THE SIGNIFICANCE OF *TISIKKHĀ* AS FOUNDATION OF BUDDHIST CHARACTER EDUCATION IN PROMOTING SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOAL 4

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ABSTRAK

Penelitian ini mengkaji signifikansi *Tisikkhā* sebagai landasan pendidikan karakter Buddhis dalam mendukung pencapaian Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 4. Pembangunan berkelanjutan merupakan upaya global untuk mewujudkan kehidupan yang lebih baik bagi generasi masa kini dan mendatang. Perserikatan Bangsa-Bangsa telah menetapkan tujuh belas tujuan pembangunan berkelanjutan untuk menjawab berbagai tantangan global kontemporer. Di antara tujuan tersebut, SDG 4 berfokus pada penyediaan pendidikan yang inklusif, adil, dan berkualitas serta mendorong kesempatan belajar sepanjang hayat bagi semua. Tujuan ini menegaskan peran strategis pendidikan dalam mendorong pembangunan berkelanjutan. Kualitas pendidikan pada abad ke-21 dituntut mampu merespons arus globalisasi tanpa mengabaikan nilai-nilai moral. Fenomena kemerosotan moral di era modern menunjukkan urgensi penguatan pendidikan karakter. Pendidikan karakter merupakan pendekatan pendidikan yang menekankan pembentukan nilai-nilai positif seperti integritas, tanggung jawab, kejujuran, empati, dan perilaku etis. Dalam perspektif Buddhisme, pendidikan karakter berakar pada tiga pilar pelatihan (*Tisikkhā*), yaitu *sīla-sikkhā* (pelatihan moral), *samādhi-sikkhā* (pelatihan batin), dan *paññā-sikkhā* (pelatihan kebijaksanaan). Melalui integrasi ketiga aspek tersebut, *Tisikkhā* berperan penting dalam membentuk generasi yang berwelas asih, bertanggung jawab, dan beretika. Dengan demikian, *Tisikkhā* dapat menjadi pendekatan yang relevan dalam menjawab tantangan pendidikan masa kini sekaligus mendukung terwujudnya SDG 4.
Kata kunci: *Buddhis, Pendidikan Karakter, Tujuan Pembangunan Berkelanjutan, Tisikkhā*

ABSTRACT

This research examines the significance of Tisikkhā as foundation of Buddhist character education in promoting sustainable development goal 4. Sustainable development is the global effort in creating a better world in the present and future. The United Nations has set seventeen sustainable development goals, addressing the contemporary global challenges. Among the seventeen sustainable goals, the SDG 4 is about the quality of education. Its aim is to ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all. This goal reflects the significance role of education in promoting sustainable development to address the global challenges. Quality of education in 21st century must adapt to the demands of globalization without neglecting the moral values. Character education is essential in addressing to the moral decline in this modern era. Character education is an approach to education that gives strong attention to the cultivation of positive character such as moral values, ethical behavior, responsibility, honesty and empathy. The character education according Buddhism is grounded in the three pillars or learning (tisikkhā), namely sīla-sikkhā (moral training), samādhi-sikkhā (mental training) and paññā-sikkhā (wisdom training). Tisikkhā is essential in shaping the generations to be compassionate, responsible and ethical

individuals in society. Tisikkhā can be an effective way in addressing the current challenges to promote sustainable development goal 4.

Keywords: *Buddhist, Character Education, Sustainable Development Goal, Tisikkhā*

INTRODUCTION

Education is a basic human right and essential for achieving sustainable development. The access to basic education is a right of every citizen guaranteed by the Indonesian constitution (Nadziroh et al., 2018). It is essential for the dignity, freedom, and full development of every person. Education as a basic human right is universally acknowledged and affirmed by the United Nations. Every person has the right to education, and that primary education should be free and required for all children. It also emphasizes that education should help individuals grow fully as human beings and learn to respect human rights and freedom (Lee, 2020).

Education plays significant role in personal and societal development (Medhācitto, 2024). Education is a key to unlocking the human potential which is able to transform the individual and society. It promotes personal growth by providing the individuals with opportunity to develop knowledge and skills to adapt the new challenges. With the rapid development of technology and global changes, education plays an important role in helping the individuals to adapt the new challenges and opportunities in the era Industry 4.0. Through education, people can learn to gain the knowledge and develop their skills to take the opportunities to grow their potential. Education is also a powerful tool for reducing inequalities and creating more equitable society. United Nations places Quality Education as the fourth goal in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (SDG 4). This goal seeks to provide inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all (United Nation, 2025).

In this 21st century, education plays crucial role in preparing the generations with the good character for this society. Education should not solely focus on academic achievements, but also paying much attention to the development of the good character of the students. Moral decline has become one of the major challenges in this modern era. Globalization and socio-cultural changes bring new dynamics that affect the moral and character of the young generations. According to the present research, the mass use of internet and social media have affected the character development and morality of the children (Iksal et al., 2024). Chaeroh (2024) highlights that the rapid modernization and the expansion of digital technology have significantly influenced the moral development of students. The lack of respect and discipline, intolerance, and irresponsible behavior are often mentioned as signs of this moral decline. The misuse of technology has caused moral decline among students even in the level of primary schools in Indonesia (Prihatmojo & Badawi, 2020). According to Erlina & Rambe (2023), there are several indicators of moral decline, such as increasing violent behavior, use of bad speech, strong influence of peer groups of violent actions, drunkenness, free sex and the drug use becoming normalized, blurring of boundaries between right and wrong, decreased work ethic, lack of respect, low sense of responsibility, habitual dishonesty, growing mutual suspicion and hatred among people. The present situation reflects the urgency of educational approach which pays more attention on the moral development of the students. Character education can serve as an alternative solution to address the problem of moral decline among the students in the schools (Suarningsih, 2024).

Character education is defined as the conscious effort to understand, care about and act upon core ethical values (Gunawan, 2012: 23). Character education can be understood as

"moral education plus" (Wibowo, 2021: 33). This means that it goes beyond simply teaching students about right and wrong. It does not only focus on moral knowledge, but also integrates three essential dimensions: knowledge (cognitive), feelings (affective), and actions (psychomotor). The aim of character education is to integrate moral and ethical learning into academic environment, to prepare the students not just for the academic success but also to shape them to be compassionate, responsible and ethical individuals in the society.

Religion has long been a cornerstone of moral guidance and ethical behavior, guiding the people to live righteously. Across cultures and civilizations, religious teachings have provided ethical guidelines and encouraged virtuous behavior. Buddhism is one of religions which pays more attention to the moral and spiritual development. Character education can be implemented basing on religious teachings. Buddhist ethical values can be adopted in the implementation of character education. Buddhist ethics and character education have similar objective in shaping individuals to be good persons in the society. Character education basically focuses on instilling noble values in students to shape them to be individuals who are beneficial for themselves and others (Iksal et al., 2024). Buddhist education also highlights the moral and mental transformation, which prepare the generations to be individual who are beneficial for oneself and others (*attahitāya ceva paṭipanno parahitāya ca*) (Medhācitto, 2024).

Education serves as the basic foundation in shaping the individuals who possess the knowledge and strong character (Pali et al., 2025). In Buddhism, it refers to the concept of *vijjā* (knowledge) and *caraṇa* (conduct). These terms represent the objectives of education which emphasis on the balance between knowledge and ethical conduct. The Buddha serves as the ultimate role model of *vijjā* (knowledge) and *caraṇa* (conduct). In Buddhist tradition, he is described as *vijjācaraṇa-sampanno*, which means "perfect in knowledge and conduct." This title reflects the complete harmony between his profound wisdom and his perfect behavior (Medhacitto, 2025). Education in Buddhism also often refers to the Pāli terms '*sikkhā'* (learning) and '*ajjhāpana'* (understanding) (Medhācitto, 2024). The word '*sikkhā'* also refers to 'good conduct or virtue' and 'disciplinary conduct.' Therefore, Buddhist education encompasses not only acquiring knowledge but also training oneself in good conduct as a foundational aspect of life. According Buddhist perspective, education should emphasize on development of human qualities such as love and compassion, focusing on experiential and contemplative learning rather than just information transfer. Buddhism can be understood as educational training system that facilities the transformation of human civilization leading to excellence and well-being (Mahatthanadull et al., 2024).

The Buddhist approach to education is built upon three main pillars of training, known as *sīla-sikkhā* (moral training), *samādhi-sikkhā* (mental training), and *paññā-sikkhā* (wisdom training). These three aspects are often referred to as the Threefold Training (*tisikkhā*). This approach offers a holistic framework that foster moral behavior, mental development, and wisdom. This *Tisikkhā* serves as the foundation of Buddhist education which emphasizes on the development of good character and wisdom. Character education according to Buddhism is implemented under the foundation of the Threefold Training (*tisikkhā*). Therefore, this paper aims to examine the significance of *Tisikkhā* as the foundation of Buddhist character education in in promoting sustainable development goal 4.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study employs a qualitative approach with a library research design to examine the meaning and relevance of *Tisikkhā* as the foundation of Buddhist character education in

supporting Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 4 on Quality Education. A qualitative approach is chosen because the study emphasizes the interpretation of philosophical, ethical, and educational concepts within Buddhist teachings and their connection to contemporary educational discourse. The research is conducted through a systematic exploration of relevant written sources, including careful selection of literature, critical reading, identification of key ideas, thematic categorization, and structured organization of arguments in accordance with the research objectives.

The data sources consist of primary and secondary materials. Primary sources include the *Tipiṭaka* and its related explanatory texts, which contain teachings on *Tisikkhā* as the threefold training of morality, concentration, and wisdom. Secondary sources comprise scholarly books, peer-reviewed journal articles, and academic studies discussing Buddhist education, character formation, and the concept of quality education within the framework of sustainable development. Data are analyzed using qualitative content analysis through stages of data selection, thematic organization, and conclusion drawing. Through this process, the study formulates a comprehensive understanding of how the values embedded in *Tisikkhā* contribute to strengthening character education aligned with the principles of Quality Education.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION
Results
Table 1. Research Results Based on Library Study (Primary and Secondary Sources)

No	Research Focus	Main Findings	Primary Sources	Secondary Sources
1	The Moral Crisis in 21st Century Education	The 21st century is marked by rapid modernization and digital transformation which contribute to moral degradation among adolescents. Character education is urgently needed to address violence, drug abuse, and ethical decline.	—	Abdullah et al. (2019); Chaeroh (2024); Prihatmojo & Badawi (2020); Suarningsih (2024); Abdi (2018); Republic of Indonesia (2003, 2017); UNESCO (2020); United Nations (2015)
2	Philosophical Basis of Buddhist Education	Buddhist education (*sikkhā*) emphasizes self-training and holistic development: moral, mental, and intellectual cultivation. Education is not merely knowledge acquisition but transformation of character and wisdom.	Bodhi (2000, 2012); Ñāṇamoli (2010); Ñāṇamoli & Bodhi (2009); Walshe (2012); Kalupahana (2008)	Payutto (2018); Somepanno (2020); Medhācitto (2024)
3	Moral Development through Sīla-sikkhā	Moral training includes right speech, right action, and right livelihood (Noble Eightfold Path). The cultivation of *hiri* (moral shame) and *ottappa*	Bodhi (2000, 2012); Ñāṇamoli (2010); Kalupahana (2008)	Dharmasiri (2019); Medhācitto (2023, 2025); Setiawan et al. (2024); Sukodoyo et al. (2024)

No	Research Focus	Main Findings	Primary Sources	Secondary Sources
		(moral dread) functions as "guardians of the world." Practice of pañcasīla and pañcadhamma strengthens ethical behavior.		
4	Mental Development through Samādhi-sikkhā	Mental cultivation consists of right effort, right mindfulness, and right concentration. Mindfulness and Brahmavihāra practices foster emotional regulation, resilience, compassion, and peaceful coexistence.	Bodhi (2000, 2010); Walshe (2012)	Medhacitto (2025); Medhacitto et al. (2024); Seanburan (2024); Tongsupachok et al. (2024); Piyabhani & Mahatthanadull (2022)
5	Wisdom Development through Paññā-sikkhā	Wisdom includes right view and right thought as foundations for ethical reasoning. Understanding the Four Noble Truths and karma supports responsible decision-making. Wisdom is developed through learning, reflection, meditation, and association with wise persons.	Bodhi (2000, 2012); Ñāṇamoli & Bodhi (2009); Walshe (2012)	Mahatthanadull et al. (2024); Medhācitto (2023); Piyabhani & Mahatthanadull (2022)
6	Relevance of Tisikkhā to SDG 4	Integration of sīla, samādhi, and paññā supports holistic education aligned with SDG 4: inclusive, equitable, and quality education promoting lifelong learning and sustainable moral development.	Bodhi (2000, 2012)	UNESCO (2020); United Nations (2015); Iksal et al. (2024); Marzuki & Samsuri (2022); Lee (2020); Nadziroh et al. (2018); Pali et al. (2025)

Table 1 concisely presents the principal findings of this study by mapping the relationship between the Buddhist training system of *Tisikkhā* and the aims of character education within the framework of Sustainable Development Goal 4. The data indicate that rapid modernization and technological expansion have contributed to ethical challenges among learners, making value-based education increasingly urgent (Chaeroh, 2024; Abdullah et al., 2019). In this context, the threefold training, moral discipline (*sīla*), mental cultivation (*samādhi*), and wisdom development (*paññā*), offers a structured and holistic pathway for nurturing responsible, mindful, and ethically reflective individuals. This integrative model resonates with the transformative orientation of education advocated by UNESCO (2020), which underlines the importance of fostering attitudes, competencies, and values that sustain peaceful and inclusive societies. Thus, the table affirms that *Tisikkhā* provides a coherent and

contextually relevant foundation for reinforcing character education in alignment with the aspirations of SDG 4.

Table 2. Classification of Research Sources

Source Type	Description	References
Primary Sources	Canonical Buddhist scriptures and authoritative translations of Nikāya texts forming doctrinal foundation of Tisikkhā	Bodhi (2000; 2012); Ñāṇamoli (2010); Ñāṇamoli & Bodhi (2009); Walshe (2012); Kalupahana (2008)
Secondary Sources	Scholarly interpretations, empirical studies, policy documents, and contemporary research on character education, mindfulness, and SDG 4	Abdi (2018); Abdullah et al. (2019); Chaeroh (2024); Dharmasiri (2019); Hermino (2014); Iksal et al. (2024); Lee (2020); Mahatthanadull et al. (2024); Marzuki & Samsuri (2022); Medhācitto (2023, 2024, 2025); Nurfalah (2016); Pali et al. (2025); Payutto (2018); Piyabhani & Mahatthanadull (2022); Prihatmojo & Badawi (2020); Setiawan et al. (2024); Somepanno (2020); Suarningsih (2024); Sukodoyo et al. (2024); UNESCO (2020); United Nations (2015); Wibowo (2021); Zed (2014)

Table 2 classifies the research sources employed in this study into primary and secondary categories, demonstrating the methodological rigor and theoretical depth of the analysis. The primary sources consist of canonical Buddhist scriptures and authoritative translations of the Nikāya texts, which provide the doctrinal basis for understanding *Tisikkhā* as a systematic framework of moral, mental, and wisdom training (Bodhi, 2000, 2012; Ñāṇamoli, 2010; Ñāṇamoli & Bodhi, 2009; Walshe, 2012; Kalupahana, 2008). These foundational texts ensure that the interpretation of Buddhist character education remains grounded in its original philosophical context. Meanwhile, the secondary sources include scholarly works, empirical investigations, educational policy documents, and contemporary discussions addressing character education, mindfulness, and Sustainable Development Goal 4 (Abdi, 2018; Abdullah et al., 2019; Chaeroh, 2024; Marzuki & Samsuri, 2022; Medhācitto, 2024; UNESCO, 2020). The combination of scriptural authority and modern academic discourse strengthens the analytical framework of this research and supports a comprehensive understanding of *Tisikkhā* within current global educational challenges.

Discussion
Theoretical Foundation of Character Education in 21st Century

The 21st century means the current century in the Gregorian calendar, beginning on January 1, 2001, and lasting until December 31, 2100. The term is commonly used to describe a period characterized by rapid technological advancement, globalization, digital transformation, and complex social change. Character education in the 21st century refers to the approach of educational system which based on moral values addressing the challenges and opportunities in the 21st century. One of challenges of education in this 21st century is how to

produce skillful and intellectual persons with good moral. There is an urgent need for education system in Indonesia to enhance the character development. Recent studies show an increasing moral crisis among adolescents in Indonesia. Data from the Indonesian Child Protection Commission (KPAI) reports that between 2011 and 2016 there were 7,698 cases crimes committed by children. These cases included physical and psychological violence, sexual abuse, murder, theft, traffic violations, illegal weapon possession, kidnapping, and abortion. In addition, data from the Indonesian Ministry of Health in 2017 indicated that about 3.8% of students at school and university level had been engaged in the misuse of narcotics and other dangerous drugs. UNICEF also reported that incidents of violence among adolescents in Indonesia had exceeded 50% in 2016 (Abdullah et al., 2019).

Various forms of social misconduct can now be seen clearly in the world of education in Indonesia. Those behaviors can be seen such as wearing inappropriate uniforms, arriving late to school, consuming alcohol, engaging in unhealthy relationships, using drugs, getting involved in student fights, and acts of violence. These conditions suggest that the education system in Indonesia is currently facing a moral decline, where values and character formation appear to be weakening among students (Suarningsih, 2024). Education is seen as one of the most effective solutions to prevent this moral degradation. By fostering moral values to the students, education helps to shape the character of young generations. In 21st century, education must emphasize on the moral development alongside academic achievements. Education in 21st century should concern about transformation of human character. The emphasis on moral or character education is very crucial in addressing the current moral crisis happening in the country. Strengthening the character education in the present context is very relevant to overcome the moral crisis such as the promiscuity, violence among children and adolescents, crimes against friends, stealing, cheating, drag abuse, pornography, destruction of other's properties (Abdi, 2018). Therefore, character education is strongly needed in this era to overcome the moral crisis.

According to Thomas Lickona, there are three components of character in character education, namely: moral knowing, moral feeling and moral action (Hermino, 2014: 159-160). Moral knowing refers to understanding ethical values and having the ability to distinguish between right and wrong through awareness, reasoning, decision-making, and self-understanding. Moral feeling relates to the development of positive emotions that support good character, such as self-confidence, empathy, appreciation of goodness, self-control, and humility. Moral action arises from the combination of moral understanding and moral feelings, which are expressed through consistent behavior, personal commitment, and good habits. When these three aspects are integrated, education does not only teach values but also helps students understand, internalize, and practice them in their daily lives.

According to Law No. 20 of 2003 on the National Education System (Republic of Indonesia, 2003), education is defined as a conscious and planned effort to create a learning atmosphere and learning process so that learners actively develop their potential to possess spiritual strength, self-control, personality, intelligence, noble character, and skills needed by themselves, society, the nation, and the state. This definition reflects the meaning of education beyond acquiring knowledge but also as the continuous process to develop noble character. Marzuki & Samsuri (2022) argue that education in Indonesia must fulfill its mission of shaping students' character while promoting noble values. It should not focus solely on academic achievement, but also emphasize moral and ethical development. By strengthening character building, educational institutions can prepare students and graduates to contribute positively to future national development without neglecting important moral and ethical principles.

In 2017, the Indonesian government took an important step to strengthen the involvement of various stakeholders in character education through the introduction of the Strengthening Character Education program. The Indonesian government introduced the Strengthening Character Education program through Presidential Regulation No. 87 of 2017 (Republic of Indonesia, 2017). The government identifies eighteen core character values to be developed through education, including religiosity, honesty, tolerance, discipline, hard work, creativity, independence, democracy, curiosity, national spirit, patriotism, appreciation of achievement, communicative skills, peacefulness, reading interest, environmental awareness, social responsibility, and accountability (Nurfalah, 2016). These eighteen values are summarized into five core values, such as religiosity, nationalism, integrity, independence, and mutual cooperation. These five values are necessary for building a generation responsible and ethical in the contribution towards social and economic development.

Buddhist Character Education Based on *Tisikkhā*

The meaning of education in the Buddhist tradition according to Somepanno (2020) is rooted from the term "*sikkhā*" which implies that education as an approach of learning that encompasses moral, mental and intellectual development P.A. Payutto (2018) explains education as learning and acquiring knowledge which refers to Pāli word *sikkhā* which means self-training and self-development. It shows that Buddhist education extends beyond learning to acquire knowledge, but it involves self-training and self-development. The Pāli term "*sikkhā*" takes on a unique role, extending the concept of education beyond intellectual learning, but also includes the ethical training which brings to character and spiritual development. It is a holistic approach for moral and mental transformation by developing personal character and wisdom. It transforms the individuals to be morally good with intellectual capacities and spiritual achievement (Medhācitto, 2024). The Buddhist education is basically based on the Threefold Training, namely *sīla-sikkhā* (moral training), *samādhi-sikkhā* (mental training) and *paññā-sikkhā* (wisdom training).

Moral Development through *Sīla-sikkhā*

Sīla-sikkhā is a moral training that guides individuals to refrain from unwholesome actions and develop the wholesome qualities. It encourages self-discipline in speech and behavior, helping a person live in a way that is ethical, responsible, and respectful toward others. Through this moral training, individuals learn to control their actions and cultivate virtues such as honesty, compassion, and integrity. According to Dissanayake M.K. Dharmasiri (2019), the main purpose of Buddhist education was to transform the individual's inner nature and shape their character through the development of moral and ethical values. Education is the basic tool of inculcating moral values by controlling animal nature of human. Without morality, the human behavior will be like an animal. Morality is what distinguishes human from animals. In the Sanskrit *Hithopadesa* it is mentioned "*Āhāra-nidrā-bhaya-maithunaṁ ca, Sāmānyam etat paśubhir narāṇām; Dharmo hi teṣām adhiko viśeṣo, Dharmeṇa hīnāḥ paśubhiḥ samānāḥ,*" which means "Eating, sleeping, fear and reproducing are common to both animals and humans. Humans are considered superior because they can understand the truth. Otherwise, they are just like animals." The similar view point can be found in the Buddhist literature like in *Lokanīti*. It is said that "*Bhojanaṃ methunaṃ niddā, Goṇe posepi vijjati; Vijjā viseso posassa, Taṃ hīno gosamo bhave,*" which means "Eating, reproducing and sleeping are common to both humans and cows. It is knowledge that makes humans different" (Medhācitto, 2023: 99-100). It is understood that animals act mostly based on natural instincts such as hunger, fear and

reproduction without thinking about right and wrong. Morality is the most important element which makes people become truly humans, possessing moral consideration which allow them to act with empathy, compassion, and a sense of responsibility towards others.

According to the teaching of Noble Eightfold Path (*ariya aṭṭhaṅgika magga*), *sīla* refers to the cultivation of moral conduct, expressed through right speech (*sammāvācā*), right action (*sammākammanta*), and right livelihood (*sammājīva*) (Bodhi, 2000: 1528). Right speech is described as abstaining from false speech, divisive speech, harsh speech and idle chatter. Instead, it encourages truthful, kind, and meaningful talk which promotes understanding and harmony. Right Action refers to ethical conduct by refraining from unwholesome actions. It includes abstaining from killing living being, abstaining from stealing, abstaining from sexual misconduct. Right livelihood emphasizes earning a living in honest, ethical and non-harmful way. It involves avoiding occupations that cause harm to others and environment. These three practices form a foundation of Buddhist practice which strengthen morality.

According to Buddhist teaching, morality is built in two key qualities, namely *hiri* (moral shame) and *ottappa* (moral dread) (Ñāṇamoli, 2010: 12). *Hiri* is a moral shame that comes from knowing right and wrong, which prevents individuals from doing harmful or unwholesome actions. *Ottappa* is the fear of negative consequences of wrongdoing, which helps individuals to prevent from committing unwholesome actions. These two qualities are seen as essential for personal growth and societal harmony. *Hiri* and *ottapa* play significant role in Buddhist practice that serve as foundation for personal ethical behavior and peaceful society (Medhācitto, 2023: 96). *Cariya Sutta* of *Aṅguttara Nikāya* mentions *hiri* and *ottapa* as "the guardians of the world", because these two things prevent the individuals from unwholesome actions and live with moral integrity (Bodhi, 2012: 143). *Hiri* and *ottappa* function as a powerful moral protection. They serve not only inner protection by preventing individuals from doing unwholesome actions which lead to suffering, but also provide external protection by contributing harmonious and peaceful society (Medhācitto, 2023: 7). When individuals act with *hiri* and *ottappa,* they will live virtuously with kindness, respect and responsibility, creating the community where people can live together safely and cooperatively. *Hiri* and *ottapa* contribute to moral development to society.

Morality will not be practiced without the qualities of *hiri* (moral shame) and *ottappa* (moral dread). People would feel no shame in doing immoral actions and ignore the consequence of their actions. In the Buddha's discourse it is mentioned that without those qualities, there is no mother, aunt, sister in law, wife, teacher or other. When those two qualities are absent, people will lose their sense of respect to others (Bodhi, 2012: 143). Therefore, according to Buddhist perspective, *Hiri* and *ottapa* are essential elements of character education to foster moral behavior and ethical living. Buddhist education regards moral shame and moral dread as important elements to develop morality of the students.

Morality is an important part of character education. It is the foundation for the students learn to distinguish right and wrong, fostering honesty, self-discipline, compassion, respect and a sense of responsibility. In order to develop the students' morality, educational programs should encourage the students to observe the Five Precepts (*pañcasīla*) which are basic ethical training in Buddhism. Students should follow the five precepts in their daily activities, namely refraining from killing living beings, stealing, sexual misconduct, lying and consuming intoxicant. The continues practice of these Five Precepts will naturally forms the good habit for the students. Besides that, the students also can practice to develop the Five Virtues (*pañcadhamma*), consisting lovingkindness, giving, satisfaction, truthfulness and awareness. While avoiding from killing living beings, one can develop lovingkindness and compassion.

Instead of stealing other possession, one can develop practice of giving. While refraining from sexual misconduct, one can practice good conduct and control his own lust. Instead of telling lie, one can develop truthfulness. While refraining from consuming alcohol, one can develop awareness. The continuous practice of *pañcasīla* and *pañcadhamma* in daily life helps the students to develop moral character. This practice promotes personal and social peace (Medhācitto, 2025). Many studies have demonstrated the effectiveness of *pañcasīla* and *pañcadhamma* in shaping students' positive behavior. In their research, Setiawan et al., (2024) demonstrates that the Buddhist education has a statistically significant effect on strengthening *pañcadharma* morality among Buddhist students. The findings show that there is a meaningful positive relationship between Buddhist education and students' moral development. The practice of *pañcasīla* and *pañcadhamma* encourage students to live ethically by promoting nonviolence, tolerance and respect of others (Sukodoyo et al., 2024).

Mental Development through *Samādhi-sikkhā*

Samādhi-sikkhā is basically understood as a training to enhance mental development. It emphasizes on cultivation of inner qualities such as awareness, emotional balance and reflective thinking. In the teaching of Noble Eightfold Path, it refers to right effort, (*sammāvāyāmo*), right mindfulness (*sammāsati*) and right concentration (*sammāsamādhi*) (Bodhi, 2000: 1528). In many discourses, right effort is commonly described as an endeavor to prevent the emergence of unrisen unwholesome qualities, to give up the unwholesome qualities that have already arisen, to arouse wholesome qualities that have not yet arisen and the effort to maintain the wholesome qualities already arisen (Bodhi, 2010: 35). Right mindfulness is basically defined a clear and non-judgmental awareness of the present moment. Right mindfulness is practiced based on the four foundations mindfulness (*cattāro satipaṭṭhānā*), such as mindfulness of the body, feeling, states of mind, and the phenomena (Bodhi, 2010: 42). Right concentration means focused or undistracted mind through deep meditation practice. In the discourses, the Buddha explained it as a part of attainment of meditative absorptions (Bodhi, 2000: 1529).

In term of education, the mental training which consists of right effort, right mindfulness and right concentration are important elements in the implementation of Buddhist character education. It helps to foster mental growth, resilience and well-being of the students. Right effort is foundation for establishing growth mindset for the students, by cultivating positive mental states and eliminating negative mental states. It also useful to strengthens the good habits for the students. Right effort involves the effort of preventing negative qualities to arise, abandoning negative qualities that have already arisen, cultivating and strengthening the good qualities. Right effort is an effective way to encounter the laziness and poor habits of the students. Right mindfulness helps the students to develop self-awareness, helping them to manage emotions, fostering mental health and well-being. Many researches have proved the positive impacts of integrating mindfulness to education. Mindfulness can effectively reduce the stress, strengthen the concentration, and develop inner calm. In this modern era, where students frequently stress, mindfulness helps to reduce the stress and improve emotional well-being. With increasing technological distractions that disrupt the focus, mindfulness helps to improve focus and concentration of the students. Nowadays, the integration of mindfulness practice into education has become a popular and effective way to develop concentration and emotional well-being of the students (Seanburan, 2024). Mindfulness also fosters moral awareness and development of wholesome mental qualities (Medhacitto et al., 2024). Right Concentration strengthens the students' concentration and focusses in the learning activities.

Mindfulness has been associated with meditation practice. Everyone can develop mindfulness by practicing meditation. In Buddhist practice, it is known two types of meditation, namely: *Samatha bhāvanā* and *Vipassanā bhāvanā*. *Samatha* meditation focuses on developing concentration and mental calmness. *Vipassanā* meditation is developing insight and understanding into the true nature of reality. Cultivation of noble qualities of *brahmavihārā* are important for mental development. *Brahmavihārā* the noble qualities consisting of lovingkindness (*mettā*), compassion (*kāruṇā*), sympathetic joy (*muditā*) and equanimity (*upekkhā*) (Walse, 2012: 489). Lovingkindness enables the students to behave with lovingkindness physically, verbally and mentally. Their behavior, speech and mind are based on lovingkindness. It encourages children to wish happiness and wellbeing for others. Compassion is the ability to aware of others' suffering and take an action to help them. It nurtures the students' awareness to care and help each other in the society. Sympathetic joy is the ability to feel happy seeing happiness and success of others. This quality is effective to reduce the feeling of jealousy. Equanimity is emotional stability. Students who possess equanimity are able to maintain emotional stability and live peacefully without easily distracted by the situation. According to research presented by Tongsupachok et al., (2024), the integration of *Brahmavihārā* to education brings positive impact for personal and social transformation, fostering peaceful and harmonious learning environment.

Wisdom Development through *Paññā-sikkhā*

Paññā-sikkhā is a training to develop wisdom. According to Buddhist point of view, wisdom is considered as the most important tool to understand the Buddha's teaching. Wisdom is a fundamental path to understand the reality of life. In one discourse, the Buddha clearly stated that his teaching is intended for the wise people, not for those who are not wise (*paññavato ayaṃ dhammo, nāyaṃ dhammo duppaññassa*) (Bodhi, 2000: 1160). Without wisdom, people will not have the ability to understand the teaching and remain clouded by delusion in seeing the reality. As result, unwise people will act wrongly because they cannot see the truth of life. Like a person walking in the darkness will easily stumble into danger, the people without wisdom will encounter many difficulties in life because they cannot see the reality clearly. The Buddha considered the wisdom as the most precious gem of humans (*paññā narānaṃ ratanaṃ*) (Bodhi, 2000: 127). Even in the worst situations, disasters, and loss of wealth, the person who has wisdom can remain strong. They are still rich even when they have nothing, because true wisdom is the greatest treasure, more valuable than material wealth (Medhācitto, 2023: 168). The Buddha mentioned that the loss of wealth, relative and popularity are not important, because the greatest loss is the loss of wisdom (Bodhi, 2012: 102).

Wisdom is a central element of the Buddhist path, encompassing both theoretical understanding and practical application in daily life (Mahatthanadull et al., 2024). In the teaching of Noble Eightfold Path, wisdom is represented by right view (*sammādiṭṭhi*) and right thought (*sammāsaṅkappo*) (Bodhi, 2000: 1528). In the Buddhist practice, right view is considered as the forerunner of the entire path (Bodhi, 2010: 11). Likewise, *Mahācattārīsaka Sutta* of *Majjhima Nikāya* highlights right view as the forerunner of other practices (*sammādiṭṭhi pubbaṅgamā hoti*) (Ñāṇamoli & Bodhi, 2009: 934). Right view is the correct understanding of the reality. It is a part of wisdom that enables the individual to see the reality as it is. In the *Vibhaṅga Sutta* right view is defined as the knowledge or understanding the Four Noble Truths, namely the truth of suffering, origin of suffering, cessation of suffering and the path leading to cessation of suffering (Bodhi, 2000: 1528). By understanding the Four Noble Truths, individual can recognize the nature of suffering, understand its cause, and follow the

path that leading to freedom from suffering. With this understanding, people can transform their perspective on life, follow the path to overcome the suffering and act wisely in the society. Right view also includes the correct understanding of Karma and moral consideration to distinguish right and wrong. With understanding the Karma, individuals will live ethically because they understand that every action has consequences. Understanding the Karma helps individuals to live with morality.

In the Buddha's discourses, wisdom also refers to right thought, namely the thought of renunciation (*nekkhammasaṅkappo*), the thought of non-ill-will (*abyāpādasaṅkappo*), and the thought of harmlessness (*avihiṃsāsaṅkappo*) (Bodhi, 2000: 1528). Thought of renunciation encourages the individual to abandon the negative emotions and reduce the attachment to desire. By releasing the negative emotions, people can live peacefully with positive thinking. The attachment to people, possession or desire often leads to suffering. The thought of non-ill-will and thought of harmlessness are important element for cultivating love, compassion and non-violence. These thoughts play important role in developing positive character, such as kindness, empathy and non-violence toward others. The Buddha emphasizes that mind is the source of all actions. The wholesome and unwholesome actions depend of the mind. Therefore, when the mind is filled with a detachment thought, compassion and kindness, naturally the speech and the action performed by individual will be kind and harmless.

Wisdom is not something can be given by others, but something should be developed by every individual. The Buddha explains about three types of wisdom, namely wisdom gained through critical thinking (*cintāmaya paññā*), wisdom through learning (*sutamayā paññā*), and wisdom through meditation (*bhāvanāmaya paññā*) (Walshe, 2012: 486). Critical thinking or reflection is one of the effective ways to develop the wisdom. Critical thinking helps the individual to think and take the careful consideration before doing something. Learning is also another way to develop wisdom through knowledge. With knowledge, individual can act based on knowledge, not with ignorance. Wisdom also can be developed by meditation. Meditation is the way to calm down the mind. When the mind is calm and peaceful, one is able to observe clearly the nature of reality. In one occasion, the Buddha has pointed out the four paths leading to growth of wisdom, such as associating with wise people (*sappurisasaṃseva*), listening to the true Dhamma (*saddhammasavanaṃ*), careful attention (*yonisomanasikāra*), practice in accordance with the Dhamma (*dhammānudhammappaṭipatti*) (Bodhi, 2012: 612). Association or friendship is the fundamental factor that supports the arising and the development of good qualities (Bodhi, 2012: 1407). The good association supports the person to learn and follow the wise people. Listening to the true Dhamma is effective to develop wisdom through knowledge and understanding. Careful attention involves mindful consideration which makes the people to be wise and have systematic thinking as well as right mentality (Piyabhani & Mahatthanadull, 2022). The practice in accordance with the Dhamma involves the practice of morality and meditation, leading the people to cultivate the wisdom. Wisdom is very important in character education because it helps students make good and thoughtful decisions in real life. It is not enough for students to simply know what is right and wrong. They also need the ability to think carefully, understand situations deeply, and choose actions that are responsible and kind.

CONCLUSION

This study confirms that *Tisikkhā* offers a comprehensive and integrated foundation for character education in advancing Sustainable Development Goal 4. In the context of rapid globalization, technological expansion, and shifting social values, education must transcend academic achievement and address the ethical and psychological dimensions of human

development. The increasing moral challenges faced by younger generations highlight the necessity of value-oriented education that shapes not only intellectual competence but also integrity, responsibility, and social awareness.

Through the threefold training of *sīla* (moral discipline), *samādhi* (mental cultivation), and *paññā* (wisdom development), *Tisikkhā* provides a holistic pathway for nurturing ethical behavior, emotional stability, and critical discernment. This framework integrates conduct, mindfulness, and insight into a unified educational process that forms compassionate, resilient, and morally grounded individuals. Therefore, *Tisikkhā* represents a relevant and practical model for strengthening character education and contributing to the realization of inclusive and sustainable quality education in the modern era.

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