priest-kings acted as absolute rulers of the whole city and authority was justified not simply by kinship or responsibility but by divine selection and that the king himself was divine and worthy of praise. However, bureaucracy was also present in Sumerian city-states. They had considerable influence on surveying and distributing lands and crops. This government structure was supported by writing of records on stone tablets. Early Sumerian writing is pictographic.

However, as their culture flourished, the picture words were replaced by short-hand symbols known as the cuneiform. The complex agricultural system adopted by the Sumerians consisted of careful planning and record-keeping. As Sumerian culture continued to flourish, scientific and mathematical development allowed for several innovations to support their agricultural production and distribution system. Calendars were developed to

aid in determining the harvest and planting seasons and astronomy was a field so vastly studied by the Sumerians.

They invented the zodiac to measure yearly time. Abstract mathematics began to develop for the calculations necessary in the agricultural system. With regards to religion, the gods of the Sumerians were known to be powerful and anthropomorphic. They controlled natural forces and also had human emotions and spiritual weaknesses. Perhaps the most important legacy of the Sumerian civilization is their invention of the law. These specific tenets written and recorded are used to resolve conflicts objectively between parties.

It is administered by the centralized figure of authority (the priest-king) and allows for retribution that is sponsored by the state against a perpetrator. The laws set by the Sumerian people were also adopted by several civilizations also in the Mesopotamian region such as the Babylonians (as written in the Code of Hammurabi). Akkadians (2340 – 2125 BC) This Semitic people that lived on the Arabian peninsula during the flourishing of the Sumerian city-states later migrated northward and became increasingly hostile to the city-states.

In 2340 BC, Sargon led the Akkadians to victory in Sumer and built an empire dominating the city-states and stretching to Lebanon. His capital was named Akkad. However, in 2125, Ur rose up against Akkad and brought the short-lived Akkadian empire to its abrupt end. 5 Amorites (1800-1530 BC) Also known as the Old Babylonians, this Semitic people came to Mesopotamia in 1900 BC after the fall of the Sumerian empire and stabilized the region that had been in conflict and 5. Perry, M. 25. chaos for close to a century.

The Amorites also centralized the government of the city-states in their capital city, Babylon, built on the foundations of Akkad. The monarchy that ruled the Amorites enjoyed more influence compared to their Sumerian predecessors. So the monarchs were viewed as gods and of divine origin. The state and its resources were managed through new tools like taxation and involuntary military serviced. The immense centralization was unprecedented. The Code of Hammurabi written around 1792-1750 BC is the most well known code of law adopted by the Old Babylonians.

This is generally regarded as having been based on Sumerian laws. Hittites (1600-717 BC) This Indo-European people invaded the dominant Amorite empire in Mesopotamia and adopted their laws, religion, and literature allowing the continuation of the Sumerian culture. The height of their power was from 1600-1200 BC. Their reign ended in 717 BC when the Assyrians conquered all Hittite cities. Though they are regarded by their contemporary Egyptian empire as barbarians, they are one of the most significant peoples to have settled in Mesopotamia.

The breadth of the empire allowed for thriving of internal commerce and trading among the civilizations of the Mediterranean allowing Mesopotamian culture to spread across the ancient world. Although they adopted the code used by the Amorites, their penalties were more practical and merciful. Another difference with the preceding civilizations is that their religion system accepted the legitimacy of all gods, including those worshipped by those they conquered. Assyrians (1170-612 BC) This Semitic people once lived in the northern parts of Mesopotamia. They had long harbored dreams of an empire.

Their first attempt under Shamshi-Adad was crushed by the Amorites. They were even brought to near-extinction during the invasion of the Hurrians. Fortunately, the Hittites who conquered these invaders did not annex Assyrian cities thus allowing this people to prepare for the conquest of Mesopotamia. Tuklti-Ninurta in began this push for conquest by trying to force Babylon to yield to his wishes. This was followed by Tiglat-Pileser who extended the empire to cover Syria and Armenia. Ashurnazirpal II and Shalmeneser III in 883 and 824 conquered the entire region of Syria, Palestine, Armenia, Babylon and Mesopotamia.

The Assyrians also destroyed Babylon and built a new capital in Nineveh. However, in fear of the Babylonian god, Marduk, they rebuilt the city. In order to prevent nationalist revolutions against their rule, they adopted the policy of forcing the conquered to emigrate from their homeland. This not only secured the empire but also homogenized the diverse cultures of Mesopotamia. The last strong monarch of Assyria, Ashurbanipal began the effort to collect tablets of all Mesopotamian literature in a great library in Nineveh. However, after his death, the empire began to decline with pressure from the Babylonians and the Medes.

The Assyrian state was basically created with war, invasion and conquest as tools. The upper classes were the military commanders who benefited most from the spoils of war. The Assyrian army's size was unprecedented. With their number and the technology of their weapons made of iron, they were almost unrivaled in battle. Despite the thirst for battle and conquest, science and mathematics also flourished in the reign of the Assyrians. They were the

first to divide the circle into 360 degrees and to use longitude and latitude in geographical navigation.

They also had very developed medical science that influenced even the Greeks of Classical Antiquity. Chaldeans (612-539 BC) The inhabitants of Babylon (the Chaldean or the Neo-Babylonians) finally rebelled against Nineveh and destroyed it under the leadership of Nabopolassar thus ushering the end of the Assyrian empire. His son, Nebuchadnezzar II extended his father's empire to Phoenicia and Judah and prevented the major powers of the ancient world, Egypt and Syria, from entering Mesopotamia. The Babylonians continued to adopt the policy of emigration started by the Assyrians.

It was in this period that the Jews were exiled to Babylon. Babylon was rebuilt to its greatest splendor and was one of the most magnificent cities of the ancient world. However, this new empire was also short-lived as after five monarchs, city-states once loyal to Assyria rebelled under the leadership of Nabonidus and conquered Babylon. After the Neo-Babylonians, the door was finally opened for civilizations of the north and the west to extend their empire into Mesopotamia. 6 Persia The great Persian empires that dominated the ancient world for centuries began at the area of what is now Iran.

The history of this civilization spans centuries and shaped the history of the 6. Perry, M. 27. ancient world. Achaemenids Empire (550-330 BC) The earliest record of the Persians was that of the Assyrians. They were once under the Medes that were in turn vassals to the Assyrians. When the Medes created their own empire, the Persians were still their subjects. The first Persian

empire known as the Achaemenids was founded by Achaemenes in 700 BC. His son, Teispes, organized the nomadic Persians of southern Iran into an organized and centralized state that had a new language, Persian (Indo-Iranian in origin).

Cyrus II the Great rallied the entire Persian kingdom against the Median Empire, freeing itself from its former conquerors. The new Shah continued the struggle until he had conquered the entire Median empire. He later conquered Lydia in Asia Minor and continued his conquest in Central Asia. In 539 BC, Cyrus victoriously dominated Babylon. Being a benevolent conqueror, he issued the first known charter of human rights in history. His descendants continued the expansion of his empire to Egypt, the Indus River valley and Thrace. They also pushed to Greece but were defeated in 479 BC.