

# Dana Paramita as A Social Movement of Buddhist Community

Situ Asih<sup>1</sup>, Bani Sudardi<sup>2</sup>, IBG Yudha Triguna<sup>3</sup>, Titis Srimuda Pitana<sup>4</sup>, M C Umanailo<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1,2,4</sup> Universitas Sebelas Maret Surakarta, Indonesia

<sup>3</sup> Universitas Hindu Indonesia Denpasar, Indonesia

<sup>3</sup> Universitas Iqra Buru, Namlea, Maluku, Indonesia

<sup>1</sup>situasih@yahoo.co.id, <sup>2</sup>banisudardi\_fssr@staff.uns.ac.id, <sup>3</sup>ajiktriguna@yahoo.com, <sup>4</sup>titispitana@gmail.com,

<sup>5</sup>chairulbasrun@gmail.com

## ABSTRACT

This article is intended to describe the understanding, form, and type of dana paramita carried out by the Buddhist community, especially at the Nichiren Shoshu Buddha Dharma Council in Central Java. Besides, it also describes how social movement in Buddhist societies occurred through the implementation of dana paramita. The research method used is a qualitative method with an ethnographic approach. The results showed that the dana paramita is one of the practices of the asceticism in Buddhism, namely the attitude of practising generosity, which is part of the sad paramita (6 noble traits). According to its type, dana is divided into two types namely dana in the form of materials or objects given to people in need (Amisedana) and dana in the form of the inner form of advice or sermon Dhamma (Dhammadana). The dana paramita, developed by the Buddhist community in Central Java, resulted in social movement, especially at the Nichiren Shoshu Buddha Dharma Assembly. The form of a social movement can be seen from the attitude of the Buddhist community in carrying out religious activities. The awareness of the community to participate in contributing material for the success of religious activities is increasing, besides that, there is a change in the principle of life that "with dana paramita, then we can break the poor soul"

## Keywords

Dana Paramita; Social Movements; Buddhist Community

Article Received: 10 August 2020, Revised: 25 October 2020, Accepted: 18 November 2020

## Introduction

Religion as a guide to human life provides benefits for humans themselves. All religious teachings teach kindness and nobleness, including Buddhism. Buddhism, especially at the Nichiren Shoshu Buddha Dharma Assembly in Central Java, practised the practice of dana paramita as a form of austerities in real Buddhism. Buddhists are invited by Buddhist leaders to make financial contributions of any kind. The purpose of the dana paramita in addition to the success of various Buddhist religious activities is also to train individuals to be more courageous to think about the happiness of others.

Making a contribution or contributing to someone else's interests is not an easy matter. This is caused by humans have been fulfilled by greedy and selfish lust. In general, people will donate material when their selves feel that it's enough. However, at the Assembly of Nichiren Shoshu Buddha Dharma in Central Java, Buddhist communities were invited to make donations as they were. It is not easy, but religious leaders and Dharmaduta and Pandita always invite to break the soul of the poor.

The invitation to donate to the Nichiren Shoshu Buddha Dharma Assembly in Central Java, is a new change, previously to participate in religious activities, both celebrations and other religious activities, the Buddhist community always get subsidies from donors (rich people who are willing to make financial contributions). With this change, people who initially had no effort to participate in dana paramita activities and became increasingly active and diligent in saving to be able to participate in religious activities that have been programmed by the assembly.

Previous research on Dana paramita was conducted by (Suamba, 2016) with the research title "Paramita as Revealed in Old Javanese Text of Sang Hyang Kamahayanikan", where this research discusses the practice of funds based on the Sang Hayang Kamahayanikan scripture, while this article discusses practices funds carried out by Buddhist communities. Other research on dana paramita is in the research conducted by Wijayanto in a new orientation journal entitled "The Supremacy of Dana Paramita for The Buddhist Laity in Daily Life". The results showed that in various texts and Buddhist scriptures it was explained that the practice of giving must be carried out by Buddhist followers if they want to attain Buddhist awareness (Wijayanto, 2009).

Based on previous research, it has not been discussed about the practice of Dana paramita with social movements. This article will discuss the dana paramita as a form of the social movement of Buddhist societies. To obtain the formulation of research questions as follows: What is the practice of dana paramita? How do Buddhist social movements occur through the practice of dana paramita?

The Dana paramita is one of the ascetic practices in Buddhism, which is a part of Sad Paramita, which is the retreat of a Bodhisattva to attain Buddhahood or Nirvana consciousness. Sad Paramita consists of 6 retreats, including (1) Dana Paramita, (2) Sila Paramita, (3) Kshanti Paramita, (4) Virya Paramita, (5) Dhyana Paramita, and (6) Prajna Paramita (Anshori & Ong, 2020; Ishii, 1987).

A Bodhisattva is a future Buddha, so to attain Nirvana it is necessary to perfect paramita. And Dana paramita is paramitas that come in the first place compared to another paramita. This is because Dana paramita is one of the most difficult hermitages to carry out. It is said to be the most difficult because basically in every human being there is a

basic error of the soul, which tends to prioritize one's interests rather than those of others.

Dana means charity, generous, and likes to help people (William, Haudi, & Wijoyo, 2019). Broadly speaking, funds are divided into 2 (two) types: the first is Amisedana, namely donations in the form of materials or goods, can be in the form of money, food, clothing, medicines and other objects that can be donated. While the second is Dhammadana, which is a donation given to others by giving information, sermons, lectures, or teaching the Dharma to others in need.

Further explained that a Bodhisattva does not prioritize thought or contemplation, but rather more concerned with practice or practice. Even a Bodhisattva not only sacrifices goods or materials but his own body and soul, this is as written in the book Sang Hyang Kamahayanikan 32 "Sacrifice yourself and it is your duty, do not wait for other people's orders" (Kumar & Sumathi, 2017).

Discussing the social movements of Buddhist societies, research has been conducted on social movements in Sri Lanka, namely research conducted by Gamlath, who researched the title "Social Movements, Power Politics and Politicization of Buddhist Priests in Sri Lanka". The results showed that politics in Sri Lanka was greatly influenced by changes in the spiritual behaviour of the Sangha (Bhikkhu) towards political practices in pre and post-independence societies in Sri Lanka. It was further explained that the rules of conduct and state sponsorship had an impact on the greatness of the sangha and the behaviour of the sangha regarding political practices in Sri Lanka (Walton, 2016).

Other research on social change, also conducted by Parvanova and Melanie, who researched the title: "Activism And Social Movements In South-East Asia". The results of the study showed that in the Asian region especially South East Asia there had been very rapid economic growth, besides that an independent movement had also emerged in this region. In Indonesia, the Philippines and other countries in Southeast Asia have been born social activism ranging from small-scale mobilization to large movements (Bond, 2008).

In general social movements are divided into old and new social movements (Dackweiler & Schafer, 1998; Jasper, 2011; Rucht, 1994). Social movements are one of the main forms of collective behaviour, but over time in the 18th-century social movements are social protest movements, while in the 20th-century social movements are an important source of political change, while also including the movement to save the environment, the world peace movement (Ramutsindela, 2009).

A social movement is a set of opinions and beliefs in a population that represents a preference for changing elements of social structure (Hara & Shachaf, 2008). It was further explained that social movements are organized and sustainable collective movements, the purpose of which is to challenge existing authorities, both institutionally and culturally (Snow, Soule, & Kriesi, 2007).

## Method

This research was conducted in Central Java Province, with a focus of research on the implementation of the practice of Dana Paramita conducted by the Buddhist community,

especially at the Nichiren Shoshu Buddha Dharma Assembly. The type of research used is qualitative research with a case study approach, this is chosen so that the reader gets a clearer causal picture of the case the researcher adopted (Widdowson, 2011). Further explained that the case study is not just a methodological choice, but a case study is a type of qualitative research (Starman, 2013). The data of this study were obtained from observations, interviews, and documentation.

## Results and Discussions

To answer the research question, it is necessary to conduct a critical analysis of the data regarding the practice of Dana Paramita conducted by the Buddhist community of the Nichiren Shoshu Buddha Dharma assembly in Central Java. Furthermore, the results of the analysis can be explained several things:

The Dana paramita as explained is one of the austerities that must be carried out by a Bodhisattva, Bodhisattvas are beings who have the determination to become a Buddha (Tania & Azeharie, 2019), must perfect their parameters by carrying out Sad Paramita in their lives (Suamba, 2016). The Dana paramita is the most basic Dharma practice, also called the foundation for carrying out the other paramitas. In other words, if running the Dana Paramita is not successful it will be difficult to carry out other Dharma practices.

Sharing with others in need is not easy, especially seeing various cases on social media, where many people commit criminal acts to fulfil their greedy desires, a child kills a parent because he wants an inheritance, a wife leaves her husband because he is not satisfied with material provided by her husband. Examples of these cases are evidence that the human soul has been filled with lust for greed and high egoism. Because of this misguided human spirit, the Buddha taught humans to always run the Dana Paramita.

In addition to breaking the mental delinquency and attachment to self-interest, the practise of dana paramita is also a proof of gratitude and repayment to Tri Ratna (Buddha, Dharma, and Sangha). Gratitude to the Buddha, for being born in the world to give the Dharma, thanking the Sangha for maintaining the purity of the Dharma, and thanking the Dharma for giving awareness to humans (Anshori & Ong, 2020).

Once the fundamental implementation of the practice of the Dana Paramita for the achievement of inner happiness, the Nichiren Shoshu Buddha Dharma assembly in Central Java invited the adherents of this religion to dare to run the Dana Paramita. At the Nichiren Shoshu Buddha Dharma Assembly in Central Java, the Dana Paramita were divided into several types: Gokuyo; Dana Paramita is intended for the benefit of Sangha members. Since the time of Sakyamuni Buddha in India, because monks broke ties with the family, the monks begged the people for food (Kiyota & Cleary, 1987). The amount of funds donated by people is not limited. The Buddhist community deposited the Dana Paramita (Gokuyo) to the staff of the Nichiren Shoshu Buddha Dharma assembly, at the Dharmasala level. In some areas, funding to Sangha members is not only in the form of money but in the form of food and medicine (Li, 2016). Then the staff is deposited to the management at the Cetya level, and so on until the National level. People submit

Gokuyo every month. Usually deposited in conjunction with the holding of a meeting that discusses the preaching of the Dharma. Dharmaduta and Pandita always give direction to increase the amount of dana paramita deposited.

The Dana Paramita is intended to foster the Buddhist Society. Nichiren Shoshu Buddha Dharma Assembly donates Zaimu every time a meeting is held, both at the Dharmasala, Cetya, District and Centra levels. The Dana Paramita are collected centrally, then used by the Assembly for the operational interests of the assembly, such as to finance the electricity and water of the Vihara, staff salaries, operational management and Dharmaduta.

Dana Paramita aimed at organizing religious activities. The Nichiren Shoshu Buddha Dharma Assembly is one of the most commonly held Buddhist religious councils. From the celebration of the feast (Oesiki, Vesak), the anniversary of the young generation, the celebration of the new year, the anniversary of the Assembly, the Anniversary of the Temple and many other activities. The purpose of the paramita funds for the activities is to make the religious activities that have been programmed. The amount of activity funds depends on the size of the activity carried out.

The statement "Break the poor soul" is a general statement that the group uses as a guide for thinking and acting. In this case, it is used as a guide by the Buddhist Society at the Nichiren Shoshu Buddha Dharma Assembly in Central Java. Giving or giving is an attitude that is owned by people who are rich, both materially and psychologically. So that the invitation of Pandita and Dharmaduta to the community of Nichiren Shoshu Buddha Dharma Assembly in Central Java to become a rich and generous person is a principle in living life.

Buddhism teaches about the law of karma, with its teachings that read "Who plants then he will reap". By having a basic belief in these natural laws, it is taught to the Buddhist community to be able to think of the happiness of others, by doing the Dana Paramita. In various sutras, it is explained that by giving paramita, one will get extraordinary benefits. Among them will get good treatment from others and a pleasant face (Suamba, 2016; Umanailo, 2020).

The principle of breaking the soul of the poor in the Buddhist community in Central Java, especially at the Nichiren Shoshu Buddha Dharma Assembly continues to be called upon in every religious activity. So that the practice of Dana paramita became a habit of living for the Buddhist community of the Nichiren Shoshu Buddha Dharma Assembly in Central Java. Over time, the practice of Dana paramita became a habit of life and was able to change the behaviour of Buddhist communities for the better.

Human behaviour now reflects that the dominance of negative behaviour is very strong compared to positive things. But in the Buddhist community, at the Nichiren Shoshu Buddha Dharma Assembly in Central Java, who dared to make changes in the implementation of Dana's practices showed that there were efforts to make changes. The practice of Dana paramita which is generally only done by the rich or sufficient in material matters, and people who are considered less able to get subsidies from the rich, have been changed.

That every individual has the same rights and obligations to change lives, with the principle of "Break the Poor's Soul". The practice of Dana paramita is not only done by one or

two individuals but all Buddhists who are members of the Nichiren Shoshu Buddha Dharma Indonesia assembly. So it can be said that the paramita fund is a social movement. Not all organizations dare to invite their followers to do actions that are difficult to do. But Nichiren Shoshu Buddha Dharma Assembly succeeded in inviting followers to change and make the principle of "Break the Poor Soul" as a guide to living.

Social movements influence in shaping the way individuals interpret the world and then encourage individuals to take actions that result in social change (Sen & Avci, 2016). Before the implementation of the Dana Paramita practice, and the implementation of the "Break the Poor Soul" Principle, the difference in social class between the rich and the poor was very noticeable. But when all members of the Buddhist community of the Nichiren Shoshu Buddha Dharma Assembly in Central Java have the same opportunity to do good, then social class no longer exists.

## Conclusion

The conclusion of this article is: The practice of dana paramita is one of the foundations in practicing Buddhism so that as Buddhists who wish to attain Buddhism, the practice of dana paramita must be perfectly carried out. At the Nichiren Shoshu Buddha Dharma Assembly in Central Java, the practice of the Dana Pramita is always called upon in every religious activity. With so many types of Dana Paramita donated by Buddhists, making Buddhists have changed their lifestyle. Social class or rich and poor differences have been eliminated by the practice of Dana paramita for all people.

## References

- [1] Anshori, M. F., & Ong, S. (2020). Praktik Keamanan Manusia Soka Gakkai International di Indonesia, Filipina, Dan Singapura ketika Pandemi COVID-19. *Intermestic: Journal of International Studies*. <https://doi.org/10.24198/intermestic.v5n1.5>
- [2] Bond, P. (2008). Social movements and corporate social responsibility in South Africa. *Development and Change*. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-7660.2008.00528.x>
- [3] Dackweiler, R., & Schafer, R. (1998). Perspectives of Women's Movements: International or Not at All TT - Bilanzen und Perspektiven der Frauenbewegungen: International oder gar nicht. *Forschungsjournal Neue Soziale Bewegungen*.

- [4] Hara, N., & Shachaf, P. (2008). A comparative analysis of online peace movement organizations. In *Social Information Technology: Connecting Society and Cultural Issues*. <https://doi.org/10.4018/978-1-59904-774-4.ch004>
- [5] Ishii, K. (1987). Old Javanese Esoteric Buddhism as Seen in the Sang Hyang Kamahayanikan. *JOURNAL OF INDIAN AND BUDDHIST STUDIES (INDOGAKU BUKKYOGAKU KENKYU)*. <https://doi.org/10.4259/ibk.36.333>
- [6] Jasper, J. M. (2011). Emotions and social movements: Twenty years of theory and research. *Annual Review of Sociology*. <https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev-soc-081309-150015>
- [7] Kiyota, M., & Cleary, T. (1987). *Shobogenzo: Zen Essays by Dogen*. Pacific Affairs. <https://doi.org/10.2307/2758913>
- [8] Kumar, S. P. S., & Sumathi, U. (2017). Universalising the Concept of Avatarhood: Sri Aurobindo's Discourse in Comparing Krishna, Christ, and Buddha. *International Journal of Linguistics, Literature and Culture*. <https://doi.org/10.21744/ijllc.v3i2.379>
- [9] Li, X. (2016). Pharmacist-Monks in the Tang Dynasty: A Group of Mahayana Buddhist Followers and their Contributions to Chinese Buddhism. *International Journal of Social Science Studies*. <https://doi.org/10.11114/ijsss.v4i8.1714>
- [10] Ramutsindela, M. (2009). Social Movements. In *International Encyclopedia of Human Geography*. <https://doi.org/10.1016/B978-008044910-4.00803-8>
- [11] Rucht, D. (1994). Modernisierung und neue soziale Bewegungen: Deutschland, Frankreich und USA im Vergleich. In *Theorie und Gesellschaft*.
- [12] Sen, A., & Avci, Ö. (2016). Why Social Movements Occur: Theories of Social Movements. *Journal of Information Economics and Management*.
- [13] Snow, D. A., Soule, S. A., & Kriesi, H. (2007). The Blackwell Companion to Social Movements. In *The Blackwell Companion to Social Movements*. <https://doi.org/10.1002/9780470999103>
- [14] Starman, A. (2013). The case study as a type of qualitative research. *Journal of Contemporary Educational Studies*.
- [15] Suamba, I. B. P. (2016). Paramita as Revealed in Old Javanese Text of Sang Hyang Kamahayanikan. *Journal of Buddhist Education and Research*.
- [16] Tania, T., & Azeharie, S. S. (2019). Komunikasi Transendental Sembahyang Buddha Mahayana (Studi Semiotika Sembahyang Di Vihara Padumuttara Tangerang). Koneksi. <https://doi.org/10.24912/kn.v2i2.3942>
- [17] Umanailo, M. C. B. (2020). Pattern Of Agricultural Land Conversion In Namlea District. *Solid State Technology*, 63(2s). Retrieved from <http://solidstatetechnology.us/index.php/JSST/article/view/6478>
- [18] Walton, M. J. (2016). Buddhist Monks and Democratic Politics in Contemporary Myanmar. In *Buddhism and the Political Process*. [https://doi.org/10.1007/978-1-137-57400-8\\_4](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-1-137-57400-8_4)
- [19] Widdowson, M. (2011). Case Study Research Methodology. *International Journal of Transactional Analysis Research & Practice*. <https://doi.org/10.29044/v2i1p25>
- [20] Wijayanto, P. A. (2009). The Supremacy of Danaparamita for the Buddhist Laity in Daily Life. *Orientasi Baru*.
- [21] William, Haudi, & Wijoyo, H. (2019). MANFAAT ETIKA DALAM BERWIRAUSAHAMENURUT PANDANGAN BUDDHIS. *Jurnal Ilmu Agama Dan Pendidikan Agama Buddha*.