

**ISCKMC 2022****International Scientific Congress «KNOWLEDGE, MAN AND CIVILIZATION»****BUDDHIST IDEAS ON EDUCATION IN THE ERA OF  
GLOBALIZATION**

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**Abstract**

This paper deals with the issue of Buddhist views on education in relation to globalization in the modern world. Society was and is still interested in Buddhism due to its tolerance to different values, lack of pretensions to exclusiveness, capacity to integrate ideas of various civilizations, readiness for the interreligious interaction. The global problems of the modern world significantly depreciate and discredit the ideas of the new European liberal project of personal self-sufficiency, rationalism, individualism. Unlikely, the Buddhist approach to the being is derived from understanding the interaction between different forms of cognition on the one hand and the total oneness of humans and the world on the other. Buddhism should be considered not so much as a religion, but as a philosophy of education and a methodology for self-improvement of the individual. The Buddhist view of the world appears in the form of an educational process in which the teacher transfers knowledge and necessary skills to his students to dispel ignorance, the root of sufferings. Both the teacher and the student must be aware that their activities are interdependent. The practical application of the Buddhist theory of interdependence is assumed to become one of the methods for solving psychological problems that arise in the learning process due to the readiness of the teacher and students to build harmonious relationships based on mutual understanding and assistance. Eventually, that would contribute to resolving many other problems in the modern globalized world.

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## **1. Introduction**

Buddhism is the oldest world religion, which influenced the cultural development of many peoples of the East. It is practiced traditionally in the countries of Southern, South-Eastern, Eastern and Central Asia. Nowadays one can see the revival of Buddhism in Russia. Buddhism began to spread across Europe and America at the end of 20th century for the western society to enrich its business activity with great spirituality of the Eastern studies.

Society was and is still interested in Buddhism due to its tolerance to different values, lack of pretensions to exclusiveness, capacity to integrate ideas of various civilizations, readiness for the interreligious interaction. The image of the alternative spirituality created by contrast with the values of the modern secular West is perfectly enrolled in the atmosphere of pluralistic globalization. However, it may be asserted that Buddhism has changed under the influence of globalization and sociocultural transformations. For instance, the new appeared religious and cultural phenomena contributed to the foundation of female Buddhist organizations (Ulanov et al., 2020).

## **2. Problem Statement**

Traditional teachings of Buddhism, as Agadzhanian (2005) remarks, do not accept globalization, but there isn't any "organized cruel anti-globalization," "pathological antimodernist strains" in Buddhism as in other widely spread religion traditions. Borup (2020) believes that Global Buddhism can be broadly understood as the transnational and transcultural network of circulating Buddhists and dynamic flows of Buddhist ideas and practices. It is characterized by ideals of universally applicable values and individually accessible experiences transgressing historical and cultural particularities.

How do Buddhists characterize globalization and correlate it with the educational goals? The outstanding Buddhist figure of modernity, His Holiness the 14th Dalai Lama remarks in his work «Ethics for the new millennium» that people acquire growing independence owing to the achievements of science and technology, but as a result they feel a great deal of loneliness and alienation instead of the feeling of community and unity. And the education has the great potential to overcome that contradiction (Dalai Lama XIV, 2001). It becomes more important while the global problems of the modern world significantly depreciate and discredit the ideas of the new European liberal project of personal self-sufficiency, rationalism, and individualism.

## **3. Research Questions**

This paper deals with the issue of Buddhist views on education in relation to globalization in the modern world.

Another interesting question is how Buddhist ideas are capable to influence contemporary education.

## **4. Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this study is to estimate the Buddhist views on education and their possible application in the globalized world.

## 5. Research Methods

The methodological basis of the research includes the systemic and sociocultural approaches.

## 6. Findings

Religion and sociology point to the crisis of the personal identification in modern society. Really, as the global space was widening due to information and communication technologies, traditional relations between people in local communities were superseded by relations on a global scale that are numerous, impersonal, and functional. As the result, the mechanism of transmitting the highest moral values, interpersonal relations in primary communities, from one generation to another is destroyed. The crisis of national cultures is not the only negative influence of globalization.

His Holiness the 14th Dalai Lama notices that the world has become too small, and now all people depend on each other. Pursuing their own interests, not philanthropy, nations must care about each other. Under these circumstances, undoubtedly, people should establish mutual understanding and practice the overall responsibility. The key element to achieve these ideals is to foster good-heartedness (Dalai Lama XIV, 2004). Despite contradictions between more and less developed countries, rich and poor sections of population inside this or that country, the leader of Buddhists remarks the strengthening of the global dependence, and responsibility can overcome such economic barriers (Dalai Lama XIV, 2003).

Robert Thurman, one of the most famous American Buddhists and Buddhologists, emphasizes that people should practice the spirit of the Great Enlightenment of Bodhisattva, caring weal of all nations. He writes about changes in life on the international level, the transformation of pride into compassion both in politics and in private life. He asks where humans' compassion is. He suggests that people should not avoid problems, but face them, not build up walls, but be openhearted to the world. To lighten the suffering of humanity, every nation should take responsibility for the weal of all nations. If expenses on armament were cut, people would be able to help without damaging their welfare. Giving up only unnecessary things, which are useless and only cause nightmares, people can significantly improve the quality of their life. It will be full of happiness that will be given to contemporaries and a lot of descendants. And everyone will only gain benefits in this situation (Thurman, 2005).

In this regard, we should pay much attention to the way Buddhist culture treats moral activity of people. Is there any benefit in applying basic Buddhist ideas to contemporary education?

The Buddhist approach to education is derived from understanding the interaction between different forms of cognition on the one hand and the total oneness of humans and the world on the other. Subsequently, the Buddhist education is based on universal and encyclopedic nature. As a rule, monastic curriculum consists of logical, philosophical, linguistical, medical, poetic, and other knowledge.

Researchers of Buddhist studies, Donets (2004), Kozhevnikova (2014), Torchinov (2002), proved that Buddhism should be considered not so much as a religion, but as a philosophy of education and a methodology for self-improvement of the individual. Thus, the essence of Buddhism consists in extensive knowledge about the nature of man, his interaction with the surrounding reality, and ways of realizing the meaning of life. Defining ignorance as that which creates obstacles for the self-improvement of the

individual, the Buddha focused on people's lack of true knowledge and a correct understanding of reality. To eliminate this ignorance, accordingly, it is necessary to seek knowledge.

The Buddhist view of the world appears in the form of an educational process in which the teacher transfers knowledge and teaches the necessary skills to his followers. Canonical texts are mostly presented in the form of a dialogue between the Buddha and his disciples, who ask questions and receive detailed answers. Comprehension of the meaning of perceived information is directly related to the personal growth of students, who, as a rule, reach a certain level of holiness. As a reward for diligent study, the Buddha often gives examples in his sermons and compares an “untrained” person with a “trained” one, that is, with one who correctly understands objective reality in accordance with Buddhist ideas about suffering, its causes, and ways to eliminate them (Kozhevnikova, 2014). Thus, a “trained” person not only possesses information, but one is also able to put it into practice, thereby changing oneself for the better.

The fundamental Buddhist teaching, which dispels ignorance, is based on understanding the law of causality. Asking ontological questions, the Buddha concluded that the answers are in the depths of the human psyche, where special mechanisms contribute to the arising and cessation of cognitive activity, which directly affects a being. Briefly, these mechanisms are described in terms of the theory of arising the dependence of phenomena (Skt. *pratitya-samutpada*), which exist due to certain causes and conditions.

The causal analysis in Buddhism identifies twelve semantic factors or links, which determine the existence and activity of a person. The life cycle of an individual, including aging, illness, various kinds of suffering and death (1), takes place only due to the fact of birth (2), which is determined by becoming (3). The cause of becoming is recognized as grasping (4), which arises due to craving (5). Craving, in turn, is due to sensation (6), and it is due to contact (7). Contact is possible in the presence of six sensory sources (8), that is, knowledge through the five senses and consciousness. The basis for these sources is the mental and corporeal complex (9), which is also based on consciousness (10). In Buddhism, consciousness is considered not as something integral, but as a mental continuum or a stream of volitional formations (11), which arise due to ignorance (12). The elimination of accompanying conditions and the root cause (ignorance) is believed to destroy the presented chain and thereby free a person from suffering (Lysenko, 2011).

Torchinov (2002) mentions that the doctrine of dependent origination has become the main methodological principle of Buddhist reflection. As a result, this theory is an indispensable component of the Buddhist discourse. For example, in the Tibetan Buddhist tradition, which was integrated into the religious culture of the peoples of Russia (Kalmyks, Buryats, Tuvans), the theory of interdependence is theoretically mastered and practically applied in Buddhist monasteries and universities (Donets, 2004).

Interdependence can be understood not only in a negative sense as something that entails suffering, but also in a positive sense as that which leads a person to achieve a goal through a chain of interdependent elements and events. In this regard, the theory of *pratitya-samutpada* is used in comprehending absolutely all spheres of human life, including the learning process. Proceeding from this, education can be represented as interconnected links of a single process that determines its main goal – to promote the self-improvement of the student. This process can be represented as follows: in the conditions of an information civilization, the main criterion for self-realization and corresponding success is a qualified education, which can be

obtained through a well-organized education system, which, in turn, is due to the close interaction of all its subjects. In accordance with this, each link performs an important function and determines the next one.

According to Lysenko (2011), the concept of *pratitya-samutpada* is distinguished not so much by causality as by its conditional character, which is formulated as when there is this, then there is that; if this arises, then that also arises; if this disappears, then that also disappears. In other words, all phenomena are characterized by relativity and exist only in dialectical dependence on each other.

In accordance with the anthropocentric approach, Buddhists apply this dialectic to the person oneself and conclude that the person as such does not exist. “I” is only a set of psychophysical elements that are in a dialectical relationship with each other, from which it follows that “I” is empty of self-existence. Such understanding of reality was developed in the teachings of the *Prajnaparamita*, that is, transcendental wisdom, the essence of which is in the vision of phenomena being empty of self-existence. The Tibetan Buddhist philosopher Je Tsongkhapa (1358–1419) showed the logical connection between the theory of interdependence and the doctrine of emptiness in his short essay on interdependence. The given reference to the authoritative Indian thinker, Nagarjuna (2–3 centuries AD), leads to the philosophical work of the last one “Seventy stanzas about emptiness”. The author pointed out in the work that the logical analysis does not allow finding in this world anything that arose and would exist regardless of any causes and conditions, that is, by itself (Nagarjuna, 2000).

This conclusion seems to be extremely important in understanding the interaction of the subjects of the educational process. In practice, guided by the theory of emptiness, the teacher and student must be aware that their activities are interdependent. The Buddhist judgment of relativity is interpreted in their relation as follows: if there is a teacher, then there is a student; if there is no teacher, then there is no student; if there is a student, then there is a teacher; if there is no student, then there is no teacher.

The application of this methodology only to the interpersonal relationships of a teacher and a student in the framework of educational work may well have fruitful results. For example, including conversations about interdependence in the lesson plan will help increase students' interest in existing problems and find the factors that caused them. Such reflection will allow not making hasty conclusions, which often lead to conflict situations. At the same time, it is important that the teacher oneself should try to understand the interdependence of the characteristics of the development and behavior of one's students, the reasons for their possible academic failure. Due to the application of such approach many issues of interpersonal interaction between the teacher and students can be “removed”, which will affect the entire educational process and determine the achievement of pedagogical goals.

## **7. Conclusion**

The global problems of the modern world significantly depreciate and discredit the ideas of the new European liberal project of personal self-sufficiency, rationalism, individualism. Unlikely, the practical application of the Buddhist theory of interdependence may become one of the methods for solving psychological issues that arise in the learning process due to the readiness of the teacher and students to build harmonious relationships based on mutual understanding and assistance. Eventually, that would contribute to resolving many other problems in the modern globalized world.

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