

Twitter Thread by Vibhu Vashisth



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ANCIENT BHARAT WAS CALLED VISHWAGURU, AND IT REALLY DESERVED IT.

India had a well developed education system centuries before the westerners arrived and called us uncivilized. Education was always given a great importance in Indian civilisation since times immemorial.



ANCIENT INDIA IN THE FIELD OF EDUCATION

India has a long and venerable history in the field of higher education. In ancient times, the country was known to have been home to the oldest formal universities in the world.

The world's oldest recognized university

As early as 700 B.C., there existed a giant University at Takshashila, located in the northwest region of [Bharat](#) (India).

Taxila also known as Takshashila, flourished from 600 BC to 500 AD, in the kingdom of Gandhar. This centre of learning was situated about 50 km west of Rawalpindi in Pakistan. 68 subjects were taught at this university and the minimum entry age, ancient texts show, was 16. At one stage, it had 10,500 students including those from Babylon, Greece, Syria, and China. Experienced masters taught the vedas, languages, grammar, philosophy, medicine, surgery, archery, politics, warfare, astronomy, accounts, commerce, documentation, music, dance and other performing arts, futurology, the occult and mystical sciences, complex mathematical calculations. The panel of masters at the university included legendary scholars like Kautilya, Panini, Jivak and Vishnu Sharma. Thus, the concept of a full-fledged university was developed in India.

It was an important Vedic/Hindu and Buddhist center of learning. It was not a well organized university like Nalanda.

There is some disagreement about whether Takshashila can be considered a university. While some consider Taxila to be an early university or centre of higher education, others do not consider it a university in the modern sense.

learning centres.

Studying the Holy Scriptures, character building, personality development, responsibilities towards self, family and society, discipline and preservation of the ancient culture and heritage were the key embodiments of education.

This kind of education system made ancient India, a centre of knowledge all over the world. Many foreign students came to India for education and India was called the 'Vishwaguru'.

Takshashila and Nalanda were the two prominent universities of ancient India.



But were these only Universities of ancient India? The answer is 'No'. Let's learn about these gems of our education system that flourished across ancient India & be proud.

NALANDA UNIVERSITY

This was the oldest university of ancient India. Situated in Nalanda distt. of Bihar...



Nalanda University; Courtesy: Booksfact

...this University was founded by King Kumaragupta I of Gupta dynasty in the 5th century & it flourished for 600yrs till 12th century. Students from India, China, Korea & Central Asia came to university for studies. Astrology, Astronomy, Medicine, Mathematics, Literature etc. was taught.

First Education System In Ancient Indian Society

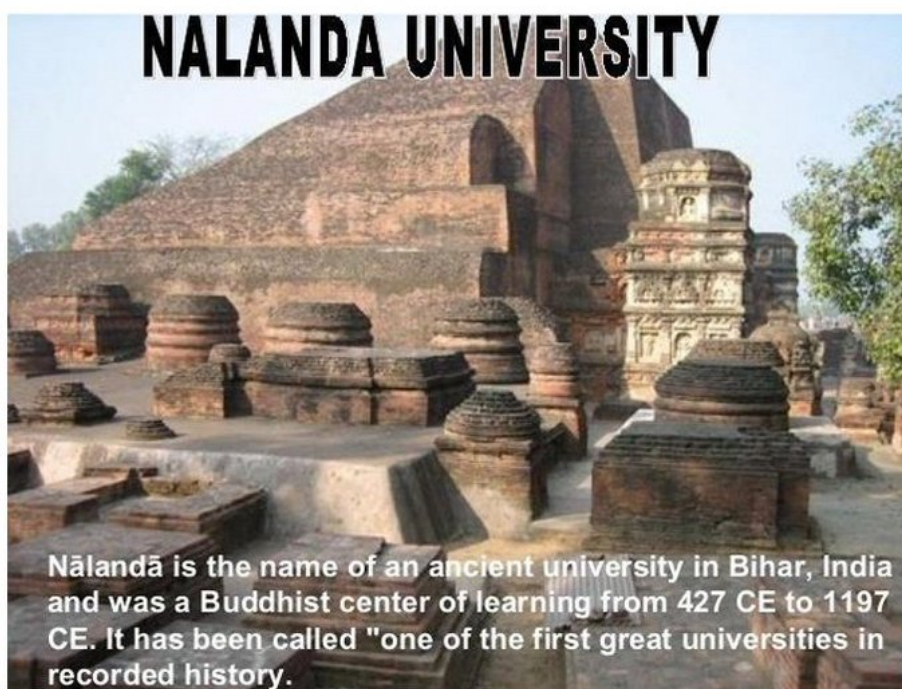
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1. Introduction

The most famous centers of learning were the monastic collage founded mostly by the Buddhists. Taxila, Varanasi, Ujjain and Amravati were other famous centers of learning before the Gupta Age. University of Taxila, though had lost its former glory due to Hun invasion, yet had maintained its standard. Vallabhi in Gujarat and Vikramasila in Bihar were other famous centers of learning. Nalanda University was established by Kumaragupta I in the 5th century. The university was one of the important learning centers of the Gupta period and it was situated in the present day Bihar. The university offered a variety of courses for the students. Nalanda university was one of the first universities which provided residential quarters or hostels for the students. The students returned

home after the curriculum was completed. Education was imparted orally. The students at the Nalanda University were taught free of cost. The Taxila University was one of the first few centers in the world which offered higher education. The university was however established before the Gupta Empire came into existence, somewhere around 700 BC. Taxila University was a centre where a variety of subjects were taught to the students. These included astronomy, medicine, accounts, politics, mathematics, science, law, music, painting and many other subjects. The students of Taxila University had to pay the requisite fees in order to obtain education. Like Nalanda University, Taxila attracted students from foreign countries.



This university was established during the reign of the Gupta ruler Skandagupta. It was founded by the Maitrakas. They were the descendents of General Bhatpara, who was a military governor of Saurashtra during the rule of Skandagupta. The university was a popular centre for Haryana Buddhism. The

Vallabhi University was funded by the Maitrakas kings. There were some other universities which achieved popularity during the Gupta empire period. One of them was the Ujjain University. This university was known for providing education in the field of astronomy.

It had the largest library in ancient world. Most sacred manuscripts were kept safe there. Muslim invader Bakhtyar Khilji annihilated the University in 1200 CE. He set the library on fire and killed many Acharyas and students. Huen Tsang & Itsing were the famous Chinese travellers..

In 2010, the parliament of India passed a bill approving the plans to restore the ancient Nalanda University as a modern Nalanda International University dedicated for post-graduate research. Many east asian countries including China, Singapore and Japan have come forward to fund the construction of this revived Nalanda University.

..who visited the Nalanda University and were greatly impressed by it. It was the first of its kind University that provided hostel accommodation for students and teachers. There were approx. 10000 students and 3000 teachers. It is a UNESCO world heritage site.



Ruins of Nalanda University. –img source

VIKRAMSHILA UNIVERSITY

Founded by the Pala King, Dharamapala(780-820CE), Vikramshila University was located in Antichak village of Bhagalpur Distt. Bihar. Ancient university was a centre of Buddhist learning, a large Buddhist Monastery and a Mahavihara.



Vikramshila University

Flourished from 8-12th century, university was famous for learning Tantra Vidya. Philosophy, metaphysics, logic & grammar were other subjects. Also was taught the subject of Blackmagic.

VALLABHI UNIVERSITY

This ancient university was located at Vallabhipur, Bhavnagar district of Gujarat



It was founded by Bhattarka, King of Maitraka Empire. It flourished from 6-12th century. Due to lack of interest by successor of Maitraka Empire & continued invasions by Arabs, university lost its significance. Religious studies, Arthashastra, Nithyashastra & Medicine were subjects taught



Vallabhi University Courtesy: Booksfact

TAKSHASHILA UNIVERSITY

Takshashila was a world famous university of the ancient India. It was the first ancient Indian International University(400-550BCE). It was located in the Gandhar region of ancient India(Present day in Rawalpindi, Pakistan).



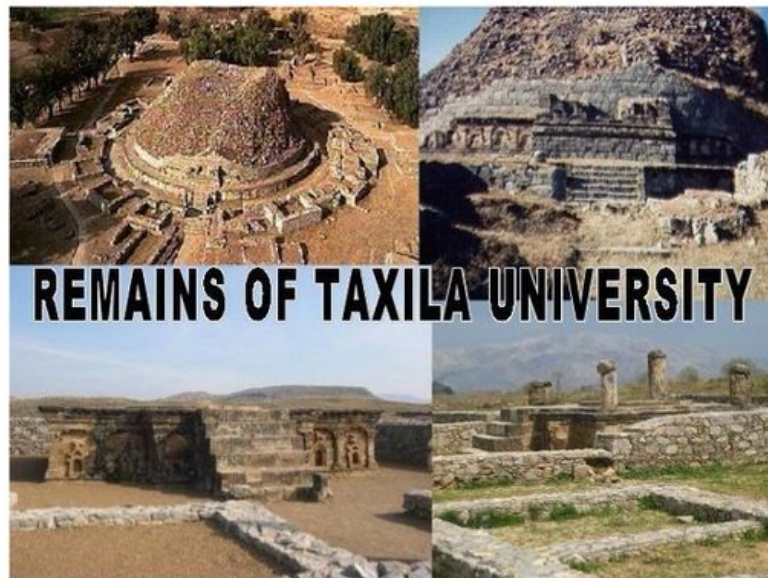
Takshashila University; Courtesy: Booksfact

There are many sources that have the mention of Takshashila such as Jatakas, Mahabharata & Ramayana etc. Flourished under the Maurya & Kushana empire periods, Takshashila was founded in 1000 BCE & destroyed by the Huns of Central Asia in 5th century & later by Muslim invaders in 12th century.



Takshashila University; Courtesy: Diary Store

Mahayana sect of Buddhism formed in Takshashila. The Vedas alongwith art forms like archery, music, dance, hunting were taught. Besides, the subjects of Philosophy, Ayurveda, Grammar & Astronomy were also taught. Takshashila was declared a UNESCO World heritage site in 1980.



Nature and organization of vocational education in Ancient India. There was no educational institution like present day in Ancient India. The ritual of Vidyarambha initiated the learner around the age of five to the primary stage of education imparted by a designated teacher the guru, to whom and to whose house the child was entrusted. There are references to these schools as lipisalas and to the teachers as daakachauya. We also read of the emergence of prakrity. The places of learning called Gurukula. Individual instruction contributed to the strength of the teaching process enabling the teacher to understand the strength and weakness of the learner and to place to process of education accordingly. The strict adherence to duty or dharma and the regulated life of the home of the teacher the Gurukula accompanied by the reverence for the guru, would have been sufficient conditions to maintain discipline in the educational institutions. The decision of the teacher was final and was never questioned.

Ashrams in Hinduism are one of four age based life stages discussed in ancient Indian texts. The four ashrams are Brahmacharya, Grihastha, Vanaprastha and Sannyasa. Brahmacharya represent the bachelor student stage of life. This stage focused on education and included the practice of celibacy. The students went to a Gurukul and typically would live with a guru, acquiring knowledge of science, philosophy, scriptures and logic, practicing self-discipline, working to earn dakshina to be paid for the guru, learning to live a life Dharma.

Taxila, Ujjaini, and Varanasi were famous educational institution. Asoka also encouraged the development of herbal medicine, for men and animals, in their territories. The Gurukul was the house of the teacher who was a settled house-holder. After the initiation ceremony a child would leave his natural parents and reside in the house of his preceptor or Guru till the end of his studies. Goshti or Conferences was a national gathering or Congress summoned by a great King in which representatives of various schools was invited to meet and exchange their views. In one such conference called by king Janaka of Videha, the great scholar Yajnavalkya won a special prize of 1000 cows with horns hung with gold. Ashrams or hermitages were another centre where students from distant and different parts of the country flocked together for learning

around famous sages and saints. For example the Ashrams of Bharadwaj at Prayag was very big Ashrams where princes like Bharat used to study. Other Ashrams was that of Naimisha located in the forest of Naimisharanya headed by sage S. Here ten thousand pupils and numerous learned teachers scholars held constant discussions and debates on religious philosophical and scientific topics. Ghathikas was an institution of highest learning where both the teachers and the taught met and discussed and where by the clash and contact of cultured scholars the highest knowledge could be obtained in religious literature. Agraharas were settlements of Brahmins in villages where they used to teach. Mathas was a place where pupils used to reside and received instructions both religious and secular. These Mathas belonged to both Shiva and Vaishnava sects and were normally attached to some temples or had some temples attached to them. Brahmapuri was a settlement of learned Brahmins in parts of towns and cities or in any selected area where education was imparted. Bihar was a Buddhist monastery where all subjects concerned with Buddhism and its philosophy was taught. The most famous centers of learning were the monastic collage founded mostly by the Buddhists.

These centers contributed to the building of a harmonious cultural life of the people. Taxila, Varanasi, Ujjain and Amravati were other famous centers of learning before the Gupta Age. University of Taxila, though had lost its former glory due to Hun invasion, yet had maintained its standard.

Vallabhi in Gujarat and Vikramasila in Bihar were other famous centers of learning. Nalanda university was one of the first universities which provided residential quarters or hostels for the students. The students returned home after the curriculum was completed. Education was imparted orally. The students at the Nalanda University were taught free of cost.

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10500 students approx. studied in Takshashila and 2000 teachers taught them. Students came from all over India, Egypt, Iraq, Greece, Syria, Turkey & China. Kautilya, Charaka & Panini were the students of Takshashila.

PUSHPAGIRI UNIVERSITY

Located in ancient Kalinga(Cuttack & Jaipur distt of Odisha),this ancient university(3-12th century) was discovered in 1995 &the evidence showed that it may be founded by Ashoka himself.The university campus was spread across 3 adjoining hills-Lalitgiri...



Pushpagiri University; Courtesy: Gyanpro

...Ratnagiri and Udayagiri. This was one of the most prominent centres of higher education in ancient India alongwith Takshashila, Nalanda and Vikramshila. Chinese traveller Huen Tsang visited it in 639CE and was spellbound by the way it functioned.

SOMAPURA UNIVERSITY

Built by King Dharamapala (780-820CE) of Pala Empire, it was located in Paharpur of Nagaon Distt in present Bangladesh. It's Terracotta wall paintings showed that it was a major centre for learning the Dharma traditions of Buddhism, Jainism and Hinduism.

Somapura



Built in Buddhist architectural style of Cambodia, it was spread over 27 acres of land. Later, due to lack of maintenance and attacks by the Muslim plunderers led to the decline of this important learning centre.



Somapura University: Courtesy: Wikipedia

The above mentioned were some of the major learning centres of ancient India but that's not the end of it. There is a very long list. Dharamapala of Pala dynasty is believed to have established 50 major educational centres across his Kingdom.

Most of the universities above were destroyed around 12th century, during the Muslim invasion of India by the fanatic Bakhtyar Khilji from Turkey in 1193CE. The great library of the Nalanda University was ransacked and burnt by Khilji's Army.



Bhaktiyar khilji destroying Nalanda university

It is said that the library was so vast that the manuscripts kept burning for 3 months. Numerous ancient manuscripts preserved for 1000s of years were destroyed in this fire. 1000s of students were burnt alive and beheaded by Khilji's army.



Barbarian Khilji in a painting from Hutchinson's 'Story of the Nations'. It depicts Khilji trying to make sense of a manuscript. Source: Wikipedia

One thing is true about the Muslim invaders,"What they couldn't have,they couldn't build,they destroyed".I can give full marks to them for spreading the death destruction&annihilation across the world.Lastly, I would like to quote a famous American writer and lecturer Mark Twain.

He said, "India is the cradle of the human race, birthplace of the human speech, the mother of history, the grandmother of legend and the great grandmother of tradition. Our most valuable and most instructive materials in the history of man are treasured up in India only".

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