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**THE ROLE OF BUDDHISM IN THE IMPLEMENTATION
OF SOCIAL SECURITY IN VIETNAM NOWADAYS**

Major: Philosophy

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SUMMARY OF DOCTORAL THESIS IN PHILOSOPHY

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The thesis can be found at the following libraries:

- Library of the Academy of Journalism and Communication;
- National Library of Vietnam.

INTRODUCTION

1. The necessity of the topic

Social security (SS) plays a vital role in social life. Emphasizing social issues and implementing SS first requires correct awareness: investing resources to solve social issues and SS is exactly investing in development. Human development holds the central goal position of social development; this is the theoretical foundation for practical solutions to social issues in life. On the basis of sharing responsibility and implementing social justice, social security policies are executed through many different forms, methods, and measures. This stems from the awareness that investing resources to solve social issues and SS is precisely investing in development; simultaneously affirming that human development is the authentic goal of social development.

Economics holds a key role but is not an end in itself, nor does it have a self-serving purpose; economic development must be oriented toward serving humans. Resolving social issues — especially pressing ones — and implementing SS are both aimed at serving the lives of people, from individuals to the community. Therefore, economic policy and social policy share the objective of being for the people and for the society of laborers. The humanistic quality of human and social development is determined by the quality of resolving social issues, the quality of social policies and SS, on the foundation of economic conditions and premises. SS is a component of the system of social issues; furthermore, it is the most prominent and outstanding component within that system.

Buddhism, with the tradition of "compassion" and "saving from suffering and bestowing joy," has long been attached to the spiritual and cultural life of the Vietnamese nation. Throughout many historical periods, Buddhism has not only been a religion with deep and wide influence but also an active force participating in charitable activities, natural disaster relief, nurturing orphans, supporting the poor, people with disabilities, and the lonely elderly. These activities not only manifest the moral values of Buddhism but also contribute to alleviating the burden on the national social security system.

The above reality poses several issues that need to be explained: Buddhism holds a very important role in the implementation of SS in Vietnam today; How

to promote the role of Buddhism in the effective implementation of SS to create a healthy living environment, enhance the quality of spiritual life, limit negative behaviors in society, supplement resources and alleviate the burden on the State in ensuring SS, build a harmonious and fair society, manifesting the harmony between religion and the State, contributing to the cause of national development. Facing those issues, researching the theoretical basis, thereby evaluating the actual status of promoting the role of Buddhism in the effective implementation of SS, and proposing solutions to promote the effectiveness of Buddhism's SS work today truly carries both theoretical and practical significance.

Recognizing the role and the significance of the role of social security in ensuring human rights, the role of Buddhism toward the implementation of SS in Vietnam is a core content in current sustainable development policies. The author, as a researcher trained at the Doctoral level in Philosophy at the Academy of Journalism and Communication, and also currently a Monk (Venerable), perceives the positive aspects in the SS activities of Buddhism and also identifies non-positive manifestations that need continued adjustment and perfection to be able to implement SS programs aimed at vulnerable groups such as: the poor, the elderly, people with disabilities, women, children, ethnic minorities... as a way to protect the rights of vulnerable groups... therefore, the author chooses the topic: "The role of Buddhism in the implementation of social security in Vietnam nowadays" as the subject of his doctoral thesis in Philosophy.

2. Research Objectives and Tasks of the Thesis

2.1. Research Objectives

On the basis of clarifying theoretical and practical issues regarding the role of Buddhism in the implementation of social security in Vietnam, the thesis proposes viewpoints and solutions to promote the role of Buddhism in the implementation of social security in Vietnam today.

2.2. Research Tasks

To achieve the set research objectives, the thesis focuses on performing the following basic tasks:

- First: The thesis conducts an analysis, systematization, and summarization of domestic and foreign research works related to the theme of

Buddhism's role in the implementation of SS, thereby identifying research gaps and contents that need continued clarification within the scope of the thesis.

- Second: Clarify a number of basic theoretical issues regarding the role of Buddhism in the field of SS in Vietnam.

- Third: Analyze and evaluate the actual status of Buddhism's role in the implementation of SS in Vietnam during the 2017–2025 period.

- Fourth: On the analyzed theoretical and practical basis, the thesis proposes viewpoints and some primary solutions to strengthen and promote the role of Buddhism in the implementation of SS in Vietnam, contributing to the process of building a fair, compassionate, and sustainably developing society.

3. Research Object and Scope

3.1. Research Object

The research object of the Thesis is the role of Buddhism in the implementation of SS in Vietnam today.

3.2. Research Scope

- Regarding content: The thesis researches theoretical issues, analyzes, and evaluates the actual status of Buddhism's role in the implementation of SS. Social security is a broad content; within the research scope of the topic, the author researches the main fields of SS in which Buddhism participates, such as: 1) Hunger eradication, poverty reduction, and employment services; 2) Orphan care activities; 3) Security activities for the elderly and those without support; 4) Security activities in compassionate education; 5) Security activities in medical care and nurturing people infected with HIV/AIDS.

- Regarding time: The thesis researches the aforementioned contents from 2017 to the present (from the 8th National Congress of the Vietnam Buddhist Sangha).

4. Theoretical Basis and Research Methods of the Thesis

4.1. Theoretical Basis

The thesis is implemented on the theoretical basis of Marxism-Leninism, Ho Chi Minh Thought, and the viewpoints of the Communist Party of Vietnam on religion and religious work, including SS work. Additionally, the Thesis inherits the research results of several previous scientific works and practical documents

from some Party, State, and religious agencies related to the content and research scope of the topic.

4.2. Research Methods

The thesis is implemented on the basis of applying the methodology of dialectical materialism and historical materialism and specific scientific research methods such as: survey, sociological investigation; analysis and synthesis; historical-logical method; generalization method; individual interviewing, and observation method.

5. New Contributions of the Thesis

- One: The Thesis builds a theoretical framework, clarifying and deepening theoretical issues regarding the role of Buddhism in the implementation of SS. The Thesis offers several scientific concepts and conclusions, contributing to the perfection of theory and serving as a basis to strengthen Buddhism's role in implementing SS.

- Two: The thesis analyzes and proposes a number of primary solutions to promote Buddhism's role in the implementation of SS, consistent with the viewpoints and orientations of the Party, the laws of the State, and the current trend of national integration and development.

6. Theoretical and Practical Significance of the Thesis

6.1. Theoretical Significance

- The thesis contributes to supplementing the theory on the role of religion in social development.

- The thesis holds important significance in clarifying the philosophical foundation for the role of Buddhism in implementing SS. By analyzing the core values of Buddhism such as compassion (karuna), non-self (anatta), dependent origination (pratityasamutpada), and saving from suffering, the thesis points out that these values are not only moral but also philosophical categories that orient social action.

- From the perspective of social philosophy, the thesis affirms that Buddhism is an institution capable of harmonizing social relations through nurturing compassion, promoting the spirit of solidarity, and upholding community responsibility. Through this, the thesis contributes to enriching the

theory on the role of spiritual values in sustainable development and enhancing the quality of social life.

- From the perspective of human-life philosophy (triết học nhân sinh), the thesis points out that Buddhism's implementation of SS is the realization of the ideal of "saving from suffering — bestowing joy," manifesting the dialectical relationship between awareness and action, and between moral values and social practice. The thesis contributes to developing a more comprehensive theoretical paradigm regarding the role of religion in the process of constructing a humanistic, harmonious, and sustainable society.

6.2. Practical Significance

- The thesis affirms that Buddhist philosophical values like compassion, non-self, and saving from suffering are capable of being transformed into specific and effective social security actions. This is an important basis for promoting humanistic activities in the community.

- Simultaneously, the thesis points out that the spiritual resources of Buddhism can be effectively utilized in the management and planning of SS policies. This expands the approach to social development in a humanistic spirit.

- The solutions proposed in the thesis can be applied in practice to build security models based on ethics and community responsibility. Through this, the thesis contributes to orienting the development of a humanistic, fair, and sustainable society.

7. Structure of the Thesis

In addition to the Introduction, Overview, Conclusion, List of the Author's Published Works, List of References, and Appendices, the content of the Thesis consists of 4 chapters and 11 sections.

Chapter 1

LITERATURE REVIEW OF RESEARCH WORKS RELATED TO THE TOPIC AND ISSUES RAISED FOR THE THESIS

1.1. Overview of research works related to the thesis topic

1.1.1. *Research works related to social security*

1.1.1.1. *Domestic research works*

The book (2005), *Social Security and Human Resource Development*, author Mac Van Tien, Labor - Social Publishing House, Hanoi. The book (2008), *Social Security Textbook*, author Nguyen Van Dinh, National Economics University Publishing House, Hanoi. The book *Social Security in Vietnam Towards 2020* by Vu Van Phuc, National Political Publishing House, Hanoi, published in 2011. The book (2013), *On Social Security in Vietnam in the 2012 - 2020 Period*, author Mai Ngoc Cuong, National Political Publishing House, Hanoi; the author provided a general reflection on social security such as: concept, structure, and content of social security.

In 2015, the Ministerial-level scientific project "*Ensuring Social Security – Model Orientation and Solutions*" by Dang Nguyen Anh systematized the concepts, functions, structures, and fundamental principles of the social security system, thereby creating a theoretical basis for orienting social security models and solutions in Vietnam.

The article "*Approaching Social Security in Vietnam Today from a Sustainable Development Perspective*", author Nguyen Thi Nga; the author argued that: there are many different viewpoints and ways of perceiving social security, but no matter which angle it is approached from, in essence, social security is an issue that possesses economic, social, and deeply humanitarian characteristics.

1.1.1.2. *Foreign Research Works* In the book *Social Security Strategies: How to Optimize Retirement Benefits*, William Reichenstein and William Meyer not only provide guidance on how to use information and automated technology to maximize social security benefits.

The book *Basis of Social Security in Asia: Mutual Aid, Micro-insurance and Social Security*. The work *Social Security, Medicare & Government Pensions* by Joseph Matthews, Attorney.

1.1.2. Research Works Related to the Role of Buddhism in the Implementation of Social Security

1.1.2.1. Domestic Research Works The book (2010), *Understanding the Social Functions of Vietnamese Buddhism*. The book (2020), *Certain Buddhist Activities Contributing to Ensuring Social Security in the Period of Development and International Integration*, authors: Thich Thanh Dien.

The book (2020), *Religion and Sustainable Development*, authors: Do Lan Hien, Vu Thị Mai Hien. The book is a collection of research papers on religion related to security and human security, to sustainable development and the policies of several nations, helping us understand and participate in actions toward the complex intersections between faith and behavior, people and policy, sustainability and stability.

The book (2020), *Religious Resources: Experience in the World and in Vietnam*, Institute of Religion and Belief – Ho Chi Minh National Academy of Politics. The work consists of 3 parts: Part 1. General theory on religious resources, including a collection of theoretical articles on religion and sustainable development goals. Prominent is the article: *Religion and Social Security Work in Vietnam: Prospects and Barriers*, author Do Lan Hien (p. 91).

The book (2020), *Buddhism and Social Security Issues*, Most Venerable Thich Thanh Dien (Editor-in-Chief). The content of the book is structured into 3 chapters. The book (2020), *The Vietnam Buddhist Sangha and Social Security Activities*. The book (2021), *Vietnamese Buddhism and Social Security Guarantee Activities, Some Theoretical and Practical Issues*, author Duong Quang Dien (Most Venerable Thich Thanh Dien) editor-in-chief.

The book (2021), *Buddhist Activities of the Vietnam Buddhist Sangha in Hoa Binh Province in the Context of International Integration*, authors: Duong Quang Dien, Social Sciences Publishing House.

The article (2016), *Social Charitable Activities of Vietnamese Buddhism* by Master Duong Quang Dien, in the *Vietnam Social Sciences Review*, No. 10 (107)

- 2016, points out a number of achievements in the social-charitable activities of several typical and prominent monastic units, and mentions some solutions but not yet of an intensive nature.

The article (2020), *Vietnamese Buddhism in Social Security – Doctrine and Practice*. According to the author, social security is understood as a state of ensuring that individuals and the social community exist in a sustainable manner.

The article (2021), *Vietnamese Buddhism and the Work of Ensuring Social Security in the Sustainable Development and International Integration of the Country*. The author states that all religions emphasize social charitable activities. The article (2021), *The Role of Vietnamese Buddhism in Current Social Work*. The article mentions 4 contents that the Vietnam Buddhist Sangha implements in social security. The article (2023), *The Role of Buddhism in Social Security Work*, author Nguyen Thi Hue, *Journal of Buddhist Studies*, ISSN: 2734-9195.

1.1.2.2. Foreign Research Works

"Buddhism-based charity, philanthropy, and social work: A lesson from Vietnam" (2018). The main content of the article clearly analyzes the charitable/philanthropic role of Buddhist Organizations (BBOs) in expanding social services, supporting the poor, the disadvantaged, children, the elderly, people with HIV/AIDS...

The article (2025), *"The Significance of Buddhist Social Work: A Study on its Impact on Community Development and Social Justice"*.

"Social Welfare in Buddhism" (2024, on Zenodo DOI: 10.5281/zenodo.13710939), author: Dr. Krishna Kant Sharma: Mentions the importance of teachings such as compassion and mindfulness, while analyzing the historical role of Buddhist monasteries in education, healthcare, and social stability.

The article (2024), *"Social Welfare and Buddhism"*, Dr. Krishna Kant Sharma, source: Zenodo (DOI: 10.5281/zenodo.13710939): The research overview shows that Buddhism promotes social responsibility through charity and the spirit of inner purification, contributing to the improvement of community welfare.

1.2. Overview of Main Values of Reviewed Works and Issues for the Thesis to Continue Researching

1.2.1. Overview of Main Values of Reviewed Works

First, the authors have mentioned building and perfecting social security policies in current development; social security and human resource development; social security law.

Second, the authors also mentioned the necessity of implementing the role of Buddhism in the implementation of social security: Understanding the social functions of Vietnamese Buddhism; social security and factors affecting the social security activities of the Vietnam Buddhist Sangha (VBS).

Third, some works analyzed and evaluated the actual status of social security activities in religious work.

Fourth, the works also contributed to further clarifying the contributions of Buddhism in social security work...

Fifth, the above works approached social security from the perspectives of policy, state management, human rights, and Buddhist philosophy on humanity.

Sixth, the above works directly approached the role of Buddhism in the field of social security, especially in the aspects of charitable activities, Buddhist affairs, and participation in ensuring social security in the community and localities.

It can be affirmed that currently, there are a number of domestic and foreign research works interested in the role of Buddhism toward various fields from many different angles. The works mentioned social security and the role of social security toward the sustainable development of social life. Some works mentioned the role of Buddhism in the implementation of social security. However, these works were only researched in the form of articles; there has not been any work researching comprehensively the role of Buddhism in the implementation of social security today. The above works are important suggestions for the author to inherit and continue perfecting his Thesis. The works and research topics mentioned above by the authors have made many important scientific contributions helping the thesis author to have an appropriate approach and research method, serving as a valuable source of supplementary reference materials effectively serving the implementation of the thesis's tasks.

1.2.2. Issues the Thesis Needs to Continue Researching

One is, theoretically, the thesis continues to research and clarify: i) some concepts related to the topic: Buddhism and characteristics of Buddhism; Social Security; The role of Buddhism in the implementation of social security. ii) Systematizing the theory on the role of Buddhism in the implementation of social security: The spirit of saving from suffering and disaster of Buddhism; the inclination toward goodness of Buddhism; Buddhism as an engaged religion, doing good; Buddhism emphasizes humanistic values and human values; Buddhism emphasizes the value of social responsibility. iii) Some Buddhist activities in the implementation of social security in Vietnam: Hunger eradication, poverty reduction, and employment services; Orphan care activities; Security activities for the elderly and those without support; Security activities in compassionate education; Security activities in medical care and nurturing people infected with HIV/AIDS. iv) Factors influencing the role of Buddhism in the implementation of social security today.

Two is, in terms of the actual status, the Thesis analyzes: i) the practice of Buddhism's role in the implementation of social security in Vietnam over the past time, through the contents: Hunger eradication, poverty reduction, and employment services; orphan care activities; security activities for the elderly and those without support; security activities in compassionate education; security activities in medical care and nurturing people infected with HIV/AIDS. In reality, the works have mentioned one or several contents regarding the social security implementation activities of Buddhism in the form of articles, thus they are not yet complete or comprehensive. ii) Evaluating the role of Buddhism in the implementation of social security: Results achieved and causes; existing problems, limitations, and causes.

Three is, on the basis of an objective evaluation of achieved results, problems, and limitations in the implementation of social security by Buddhism, the author proposes solutions to enhance the role of Buddhism in the implementation of social security in Vietnam in the coming time.

Chapter 2

THE ROLE OF BUDDHISM IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF SOCIAL SECURITY - SOME THEORETICAL ISSUES

2.1. Overview of Buddhism and Social Security

2.1.1. Buddhism and Characteristics of Buddhism

2.1.1.1. General Overview of Buddhism Buddhism is a major religious-philosophical system born in the 6th - 5th century BCE in India, founded by Prince Siddhartha after attaining enlightenment, becoming Shakyamuni Buddha. Buddhism is not a theistic religion in the traditional sense, but a system of teachings about humans, suffering, and the path to liberation from suffering, based on wisdom and compassion.

2.1.1.2. Characteristics of Buddhism First, humanism and pro-humanity orientation. One of the prominent characteristics of Buddhism is its profound humanism. Second, the engaged nature and companionship with the nation. Third, tolerance and harmony. Fourth, empiricism and rationality. Fifth, affirming "man is the focal point of human society." Sixth, "constructing a new society" whose foundation is the "new human."

2.1.2. Social Security

2.1.2.1. Concept of Social Security In a broad sense, social security is the guarantee of the implementation of rights so that humans live in peace, ensuring security and safety in society. In a narrow sense, social security is the guarantee of income and living conditions for each individual and family when they encounter difficulties or contingencies in life, having their income cut due to loss of working capacity or job loss; and it is also the guarantee for vulnerable groups in society. When finalizing the concept, remember to note the connotation of the concept so that when analyzing subsequent contents, one must adhere to this connotation.

2.1.2.2. Structure of Social Security On the basis of the viewpoints of the Communist Party of Vietnam, inheriting concepts about the structure of the social security system, according to us, the social security system in Vietnam consists of the following pillars: 1) Employment guarantee policy; 2) Social insurance

policy; 3) Social assistance policy; 4) Effective implementation of the sustainable hunger eradication and poverty reduction program; 5) Basic social service policy.

These pillars reflect basic and universal features of social security issues today, which are: One, risk prevention policies and programs. Two, risk mitigation policies and programs. Three, risk overcoming policies and programs.

2.1.3. Forms of Implementing Social Security

Forms of implementing social security: Social insurance; Social assistance; Social welfare; Social services (SS) is a form where the State organizes the provision of essential services such as healthcare, education, clean water, environment, information technology, and legal support for all citizens, especially vulnerable groups in society. Second, the methods of implementing social security: State-led method; Socialization method; Public-private partnership method; Community-self-governance method.

2.1.4. Methods of Implementing Social Security

State-led method; Socialization method; Public-private partnership method; Community-self-governance method.

2.1.5. Principles of Implementing Social Security

The principle of ensuring human rights and civil rights; the principle of fairness and inclusivity; the principle of risk sharing and community mutual aid; the principle of multi-layering and ensuring financial sustainability; the principle of suitability with socio-economic conditions.

2.1.6. Entities Implementing Social Security

The Communist Party of Vietnam; the State of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam; the Vietnam Fatherland Front and socio-political organizations; the Vietnam Buddhist Sangha.

2.2. Theoretical Basis of Doctrine and the Role of Buddhism in the Implementation of Social Security

2.2.1. Engaged nature, inclination toward goodness, and doing good: The inclination toward goodness of Buddhism is one of the origins of humanitarianism. As a religion that emphasizes humans, taking humans as the center.

2.2.2. From the philosophy of "compassion, saving from suffering and disaster, engaging in the world to help life" of Buddhism: Buddhism is a major

religion-philosophy with profound influence on the spiritual and cultural life of many nations and peoples in the world.

2.2.3. *Buddhism emphasizes humanistic values and human values:* Buddhism was born to meet the urgent requirement of receiving support for specific individuals to overcome their own current difficulties.

2.2.4. *Buddhism emphasizes the value of social responsibility:* Social responsibility (SR) is a theory or an ethical ideology emphasizing that an individual or an organization has an obligation to act for the benefit of society.

2.3. Contents of the Role of Buddhism in the Implementation of Social Security

2.3.1. *Buddhism participates in hunger eradication, poverty reduction, and employment services* First, the spirit of compassion of Buddhism. In Buddhism, the concept of compassion (one of the important virtues of the Buddha) is considered the motivation to help the poor and suffering. Second, the hunger eradication and poverty reduction activities of Buddhism. Many Buddhist organizations, from local to international levels, have been implementing programs to support the poor and disadvantaged. Third, employment services.

2.3.2. *Buddhism participates in orphan care activities* In the Buddhist tradition, the spirit of compassion and mercy are core virtues, considered the foundation for all charitable and suffering-saving actions. Orphan care activities in Buddhism are not only humanitarian deeds but also the manifestation of infinite compassion toward unfortunate lives.

2.3.3. *Buddhism participates in security activities for the elderly and those without support* Buddhism always values the care and support for the elderly, the weak, and the sick, especially those who cannot take care of themselves.

2.3.4. *Buddhism participates in security activities in compassionate education* First, on the spirit of education in Buddhism. Education in Buddhism does not just stop at teaching knowledge or life skills, but also aims at forming moral values, love, and compassion in each individual. Second, social security activities in compassionate education of Buddhism focus on caring for and helping vulnerable groups in society, especially poor children, orphans, people

with disabilities, and those without access to education. Third, compassionate education in personality development.

2.3.5. *Buddhism participates in security activities in medical care and nurturing people infected with HIV/AIDS* First, medical care. The goal of medical care for HIV-infected people is to help them maintain health, prevent complications, improve quality of life, and prolong lifespan. This part is not yet clear on Buddhist activities. Second, nurturing and nutritional support: Nurturing and nutritional support in Buddhism is an important part of social security activities. Third, psychological and social support: Psychological and social support in Buddhism plays an important role in the implementation of social security, especially in the current context when society faces many psychological and social issues such as stress, anxiety, poverty, and inequality. Fourth, policies and rights of people infected with HIV/AIDS: Health insurance policy: HIV-infected people need to be covered by health insurance policies, ensuring they can access necessary medical services without financial difficulty. Fifth, education and communication: Education and communication about HIV-infected people from a Buddhist perspective can play an important role in reducing stigma, raising awareness, and supporting HIV-infected people in the community.

There is a major imbalance in volume between part 1 and part 2. Part 1 should be reviewed to cut out overlaps and unnecessary parts, it should be at most 30 pages; part 2 should be further refined to be at least 20 pages.

2.4. Factors Influencing the Role of Buddhism in the Implementation of Social Security

2.4.1. *Subjective Factors*

- **First:** Buddhist doctrine.
- **Second:** The Standing Board of the Executive Council.
- **Third:** The sincere and voluntary spirit of Buddhists.
- **Fourth:** The active operation of Buddhist social protection establishments.
- **Fifth:** Infrastructure and funding.

2.4.2. *Objective Factors*

- **First:** Viewpoints and policies of the Party and State regarding religion and religious work.
- **Second:** Local authorities and mass organizations.
- **Third:** The development of science and technology.
- **Fourth:** Economic development.
- **Fifth:** International integration.

Chapter 3

ACTUAL STATUS OF THE ROLE OF BUDDHISM IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF SOCIAL SECURITY IN VIETNAM NOWADAYS

3.1. Actual Status of the Role of Buddhism in the Implementation of Social Security Over the Past Time

3.1.1. Role of Buddhism in Hunger Eradication, Poverty Reduction, and Employment Services

3.1.1.1. On Hunger Eradication and Poverty Reduction First, on resources: Buddhism has the ability to effectively mobilize financial resources from many different channels. Second, on the content of activities: Buddhist establishments have regularly deployed direct support activities for vulnerable groups through providing food, clothing, scholarships, building compassion houses, and medical support. Third, on the intended goals: The intended goals manifest the close link between Buddhist doctrine and the need for sustainable development in modern society.

3.1.1.2. On Employment Services

First, on implementation resources. Foremost, regarding infrastructure, the system of pagodas and monasteries is spread across all localities, especially in rural and suburban areas, which can be utilized as venues for vocational classes, career orientation sessions, and community activities. This widespread presence helps Buddhism have the ability to reach vulnerable groups in society closely and quickly. Second, on implementation content: Typical is the opening of vocational classes for handicrafts such as tailoring, incense making, vegetarian cooking, baking, weaving... by some Buddhist establishments. Third, on intended goals: Buddhism conceives that saving from suffering does not just stop at giving, but

more importantly, giving the disadvantaged the ability to save themselves, true to the spirit of "self-liberation" in the Buddha Dharma.

3.1.2. Role of Buddhism in Orphan Care

3.1.2.1. On implementation resources: On building a system of nursing homes and orphanages. Regarding financial resources, job creation activities are often funded by the merits of followers, donations from the Buddhist community, and contributions from devout businesses.

3.1.2.2. On implementation content: Commonly trained trades include tailoring, incense making, vegetarian cooking, baking, weaving, embroidery, and handicrafts.

3.1.2.3. On intended goals: The Vietnam Buddhist Sangha has implemented many orphan care activities throughout the past time, with the goal of bringing love, care, and support to children lacking affection and care.

3.1.3. Role of Buddhism Toward the Elderly and Those Without Support

3.1.3.1. Implementation resources: Vietnamese Buddhism is currently operating a network of more than 18,000 monastic establishments nationwide, with a contingent of over 55,000 monks and nuns (Vietnam Buddhist Sangha, 2024). Regarding finance, the main resources come from merits, voluntary donations of followers, Buddhist businesses, and benefactors domestically and abroad.

3.1.3.2. On implementation content: First, admission and nurturing at Buddhist establishments; Second, support for physical and mental healthcare; Third, organizing community activities; Fourth, ensuring end-of-life care; Fifth, mobilizing and connecting the community to join in care.

3.1.3.3. On intended goals: Caring for the elderly without support is a typical charitable activity, manifesting the spirit of protecting the nation.

3.1.4. Role of Buddhism in Compassionate Education

3.1.4.1. Implementation resources: Regarding headquarters and infrastructure. Infrastructure utilizes classrooms within pagoda and monastery campuses; many places also organize outdoor classes or simple day-boarding classes. Regarding human resources, including: Monks and nuns: Are the core force at monastic establishments, playing the role of coordinating, organizing,

and directly participating in teaching, moral guidance, and spiritual care for learners.

3.1.4.2. Implementation content: The teaching content in these classes follows the basic general education program, emphasizing essential subjects such as Mathematics, Vietnamese, and Ethics.

3.1.4.3. On intended goals: ensuring the right to education for vulnerable children, including orphans, street children, those without household registration, or those ineligible to attend public educational institutions. Second, compassionate education aims at preventing the risk of illiteracy, lack of schooling, and re-poverty, factors which are the root causes of inequality and social instability.

3.1.5. Role of Buddhism in Medical Care and Nurturing People Infected with HIV/AIDS

3.1.5.1. Implementation resources: Monks, nuns, and Buddhists: are the core force, regularly present at religious establishments, participating directly in organizing activities, care, and spiritual support.

3.1.5.2. Implementation content One is, organizing free examination and treatment for the poor and people infected with HIV/AIDS in the social security activities of Buddhism. Two is, establishing support, consultation, and care centers for people infected with HIV/AIDS within the Buddhist social security system. Three is, organizing long-term care and nurturing for people infected with HIV/AIDS without support. Four is, organizing nutritional programs, gift distribution, and daily life support for people infected with HIV/AIDS. Five is, psychological counseling, community education, and stigma reduction.

3.1.5.3. On intended goals: Foremost, the core goal of these activities is to alleviate physical and mental pain for people infected with HIV/AIDS - one of the highly vulnerable target groups who often face social stigma.

3.2. Evaluation of the Actual Status of Buddhism's Role in the Implementation of Social Security in Vietnam Over the Past Time

3.2.1. Results Achieved and Causes

3.2.1.1. Results Achieved Over the past time, compassionate classes, schools for children with disabilities and orphans, nursing homes, vocational schools,

consultation centers for people infected with HIV/AIDS... within the VBS system have all operated stably with results. Monks, nuns, and Buddhists nationwide have warmly responded to movements beneficial to the country and the people, supporting the "Gratitude" fund, building houses of gratitude, compassion houses, Great Solidarity houses, coffins, rice, clothes, medicine, supporting the front lines of the Fatherland, border guards, mental hospitals, nursing homes, longevity funds, thousands of humanitarian blood donations, and many other charitable tasks... Vulnerable groups in society are cared for and receive more attention: supporting the poor, caring for poor students, nurturing the lonely elderly, building houses of gratitude, supporting scholarships for poor students, providing capital support, and gifting means of livelihood to people in difficult circumstances. The contingent of nuns with professional training is increasing, with experience in participating in social charitable activities; the nuns are dynamic and active in participating in social security charitable work in highland areas such as Dien Bien, Son La, Lao Cai provinces, the Central Highlands, Dak Lak,.... Propaganda work on the social security activities of nuns has been pushed forward: combining propaganda on An Vien TV channels, Buddhist Affairs Online, articles, *Hoa Dam* Special Issue, *Hoang Phap* Internal Bulletin, *Khuong Viet* Magazine...

3.2.1.2. Causes of Achieved Results A tight Sangha organizational system, spreading widely in social security, manifested in: The VBS has a unified and synchronous organizational structure from central to local levels, helping to effectively deploy social security activities nationwide, with rhythmic coordination between monks/nuns, pagodas, and followers. The network of pagodas covering the whole country is the extended arm of the Sangha and also the social security anchor in the community, helping Buddhism deploy timely, deep, wide, and effective volunteer activities, contributing to building a compassionate, united, and sustainably developing society. Vietnam currently has more than 18,000 monastic establishments (pagodas, Zen monasteries, monasteries...) distributed evenly across regions - from urban to rural areas, remote areas, and ethnic minority areas. There should be causes for the achieved results.

3.2.2. Limitations and Causes

3.2.2.1. Limitations Social security activities of Buddhism over the past time were still inclined toward "a morsel when hungry" but did not emphasize activities aimed at assisting people to positively transform their awareness so they themselves can rise out of hunger and poverty, rising to overcome the difficulties and challenges of natural disasters and circumstances. Over the past time, social security (SS) activities of Buddhism have not established a tight coordination mechanism with socio-political organizations, thus efficiency in some cases remains limited, or even generates a reverse effect. Regarding vocational establishments: In general, they are not yet commensurate with general requirements. Establishments in localities are still scattered, small in scale, poor in equipment, mainly stopping at short-term, simple vocational training.

3.2.2.2. Causes Alongside historical renovation achievements, many challenges still exist: (i) the wealth gap is increasingly distinct; (ii) people's lives are still difficult, especially in remote areas. The negative impact of the downsides of the market economy, climate change, natural disasters,... are posing a series of social issues, such as: unemployment, loss of production land and difficult livelihood conditions, re-poverty, lack of healthcare capacity,... Buddhism in Vietnam, as well as in the world, has a division into many different schools and sects, leading to a lack of uniformity in the deployment of social activities.

Chapter 4

VIEWPOINTS AND SOLUTIONS TO PROMOTE THE ROLE OF BUDDHISM IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF SOCIAL SECURITY IN VIETNAM NOWADAYS

4.1. Viewpoints on Promoting the Role of Buddhism in the Implementation of Social Security in Vietnam Today

- **4.1.1.** Religion — including Buddhism — is an important resource contributing to national development and the assurance of social security.

- **4.1.2.** Encourage Buddhist organizations to participate in humanitarian and charitable activities and to care for vulnerable groups.

- **4.1.3.** Socialization of social security — Buddhism is an important partner of the State in target programs.

- **4.1.4.** Honor religious moral values — the foundation for promoting the social responsibility of Buddhism.

- **4.1.5.** The State creates favorable conditions for Buddhism to promote its security role, while simultaneously ensuring management in accordance with the law.

- **4.1.6.** Promote the role of Buddhism in implementing social security in association with consolidating the great national unity bloc.

4.2. Solutions to Promote the Role of Buddhism in the Implementation of Social Security in Vietnam Today

4.2.1. Strengthening Awareness of the Importance of Buddhism's Role Toward Social Security Activities

- **One:** It is necessary to clearly recognize that in essence the "Vietnam Social Security Strategy for the 2021 - 2030 period" is exactly a constituent part of the "Overall Socio-economic Development Strategy of Vietnam for the 2021 - 2030 period."

- **Two:** The Buddhist Sangha needs to push forward the work of propaganda, dissemination, and legal education. To improve propaganda activities, it is necessary: First, to push forward mass media communication on social security activities. Second, the Sangha needs to propagate social security activities through Buddhist life activities and retreats.

- **Three:** Strengthen the work of propaganda, dissemination, and legal education for officials, civil servants, and people so they clearly understand and know their own rights, interests, and responsibilities when social security contents, information, and documents are made open and transparent.

- **Four:** Monks, nuns, and Buddhists need to strictly implement social security activities to build trust. For noble behaviors to spread deeply and widely in society, it is very necessary that they are implemented in a strict manner.

- **Five:** The Vietnam Buddhist Sangha at local levels needs to continuously expand preaching programs for the masses and Buddhists.

4.2.2. Strengthening Propaganda Work on Social Security Activities

- **First:** Plan the organization of propaganda. The preparation of communication content and messages is also very necessary. Planning the organization of conferences and seminars plays an important role.

- **Second:** Distribute leaflets, books, and newspapers: Distribute leaflets, books, newspapers, and documents on social security support programs, the rights and responsibilities of the people.

- **Third:** Use mass media: Use mass media means such as radio, television, press, and social networks to spread information about social security activities.

- **Fourth:** Organize community campaigns: Direct propaganda campaigns in the community, from volunteer activities to consultation sessions at communes and wards, help people easily access information on social security.

- **Fifth:** Encourage the participation of social organizations.

4.2.3. The State Perfecting the Legal System Related to the Implementation of Social Security

- **First:** Competent state agencies review and amend, supplement legal regulations that are still inadequate.

- **Second:** The State issues policies to support and encourage religion to participate in social security.

- **Third:** Improve legal and administrative capacity for Buddhist organizations.

- **Fourth:** Create favorable conditions for religion to participate socially.

- **Fifth:** It is necessary to tighten oversight mechanisms and perfect regulations on sanctions for violations. Regarding the scope of oversight, it is necessary to: Legally oversee; Finance - asset oversee; Media and reputation oversee.

4.2.4. The Buddhist Sangha Needs to Train and Cultivate Monks, Nuns, and Buddhist Followers

- **First:** On raising the level of people's intellectual standards and the level of legal understanding for Monks, Nuns, and Buddhist followers: Social charitable activity is a noble good deed that every Monk, Nun, and Buddhist follower, regardless of which tradition or sect they follow within the VBS, all practice. Second, the VBS coordinates with universities in the training and cultivation of the contingent of monks, nuns, and followers. The Central VBS and Buddhist Sanghas at all levels must regularly coordinate with professional training schools to train personnel for social security activities. Third, content and

programs for training and cultivation. Fourth, inspection and evaluation of training and cultivation activities for Monks, Nuns, and followers. Fourth (Fifth), mobilize monks, nuns, and Buddhists throughout the country to implement social security activities deeply and widely.

4.2.5. Strengthening Coordination Among Mass Mobilization Agencies, the Fatherland Front, Local Authorities, and State Management Agencies in the Implementation of Social Security

- **First:** Social security of Buddhism needs to have a tight link with social organizations, such as youth unions, women's unions, veterans' associations, elderly associations, as well as the system of schools, religions/villages,... Second, attention should be paid to adjusting some broad-sense social security activities at pagodas, such as helping to treat the sick and ailing, those who encounter misfortune or difficulties in life... Third, Buddhist Sanghas at all levels need to elevate some activities of Buddhism into social work. Fourth, build a mechanism for information exchange with state humanitarian and charitable agencies and organizations, and other individuals and organizations outside society.

4.2.6. Ensuring Financial Openness and Transparency in the Implementation of Social Security

- **First:** Need to recognize clearly and objectively the role of financial resources of religious organizations in general and Buddhism in particular. Second, strengthen activities to attract financial resources serving social security activities. Third, perfect the financial mechanism and resource mobilization for social security. Fourth, need to raise awareness and professional capacity of those implementing openness and transparency in the field of social security. Fifth, build a national database on social security, step by step digitize state management of the social security field as a tool to ensure the implementation of openness and transparency in this field. Sixth, push forward inspection, examination, and supervision activities of social security openness and transparency of subjects with assigned implementation responsibilities. Seventh, raise awareness and professional capacity of those implementing openness and transparency in the field of social security. Eighth, regularly implement forms of openness and transparency in social security.

4.2.7. Inspection, Examination, and Supervision of Social Security Activities

- **First:** The VBS needs to establish a specialized agency to conduct regular inspection and supervision of charitable and humanitarian activities. Second, on the content of inspection, examination, and supervision of social security activities. Third, strengthen community participation. Strengthening community participation in social security activities is an important factor to build a fair and sustainably developing society. Fourth, push forward the application of science and technology into the work of inspection and supervision of charitable and humanitarian activities.

CONCLUSION

Social security activities of Buddhism in Vietnam do not only carry a purely charitable meaning, but also vividly manifest the profound humanistic values of Buddhism — the spirit of compassion, saving from suffering, and engagement. Through a widespread network of religious establishments, Buddhism has contributed an important resource to the national social security system, providing timely support to vulnerable groups, reducing the burden on the state budget, while simultaneously spreading moral standards, the spirit of solidarity, and community awareness. Buddhism holds an important auxiliary role toward the State's social security policies, especially in remote areas where public resources are still limited.

Research results affirm that social security is an important pillar of sustainable development, recognized in international human rights conventions and in the Constitution and laws of Vietnam. Buddhism, with its philosophy of compassion, saving from suffering, and altruism, has formed a system of values and actions closely linked to social assistance activities, consistent with the goals and principles of modern social security. In the current social context, identifying and systematizing the role of Buddhism in social security will contribute to supplementing theoretical arguments for the State's religious and social policies.

Practicality shows that Buddhism is currently the religion with the largest number of followers in Vietnam, with a widespread network of monastic establishments, meditation huts, and charitable facilities, directly organizing many social security activities such as: caring for the lonely elderly, nurturing

orphans, supporting people with disabilities, disaster relief, and free medical examination and treatment. Social security activities of Buddhism have been and are contributing significantly to reducing the state budget burden, especially in remote areas where public services are still limited.

The Vietnam Buddhist Sangha over the past time has achieved many great results in social security work; however, there are still some challenges such as: challenges in resources; in management and organization; in the social context; in legality and policy... Therefore, it requires that the activities of Buddhism in the field of social security undergo changes to adapt in order to meet the requirements set out in the current process of integration and development.

To overcome limitations and strengthen, further promote the role of Buddhism in the implementation of social security, the author proposes 7 solutions, which are: 1) Strengthening awareness of the role of Buddhism toward social security activities; 2) Strengthening propaganda work on social security activities; 3) The State perfecting the legal system related to the implementation of social security; 4) The Buddhist Sangha needs to train and cultivate monks, nuns, and Buddhist followers in skills to participate in social security activities; 5) Strengthening coordination among mass mobilization agencies, the Fatherland Front, local authorities, and state management agencies in the implementation of social security; 6) Ensuring financial openness and transparency in the implementation of social security; 7) Inspection, examination, and supervision of social security activities.

The research affirms that Buddhism holds an important role in the social security system in Vietnam through activities supporting the poor, disaster relief, caring for vulnerable groups, and nurturing the spirit of kindness in the community. Models of charity and social care deployed by Buddhism have contributed to reducing the burden on the State and strengthening social cohesion. However, this role is still limited due to its spontaneous nature, lack of professionalism, lack of coordination mechanisms, and unstable financial resources. The thesis proposes a number of viewpoints and solutions to better promote the potential of Buddhism in the field of social security, thereby contributing to building a fair, humanistic, and sustainable society.

**LIST OF THE AUTHOR'S PUBLISHED WORKS RELATED TO THE
THESIS TOPIC**

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2. Nguyen Huu Nhung (2024), "Vietnamese Buddhism participates in the implementation of current social security assurance policies", *Journal of Political Theory*.
3. Nguyen Huu Nhung (2023), "Promoting the role of Buddhism toward social security in Vietnam today", *Journal of Political Theory*, Special Issue No. 2/2023, ISSN: 1869-1485, pp. 56-60.