

Buddhist education and propagation in Lao PDR.

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1. Introduction

Education is resumption of value, knowledge, ability, position and behavior, which in meaning of education wide is living itself (and the learning for a lifetime), as process removes stupidity and matures self towards perfection. This definition comes near sociological sight, psychological and anthropological. Learning to know, leaning to do, and Learning to communicate, in order to know or to do is three different categories of teaching three different kinds of learning experience.

In the world of education, it has recognized that to cope with the 21st century problems we need to have 21st century skills which comprise of core subjects (3Rs and 21st century themes); learning and innovation skills (4Cs: critical thinking, communication, collaboration, creativity; information, media and technology skills; life and career skills. It's an absolute requirement to be met for a lifetime of human's life. Education as an integral part of community life must be able to provide and facilitate the growth and development of intellectual skills, social, and personal. Education should encourage students' competencies. Intellectual skills, social, personal and not only build the foundation of reason and logic, but also inspiration, spiritual. Schools as educational institutions creativity, moral intuition (emotion), and miniature communities need to develop a study in accordance with the demands of the global era, one of them is developing active learning, innovative, creative, and fun.

Education is defined as a planned effort to establish a study environment and educational process so that the student may actively develop his/her own potential in religious and spiritual level, consciousness, personality, Intelligence, behavior and creativity to him/herself, other citizens and the nation. The Constitution also notes that there are two types of education in Lao: formal and non-formal. Formal education is further divided into three levels: primary, secondary and tertiary education.

Schools in Lao are run either by the government or private sectors. Some private schools refer to themselves as "national plus schools" which means that their curriculum exceeds requirements set by the Ministry of Education, especially with the use of English as a medium of instruction or having an international-based curriculum instead of the national one. In Lao there are approximately- primary schools, 40,000 junior-secondary schools and 26,000 high schools. 84 percent of these schools are under the Ministry of National Education (MONE) and the remaining 16 percent under the Ministry of Religious Affairs (MORA). Private schools only comprise 79% of the total school's number.

Buddhism came to Laos more than two thousand years ago, but it's recorded in history in the middle of 13th century by Fa Ngum, the great. He had unified and accumulated Lao land was Lan Chang Kingdom in C.E. 1353, Reign around 3 years, he brought Theravada Buddhism in the form of Lunka Vamsa from Cambodia into Laos in C.E. 1356 and after that Buddhism has been stable until now. Now, Buddhists in Lao number about 6 million persons or 100 percent of the total population of Lao.

2. Buddhist education

The Buddha was the teacher of gods and men (satta deva manussanam). As a teacher, the Buddha taught gods and men using the right methods. In teaching, the Buddha always saw into his students. Therefore, stand students inner is quite clean, so he would give a dhamma lesson at a high level as Cattari Ariya Saccani (four noble truths). If the state of the inner the students was not clean enough, he would give a dhamma lesson light as Anupubbikatha. Thus students of the Buddha who want to hear dhamma with eagerness were able to understand dhamma well.

The teaching of the Buddha also includes the same way with public education is interaction between the teachers and students (learning and teaching). As described in Sigalovada sutta about five obligation teachers and students five obligation. Five duty of a teacher: train students in such a way that he trained well; make he took control of what has been taught; teaching deeply science and artistic; speak about his students kindness to mate and his friends; equip students for security in any direction. Whereas five students were obligations: rise from their seats (salute); serve them; with determination to learn; offer them; and pay attention when reminded.

The heart of the Buddhist teaching is education, which can be summarized viz. S la (Regulating/Relationship), Sam dhi under Buddhist 3Rs or threefold education (Reflecting), and Paññ (Reasoning). The Buddhist education teaches us how to maneuver our lives to be peaceful, prosperous and happy in addition to the highly competitive knowledge for today's economic driven society with constructive creativity and social relationship. In other words, it fully answers what the 21st century skills are looking for. The paññ or wisdom is the crown and pinnacle of the entire system of Buddhist education, and all the preliminary steps in a Buddhist educational system should be geared toward the flowering of this supreme virtue. It is with this step that education reaches completion, that it becomes illumination in the truest and deepest sense, as exclaimed by the Buddha on the night of his Awakening: "There arose in me vision, knowledge, wisdom, understanding, and light.

Education in Pali tradition, obtained from terminology of 'sikkha', in general implies that education is processing learning, lesson training, studies, expansion, and attaining of enlightenment. It naturally includes high morale practice (sil), concentration (sam dhi), and wisdom or knowledge (paññ) and combined with the word 'pada' in 'sikkh pada', that is educational order, which normally is known as sekhatipada, which is training for student. Continuity of education has a functional character in training or instruction, practice and progressing step by step (anupubbasisikkh , anupubbakiriy anupubbapatipad) Gives a correct to educative participant, noble initial guide in so many biosphere and insight into business o teaches it how to do correct, success life, happy, and leads it towards mastering progress altogether prosperous and secure and prosperous develop good personality with behavior and perfection knowledge and terminates grief safe. The three systems of education tri-sikkha (three practice) of education regarding mental development are: pariyatti (theoretical), patipatti (practice), and pativedha (realization). Each step must be achieved in the buddhist world and also in educational systems.

3. Education in Lao before the Lao People's Democratic Republic

Of the many ethnic groups in Laos, only the Lao Loum had a tradition of formal education, reflecting the fact that the languages of the

other groups had no written script. Until the mid-20th century, education was primarily based in the Buddhist temple school (wat school), where the monks taught novices and other boys to read both Lao and Pali scripts, basic arithmetic, and other religious and social subjects. Many villages had wat schools for novices and other village boys. However, only ordained boys and men in urban monasteries had access to advanced study. During the colonial period, the French established a secular education system patterned after schools in France, and French was the language of instruction after the second or third grade. This system was largely irrelevant to the needs and lifestyles of the vast majority of the rural population, despite its extension to some district centers and a few villages. However, it did produce a small elite drawn primarily from the royal family and noble households. Many children of Vietnamese immigrants to Laos who made up the majority of the colonial civil service attended these schools and, in fact, constituted a significant proportion of the students at secondary levels in urban centers.

Post-secondary education was not available in Laos, and the few advanced students traveled to Hanoi, Danang, and Hue in Vietnam and to Phnom Penh in Cambodia for specialized training, fewer still continued with university-level studies in France.

The Pathet Lao began to provide Lao language instruction in the schools under its control in the late 1950s, and a Laotian curriculum began to be developed in the late 1960s in the RLG (Royal Lao Government) schools. In 1970 about one-third of the civilian employees of the RLG were teachers, although the majority of these were poorly paid and minimally trained elementary teachers. At that time, there were about 200,000 elementary students enrolled in RLG schools, around 36 percent of the school-age population.²

4. Education since 1975

An important goal of the Lao People's Democratic Republic (LPDR) government was to establish a system of universal primary education by 1985. The LPDR took over the existing Royal Lao Government education system that had been established in the 1950s and restructured it, facing many of the same problems that had confronted the previous governments. The French system of education was replaced with a Laotian curriculum, although lack of teaching materials has impeded effective instruction.

An intensive adult literacy campaign was initiated in 1983-84, which mobilized urban neighborhoods to bring basic reading educated persons living in villages and writing skills to over 750,000 adults. Largely as a result of this campaign, those able to read and write had increased to an estimated 44 percent. According to the United Nations, by 1985 those able to read and write were estimated at 92 percent of men and 76 percent of women ages 15 to 45. Because few reading materials are available, especially in the rural areas, many newly literate adults lose much of their proficiency after a few years.

The decision to establish universal education led the government to focus its efforts on building and staffing schools in nearly every village. Because resources are limited, most schools are poorly constructed of bamboo and thatch and staffed by one or two teachers who are paid low wages, usually in arrears. Many village schools have only one or two grades; books, paper, or other teaching materials are conspicuous by their scarcity.

School enrollment has increased since 1975. In 1988 primary school enrollment was estimated at 63 percent of all school-age children. In 1992-93 an estimated 603,000 students were in primary school, compared to 317,000 students in 1976 and 100,000 students in 1959. However, the goal of achieving universal primary education was postponed from 1985 to 2000 as a result of the lack of resources.

Because teachers are paid irregularly, they are forced to spend significant amounts of time farming or in other livelihood activities, with the result that in many locations classes are held for only a few hours a day. Because of irregular classes, overcrowding, and lack of learning resources, the average student needed 11 to 12 years to complete the five-year primary course in the late 1980.

5. Education in Lao 1990 for development challenge in Laos's education system.

The Lao population of 6.5 million is ethnically and linguistically diverse. The government has defined 49 ethnic groups, many having their own language. School attendance, literacy, and other indicators of educational attainment vary greatly among different ethnic groups. Census data from 1995 reveal that 23 percent of the Lao never went to school as

compared with 34, 56, and 67 percent for Phutai, Khmu, and Hmong. Among two of the smallest ethnic groups, 94 percent of the Kor and 96 percent of the Musir never attended school. The quality of instruction tends to be poor, and nearly half of those who enter do not complete the primary cycle.

Lao, the official and instructional language, is the first language of about 50 percent of the population. Children from homes, where Lao is not spoken, enter schools with a significant handicap, a condition partly accounting for the high dropout rate. Changing the language of instruction would be a complex problem; however, steps can be taken by schools to assist non- Lao speaking pupils.

The rural quality of Laos implicates the provision of education as urbanization facilitates educational delivery. It is more expensive to provide schools for each small village than to build a smaller number of large schools in cities. These rural-urban differences are even more significant for provision of secondary, technical or vocational schools given the higher unit costs involved. The quantity and quality of schooling are influenced by demographic structures and are highly sensitive to the size of the school-age cohort.

The extremely young population of Lao PDR puts a heavy burden on schooling and, at the same time, the high dependency ratio contributes to the low national productivity. Large families force choices as to which children go to school, tending to suppress female enrollments and indirectly reducing the number of subsequent opportunities for girls in education and in the labor market.

The education system is evolving under severely constraining conditions of inadequately prepared and poorly paid teachers, insufficient funding, shortages of facilities, often ineffective allocation of the limited resources available. There is significant geographic, ethnic, gender and wealth disparities in the distribution of educational services, and inequalities exist in every level of the system.

6. Buddhist Education in Luangprabang of Lao

During the increase of new ordinations, the classes were at full capacity. During this time, management had to build new buildings for Secondary Education: junior high; senior high school and Higher education.

The Promotion of Morality and Vipassana Meditation also required a lot of work which led to the formation of a group for the Promotion of Morality and Vipassana Meditation. It encompasses work such as training morality to patients, Novice-Ordinations Vacation Training, the Promotion of Morality and Vipassana Meditation to implement duty on communication technology (internet) such as: to propagate the words of the Buddha's teaching daily via Radio, Television, Facebook, and others. Further- more, the Sangha Construction and Renovation also action their duty namely: to build the temples and renewal in Laos's culture and society activities by the donation of material to rural areas. When natural disasters, such as floods and conflagration occur, they are creating the social work, treatise and preserve ancient objects agency. An agency was created to help with social work and the preservation of ancient objects.

7. Education for propagation on social media

From now, schools must provide religious Study. Buddhists begin to pay attention to the development of education. moving into the field of broadcasting and religious services at the monastery begin organizing for courses-reserved Buddhist teachers and assigning their activist plunge into schools and develop and develop Buddhist education to police school and re- member that very important to educate Buddhist people. teaching and spreading or the communication of words Buddha's teaching to Buddhist lay-people. First time of Buddhists old learning is reciting, but nowadays using new technology as internet and social media in era to help Sangha education and to propagate the words of Buddha's teaching in the present. In the present, the communication is development to all around the world (Internet), to be able sending information to different parts of the world, so that, Buddhism's propagation has to use information media to spread out the teaching of Buddhism on internet is an important factor of human learning in currently and the future education until unable to avoid it depending on new technology to serve our living life into working and to respond the demand for convenience. Currently, the technology progress in period of communication information by social media unable to refuse of effect to Buddhism namely: new young generation are disaffected from temple, causing many problems happened were ethics, teen poison, social disaster issues and other. To condemn these and those thing or releasing it will be more deterioration, so we have to turn crisis into opportunity by using these

social media (internet) to be communication and teaching, especially focus on new young generation be able touching and got the words of Buddhism. And which practicing on monastic and spiritual, many program be done in many Buddhist countries until now, such as:

Buddhist Sunday School

Buddhist Sunday School is a great education program that take place in every Sunday in the temple as learning group for Buddhist children. This program has the goal to teach and introduce Buddhism to Buddhist children so they understand Buddhism and are happy to be Buddhist.

It is teaching and learning activities in a non-formal way carried out in monastery every Sunday. Buddhist Sunday School aims to infuse kindness in order to increase the faith of Buddhists. Sunday school bud-education on a unit formal education. Buddhist is an appendage or part of religious deist Sunday school curriculum material includes partita study, dharmagita, meditation, and this basic Buddhism. Educators at Buddhist Sunday school include: monks (bhiksu), nun (bhiksuni), samanera, sramaneri, pandita, Buddhist Teacher, or who competence to teaching Buddhism. In Luangprabang, I would like every monastery run a Buddhist Sunday School to teach Buddhism to children.

8. Novice Ordination and Silacarini (pabbajja)

Pabbajja (Pali word) means "to go forth" and refers to when a layperson leaves home to live the life of a Buddhist renunciation among a community of monks (bhikkhus). This generally involves preliminary ordination as a novice (m. samanera). It is sometimes referred to as "lower ordination." After a period or when the novice reaches 20 years of age, the novice can be considered for the upasampada ordination (or "higher ordination") whereby the novice becomes a monk (bhikkhu) or nun (bhikkhuni). It is a Monastic education or spiritual education done by the Buddhist Sangha and institute of education under the ministry of religious affair, such as:

A program for introducing Buddhist practice as a Buddhist monk through temporary ordination of Buddhist students for about 1-2 weeks. Some Buddhist Colleges also give ordination to the students as part of education, and give a choice to students to study in the college and part of the monkhood.

Dhammasekha This program is good for education, but we have to talk to the Ministry of Religious Affairs for Buddhist Communities.

Dhammasekha is the program of Buddhist education involving intensive study of Buddhism in formal and informal education with the curriculum mix of Buddhist studies and general science.

Conclusion

Buddhism was brought to Laos by Fa Ngum, the Great. He had unified and accumulated Lao land in the Lan Chang Kingdom in C.E. 1353, Reigning around 3 years, he brought Theravada Buddhism in the form of Lunka Vamsa from Cambodia into Laos in C.E. 1356 and after that the Buddhism had been stable until now. Currently, Buddhism in Laos PDR plays an important role in the spiritual development of Laos people and is an institution of traditional values, a symbol of an old heritage and invaluable cultural symbol of the national, including playing an important role in education by training the Buddhists in Laos to stand together with morality, harmony and making friendships together, emphasizing Loving-kindness and loyalty to the nation, and cooperation with the national development for prosperity and mind conformity set out by the new approach of Laos government party.

Nowadays, the Government and Party of Laos PDR observe the free right policy to believe in religions of Laos's population. Enhancing main role of Lao Buddhist believer and other religions perform into the nation mission of the main moral basic in religion and conformity with law regulation. Buddhism in Laos PDR has Lao Buddhist Fellowship Organization as the head of Buddhist management which contain with infrastructure's organization in action plan is Sangha Council such as: Sangha Council for Governace, Sangha Council for Education, Sangha Council for Propagation of Morality and Vipassana Meditation and Sangha Council for Construction and Renovation of Temple and one of the Headquarter Office of Central Lao Buddhist Fellowship Organization.

Thus, the brief history of Buddhist education in Lao, to introduces and propagate Buddhism in Lao.

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