

Place of buddhist education earliest and in present day in vietnam

[Countries](#), [Vietnam](#)



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

Buddhism has been present in Vietnam for almost two thousand years. Buddhism is an offshoot of Hinduism. It originated in Nepal in 530 B. C. A Hindu prince, Gautama who did not like the idea of Hindu caste system, was the founder of Buddhism. Gautama did not believe that any man could be superior to the other and as Hinduism Brahmins are considered superior, he left this religion. Gautama had spent many years wandering and meditating. In the end he found answers to all his questions and hence found the path of enlightenment, "nirvana". According to Buddhism, nirvana is the path to endless serenity.

It is free from the cycle of birth, death and rebirth. Moreover, a person will achieve salvation if he believes in the four noble truths. These four noble truths are that a man suffers in all his consecutive lives; the reason for his sufferings is his wants for earthly things, when the person frees himself from all the wants of earthly things he then achieves deliverance. The last noble truth says that a person can achieve deliverance by following the eightfold noble path. BUDDHIST SCHOOLS Buddhism spread in Vietnam through China in second century A. D. In third and sixth century it came from India.

Buddhism came through Vietnam's Red River Delta region and Mekong Delta area. Mahayana Buddhism came from China and became more famous than Theravada (or Hinayana) Buddhism. Theravada Buddhism came from India and was accepted by people in the Southern delta region. Both of these have different views about Gautama Buddha. According to Mahayana Buddhism, Buddha was one of many enlightened people. They also believe that out of all these people Buddha was the divine one. Theravada Buddhism believes

that Buddha was the only enlightened one and that there was no other than him.

However they think that Buddha cannot be called as the divine one. The Mahayana school also believes that any person can achieve nirvana and that who ever follows the right path will be able to reach nirvana but Theravada school says that only monks and nuns can attain nirvana. These two schools of Buddhism are actually different interpretations of one basic belief. These are the earliest schools in Vietnam. Why did Mahayana become more accepted? It is because the Mahayana ritual and imagery attracted the Vietnamese. Its ceremonies were in conformity with original Vietnamese beliefs and rituals.

This school of Buddhism also combined folklore with Taoist teachings. The enlightened ones in Buddhism were respected as animist spirits. In 7th century C. E, Mahayana school became a little more developed. It was then called Vajrayana. This had an influence of Hinduism also but had similar teachings as of Mahayana. The aim of Vajrayana is the same as that in Mahayana, that is to attain Buddhahood, but the tantric practices showed a quick way to achieve this end .

BUDDHISM BEFORE UNIFICATION

Before the country was unified, Buddhism was the state religion. When the communist gained power, Buddhism religion came under continuous hostility.

Later, the Patriotic Buddhist Liaison Committee was formed. This committee tried to separate real collaborators from opponents. It promoted the idea that all Buddhist wanted to build a new society. This society was free from the feudal and neo-colonialist influences. This committee tried to prove that

all Buddhist were involved in this committee and that they were trying to put a halt to independent Buddhist clergy's activities to a halt. The communist in those times tried to pressure the monks and nuns to lead their life in such a way that they do not oppose their worldly desires.

However the main aim of Buddhism is to lead a secular life, hence whoever disobeyed these communists was placed under house arrest or imprisoned. All their holdings were confiscated most of their religious places were turned in to public use. Trainings of monks and nuns were stopped. In 1981, a Buddhist church was formed in Vietnam which represented all Buddhists. Though Buddhists activities were taking place in some remote areas but each and every pagoda in the country had been destroyed. The main aim of these communists was to stop any religious growth of Buddhists.

Whatever Buddhists remained were practicing their religion but no new monks and nuns were allowed to be ordained. When the Buddhist church was formed in 1981, it helped train a new generation of monks and nuns. Two Buddhists academy were formed one in Hanoi and another in Ho Chi Minh City. BUDDHIST EDUCATION The education system in Vietnam is of great importance as it declares the identity of a nation. This identity is also characterized by the culture and religion and is the core element in cooperation with other nations. The culture might make up the identity of a nation.

This culture is influenced by the education of the country and more importantly the higher education. From very early period Buddhists are concerned about education. In third century almost 9 Dhamma missionaries

were sent to different areas of south East Asia in order to teach people about Buddhism . This is the oldest example telling Buddhists concern about Buddhist studies. These 9 Dhamma missionaries started a wave of missionaries. These were sent to Sri Lanka, Thailand and china etc. Today, due to these missionaries and Buddhist schools, Buddhists are present in very corner of the world.

Vietnamese Buddhist education leaders are very much concerned about the global demands and needs of Buddhist education. In 1975, when the country got united, there already was a higher education institution in South; it was named Van Hanh University. This university was popular internationally and had close interaction with many other universities of the world. After 1980s two advanced schools were established in Ha Noi and Ho Chi Minh City. These schools trained monks and nuns at B. A level. Due to growing demand these two higher education schools were later turned in to universities.

These now trained monks and nuns at not only undergraduate level but also postgraduate level. In 1997, one more Buddhist university was formed, this time in Hue city. Today, there are almost 40, 000 monks and nuns. There are almost six colleges and 31 high schools teaching Buddhism . In past few years many Buddhist colleges have been made. These Buddhist colleges give Buddhist education at B. A level. Many monks and nuns have been sent to other countries like India, China, Taiwan, Japan, Thailand and United States, in order to have higher education. These students come back with PhDs and master degrees.

This will help improve the quality of education and increase the number of teaching staff in the country. These students not only spread the good name of Buddhism but also help impart their knowledge to other Buddhist students in Vietnam. Though Buddhism is present in every corner of the world and is considered one of the global religions, it has never tried to alter or threaten the cultures and traditions of any place. The main reason for this is that Buddha's original teachings never tried to alter anyone's culture. It was with the doctrine of dependent origin (Paticcasamuppada).

They have a general formula which says that nothing exists independently. Moreover, the Chinese Hua Yen school believes in the theory of totalism. This theory says that all the things in the universe have their own qualities. These are fully present within or without Dhamma. Hence, we can say that Buddhists studies believe that all existence in the world is interdependent regardless of their faith, nation or religion. This attitude of Buddhist studies has helped Buddhism spread throughout the world. Education can be called a tool which helps a human being grow, transform and learn.

Education in many areas of the world is a social liability, but never can we see that it illuminates the light of truth and goodness like Buddhist education. The primary responsibility of Dhamma schools is to transform a character. A person has values which are responsible for his character. These values come from ideals. Buddhist educators determine these ideals and teach students about a proper Buddhist life. There are five qualities that Buddhism education brings from the teachings of Buddha. The first one is

concerned with emotions of a human. Second is related to education and wisdom.

Others relate to better living styles like avoid killing, stealing, sexual abuse and drinking. The Buddhist education transforms a character in real terms. The character and intelligence, both are tried to be balanced. The entire Buddhist education comes from the studies of Buddha, who is the supremeteacher. All of the studies root from saddha, which is the faith in triple Gem. Depdnding upon these studies the students are taught according to the five rules. The students should know the rules, their reason and their appliance in daily lives. Most importantly, they should appreciate all these rules and believe in them.

The students should know what is generosity and self sacrifice. These are essential elements that help the students overcome their worldly desires, their selfishness and greed. These five moral rules are dependent on each other. A student can gain by suta, which is by extensive reading of Buddhism texts. According to Buddhist studies the knowledge of a person is dependent on his inside belief of truth i. e. Dhamma. Calm and insight are the two main elements of any Buddhist teaching. In Buddhist education tasks and wisdom are dependent on each other. A student can attain wisdom by deep investigation, discussion and intelligence.

This wisdom was the basic instruments which lead Buddha to salvation. This wisdom is the crown of all educations of Buddhism. Without wisdom, education is incomplete. Before French, people were chosen based on their education. These were officials known as “ mandarins”. Learning was very

important in those times. It was not just education but it lead a person to intellectual understanding, social standing, wealth and power. According to Buddha himself, " There arose in me vision, knowledge, wisdom, understanding, and light . " Today, Buddhist monasteries still give Buddhist education to scholars.

Buddhist relics are found all over Vietnam. These relics indicate that there were Buddhists present there in one time or the other. Religious education was provided to masses, and every nook and corner of Vietnam had places for Buddhist education. During rainy seasons the monks rested in viharas, which was also their place of meditating. The Stupa is also a place where Buddhist education can be taught. Usually in a stupa there is a large place which can hold the teacher student class. Sometimes there are stone benches and a place on the wall used as a writing board.

Sometimes there are cubicles which are all around the hall. In olden days Buddhist scholars were taught in stupas. Theacademicday in a Buddhist school starts with paying of obeisance to Buddha. " Siddham namah" is recited till today and it means " I bow to Buddha ". Older Buddhists usually write these words when starting to write any text. Vietnamese Buddhists are trying hard to encourage people to learn Buddhism. They are conveying the message of peace as Buddhism is a religion of peace and mental development. Buddhism has contributed a lot to Vietnam's development.

Buddhists monks are brought together from inside and outside the country. VBS, also known as Vietnam Buddhist Sangha is the only representative of Buddhism in Vietnam . They have worked very hard in order to spread and

teach Buddhism. Today there are almost 15, 000 worship places in Vietnam and 10 million Buddhist followers. Almost 40, 000 monks and nuns have studies Buddhism. Though there were a few schools in the country and only one Buddhist institute names Van Hanh in Ho Chi Minh City. Today there are four institutes, six colleges and 31 high schools which teach Buddhist education.

Almost 200 monks and nuns went abroad to study Buddhism. Each and every one of them either got a PhD or a master's degree. Many thousand students are studying Buddhism in Vietnamese schools. VBS runs almost 1, 000 classrooms for disadvantaged children. There are almost 36 Buddhist orphanages all across the country. Almost 10 vocational training schools have been built by VBS. These schools train people free of charge. Buddhist education system is indeed prospering and when a nation's education system is that well it certainly has an impact on other walks of life also.

Buddhists Monks and nuns organize a large number of humanitarian works. They have campaigns to raise funds for flood victims, build charity houses and provide medical care to the poor and disabled. Over past 5 years VBS has raised almost \$25 million for charity works. Due to Buddhists scholars going abroad for learning, there has been a deep integration of Buddhist education in the international economies also. Many Buddhist students from all over the world come to Vietnam to study Buddhism. It ahs become an international arena and attracts Buddhist scholars from all over the world.

Though Vietnam is a poor country with low per capita income yet it has one of the highest literacy rates. The literacy rate in Vietnam in 1997 was 92%.

There are over 2 million pupils all over the country. In 2000, the budget share for education was almost 15%, out of which almost 80% was paid to the teachers . In 2008, Birth anniversary of Buddha will be held in Vietnam for the first time. Already almost 100 countries have registered so far. Indeed Buddhist education in Vietnam has opened the gates to the world's community. People now from all over the world come to Vietnam to study religion.

Vietnamese education system is one of the oldest and yet most advanced. Though there were no universities teaching Buddhism as a subject, today there are several universities which have Buddhist studies as their main subjects. CONCLUSION Buddhism is one of the most important religions of the World and has become one of the fastest spreading religions also. The materialistic nature of human is the root of all evil and as Buddhism shows human that there existence is not for these worldly pleasures but for the attainment of nirvana, it is becoming popular.

More people are now turning to Buddhism. These people want to find the true spiritual reason for the existence of humans. These spiritual values are one major thing that all other western religions lack. An innovation and reformation is occurring in all the study areas of the world. Globalization is becoming a new trend. Buddhists students are also not confined to Vietnam alone, but they go to many other countries in order to educate themselves. These students then come back and teach many other students who are eager to learn Buddhism.

Due to new trends, Vietnam has also reformed its educational structures and strategies in order to conform it to global changes. Buddhism as a whole has undergone structural changes in higher education so that Buddhist universities can reach international standards. Many scholars suggest that educational institutions teaching Buddhism in Vietnam should have an entrepreneurial structure but others say that a heuristic approach would help more. Here is a list of some Vietnamese Universities giving Buddhist education.

- Ho Chi Minh City College for Buddhist Studies, Thien Minh Temple, Do Xuan Hop

- Hanoi College for Buddhist Studies, Non Nuoc Temple, Xa Phu Linh, Huyen Soc Son, Ha Noi.
- Hue College for Buddhist Studies, Bao Quoc Temple, Hue.
- Can Tho College for Buddhist Studies, Chua Buu An, Quan Ninh Kieu, Can Tho
- Lam Dong College for Buddhist Studies, Linh Son Temple, 120 Nguyen Van Troi. Da Lat
- Ba Ria – Vung Tau College for Buddhist Studies, Dai Tong Lam Monastery. Tan Thanh. Ba Ria Vung Tau
- Bac Lieu College for Buddhist Studies, 3/234 Tinh Lo 38, P. 5, Bac Lieu, Ca Mau
- Advanced School for Dharma Dissemination, Hoa Khanh Temple, 215 Phan Van Tri, Binh Thanh, HCMC

- Khmer Theravada Academy for Buddhist Studies, Pothisomron Temple, O Mon, Can Thos

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