Mongolian Buddhist education: Past and Present

In general, an education is developed on the basis of tradition in taking of changes of modernity. Following the tradition of the Glorious Nalanda University of India and by the virtue of unbroken continuity of transmission from masters to disciples, a specific Mongolian Buddhist education and training has been developed throughout the centuries.

Buddhism in Mongolia is the tradition of the Glorious Nalanda University and of Nalanda University scholars such as Nagarjuna, Aryadeva and Shantideva who composed several hundreds of Buddhist texts and commentaries on the teachings of the Buddha.

Mongolian and Tibetan Buddhist monastic curriculum was based on texts composed by Nalanda University scholars. A traditional Buddhist educational training was broken due to communist persecution took place in Mongolia in the 1930s. By 1939, there was not any single functioning Buddhist monastery left in Mongolia. Closing down monasteries was followed by mass arrest and execution of Buddhist monks.

In 1994, Gandantegchenling monastery was re-opened with nine monks. In 1970, the Buddhist College was established by the decree of the Committee on Religious Affairs, the Committee of Ministries. The establishment of the Buddhist College was an effort of re-establishing Buddhist educational tradition in Mongolia but due to socialist system that was dominant at the time, a course on atheism was a compulsory course for the Buddhist College students.