

The Future Buddhist Education Development in Indonesia: Reconstruction of Buddhism Views and Advocating for the Buddhayāna Spirit Movement to Integrate into Indonesian Buddhist Education

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Abstract

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Buddhist education in Indonesia faces significant challenges and opportunities in future developments, especially in integrating spiritual values with the demands of modern times. This review and study analyzed the dynamics of the development of Buddhist education by reconstructing the Buddhist community's view of religious education and the advocacy efforts of the Buddhayāna spirit movement. This approach emphasizes building a collective consciousness oriented towards universal human wisdom and values. The reconstruction of the Buddhist community's view includes the transformation of the traditional paradigm towards a more inclusive, relevant, and adaptive approach to the needs of the millennial generation and the digital generation. In addition, the Buddhayāna spirit movement was introduced as an integrative strategy to bridge traditional Buddhism with modern education in both formal and informal realms. This movement emphasizes the importance of curriculum reform, the development of technology-based learning methods, and the strengthening of Buddhist ethical values in creating a generation that is not only intellectually intelligent but also wise and with integrity. The results of the analysis show that collaboration between religious stakeholders, government, and society is the key to the success of Buddhist education in the future. Applying the Buddhayāna spirit is expected to strengthen the position of Buddhist education in supporting inclusive and harmonious nation-building. Therefore, this research provides a strategic and practical perspective to advance Buddhist education in Indonesia through an innovative, integrative, and relevant approach to the existing socio-cultural context.

Introduction

Buddhism peaked in Indonesia during the Srivijaya (7th to 13th centuries) and Majapahit (14th to 15th centuries) kingdoms. During this period, the Srivijaya kingdom was a center of learning—this kingdom became a center of international Buddhist education, attracting scholars from various countries such as India and China. The monasteries in Srivijaya teach Buddhist philosophy and meditation. The temple was built in the 8th

century; Borobudur became the Buddhist spirituality and education, as well as proof of the cultural excellence of the archipelago (Soekmono, 1976). After the decline due to the entry of Islam, the modern revival of Buddhism in Indonesia occurred in the 20th century through figures such as Bhikkhu Ashin Jinarakkhita, who introduced the Buddhayāna spirit movement as a strategy to unite various Buddhist traditions and adapt Buddhist teachings to the local culture. The challenge of Buddhist education in Indonesia has an intrinsic relationship with Buddhism itself. The Buddhist community in Indonesia is divided into several significant traditions, such as Theravāda, Mahāyāna, and Vajrayāna (Kimura, 2003a). These differences often create fragmentation that hinders collaboration in education. In addition, there is a curriculum that is not adaptive and lacks relevance – Buddhist educational curricula are usually frequently used on classical texts, making them less relevant for younger generations living in the digital age. It does not stop there, and there is a lack of interdisciplinarity. Buddhist education rarely integrates Buddhism with modern science, such as psychology and technology. In addition, there is also a shortage of resources: there is a shortage of teachers and minimal infrastructure, i.e., competent Dharma teachers are still minimal, especially in remote areas, and many Buddhist schools face limited facilities and funds. The younger generation and modernity often make them feel that Buddhism is irrelevant to modern life, so their interest in Buddhist education declines (Harvey, 2013).

Reconstructing the views of the Buddhist community must begin with a re-understanding of the essence of the dharma, in the right dharma, making the views and practices of dharma into the values in daily life, including how to emphasize love (*metta*), wisdom (*panna*), and non-discrimination (*upekkha*) as the foundation of education. The practice of the dharma in daily life can encourage the application of Buddhism in social, economic, and environmental contexts. Community-based education invites the Buddhist community to support education through participation and donations actively and conducting social programs by integrating Buddhist education with programs relevant to the community, such as environmental conservation and health services (Rai, 2017). Adaptation to modern needs by utilizing digital technology so that the use of technology is used to reach a wider audience, such as through e-learning platforms and social media. An effort to contextualize and adapt Buddhism to local needs without losing its essence. These efforts can be made by developing the Buddhayāna spirit movement as an integrative approach (Wijayanto, 2020a). The basic philosophy of the Buddhayāna spirit movement aims to unite various Buddhist traditions and adapt Buddhism to the Indonesian cultural context. Its main principles include unity in diversity by recognizing that all Buddhist traditions have the same goal: achieving enlightenment and applying the Dharma with Buddhist values in daily life, including education – cultural Adaptation by adapting Buddhist teachings with local values such as cooperation and *Bhinneka Tunggal Ika* (Targowski, 2011a).

Implementing Buddhist education with the Buddhayāna spirit movement can provide a framework for Buddhist education in Indonesia, including giving rise to an inclusive curriculum by developing a curriculum that includes various Buddhist traditions.

Integrated education is multicultural education that emphasizes interreligious harmony and multiculturalism in educational materials. Education will be integrated with developing value-based programs by aligning Buddhist education with universal values relevant to modern society (Harvey, 2013). Strategies incorporating the Buddhayāna spirit movement can encourage cooperation between Buddhist organizations such as the Indonesian Theravāda Sangha, the Indonesian Mahayana Sangha, and the Indonesian Great Sangha to create educational synergies. Integrating the Buddhayāna spirit movement in education will strengthen the identity of Buddhists in Indonesia while creating a more harmonious community. A relevant Buddhist education will produce individuals who can contribute to society through values such as compassion and wisdom. By involving local values, Buddhist education can contribute to preserving Indonesia's cultural heritage, such as Borobudur and the Vesak tradition. Buddhist education will produce ethical and responsible leaders who can contribute positively to various sectors of life (S. Jones, 2020). The future development of Buddhist education in Indonesia requires a reconstruction of the views of the Buddhist community and the integration of the values of the Buddhayāna spirit movement. Through this approach, Buddhist education can become more relevant, inclusive, and able to answer the challenges of the times. By utilizing technology, strengthening collaboration, and engaging the younger generation, Buddhist education will boost the Buddhist identity in Indonesia and significantly contribute to the global community (Abdillah, 1997).

Method

This study uses a literature study approach by analyzing a bibliography based on the themes and keywords raised regarding the development of Buddhist education in Indonesia and its relation to the Buddhayana Spirit Movement. This study aims to multiply the position of Buddhism in Indonesia more profoundly and systematically and how the existence of Indonesian Buddhism affects the development of Buddhist society. This study uses primary and secondary data based on the needs of researchers in reviewing and analyzing existing literature data. The analysis was also carried out in detail and depth with a descriptive qualitative approach.

Result and Discussion

The Existence of Buddhism, Ideology, and Diversity in Indonesia

Indonesia is known as a country with extraordinary cultural and religious diversity. As one of the six official religions recognized by the government, Buddhism has a long history that has shaped Indonesia's spiritual and cultural landscape. From the heyday of the Srivijaya and Majapahit kingdoms to its status as a minority religion in the modern era, Buddhism has played an essential role in building harmony and diversity in Indonesia. The existence of Buddhism in the archipelago has a long history (Lopez, 2012). During the Srivijaya Kingdom, Buddhism entered Indonesia through maritime trade routes from India and China around the 1st to 7th centuries. The Sriwijaya kingdom in Sumatra became a center for Buddhist learning, attracting scholars from all over Asia, including famous priests such as I-Tsing. During the Borobudur and

Majapahit Kingdoms—during the Ancient Mataram and Majapahit Kingdoms-Buddhism flourished, as seen in Borobudur Temple—the UNESCO World Heritage Site that reflected Buddhism's spiritual and intellectual greatness at that time (Sadji, 2020). Buddhism is a minority religion in Indonesia. With the entry of Islam in the 13th century, the influence of Buddhism began to decline. However, Buddhism persisted in Bali, Java, and Sumatra. In the 20th century, the revival of Buddhism in Indonesia started, especially after the recognition of Buddhism as one of the official religions by the Indonesian government in the 1950s. The composition and distribution of the Buddhist community are based on its demographics—census data. Buddhists in Indonesia account for less than 1% of the total population, with the main concentration in urban areas such as Jakarta, Medan, and Semarang. Based on ethnicity—most Buddhists in Indonesia come from the Chinese community, although there are also adherents from Javanese and Balinese communities who adopt Buddhism (Setiawan, 2021; Mardiono et al., 2024).

Buddhism in Indonesia has existed for a long time and is the second oldest religion after Hinduism. Buddhism itself has been present again until now, 500 years after the collapse of the Majapahit Kingdom, with the ordination of a monk in the 1950s. Since then, Buddhism has gone through various spiritual and political situations in Indonesia and has been recognized as a formal religion with five other faiths. Buddhism in Indonesia has developed its characteristics and uniqueness in the adversity of Indonesia's religions, cultures, customs, ethnicities, languages, and beliefs. Religious development in Indonesia is inseparable from the ideology of Pancasila and the characteristics of the diversity of the Indonesian nation. Indonesia is a country that has a society consisting of various ethnicities, ethnicities, customs, groups, religions, and social strata, so it is called one of the largest multicultural countries in the world (Perdana et al., 2018). Indonesia's social and geographical environment is one of the most complex and diverse in the world. In one count, at least 731 languages and more than 1,100 dialects are spoken in the archipelago. The state of Indonesia covers about 17,508 islands. The landmass ranges from rainforests and steaming mangrove swamps to arid plains and snow-capped mountains. The world's major religions, such as Islam, Catholicism, Christianity, Buddhism, Hinduism, and Confucianism, exist in Indonesia, and there are also many other local religious belief traditions (Leinbach, 1994).

According to data from the Ministry of Home Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia, the total population of Indonesia until the first semester of 2024 will reach 282,477,584 people. The population increased by 1,752,156 people compared to the second semester of 2023. The number of Buddhist people in Indonesia was 2.02 million as of December 31, 2022. this number is equivalent to 0.73% of Indonesia's population of 277.75 million people. Buddhism is practiced by less than 1% of Indonesia's total population of 2 million people, making Buddhism the fifth religion of the six formal religions recognized in Indonesia (Kemendagri, 2024).

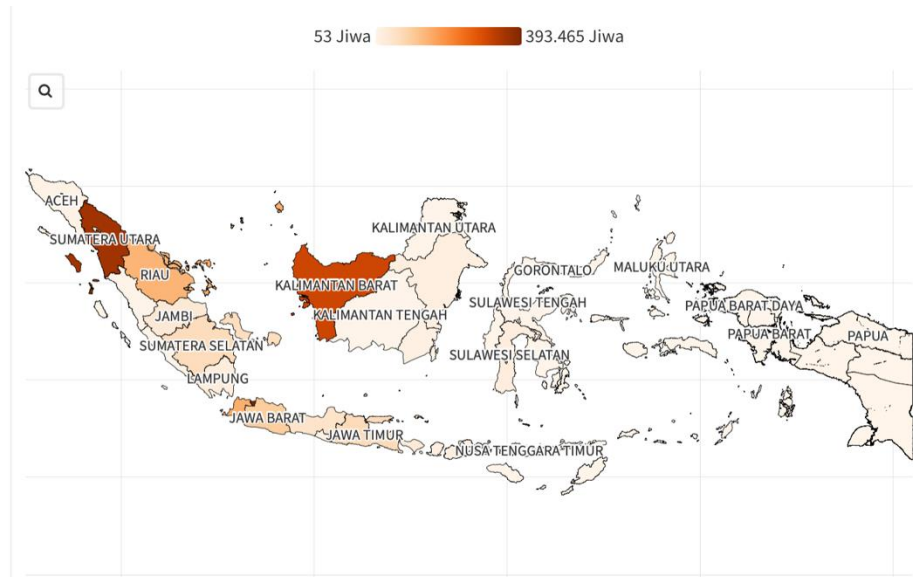


Figure 1. Distribution of Buddhist Population in Indonesia Year 2022

The existence of Buddhism in Indonesia, like other religions recognized by the state, must follow and adjust to the policies, rules, laws, and ideologies of the Indonesian state itself. Indonesia is a diverse and open country and requires that every religion meet specific requirements to be declared a formal religion recognized by the government and recorded in state documents. It makes the characteristics of Buddhism in Indonesia adjust and change their original form while still maintaining the essence of Buddhism itself. The religious diversity of the Indonesian state also gives Buddhism characteristics, and it develops according to where it exists and grows. It is not uncommon today in Indonesia to have. These rules from Buddhism in Indonesia have a unique identity and show a change in form and Adaptation to change (Ricklefs, 2007).

It does not stop there; Buddhism in Indonesia has developed and adapted to various characteristics of Indonesian statehood, politics, government, and religion. Adaptation and Adaptation have transformed Buddhism in Indonesia and established itself as Indonesian Buddhism. Indonesian Buddhism is a change in the form of Buddhism and an adjustment to the wisdom values of cultural Diversity and Indonesian society that crystallizes itself as a Buddhist religion, an entire of the characteristics of Indonesian Buddhist society. Indonesian Buddhism does not change itself and is separated from the roots of the previous lineage; it only changes its form and adjusts. Buddhism is adaptive, transformative, and applicative (UNESCO, 2021). Buddhism has come a long way since 2,600 years ago and has transformed everywhere, and it does not discriminate. It does not deviate from local policies. Many local wisdom transforms into more meaningful and beneficial practitioners by grounding in Buddhist teachings themselves. Buddhism is not infrequently used as a basis to resolve various conflicts and social and humanitarian problems worldwide. Buddhism emerged to answer the social issues in the previous Buddhist era. Buddhism is not a religion that is apathetic, hierarchical, and discriminatory against certain castes. Buddhism is the practice of penetrating injustice, discrimination, and injustice to life. Buddhism is an art of reverence for life (I-Tsing, 1982).

Buddhism in Indonesia is no different from Buddhism in various countries, but it has its characteristics and is typical of Indonesia. Buddhism in Indonesia consists of multiple sects and has developed in various ways in the Indonesian Buddhist community itself, so it is not surprising that there are currently seven groups of Buddhist sects. Not infrequently, the existence of Buddhism itself in Indonesia has conflicts and contradictions due to differences of views regarding approaches and teachings. The spread of views on the teachings of Buddhism itself has made Buddhism compartmentalized and given birth to many Buddhist religious organizations; unconsciously, the face of Buddhism in Indonesia has formed a new face in the form of each sect and not infrequently unconsciously claims the authenticity of each (Susilo, 2021a).

Ideology and Role of Buddhism in Pancasila There is a harmony between Buddhism and the values of Pancasila; as a national ideology, Pancasila emphasizes the values of social justice, diversity, and religious freedom. Buddhism has many values in common with Pancasila, such as the one godhead: Buddhist teachings about enlightenment and universal truth are in line with the first principle of Pancasila. Fair and Civilized Humanity with compassion (*metta*) and concern for others is relevant to the second principle (Sadji, 2020). The unity of Indonesia is in harmony with Buddhism, which emphasizes harmony and interconnection, reflecting the spirit of unity carried by Pancasila. In forming the national ideology, Buddhism and other religions have also contributed to forming Indonesia's diversity framework. Buddhist figures, such as the late most venerable Ashin Jinarakkhita, played an essential role in ensuring that Buddhism was recognized in the order of modern Indonesian society. Ideological challenges for religions that are minorities in state policy: although Pancasila guarantees freedom of religion, Buddhist communities often face challenges in obtaining equal attention in public policy. In addition, the existence of social stigma at the level of the wider Indonesian community makes Buddhism sometimes considered an 'imported' religion that only partially represents Indonesian identity, especially since many of its adherents come from the Chinese community (Rai, 2017).

Buddhism's role in diversity has shown that its universal values can support diversity and social harmony. In a pluralistic society like Indonesia, Buddhism acts as a bridge between cultures: interreligious dialogue—Buddhist communities are active in interfaith dialogue, promoting tolerance and mutual understanding. In addition, celebrating Vesak at Borobudur Temple is a religious ritual and a symbol of diversity that invites people from various backgrounds to participate. Many Buddhist organizations are involved in social activities such as humanitarian aid and education, which involve collaboration with other religious communities (Susilo, 2021b). The Buddhist community shows how compassion and tolerance can strengthen interfaith relationships in everyday life. The challenge of the Buddhist community in Diversity in Indonesia is to feel discrimination and marginalization—as a minority community, Buddhists sometimes face discrimination, especially in areas with a specific religious majority. Limited representation—Buddhists have limited representation in government structures and public institutions (Kompas, 2022).

Buddhist education is the key to strengthening the existence of Buddhism in Indonesia. The Buddhist community needs to be active in advocating for policies that support diversity, such as equitable access to education and representation in government. Buddhism needs to continue to be aligned with local culture, such as the values of *gotong royong* and *bhinneka tunggal ika*, to strengthen community acceptance. Buddhism in Indonesia, despite being a minority religion, has a history and significant contributions to shaping social diversity and harmony (Zhong, 2018). Through universal values such as compassion, tolerance, and justice, Buddhism is in line with the ideology of Pancasila and can adapt to modern challenges. With strategies that include education, cultural promotion, and policy advocacy, the Buddhist community can continue to play an essential role in creating a more inclusive and harmonious Indonesian society. The existence of Buddhism is not only part of Indonesia's past but also the key to the future of the nation's diversity (Petersen, 2015).

The Relationship of Indonesian Buddhist Society, Buddhist Temples, and Buddhist Education Development

In Indonesia, Buddhism developed from the 5th to the 15th century. However, in the early 15th century, Islam gained a foothold in Java and spread to the surrounding areas. Islam dominated in the early 17th century, and Buddhism disappeared on most of the islands of Indonesia. The revival of Buddhism in Indonesia began under colonial rule in the late 19th century. Among the few groups that care about and play the most crucial role of scholars, he prepares for the coming era. Many people led the revival of Buddhism after the independence of the Republic of Indonesia (Kimura, 2003b). Indonesia's demographics, economic and political situation, and cultural diversity also affect the development of religions in Indonesia, including Buddhism (B. W. Jones, 1995). Indonesia, the largest archipelagic country in the world, consists of 18,108 islands with many ethnicities, languages, cultures, beliefs, and religions, a vast maritime economy, and nearly 300 million inhabitants (Cribb & Ford, 2009). Indonesia is currently the seventh-largest economic center in the world, and its education system is constantly evolving. The diverse backgrounds of people in Indonesia make educational development a severe issue for the Indonesian government and culture (Sudarman et al., 2016).

Today, education is developing very fast and forming a new civilization. The civilization of modern society has changed the direction of education to be more competitive, individualistic, and disintegrated with society's lives (Targowski, 2011b). Education should be universal and humanizing, further enlightening every person to benefit world civilization with character and enlightenment to be integrated with actual life. Even further, education can connect the world and answer problems of poverty, community marginalization, issues of war, gender equality, economic strengthening, environmental conservation, and sustainable development for people's lives (UNESCO, 2018). Likewise, education in Buddhism focuses on self and social transformation to develop the highest human values through disciplined, ethical, intellectual, and spiritual perfection to achieve wisdom (Khakhlyar, 2019). Buddhism is an educational system that aims to regain the intrinsic nature of the individual and teaches absolute equality, that all living beings have this wisdom and innate nature (Narada, 1998).

Pāsādikasutta in Dīgha Nikāya 29 explains that Buddhism refers to how education in learning and training focuses on enlightenment, whose teachings can be defined and stated as liberating, leading to peace and happiness (Sujato, 2020). In Indonesia, the period of Buddhist education development was strongly influenced by the period of Buddhism development in Indonesia itself. The period of Buddhism development in Indonesia has several stages, including 1) Buddhism in the age of the kingdom, 2) Buddhism in the colonial age, 3) revival after independence, 4) the development of Buddhist organizations, and 5) post-sect period (Buddhayana, 2023).

Indonesia is known as a country with an extraordinary diversity of religions and cultures. Buddhism, although it is a minority religion in Indonesia, has an essential contribution to creating social and cultural harmony amid the plurality of society. In the Indonesian Buddhist community, monasteries function as places of worship and as centers of education, culture, and social interaction. In addition, the development of Buddhist teaching is one of the essential pillars to maintain the relevance of Buddhism in the modern era and strengthen the position of Buddhism in Indonesia. The Indonesian Buddhist community consists of various ethnic and cultural backgrounds. Most Buddhists come from the Chinese community, but there are also adherents from Javanese, Balinese, and Dayak ethnic groups in Kalimantan. Buddhists are primarily concentrated in urban areas such as Jakarta, Medan, and Surabaya, as well as rural areas in North Sumatra and Kalimantan. According to the census, the Buddhist population is less than 1% of the total population of Indonesia (Lopez, 2012).

The function of the temple is to be a house of worship. Monasteries are the center of spirituality and culture for Buddhists. Its functions go beyond daily worship activities, including: (1) places of worship – monasteries become the prominent locations for meditation, religious ceremonies, and celebrations such as Vesak; (2) community centers – monasteries provide a space for Buddhists to gather, share experiences, and build social relationships; (3) educational centers – many monasteries hold Dharma classes, seminars, and other educational activities for all ages. The role of monasteries in community development: monasteries not only function as places of worship but also as agents of social change: (1) social services – many monasteries provide free health services, food assistance programs, and other philanthropic activities; (2) cultural preservation – monasteries are often central to the preservation of Buddhist arts and culture, such as sculpture, calligraphy, and dance; and (3) increased environmental awareness – some monasteries are also involved in environmental campaigns, such as greening and waste management (UNESCO, 2021).

Buddhist education shapes Buddhists' understanding, character, and identity. This education aims to (1) teach Dharma Values: Buddhist education emphasizes moral teachings, meditation, and wisdom; (2) to build the Next Generation – through education, Buddhism can be passed on to the younger generation; and (3) improve spiritual understanding – Buddhist education helps individuals understand Buddhist teachings in-depth and relevant to modern life. The Relationship Between Buddhist Community, Monasteries, and Education These three elements are interrelated in strengthening Buddhist identity and the relevance of Buddhism in Indonesia. Monasteries play an essential role in supporting Buddhist education. Many monasteries

hold regular classes for children, teenagers, and adults, teaching moral values and meditation. The monastery also provides meditation programs to increase spiritual awareness and mental balance (Anshari, 2015). Some monasteries train Dharma teachers who then teach Buddhism in schools or communities. Many Buddhist communities fund schools and educational programs through donations. Parents and community members are often involved in academic activities, such as volunteering or mentoring. Buddhist education not only shapes individuals but also strengthens communities: (1) collective consciousness – through education, Buddhist communities understand the importance of cooperation and harmony; and (2) leadership: Education produces Buddhist leaders who can lead communities in the face of social and spiritual challenges (Setiawan, 2021).

The Late Most Venerable Ashin Jinarakkhita Advocating and the Buddhayāna Spirit Movement

The late most venerable Ashin Jinarakkhita was a central figure in the rise of modern Buddhism in Indonesia. Known as the pioneer of the Buddhayāna spirit movement, Ashin Jinarakkhita played an essential role in aligning Buddhism with local values and Indonesian culture. The movement not only aims to revive Buddhism in the country but also to unite various Buddhist traditions, such as Theravāda, Mahāyāna, and Vajrayāna, under the umbrella of harmonious diversity (Kimura, 2003a). His efforts aim to ensure that Buddhism remains relevant in Indonesia as part of the Pancasila framework. At the beginning of the development of Buddhism in Indonesia, Ashin Jinarakkhita faced a significant challenge in promoting Buddhism in a country where the majority of the population adheres to Islam. He realized a new approach was needed to make Buddhism relevant in Indonesia's cultural and social context. The Buddhayāna spirit movement, spearheaded by Ashin Jinarakkhita, is an answer to the need to unite various Buddhist traditions and align Buddhist teachings with local Indonesian values. The basic philosophy of the Buddhayāna spirit is unity in diversity. Buddhayāna's spirit emphasizes that Theravāda, Mahāyāna, and Vajrayāna are distinct but complementary paths to enlightenment. The practicality of dharma with the Dharma movement encourages the application of Buddhist teachings in daily life, focusing on love, compassion, and social harmony. In addition, this movement also had the value of Adapting to customs and culture. Ashin Jinarakkhita integrates local values, such as 'gotong royong' and 'Bhinneka tunggal ika,' into Buddhist teachings to ensure their relevance to Indonesian society (Burmansah et al., 2023).

This movement aims to revive Buddhism as one of the official religions in Indonesia. The more fundamental thing is to unite Buddhists from different traditions to create internal harmony. Furthermore, this movement is also able to introduce Buddhist values that are relevant to the social and cultural context of Indonesia. Ashin Jinarakkhita's advocacy for Buddhayāna used a variety of strategies to promote and propagate in Indonesia, from building institutions to leading interfaith dialogue. One of Ashin Jinarakkhita's outstanding achievements was to revive the Vesak celebration at Borobudur Temple. This activity symbolized the unity of Buddhists and Indonesia's cultural heritage. Borobudur Temple as a spiritual center—He made the Vesak celebration at Borobudur Temple a national and international event to show the

greatness of Buddhism in Indonesia. Another significant value is interreligious harmony. Vesak is also a means to promote interfaith dialogue and strengthen the spirit of diversity. Ashin Jinarakkhita founded the Maha Sangha of Indonesia as an organizational forum that unites various Buddhist traditions in Indonesia. He also prioritized education by establishing schools and seminaries (Kimura, 2003a).

The development of Buddhism in Indonesia was also influenced by the Diversity of Buddhist schools and the country's situation. The Buddhist schools in Indonesia were divided into Theravada, Mahayana, and Vajrayana. Since Buddhism arose in Indonesia, the followers of Buddhism continuously grown in the country are now split into seven groups: Buddhayāna, Theravada, Mahayana, Kasogatan, which is a group of followers of old Javanese Buddhism, Maitreya, Nichiren, which is a new Japanese Buddhist sect popularly known as 'Sokagakkai', and Tridharma. In the development of Indonesian Buddhism, the view of all traditions of Buddhism has their wisdom points in a skillful means, which all represented the same goal to achieve the path of liberation according to the teachings of Buddha, and there is no distinction among the doctrines of Buddhism. The insight and perspective refer to Buddhayāna. Buddhayāna is the way to use the wisdom of all Buddhist schools. It should instead be expressed as the united form of all Buddhism and spread in inclusive Buddhism, accepting the insight from the schools of Theravada, Mahayana, and Vajrayana (Kimura, 2003b).

Having diverse Buddhist schools potentially creates obstacles and problems, so the Buddhayāna spirit movement became an idea to support avoiding conflicts among Buddhist followers in Indonesia. The thought of Buddhayāna was made to bring the spirit of nonsectarians and avoid becoming a Buddhist follower with a radically and rigidly narrow mind of implementing the Buddha's teaching in all aspects daily. Buddhayāna was defined as unity in the Diversity of Buddhism (Kimura, 2003b; Mukti, 2004). Buddhayāna combines the essence of teachings with one's lifestyle and culture. Buddhayāna is synonymous with Ekayana, which refers to and summarizes the views, streams of teachings, or even the understanding of Buddhism in general, confirming that Dharma or Dharmas is the only one. This term erodes confusion and the view that many Buddhist schools are reflected in the many streams, which show a different truth. In Buddhayāna, Diversity and Adaptation are not a difference or division but are an integral part of Ekayana. Buddhayāna is not a sect but Buddhism itself (Mukti, 2004).

The most crucial factors in promoting harmony in a nonsectarian view are an open mind, nondiscrimination, moderation, and tolerance. If people do not understand something or think that something is against the principles, they mindfully work to investigate and find the true Buddhist spirit. A closed mind and selfish perspective will only bring something worse than sectarianism – religious fanaticism, which should be grateful that Buddhism is entirely free from it in its long history (Piyasilo, 2008). Wisdom and compassion, in essence, are not two but one, which is the indescribable Nirvana, and the path that leads to it, namely the Arhatship Path and the Bodhisattva Path, is one, that is one path or one vehicle (Ekayana), the path of Buddha (Buddhayāna). When we see that the path of mindful living, the accurate esoteric way, the path of emptiness, the path of compassion, and the middle way are all aspects of the one path—the path taught by Buddha as the path of liberation is one for all.

Buddhists pursue various methods of achieving that goal (Apple, 2015; Sujato et al., 2012). Buddhayāna is an exciting alternative that can replace dogmatism or the emptiness of secularism. Beyond being merely an exotic attraction, Buddhayāna will be well integrated into people's lives contextually (Dhammika, 2006). Buddhayāna spirit movement in Indonesia carries the mission of practicing and sharing the essence of Buddhism contextually through self-transformation and social transformation by adhering to the values of non-sectarianism, inclusivism, pluralism, universalism, and belief in Dharmakaya – *Namo Sang Hyang Adi Buddhaya* (Buddhayana, 2021).

The spirit of the Buddhayāna movement brought an excellent foundation for developing Buddhist society, whether the development of economics, culture, social work, and all aspects of social life or even education in Indonesia (IBC-RDB, 2005). Buddhist education development is becoming directed and flown toward Buddhism's growth. With this spirit of Buddhayāna, the development of Buddhist education is not hindered by various obstacles from the Diversity of Buddhist schools and government policies related to the development of Buddhist society. The spirit of Buddhayāna makes Buddhism more contextual, humanist, and inclusive. The essence of Buddhayāna is more adaptive, transformative, and meditative (Buddhayana, 2021; Shan-fo, 1999). The Buddhist education system was developed based on fundamental life. This education is based on a student's moral, mental, and physical development. It also diverts students toward the rules of the Sangha and guides them to follow them (Gethin, 1998). Tracing back to the 5th century B.C., the Buddha initially taught Buddhist Education. Its main characteristics were monastic and covered all castes. The main objective of the Buddhist Education system is to facilitate the overall and thorough development of the student's personality, be it intellectual and moral development as well as physical and mental development. The educational spirit of Buddha himself emphasized the values of egolessness, altruism, compassion, and equality. It is based on the doctrine of dependent origins, causation, and karma. In education, wisdom is the basis for guiding sentient beings and lovingly brings everyone out of ignorance (Khakhlary, 2019; Narada, 1998).

The Buddhayāna Spirit Movement and the Development of Buddhist Education in Indonesia

Buddhism has been an integral part of the history and culture of the archipelago for centuries. From the heyday of the Srivijaya and Majapahit kingdoms to its resurgence in the modern era, Buddhism has continued to adapt to the changing needs of society. One of the crucial innovations in the development of Buddhism in Indonesia is the Buddhayāna spirit movement, spearheaded by Bhikkhu Ashin Jinarakkhita in the mid-20th century. The movement aims to unite various Buddhist traditions and adapt Buddhism to Indonesia's cultural and social context. Along with the emergence of the Buddhayāna spirit movement, Buddhist education in Indonesia has also developed to spread Buddhism more widely and relevantly (Anshari, 2015). Buddhist education is essential in building a new generation of Buddhists who can apply Buddhist values daily and answer modern challenges. The development of Buddhist education in Indonesia during the Srivijaya and Majapahit kingdom, Buddhist education developed rapidly. The monasteries in the Srivijaya kingdom became a center of learning that

attracted scholars from various countries. However, Buddhist education also declined with the decline in Buddhism's influence after Islam's entry. In the 20th century, Buddhist education began to revival through the efforts of figures such as Bhikkhu Ashin Jinarakkhita. Some of the essential milestones in the development of Buddhist education include formal and non-formal approaches—Buddhist education is now available in the form of formal schools, seminars, and Dharma classes held in monasteries (Tambyah, 2019).

Buddhist education aims to teach Dharma values to cultivate students' character based on Buddhist values such as love, patience, and wisdom. Preparing spiritual leaders means producing competent Dharma teachers and community leaders. Integrating Buddhism with Modern Life is to provide practical solutions to social, environmental, and moral challenges. The Buddhayāna Spirit Movement and the development of Buddhist education have a close relationship—the two support each other in creating a strong, relevant, and inclusive Buddhist society. The Buddhayāna spirit movement provides a philosophical framework that can be implemented in Buddhist education, namely (1) the unity of teachings—the Buddhayāna spirit encourages the integration of various Buddhist traditions in the educational curriculum; (2) cultural relevance—Buddhist education inspired by Buddhayāna is more acceptable because it adapts Buddhism to Indonesian culture; (3) emphasis on practical values—the Buddhayāna-based curriculum emphasizes the application of Buddhist values in daily life. On the contrary, Buddhist education became an essential tool for spreading Buddhayāna values: (1) formal education, such as Buddhist Schools taught the Buddhayāna philosophy to the younger generation, and (2) non-formal education such as Dharma classes and meditation retreats held in monasteries often reflect Buddhayāna values (Kimura, 2003a; Burmansah et al., 2023).

The Buddhayāna spirit movement and Buddhist education have made significant contributions to the Buddhist community in Indonesia: (1) community unity, i.e., by integrating various traditions, the Buddhayāna spirit creates harmony among the Buddhist community; (2) increasing spiritual awareness, namely Buddhist education, helps people understand Buddhist teachings in depth; and (3) social involvement, which is Buddhist values that encourage people to be active in social activities such as health services and humanitarian assistance (Suryadinata, 2005). Outside the Buddhist community, Buddhist values and Buddhist education also have a positive impact: (1) interreligious harmony—The Buddhayāna spirit movement promotes tolerance and interreligious dialogue; (2) cultural preservation—Buddhist education helps preserve cultural heritage such as Borobudur and the Vesak tradition; and (3) ethical leadership—Buddhist education produces values-based leaders, who contribute to social development. Despite achieving many things, the Buddhayāna spirit movement and Buddhist education face various challenges, namely: (1) limited resources—many Buddhist schools and monasteries lack funds and infrastructure; (2) minorities in Indonesia—as a minority religion, Buddhism often has limited representation in national policy; (3) modernization—integrating Buddhism with the modern world remains a challenge, especially in attracting the interest of the younger generation; and

(4) internal fragmentation – although the Buddhayāna spirit aims to unify, some groups still maintain an exclusive approach to their traditions (Ricklefs, 2007).

Several strategies can be implemented to meet these challenges by combining Buddhism with modern science, such as technology and psychology, and developing online learning platforms to improve access to Buddhist education. The reach of the Buddhayāna spirit movement by increasing public awareness by promoting Buddhayāna values through social media and public campaigns. By holding joint programs with other religious communities to promote universal values such as compassion and harmony. Increase youth involvement by holding retreats, leadership training, and social activities to attract the younger generation. Also, it can use a creative and interactive approach to teaching Buddhism (Petersen, 2015). The Buddhayāna spirit movement and the development of Buddhist education in Indonesia are mutually supportive elements in strengthening the Buddhist community and promoting Buddhist values. Through strategies that focus on inclusivity, cultural Adaptation, and modernization, these two elements can continue to evolve and significantly contribute to a pluralistic Indonesian society by overcoming existing challenges and taking advantage of opportunities through disseminating the Buddhayāna spirit movement and education development (Zhong, 2018).

The Crisis and Gap in Indonesian Buddhism as an Obstacle to the Development of Buddhist Education in Indonesia

Buddhism in Indonesia has a long history that reflects its influence on culture, spirituality, and education. However, Buddhist organizations in Indonesia face various challenges in modern developments, including internal crises, gaps between organizations, and sectarian diversity. These factors affected the relationship between Buddhists and became a significant obstacle to developing Buddhist education. As a religion rich in tradition and philosophical teachings, Buddhist education is vital in transmitting Dharma values and building a generation that understands and practices Buddhist teachings (Lopez, 2012). However, with cooperation and synergy between organizations and sects, the development of Buddhist education in Indonesia has improved. This diversity is supposed to be wealth, but it often creates (1) Internal fragmentation – a lack of unity among various sects leads to differences in priorities and approaches to the development of education; (2) organizational competition – each sect tends to build exclusive educational institutions and programs, hindering effective collaboration; and (3) lack of inter-traditional dialogue – a lack of dialogue leads to a low understanding of inter-tradition, which can exacerbate internal tensions (Wijayanto, 2020a).

Buddhist organizations in Indonesia are essential in promoting Buddhism, building communities, and supporting education. However, these organizations often face internal crises and gaps between organizations. Internal crises include (1) uncoordinated leadership – many Buddhist organizations run independently, without a coherent vision and mission; (2) Conflict of interest – differences in vision between organizations often lead to conflicts of interest that hinder mutual progress; and (3) lack of transparency – some Buddhist organizations have faced criticism regarding the lack of transparency in the management of resources. The gap between organizations

includes financial gaps marked by some organizations having abundant resources while others face limited funds to run educational programs. In addition, regional disparities—organizations based in large cities tend to be more advanced than organizations in rural or remote areas. The most significant thing is the lack of synergy—the absence of a common platform to share resources and ideas hinders collaboration between organizations (Kompas, 2022).

Crises and disparities in Buddhist organizations create a fragmented education. Lack of curriculum standardization: each organization or sect often needs coordination with others to develop their curriculum. Educational access gap: Buddhist education tends to be more available in urban areas, while Buddhist communities in remote areas have limited access. Lack of Innovation: Internal conflicts and lack of cooperation limit innovation in teaching methods and educational materials. This fragmentation and disparity hurt the younger Buddhists, including a lack of interest. Education irrelevant to modern needs makes the younger generation less interested in Buddhism. Identity confusion that creates differences in teachings between traditions can lead to confusion in understanding the core of the Dharma. Limited Opportunities lead to a need for more quality education, limiting opportunities for the younger generation to become competent leaders of the Buddhist community (Coedes, 1968).

The crisis and disparities in Buddhist organizations and the diversity of Buddhist sects in Indonesia are significant challenges in developing Buddhist education. Fragmentation, internal conflicts, and resource gaps hinder Buddhist education's ability to transmit Dharma values effectively. However, these challenges can be overcome through inter-traditional dialogue, curriculum standardization, the use of technology, and improved teacher training. With a collaborative and innovative approach, Buddhist education in Indonesia has great potential to grow and positively impact the local Buddhist community and the development of Buddhism globally. This effort will ensure that the values of the Dharma remain relevant and able to answer the needs of modern society (Ricklefs, 2007).

Restoring the Essence of Buddhism and Future Buddhist Education Development in Indonesia and Its Contribution to the World

Buddhist education in Indonesia has played an essential role in building Buddhist spiritual understanding and practice in the country. However, amid an increasingly modern and complex era, the essence of Buddhism is often threatened by excessive formalities, less contextual interpretation, and a lack of integration with the needs of contemporary society. To maintain the relevance and depth of Buddhist teachings, a systematic effort must be made to restore the essence of the Dharma in Buddhist practice and education in Indonesia (Kompas, 2022). Buddhist education aims to transmit Buddhist teachings and create a generation that understands ethical values, compassion, and wisdom that can be applied daily. The essence of Buddhism remains relevant in facing the challenges of modern society, including (1) mental well-being—meditation and mindfulness practices taught by the Buddha can help manage stress, anxiety, and depression; (2) global ethics—principles such as non-harm (ahimsa) and respect for life are particularly relevant in dealing with issues such as violence, conflict, and environmental damage; and (3) Interdependence—the teaching of

interdependence (Paticca samuppāda) provides a holistic view of human relationships with the environment and society (Wijayanto, 2020b).

Many Buddhist practices tend to focus on rituals and traditions without understanding the deep meaning behind them. It can obscure the essence of Buddhism as a spiritual and philosophical path. In Indonesia, Buddhism is divided into several traditions, such as Theravāda, Mahāyāna, and Vajrayāna. These differences often create barriers that hinder unity in understanding the dharma. The new Buddhist generation frequently feels that Buddhism is less relevant to their lives, filled with technological challenges, globalization, and social change (UNESCO, 2021). The limited number of competent Dharma teachers and the lack of qualified Buddhist education are obstacles to transmitting the essence of Buddhism. The strategy is to restore the spirit of Buddhism by developing education based on the nature of the dharma. Buddhist education should return to the core of Buddhism by emphasizing (1) practical understanding—to teach how the dharma can be implemented in daily life; (2) meditation and mindfulness—provides in-depth training on meditation and mindfulness as a tool for inner transformation; and (3) developing ethics and morality by instilling values such as honesty, compassion, and social responsibility. Efforts to unite various Buddhist traditions in Indonesia can be made through dialogue and collaboration, focusing on the similarity of the core values of the dharma—dharma digital technology to spread Buddhism more widely (Wijayanto, 2020a). Train Dharma teachers who are competent and relevant to the needs of modern times. Qualified teachers can be agents of change in transmitting the essence of the dharma to the Buddhist generation.

Buddhist education must reflect the core values of the Dharma as Dharma is relevant to the modern challenge, which is interdisciplinary and is the ability to integrate Buddhism with modern sciences such as psychology, technology, and the environment—contextual Buddhist education by adapting Buddhist teachings to local needs and Indonesian culture. Technology can be a powerful tool to spread Buddhist education through learning apps. It can be created by creating apps that contain Buddhist teaching materials in an interactive and engaging format, learning innovations through webinar media and learning videos, and holding webinars on Buddhist topics relevant to modern life (Coedes, 1968). Two complementary things are restoring the essence of Buddhism and developing Buddhist education in Indonesia. By focusing on the core of the Dharma, Buddhist education can be a tool for creating a more harmonious, tolerant, and ethical society. Meanwhile, efforts to integrate Buddhist values with modern challenges will ensure the relevance of Buddhism in the era of globalization. Through curriculum innovation, the use of technology, teacher training, and interfaith collaboration, Buddhist education in Indonesia can continue to develop and provide direct benefits in daily life (Soekmono, 1976).

Buddhism's role in diversity has shown that its universal values can support diversity and social harmony. In a pluralistic society like Indonesia, Buddhism acts as a bridge between cultures: interreligious dialogue—Buddhist communities are active in interfaith dialogue, promoting tolerance and mutual understanding. In addition, the celebrating in Borobudur Temple is a religious ritual and a symbol of diversity that invites the participation of people from various backgrounds. Many Buddhist

organizations are involved in social activities such as humanitarian aid and education, which involve collaboration with other religious communities (Setiawan, 2021). The Buddhist community shows how compassion and tolerance can strengthen interfaith relationships in everyday life. The challenge of the Buddhist community in Diversity in Indonesia is to feel discrimination and marginalization—as a minority community, Buddhists sometimes face discrimination, especially in areas with a particular religious majority. Limited representation—Buddhists have limited representation in government structures and public institutions (Kompas, 2022).

Buddhist education is the key to strengthening the existence of Buddhism in Indonesia. The Buddhist community needs to be active in advocating for policies that support diversity, such as equitable access to education and representation in government. Buddhism needs to continue harmonizing with local culture, such as the values of cooperation and *Bhinneka Tunggal Ika*, to strengthen public acceptance. Buddhism in Indonesia, despite being a minority religion, has a history and a significant contribution to shaping social diversity and harmony (Rai, 2017). Through universal values such as compassion, tolerance, and justice, Buddhism is in line with the ideology of Pancasila and can adapt to modern challenges. With strategies that include education, cultural promotion, and policy advocacy, the Buddhist community can continue to play an essential role in creating a more inclusive and harmonious Indonesian society. The existence of Buddhism is not only part of Indonesia's past but also the key to the future of the nation's diversity (Dharmaputra, 2019).

Buddhist education is vital in maintaining, spreading, and developing Buddhist teachings. As one of the oldest religions in the world, Buddhism has universal relevance that transcends geographical and cultural boundaries. In Indonesia, Buddhist education not only aims to preserve local traditions but also contributes to the development of Buddhism at the global level. As a country with cultural and religious Diversity, Indonesia has great potential to become an innovative center for Buddhist education and development. Indonesia has a rich Buddhist heritage, such as the Borobudur Temple, a spiritual center and a global icon. Buddhist education in Indonesia helps preserve and promote this heritage internationally. Buddhist values such as compassion, wisdom, and interdependence have become relevant in facing global challenges such as conflict, social inequality, and environmental degradation (Tambyah, 2019).

Through Buddhist higher education, Indonesia can produce spiritual leaders contributing to the global dialogue on ethics, spirituality, and sustainability. Indonesian Buddhist education allows the Buddhist community to participate in international conferences and initiatives that promote peace and harmony. Buddhist education helps Buddhists in Indonesia understand and maintain their identity amid a pluralistic society. Buddhist values taught through education contribute to forming a more ethical, harmonious, and inclusive society (Nugroho, 2019). Buddhism's teachings on interdependence inspired an environmental preservation movement based on spiritual values. Inclusive Buddhist education promotes interfaith dialogue and cooperation, creating social harmony at the local and global levels. Buddhist education in Indonesia has great potential to contribute to the development of Buddhism globally. Through

preserving cultural heritage, disseminating universal values, and developing spiritual leaders, Indonesian Buddhist education can become a global force in promoting compassion, wisdom, and harmony. By facing challenges such as limited resources and curriculum modernization, Buddhist education in Indonesia can continue to develop through innovative strategies relevant to the times' needs. In the future, Buddhist education will strengthen Indonesia's Buddhist community and positively impact the world (Coedes, 1968).

Conclusion

Buddhist education in Indonesia has great potential to develop as a moral and intellectual foundation for future generations. This analysis shows that the success of Buddhist education is highly dependent on the reconstruction of the Buddhist community's view of religious education. Traditional views that tend to be exclusive and rigid need to be transformed into a more inclusive, relevant, and adaptive approach to the dynamics of the times, especially in the ever-evolving digital era. The reconstruction aims to create an education system that teaches religious doctrine and equips students with critical thinking skills, ethical values, and global insights appropriate for modern challenges. Integrating the Buddhayāna spirit movement is one of the strategic solutions to accelerate the development of Buddhist education in Indonesia. The Buddhayāna spirit encourages a holistic approach to education, combining universal Buddhist values with a contextual and technology-based curriculum. Implementing the Buddhayāna spirit allows Buddhist education to remain relevant, not only within the religious community but also in its contribution to the development of society at large. Collaboration between governments, religious institutions, and Buddhist communities is necessary to realize this goal. The government is expected to support policy, while the Buddhist community must actively promote and implement educational innovations. Renewed Buddhist education can create a harmonious, integrity, and globally minded society. Thus, the future of Buddhist education in Indonesia lies in the ability to carry out transformations, integrate the Buddhayāna spirit, and create synergies between spiritual values and the needs of the modern world. This step strengthens the Buddhist identity and enriches Buddhism's contribution to inclusive and sustainable nation-building.

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