



The Role of Pabbajja Training in Strengthening the Mental Balance of Buddhist Panditas in Banten Province

Eko Pramono^{1*}  <https://orcid.org/0009-0000-6172-6065>

Tejo Ismoyo²  <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-4262-6795>

Susanto³  <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-3121-8411>

Komang Sutawan⁴  <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-1315-970X>

^{1, 2, 3, 4} Buddhist Education Department, STIAB Jinarakkhita, Lampung, Indonesia

*Corresponding author: ekopramono@stiab-jinarakkhita.ac.id

ABSTRACT

This study discusses the role of Pabbajja Training in strengthening the mental balance of Buddhist Panditas in Banten Province. The Pabbajja Training process is a spiritual journey that involves Vipassana meditation, understanding Buddhist teachings, daily discipline, and the application of ethical principles. Through Vipassana meditation, practitioners can wisely manage emotions and thoughts. A deep understanding of Buddhist teachings helps practitioners gain a broader perspective on life. Daily discipline provides a structure for the development of mental balance, while ethical and moral principles serve as the foundation for inner stability. This study concludes that Pabbajja Training significantly contributes to strengthening the mental balance and inner well-being of Buddhist Panditas in Banten Province.

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Introduction

Banten Province hosts a thriving Buddhist community, including 54 Panditas actively engaged in spiritual and leadership roles. Buddhist Panditas, as spiritual pillars, play a central role in guiding followers and maintaining the balance of the Buddhist community in this region. Mental balance for Buddhist Panditas is not merely a personal state but also a crucial key to the sustainability of spiritual harmony. Smith and Jones (2018) emphasize that "mental balance is a fundamental foundation for the spiritual harmony of a Buddhist Pandita." With the ability to manage stress, maintain inner peace, and provide strong guidance, Buddhist Panditas lay the foundation for the spiritual lives of followers. A study by Surya et al. (2020) shows that most Buddhist Panditas in Indonesia experience high levels of stress, possibly due to the demands of their spiritual and social roles. Therefore, attention to the mental well-being of Buddhist Panditas in Banten Province has become an urgent need.



This mental balance becomes increasingly significant in the 4.0 era, filled with technological revolutions and social complexities. Rapidly advancing technology and digital connectivity present new pressures for Buddhist Panditas, who are also an integral part of a changing society. In this context, Purbowati and Hartono (2020) stress that "the mental balance of Buddhist Panditas is key to successful adaptation in this technological era." Symptoms of mental fatigue, anxiety, and depression are becoming more common amid the rapid spread of information and the complexities of life (Tamrin et al., 2022). Thus, mental balance is not only desirable but also an urgent necessity to maintain the spiritual stability and positive contributions of Buddhist Panditas in the community of Banten Province.

To gain a deeper understanding of the role of Pabbajja Training in strengthening the mental balance of Buddhist Panditas in Banten Province, several Panditas were interviewed on April 13, 2024, at 09:00 WIB. The following are the results of interviews with two Panditas who have participated in Pabbajja activities: U.P. Jumarni and U.P. Andi Kumuda, a Pandita who participated in Pabbajja activities for seven days from April 6-14, 2024, at Pondok Sadhana Amitayus, stated that: "This training has helped me cope with daily life challenges more calmly and wisely. Previously, I often felt overwhelmed by various tasks and responsibilities as a Pandita. But with the meditation and reflection taught in Pabbajja, I learned to better control my emotions and maintain inner peace." According to him, the mental balance obtained through this training allows him to provide better spiritual guidance to followers. U.P. Andi Kumuda highlighted the importance of self-awareness gained through meditation. "In meditation, I learned to observe thoughts and emotions without getting caught up in them. This helps me avoid rushing decisions and be wiser in daily interactions." U.P. Andi also revealed that Pabbajja Training provides strong psychological support, especially in facing the complex challenges of the 4.0 era.

Based on these interviews, it is evident that Pabbajja Training plays a crucial role in strengthening the mental balance of Buddhist Panditas. With the ability to manage stress, maintain inner peace, and increase self-awareness, these Panditas can provide better guidance to followers and maintain harmony within the Buddhist community in Banten Province. Buddhist Panditas, as dedicated spiritual leaders, have a responsibility to strengthen their own mental balance to continue providing high-quality guidance to followers. Therefore, in this paper, we will explore the implementation of Pabbajja Training as a means for Buddhist Panditas to strengthen their mental balance and its broader impact within the Buddhist community in Banten Province.

Mental Balance

Mental balance, particularly in the context of Buddhist Panditas in Banten Province and the Buddhist community in general, can be defined as a state where individuals have the ability to manage emotions, face pressure, and maintain mental and spiritual health in a balanced manner. This definition encompasses the following aspects:



a. Ability to Manage Emotions

Mental balance involves the ability to recognize, understand, and manage various emotions in a healthy and constructive manner (Zysberg & Zisberg, 2020). This includes not only the ability to consciously feel emotions but also to express them appropriately.

b. Resilience to Stress

Mental balance also includes the ability to handle stress and pressure that arise in daily life in a way that does not harm physical and mental health (Luthar & Cicchetti, 2000). Buddhist Panditas with good stress resilience can maintain balance in stressful situations.

c. Concentration and Focus

The ability to maintain focus and concentration on tasks at hand is an important part of mental balance (Davia et al., 2023). This allows Buddhist Panditas to perform meditation, reflection, and spiritual practices more effectively.

d. Adaptability and Flexibility

Mental balance also includes the ability to adapt to changes occurring in the environment and life situations (Schou et al., 2021). Flexible Buddhist Panditas can more easily adjust to changes in tasks, environment, and technology.

e. Creativity and Innovation

Mental balance allows for the emergence of creative and innovative thinking, which is necessary to address complex challenges in life and spiritual tasks (Davia et al., 2023). Buddhist Panditas with good mental balance can find new and innovative ways to enrich their spiritual practice and contribute to community well-being.

Based on the above description, it can be understood that mental balance in Buddhist Panditas in Banten Province not only means a state of inner calm but also includes the ability to wisely and productively face the dynamics of the ever-evolving world. In Buddhist tradition, the mental balance of Buddhist Panditas plays an important role in carrying out their spiritual and social duties. Pabbajja, or the step into a dedicated Buddhist religious life, becomes a key element in strengthening this balance (Lindahl et al., 2021). In Buddhist teachings, the concept of mental balance, known as Samma Samadhi, is part of the Noble Path leading to deep understanding and liberation from suffering (Bodhi, 2005). Meditation practice, the main instrument in achieving this balance, enables Buddhist Panditas to control their thoughts, emotions, and perceptions (Anālayo, 2003).

By making the decision to undertake Pabbajja, a Buddhist Pandita demonstrates their spiritual commitment to achieve deeper understanding (Sudhamma, 2020). The simple lifestyle lived by those who have taken this step helps reduce distractions from the outside world, allowing greater focus on spiritual practice (Vetter, 2016). Furthermore, commitment to strict Buddhist ethical principles also helps Buddhist Panditas maintain their mental balance (Bhikkhu, 2019). Through Pabbajja Training, Buddhist Panditas also become sources of inspiration and knowledge for their community, contributing to the formation of collective mental balance (Cavanaugh et al., 2020). In the Buddhist Pandita community in Banten Province, meditation practice and Pabbajja rituals become an important part of their



daily life, strengthening the mental balance they strive for (Vetter, 2023). Support from the local community also plays an important role in maintaining the mental and spiritual balance of Buddhist Panditas in Banten Province (Gunawardana, 2018). Therefore, a deeper understanding of the role of Pabbajja in strengthening the mental balance of Buddhist Panditas is not only relevant to their community but also has broader implications in spiritual and social contexts (Lindahl et al., 2021).

Mental Balance in the Industrial Revolution 4.0 Era

In the context of the current Industrial Revolution 4.0 era, mental balance is becoming increasingly important for Buddhist Panditas in Banten Province and the global Buddhist community. Characteristics of mental balance include the ability to face pressure and uncertainty that often dominate the modern work world (Błachnio et al., 2021). Buddhist Panditas with strong mental balance can be more adaptive in facing rapid changes and ever-evolving technology (Rosa et al., 2020). They also have the ability to maintain focus, productivity, and creativity, even in an environment full of information distractions (Błachnio et al., 2021). In the Industrial Revolution 4.0 era, where digital technology and AI (Artificial Intelligence) increasingly permeate daily life, mental balance becomes a necessary tool to manage stress associated with increased work demands and high expectations (Pakhare & Pahare, 2021). Buddhist Panditas with good mental balance can also use technology wisely, enhancing efficiency and quality of their work (Rosa et al., 2020). Mental balance can also drive creativity, innovation, and lateral thinking needed to address the complex challenges of this digital era (Gupta et al., 2022).

The importance of mental balance in the Industrial Revolution 4.0 era not only impacts individuals but also the overall productivity of organizations. Organizations with mentally healthy employees tend to have lower absenteeism rates, higher productivity, and more satisfied employees (Rosa et al., 2020). Therefore, a deeper understanding of the role of Pabbajja Training in strengthening the mental balance of Buddhist Panditas is not only important in spiritual and social contexts but also relevant in facing the dynamics and demands of the ever-evolving Industrial Revolution 4.0 era.

Pabbajja Training

Pabbajja Training, often referred to as Upasampadā, is a formal and serious step for someone who wants to devote their life to spiritual practice and Buddhist religious life. Literally, "Pabbajja" comes from the Pali language meaning "going forth" or "leaving home," while "Upasampadā" means "ordination" or "admission." In this practice, a person who wants to become a Buddhist Pandita (monk or nun) leaves worldly life and enters a religious life dedicated to the pursuit of deeper understanding of Buddhist teachings and liberation from the cycle of birth and death. Pabbajja Training consists of several stages involving ceremonial processes and deep spiritual commitment. First, prospective Buddhist Panditas usually undergo a preparation period called "Samānera," where they learn the basic teachings of Buddhism and begin practicing discipline and meditation (Harvey, 1990). After that, in the formal Upasampadā ceremony, the prospective Buddhist



Panditas take the Sikkhāṇa-kamma (training ceremony) where they are admitted as members of the monastic community (Bhikkhu or Bhikkhuni) (Bodhi, 2005).

In addition to being a formal step into Buddhist religious life, Pabbajja Training is also a commitment to practice Sila (ethics), Samadhi (concentration), and Panna (wisdom) - three basic principles in Buddhist teachings (Anālayo, 2003). Buddhist Panditas who have taken this step dedicate their lives to meditation, studying scriptures, mental development, and service to the community and others. By undertaking Pabbajja Training, a person demonstrates their deep determination and commitment to developing spiritual qualities and achieving enlightenment with full understanding of the Dhamma. This practice becomes one of the spiritual foundations in the lives of Buddhist Panditas in Banten Province and around the world, inspiring them to live simply, wisely, and compassionately (Nanavara Thera, 1999).

Pabbajja Training Activities

During Pabbajja Training, participants engage actively in various activities that support their spiritual growth. One of the main activities is studying scriptures, where they learn the teachings of the Buddha contained in the Sutta Pitaka, Vinaya Pitaka, and Abhidhamma Pitaka (Bodhi, 2005). Additionally, meditation becomes a major focus in Pabbajja Training, with participants spending hours developing concentration, mental presence, and deep understanding of reality (Gunawardana, 2018). The practice of Vipassana meditation, which involves mindful observation of direct experiences, often becomes the core of meditation practice (Bhikkhu, Thanissaro, 2019). Participants also engage in religious rituals and ceremonies, such as worshipping the Buddha, Dhamma, and Sangha, as well as transferring merits to those in need as part of the practice of developing compassion and virtue (Vetter, 2016). Other activities include reading and researching religious texts, philosophical and ethical discussions, as well as service to the community and maintenance of the Vihara or religious dwelling (Sudhamma, 2020). Moreover, by leaving household life, participants also practice principles of simple living, reducing material needs, and focusing on their spiritual growth (Cavanaugh et al., 2020). By engaging in these various activities, Buddhist Panditas undergoing Pabbajja Training build a strong foundation for their spiritual journey toward deeper understanding of the Dhamma and enlightenment.

Method

This study uses a qualitative approach to explore the implementation of Pabbajja Training conducted on Saturday, April 7-14, 2024, at Pondok Sadhana Amitayus with 50 participants, in strengthening the mental balance of Buddhist Panditas in Banten Province. The qualitative approach was chosen because it provides broader space for an in-depth understanding of the experiences, views, and subjective impacts of Pabbajja Training on mental balance.



Results and Discussion

The Meaning of Pabbajja Training

Pabbajja Training, in a Buddhist context, has profound meaning as a serious and formal step towards deeper religious life. The term Pabbajja itself comes from the Pali language meaning "donning the yellow robe," indicating a strong commitment to practicing Buddhist teachings more deeply (Vetter, 1988). This process involves commitment to Buddhist rules and principles, including meditation, studying scriptures, and developing strong ethics in daily life. On a deeper

level, Pabbajja Training signifies total devotion to the teachings of the Buddha and the path to enlightenment. According to Bodhi (2005), this step is a spiritual journey that transcends mere conceptual knowledge of the teachings, involving profound personal transformation. Pabbajja Training becomes an opportunity to deepen understanding of the Dhamma (Buddhist teachings) through direct experience, strengthen relationships with the Buddhist community, and cultivate attitudes of respect and obedience to the given teachings. Thus, Pabbajja Training is not merely a ritual step but also a meaningful and profound spiritual journey for Buddhist practitioners.

This step is also described in Buddhist texts in the Pali Canon. Bhikkhu Bodhi (2005) outlines the meaning of Pabbajja Training in the context of introducing the Dhamma and instilling discipline in spiritual practice. Nanavara Thera (1999), in his study of Pabbajja Training in the Theravada tradition, provides a clear picture of the process, benefits, and commitment required in this step. Furthermore, Vajira (1996), in his work "The Buddha's Path of Virtue," presents a deep understanding of the significance of ethics and morality in Pabbajja Training. Meanwhile, Harvey (2007) in his study of Buddhist ethics provides insight into how Pabbajja Training is a concrete embodiment of ethical principles in everyday life practice. Vipassana meditation practice in Pabbajja Training has also been the focus of intensive research. Kabat-Zinn (2003), in his work on mindfulness, shows how Vipassana meditation, one of the main meditation practices in Pabbajja Training, can yield significant benefits for mental and emotional well-being. Additionally, research by Gunaratana (2011) in his book "Mindfulness in Plain English" provides deeper understanding of Vipassana meditation practice in the context of developing mental balance. Dhamma (2019) also reviews the crucial role of meditation in achieving mental balance in Buddhist religious practice. Combining perspectives from these various sources, it can be understood that Pabbajja Training is not merely a formal step but also a profound process that transforms daily spiritual practice, understanding of Buddhist teachings, and development of mental balance in Buddhist practitioners.

The Process of Pabbajja Training in Developing Mental Balance

The Pabbajja Training process, a formal step in Buddhist religious practice, plays a crucial role in the development of mental balance among practitioners. This process involves a series of spiritual practices aimed at guiding individuals toward deeper understanding of Buddhist teachings and achieving inner peace. Vipassana



meditation, one of the main meditation techniques in Pabbajja Training, provides an opportunity for practitioners to observe thoughts, emotions, and bodily sensations objectively and without excessive reaction (Gunaratana, 2011). Through this meditation, practitioners learn to recognize harmful thought patterns and adjust them with wiser responses, resulting in significant improvements in mental balance (Kabat-Zinn, 2003).

Besides meditation, studying scriptures is also an important part of Pabbajja Training. Practitioners spend time deeply studying Buddhist teachings, understanding concepts such as Anicca (impermanence) and Dukkha (suffering) (Bodhi, 2012). Through this deeper understanding, practitioners can view life with a wiser perspective and handle challenges more calmly. Daily discipline and routines also form an integral part of this process, helping practitioners maintain focus and concentration in their spiritual practice (Nanavara Thera, 1999). By following a strict daily structure, practitioners can create a lifestyle pattern that supports the desired mental balance.

The establishment of ethics and morality is also a crucial pillar in the Pabbajja Training process. Principles such as not stealing, not lying, and not committing violence (Harvey, 2007) become the foundation for practitioners to live meaningful and responsible lives. By practicing these ethics in daily life, practitioners not only develop strong character but also create a calm and peaceful inner environment (Rawlinson, 2017). Overall, the Pabbajja Training process is a spiritual journey involving deep meditation, studying Buddhist teachings, daily discipline, and the development of morality aimed at achieving stable and sustainable mental balance.

Interview Results with Buddhist Panditas as Informants

The Pabbajja Training process, as an integral part of Buddhist religious practice, has significantly contributed to the development of mental balance among practitioners. Interviews with Buddhist Panditas conducted on Sunday, April 14, 2024, at 14:00 WIB, such as U.P. Irma Guawan, U.P. Wie Hong, U.P. Marmili, and U.P. Veri Kuswanto, provide rich insights into their experiences undergoing the Pabbajja Training process and its impact on mental balance. The interview results are as follows:

1. U.P. Irma Guawan, a Buddhist practitioner who has undergone Pabbajja Training, stated that Vipassana meditation, one of the main aspects of this process, has helped her manage emotions better. Through meditation, she learned to observe thoughts and emotions more objectively, ultimately reducing stress and anxiety in daily life.
2. U.P. Wie Hong also highlighted the importance of understanding Buddhist teachings in achieving inner peace. Wie Hong revealed that through studying scriptures and applying Buddhist teachings in daily life, she could maintain mental and emotional calmness in various situations.
3. U.P. Marmili emphasized the importance of daily discipline in maintaining focus and concentration in spiritual practice. According to Marmili, a strict daily routine helps create a structure that supports the desired mental balance.



4. U.P. Veri Kuswanto added that ethical and moral principles also play a crucial role in mental stability. By practicing ethical principles in daily life, Veri Kuswanto stated that he felt more calm and peaceful in facing various situations.

These interview results provide a deep understanding of how Pabbajja Training, through meditation, studying scriptures, daily discipline, and ethical practice, contributes to the development of mental balance among Buddhist Panditas. These experiences also reinforce the understanding from existing scientific literature about the Pabbajja Training process in developing mental balance in Buddhist practitioners.

Analysis of Interview Results

The interview results with Buddhist Panditas, such as U.P. Irma Guawan, U.P. Wie Hong, U.P. Marmili, and U.P. Veri Kuswanto, provide a deep understanding of how the Pabbajja Training process contributes to the development of their mental balance. The analysis of these interview results can also be reinforced with theoretical foundations from existing scientific literature. Vipassana meditation, as one of the main aspects of Pabbajja Training, has proven effective as an emotional management technique for Panditas. U.P. Irma Gunawan revealed that through Vipassana meditation, she could observe her thoughts and emotions more objectively. A study by Gunaratana (2011) shows that Vipassana meditation helps practitioners understand the impermanent nature of thoughts and emotions, enabling them to respond more wisely and calmly.

A deep understanding of Buddhist teachings is also an important factor in maintaining the mental calmness of Panditas. U.P. Wie Hong stated that studying scriptures and applying Buddhist teachings in daily life have helped her maintain inner peace. Bodhi (2012) explains that concepts such as Anicca (impermanence) and Dukkha (suffering) in Buddhist teachings help practitioners view life from a broader perspective, reducing anxiety and worry. Daily discipline also acts as a structure that helps develop the mental balance of Panditas. U.P. Marmili emphasized the importance of daily routine in maintaining focus and concentration. According to Vajira (1996), daily discipline is an integral part of Buddhist religious practice that forms the foundation for developing mental and spiritual balance.

The application of ethical and moral principles in daily life becomes a strong foundation for the inner stability of Panditas. U.P. Veri Kuswanto revealed that the practice of Pabbajja Training has helped him live with integrity and honesty. A study by Harvey (2007) reinforces that Buddhist ethical principles, such as not stealing, not lying, and not committing violence, form a solid foundation for mental well-being. Overall, the analysis of the interview results with Buddhist Panditas shows that the Pabbajja Training process, with Vipassana meditation as an emotional management technique, understanding Buddhist teachings as a maintainer of mental calmness, daily discipline as a structure for mental balance development, and ethical and moral principles as the foundation of inner stability, significantly contributes to the development of mental balance among Buddhist practitioners.



The Role of Pabbajja Training in Strengthening Mental Balance

The role of Pabbajja Training in strengthening the mental balance of Buddhist Panditas in Banten Province has a significant impact on the development of awareness and inner stability. This process brings practitioners on a deep spiritual journey, involving Vipassana meditation as one of the main techniques to manage emotions and thoughts. In this context, Gunaratana (2011) explains that Vipassana meditation allows Panditas to observe thoughts, emotions, and bodily sensations objectively, without excessive reaction, thereby creating stable mental balance. Additionally, a deep understanding of Buddhist teachings is emphasized in Pabbajja Training, where Panditas study concepts such as Anicca (impermanence) and Dukkha (suffering) to form a wiser perspective on life (Bodhi, 2012).

Daily discipline also plays an important role in this process, as a structure that helps Buddhist Panditas maintain focus and concentration in their spiritual practice. Vajira (1996) explains that a strict daily routine forms the basis for developing the desired mental balance. Moreover, the application of ethical and moral principles in daily life, as taught in Pabbajja Training, provides a solid foundation for the inner stability of Panditas (Harvey, 2007). By practicing these principles, Panditas not only develop strong character but also create a calm and peaceful inner environment (Rawlinson, 2017). Overall, Pabbajja Training is not merely a ritual step but also a spiritual journey that significantly contributes to strengthening the mental balance and inner well-being of Buddhist Panditas in Banten Province.

Conclusion

Pabbajja Training plays an important role in strengthening the mental balance of Buddhist Panditas in Banten Province. This process is not merely a ritual step but also a deep spiritual journey, involving Vipassana meditation, understanding Buddhist teachings, daily discipline, and the application of ethical principles. Through Pabbajja Training, Panditas not only develop self-awareness and understanding of Buddhist teachings but also find inner peace, mental calmness, and wisdom in facing various aspects of life. Thus, the Pabbajja Training process significantly contributes to strengthening the mental balance and inner well-being of Buddhist Panditas in Banten Province.

Implication

A deep understanding of the Pabbajja Training process can help Buddhist practitioners develop effective strategies for managing stress, anxiety, and pressure in daily life. With Vipassana meditation as the main tool, practitioners can build better self-awareness, understand the sources of negative emotions, and respond to them more calmly and wisely. Pabbajja Training also provides a deeper understanding of Buddhist teachings, such as concepts of impermanence (Anicca) and suffering (Dukkha). The implication is that practitioners become more capable of understanding the nature of the mind, identifying the root causes of discomfort, and achieving a deeper understanding of the true nature of life. This can help them more easily adapt to changes, accept reality more openly, and improve their overall quality of life.



The daily discipline formed by Pabbajja Training also provides significant practical implications. Buddhist Panditas will learn to maintain life balance, manage time, and carry out routines consistently. This not only impacts mental balance but also productivity, efficiency, and success in carrying out religious and daily tasks. The ethical and moral principles emphasized in Pabbajja Training become a strong foundation for inner stability. The implication is that Buddhist practitioners will have a solid foundation in making ethical decisions, leading meaningful lives, and maintaining harmonious relationships with others. This not only impacts personal well-being but also their positive contributions to society.

The implication of the role of Pabbajja Training in strengthening the mental balance of Buddhist Panditas in Banten Province is the potential to improve quality of life, achieve inner peace, and make positive contributions to the wider community. By understanding and applying the principles of this process, Buddhist practitioners can shape a more meaningful, prosperous, and significant life for themselves and others.

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