

BUDDHIST COLLEGES IN INDONESIA

Delegates from Indonesia

INDONESIA WAS A BUDDHIST COUNTRY

Indonesia was a Buddhist country, before the arrival of Islam – from the 5th – 15th century. Javadwipa (Java) with Mataram Buddhist Kingdom of Syailendra Dynasty and Majapahit Buddhist Kingdom, and Suvarnadwipa (Sumatra) with Sriwijaya Buddhist Kingdom, were two popular islands with Buddhist population in those ages. Sriwijaya had a well-known university, which had close relationship with Nalanda University in India. However, Majapahit was the last Buddhist Kingdom. After that, Buddhists hide and Buddhism in Indonesia collapsed.

In the 20th Century, Buddhism revived - encouraged by the visits of Venerable Narada from Sri Lanka, who visited Indonesia 15 times within 49 years from 1934 to 1983. The quantity of Buddhist had grown. Many other monks have visited Indonesia and taken interest to re-establish Buddhism. Development of organizations of Buddhist community was dynamic and fast. However, quality of Buddhist human resources still remains behind.

REVIVAL OF BUDDHIST COLLEGE

In 1976, Buddhist Education Foundation of Nalanda pioneered to build a Buddhist college in East Jakarta for improving the quality of Buddhist human resources. Ten years later, in 1986, the effort of Nalanda was followed by Smaratungga Buddhist College in Boyolali, Central Java. In 2000, there was a Government's regulation that teaching religion in public schools should be done by teachers who have the same religion with the taught students. It means that the demand of teacher of Buddhism was increased. Dhammadipa Arama Foundation pioneered to catch this opportunity by establishing Kertarajasa Buddhist College in Batu, East Java. With similar aims then Samma Sambodhi Foundation founded Syailendra Buddhist College in Semarang, Central Java, 2001. After that, Bodhi Dharma Education Foundation founded Bodhi Dharma Buddhist College in Medan, North Sumatra, in 2002. Bodhi Prasadha Foundation founded Maha Prajna Buddhist College in North Jakarta, in 2002. Sriwijaya Foundation founded Sriwijaya Buddhist College in Tangerang Banten, in 2006. Buddhayana Vidyalaya Foundation founded Jinarakkhita Buddhist College in Lampung, in 2006.

There are eight Buddhist colleges in Indonesia, namely:

1. Name: STAB Nalanda
2. Name: STIAB Smaratungga
3. Name: STAB Kertarajasa
4. Name: STAB Syailendra
5. Name: STAB Bodhi Dharma
6. Name: STAB Maha Prajna
7. Name: STABN Sriwijaya
8. Name: STIAB Jinarakkhita

HANDICAP OF DEVELOPMENT

There is a Government's regulation that states all universities and colleges, including religious colleges, which formerly guided by the Ministry of Religious Affairs, should be accredited by the National Accreditation Board following the National Educational Systems. Otherwise, the university/college is prohibited issuing diploma for its graduates.

One requirement for accreditation is the college should have at least two lectures with MA degree in Buddhism study. So far, there is no Buddhist College in Indonesia which could fulfill the requirement. The problem, there has been no university in Indonesia which has a program for graduating MA degree in Buddhism Study yet.

So that, there is no other way except the Indonesia Buddhist Colleges should send their lectures abroad to reach the MA degree in Buddhism Study. However, financially all Buddhist Colleges in Indonesia are still very weak, and, as a minority, support of the Government to education of Buddhism is very low. Whereas financial background of most students are poor which could not support themselves for affording their tuition fee.

Without giving hands from the community of International Buddhist Universities, higher learning education with Buddhist Colleges in Indonesia will be facing a big problem when regulation of college accreditation is enforced in the near future.

CONCLUSION

Higher learning education of Buddhism in Indonesia has started to revive. Development of Buddhism educational institutes is on the right track. However, to enhance the process of development, support from the community of Buddhist universities, internationally, are needed.

NALANDA BUDDHIST COLLEGE, JAKARTA, INDONESIA

Educational:

The academic year is divided into two full semesters, each lasting sixteen weeks:

1. The first semester usually commences in September and ends in January.
2. The second semester usually commences in January and ends in June.

Most of the students come from rural area or small city around Indonesia, they are simple family, even some of them can not afford to pay tuition fee. Most of the students have to work to support their cost of living and all of his/her expenses, because the support from the family is not enough. Every year between 25 to 30 students enroll, this amount of students is not big enough to cover all the cost and expenses of the college activities, we could not implement high tuition fee, so we always have deficit cash flow and this deficit is funded by all donation from the Buddhist and non Buddhist, Department of Religion of Republic Indonesia. Total of the students are about 120.

In 2003, we received a 5,000m² piece of land from a very kind family: Mr. Siwie Honoris. We also received a donation from Mr. Paulus Tumewu and family: a 4 storied building with a total area of 2,000m² built in the 5,000 m² land. We have big campus and we also have problem with the increase cost and expenses, all kind of expenses increase such as electricity, honorarium and salary, tax, phone, maintenance etc.

The Program of Nalanda Buddhist College consists of a core curriculum to produce Buddhist Teachers. Our curriculum consists of Tipitaka, (Vinaya, Sutta, Abhidhamma), Meditation, English, Pali, Social Studies, Mahayana Buddhism, Indonesian Language, Psychology, Evaluation of Education, Psychology of Education; and other, non-compulsory subjects such as: computer, accounting, entrepreneurship, and Chinese language - as subjects shape students for the society. We have 156 credit-points for students.

The students need at least 4 years, to get Bachelor Degree. They not only study theory, but they must practice 10 days vipassana meditation retreats and practice teaching. Up to 2005, we have had 300 graduates in Bachelor Degree program. Most of the students teach Buddhism in the Buddhist school, children class in the temple and Cetya when they are studying in Nalanda and this activity is a teaching practice before they are really become the Buddhism teacher.

When they graduate, almost all of the students in Nalanda teach Buddhism in Buddhist schools, college and universities as a teacher, some of them become civil employees in government institutions, especially in Religious Department and Education Department of The Republic of Indonesia; or members of temples and Buddhist Organization, etc.

The Nalanda Buddhist Education Foundation always give financial support to Nalanda Buddhist College and Nalanda Senior High School, currently the foundation should support Rp.150 million - to Rp.200 million, per year.

The strengths and the promoter opportunity of the institution:

- Nalanda is the first Buddhist College in Indonesia.
- Nalanda is privately owned
- Nalanda resides on land of only 5000 sq. meters
- Nalanda also earns confidence from society because Nalanda produces high quality graduates.
- Most graduates of Nalanda's Buddhist Education work in several Government Institution.

The Activities of the Students Executive Organization:

1. Celebrate Buddhist holiday, as Vaisaka, Maghapuja, Kathina, Asadha.
2. Established seminars and invite resource personnel with experience, for example seminars for Dhammaduta, seminars for the acceptance of new students, etc.
3. Social Activities
4. Sport: Volleyball, Football (soccer), and Basketball.
5. Visiting other Institutions for inspections.
6. Cooperation with other Buddhist organizations
7. Public-speaking training

KERTARAJASA BUDDHIST COLLEGE, BATU, INDONESIA

Kertarajasa Buddhist College was founded by Dhammadipa Arama Foundation and is supported by Theravada Sangha of Indonesia (STI) and Council of Theravada Buddhism of Indonesia (MAGABUDHI); with the *vision* to be the center of excellence for religiosity and professionalism for Indonesian Buddhist Human-Resources based on Pali-Tipitaka.

CONDITION AND SITUATION

OPPORTUNITY:

- a) Kertarajasa is the only Buddhist higher learning institute in eastern part of Indonesia.
- b) There is a Government regulation stating that teaching religion in public schools should be done by teachers for students with the same religion, implying that the Government needs additional Buddhist teachers.
- c) The community is increasingly interested in watching Dhamma TV programming - transmitted from near the Kertarajasa campus – therefore transmissions can be utilized as a learning tool.

THREAT:

- a) Financial backgrounds of the students are mostly poor, so that they could not afford their cost of study by themselves without donation/financial support.
- b) Accreditation by Government needs requirements which could not be realized without international help, such as requirement that every Buddhist University should have at least two lecturers who have MA degree in Buddhist Studies.

NEEDED HELPS:

Based on analysis, for realizing its vision: STAB Kertarajasa needs international help, for:

1. Improvement of lecturer quality by training and degree programs in foreign Buddhist Universities.
2. Funds for joined research.
3. Development of Computer Center.
4. Development of Language & Culture Training Laboratory.
5. Development of Student Center.
6. Student exchanges with foreign Buddhist universities.
7. Improvement of Dhamma television broadcasting.
8. Improvement of mobility and administration facilities.

MAHA PRAJNA BUDDHIST COLLEGE, JAKARTA UTARA, INDONESIA

It is situated in North Jakarta, founded in the year 2002 by the Bodhi Prasadha Foundation under leadership Venerable Andana Mahasthavira. This college accepts students from various Indonesian islands. They are educated in Buddhism, Buddhist culture, Education Strategy, languages, and monkhood. The students are given free lodging, food

medicine, and other requisites which supporting the process of education. They are free to follow monk's life or laylife; or they are free to live outside the temple, provided they become responsible to support their own daily needs. If they live inside the temple, they have the freedom to enjoy temple facilities.

The college has two specializations for study, they are teacher education and Dhamma preacher - all in Indonesian language-medium within for year duration. The Maha Prajna College jointly with the Government of Indonesia, and the Department of Religious Affairs – with the section of General Director of Buddhist Affairs, gives final examinations for certifications. So the government always supports the program by giving facilities for education if needed. Some of the lecturers are Officials from the Department of Religious Affairs. The graduates from this college mostly work for the government or become teachers in private or government elementary schools.

The vision of this college is to educate people in Buddhism with loving-kindness. And its mission is to arrange people to master Buddhism and have them learn how to spread Buddhadhamma for benefit of others. So it is not profit-oriented, but it is more social or spiritual-oriented. It can be seen from the daily life, the students not only study in the classroom, but they chant sutras every early morning and evening before going to classroom. Every Sunday students go to other temples to teach school children, without any salary - and there, devotees recite sutras as social services for the Buddhist people.

Maha Prajna College has worked hard to develop the institution and to improve the education program financially, etc. Indonesia already has established Buddhist colleges - whether in Jakarta or in Central Java – and therefore there is some competition to register students. Many Buddhist Monks give financial help to students, so they can study freely. Maha Prajna also provide donation for the needy students who come from poor family but have idea to study Buddhism and ready to follow the College and temple regulations. As result the monks work hard to find out donation for their students who study in the college. It is a free donation for them, the chief monks do not expect anything from them, they hope only to study diligently and pass with satisfied marks. So they can protect, educate people, and spread Buddhism for the benefit of people - here and now. College always awaits for students from all statuses of society so they can finally work for Buddhism.