

## Education System in Modern Society

Prof.Dr. Thepvajrabundit  
Rector,  
Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya  
University, Thailand

### Introduction

The education system aiming to develop people with morals and ethic must be based upon understanding of both human physical and mental factors which are the Five Elements of being, comprising of:

Form – the body and appearance, subject to destruction by factors

Sensation – the feeling, subject to emotional effect

Perception – the recognition and knowing

Predisposition – the reflection of mindful experiences, either bad or good, happy or unhappy, vicious intention as well as kindness etc.

Consciousness – the emotional recognition of seeing, hearing, smelling, touching and thinking

**These are explanation of the basic factors of life.**

“Life” is of much more complicated factors than seeing, hearing, smelling, testing, touching and awaring.

“Birth” is not actually the composition of the Five Elements from various sources integrated into life. But they are of the one entity comprised of the five functioning elements, integratedly. The Form controls physical mechanism, Sensation recognizes emotional experiences, Perception records emotional experiences, Predisposition results into either bad or good reactions and Consciousness performs its double responsibilities of firstly the emotional sensing through the eyes, the ears, the nose, the tongue, the body and the mind; secondly it leads a creature from one life toward the other.

**The continual living mechanism:**

**from birth to existences and passing away.**

The integrated function of the Five Elements works in the way the mechanism of a cart or a car does. It jointly moves the body forward or backward. While a cart needs pushing, a car needs fuel for engine igniting which is truly comparable to the way of living.

A Buddhist proverb says that all world creatures follow their own karma for taking birth, being existent and passing away. “Karma” means physical actions, wordings and disposition which are simple and understandable whereas causes and consequences are substantially complicated.

How karma does arise? Where is it results? How does it affect one’s living?

The conclusion is the cycle of desires, karma and sufferings, does affect one’s living. Desires lead toward actions (karma) followed by results.

Prior to the arising of karma, the internal and external sensation must unavoidably work in pair; that is the eyes and form, the ears and hearing, the nose and smelling, the tongue and testing, the body and touching, and the mind and emotion. Therefore causes always lead to recognition or knowing as follows;

- Knowing by seeing through the eyes
- Knowing by hearing through the ears
- Knowing by smelling through the nose
- Knowing by testing through the tongue
- Knowing by touching through the body
- Knowing by feeling through the mind

By whichever mean that knowing does occur it will lead to karma. Desire acts as the pushing power that causes actions which are karma through the movement of body, wording or mindset. The internal mechanism of human body will be forever moving.

Externally knowing either of good or bad matters certainly brings as well good or bad karma, depending on how carefully a person contemplate and on his/her nature.

Then what will be resulting by “thinking good, talking good, doing good or thinking bad, talking bad and doing bad”?

All thinking, doings, and sayings either good or bad; wherever and whenever, whether they do or do not affect the actor or other people shall bear results. All records kept and accumulated subconsciously shall push for an endless circle of birth and death until a person can learn to be free from all desires, then deeds will no longer exist to drive the endless life circle. In conclusion, 'Karma' is the driving force of human life based on the Five Elements of being, the main actor and accumulator of results.

Buddhism declares that life is no one's creativity, not coming from the outside world or any other elements. Development of human life must be based on this basic structure with proper management to ensure the aiming outcomes.

## **Principles of learning :**

### **teaching for moral and ethical development**

#### **Step 1: faith building**

A teacher must observe that *faith is the foundation of learning – teaching of all subjects*. Buddhism preaches that faith takes one across the valley and muddy creek. Faith is the basic of a successful teaching for both a teacher and a learner whose confidence arises from the teacher's qualification.

Required qualifications for a teacher are of two folds:

#### ***The first is personal behavior***

A teacher is called a virtuous person in Buddhism, who has seven characteristics of; 1) being nice, 2) respectable, 3) admirable, 4) a good speaker, 5) a good listener to suggestions and comments, 6) a good explainer of complicated matters, 7) no nonsense talking.

#### ***The second is acquiring knowledge***

A teacher must be one of *the academic distinction* or a 'scholar' who has 1) studied a lot, 2) good memory, 3) good practices, 4) learnt by heart and 5) high expertise in certain field as the original presenter and explainer, observable by the following generations.

Educational development to nurture a man of moral and ethics comprises of two factors; the specific technical knowledge and the basic life skills. Therefore a teacher who knows philosophy, religion, culture and logics must also understand in depth what life is, its composition, its origin, existence and passing away. Such knowledge will enable proper courses and teaching procedure to ensure effective development of mankind.

These two qualifications will create faith and confidence toward the teacher among students. Without such qualifications and student's confidence learning and teaching will fail to provide knowledge and mental development which cannot be substituted by degree earning.

### **Step 2: a learner culturing**

The learner culturing frame is the threefold training (Trisikkha) of precepts, concentration and wisdom which is the important basis of the modern learning – teaching process. An education administrator needs to know and pay attention to this concept otherwise a trained person without moral will cause problems, a person without concentration will never remember what has been taught while a person without wisdom cannot learn.

The principal adopted by the Sattayasai Institute headed by Professor Arj-ongXumsai Na Ayuthaya prefers a good man than a clever person. Goodness is viewed as a tool to train an expert. Precepts, concentration and wisdom serve as a mean as well as being a development target. Merit making, donation and regular practicing of the precepts as well as meditation will result into good concentration; eventually wisdom will be acquired. Therefore the threefold training is both the mean and the target.

In certain cases where precepts, concentration and wisdom serve as the training target, for instance at the Sattayasai School, Professor Arj-ong has chosen religious activity or ceremony to achieve the goal. Some communities regularly hold religious ceremonies to avail social gathering for public activities and beneficial communication among people which includes religious trainings. Not for long that people in those communities will be developed as the precepts followers with good concentration and wisdom

### **Step 3: knowledge transfer**

The Buddhist tradition based upon theoretical learning, practicing and implementation of the doctrines and scriptures of Buddhism must be set as the frame for knowledge transferring. This is to ensure the complete coverage of all required subjects.

Knowledge transfer for other subjects will be of a similar mean including linguistics, sciences and mathematics for which the focus points may be different as required.

Moral and ethic development courses should pay attention to; 1) knowing, practicing, using; 2) teaching, showing, being the role model.

*'Knowing, practicing, using'* is the technical target to ensure that what has been learnt is really beneficial for using.

*'Teaching, showing, being the role model'* is the training frame to develop a person of good moral which also requires a role model.

The CP Group has set up the PanyaPiwat Technology Institute aiming 1) to develop specialists at the graduate level, 2) to develop practitioners, The Institute functions upon the aforementioned double basis.

The proposed observation is:

Whether or not a person of theory is separated from practitioners?

Whether or not it is true that a theory is original by people's idea and put in the textbook while the how to is gained from real situation experiences of various times, places, people and environment?

Whether a good people is of a separate group from the religious learners?

A good person is nurtured by observation of religious principles and social rules and norms or by being an expert in religious and other sciences?

Is expertise in religion a guarantee for being a good person?

Is it true that religious training and understanding does not ensure that a person is good?

Therefore the attempts made by many people to put religion as a subject in school, college and university curriculums, hoping that it will help develop good citizens in not relevant to the real life. Religions learning will provide understanding in religion, not being a good person. Only religions practicing can ensure development of good personality and citizenship.

This is true to all academic learning. While knowledge is gained whether the learner will be a good man must be considered. Firstly all educators must realize that the sweetness of the fruits which are various subjects shall bring joyfulness only when earning knowledge is put into practices, by which the joy of success will refresh the heart of the learned practitioners.

## **The goal of the present learning-teaching system**

### **Goal 1: academic capability.**

#### **1. Knowledge through contemplation**

“Chintamayapanya” means the knowledge that arises through self analysis. The best teaching is to train people of how one can contemplate. Ancient Indians were to wise on how to train their children the way of thinking. The Indian society is rich with fairy tales. gods and goddesses whom no one knows where they are. But paintings and sculptors of them have been established for people to pay respect and worship. It is really amazing that man can create heaven from their imagination. There might be some facts in certain stories while the others are merely fictions.

The supreme truth is more complicated than words of explanation. That is why our ancestors created fairy tales to transfer such universal matters. It needs crystalized imagination and subtle creativity to compose those stories. This reflects how people are so rich with beautiful ideas.

But wisdom through contemplation is only a starting point and needs a top up of learning, otherwise it might turn into a harmful nonsense. Confucius said that “education without thinking is useless while thinking without education is harmful”. Whenever those people with ideas have a chance to study philosophy and sciences they can become distinctively wise.

Learning-teaching must enable people to become a good thinker of the 10 approaches- “yonisomanasikara” in Buddhism, based upon : 1) exploring of causes, 2) elements analysis, 3) knowing the usual things, 4) knowing the noble truth or problem solving, 5) following the set goal and principles, 6) usefulness and threatening 7) genuine and unreal values, 8) moral awaring tactics, 9) present situation and 10) critical thinking. The literally translation of “yonisomanasikara” is the tactic of mentality thinking which involves proper approaches with rationales to stimulate positive ideas. The terminologies referred to are: 1) correct method of thinking- ubayarmanasikara, 2) correct direction of thinking-patamanasikara, 3) rationalized thiking-karanamanasikara and 4) positive awareness thinking-uppatamanasikara.

All theories must be by self-thinking, neither from reading nor listening. “Trisadi” is sansakris term whereas it is “titti” in Pali, meaning idea which is not the “knowledge” as many people take it for granted Several theory owner is without schooling, free from listening while many of them read a little. They introduce theory out of genuine thinking.

## **2. Knowledge from listening.**

“Sutamayapanya” means knowledge gaining from learning by listening. Actually we should firstly ask “what is knowledge?” Is date combination with memory a knowledge or not? Whether a person exposing to much reading, listening with a huge memory be a , knowledge one? To sum, sutamaya-the matter, then the matter is synthesized as an individual intuition. Subject presentation should not come in the form of instant formulas or excessive multiple choices. But it should be of an open end format of flexibility and sell expression. In the Buddhist term “Kankhaniya” means a questionable matter should be allowed for analysis to avail a self-learning process, supported by the teacher.

## **3. Success through meditation.**

“Bhavanamayapanya” means learning by doing so that a theory can be put into implementation, either for gaining success or to face failure. In Buddhist tradition it is a way to practice meditation which can result into “abhinya” or the extreme knowledge acquisition, composing of: 1) accumulated information through

observation, studying textbooks or by means of communication; 2) meditative absorption.

The Naropa University is a world removed institute in USA, established as a private university based upon Buddhism philosophy, with the state accreditation.

It introduces the contemplative education system, teachers integrated Buddhism and meditation, similarly to the Zen practices by which problem tackling leads.

The sudden satori. The interesting characteristic is of the learning-teaching method which integrates life experiences for practicing alongside the subject-matter. The high-light is that Contemplative Education-aims to acquire the core truth.

The contemplative education combines the best practice of the East into that of the Western world which enables students to know their oneself more in depth with proper socialization approaches to live with the others.

The academic process should support self exploring through learning by doing to enhance sustainable development.

## **Goal 2: self management capacity**

The capacity to manage one's self is the life skill learning, not available in the instant formula pattern. Mainly it is gained from daily living and individual contemplation to become required capacity

### **1. Self realization**

The person will able to pinpoint personal power, status, weakness and strength while continue self development based upon the ethic of truth with determination to free one's self from disturbing matters.

### **2. Self warning.**

The person will be able to tell him/herself whether the environment is good or not and what reactions are appropriate.

### **3. Self using**



The person will recognize what job will be suitable to his/her skills and can complete all duties with responsibility, while seeking a quiet corner for working and rest as well as knowing life rewards.

### **Goal 3: integration of the 3 academic principles.**

The bachelor degree course offered by all Thai universities is not aiming to provide basic learning of any major subjects. This is as well observable in humanity course for which all subjects serve as the core to integrate academic and professional training with the study of life skills.

Academic learning is to enhance understanding in the chosen subject to be a graduate at the bachelor, master and doctorate levels.

Professional training is to enable combination of experiences gained from technical application to various job performance. Life skill learning provides understanding of living in various social status, for instance as an employee, husband/wife and parents. How importance it is to integrate these three learning principles? Whether a knowledgeable person who is a specialist with job security can solve the personal or family problem? Whether a good person can solve the facing problem by the good habits and good nature? Therefore a capable person needs to process good quality and understand the truth of life.

### **Conclusion**

Lord Buddha has concluded all of his preaching dharma in a short wording that “we have revealed the world matters including the origin of the world, the extinction of the world and the way toward the world extinction within a body of one yard length, half a foot thickness with consciousness and one heart” meaning that the world is not any larger than the body of a man. All things are in the only one center of man, good or bad, then, expand into the outside world. Man causes all crisis faced by the world, namely global warming, international conflicts and many more incidents. In the era of moral and ethical values the world will turn to prosperity and happiness. Contrarily, in the era and lands of amoral people will face all troubles and sufferings. The issue is thus how can we eliminate immoral practices, ill willing behavior and replace them with goodness and ethical values. All societies keep discussing these matters, but why we cannot solve or fully solve such problems? Perhaps the causes are of the following 2 folds:

*First: incomplete moral and ethical circle*

Most people take moral and ethic as a theory, knowledge as well as written rules and regulations needed for learning to enhance the learner's ethical practices. Such understanding is one third correct since ethical and moral development comprises of the following three factors:

1. Principles; the code of conducts of both the state and religious empire to ensure good social behavior leading to a happy and peaceful living nationwide. This practical sector needed to be established for learning – teaching of the best practice.
2. Methodology; the mean to implement the code of conducts in personal and working life based on the two elements of success, namely 1) continual training and coaching, 2) a role model of moral and ethic in the past and at present for social inspiration and to guide the younger generation.
3. Target; the culture of good value, appreciation of ethical tradition to enhance sustainable moral society. A role model is also needed to ensure practical target achievement.

Therefore one must realize that moral and ethic is not merely a theory for studying. Hence, the second and third elements are the indispensable parts for a complete implementation of the moral and ethical promotion activity or programme.

*Second: divisional education*

The education system which separates “arts” from “sciences” and focuses on theoretical approaches in learning – teaching without attention to implementation and results is not in line with the Five Elements of Being which are the foundation of human, covering faith and emotion (arts), wisdom and rational (sciences). Perception of learning – teaching involves input of subject matter to develop the Five Elements of Being of man. If the weight is more on arts that sector shall be more developed than its counterpart and vice versa. Such imbalance learning – teaching approach leads to problems regarding moral and ethical development.

The subject matters to enhance a complete development of mankind are religion, philosophy and sciences which provide beauty, goodness and truth. Therefore the integrated approach to provide learning – teaching for development of moral and ethic must be of a good balance of both arts and sciences. The Indian

ancient learning – teaching is of a complete approach of both arts and sciences as in the case of the 18 subjects of arts – sciences course (Lokaniti and Dharmaniti cannons).

Designing of training courses must feature the balanced harmonization of arts and sciences subjects. Divisional approaches shall not be allowed in learning – teaching process. Special training is allowed to serve individual preference such as in mathematics, but the student must also study communication arts so that he/she can get along with the other at the social level.

‘Arts’ is the matter of faith and emotion.

‘Sciences’ is the matter of wisdom and rational.

The question is whether live can move forwardly with only emotional or rational approaches? A balanced living must be based on the integral foundation of arts and sciences. Faith and wisdom serve as the two pillars of various ways of living under the frame of balancing nature, without any extreme. Ethical values based upon integration of arts and sciences in the education system of an appropriate approach.