

The Effects of Theravāda Buddhism in Social and Culture of Vietnam

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Abstract: *This research paper will hopefully address some important issues of Tradition, Culture in Vietnam, about the influence of Theravāda Buddhism in some areas of political, cultural, and social life Vietnam. The areas of political, cultural, and social life mentioned here include only those aspects of Theravāda Buddhism that are spread from the past to the modern.*

Keywords: Theravāda Buddhism, Social Culture, Vietnam

1. Introduction

Theravāda Buddhism was present in the Mekong Delta very early (around the fourth century). *Theravāda* Buddhism has had 452 temples with 8,574 monks, concentrated mainly in nine provinces: Tra Vinh, Vinh Long, Can Tho, An Giang, Kien Giang, Bac Lieu, Soc Trang and Ca Mau.¹

Buddhism has experienced many ups and downs in history and has become one of the major religions in the world, affecting all aspects of social life. Buddhism has built a rich treasure of scriptures called the *Tripitaka Sutras* and many studies of the monks with the writings, explanations, and commentaries on the doctrine. So far, Buddhism has had many sects, sects, tribes, etc. that diversity does not reflect a separate disagreement but an expanded form. This contributes to the vast and profound teaching of the Buddha.

Vietnamese Buddhism throughout history has left significant contributions to the nation in various fields such as morality, culture, art, lifestyle, and thinking. It can be said that *Theravāda* Buddhism in Vietnam has accompanied the people in political, religious, and cultural life from the early days and has now become a traditional religion of the nation. Today, Buddhism is increasingly promoting its positive values in many areas of social life, in the modern context of the market economy and globalization. *Theravāda* Buddhism's philosophical and anthropological ideology occupies an important position, influences the social life of Vietnamese people, and is being continuously promoted in the practical life of the country. Right from the beginning, the ideas about the human life of Buddhism and the ethical norms of *Theravāda* Buddhism have directly affected the culture and society in Vietnam.

2. The Concept of Theravada Buddhism in Vietnam

To better understand this sect, we learn the concept of "*Theravāda Buddhism*." Although relatively early in the Mekong Delta region, when indigenous Buddhism had influence only in the North, in Chan Lap (South Vietnam)

Nam Tong Buddhism received missions, taught by Indian monks².

Today, the Buddhism of Theravāda is two of the most famous forms to label it: Theravāda Buddhism (commonly Theravāda, Vietnamese and Khmer) Buddhism. Moreover, Theravāda Buddhism is also known as Buddhism Theravāda, Buddhism Theravāda ...

The Mahāyan or Theravada Buddhism is practically unconceived by most regular Buddhists. They also say clearly that monks are Buddhist adherents while the majority of Vietnamese Buddhists are Mahāyana or Northern Buddhist, from lessons to rituals. Since Buddhism has become popular in Vietnam, the need to work, read, compare and understand this school of Buddhism is increasingly important.

Terms like "Theravāda" or "Buddhism Theravāda" are most sometimes used by the Buddhist Theravāda culture. But the words are both misleading and inadequate for historical and geographical details surrounding this Buddhist nation. The explanation may also be known that Theravāda Buddhism never spread to China, Korea, Japan and North, and it was not until the 11th century that Theravāda Buddhism began to move from Sri Lanka to Myanmar, Thailand, Cambodia and the south of Viet Nam. Previously, Mahāyana Buddhism and Vajrayana Buddhism followed.³

3. Influence on Traditional Culture in Vietnam

Theravāda Buddhism has a number of architecture works that have existed for long time and build prosperity for the Vietnamese community after its spread into our country quite early on. The beliefs and ethical principles and the theory of cause and effect of Theravāda Buddhism have strongly affected the traditions and practices of Vietnamese citizens. It can be assumed that In the spirit of the rule of cause and effect, man's happy and joyous life has been strongly connected with Buddha's practices and guidance from there. Every tradition of life, or, in other words, a life cycle for the citizens of Vietnam, is strictly regulated by the hope that all will live in decent and happy existence for

¹Minh Nga. *Theravāda Buddhism Excerpts from Khmer* (Government Committee for Religious Affairs).

²*Ibid.*

³PhapHien. *Theravāda Buddhist Sects*, page 98.

those in Vietnam. Survivors and others who have suffered have a safe and healthy exit. Such activities often conform with Theravāda Buddhist ethical guidelines for a happier future existence without any reference to deliverance or nirvana.

So the background of the creation and growth of Theravāda Buddhism in Vietnam and the past of the country have been brought to light both through the most painful moment and through flourishing. Theravāda Buddhism in Vietnam has always been the most significant time. The Theravāda Buddhism, in Vietnamese feudal culture, is not only known to be a concept of consciousness, but also to be called the network super-structural of a former community (mostly the Temple). Such functions should not be defined, though. It not only performs political and solely religious worship owing to the pagoda in history, but also non-religious roles as market, governance, community and society.

4. Festival

While these festivals are grounded in conventional conceptions of wet rice farmers, they are conducted in a nation that has had a profound impact on Theravāda Buddhism, so the role of Buddhism in these festivals is very significant. The monks who are holding the festivals first of all. The first festival practice is to read the Buddhist scriptures in order for the Buddha to bear witness to the benevolent works of the citizens who have pursued the Buddha's guidance to the Buddha. The bumper crop, in accordance with the laws of cause and effect, would be the trigger of successful sowing together with the gods that the citizens have achieved, bringing rain a strong breeze.

5. Architecture and Sculpture

It can be said that *Theravāda* Buddhism has completely conquered the emotions of architectural and sculpture art of Vietnamese artisans to create very impressive, sophisticated, and brilliant Buddhist architectural works and sculptures. All these things have shown the reverence for the Buddha and the admiration for the Buddha's teachings that the Vietnamese people have been living in and forever. Therefore, when it comes to Vietnamese architectural and sculpture art, the most typical and the most outstanding is still Buddhist architectural and sculpture art, even it has a profound impact on both the architectural works and other sculptures of the later Vietnamese. A natural attachment, not imposed by the government, whether worshiped, regarded as the state religion or weakened or ruined, the people and Buddhism have always been together, and especially mentally and spiritually.

6. Art

Traditional Vietnamese painting is also heavily influenced by *Theravāda* Buddhism. The paintings are mainly drawn to serve Buddhism, to illustrate scenes taken from Buddhist scriptures, stories about the Buddha's life, and the law of the causal reincarnation of the Buddha. Painters are usually monks or believers with more or less knowledge of Buddhism. However, because the compositions were mainly

from Buddhist scriptures, the works almost had no personal artistic expression and the names of the artists were very few. But one thing is undeniable that the content on the human life of Buddhism, with the theory of reincarnation, is always an endless topic of Vietnamese traditional painting.

7. Conclusion

However, Vietnamese Buddhism has chosen Cambodian *Theravāda* Buddhism as the mainstream in both congregational and doctrinal stereotypes, but not all content is rigidly dogmatically accepted. It is the spirit of selectively acquiring for the purpose of building and developing a prosperous country. It can be said that Vietnamese traditional culture is Buddhist culture because all cultural elements deeply influence Buddhism, which is the human view and moral norms of Theravada Buddhism. Vietnamese people are imbued with Buddhism and on the basis of Buddhism, they have created a culture with a very special Buddhist identity. When we interact with Vietnamese people in addition to being easily friendly and approachable because we see in them a gentle temperament, a generous and generous heart that we respect them when we see that they are always calm and calm. Resolutely resolve all incidents that occur in daily life quietly, without noise, with no big hammer or angry. That is the personality of the Vietnamese people.

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