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Tri-Sikkha (Threefold Learning) Approach: Buddhist Mental Development

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Abstract:

Buddhist mental development is to enhance mental quality of people by calming mind in order to generate wisdom, to solve problem in daily life, to live in the real world without suffering, and to do the best for all duties. Therefore, developing mind to have efficacy and effectiveness can be achieved by using Tri-Sikkha Approach, due to the reason that Tri-Sikkha is a system and practice procedure to develop people in 3 aspects: 1) behavioral development – Sīla – morality, 2) mental development – Samādhi – concentration, and 3) wisdom development – Paññā – wisdom. This system or procedure aims people to live their life in the right way by applying Tri-Sikkha Approach to support the prosperity as the nature of wisdom. The morality development is to develop or to practice individual's behavior in order to entrench in the discipline, to not cause trouble, to live with others happily, to be generous to other people in the society, to be responsible to duty, and to behave well based on ethics.

The mental development is to develop or to train individual's mind to be strong and stable, to grow with ethics, such as loving-kindness and compassion, hardworking, tolerance, concentration, vivacity, and beatitude. Therefore, there should be mental training by continually practicing meditation because concentration is necessary to mental development. This training aims to generate courage and determination to develop work to reach its goal, to practice to study or to do the duty with intention and tolerance by practicing meditation to calm mind.

The wisdom development is to develop or to train the wisdom to know and to understand the truth, to know the world and living conditions, to liberate mind, to be freed from defilements and suffering, to solve all problems with wisdom by self-studying and self-practicing in the hard time. In addition, it is important to have thinking process to carefully solve problem step by step, and to be able to solve problem during work on the current conditions.

Keywords: *Tri-Sikkha approach, mental development, buddhist mental development*

1. Introduction

Buddhist psychology is the concept of the Buddhadhamma principles that mentioned the mental suffering, the process of emergence and extinction of mental suffering by applying the description of mental process in psychology in order to create understanding to people nowadays. The purpose is to heal and enhance people mental quality; this means Buddhist psychology is the science that studies mind and its process, which is psychology in order to explain the process of emergence and extinction of mental suffering; this is the main concept of Buddhism. Thereby, Buddhist psychology is the study about nature of people's mind from the Buddhadhamma principles which is the source of knowledge and analysis about people's mind. Its purpose is that people can manage their daily life. The theme of Buddhist psychology is the presentation of nature principle of the process of emergence and extinction of suffering along with the method to end all suffering or problem in mind. The researcher can use this knowledge and understanding from this study to refine the mind to clearly see and understand the truth subjected to the Buddhadhamma principles and also share this knowledge and understanding to create good friendship for providing mental help to others (Srichannil, 2009).

The mental practice is an important basis of development in the aspects of disengagement, happiness, and connection to surrounding things and society in daily life. In addition to abandon the defilements, the advantage of mental practice is its impact on mental condition, behavior, and relationship. The well-practiced mind can bring about happiness, not the pleasure that relies on external factors. This helps liberate life and reduce the reliance on external environment. The mind that is correctly developed also helps people to fully use their potentiality of thought, mind and body; this also develops behavior and attitude about the world. People will have loving-kindness and compassion, will not hurt each other, and live together with generosity; this is an important basis to the performance of duty and social development (Phrakhru Dhammadon Kanchit Kunvaro, 2013)

The key ethics for life development to be successful and to be perfect person is *Tri-Sikkha Approach*. *Tri-Sikkha* is counted in *Magga* - the Path leading to the Cessation of Suffering, it is the principle to develop the complete life, which consists of 1) *Sīlasikkhā* – training in morality, 2) *Cittasikkhā* – training in mentality, and 3) *Paññāsikkhā* – training in wisdom. *Tri-Sikkha* is the procedure and development in 3 aspects of life: *Sīla* – the principle for developing life about general environment, *Samādhi* - the principle for developing mind to have capacity and efficacy in thinking, considering, and making decision to do or not to do something, *Paññā* - the

principle for developing knowledge and understanding to know everything according to its real conditions, and to analyze, to distinguish and to find the cause explicitly (Teerasiranon, 2013)

An effective method of mental development to have capacity and efficacy is to use *Tri-Sikkha Approach*, due to the fact that *Tri-Sikkha Approach* is a system and practice procedure to developing people in 3 aspects: 1) behavioral development – *Sīla* – morality, 2) mental development – *Samādhi* – concentration, and 3) wisdom development – *Paññā* – wisdom. This system or procedure aims people to live their life in the right way by applying *Tri-Sikkha Approach* to support the prosperity as the nature of wisdom.

2. Buddhist Mental Development

Psychology is the science that focuses on studying behavior and mental procedure of people, which aims to understand, explain, predict, and control or change people's behavior. There has long been an attempt of people to understand their nature of mind and behavior. It began with the psychology study of Wilhelm Woundt who built the psychological laboratory at University of Leipzig, Germany; he began to experiment feeling, imagination, reasoning, which are the official origin of science of psychology. This caused the general study of psychology based on the western psychology concept. As in Thailand, most study of psychology also relies on the western psychology concept.

The western psychology is the name of the concept group of psychology which has the origin from people in western world, who are interested in searching for knowledge about human mentality and behavior. The western concept is divided in many theory groups, each group has different opinion or focus about mentality and behavior, for example, Psychoanalysis of Sigmund Freud who believed that unconscious mind is the indicator of people behavior; while Behaviorism believed that in order to understand people, it is necessary to study on the external visible behavior, by neglecting the study about mentality. Although the western psychology is accepted about its method to know the people's mentality and behavior systematically as the scientific methods, the phenomenon which often happens to the western psychology concept is that one group disagreed with one concept then presented its own concept, for example, Cognitivism group thought that the concept of Behaviorism is too narrow, and thought that actually people have wisdom, thought and feeling; these internal factors indeed have an influence on people's behavior more than only the external factors (Srichannil, 2009).

Therefore, the western psychology concept distinguishes the study about people's mentality from people's behavior. Each group focused on studying people's mentality and behavior in only one aspect by neglecting other causes. From this phenomenon of western psychology concept, it is noteworthy that even though the western psychology concept is based on scientific study, none of the western psychology concept is accepted that it can profoundly explain people's mentality and it is the highest incontestable truth. Thereby, in order to understand the condition of people's mentality and behavior, which is delicate and profound, it is interesting to do holistic study about people's mentality and behavior, which focuses on studying all causes of people's mentality and behavior and their relation which causes an impact on each other.

The profound finding about the holistic nature of people about the nature of condition of people's mentality and behavior is the Buddhadhamma, which is the teaching of the Buddha who dedicated himself to attain enlightenment about the nature and possibility. Each teaching aims to thoroughly explain the procedure of people's mentality and behavior, it describes causes and solution methods to problem in people's mind explicitly, not only the principle or theory, but the basis is about the practice which leads to change and enhancement of individual's mentality in many dimensions. It also can be said that Buddhism has the same principle and method as those of the scientific field; which means Buddhism has the systematic study aiming to find the nature and the rule of nature as those of science. The difference is that science focuses on the external human nature, but Buddhism focuses on the internal human nature or the nature of people's mentality with the reasonable and provable explanation which manifests the unlimited truth. This is some differences between them, which is the finding from the scientific field can be altered in case that there is new evidence or finding which is reliable and different from the original version.

The Buddhist psychology helps expand thought, understanding and goal of western psychological therapies with the purpose that the researcher can understand the possibility of the world and life correctly in order to understand and to relieve the suffering in mind. When the mind is healed, its quality is also developed in the same time. The Buddhist mental development is to enhance people's mentality by calming mind in order to generate wisdom, to solve problem in daily life, to live in the real world without suffering, and to do the best for all duties. This is to calm mind to have mindfulness, concentration, reason, hard-working, tolerance and mental power so that this brings about good mental health, strong mind which is worth for working. While the physical practice needs the movement and exercise in various departments, which can strengthen the physical body, the mental practice and development needs to let the mind stay still (Phra Maha Boonlert Dhamma thatsi, 2008).

The meditation practice is to sublimate the mind, the mentality will develop and change in the positive way, for example, to calm down, to reduce the aggressiveness of anger, to have mindfulness and emotional control, to reduce pride, distraction and stress, to be tolerant to external factors affecting the mind, to understand others and know about forgiveness so that love, loving-kindness and good-intention happen in mind generating high benefit in living, which supports health, creates knowledge and potentiality in working and solving personal problem. Therefore, there is the development of public society in every level endlessly until it reaches the peace as expected. The most effective mental development will help reduce selfishness and know the release and forgiveness; loving-kindness, compassion and generosity are good for people themselves, their family, country and world society (Phra Maha Boonlert Dhamma thatsi, 2008). Therefore, the mental development is the study about *Tri-Sikkha Approach*: *Sīla* – morality, *Samādhi* – concentration, and *Paññā* – wisdom. People should practice their mind to be conscious by practicing meditation and insight meditation in order to understand the process of people's self-adaption, problem confrontation, problem resolution, and consideration of mental condition about feeling, thought, emotion and direction to maintain mental health.

3. Tri-Sikkha Approach

Everything in the world is in accordance with the principle of *Tilakkhaṇa* - the Three Characteristics, which is *Aniccatā* - impermanence, *Dukkhatā* - state of suffering, and *Anattatā*: soullessness. This means nothing is desirable or admirable; someone who has *Upādāna* – attachment with the influence of ignorance will suffer. Buddha taught in order to be freed from that power by using *Tri-Sikkha Approach*: *Sīla* – morality, *Samādhi* – concentration, and *Paññā* – wisdom. *Tri-Sikkha Approach* is the Threefold Learning which are 1) *Adhisīla-sikkhā*: training in higher morality, 2) *Adhicitta-sikkhā*: training in higher mentality, and 3) *Adhipaññā-sikkhā*: training in higher wisdom, which are easily called *Sīla*, *Samādhi*, *Paññā*. The word *Sikkhā* means the learning, practicing and training; which is the practice direction for training the body, speech, mind and wisdom to be prosper to reach the highest goal which is *Nirvāṇa* or *Nibbāna* – the extinction of the fires of greed, of hatred and of ignorance (Phra Dhammapitaka (P.A. Payutto), 2003). *Tri-Sikkha Approach* consists of 1) *Adhisīla-sikkhā*: training in higher morality, 2) *Adhicitta-sikkhā*: training in higher mentality, and 3) *Adhipaññā-sikkhā*: training in higher wisdom (Roddara, 2005)

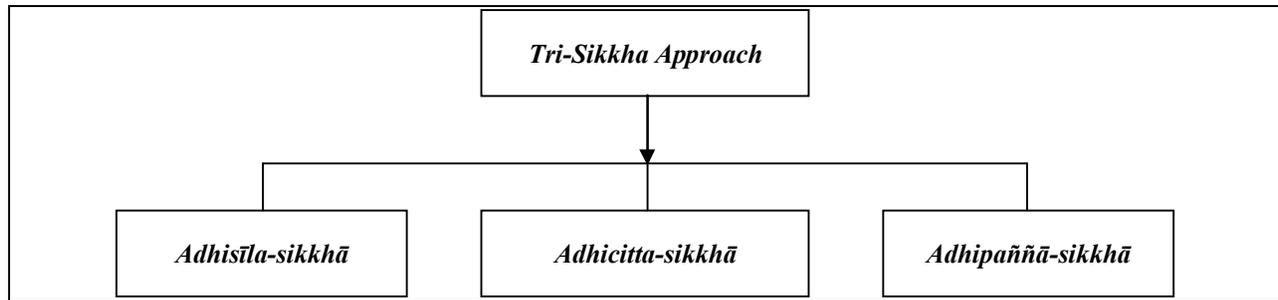


Figure 1: Tri-Sikkha Approach

Therefore, *Tri-Sikkha Approach* means the issue which must be studied and practiced to train the body, speech, mind and wisdom in order to develop to reach *Nirvāṇa* according to these 3 processes: 1) *Adhisīla-sikkhā* means regulation for training in higher morality to practice the behavior in the aspects of the body and speech which is discipline, living together with others in various environment with generosity (Phra Dhammapitaka (P.A. Payutto), 2003); 2) *Adhicitta-sikkhā* means regulations for training mentality to generate higher concentration (Phra Dhammapitaka (P.A. Payutto), 2003). There are 2 methods of mental practice: first is restful meditation, it is the way to practice mentality to have peacefulness and concentration by letting the mentality rely on something emotional or think of only one thing; and second is insight meditation, it is the training to generate wisdom, knowledge and understanding of the truth and every phenomenon without any embellishment by the power of ignorance, thirst and attachment in order that the mentality receives the suitable development and worth for wisdom work (Phra Promkunaporn (P.A. Payutto), 2010) and 3) *Adhipaññā-sikkhā* means regulations for practicing wisdom to see the truth so that the mind is liberated from thirst and suffering (Phra Dhammapitaka (P.A. Payutto), 2003). There are 2 levels of wisdom: 1) *Lokiyapaññā* or wisdom in the level of view; it is the wisdom of general people, which comes from consideration with normal mentality for correctly living and generating advance; 2) *Lokuttarapaññā* or the wisdom in the level of insight; it is the wisdom of noble people, which comes from mental practice according to the principle of concentration, and the strict training to reduce defilement, thirst and false view.

4. Mental Development according to Tri-Sikkha Approach

In practicing the *Tri-Sikkha Approach*, it should begin with creating *Sammādiṭṭhi* - Right View from the persuasion of good friend and use *Yonisomanasikāra* - proper attention to consider, then practice the study according to *Tri-Sikkha Approach* by observing the precepts to develop the physical and verbal behavior, to have right means of livelihood, to consume the four necessities of life, facility, technology as its true value. This can develop the mentality to have quality and good health so that people can develop knowledge and understanding to be completed until it reaches the truth of formation and can correctly rely on things, and the mind is completely liberated, which is the life development with integration and the holistic that is developed with well balanced (Chanphiboon, 2016).

The morality development is to develop or to practice individual's behavior in order to entrench in the discipline, to not cause trouble, to live with others happily, and to be generous to other people in the society. This revolution can be noticed from daily behavior, such as in case of an ascetic, the behavior can be noticed from the principle of *Pārisuddhisīla* - the four kinds of Higher *Sīla*, 1) *Pāṭimokkha-saṃvarasīla* - moral discipline as regards the Fundamental Precepts, 2) *Indriyasaṃvarasīla* - discipline as regards sense-restraint, 3) *Ājīvapārisuddhisīla* – discipline as regards purity of livelihood, and 4) *Paccayasannissitasīla* - discipline as regards the four requisites. The practice of *Adhisīla-sikkhā* can apply the principle of *Pārisuddhisīla* (Chanphiboon, 2016) as follows:

- 1) *Pāṭimokkha-saṃvarasīla*: it is to apply *Sīla* 4 or *Sīla* 8 to be the basis in practicing behavior correctly and suitably to family, community, and society and to be compatible to rule, regulation and law. No matter which type of *Sīla*, it is necessary to undertake which is to speak out speech to set the mind to accept that kind of *Sīla* to always practice to be usual habit and personal life style.
- 2) *Indriyasaṃvarasīla*: it is the practice of behavior to use the body to watch, listen, or eat with mindfulness along with continual self-development in order that the wisdom will prosper and the life quality is better and valuable.

3) *Ājīvapārisuddhisīla*: it is to do some activities, hobby, and good livelihood by ignoring wrong livelihood, such as defalcation, trickery in order to not cause trouble to others and themselves, society and environment, to not destroy value and life quality, and to be mainly self-reliant.

4) *Paccayasammissitīla*: it is to eat good food in the proper amount to the body's need to be healthy, to wear clothes, to use facility, convenience and technology economically, to live in the residence which is stable, clean, safe and convenient to travel, to have the opportunity to talk or to do some activities with knowledgeable people, such as monk, doctor, or moral people in order to practice using wisdom in living, having efficiency and tolerance in hard time. In addition, it is also necessary to take care of health and hygienic condition, to always exercise with mindfulness, to well manage time, to control mentality and carnality, to correctly use the medication suitable to the disease in the right quantity in order to be healthy and freed from all disease.

The mental development is to develop or to train individual's mind to be strong and stable, to grow with ethics, such as loving-kindness and compassion, hardworking, tolerance, concentration, vivacity, and beatitude. This revolution can be noticed from daily behavior, such as in case of an ascetic, the behavior can be noticed from the principle of *Sammāvāyāma* - right effort which consists of 1) *Saṃvara-padhāna* - the effort to prevent, 2) *Pahāna-padhāna*: the effort to abandon, 3) *Bhāvanā-padhāna*: the effort to develop, 4) *Anurakkhanā-padhāna*: the effort to maintain. Moreover, it should be noticed from the principle of *Sammāsati* - right mindfulness, and *Sammāsamādhi*: right concentration. In case of householder, the behavior can be noticed from gratitude, loving-kindness, compassion, working and learning with determination, tolerance, hard-working, good mental health, and vivacity. The practice of *Adhicitta-sikkhā* can apply the principle about meditation practice (Chanphiboon, 2016) as follows:

1) The concentration-development according to the natural method: this is the regulation from the principle of concentration creation by using *Sīla* as the base to be able to practice with the right behavior. When thinking about the right behavior, it should think about ethics used in consideration, this can create delight and happiness which influences the mind to have concentration.

2) The concentration-development according to the principle of *Iddhipāda*: this is the regulation to create concentration, which consists of *Chanda* – will, *Viriya* – effort, *Citta* – thoughtfulness, and *Vīmaṅṅsā* - investigation. People can work or do activities to be useful to themselves and others at every time and everywhere. In spite of the weak physical condition, the strong mind and good concentration will strengthen the body along with reasonably investigating the work or activities, and improving the mistake in order to work successfully with concentration.

3) The concentration-development led by mindfulness or the ordinary concentration-development: this is the method of using mindfulness to cling the mentality on emotion; this can apply the method of *Satipaṭṭhāna* – foundations of mindfulness, in daily life by using mindfulness to control the mentality to work or ongoing activity.

4) The methodical concentration-development: this is the fastest and most stable method to create concentration, which is *Ānāpānasati* - mindfulness on breathing. After beginning the practice, it can be clearly seen that the body and mind will relieve, the mind is calmed. Therefore, *Kammaṭṭhāna* - mental exercises, in addition to withhold *Akusala-dhamma* - unskillful, unwholesome or unprofitable states, and support *Kusala-dhamma* - skillful, wholesome, or profitable states, support to have good health also.

The wisdom development is to develop or to train the wisdom to know and to understand the truth, to know the world and living conditions, to liberate mind, to be freed from defilements and suffering, to solve all problems with wisdom. This revolution can be noticed from behavior in daily life, such as having faith and understanding in the Triple Gem, realizing demerit and virtue, searching for truth and creation, developing work, and resolving problem in life and work with wisdom. The practice in the level of *Adhipaññā-sikkhā*, which can train in the level of *Lokiyapaññā* or wisdom in the level of view by attempting to study continually and to listen to the recommendation from good friend, knowledgeable people, moral people in order to think and consider systematically according to the principle of *Yonisomanasikāra* - proper attention to consider and to know cause and effect connecting to knowing community, person, moderation, and proper time. In addition, it is necessary to apply knowledge and capability in practicing and operating to reach the goal, to prevent the problem, and to solve the problem directed to the point, to recover and develop oneself to have correct attitude and conduct, thus they can live with good relationship with family, community and society happily, even though the defilement cannot be rejected decisively. In the level of *Lokuttarapaññā* or the wisdom in the level of insight, people can follow the principle of *Ariyamagga* – the noble (eightfold) path by practicing *Satipaṭṭhāna* - foundations of mindfulness, in order to develop mental quality and capacity. When the mind development reaches its peak, the mind will be freed from all defilement. The consideration of *Tilakkhaṇa* - the Three Characteristics, is to know the nature and life which consists of *Pañca-khandha*: the five groups of existence, inaccuracy, suffering, without true identity to cling on, but to know *Ariyasacca* - the four noble truths, and *Loka-dhamma*: worldly conditions: not to be addicted to treasure and life, to calm oneself in hard time, and to live happily (Chanphiboon, 2016).

5. Conclusion

Tri-Sikkha Approach is the Buddhist teaching that all Buddhist people should follow in order to develop themselves to have good life, to adapt to the condition of life, society and environment, including all relationship to be appropriate and ready to do duty and operation to be advanced with the best result to reach the life goal of individual, organization, community, society and country.

With regard to the morality development, it is the development or training about individual's behavior to entrench in the discipline, to not cause trouble, to live with others happily, to be generous to other people in the society, to be responsible to duty, to not tell a lie or bad words while working, to ignore cause of ruin, to behave well based on ethics and Buddha's teaching. *Sīla* is the root of all ethics, accord to the *Buddhavacana* - the word of the Buddha in *Saṃyuttanikāya* - collection of connected discourses that *Sīla* which is pure is the base of all *Kusala-dhamma*: skillful, wholesome, or profitable states, which is relevant to the content in *Ovādapāṭimokkha* - the principal teaching that the abandon of all demerit, *Tri-Sikkha Approach* supports the learner to practice more.

With regard to the mental development, it is the development or training about individual's mind to be strong and stable, to grow with ethics, such as loving-kindness and compassion, hardworking, tolerance, concentration, vivacity, and beatitude. Therefore, there should be mental training by continually practicing meditation because concentration is necessary to mental development. This training aims to generate courage and determination to develop work to reach its goal, to practice to study or to do the duty with intention and tolerance by always practicing meditation to calm mind. The direction of concentration-development is the concentration-development according to the natural method, the concentration-development according to the principle of *Iddhipāda*, the concentration-development led by mindfulness or the ordinary concentration-development, and the methodical concentration-development.

With regard to the wisdom development, it is the development or training about the wisdom to know and to understand the truth, to know the world and living conditions, to liberate mind, to be freed from defilements and suffering, to solve all problems with wisdom by self-studying and self-practicing in the hard time. In addition, it is important to have thinking process to carefully solve problem step by step, and to be able to solve problem during work with knowing on the current conditions.

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