

Buddhism and Society: The History and Contribution of Buddhist Education in Taiwan

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Abstract : Buddhist monks and nuns have changed within the dynamic culture of Taiwan that they find themselves in. The diverse cultures, economic development, and advanced educational levels of the island are all part of this. Buddhist education has become an interesting aspect in the history of Taiwanese Buddhism. In recent years, Buddhists in Taiwan have made significant contributions to both academic and religious studies. This paper will focus on the following questions: What is Buddhist education? How does a Buddhist education change monastic role in Taiwanese Buddhism? Finally, how has Buddhist education benefited Taiwanese society? Research indicates that Buddhist education in Taiwan possesses four features: 1. Master teaching disciple: Buddhist masters teach monastic rules to monastic disciples only. 2. Monastic education: It is mainly focused on Buddhist doctrines and sangha rules. 3. From Buddhist education to secular education: Buddhist studies were introduced into secular educational environments that were the beginning for outsiders to study Buddhism. It also opened a door to recruit young college students to enter the monastery. 4. Academic Buddhist training: Buddhist monks and nuns have begun to study at secular colleges in various programs besides Buddhist studies. In recent years, Buddhist colleges and secular universities' religious studies programs have begun to admit overseas students due to the low birth-rate in Taiwan. Therefore, the relationship between Buddhism and Taiwanese society is dynamic.

Keywords : Buddhist college and university in Taiwan, Buddhist education, institutionalization in Taiwanese Buddhism, monastic and secular education, Taiwanese Buddhist monks and nuns

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