



VIETNAM BUDDHIST UNIVERSITY



VIETNAM INSTITUTE OF BUDDHIST STUDIES

AGENDA

**COMMEMORATING THE 35TH ANNIVERSARY OF
THE FOUNDING OF THE VIETNAM INSTITUTE OF BUDDHIST STUDIES**

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. First Conference Agenda3
2. Second Conference Agenda6

EYNOTE SPEECHES FOR THE FIRST CONFERENCE

3. Opening Speech by Director of Vienam Institute of Buddhist Studies: His Eminence Thích Giác Toàn 11
4. Speech by the President of the Vietnam Buddhist Sangha: His Eminence Thích Thiện Nhơn 15
5. Speech by The Executive Council of VBS: Most Ven.Thích Đức Thiện 21
6. Speech by the Government Committee for Religious Affairs at the Conference: H.E. Trần Thị Minh Nga 27
7. Indian Ambassador's Remarks: H.E. Sandeep Arya 33
8. First Conference Overview : Most Ven. Thich Nhat Tu 37
9. First Conference Paper Presentation Agenda5
10. Valedictory Ceremony 52

KEYNOTE SPEECHES FOR THE SECOND CONFERENCE

11. Opening Speech by Director of Vienam Institute of Buddhist Studies: His Eminence Thích Giác Toàn 55
12. Congratulatory Message From Vice-Chancellor of Nava Nālandā Mahāvihāra University 61
13. Congratulatory Message From Vice-Chancellor of Sanchi Buddhist University 65
14. Second Conference Overview 69
15. Speech by Most Ven.Dr. Thich Gia Quang 75
16. Dharma Master Thích Minh Châu's Monograph on Faxian's Foguoji and Its Importance as a Source for the Study of Indian Buddhism: Prof. Karam Tej S. Sarao 81
17. Review of Thich Minh Châu's Doctoral Dissertation by Most Ven. Thich Nhat Tu 95
18. Second Conference Paper Presentation Agenda 123
19. Valedictory Ceremony 129

FIRST CONFERENCE AGENDA

“HIS EMINENCE THÍCH MINH CHÂU: VISION AND MISSION”

First Floor Auditorium, Ho Chi Minh City, October 19, 2024

I. CULTURAL PERFORMANCE: (1st Floor Hall) Time: 07:00 to 07:25

1. *Buddhism* (Composer: Thích Nhật Từ. Performance: Lotus Bud Choir)
2. *Vietnam Institute of Buddhist Studies* (Composer: Thích Nhật Từ. Performance: Buddha Sound Choir)
3. *His Eminence Minh Châu, Ever Shining* (Traditional Cải Lương: Monk Ngô Pháp; Performance: People’s Artist Phụng Hằng)
4. *His Eminence Thích Minh Châu* (Composer: Thích Nhật Từ. Performance: Divine Sound Choir)

II. OPENING CEREMONY: (1st Floor Hall) Time: 07:30 to 09:15

- Invitation to the distinguished guests
 - Chanting for blessings
 - Statement of purpose
 - Introduction of attendees
1. Opening Speech by **His Eminence Thích Giác Toàn** (Vice President of Vietnam Buddhist Sangha; the Director of Vietnam Institute of Buddhist Studies)
 2. Keynote Address by **His Holiness Thích Trí Quảng** (the Supreme Patriarch of Vietnam Buddhist Sangha)
- Official escort for the Supreme Patriarch's departure from the hall.
 3. 35-Year Summary Report of the Establishment and

Development of the Vietnam Institute of Buddhist Studies
(**Most Ven. Dr. Thích Tâm Đức**)

4. First Conference Overview (**Most Ven. Dr. Dr. Thích Nhật Từ**)
5. Remarks by the Standing Committee of the Vietnam Buddhist Sangha (**Most Ven. Dr. Thích Đức Thiện**)
6. Address by the Government Committee for Religious Affairs (**Ms. Trần Thị Minh Nga**, Vice Chairwoman)
7. Address by the Indian Ambassador (**H.E. Sandeep Ayra**)
8. Tribute to His Eminence Thích Minh Châu from the Tường Vân Monastic Lineage (**His Eminence Thích Chơn Tể**)
9. Documentary Film on the Life of His Eminence Thích Minh Châu (Produced by **Võ Văn Tường** and **Lâm Ánh Ngọc**)
10. Speech by His Eminence **Thích Thiện Nhơn** (the Deputy Supreme Patriarch and President of the Vietnam Buddhist Sangha)
- Official escort for the departure of the Sangha's President and distinguished guests from the hall.

III. CEREMONY OF MERIT RECOGNITION

1. Reading of the Merit Recognition Decree by the President of the Executive Council of the Vietnam Buddhist Sangha (Most Ven. Thích Phước Nguyên)
2. Presentation of Merit Recognition Certificates by the President of the Executive Council of the Vietnam Buddhist Sangha
3. Reading of the Merit Recognition Decree by the Rector of the Vietnam Institute of Buddhist Studies (Most Ven. Dr. Thích Giác Hoàng)
4. Presentation of Merit Recognition Certificates by the Rector of the Vietnam Institute of Buddhist Studies
5. Announcements: (a) Specialized forum locations (starting at 12:30) (b) Invitation to the luncheon for delegates

IV. FIVE THEMATIC WORKSHOPS:

- **12:30~14:15:** First 5 Thematic Workshops (in different Seminar Rooms)
- **14:15~16:00:** Second 5 Thematic Workshops (in different Rooms)

V. VALEDICTORY CEREMONY: 16:15 – 17:15 (2nd Floor Hall)

VI. MEMORIAL CEREMONY FOR HIS EMINENCE THÍCH MINH CHÂU

1. **Venue:** Buddha Hall, Vạn Hạnh Zen Monastery
2. **Time:** 19:00~20:15 on October 19, 2024

SECOND CONFERENCE AGENDA

“EXPLORING THE HISTORICAL, SPIRITUAL, AND CULTURAL LINKS OF BUDDHISM BETWEEN INDIA AND VIETNAM”

First Floor Auditorium, Ho Chi Minh City, October 20, 2024

I. OPENING CEREMONY: (1st Floor Main Hall) | Time: 07:30 to 09:00

1. Opening Speech by **His Eminence Thích Giác Toàn** (Vice President of Vietnam Buddhist Sangha; the Director of Vietnam Institute of Buddhist Studies)
2. Remarks by Indian Ambassador: **H.E. Sandeep Ayra**
3. Remarks by **Prof. Rajesh Ranjan**, Vice-Chancellor of Nava Nālandā Mahāvihāra University
4. Second Conference Overview by **Most Ven. Dr. Dr. Thích Nhật Từ** (Permanent Vice Rector of Vietnam Buddhist University, Conference Convenor)
5. Keynote speech by **Most Ven. Dr. Thích Gia Quang** (Vice President of Vietnam Buddhist Sangha; the Co-Director of Vietnam Institute of Buddhist Studies Branch, Hanoi) on
6. Guest speech by **Prof. K.T.S. Sarao** (Former Head of the Department of Buddhist Studies, University of Delhi) on: *“Dharma Master Thích Minh Châu’s Monograph on Faxian’s Foguoji and its Importance as a Source for the Study of Indian Buddhism”*
7. Announcement by the MC for the breakout thematic session rooms

II. FIRST THEMATIC WORKSHOPS:

Venue: Main Hall (for Indian scholars)

Time: 09:30 to 11:30

Session 1 | Time: 10:00-11:30

FROM TRANSMISSION TO TRANSFORMATION: A SHARED BUDDHIST LEGACY

Moderators: Prof. Dr. K.T.S. Sarao and Most Ven. Dr. Thich Nhat Tu

Lunch: 11:30~12:30

III. SECOND THEMATIC WORKSHOPS:

Venue: Main Hall (for Indian scholars)

Time: 13: 00 to 15: 00

Session 2 | Time 13:00-15:00

FROM TRANSMISSION TO TRANSFORMATION: A SHARED BUDDHIST LEGACY

Moderators: Most Ven. Dr. Thich Tam Duc and Dr. Heero Hito

IV. VALEDICTORY CEREMONY

Venue: Main Hall

Time: 15: 30 to 16: 30

**KEYNOTE SPEECHES
FOR THE FIRST CONFERENCE
“HIS EMINENCE THÍCH MINH CHÂU:
VISION AND MISSION”**

OPENING SPEECH

THE GRAND CEREMONY CELEBRATING THE 35TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE FOUNDING OF THE VIETNAM INSTITUTE FOR BUDDHIST STUDIES

His Eminence Thích Giác Toàn

*Vice President of the Executive Council of the Vietnam Buddhist Sangha Director
of the Vietnam Institute for Buddhist Studies*

His Holiness Thích Trí Quảng Supreme Patriarch of Vietnam Buddhist Sangha (VBS);

Deputy Supreme Patriarchs of VBS Thích Giác Quang and Viên Minh;

His Eminence Thích Thiện Nhơn, President of the Executive Council of the VBS;

Respected Venerables, and Distinguished Guests;

Today, in this solemn and joyous atmosphere, we are honored to gather here to celebrate the 35th anniversary of the establishment of the Vietnam Institute for Buddhist Studies (1989-2024), a significant milestone in the journey of Buddhist research, translation, and development in Vietnam. This is a moment for us to reflect on the paths we have traversed and to express our deep gratitude to the great meritorious deeds of our venerable predecessors, especially His Eminence Thích Minh Châu, the founding Director, and the Fourth Supreme Patriarch of the Vietnam Buddhist Sangha, His Holiness Thích Trí Quảng—who inherited and carried forward this monumental mission, elevating the Institute to new heights.

Venerable Sangha and Distinguished Guests,

Thirty-five years ago, the Vietnam Institute for Buddhist Studies was established to build a comprehensive and scholarly foundation for Buddhist research, serving the learning and research needs of both

monastics and lay Buddhists in Vietnam and abroad. His Eminence Thích Minh Châu, as the founder and the first Director, with his profound wisdom and boundless compassion, not only laid a solid foundation for the Institute but also provided a long-term strategic vision. He devoted his life to the translation and dissemination of Pāli scriptures, including the *Dīgha Nikāya*, *Majjhima Nikāya*, *Samyutta Nikāya*, *Anguttara Nikāya*, and the first seven volumes of the *Khuddaka Nikāya*, and many other works, making the original teachings of the Buddha accessible to Vietnamese Buddhists.

Beyond his work in translating and studying the early Buddhist scriptures, His Eminence Thích Minh Châu also focused on publishing translations of the Āgamas and the scriptures and treatises of Mahāyāna Buddhism. His efforts expanded the understanding of monastics and lay practitioners across the entire spectrum of Buddhist teachings, creating a rich and comprehensive Buddhist landscape in Vietnam, harmonizing the spirit of Theravāda, Sectarian Buddhism, and Mahāyāna. Through these monumental works, he masterfully laid the foundation for a Vietnamese Buddhist scholarship that is both profound and unique, providing a basis for the long-lasting development of Vietnamese Buddhism now and in the future.

Distinguished Guests,

Inheriting and furthering the legacy of His Eminence Thích Minh Châu, Supreme Patriarch Thích Trí Quảng, as the second Director of the Institute (2008-2017), tirelessly advanced the Institute's research mission, developing it into a multidisciplinary Buddhist research organization with specialized centers such as Huệ Quang Center for Chinese Translation, Center for Hán Buddhist Studies and Translation, Center for Southern Buddhist Meditation Research, Center for Northern Buddhist Meditation Research, Center for Vietnamese Buddhist Studies, and the Center for Vietnamese Buddhist Literature Research. Under his leadership, the Institute expanded its research activities, published many works of academic value, and established collaborative relationships with universities and research institutes, affirming the Institute's position both domestically and internationally.

Distinguished Guests,

Since 2017, as the third Director of the Institute, we have continued to carry forward the precious spiritual legacy left by our predecessors, making continuous efforts to expand research by establishing new branches and translation centers such as Khmer Theravāda Buddhist Research Institute, Pāli Studies Center, Trí Tĩnh Translation Center, Buddhist Studies and Translation Center, Khất Sĩ Buddhist Research Center, Religious Studies Center, and the Women's Buddhist Studies Center. These centers have gathered many scholars, creating a favorable environment for researchers to contribute their intellect, further advancing Vietnamese Buddhist scholarship.

A particularly important milestone during this period has been the implementation of the Vietnam Tripiṭaka Project, now known as the *Threefold Sacred Canon of Vietnamese Buddhism*, initiated in 2017. This project is of historical significance and holds profound meaning, aiming to systematize and standardize the Buddhist scriptures of Vietnam. To date, the project has completed the entire *Pāli Canon*, published in nine volumes, the *Theravāda Vinaya*, published in two volumes, four Āgamas (both old and new translations), published in seven volumes, and three volumes of the *Avadānas* yet to be translated. In total, the Institute has published 21 volumes, with three more volumes of the *Avadānas* to be completed in 2024, bringing the total to 24 volumes. Each volume averages between 1,300 and 1,500 pages, with dimensions of 19x27 cm. The gradual completion of the *Threefold Sacred Canon of Vietnamese Buddhism* creates a new chapter and a priceless legacy for Vietnamese Buddhism. In the coming years, the Institute will systematically translate, edit, and publish the sectarian Vinaya texts and major Mahāyāna sūtras such as the *Lotus Sūtra*, *Nirvāṇa Sūtra*, *Bhaiṣajyaguru Sūtra*, and others.

The *Threefold Sacred Canon of Vietnamese Buddhism* is not only a spiritually and academically significant project but also a symbol of unity and cohesion within Vietnamese Buddhism, building a solid foundation for its long-term development. This is a historical achievement, embodying the spirit of serving the Dharma and the nation, which our generation is wholeheartedly committed to advancing.

Venerable Sangha, and Distinguished Guests,

On the occasion of the Grand Ceremony celebrating the 35th anniversary of its establishment, the Board of Directors of the Vietnam Institute for Buddhist Studies, in collaboration with the Executive Council of the Vietnam Buddhist University in Ho Chi Minh City and the Tường Vân Monastery lineage, will organize the seminar *“His Holiness Thích Minh Châu: Vision and Mission”* on the afternoon of October 19, 2024. Additionally, the Board of Directors, in partnership with the Embassy of India in Vietnam, will host the seminar *“Exploring the Historical, Cultural, and Spiritual Links between India and Vietnam”* on October 20, 2024. Beyond these two seminars, the Board of Directors, together with the Association of Monastic Students of the Vietnam Buddhist University in Ho Chi Minh City, will hold a candlelight vigil at Vạn Hạnh Monastery, 750 Nguyễn Kiệm, Ward 4, Phú Nhuận District, Ho Chi Minh City, to honor the profound contributions and spiritual legacy of His Holiness Thích Minh Châu to the Dharma and sentient beings.

Today, as we look back on the 35-year journey of the Vietnam Institute for Buddhist Studies, we cannot help but feel moved and joyful at the achievements we have accomplished. Each page of the Institute’s history is engraved with the merits and wisdom of our venerable predecessors, monastics, and the support of lay Buddhists and benefactors from both within Vietnam and abroad. Together, we vow to ensure that the Vietnam Buddhist Sangha and the Vietnam Institute for Buddhist Studies continue to flourish, standing as a guiding light for future generations of monastics and lay Buddhists, both domestically and internationally.

May I extend my best wishes for peace and well-being to all the Venerable Elders, Monastic members, distinguished guests, and lay Buddhists present. May all Dharma activities be accomplished with success.

I wish for the Grand Ceremony Celebrating the 35th Anniversary of the Establishment of the Vietnam Institute for Buddhist Studies to be a resounding success.

Thank you.

SPEECH

BY THE PRESIDENT OF THE VIETNAM BUDDHIST SANGHA

His Eminence Thích Thiện Nhơn

- Respected His Holiness Thích Trí Quảng, Supreme Patriarch of the Vietnam Buddhist Sangha,
- His Eminence Thích Giác Quang and, His Eminence Viên Minh, Deputy Supreme Patriarch of the Vietnam Buddhist Sangha
- Most Venerable Thích Giác Toàn, Vice President of the Vietnam Buddhist Sangha, Director of the Vietnam Institute of Buddhist Studies,
- H.E. Sandeep Arya, Ambassador of India to Vietnam,
- Distinguished guests,

I am profoundly delighted to gather with you today to commemorate the 35th anniversary of the establishment of the Vietnam Institute of Buddhist Studies, a significant milestone in the advancement of Buddhist scholarship in Vietnam. This is a special occasion, as the Board of Directors has organized two pivotal conferences. The first, *“The Vision and Mission of His Eminence Thích Minh Châu,”* was held on October 19, 2024, followed by the second conference *“Exploring the Historical, Cultural, and Spiritual Links between India and Vietnam”* on October 20, 2024. These two events not only offer us an opportunity to remember and express our gratitude for the immense contributions of His Eminence Thích Minh Châu but also highlight the deep cultural and religious connections between India and Vietnam.

I. Conference 1: “His Eminence Thích Minh Châu: Vision and Mission”

This conference is dedicated to exploring the life, vision, and profound contributions of His Eminence Thích Minh Châu, a towering figure in modern Buddhism, both in Vietnam and

internationally. His life and work stand as a beacon of wisdom, compassion, and leadership, reflecting the very essence of the Buddha's teachings.

Today, we come together to honor his legacy through five major themes, showcasing his pioneering contributions as a Buddhist scholar, educator, translator, diplomat, and leader of the Sangha.

1. A Pioneering Buddhist Scholar

His Eminence Thích Minh Châu was one of the most influential Buddhist scholars of his time, not only in Vietnam but around the world. His rigorous scholarship and unwavering dedication to the Dharma positioned him as the author of five significant English works, four of which were published in India, including:

- *The Chinese Madhyama Āgama and The Pali Majjhima Nikāya: A Comparative Study* — His Eminence Thích Minh Châu's doctoral thesis, which compares two essential Buddhist sūtra collections from the Theravāda and Sarvāstivāda traditions, shedding light on the similarities and differences between these pivotal Buddhist teachings.

- *Milindapannha and Ngasenabhikhuṣṭra: A Comparative Study* — translated into Vietnamese by the lay scholar Nguyễn Tâm. This work meticulously compares the dialogues between King Menander (Milinda) and the monk Nāgasena, exemplifying the rich cross-cultural exchanges in ancient Buddhist thought.

- *Hsuan T'sang, The Pilgrim and Scholar* — translated into Vietnamese by nun Trí Hải. This work focuses on the life of the renowned Chinese monk Xuanzang, whose pilgrimage to India and Buddhist studies had a profound influence on Buddhist scholarship.

- *Fa-Hsien, The Unassuming Pilgrim* — also translated into Vietnamese by nun Trí Hải. This text details the pilgrimage of Fa-Hsien to India, seeking sacred scriptures, and embodying the dedication and scholarly spirit of Buddhist pilgrimages.

- *Some Teachings of Lord Buddha on Peace, Harmony, and Human Dignity* — an important work emphasizing the Buddha's message of peace and how it contributes to global harmony and respect for human dignity.

These works, written in English and published internationally, have established His Eminence Thích Minh Châu as a global voice in Buddhist scholarship, reflecting his deep connection with the ancient wisdom of the Buddha and its relevance in the modern world.

2. A Visionary Buddhist Educator

His Eminence Thích Minh Châu's vision for Buddhist education extended far beyond the borders of Vietnam. As a forward-thinking educator, he recognized the importance of expanding Buddhist education beyond the confines of monasteries to reach a broader audience. His belief in education as the cornerstone for the survival and flourishing of Buddhism led to the establishment of key institutions such as Vạn Hạnh University (1964), the Vietnam Buddhist Academy in Ho Chi Minh City (1984), and the Vietnam Institute for Buddhist Studies (1989). These institutions have since become vital academic centers for the study and practice of the Dharma.

He viewed education as a means of fostering both intellectual and spiritual development, ensuring that future generations of Buddhist scholars, monks, nuns, and lay practitioners would be equipped with the necessary tools to navigate the modern world while remaining deeply rooted in the teachings of the Buddha.

His Eminence Thích Minh Châu's leadership in education was further exemplified by his international collaborations with numerous Buddhist institutions worldwide. He played a crucial role in establishing academic relationships with Buddhist universities in Sri Lanka, India, Thailand, and other countries, solidifying the global significance of Buddhist education. His efforts have helped nurture a new generation of scholars who continue to carry forth his legacy with compassion and a critical understanding of the Buddha's teachings.

3. A Translator of the Pāli Canon

One of His Eminence Thích Minh Châu's greatest achievements was his work in translating key Buddhist scriptures from Pāli into Vietnamese. His dedication to this monumental task is unparalleled.

His translations remain essential resources for Vietnamese-speaking scholars and Buddhist practitioners. His works include (i) *The Dīgha Nikāya* (Trường Bộ Kinh), (ii) *The Majjhima Nikāya* (Trung Bộ Kinh), (iii) *The Saṃyutta Nikāya* (Tương Ưng Bộ Kinh), (iv) *The Aṅguttara Nikāya* (Tăng Chi Bộ Kinh), and (v) seven out of the fifteen volumes of *The Khuddaka Nikāya* (Tiểu Bộ Kinh), “The Collection of Shorter Discourses.”

Through his translations, His Eminence Thích Minh Châu brought the original voice of the Buddha—preserved in the Pāli language—into the hearts of the Vietnamese Buddhist community. His work has ensured that the Vietnamese people can access these important scriptures in their language, opening new avenues for study and practice. His tireless efforts have preserved the authenticity of the Pāli Canon (*P. Tipiṭaka*; *S. Tripiṭaka*; 三藏) while making it accessible to contemporary readers.

4. An International Buddhist Diplomat

From the 1970s to the early 2000s, His Eminence Thích Minh Châu played a pivotal role in representing Vietnamese Buddhism on the international stage. During these decades, he participated in numerous international Buddhist conferences, often serving as the primary voice of the Vietnamese Sangha in promoting peace, cultural exchange, and mutual understanding among global Buddhist communities. His contributions to Buddhist diplomacy include attending meetings of the World Fellowship of Buddhists (WFB), where he was a key figure advocating for global cooperation among Buddhist organizations. His Eminence Thích Minh Châu’s role as an international diplomat for Vietnamese Buddhism also reflected his deep belief in the power of dialogue and mutual respect in promoting global peace. He worked closely with Buddhist leaders from Sri Lanka, India, Thailand, and many other countries, strengthening the bonds between Vietnamese Buddhism and the broader global Buddhist community. His diplomatic efforts were guided by the Buddhist principles of nonviolence (*P. ahiṃsā*; *S. ahiṃsā*; 不害) and compassion (*P. karuṇā*; *S. karuṇā*; 慈悲), emphasizing the importance of peaceful dialogue and cooperation.

5. A Leader of the Sangha

In Vietnam, His Eminence Thích Minh Châu was an exemplary leader in the governance of the Sangha. His leadership spanned several decades, during which he held numerous important positions within the Vietnam Buddhist Sangha (VBS). Initially, he served as Vice Chairman and General Secretary of the Sangha, a role in which he contributed significantly to the organizational development and consolidation of unity within the Buddhist community. He later became the Standing Vice Chairman of the VBS and was eventually appointed Deputy Supreme Patriarch of the Vietnam Buddhist Sangha.

Under his leadership, the VBS flourished, maintaining unity and resilience in the face of challenges. His wise and compassionate leadership ensured that the Sangha remained focused on the practice of the Buddha's teachings, while also expanding educational programs and social initiatives. His Eminence Thích Minh Châu's role in Sangha governance not only strengthened Vietnamese Buddhism but also ensured that the Sangha continued to serve as a moral and spiritual guide for the broader Vietnamese society. As we reflect on the life and contributions of His Eminence Thích Minh Châu, we are reminded of his exceptional wisdom, deep compassion, and visionary leadership. His contributions to Buddhist scholarship, education, translation, diplomacy, and the Sangha administration continue to inspire generations of Buddhist scholars and practitioners. His legacy stands as a testament to the power of the Dharma to transform not only individuals but also communities and nations.

In this conference, let us honor his memory by continuing the work to which he dedicated his life: spreading the teachings of the Buddha, pursuing the cause of education, and building bridges between cultures and nations through the values of compassion, wisdom, and nonviolence. The life of His Eminence Thích Minh Châu remains an enduring example of how one's devotion to the Dharma can leave an indelible mark on the world, transmitting a legacy of peace, understanding, wisdom, and tireless service.

SPEECH

at the 35th Anniversary of the Founding of the Vietnam Institute of Buddhist Studies

Most Ven.Thích Đức Thiện
Vice President, General Secretary of the VBS

Namo Shakyamuni Buddha!

His Holiness Thích Trí Quảng, Supreme Patriarch of the Vietnam Buddhist Sangha,

His Eminence Thích Thiện Nhơn, Deputy Patriarch, President of the Executive Council of the Vietnam Buddhist Sangha,

Most Venerable Thích Giác Toàn, Vice President of the Vietnam Buddhist Sangha, Director of the Vietnam Institute of Buddhist Studies,

Respected Sangha Members,

Honorable Indian Ambassador Sandeep Arya,

Distinguished Guests, Scholars, and Fellow Buddhists,

Today, as we gather in the solemn and joyful atmosphere of the 35th Anniversary of the Vietnam Institute of Buddhist Studies, we are filled with immense joy and gratitude. On behalf of the Standing Committee of the Executive Council of the Vietnam Buddhist Sangha, I am honored to extend respectful greetings to the Supreme Patriarch, the Chairman of the Vietnam Buddhist Sangha. I also offer my heartfelt commendation to Most Venerable Thích Giác Toàn, the Sangha's Vice President and Director of the Institute, as well as to the esteemed members of the Board of Trustees, distinguished guests, scholars, and Buddhist followers who have stood by the Institute throughout its 35-year journey of growth and development.

1. The Anniversary Celebration – Affirming the Role of Buddhist Studies in the New Era

The celebration of the 35th Anniversary of the Vietnam Institute of Buddhist Studies not only marks a momentous occasion to reflect on its illustrious path but also serves as an opportunity to affirm the vital role of Buddhist studies in the spiritual life of the Vietnamese people, especially in the context of deep international integration. The organization of two significant scientific conferences—“His Eminence Thich Minh Chau: Vision and Mission” today (October 19, 2024) and “Exploring the Historical, Spiritual, and Cultural Links of Buddhism between India and Vietnam” tomorrow (October 20, 2024)—demonstrates the strategic foresight of the Institute’s Board of Trustees.

The conference on His Eminence Thich Minh Chau allows us to revisit the life and contributions of this eminent scholar-monk, whose vast knowledge and dedication have made invaluable contributions to Vietnamese Buddhism. This event also inspires the present and future generations of Sangha members and lay Buddhists to continue their commitment to the Dharma.

The conference “Exploring the Historical, Spiritual, and Cultural Links of Buddhism between India and Vietnam,” co-organized by the Vietnam Institute of Buddhist Studies and the Indian Embassy in Vietnam, exemplifies our efforts to enhance cultural exchanges, strengthening the bonds of friendship between Vietnam and India. This event is also a significant opportunity to reflect on the profound historical ties between our two nations, which have been united through the shared heritage of Buddhism for thousands of years.

2. The Vietnam Institute of Buddhist Studies – A Premier Center for Buddhist Studies

For the past 35 years, the Vietnam Institute of Buddhist Studies has continuously strived and evolved to become a leading center for Buddhist studies in the nation, gaining recognition both regionally and globally. The Institute has undertaken numerous valuable research projects, contributing to the elucidation of both theoretical and practical issues in Buddhism, addressing the study

and research needs of Vietnamese monastics and lay Buddhists.

Among these, the translation and publication of the *Vietnamese Tripitaka*, now known as the *Vietnamese Buddhist Canon*, stands as a historic milestone. This monumental project, encompassing the *Pali Canon*, *Sectarian Buddhist Canon*, *Mahayana Buddhist Canon*, as well as Vietnamese Buddhist literature, plays a vital role in preserving and advancing Vietnamese Buddhism. By October 2024, the Institute has successfully published 21 volumes of this grand canon, with plans to complete an additional 3 volumes by the end of the year. This remarkable achievement reflects the collective dedication and commitment of the Institute's staff and leadership to serving the Dharma.

In addition, the Institute has organized numerous scientific conferences, training programs, and Buddhist education courses for monastics and lay practitioners, as well as published hundreds of Buddhist books, enhancing the understanding of Buddhist teachings within the broader community.

The Vietnam Institute of Buddhist Studies not only stands as a premier research center but also serves as a vital advisory body to the Vietnam Buddhist Sangha. With its team of scholars deeply versed in Buddhist teachings and well-attuned to contemporary social issues, the Institute has been instrumental in proposing development strategies for Vietnamese Buddhism in a spirit of engaged service to society, fostering harmony between the Dharma and worldly life. We are confident that, with its insightful wisdom and unwavering dedication to the Dharma, the Institute will continue to offer practical and visionary solutions, guiding the Vietnam Buddhist Sangha in its mission to meet the growing spiritual needs of the Buddhist community and contribute to the building of a prosperous and cultured Vietnam.

3. His Eminence Thich Minh Chau – A Pillar of Vietnamese Buddhism

When discussing the Vietnam Institute of Buddhist Studies, we cannot overlook the late His Eminence Thich Minh Chau (1918–2012), who played a pivotal role in founding and leading the Institute for its first two decades.

The life and work of His Eminence Thich Minh Chau stand as a shining example of profound learning, erudition, and the noble virtues of a devoted Buddhist. After spending over 12 years studying at Nava Nalanda Mahavihara in India, culminating in a PhD in 1961, he left a lasting impression on the world of Buddhist studies. His four significant works in English, including his doctoral thesis “*A Comparative Study of the Majjhima Nikāya and the Madhyama Āgama, A Comparative Study of the Milindapanha and the Questions of King Milinda, Xuanzang: The Pilgrim and Scholar, and Faxian: The Humble Pilgrim,*” are scholarly contributions that have shed light on important aspects of Buddhism.

Upon his return to Vietnam, embodying the spirit of “study to practice, practice to liberate,” His Eminence Thich Minh Chau dedicated his life to spreading the Dharma and serving sentient beings. His monumental translations of key Theravāda texts, including the *Majjhima Nikāya*, *Dīgha Nikāya*, *Saṃyutta Nikāya*, *Anguttara Nikāya*, and the first seven volumes of the *Khuddaka Nikāya*, have opened new doors for the study and practice of early Buddhism in Vietnam. His translation style, widely regarded as exemplary and profound, has enriched the Vietnamese lexicon, further contributing to the cultural and spiritual heritage of the nation.

4. The Legacy of His Eminence Thich Minh Chau – The Luminary Who Pioneered Vietnamese Buddhist Education

His Eminence Thich Minh Chau was not only a distinguished Buddhist scholar but also a visionary educator who made tremendous contributions to the development of modern Vietnamese Buddhist education. He was instrumental in founding Vạn Hạnh University in 1964 and establishing the Vietnamese Buddhist College in 1984, which was later renamed the Vietnam Buddhist University in Ho Chi Minh City in 1997. Additionally, he served as the founding Director of the Vietnam Institute of Buddhist Studies in 1989.

With foresight and wisdom, His Eminence Thich Minh Chau recognized the importance of training a new generation of Buddhist leaders, ensuring they possessed a profound understanding of Buddhist studies to propagate the Dharma and benefit all beings. His monumental

contributions sparked a flourishing movement in Buddhist research, promoting the intellectual advancement of Vietnamese Buddhism and aligning it with global Buddhist currents.

5. The Spiritual Connection Between Vietnam and India – The Cultural Root of Buddhism

Buddhism arrived in Vietnam at an early stage and has since become an inseparable part of the spiritual and cultural life of the nation. Vietnam and India, both sharing a deep-rooted Buddhist cultural heritage, have fostered a relationship of mutual exchange and connection spanning thousands of years.

The presence of the Indian Embassy at this 35th Anniversary Celebration, and especially the co-organization of the scientific conference *Exploring the Historical, Spiritual, and Cultural Links of Buddhism between India and Vietnam*, is a testament to the enduring bond of friendship between the two nations.

The visit of Prime Minister Narendra Modi to the headquarters of the Vietnam Buddhist Sangha at Quán Sứ Pagoda in 2016 marked a significant step forward in the bilateral cooperation between the two countries, particularly in the realms of culture and religion. India's promotion of Buddhism and Yoga as soft power strategies is a brilliant and effective form of cultural diplomacy.

To further strengthen this special relationship, I respectfully propose several new avenues of cooperation between the Indian Embassy and the Vietnam Buddhist Sangha:

- **Development of spiritual tourism:** Collaborate on creating spiritual pilgrimage tours to Buddhist sacred sites in India and cultural landmarks in Vietnam, thereby fostering cultural, economic, and tourism exchanges.

- **Collaboration in research and translation of Buddhist scriptures:** India, the birthplace of Buddhism, holds a vast repository of Buddhist scriptures. By working together to research, translate, and publish these texts from Sanskrit and Pali into Vietnamese, we can enrich the Buddhist canon in Vietnam and offer the Vietnamese public access to the profound wisdom of Buddhism's original teachings.

- **Buddhist cultural exchange:** Support the organization of Buddhist art performances, exhibitions of Buddhist artifacts, and architecture to showcase the beauty of each country's Buddhist culture to the wider public.

- **Short-term retreats and training programs:** Create opportunities for Vietnamese and Indian monks, nuns, and lay practitioners to participate in short-term meditation retreats, yoga, and applied Dharma programs at esteemed Buddhist centers in both countries.

- **Exchange of monastic communities:** Facilitate exchange programs for monks, nuns, and lay practitioners from both nations to study and share experiences at each other's Buddhist institutions. This will deepen mutual understanding, promote shared learning, and strengthen Dharma propagation.

We are confident that with the close and effective cooperation between the Indian Embassy and the Vietnam Buddhist Sangha, the traditional friendship between our two countries will continue to grow stronger, bringing tangible benefits to the people of both nations and contributing to the creation of a peaceful, harmonious, and joyful world.

6. Words of Gratitude and Hope

On this occasion, I would like to extend my deepest gratitude to the generations of leaders and staff at the Vietnam Institute of Buddhist Studies for their tireless dedication and contributions to the Institute's development over the past 35 years. My heartfelt thanks also go to the scholars and researchers whose wisdom and commitment have been instrumental in the success of this grand celebration and the two scientific conferences. I wish the Vietnam Institute of Buddhist Studies continued success in upholding its illustrious tradition, organizing valuable scientific conferences, and swiftly completing the project of translating and publishing the *Vietnamese Buddhist Canon*, contributing to the robust growth of Vietnamese Buddhism.

I wish the celebration and conferences of the Vietnam Institute of Buddhist Studies a resounding success.

SPEECH

**By the Government Committee for Religious Affairs at the Conference
“HIS EMINENCE THÍCH MINH CHÂU: VISION AND MISSION”**

On the occasion of the 35th Anniversary of the establishment of
the Vietnam Institute for Buddhist Studies (1989 - 2024)
(Ho Chi Minh City, October 19, 2024)

By Trần Thị Minh Nga

Phó Trưởng Ban Tôn giáo Chính phủ

Respected:

His Holiness Thích Trí Quảng, Supreme Patriarch of the
Vietnam Buddhist Sangha,

His Eminence Thích Giác Quang, Deputy Supreme Patriarch of
the Vietnam Buddhist Sangha,

His Eminence Viên Minh, Deputy Supreme Patriarch of the
Vietnam Buddhist Sangha,

His Eminence Thích Thiện Nhơn, Deputy Supreme Patriarch of
the Board of Certification, Chairman of the Executive Council of
the Vietnam Buddhist Sangha,

His Eminence Thích Giác Toàn, Vice Chairman of the Executive
Council of the Vietnam Buddhist Sangha, Director of the Vietnam
Institute for Buddhist Studies,

Distinguished Guests:

- Members of the Supreme Patriarch Council, and the
Executive Council of the Vietnam Buddhist Sangha,
- His Excellency Sandeep Ayra, Ambassador of India to
Vietnam,
- Esteemed leaders and representatives of central and local
governmental agencies,

- Honored delegates and distinguished guests!

In the series of activities celebrating the 35th anniversary of the establishment of the Vietnam Institute for Buddhist Studies, the Board of Directors of the Vietnam Institute for Buddhist Studies, the Executive Board of the Vietnam Buddhist Academy in Ho Chi Minh City, and the disciples of the Tường Vân Monastery have organized this conference, “His Eminence Thích Minh Châu: Mission and Vision.” The Government Committee for Religious Affairs acknowledges that this is a highly meaningful event.

At this conference, with the attendance of the venerable leaders of the Board of Certification, the Executive Council of the Vietnam Buddhist Sangha, alongside a large gathering of monastics, lay practitioners and honored delegates, the Government Committee for Religious Affairs sees this as a vivid embodiment of the nation’s tradition of “drinking water, remember its source,” expressing profound gratitude to the ancestors who devoted their intellect and efforts to preserving the continuity of Buddhism in the historical stream of the Vietnamese nation.

On behalf of the Leadership of the Government Committee for Religious Affairs, I would like to respectfully extend my best wishes for peace and success to His Eminence Thích Thiện Nhơn, Deputy Supreme Patriarch of the Board of Certification, Chairman of the Executive Council of the Vietnam Buddhist Sangha, the venerable leaders of the Vietnam Buddhist Sangha, esteemed leaders of central and local agencies, as well as the venerable monastics, lay practitioners, and distinguished guests. I wish the conference a great success.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Throughout history, the harmonious combination of Buddhism and the nation has always been a distinctive and proud feature of Vietnamese Buddhism. In every era, there have been exemplary high monks who played significant roles both within the Dharma and in the broader society.

Continuing the patriotic tradition of Vietnamese Buddhism, from its inception to the present day, the Vietnam Buddhist Sangha

has made considerable contributions to the cause of national construction and defense, strengthening the Vietnam Buddhist Sangha in all aspects and affirming the position of Vietnamese Buddhism in the heart of the nation. Achieving these successes is due to the continuous contributions and efforts of the Most Venerable, Venerable monks, senior nuns, and the entire Buddhist clergy and laity in Vietnam, among whom the contributions of the late His Eminence Thích Minh Châu cannot go unmentioned.

Reflecting on the 95-year life journey of His Eminence, with more than 70 years in the Dharma, he lived and dedicated his entire life to the homeland, the country, and Vietnamese Buddhism.

His Eminence made numerous contributions to the establishment and development of the Vietnam Buddhist Sangha, building and maintaining the Sangha's path of engagement with and support for the nation. As a monastic leader, holding key positions in various Buddhist organizations, and later within the Vietnam Buddhist Sangha, His Eminence was an active international Buddhist leader, a talented diplomat, an exceptional scholar, an educator, and a distinguished author and translator of the 20th and early 21st centuries.

As a citizen, during the years of national resistance and reconstruction, His Eminence was a core figure in the Annam Buddhist Association, which launched the patriotic movement against French colonialism, rallying monks, nuns, and lay Buddhists in support of the revolution, striving for national independence and freedom for the homeland. When peace was restored, and the nation was unified, His Eminence actively participated in social activities, notably being entrusted by the people to serve as a National Assembly delegate for the Socialist Republic of Vietnam for four consecutive terms (from the 7th to the 10th National Assembly). Throughout his tenure in the National Assembly, His Eminence made significant contributions to the development of institutional frameworks, including ensuring the religious freedom of the nation's believers. At the same time, he excellently fulfilled his role as one of the key bridges between the Vietnam Buddhist Sangha (VBS) and the State, as well as between the State and the Sangha. He diligently

conveyed the legitimate concerns and aspirations of the VBS, its monks, nuns, and lay Buddhists to the State, while also effectively communicating the State's religious policies to the Sangha and the Buddhist community in Vietnam.

It can be said that, in any position he held, His Eminence was a shining example of wisdom and virtue, an esteemed ascetic, a pillar of the monastic community. Alongside the revered leaders of the VBS, he guided the monks, nuns, and lay Buddhists in unity, in study, and in practicing the Dharma by the Sangha's chosen motto: "Dharma - Nation - Socialism." His efforts helped solidify the position of the VBS within the heart of the nation and contributed to the construction of both the Sangha and the country of Vietnam.

His Eminence truly deserves to be honored as an illustrious monk of the Vietnam Buddhist Sangha and an exemplary citizen of the nation. His contributions have been respectfully acknowledged by the Party and State with prestigious accolades: the Hồ Chí Minh Order, the Independence Order, Second Class, and the Great National Unity Order, among other honors.

Distinguished Guests!

We believe that this conference offers a valuable opportunity for researchers and knowledgeable scholars to provide further meaningful insights into the life and career of His Eminence Thích Minh Châu. We also have to fully appreciate and honor the legacy that His Eminence has left for Buddhism and society. At the same time, this is a moment for us to reflect on the history of Vietnamese Buddhism and the nation's history, thereby allowing us to more clearly recognize the true value and immense contributions of past pioneers who have helped build our strong society and Sangha as we see today.

Through this conference, the Government Committee for Religious Affairs would like to express its respect for His Eminence Thích Minh Châu for the contributions he made to the country. We hope that, following this conference, many more will be held on Vietnamese Buddhism and other eminent monks, so that the history of Vietnamese Buddhism can be viewed more fully and comprehensively. This will allow the Vietnamese Buddhist

community to continue affirming and enriching its tradition of always being closely connected with the nation.

Distinguished Guests!

Once again, on behalf of the leadership of the Government Committee for Religious Affairs, I would like to wish His Eminence, Deputy Supreme Patriarch, Chairman of the Executive Council, the venerable leaders of the VBS, representatives of central and local agencies, and all esteemed guests attending the conference good health and all the best.

Thank you very much.



AMBASSADOR'S REMARKS

at the 35th Anniversary of Vietnam Institute of Buddhist Studies
(H.E. Sandeep Ayra)

Hanoi, Oct 18, 2024

- His Holiness Thích Trí Quảng, Supreme Patriarch of the Vietnam Buddhist Sangha,

- Deputy Supreme Patriarchs of the Vietnam Buddhist Sangha, including His Eminence Thích Giác Quang, His Eminence Viên Minh, and His Eminence Thích Thiện Nhơn, President of Vietnam Buddhist Sangha

- His Eminence Thích Giác Toàn, Vice President of the Vietnam Buddhist Sangha, and Director of Vietnam Institute of Buddhist Studies

- Most Ven. Thích Đức Thiện, Vice President and General Secretary of the Vietnam Buddhist Sangha

- Most Ven. Thích Nhật Từ, Permanent Vice-Rector of Vietnam Buddhist University, Conference Convenor

- Distinguished leaders, scholars, and devotees

Xin chào, Namaskar, Namo Shakyamuni Buddha

Thank you for the honour of inviting me to the 35th-anniversary celebration of this eminent institute.

I express my heartiest felicitations to the Vietnam Institute of Buddhist Studies on completing 35 years of significant work in the field of education, research, and spiritualism.

We are also remembering the profound life and contribution of His Eminence Thich Minh Chau. We are gratified by his close association and education in India.

Revered monks, leaders, and dear believers,

India is proud of being the home of Shakyamuni Buddha and of the enormous legacy of his life, Dharma, thought, and his indelible influence forever for the entire humanity. Shakyamuni Buddha affects the spiritual, philosophical, social, and public life in India in multiple ways. I learned about Lord Buddha's four noble truths and eight-fold noble path in my school textbooks, as Indian students do throughout the country. Lord Buddha's philosophy and ideals affect Indian thinking about inner peace, the power of meditation, contentment in life, and restraint in human conduct and behavior. Prime Minister Modi has stated that the roadmap that India has created for its development will be guided by the teachings of Lord Buddha.

I believe that Shakyamuni Buddha's ideals and path have a huge role to play in addressing the challenges of the present world – be it peace, harmony, humanism & compassion, approach to sustainable development, climate change, economic inequalities, healthy lifestyle, mental health and norms of social behavior. Prime Minister of India, H.E. Narendra Modi said at the Global Buddhist Summit in India last year that the Path of Buddhism is the path of the future of the world and the path of sustainability. Prime Minister Modi's call for a Lifestyle for the Environment 'Mission Life' for moderating individual lifestyle and consumption is inspired by Lord Buddha's ideals about curbing desire and greed.

I am glad that there will be a conference tomorrow on 'Exploring the Historical, Spiritual and Cultural Links of Buddhism between India and Vietnam' for which five distinguished Indian scholars have travelled to Ho Chi Minh City from India. I hope that they will also draw contemporary relevance of Lord Buddha's life and Dharma for the entire humanity. I am thankful to the International Buddhist

Confederation, New Delhi for supporting the participation of Indian scholars in this conference.

India is putting considerable effort into the preservation, conservation, maintenance, and upgradation of Buddhist heritage and sites in India. Some recent efforts include the establishment of the India International Centre at Lumbini, renovation work at Sarnath associated with the first sermon by Lord Buddha, building of Kushinagar airport, and the enhancement of Nalanda University, which was the preeminent seat of Buddhist studies 1500 years ago attracting scholars from all over the world. Earlier this month, the government of India accorded the status of Classical Language to the Pali language which was the language of rich archives, records, and documentation of Shakyamuni Buddha's teachings, thoughts, and philosophy. This step will enhance the preservation of documentation, archiving, translation, and digitization.

I am glad that hundreds of Buddhist monks, scholars, and students from Vietnam attend Bachelor's, Master's, and Doctoral studies in the field of Buddhism, its philosophy, Pali language, and related subjects in prominent Indian universities. In August-September this year, about 40 Vietnamese scholars travelled to India using the Indian government's full scholarship for Masters and Doctorate studies in Buddhism, history, and Pali Language at Delhi University, Nalanda University, Banaras Hindu University, Andhra University, Gautam Buddha University, Lucknow University and so on.

2025 will be an important year for Vesak celebrations in Vietnam. I will be happy if India can contribute in any manner to the commensurate level of celebration of Vesak in Vietnam.

I pay my deep regards to the most venerable monks and leaders present here today and convey my thankfulness to the Vietnam Buddhist Sangha for their enormous contribution to the India-Vietnam friendship. Buddhism has been and will always be a key element of the partnership between India and Vietnam. I remember that last year when India's External Affairs Minister visited Hanoi, the Government of Vietnam selected Tran Quoc pagoda in Hanoi for a joint visit by the two Foreign Ministers.

I convey my best wishes for the success of this conference and my appreciation to the Vietnam Institute of Buddhist Studies for their efforts in organizing this important conference and a special session on India-Vietnam Buddhist links.

Xin Cảm ơn, Danyavad as we say in India.

Namo Shakyamuni Buddha,

Nam-mô Thích-ca Mâu-ni Phật.

CONFERENCE OVERVIEW

“HIS EMINENCE THÍCH MINH CHÂU: VISION AND MISSION”

Most Ven.Dr. Thích Nhật Từ¹

I. Introduction: 35 Years of the Vietnam Institute for Buddhist Studies and the Significance of the Conference

Over the past 35 years (1989-2024), the Vietnam Institute for Buddhist Studies has made continuous progress, achieving remarkable success in its efforts to research, translate, and propagate the teachings of Buddha. These efforts have greatly contributed to the preservation and promotion of the rich heritage of Vietnamese Buddhism. Established in 1989, the Institute has evolved into a major academic hub, not only within Vietnam but also internationally, attracting scholars, researchers, and distinguished monastics and lay Buddhists from all corners of the globe.

Reflecting on this 35-year journey, we acknowledge the significant contributions the Institute has made to preserving Buddhist heritage, particularly in introducing and promoting the profound humanistic values of Buddhism in contemporary society. Today and tomorrow, we gather for two important conferences, which are designed to honor and explore the significant legacy of Vietnamese Buddhism and its connection to global culture and spirituality.

¹ Master Thich Nhat Tu is currently serving as Vice President of the International Buddhist Confederation (IBC); Standing Member of the Executive Council of the Vietnam Buddhist Sangha (VBS); Vice Chairman of Vietnam Buddhist Sangha of Ho Chi Minh City; Executive Vice Chairman of the Central Committee for International Buddhist Affairs; Executive Vice Chairman of the Central Committee for Buddhist Education; Vice Director and General Secretary of the Vietnam Institute for Buddhist Studies; Standing Vice-Rector of the Vietnam Buddhist University in Ho Chi Minh City; and Co-Chair of the Conference Organizing Committee.

The first conference, titled *“His Eminence Thích Minh Châu: Vision and Mission,”* is held today, October 19, 2024, in collaboration between the Vietnam Institute for Buddhist Studies, the Vietnam Buddhist University in Ho Chi Minh City, and the Tường Vân Monastery lineage. This conference delves into the life, thought, and exceptional contributions of His Eminence Thích Minh Châu, a towering figure whose influence has greatly shaped the development of Buddhism in Vietnam.

Tomorrow, on October 20, 2024, the Vietnam Institute for Buddhist Studies will collaborate with the Embassy of India to organize a second conference titled *“Exploring the Historical, Spiritual, and Cultural Links of Buddhism Between India and Vietnam.”* This conference aims to illuminate the profound religious and cultural ties between the two nations.

Today’s conference is not only an opportunity to honor the contributions of His Eminence Thích Minh Châu in the fields of Buddhist research, education, and translation, but it also serves as a moment for us to reflect on the invaluable legacy he has left for Vietnamese Buddhism. In the realm of leadership, His Eminence Thích Minh Châu held key positions, serving as Vice President – General Secretary, later as Standing Vice President of the Executive Council of the Vietnam Buddhist Sangha, and finally as Deputy Supreme Patriarch of the Vietnam Buddhist Sangha. In education, he co-founded Vạn Hạnh University (1964), founded the Vietnam Buddhist University in Ho Chi Minh City (1984), and established the Vietnam Institute for Buddhist Studies (1989). As a propagator of the Dharma, he translated the Pāli Canon into Vietnamese, including the *Dīgha Nikāya*, *Majjhima Nikāya*, *Saṃyutta Nikāya*, *Aṅguttara Nikāya*, and seven volumes of the *Khuddaka Nikāya*. In practice, he was a dedicated teacher of Vipassanā meditation. The Organizing Committee is deeply honored by the presence and blessing of His Holiness Thích Trí Quảng, Supreme Patriarch of the Vietnam Buddhist Sangha; and the invaluable attendance of three Deputy Supreme Patriarchs: His Eminence Thích Giác Quang and His Eminence Viên Minh; as well as His Eminence Thích Thiện Nhơn, Deputy Supreme Patriarch and Chairman of the Vietnam Buddhist

Sangha. These great leaders have made profound contributions to the sustainable development of Vietnamese Buddhism. The conference dedicated to His Eminence Thích Minh Châu centers around five major themes, enriched by diverse presentations. Each theme reflects significant aspects of His Eminence Thích Minh Châu’s life and career, as well as the deep connections between Indian and Vietnamese Buddhism.

Theme 1: His Eminence Thích Minh Châu – A Buddhist Scholar

This theme comprises 15 papers that present crucial aspects of Buddhist thought and the translation efforts of His Eminence Thích Minh Châu. One of the notable papers, “*His Eminence Thích Minh Châu and Ekāyana (The One Vehicle)*” by Most Venerable Dr. Thích Tâm Đức, highlights the rigor and comprehensiveness of his research and Buddhist educational contributions. This paper provides deep insights into the path of practice and meditation that His Eminence Thích Minh Châu consistently emphasized in his teachings. It also portrays him as Vietnam’s Xuanzang, particularly through his work on translating and propagating the *Pāli* Canon.

Another significant aspect discussed in this theme is the role of His Eminence Thích Minh Châu as an authoritative translator of the Buddhist scriptures. In the paper presented by Most Venerable Dr. Thích Bửu Chánh, his translation work is celebrated as an important contribution that has brought Vietnamese Buddhism closer to the original Buddhist teachings. The translation of the *Pāli* Canon into Vietnamese is hailed as an invaluable resource, laying a solid academic foundation for scholars and lay Buddhists alike.

Additionally, Professor Dr. Karam Tej S. Sarao from the University of Delhi focuses on His Eminence Thích Minh Châu’s research on *Fo Guo Ji (Records of the Buddhist Kingdoms)*, a work considered a valuable resource for the study of Indian Buddhism. The analysis of this text highlights the intricate connections between Vietnamese and Indian Buddhism, underscoring His Eminence Thích Minh Châu’s scholarly and translational finesse.

Theme 2: His Eminence Thích Minh Châu – A Buddhist Educator

This theme gathers 12 papers, each focusing on His Eminence Thích Minh Châu's prominent contributions to the development of Buddhist education in Vietnam. In a paper by Venerable Dr. Thích Trung Định, His Eminence Thích Minh Châu's role is examined through his significant contributions to the establishment and leadership of the Vietnamese Higher Buddhist School, which was later renamed the Vietnam Buddhist University in Ho Chi Minh City in 1997. Under his leadership, generations of monks and nuns were trained and developed, earning him recognition as a visionary educator who embraced both innovation and openness, always updating and advancing educational methods to meet the academic and spiritual needs of the times.

A key focus of this theme is the development of His Eminence Thích Minh Châu's Buddhist educational philosophy. Dr. Tạ Thị Minh Phương notes that his educational philosophy is grounded in the principle of "as it truly is" (*yathābhūta*), aiming to cultivate an authentic understanding of life's nature through the practice of the Buddha's teachings. This philosophy extends beyond Buddhist education, serving as a profound framework for moral and ethical character development, particularly relevant for today's youth in modern society.

Several other papers also emphasize His Eminence Thích Minh Châu's educational career and vision, such as the paper by Associate Professor Dr. Nguyễn Công Lý, which describes him as "a pillar of Vietnamese Buddhism," who played a pivotal role in shaping and developing contemporary Buddhist education.

Theme 3: The Translation of the Pāli Canon

This theme comprises 15 papers that focus on the outstanding contributions of His Eminence Thích Minh Châu to the translation of Buddhist texts from *Pāli* into Vietnamese. Venerable Thích Thông Thiền's paper emphasizes that His Eminence Thích Minh Châu was a master translator, renowned for his accuracy and scholarly value. His work not only popularized Buddhist teachings but also elevated the standards of Buddhist studies in Vietnam.

In a paper by Venerable Dr. Thích Nữ Tuệ Liên, the legacy of His Eminence Thích Minh Châu's translation efforts is regarded

as a treasure trove for modern Buddhist research. The paper highlights that thanks to his tireless dedication, many generations of Vietnamese monks, nuns, and lay Buddhists now have direct access to the Buddha’s teachings through the translated *Pāli* Canon, without relying on third-party sources.

A special aspect of this theme is the analysis by Venerable Master of Arts Thích Chúc Phú, who discusses the difficulties and challenges His Eminence Thích Minh Châu faced during his translation work. Detailed discussions of his translation methodology, and linguistic, and religious analysis of the texts provide readers with a deeper understanding of this challenging yet profoundly important endeavor.

Theme 4: His Eminence Thích Minh Châu – An International Buddhist Diplomat

This theme encompasses 12 papers focusing on His Eminence Thích Minh Châu’s role in developing Buddhist diplomatic relations, particularly between Vietnam and the global Buddhist community. Venerable Dr. Thích Minh Thiện’s paper highlights the Most Venerable’s diplomatic career, underscoring his efforts to establish and strengthen international relationships that promoted Vietnamese Buddhism on the global stage.

One noteworthy aspect is the paper by Dr. Tống Thị Quỳnh Hương and Dr. Phạm Thị Thanh Huyền on Vietnam-India Buddhist relations, in which His Eminence Thích Minh Châu is recognized as a crucial bridge fostering cooperation between these two great Buddhist traditions. The papers detail his contributions to organizing international exchanges, providing scholars and monastics from both nations with opportunities for academic and spiritual collaboration.

Additionally, Dr. Đỗ Quang Huy’s paper extols the Most Venerable’s peaceful diplomatic philosophy, as reflected in his work “*Buddhism and the New Ethical Order*,” a text imbued with the spirit of reconciliation and cooperation. This work has significantly contributed to building a strong foundation for international Buddhist development in the modern era.

Theme 5: His Eminence Thích Minh Châu – Governance of the Vietnam Buddhist Sangha

This theme features 10 papers that focus on His Eminence Thích Minh Châu's role in the administrative management and institutional development of the Vietnam Buddhist Sangha. Dr. Thích Hạnh Chánh's paper highlights the Most Venerable's pivotal role in creating a unified organizational structure for the Sangha, which has enabled Vietnamese Buddhism to grow robustly over the past decades.

Furthermore, Dr. Hồ Tường's paper emphasizes the Most Venerable's wise leadership in managing Buddhist educational institutions such as the Vietnam Buddhist University and other Buddhist research centers. His contributions extended beyond administration, reflecting his deep commitment to improving the quality of education and moral cultivation for monks, nuns, and lay Buddhists.

Dr. Lê Đức Hạnh's paper also commends the Most Venerable's leadership in establishing and developing the Buddhist educational system, which has allowed generations of monastics to be trained and developed in a rigorous and professional academic environment.

Conclusion: Multidisciplinary Methodologies and Academic Value

In the context of today's globalized world, Buddhist research cannot remain confined to a singular perspective but must adopt a multidisciplinary approach, incorporating history, culture, philosophy, and religious studies. The papers presented at this conference highlight the importance of addressing Buddhist studies from various angles, not only to deepen our understanding of Buddhist thought and teachings but also to broaden our comprehension of the relationships between Vietnamese Buddhism and the wider Buddhist world. The participation of Vietnamese and international scholars and monastics in these studies has contributed to the richness and diversity of the research, reflecting the continuity and evolution of Buddhism across multiple generations and cultural contexts.

The research presented goes beyond philosophy or history, emphasizing the connection between Buddhist studies and contemporary life by applying Buddhist ethical values to social, educational, and human development issues. This not only enhances the academic value of the conference but also opens up new directions for the future development of Buddhism, especially in fostering humanistic education and sustainable growth for the community.

In conclusion, His Eminence Thích Minh Châu stands as a shining example of lifelong dedication to the pursuit of education, research, and the propagation of the Dharma. With profound wisdom and boundless compassion, he has left an invaluable legacy for both Vietnamese and international Buddhism through his translations of the *Pāli* Canon, his comparative Buddhist studies, and his significant contributions to education. He was not only a virtuous ascetic but also an outstanding scholar, tirelessly overcoming challenges to bring true knowledge and understanding of the Buddha’s teachings to successive generations of monks, nuns, and lay Buddhists. His illustrious example continues to inspire future generations to follow the path of study and practice, serving as a beacon of perseverance, wisdom, and compassion, illuminating the way for the Dharma and the Vietnamese nation.

FIRST CONFERENCE PAPER PRESENTATION AGENDA

"HIS EMINENCE THÍCH MINH CHÂU: VISION AND MISSION"

Ho Chi Minh City, October 19, 2024

(In Vietnamese)

SUB-THEME 1:

HIS EMINENCE THÍCH MINH CHÂU: A BUDDHIST SCHOLAR

Venue: Main Hall

Session 1: 12:30-14:15

HIS EMINENCE THÍCH MINH CHÂU: BUDDHIST THOUGHT & MEDITATION

Chairs: Most Ven.Dr. Thích Viên Trí and Most Ven.Dr. Thích Phước Lượng

- **12:30-12:45** - *Most Ven.Dr. Thích Viên Trí: "An Insight into the Buddhist Thought of His Eminence Thích Minh Châu"*
- **12:45-13:00** - *Bhikkhuni Dr. Hằng Liên: "His Eminence – A Shining Teacher"*
- **13:00-13:15** - *Bhikkhuni Thích Nữ Trung Hiếu & Most Ven. Dr. Thích Hạnh Tuệ: "The Meditation Perspective of His Eminence Thích Minh Châu"*
- **13:15-13:30** - *Bhikkhuni Dr. Thích Nữ Thanh Quế & Lưu Hồng Hoa: "His Eminence Thích Minh Châu and Contemporary Vietnamese Meditation"*
- **13:30-13:45** - *Dr. Nguyễn Thành Trung: "Approaching Xuanzang – The Scholar Pilgrim (Thích Minh Châu) from a Biographical Critique Perspective"*
- **13:45-14:00** - *Đào Văn Trường & Đinh Văn Luân: "A Study on His Eminence Thích Minh Châu's Perspective on the"*

'Five Precepts' in Buddhist Ethical Education"

- **14:00-14:15 - Discussion and Presentation of Certificates**

Session 2: 14:15-16:00

HIS EMINENCE THÍCH MINH CHÂU: A BUDDHIST SCHOLAR

Chairs: Most Ven.Dr. Thích Tâm Đức and Bhikkhuni Dr. Thích Nữ Diệu Hiếu

- **14:15-14:30** - *Most Ven.Dr. Thích Tâm Đức:* "His Eminence Thích Minh Châu and the Ekāyano Path"
- **14:30-14:45** - *Đào Nguyên:* "Introduction of the Doctoral Thesis: 'A Comparative Study of the Chinese Mādhyama Āgama and the Pāli Majjhima Nikāya' by His Eminence Thích Minh Châu: A Pioneering Contribution to Vietnamese Buddhist Studies"
- **14:45-15:00** - *Most Ven.Dr. Thích Đạo Nhân:* "Dhamma as Seen in the Pāli Canon"
- **15:00-15:15** - *Bhikkhuni Dr. Thích Nữ Nghiêm Liên:* "An Indelible Mark: The Tangible and Intangible Legacy of His Eminence Thích Minh Châu"
- **15:15-15:30** - *Phạm Bá Nhiều:* "His Eminence – A Distinguished Buddhist Scholar"
- **15:30-15:45** - *Lê Tô Nam:* "The Impact of His Eminence Thích Minh Châu's Buddhist Research in Vietnam Through the *Vietnamese Buddhist Dictionary*"
- **15:45-16:00 - Discussion and Presentation of Certificates**
- **16:00 - Return to the Main Hall for the Valedictory Ceremony**

SUB-THEME 2:

HIS EMINENCE THÍCH MINH CHÂU A BUDDHIST EDUCATOR

Venue: Nirvana Hall

Session 1: 12:30-14:15

HIS EMINENCE THÍCH MINH CHÂU – A BUDDHIST EDUCATOR

Chairs: Most Ven. Dr. Thích Minh Thanh and Most Ven. Dr. Thích Giác Duyên

- **12:30-12:45** – *Most Ven. Dr. Thích Minh Thanh:* "His Eminence Thích Minh Châu – A Great Cultural and Intellectual Educator of Vietnam"
- **12:45-13:00** – *Dr. Bùi Thị Ánh Vân & Researcher Nguyễn Tùng Thảo Chi:* "The Rector of Vạn Hạnh University and His Contributions to Vietnamese Buddhist Education"
- **13:00-13:15** – *Ven. Thích Nguyên Định:* "His Eminence – A Shining Star in Vietnamese Buddhist Education"
- **13:15-13:30** – *Ven. Thích Quảng Thiên:* "The Educational Philosophy of His Eminence Thích Minh Châu"
- **13:30-13:45** – *Ven. Thích Khải Thành:* "A Grand Legacy: The Importance of His Eminence in the Field of Buddhist Education"
- **13:45-14:00** – *Nguyễn Minh Trí:* "His Eminence Thích Minh Châu: Mission and Vision"
- **14:00-14:15** – **Discussion and Presentation of Certificates**

Session 2: 14:15-16:00

HIS EMINENCE THÍCH MINH CHÂU: THE CAREER OF TRANSLATING THE PĀLI CANON

Chairs: Most Ven. Dr. Thích Nguyên Hạnh and Bhikkhuni Dr. Liễu Pháp

- **14:15-14:30** – *Most Ven. Dr. Thích Nguyên Hạnh:* "His Eminence Thích Minh Châu: A Pioneering Translator of the Nikāya Canon"
- **14:30-14:45** – *Bhikkhuni Thích Nữ Huệ Cảnh:* "The Contributions of His Eminence Thích Minh Châu to Translating the Pāli Canon"
- **14:45-15:00** – *Phạm Anh Kiệt:* "The Translation of

Abhidhammattha Sangaha by His Eminence Thích Minh Châu – Its Significance and Value for Vietnamese Buddhist Studies"

- **15:00-15:15** – *Ven. Thích Đạt Ma Hồng Đăng*: "His Eminence Thích Minh Châu – His Contributions to Buddhist Education in Vietnam"
- **15:15-15:30** – *Nguyễn Văn Toàn*: "The Philosophy of Education and the Role of the Teacher in His Eminence Thích Minh Châu's Thought: Reflections on Modern Education"
- **15:30-15:45** – *Bhikkhuni PhD Candidate Thích Nữ Huệ Lộc*: "His Eminence Thích Minh Châu – A Beacon of Light for Future Generations"
- **15:45-16:00** – **Discussion and Presentation of Certificates**
- **16:00** – **Return to the Main Hall for the Valedictory Ceremony**

SUB-THEME 3:

HIS EMINENCE THÍCH MINH CHÂU

THE CAREER OF TRANSLATING THE PĀLI CANON

Venue: Lower Lecture Hall

Session 1: 12:30-14:15

HIS EMINENCE THÍCH MINH CHÂU – THE CAREER OF TRANSLATING THE PĀLI CANON

Chairs: Most Ven. Dr. Thích Giác Hoàng and Most Ven. Thích Thông Thiên

- **12:30-12:45** – *Most Ven. Thích Thông Thiên*: "His Eminence Thích Minh Châu (1918-2012) – A Master Translator of the Canon and Rector"
- **12:45-13:00** – *Most Ven. Dr. Thích Giác Hoàng*: "His Eminence Thích Minh Châu: The Career of Translating the Pāli Canon"
- **13:00-13:15** – *Ven. Thích Tâm Hạnh*: "A Venerable Monk of

Wisdom and Education"

- **13:15-13:30** – *Bhikkhuni Dr. Thích Nữ Tuệ Liên*: "His Eminence Thích Minh Châu: The Glorious Legacy of Vietnamese Buddhism in the 20th Century"
- **13:30-13:45** – *Nguyễn Văn Tiếng*: "The Literary Value in His Eminence Thích Minh Châu's Translation of the *Dhammapada*"
- **13:45-14:00** – *Bhikkhuni Dr. Huệ Ngôn*: "The Translation Theory of His Eminence Thích Minh Châu"
- **14:00-14:15** – **Discussion and Presentation of Certificates**

Session 2: 14:15-16:00

HIS EMINENCE THÍCH MINH CHÂU – THE CAREER OF TRANSLATING THE PĀLI CANON

Chairs: Most Ven.Dr. Bửu Chánh and Bhikkhuni Dr. Thích Nữ Tuệ Liên

- **14:15-14:30** – *Most Ven.Dr. Thích Bửu Chánh*: "His Eminence Thích Minh Châu: An Authoritative Translator of the Pāli Canon"
- **14:30-14:45** – *Most Ven. Thích Chúc Phú*: "A Study on Key Aspects of His Eminence Thích Minh Châu's Translation Process"
- **14:45-15:00** – *Lê Diễm Hằng*: "His Eminence Thích Minh Châu – An Outstanding Translator of the Canon"
- **15:00-15:15** – *Bhikkhuni Xuân Liên*: "His Eminence Thích Minh Châu: The Career of Translating the Pāli Canon"
- **15:15-15:30** – *Bhikkhuni Thích Đàm Huy*: "His Eminence Thích Minh Châu – A Great Figure Who Laid the Foundation for Buddhist Scriptural Translation in Vietnam"
- **15:30-15:45** – *Phan Thị An Phú*: "The Significant Contributions of His Eminence Thích Minh Châu to Buddhist Education"
- **15:45-16:00** – **Discussion and Presentation of Certificates**

- **16:00 – Return to the Main Hall for the Valedictory Ceremony**

SUB-THEME 4 & 5

HIS EMINENCE THÍCH MINH CHÂU: INTERNATIONAL BUDDHIST DIPLOMAT AND SANG- HA ADMINISTRATOR

Venue: Hồng Ân Stupa

Session 1: 12:30-14:15

HIS EMINENCE THÍCH MINH CHÂU: AN INTERNA- TIONAL BUDDHIST DIPLOMAT

Chairs: Most Ven. Dr. Thích Nhật Từ and Most Ven. Thích Minh Thiện

- **12:30-12:45** – *Most Ven. Thích Minh Thiện*: "His Eminence Thích Minh Châu – A Pillar Contributing to the Growth of Vietnamese and Global Buddhism"
- **12:45-13:00** – *Dr. Tống Thị Quỳnh Hương & Dr. Phạm Thị Thanh Huyền*: "His Eminence Thích Minh Châu's Role in the Diplomatic Relations between Vietnamese and Indian Buddhism"
- **13:00-13:15** – *Dr. Đỗ Quang Huy*: "His Eminence Thích Minh Châu – A Thought Leader in Global Peace Diplomacy (Through the Study of 'Buddhism and a New Ethical Order')"
- **13:15-13:30** – *Dr. Hồ Tường*: "His Eminence Thích Minh Châu: A Shining Gem in the History of Vietnamese Buddhism in the Late 20th and Early 21st Centuries"
- **13:30-13:45** – *Most Ven. Dr. Thích Minh Sơn*: "His Eminence Thích Minh Châu: An Outstanding International Buddhist Diplomat"
- **13:45-14:00** –
- **14:00-14:15** – **Discussion and Presentation of Certificates**

Session 2: 14:15-16:00**HISEMINENCE THÍCH MINH CHÂU: CONTRIBUTIONS**

Chairs: Most Ven. Dr. Giác Trí and Bhikkhuni Dr. Thích Nữ Như Nguyệt (Viên Minh)

- **14:15-14:30** – *Bhikkhuni Dr. Thích Nữ Như Nguyệt (Viên Minh): "The Legacy of His Eminence Thích Minh Châu"*
- **14:30-14:45** – *Dr. Nguyễn Thị Thanh Xuyên: "The Contributions of His Eminence Thích Minh Châu's Buddhist Research on Ethics and Human Happiness"*
- **14:45-15:00** – *Bhikkhuni Thích Nữ Lạc Diệu Nga: "His Eminence Thích Minh Châu (1918-2012): The Great Figure of Vietnamese Buddhism in the 20th and 21st Centuries"*
- **15:00-15:15** – *Vũ Đình Trung & Trần Văn Thanh: "His Eminence Thích Minh Châu: A Bright Example of Devotion to Buddhism, Patriotism, National Protection, and Social Harmony"*
- **15:15-15:30** – *Most Ven. Dr. Thích Đạo Tuệ, Trần Văn Hợi, & Võ Chí Quyết: "His Eminence Thích Minh Châu: Pioneer of the Buddhist Youth Movement in Huế (1936-1951)"*
- **15:30-15:45** – *Ven. PhD Candidate Thích Thiện Mãn & Bhikkhuni PhD Candidate Thích Nữ Thắng Tâm: "His Eminence Thích Minh Châu's Contributions to the Buddhist Revival Movement in Central Vietnam (1932-1953)"*
- **15:45-16:00** – **Discussion and Presentation of Certificates**
- **16:00** – **Return to the Main Hall for the Valedictory Ceremony**

VALEDICTORY CEREMONY

Main Auditorium, 16:15, October 19, 2024

1. Opening Remarks by the Organising Committee: **Most Ven. Dr. Thich Nhat Tu**, Permanent Vice-Rector of Vietnam Buddhist Sangha
2. Remarks by **Prof. Vũ Minh Giang**, Former Vice President of Hanoi National University, and Chairman of the Science and Training Council of Hanoi National University
3. Remarks by **Prof. K.T.S. Sarao**, Former Head of the Department of Buddhist Studies, University of Delhi
4. Remarks by **His Eminence Ven. Viên Minh**, Deputy Supreme Patriarch of Vietnam Buddhist Sangha
5. Vote of Thanks by the Organizing Committee: **Most Ven. Dr. Thich Bửu Chánh**, Vice-Rector of Vietnam Buddhist University

**KEYNOTE SPEECHES
FOR THE SECOND CONFERENCE:
“EXPLORING THE HISTORICAL, SPIRITUAL,
AND CULTURAL LINKS OF BUDDHISM
BETWEEN INDIA AND VIETNAM”**

OPENING SPEECH

**BY THE DIRECTOR OF THE VIETNAM INSTITUTE OF
BUDDHIST STUDIES**

**at the Conference on "Exploring the Historical, Spiritual, and
Cultural Links of Buddhism between India and Vietnam"**

By His Eminence Thích Giác Toàn

*Vice President of Vietnam Buddhist Sangha
Director of Vietnam Institute of Buddhist Studies*

Venerable leaders of the Vietnam Buddhist Sangha,

Esteemed scholars, researchers, and distinguished delegates,

Today, we gather here at the Minh Dang Quang Dharma Monastery for the conference entitled "*Exploring the Historical, Spiritual, and Cultural Links of Buddhism between India and Vietnam*," co-organized by the Vietnam Institute of Buddhist Studies and the Embassy of India. This is an auspicious occasion for us to delve deeper into the core values that have intricately woven together two great and ancient Eastern cultures – India and Vietnam – through the invaluable heritage of Buddhism.

On this momentous occasion, as the Vietnam Institute of Buddhist Studies celebrates its 35th anniversary, I would like to extend my heartfelt gratitude to the venerable leaders, scholars, and all distinguished guests whose unwavering support and contributions have been instrumental in achieving the significant milestones we celebrate today.

I. Preserving and Promoting the Buddhist Heritage

Buddhism is not merely a religion of compassion and wisdom but stands as an eternal symbol of humanistic values, fostering harmony and mutual understanding among nations. Throughout its 2,600-year history, Buddhism has transcended borders and

cultures, becoming a bridge that connects civilizations. In this grand narrative, India and Vietnam are exemplary nations, bound by the profound influence of Buddhism.

Our responsibility is not only to safeguard this invaluable heritage but also to skillfully cultivate the deep spiritual values imparted by the Buddha. For the past 35 years, the Vietnam Institute of Buddhist Studies has been steadfast in its commitment to upholding and advancing Buddhist thought, contributing to the prosperity and harmonious development of Vietnamese society.

Looking ahead, our vision at the Vietnam Institute of Buddhist Studies is to expand international collaboration and foster deeper cultural exchanges—not only within the realm of Buddhist studies but across broader fields of social and human sciences. In today's modern society, the pursuit of progress is inseparable from the guiding light of compassion and wisdom that Buddhism offers, and it is this path that will continue to guide us forward.

II. Exploring the Historical and Spiritual Connections of Buddhism between India and Vietnam

The core focus of today's conference is to collectively reflect on and critically assess the unique historical and spiritual relationship between Indian and Vietnamese Buddhism. Originating in India over 2,600 years ago, Buddhism has become a beacon of light that has spread across the world, illuminating hearts and minds. It reached Vietnam through the intricate pathways of trade and cultural exchange. Since the first centuries of the Common Era, the teachings of the Buddha—centered on compassion, wisdom, and liberation—have taken deep root in the spiritual consciousness and cultural fabric of the Vietnamese people, serving as a compass for societal, political, and spiritual development over millennia.

The spirit of compassion and wisdom—the two core pillars of Buddhism—has been deeply nourished in the spiritual life of both nations. In India, these principles have not only guided society through the tribulations and injustices of samsara but have also laid a firm ethical foundation for dynasties and civilizations. Similarly, in Vietnam, Buddhism, with its boundless compassion and profound

wisdom, has served as a guiding torch through challenging periods in the nation's history, playing a crucial role in the shaping of a culture rooted in peace, humanity, and altruism.

This enduring influence is evident in the development of two major schools of Buddhism: Mahayana and Theravada. In Vietnam, Mahayana Buddhism holds predominance, yet it is noteworthy that the shared spirit of both traditions—rooted in wisdom and compassion—has seamlessly intertwined to provide a path of liberation for millions of devout followers. The open-mindedness and receptivity with which Vietnam has embraced Buddhist thought from India have helped to shape a rich and distinctive Buddhist identity, one that is both steeped in tradition and yet innovative in its integration of new values.

III. Shared Cultural and Spiritual Heritage of Buddhism Between India and Vietnam

It is impossible to speak of Buddhism without acknowledging the profound cultural and spiritual bonds that have united India and Vietnam for millennia. Buddhist architecture, from ancient pagodas to majestic stupas, stands as a living testament to the deep and enduring influence of Buddhism in both nations. Here, the image of the Buddha is not merely present in the form of intricate sculptures and paintings, but it is woven into the very fabric of these structures, creating timeless masterpieces that transcend the ages, conveying the essence of enlightenment and compassion.

Regarding rituals and festivals, both India and Vietnam celebrate pivotal Buddhist events, such as Buddha Purnima—a day commemorating the birth, enlightenment, and parinirvana of the Buddha. These occasions are not simply moments of veneration but opportunities for people to reflect and reconnect with the profound spiritual values that Buddhism offers. Such festivals transcend religious boundaries, bringing entire communities together in a spirit of compassion and wisdom, reminding everyone of the path to liberation from suffering and the endless cycle of rebirth.

More significantly, the spirit of Buddhism has permeated the daily lives of the people of India and Vietnam. From the principles

of compassion and wisdom to the way individuals confront suffering, these values have served as guiding lights for generations. Buddhism, with its deep-rooted humanistic values, has not only shaped personal ethics but has also exerted a powerful influence on the social and political structures of both nations. It has helped foster societies that are open, compassionate, and oriented toward the pursuit of true happiness and liberation from suffering.

The compassion and wisdom that the Buddha imparted are, therefore, not mere religious doctrines. They serve as an impetus for individuals to live virtuously, act with kindness, and embrace love and generosity. These are the core values that Buddhism has bestowed upon our two nations, providing the foundation for sustainable development and contributing to the creation of a peaceful, harmonious, and benevolent society.

IV. Strengthening Cultural Cooperation and People-to-People Exchange Through the Act East Policy

On this occasion, I would like to express my commendation for the **Act East Policy** initiated by Prime Minister Narendra Modi's administration. This policy has laid a solid foundation for the continued growth of cooperative relations between India, Vietnam, and other countries in the region, especially in the areas of cultural exchange and Buddhism.

We have great confidence that the cultural and religious exchanges between our two countries will continue to flourish. Notably, organizing pilgrimages to India to visit the sacred Buddhist sites, such as Lumbini (the birthplace of the Buddha), Bodh Gaya (the site of the Buddha's enlightenment), Sarnath (where the Buddha delivered his first sermon), and Kushinagar (where the Buddha attained parinirvana), will further strengthen the spiritual bond and mutual understanding between our peoples.

Since 1991, we have continuously encouraged Vietnamese monks and nuns to pursue their studies at renowned Buddhist universities in India. This invaluable opportunity allows them to absorb profound Buddhist knowledge, which enhances the development of Buddhism in Vietnam amidst the context of globalization.

Additionally, cultural exchange programs, such as joint artistic performances between India and Vietnam, the celebration of International Yoga Day in Vietnam, joint Buddhist seminars, and the publication of Buddhist research works, will serve as practical means to foster cultural engagement and growth, creating an environment that nurtures understanding and solidarity between the two nations.

V. Conclusion

Reflecting on the immense contributions of Buddhism, we can affirm that Buddhism is not only a religion but a bridge that connects the cultural, spiritual, and intellectual realms of India and Vietnam. The humanistic values of Buddhism—compassion, wisdom, and liberation—have played, and will continue to play, a pivotal role in building harmonious, compassionate, and enlightened societies.

The future of this relationship demands that we relentlessly strive to preserve and nurture these precious spiritual values, while also promoting cultural, educational, and Buddhist collaboration between our two countries. With a profound belief in our shared prosperity, I am confident that we will continue to achieve new milestones together, writing new golden chapters in the history of the Buddhist relationship between India and Vietnam.

Finally, I would like to extend my sincere gratitude to all of you for your presence, and I wish our conference a resounding success.

CONGRATULATORY MESSAGE

From Vice-Chancellor of Nava Nālandā Mahāvihāra University

Nalanda, Oct 17, 2024

Prof. Rajesh Ranjan

Vice Chancellor

Nava Nalanda Mahavihar, Bihar, India

His Eminence Thich Giac Toan,

Director of the Vietnam Institute of Buddhist Studies,

Most Ven. Thich Nhat Tu,

Permanent Vice Rector of Vietnam Buddhist University,

Dear Most Venerables,

I extend my warmest greetings and sincere congratulations on the occasion of two highly significant academic conferences: “**His Eminence Thich Minh Chau: Vision and Mission**,” taking place on October 19, 2024, and “**Exploring the Historical, Spiritual, and Cultural Links of Buddhism between India and Vietnam**,” scheduled on October 20, 2024. These events reflect the strategic vision of the Vietnam Institute of Buddhist Studies and coincide with the 35th anniversary of its establishment, marking a half-century of remarkable contributions to Buddhist education and scholarship. The conferences underscore the vital cooperation between the Vietnam Institute of Buddhist Studies and the Indian Embassy in Vietnam. I commend your leadership in organizing these conferences, which highlight the profound connection between our two great nations, bound by the shared heritage of Buddhism.

It is with great regret that I must inform you of my inability to attend these esteemed gatherings in person. Due to my heart condition and the advice of my physicians, I am currently unable

to travel, despite my deep desire to participate. However, I am heartened to know that such distinguished figures as the Supreme Patriarch of the Sangha of Vietnam, the President of the Vietnam Buddhist Sangha, and His Excellency Sandeep Arya, Ambassador of India to Vietnam, will be present to grace the events. Their participation is a testament to the significance of these conferences, and I extend my heartfelt wishes for their utmost success.

As Vice-Chancellor of *Nava Nālandā Mahāvihāra University*, a deemed university under the Ministry of Human Resource Development, Government of India, I take great pride in the academic journey of His Eminence Thich Minh Chau, who spent over 10 years studying at our prestigious institution. He earned his doctorate in 1961 with his remarkable dissertation “the *Majjhima Nikāya* and the *Madhyama Āgama*: A Comparative Study”. My predecessor, Professor S. Mookerjee, who was Vice-Chancellor in 1964, expressed profound admiration for His Eminence Thich Minh Chau, stating: “We shall forever be proud of what Dr. Thich Minh Chau and his colleagues have accomplished. When he returns to his homeland (Vietnam), Dr. Thich Minh Chau will, like Xuanzang (玄奘), dedicate his life to the noble mission of disseminating the True Dharma (*Saddharma*) for the benefit and happiness of many.”

As his successor in this honorable role, I wholeheartedly share this sentiment. His Eminence Thich Minh Chau's extraordinary contributions, from translating the *Pali Canon* into Vietnamese to teaching *Vipassana Meditation*, are unparalleled. His exemplary conduct, rooted in pure moral discipline, his founding of the Van Hanh University, the Vietnam Buddhist University, and the Vietnam Institute of Buddhist Studies, and his lasting impact on Buddhist education in Vietnam, are achievements that bring great pride to Nava Nālandā Mahāvihāra University. We are indeed honored to count him among our most distinguished alumni, and his legacy continues to inspire generations of scholars and practitioners alike.

Furthermore, I am deeply grateful for the communication from His Eminence Thich Giac Toan, Director of the Vietnam Institute of Buddhist Studies, and the subsequent correspondence from Most Ven. Thich Nhat Tu, regarding the proposal to establish a

“Thich Minh Chau Auditorium Hall” at *Nava Nālandā Mahāvihāra University*. At the September 2024 meeting of the Nava Nālandā Mahāvihāra University Council, we enthusiastically endorsed this idea and proposed the construction of a 250-300-seat conference hall named after His Eminence Thich Minh Chau, complete with a statue of him at the entrance to this prestigious venue. This initiative symbolizes the profound bond between our two institutes and serves as a lasting tribute to a remarkable scholar and teacher.

I am currently in the process of securing formal approval from the Government of India to support this endeavor, and I am optimistic that it will be accepted. This project represents a unique opportunity to deepen the ties between India and Vietnam, not only through cultural and spiritual diplomacy but also through academic collaboration. The creation of the “Thich Minh Chau Conference Hall” will be a beacon of shared Buddhist heritage and a testament to the enduring friendship between our countries.

I look forward with great anticipation to welcoming the Vietnam delegation led by Most Ven. Thich Nhat Tu to Nava Nālandā Mahāvihāra University on November 3, 2024, to survey the site and finalize the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between our two esteemed institutions. This momentous occasion will mark a new chapter in our partnership and pave the way for further collaboration in Buddhist studies, education, and cultural exchange. I remain confident that the Government of India will endorse this important project, and I am eager to witness the realization of this shared vision.

Once again, I extend my warm congratulations on the successful organization of these two significant conferences, which not only honor the remarkable legacy of His Eminence Thich Minh Chau but also strengthen the historical, spiritual, and cultural bonds between India and Vietnam. May the light of the Dharma continue to guide us as we build a brighter future for Buddhist education and scholarship.

With deepest respect and warm regards.

CONGRATULATORY MESSAGE

From Vice-Chancellor of Sanchi Buddhist University

Professor Baidyanath Labh

Vice-Chancellor, Sanchi Buddhist University;

Former Vice-Chancellor, Nava Nālandā Mahāvihāra University;

His Eminence Thich Giac Toan,

Director of the Vietnam Institute of Buddhist Studies,

Most Ven. Thich Nhat Tu,

Permanent Vice Rector of Vietnam Buddhist University,

Dear Most Venerables,

It is with great joy and profound respect that I extend my heartfelt congratulations on the occasion of two academic conferences: “*His Eminence Thich Minh Chau: Vision and Mission*,” taking place on October 19, 2024, and “*Exploring the Historical, Spiritual, and Cultural Links of Buddhism between India and Vietnam*,” scheduled for October 20, 2024. These events, organized by the Vietnam Institute of Buddhist Studies in collaboration with Vietnam Buddhist University and the Embassy of India in Vietnam, stand as a beacon of intellectual and spiritual engagement, reflecting the shared commitment of both our nations to preserving and celebrating the profound Buddhist connections that have endured through centuries. This collaboration exemplifies a vision that transcends borders, weaving together the threads of our rich spiritual and cultural heritage through the timeless teachings of the Buddha.

His Eminence Thich Minh Chau occupies a place of profound reverence in the history of *Nava Nālandā Mahāvihāra University*. His journey through our institution, where he spent 12 years immersed in the sacred teachings of the Buddha, culminated in his earning

a doctorate in 1961 with his dissertation, *A Comparative Study of the Majjhima Nikāya and Madhyama Āgama*. This scholarly work remains a cornerstone in the global study of early Buddhist texts, enriching both Mahayana and Theravada traditions. My esteemed predecessor, Professor S. Mookerjee, once aptly compared His Eminence to the revered Xuanzang (玄奘), remarking that “Dr. Thich Minh Chau will return to his homeland [Vietnam] as Xuanzang did, with a mission to propagate the True Dharma (Saddharma) for the happiness and well-being of all beings.” Such a comparison is not only fitting but highlights the vast impact His Eminence had, not just as a scholar but as a living embodiment of the Dharma’s compassionate ideals.

What sets His Eminence Thich Minh Chau apart is his remarkable ability to merge deep academic rigor with spiritual dedication. His pioneering translation of the *Pali Canon* into Vietnamese stands as a monumental achievement, granting generations of Vietnamese scholars and practitioners direct access to the Buddha’s teachings in their native language. His introduction of *Vipassana Meditation* to Vietnam, a practice that offers profound personal transformation, further solidified his role as a bridge between theory and practice, between learning and realization. His vision extended beyond the classroom and meditation hall, as seen through his leadership in founding institutions like Van Hanh University (1964), the Vietnam Buddhist University (1984), and the Vietnam Institute of Buddhist Studies (1989). These achievements are not merely institutional legacies but enduring contributions to the intellectual and spiritual life of Vietnam, inspiring countless individuals to walk the path of compassion, wisdom, and selfless service.

Vietnam’s encounter with Buddhism has deeply shaped its spiritual, social, and intellectual fabric, much like how Buddhism in India continues to be the bedrock of our cultural and ethical foundations. The transmission of Buddhism to Vietnam, through centuries of trade, pilgrimage, and scholarly exchanges, represents not only a spiritual gift from India but a shared commitment to the principles of compassion, wisdom, and liberation. These values have been embraced and nourished by the Vietnamese people,

creating a unique and vibrant Buddhist tradition that reflects both the Mahayana and Theravada heritages. In this light, the conferences you have organized serve as a timely reminder of the enduring bond between our two nations, a bond that has been cultivated over centuries and continues to grow.

It is also fitting to highlight the 35th anniversary of the founding of the Vietnam Institute of Buddhist Studies—a milestone that marks 3.5 decades of remarkable contributions to Buddhist education, research, and cross-cultural dialogue. The Vietnam Institute of Buddhist Studies has long stood as a pillar of scholarship, fostering not only academic excellence but also spiritual growth, drawing together the best of Vietnamese and international Buddhist thought. As we look forward, I have every confidence that your institution will continue to flourish, expanding its global reach and enriching the world with its unique contributions to the study and practice of Buddhism.

Finally, I wish to express my deepest gratitude to you, His Eminence Thich Giac Toan, for your tireless leadership in organizing these conferences. Your vision of fostering greater understanding between India and Vietnam through our shared Buddhist heritage is truly commendable. Additionally, I must extend my sincere thanks to my cherished friend of over two decades, Most Venerable Thich Nhat Tu. It was during my tenure as Vice-Chancellor of *Nava Nālandā Mahāvihāra University* in 2023 that Most Venerable Thich Nhat Tu became the first Vietnamese scholar to receive an Honorary Doctorate (Vidya Varidhi) from our institution. His unwavering dedication to promoting Buddhist education and his pivotal role in strengthening the spiritual and academic ties between our nations exemplify the spirit of collaboration and mutual respect that we strive to uphold.

As we move forward together, I eagerly anticipate continued collaboration between our institutions. Our shared commitment to preserving the Dharma, promoting peace, and fostering spiritual and academic exchange will undoubtedly lead to a future filled with greater understanding, harmony, and enlightenment for all beings.

With deepest respect and warm regards.

SECOND CONFERENCE OVERVIEW

“EXPLORING THE HISTORICAL, SPIRITUAL, AND CULTURAL LINKS OF BUDDHISM BETWEEN INDIA AND VIETNAM”

Most Ven.Dr. Thich Nhat Tu¹

Introduction

The commemoration of the 35th anniversary of the establishment of the Vietnam Institute of Buddhist Studies marks a significant milestone in the development of modern Vietnamese Buddhism. This event, organized by the Vietnam Institute of Buddhist Studies on October 19-20, 2024, reflects its mission to research and propagate the Dharma, consistently contributing to the advancement of Buddhist scholarship and the spiritual life of the Vietnamese Buddhist community. Over the past three decades, the Institute has successfully organized numerous international conferences and seminars, collaborating with global partners to promote a deeper understanding of Buddhist studies and culture.

The second conference, *"Exploring the Historical, Spiritual, and Cultural Links of Buddhism Between India and Vietnam,"* co-organized with the Indian Embassy on October 20, 2024, aims to illuminate the role Buddhism has played in fostering cultural and spiritual connections between the two nations. Additionally, it emphasizes the influence of Buddhism across the realms of

¹ Most Ven. Thich Nhat Tu is currently serving as the Vice President of the International Buddhist Confederation (IBC); Standing Member of the Executive Council of the Vietnam Buddhist Sangha (VBS); Vice Chairman of the Ho Chi Minh City VBS Executive Council; Permanent Vice Chairman of the Central Committee for International Buddhist Affairs; Vice Chairman of the Central Committee for Buddhist Education of the VBS; Vice Rector and General Secretary of the Vietnam Institute of Buddhist Studies; Executive Vice Rector of the Vietnam Buddhist Academy in Ho Chi Minh City; and Co-chair of the Conference Organizing Committee.

education, culture, and society. This conference offers an invaluable opportunity for scholars and researchers to share their knowledge and experiences, aiming toward further collaboration in Buddhist studies.

We express our heartfelt gratitude for the support and guidance of the Chairman of the Vietnam Buddhist Sangha, whose contributions have shaped the development of Vietnamese Buddhism and its academic foundation. This year's conference gathered 52 academic papers, including 13 in English and 39 in Vietnamese, from renowned scholars and researchers both domestically and internationally. These contributions are a testament to the importance of Buddhist studies in today's global context.

Theme 1: The Life and Legacy of His Eminence Thích Minh Châu

The first theme comprises 10 papers, focused on exploring and analyzing the historical, cultural, and spiritual ties between Indian and Vietnamese Buddhism through the significant contributions of His Eminence Thích Minh Châu. In these papers, scholars have emphasized His Eminence Thích Minh Châu's pioneering role in translating Buddhist scriptures from Pāli into Vietnamese, thus enriching the philosophical and doctrinal understanding of Buddhism within the Vietnamese context. Most Ven.Dr. Thich Tam Duc particularly highlighted his monumental work on the Majjhima Nikāya, the Aṅguttara Nikāya, and the Khuddaka Nikāya, which have profoundly influenced Vietnamese Buddhist scholars and monastics over the past six decades.

Moreover, these presentations delved into comparative studies between the Sarvāstivāda and Theravāda traditions, shedding light on philosophical, doctrinal, and interpretive differences. Dr. Akansha Singh presented a unique comparative analysis of the Chinese Mādhyama Āgama and the Pāli Majjhima Nikāya, illustrating how oral transmission and sectarian influences shaped the content of both collections. Such research not only enriches Buddhist knowledge but also underscores His Eminence Thích Minh Châu's pivotal role in bridging the doctrinal foundations of Indian and Vietnamese Buddhism.

The presentations affirmed His Eminence Thích Minh Châu's role as a preserver of Buddhist heritage. Professor Karam Tej S. Sarao, in his study, honored His Eminence Thích Minh Châu's contributions through his significant work, *Phật Quốc Ký* (A Record of the Buddha's Land), which provides valuable insights into Indian Buddhism. Similarly, Professor Angraj Chaudhary, an international scholar and a personal friend of His Eminence Thích Minh Châu, shared his personal reflections on His Eminence Thích Minh Châu's scholarly rigor and dedication to propagating Buddhism. His legacy continues to strengthen Vietnam's connection with the global Buddhist community, enhancing the country's role in preserving and advancing Buddhism.

Other presentations highlighted His Eminence Thích Minh Châu's contributions, not just as a scholar but as an educator with a broad vision. Dr. Heero Hito lauded his efforts in establishing Vietnam's Buddhist educational foundations, particularly through the founding of Vạn Hạnh University. His ideas and vision have not only contributed to the development of Vietnamese Buddhism but have also expanded academic exchanges and collaborations with neighboring countries, thus solidifying Vietnam's role within the global Buddhist community.

Theme 2: Shared Buddhist Heritage: The Development of Buddhism from India to Vietnam

This theme explores the transmission of Buddhism from India to Vietnam and its transformation over different historical periods. Nineteen papers delve into the stages of Buddhist transmission and transformation from India to Vietnam, spanning various eras.

The presentations shed light on how Buddhism was introduced into Vietnam in the first century CE, blending with local religious and cultural traditions such as Confucianism, Taoism, and ancestor worship. This process was not merely a transmission of doctrine but an adaptation to the cultural and social conditions of Vietnam, establishing a form of Buddhism imbued with Vietnamese identity.

Scholars offered sharp analyses on the indigenization of Indian Buddhism during the Chinese occupation, highlighting Buddhism's role as an ethical system that helped preserve Vietnamese identity

amidst attempts at cultural assimilation. At the same time, the research elucidated how Indian Buddhist thought harmonized with Vietnamese Zen Buddhism, particularly under the Trúc Lâm Yên Tử sect founded by Trần Nhân Tông, exemplifying the integration of Buddhist thought with Vietnamese national spirit.

Buddhism also evolved through the introduction of Zen (Chan), strongly influenced by India and China, as illustrated by research on the Tỳ-Ni-Đa-Lưu-Chi Zen lineage. Scholars clarified how this early Zen lineage in Vietnam merged Prajñāpāramitā thought with local Giao Châu folk beliefs, creating a uniquely Vietnamese form of Zen philosophy.

Theme 3: Art, Architecture, and Daily Life: Expressions of Buddhist Culture

With 13 presentations, this theme delves into the profound cultural and religious exchanges between Indian and Vietnamese Buddhism through various aspects such as art, architecture, and daily life. As Buddhism spread from India to Vietnam, it was not only embraced but transformed to align with local cultural identities, contributing to the creation of unique cultural values while retaining the core spirit of the Buddha's teachings.

One study on Hue's pagoda architecture underscored the harmonious blend of Buddhist philosophy, imperial architecture, geomancy, and Cham influences. With over 300 pagodas, Hue stands as a symbol of the deep spiritual connection between Buddhism and Vietnamese folk culture.

Furthermore, a comprehensive analysis of Buddhist architecture in the Funan and Cham periods emphasized how these architectural imprints endure as cultural legacies, serving as testaments to the profound cultural exchanges between Indian and Vietnamese Buddhism.

Theme 4: Buddhist Pilgrimage: Connecting Sacred Sites

Five papers in this theme explored the deep spiritual and cultural connections facilitated through sacred Buddhist pilgrimage sites. Pilgrimage is not only a spiritual journey but also a cultural bridge linking Indian and Vietnamese Buddhism. In a paper on

the *Mahāparinibbāna Sutta*, the author analyzed the sacredness of the four major sites in the Buddha's life — Lumbini, Bodh Gaya, Sarnath, and Kushinagar — and their connection to Vietnamese Buddhist pilgrimages.

The presentations underscored pilgrimage's role in preserving and spreading Buddhist spiritual values. Sites like Bodh Gaya are not only centers of devotion but serve as vital cultural bridges between the two nations.

Theme 5: Meditation Practice and Dharma Exchange: A Cross-Border Buddhist Path

This theme comprises five papers, providing deep analysis of meditation practices and the exchange of Buddhist teachings between the two nations. The development of Vietnamese Buddhism is inseparable from Indian meditation practices, particularly with the introduction of Zen. All the studies confirmed that meditation is not merely a path to enlightenment but also a cultural and spiritual bridge between the two nations.

Detailed discussions on the impact of meditation, particularly the Tỳ-Ni-Đa-Lưu-Chi Zen lineage, clarified how Indian meditation methods were adapted to Vietnamese cultural contexts, establishing a solid foundation for Zen in Vietnam.

Conclusion

This conference has highlighted the richness and multidimensional nature of the relationship between Indian and Vietnamese Buddhism through various interdisciplinary approaches, from history to culture and spirituality. The presentations went beyond examining isolated aspects to provide a comprehensive analysis of the dynamic interactions between the two Buddhist traditions. The conference illuminated the profound impact of Indian Buddhism on Vietnamese society and culture, from the dissemination of early Buddhist teachings to its influence on art, architecture, and sustainable living philosophies. This process has not only enriched the spiritual life of the Vietnamese people but also contributed to the creation of a unique form of Vietnamese Buddhism, deeply imprinted with local cultural identity.

Importantly, the conference affirmed that Buddhism is not solely a religion of the past but plays a vital role in the present, acting as a cultural bridge that fosters cooperation and understanding between nations, especially in today's globalized world. The presentations have provided practical scholarly value, contributing to the foundation for continued Buddhist research and dissemination across the region. The exchange between Indian and Vietnamese Buddhism is not only a symbol of the past but continues to contribute positively to the expansion of knowledge and the growth of Buddhism in the modern context.

Beyond academic contributions, the conference also addressed pressing issues regarding the preservation and promotion of Buddhist heritage. As the world modernizes, Buddhist cultural heritage faces challenges such as urbanization, cultural shifts, and the erosion of traditional values. Hence, initiatives like digitizing Buddhist scriptures, preserving historical structures, and developing Buddhist cultural tourism were proposed as practical measures to preserve this invaluable heritage. The preservation and promotion of Buddhist heritage is not solely the responsibility of scholars but a collective task for society, to ensure that these cultural treasures endure for future generations.

Ultimately, this conference has demonstrated that Buddhism is not only a religion but a rich cultural ideology that plays a vital role in shaping the ethical and humanistic values of society. The continued interdisciplinary research in Buddhism and other fields will foster the sustainable development of these values while creating opportunities for cultural and academic exchanges between Vietnam and the world. The research results from this conference contribute to the academic field of Buddhist studies while opening new avenues for future generations of monastics and scholars to propagate and develop Buddhist teachings in an increasingly globalized era.

SPEECH AT THE CONFERENCE: "EXPLORING THE HISTORICAL, SPIRITUAL, AND CULTURAL LINKS OF BUDDHISM BETWEEN INDIA AND VIETNAM"

Most Ven. Dr. Thich Gia Quang

Vice President of the Vietnam Buddhist Sangha

Director of the Vietnam Institute of Buddhist Studies Hanoi Branch

Venerable Leaders, Esteemed Guests, Honorable Ambassador Sandeep Arya, Excellencies, Distinguished Scholars, and Guests:

It is with great pleasure that I warmly welcome you all—venerable leaders of Buddhism, distinguished guests, and respected researchers—to the academic conference titled *"Exploring the Historical, Spiritual, and Cultural Links of Buddhism Between India and Vietnam,"* held in conjunction with the 35th anniversary of the founding of the Vietnam Institute of Buddhist Studies (1989-2024).

The Vietnam Institute of Buddhist Studies has previously hosted numerous conferences on the subject of Buddhism in both Vietnam and India. However, this conference holds special significance as it takes place during the 35th anniversary of the Institute, and we are deeply honored to co-organize this event with the Embassy of India, as we embark together on this journey of exploring the historical, spiritual, and cultural connections of Buddhism between our two great nations.

We hope that through this conference, scholars and researchers will present scientific papers and studies that further illuminate the historical Buddhist ties between India and Vietnam. This, in turn, will help to strengthen the unique and profound friendship between our two countries, extending from the past, enriching the present, and guiding us into the future.

The year 2024 marks the 52nd anniversary (1972-2024) of diplomatic relations between Vietnam and India, including 8 years of comprehensive strategic partnership (2016-2024). Additionally, for approximately 21-22 centuries, there has been ongoing cultural interaction, exchange, and adaptation between Indian and Vietnamese Buddhism. This enduring legacy has shaped and enriched the friendship between our nations, fostering a deep spiritual, cultural, and religious bond that continues to connect our two countries as we write new chapters in history today and for generations to come.

Since the beginning of his term, Ambassador Sandeep Arya has demonstrated remarkable efforts in continuing the tradition of strong bilateral relations. He emphasized promoting cooperation, implementing community-based projects on education and culture, stating that, *"India is committed to supporting Vietnam in executing projects on building schools, hospitals, educational training, scholarships, cultural and tourism exchanges, and promoting the development of yoga—all contributing to strengthening the Vietnam-India partnership in a deeper, more effective manner."*

Indeed, this conference reflects that very spirit. The organizing committee has carefully designed the content to provide a comprehensive and detailed exploration of the historical interaction and cultural exchange between India and Vietnam. Through four key thematic sessions, we aim to explore these shared cultural and spiritual treasures:

1. From Transmission to Transformation: A Shared Buddhist Legacy
2. Art, Architecture, and Daily Life: Expressions of Buddhist Culture
3. Buddhist Pilgrimage: Connecting Sacred Sites
4. Meditation Practices and Doctrinal Exchange: The Buddhist Path Across Borders

Honorable Delegates, Distinguished Guests, and Esteemed Scholars:

Your presence here today, participating in discussions across

these four in-depth thematic sessions, affirms the profound and compelling nature of the cultural, spiritual, and religious ties between India and Vietnam.

On behalf of the Vietnam Buddhist Sangha, the Vietnam Institute of Buddhist Studies, and the Organizing Committee, I warmly welcome all of you—venerable leaders, esteemed guests, and distinguished scholars. May you all enjoy health, happiness, and success.

India, with its ancient and deeply rooted civilization, stands as one of the four great cradles of human civilization. The nation plays a pivotal role in cultural and religious spheres, as well as in geopolitics and geo-economics. In the current era, India is experiencing rapid economic growth, and by 2030, it is projected to become the third-largest economy in the world.

Vietnam, a country stretching along the coast of the East Sea, boasts a multilingual and culturally rich heritage. The Đại Việt civilization is considered one of the first 34 civilizations in human history. Vietnam's civilization, which flourished from a rice-growing culture, successfully absorbed and transformed Indian cultural elements, contributing new milestones to the cultural development of humankind.

Indian culture and civilization arrived in Vietnam through peaceful means, carrying profound humanistic values. As Prime Minister Narendra Modi noted during his visit to Vietnam in September 2016, while invaders brought war to Vietnam, they have since vanished. Yet, Indian Buddhism, with its messages of peace, compassion, and humanistic philosophy, remains a lasting influence in Vietnam.

Initially, Indian Buddhism integrated into Vietnam's local culture and popular beliefs. Prior to Vietnam's cultural interaction with China, the Vietnamese language already had the term “Bụt,” which predates the term “Phật.” “Bụt,” a term found in ancient Vietnamese folk tales, is a direct transcription from the Sanskrit “Buddha.” Historically, from the 2nd to the 9th or 10th century, the center of Luy Lâu (in present-day Thuận Thành district, Bắc Ninh province) was not only a hub for translating Buddhist scriptures

from Sanskrit into Chinese (read in Sino-Vietnamese) but also a place where Sanskrit (Pāli, Sanskrit) was taught, equipping monks with the linguistic skills needed for study in India. From the 3rd century onwards, Indian monks such as Ma-ha-kỳ-vực and Chi-cương-lương brought Buddhism to Giao Châu. Following their efforts, many Vietnamese monks traveled to India for further study, like the 7th-century monk Trí Hành from Ái Châu (modern-day Thanh Hóa), who left important works behind. This historical interaction is a key testament to the profound connection between the two nations. In the 20th century, President Hồ Chí Minh and Prime Minister Nehru continued to nurture and strengthen this long-standing relationship.

Indian Buddhism has had a significant impact on all aspects of Vietnamese social life. Alongside Buddhism, Hinduism, originating in India, also made its way into Central and Southern Vietnam in the early centuries of the Common Era, becoming the foundation of the Chăm culture of the Champa kingdom (emerging around 2,000 years ago, from the central coast to the Đồng Nai region). The Chăm people created a unique cultural, artistic, and architectural legacy, rivaling any other ancient civilization in Southeast Asia. The art of Champa, with its monumental and significant contributions, left a lasting impression through sculptures in bronze and stone, depicting Buddhist themes and spanning the vast Champa kingdom, from Indrapura in the north to Panduranga in the south.

Today, many architectural and artistic relics of the Champa civilization are in ruins. This makes the reconstruction of Champa architectural features difficult, as restoration experts lack clear insights into the methods used in Champa's ancient structures.

India and Vietnam are both nations rich in religious and cultural heritage, attracting global interest in tourism, research, and investment. Promoting spiritual pilgrimage in Vietnam offers numerous benefits:

- Ensuring the preservation and maintenance of historical, cultural, and religious sites;
- Spiritual tourism plays a key role in shaping human consciousness and lifestyle, contributing to social stability and development;

- It fosters understanding, compassion, and connectivity, bridging distances and promoting global peace.

If these elements are promoted effectively, they will further highlight India's cultural imprint in Vietnam through the lens of religious exchange, which has permeated and will continue to shape the country's history and daily life across various domains, including culture, art, architecture, and more.

Indian Buddhism's influence on Vietnamese Buddhism is profound, and its legacy will continue to evolve, adapting and interacting within the multidimensional, multifaceted relationship between Vietnam and India, contributing to the shared cultural heritage of both nations in an increasingly globalized world.

Religious culture in general, and Buddhist culture in particular, is one of the key factors that contribute to the development and strengthening of relations between the two nations. The bond of friendship between India and Vietnam will be further enhanced by fostering ties between temples and monasteries, promoting the Buddha's teachings of peace, prosperity, and global harmony. Connecting the cultures of Vietnam and India, especially the influence of Buddhist culture on both nations, is essential, as this is a cultural domain characterized by wisdom and lasting value.

To deepen the relationship between India and Vietnam, fostering understanding between the two cultures—particularly Buddhist culture—researchers must bridge the past with the present, and the present with the future, thereby cultivating even stronger ties. India should offer the best possible conditions to support Vietnamese scholars in their studies of Vedic philosophy, Sanskrit, and Pāli. Vietnam, with its strong tradition and expertise in Pāli studies, is well-positioned to contribute to this exchange.

Venerable Sangha, esteemed delegates, distinguished guests, and scholars,

It is worth reflecting on the fact that Vietnamese scholars have an extensive and profound understanding of Indian culture, philosophy, literature, and archaeology, while Indian scholars, in contrast, know relatively little about Vietnam. For instance,

Vietnam is deeply familiar with Bodh Gaya and the sacred Buddhist sites in India, while India knows comparatively little about My Son Sanctuary or the Chẵm towers in Central Vietnam.

We hope that not only in the past and present, but in the future, the friendship between the two nations will remain strong and enduring. This foundation will support the strengthening of relations between Buddhist organizations in both countries. The continued interaction among Buddhist monks, Buddhist lineages, sects, temples, and monasteries, promoting the Buddha's teachings for global peace, prosperity, and harmony, will be key to this process.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi once remarked, "The world needs peace. Walking the path of peace brings happiness to all beings. War only leads to destruction, cruelty, and death. Buddhism offers hope, light, faith, and peace."

Indeed, through the conference on "Exploring the Historical, Spiritual, and Cultural Links of Buddhism Between India and Vietnam," the Vietnamese Buddhist community, the Vietnam Buddhist Sangha, and the government of both nations contribute to the promotion of Buddhist cultural heritage and religious spiritual heritage in practice. This collaboration strengthens and builds the comprehensive relationship between the two peoples, bringing hope, light, and faith in the prosperity of Vietnam and India in this new era.

I wish all esteemed delegates, venerable Sangha members, distinguished guests, and scholars good health and happiness.

May the conference be a resounding success.

Thank you.

DHARMA MASTER THÍCH MINH CHÂU'S MONOGRAPH ON FAXIAN'S FOGUOJI AND ITS IMPORTANCE AS A SOURCE FOR THE STUDY OF INDIAN BUDDHISM

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Abstract

Dharma Master Thích Minh Châu has produced two well-documented and scholarly monographs in English on Faxian's *Foguoji* (佛國記) and Xuanzang's *Xiyuji* (大唐西域記) both of which are considered as very valuable sources for the study of Indian Buddhism. This paper is proposed to have a critical look at the importance of Master Thích Minh Châu's monograph on *Foguoji* (*Fa-Hsien – The Unassuming Pilgrim*, Patna: Bihar Research Society, 1975). This monography by Master Thích Minh Châu is specifically important considering that though a few outdated translations of *Foguoji* in French and English were available, Master Thích Minh preferred to use the original Chinese text along with Shi Huijiao's original *Biographies of Eminent Monks* (高僧傳). An effort has been made to show that this monograph, in which Master Thích Minh Châu has skilfully gleaned historical information on different aspects of Buddhism in India, continues to retain its importance as a valuable for the history of Indian Buddhism.

The majority of the Buddhist monks who travelled from China to India during the ancient and early medieval period for pilgrimage, to study, and/or collect Buddhist texts travelled on the land route that passed through present-day Xinjiang, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, and Afghanistan (for instance, Xuanzang), though a few are known to have travelled directly from Xinjiang to Kāśmīra (for instance,

Faxian) or via Tibet and Nepal (e.g. the Korean monk Hyont'ae). Some monks traveled entirely through the sea route (for instance, Yijing) whereas others such as Faxian took the return journey by sea. This travel was extremely dangerous and arduous due to the extreme climates in the deserts such as Gobi and Taklamakan, nearly impassable mountainous terrains with their icy passes, hostility of unfriendly communities, bandits, shipwrecks, and above all, hunger and thirst.¹ Thus, both the land and sea routes were full of genuine life-threatening perils, and what Master Thích Minh Châu calls “the chance of survival was but one in ten thousand” (Châu 1975: xii). Master Thích Minh Châu² has produced well-documented and scholarly monographs on two amazing travellers, Faxian³ and

¹ According to a study conducted by a Chinese historian it was found out that of a total of 132 monk-scholars who set-out on a journey from China to India, only 42 were able to return safely to China. Of the remaining, 2 gave up shortly after setting out on the journey, 31 died during the onward journey, 31 died while in India, 5 died during the return journey, 7 stayed back in India, and nothing is known about the remaining 16 after they travelled beyond Xinjiang. Out of the six monks who set out on the journey for a second time, one died while returning. There were hundreds of other monks about whose fate we do not know (see Weerawardane 2009: 14-18). According to translated documents from the Chinese Institute for Canonical Translations, a survey conducted during the Sung era showed that at least 183 monks had successfully completed their pilgrimage to India by the year 1035 CE (see Yün-hua 1966: 138).

² Most Ven. Thích Minh Châu (Dinh Van Nam) (1918-2012) came from an illustrious family, his father Dinh Van Han (who was admitted to the 1913 Quy Suu faculty when he was only 21 years old) and grandfather Dinh Van Thanh *alias* Dinh Van Quality (who passed the Third Doctorate in the Nguyen Dynasty in 1822) already having made a name for themselves in the field of education. Following in their footsteps, Master Thích Minh Châu also began his career as a dedicated and diligent student. He was ordained in 1946 and with the Saṃgha's permission, he went to Sri Lanka in 1952. Once there, he acquired a thorough knowledge of Pāli language and received the degree of Dharma Master (*Saddhammācariya*) in the year 1955. While learning Pāli, he also attained mastery over the English language. Thereafter, he went to India to do his doctorate at the Nava Nālandā Mahāvihāra and successfully completed his thesis in 1961 on the topic *The Chinese Madhyamāgama and the Pāli Majjhima Nikāya: A Comparative Study*, becoming the first Vietnamese to receive a doctoral degree from an Indian University and also the first Vietnamese to have acquired a doctorate on Buddhism. After having taught in India for a while, he returned to Vietnam in 1964 to undertake the work of translating original Buddhist sūtras and other Dharma work.

³ Thích Minh Châu. 1975. *Fa-Hsien– The Unassuming Pilgrim*, Patna: Bihar Research Society. Master Châu's use of the work of Shi Huijiao (慧皎) (497-554 CE), whose latest English translation has been made available by Yang (2022: 96-101), is particularly significant in the preparation of this monograph.

Xuanzang.⁴

In this paper, it is proposed to have a critical look at the importance of Master Thích Minh Châu's monograph on Faxian⁵ as a source for the study of Indian Buddhism.⁶ Faxian's account is the oldest among the Chinese monks to have survived the journey to India. Of the few monks who may have travelled to India before him, not much is known about their journeys. Though at least one translation in French⁷ and five in English⁸ was available at the time

⁴ Thích Minh Châu. 1975. *Hsuan T'sang- The Pilgrim and Scholar*, Patna: Bihar Research Society (originally published by Vietnam Buddhist Institute, 1963).

⁵ Faxian (法顯) (337–c.422 CE), whose name was formerly spelt as Fa-hien, Fahan, and Fa-hsien in Roman, set out on his journey to India and Sri Lanka in the year 399 CE at the ripe age of 60 and returned to China in 412 CE with eleven Buddhist texts. Of these, he translated six into Chinese along with the Indian monk-scholar Buddhābhaddra viz., including the *Mahāparinirvāṇa Sūtra*, *Mahāsāṃghika Vinaya*, *Samyuktābhidharmaśāstra*, *Vaitulyanirvāṇa Sūtra*, *Mahāsāṃgha Śīla*, and *Zazang Sūtra*. Others texts carried by him to China were the *Dirghāgama Sūtra*, *Samyuktāgama Sūtra*, *Mahīśāsaka Vinaya (Five Categories)*, and *Mahīśāsaka Vinaya (Sarvāstivāda)* (Xican 2016: 41). At the time of his visit, Chandragupta II (r. c. 375–415) was the ruler in India. He set out on his journey on foot with nine companions, but all of them either died on the way to India or returned to China, except one called Daoching. Even Daoching decided to stay back in Pāṭaliputra because “he saw the excellent rules and decorous conduct of the monks in the Middle Kingdom.... From now on, till he reached China, Fa-Hsien had to undertake the journey alone, first from Pāṭaliputra to Campā and Tāmralipti, then sailed to the country of Sīṃhala” (Châu 1975: 19. See also Châu 1975: x, 5; Shupski 1974: 35). Interestingly, Master Châu points out that even Faxian would have stayed in India “had he not made a vow to bring the Vinaya Text to his own country” (Châu 1975: 5).

⁶ Master Thích Minh Châu has produced two other monographs in English viz., *Milindapañha and Nāgasena-bhikṣusūtra: A Comparative Study* (Calcutta: Mukhopadhyay, 1964) and his magnum opus *The Chinese Madhyama Āgama and the Pāli Majjhima Nikāya- A Comparative Study* (1st Indian edition, Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 2009, originally South Asia Books, 1991) which was his doctoral thesis prepared at the then renowned Nava Nālandā Mahāvihāra. In the history of Buddhist studies, Thích Minh Châu's magnum opus has been praised among scholarly circles as “the first comparative study between an entire Āgama collection and its Pāli counterpart” (see, for a scholarly review-article on this, Anālayo 2008: 1-21).

⁷ M. Abel-Rémusat (trans.). 1836. 佛國記 *Foé Koué Ki: Ou Relations des Royaumes Bouddhiques: Voyage dans la Tartarie, dans l'Afghanistan, et dans l'Inde Exécuté à la Fin du IV^e Siècle par Chy Fā Hian*, Paris: L'Imprimerie Royale.

⁸ John W. Laidlay et al (trans.). 1848. *The Pilgrimage of Fa Hian from the French Edition of the Foé Koué Ki of MM. Remusat, Klaproth, and Landresse with Additional Notes and Illustrations*, Calcutta: Baptist Mission Press; Samuel Beal (trans.). 1869. “Records of Buddhist Countries by Chi Fah Hian of the Sung Dynasty,” *Travels of Fah-Hian and Sung-Yun, Buddhist Pilgrims, from China to India (400 A.D. and 518 A.D.)*, London: Trübner & Co.: 1-174; Herbert A. Giles (trans.). 1877. 佛國記 *Record of the Buddhistic Kingdoms*, Shanghai: Kelly & Walsh;

when Master Thích Minh Châu began to work on this monograph, he preferred to use the original text of the *Foguoji* (佛國記) in Chinese. Though a few English translations of *Foguoji*⁹ and many monographs¹⁰ have also been produced since the publication of Master Thích Minh Châu's monograph, his *Fa-Hsien—The Unassuming Pilgrim* continues to retain its importance as a source of valuable information on the history of Indian Buddhism towards the beginning of the fifth century CE.¹¹ As he mentions at the beginning of this work, Faxian's purpose was to acquire and bring back texts on the Vinaya for Chinese monks as no appropriate Vinaya text was available in China.¹² Faxian's *Foguoji* (佛國

Samuel Beal (trans.). 1884. *Travels of Fa-hian or Fo-kwō-ki, Buddhist-Country-Records*, London: Trübner & Co.; James Legge (trans.). 1886. *A Record of Buddhistic Kingdoms, Being an Account by the Chinese Monk Fā-hien of His Travels in India and Ceylon (A.D. 399–414) in Search of the Buddhist Books of Discipline*, Oxford: Clarendon Press.

⁹ For instance, Li Rongxi. 2002. "The Journey of the Eminent Monk Faxian," Li Rongxi et al, *The Lives of Great Monks and Nuns*, Berkeley: Numata Center for Translation and Research, Taishō vol. 51, no. 2085: 163-214.

¹⁰ For instance, Tansen Sen. 2006. "The Travel Records of Chinese Pilgrims Faxian, Xuanzang, and Yijing," *Education About Asia*, vol. 11, no. 3, Winter: 24-33; Max Deeg. 2019. "Chinese Buddhist Travelers: Faxian, Xuanzang, and Yijing," *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Asian History*, Oxford: Oxford University Press; Yang, Tianshu (trans.). 2022. *The Biographies of Eminent Monks* (高僧傳) by Shi Huijiao (慧皎) (497-554 CE), Hong Kong: University of Hong Kong; J. Zhang. 1997. "The Nationality, Quantity, Crew, and Sea Area of the Ship by Faxian," *Study of Chinese History*, 3: 12-14; Xican Li. 2016. "Faxian's Biography and His Contributions to Asian Buddhist Culture: Latest Textual Analysis," *Asian Culture and History*, vol. 8, no. 1: 38-44.

¹¹ The historical value of *Fógúojì* lies in the fact that though Faxian is sometimes seen as intellectually less rigorous than Xuanzang and Yijing (see Weerawardane 2009: 15), his account has much less of what may be called accounts of threatening dragons, hostile demons, and extraordinary miracles. Faxian was "a pilgrim with a difference" (Châu 1975: 3). Apart from "pilgrimage to worship the Buddhist places in India... [the purpose of his journey was] "to observe the way the monastic rules were practised in the countries he traversed especially in India, and to bring the Vinaya Texts to China" (Châu 1975: 3-4). Faxian's "contributions are more important and more unique, in the sense that they have supplemented what are lacking in Hsuan-tsang's Records" (Châu 1975: 36). In fact, it has been attested in Chinese ancient records that the decisions of Xuanzang and Yijing to visit India were deeply motivated by Faxian's experience and selfless spirit and Faxian is, therefore credited with having laid the foundations of a new era of pilgrimage to India (Châu 1975: ix, 3; Xican 2016: 42).

¹² In the year 404 CE, Puṇyātara, a monk from Kāśmīra, began the work of translating into Chinese a more complete Vinaya text, the *Sarvāstivāda-vinaya*, in cooperation with the half-Indian monk Kumārajīva. But Puṇyātara died before completing the work, having translated only about two-thirds of the text. Dharmarūci, a monk from Kucha, who arrived in the Chinese capital in the year 405 CE, was asked to continue the translation with Kumārajīva, who died

記)¹³ is a primary record of the social, religious, and cultural conditions of the places he visited, primarily India. Faxian's translations of the Buddhist texts that he took with him to China offer useful yardstick to date texts and concerned persons. They also make available the earliest witness record by an historical personality of the historical names, events, ideas, and manuscripts mentioned therein (Deeg 2019).

Comparing Faxian with Xuanzang, Master Thích Minh Châu considers the former “a pilgrim with a difference” (Châu 1975: ix). According to him, Xuanzang could be labelled with many titles such as “a pilgrim, a learner, a preacher, a debater, a translator, a writer and a mystic” but Faxian could only be described as an “Unassuming Pilgrim” (Châu 1975: ix). The purpose of the pilgrimage of Xuanzang, a hardcore Mahāyānist with the sole goal “to promote and advocate the doctrine of the Bodhisattva ideal” was multifarious, including learning the *Yogācārabhūmiśāstra* and unknown aspects of the Buddha Dharma that existed in the *Sutta Piṭaka* and the *Abhidhamma Piṭaka* (Châu 1975: ix). However, according to Master Thích Minh Châu, Faxian “wanted only to observe how the monastic discipline was practised in the Middle Kingdom to improve the religious condition at home which seemed to be in a very bad shape.... [His] attention veered around the *Vinayapiṭaka* and what was closely connected with the life of a monk. ... [He] was a pure Hīnayānist in character and aspiration; the only shade of Mahāyānism in him was his prayer to Avalokiteśvara, a Mahāyānist Bodhisattva, while his ship ran into fearful storms in his voyage from Lankādvīpa to Yavadvīpa and from Yavadvīpa to China” (Châu 1975: ix). However, “the most outstanding feature of Fa-hsien is undoubtedly his lovable nature of an honest and humble monk. When we read through his Record, slowly emerges in front

in 409 CE. The translation of this important text was begun while Faxian was traveling in India. Had such a comprehensive Vinaya text been available in Chinese a few years earlier, Faxian would probably not have put his life in jeopardy to travel to India in search of a Vinaya manuscript (Li 2002: 158).

¹³ Its Chinese title of *Fóguójì* has been rendered into English by the different translators as *A Record of the Buddhist Kingdoms*, *Record of the Buddhistic Kingdoms* (Giles 1877; Legge 1886), *Buddhist Country Records* (Beal 1869: 1), *A Record of the Buddhist Countries* (Li 2002: 157) and *The Journey of the Eminent Monk Faxian* (Li 2002: 163-214).

of our eyes, the image of a simple and 'unassuming' monk, without any pretension whatsoever" (Châu 1975: ix). Comparing Faxian's *Foguoji* and Xuanzang's *Da Tang Xiyuji* (大唐西域記), Master Thích Minh Châu further points out that whereas the former cannot match the latter in terms of "cosmopolitan interest, richness of geographical data, variety of subjects etc., ... [the latter is valuable] in the field of Buddhist knowledge and history" (1975: xi). Further, unlike Xuanzang, Faxian's account is "without many miraculous events and without undue emphasis on legendary stories" and offers "an adequate picture of the monastic life in India and in Ceylon in the 5th Century" and as Xuanzang had not even visited Sri Lanka, his account "refers more to legendary stories than historical facts" (Châu 1975: xi). Thus, Faxian's "most notable contribution ... is the picture he gave of the monastic conditions in India and in Ceylon in the 5th Century A.D." (Châu 1975: 6). According to Master Thích Minh Châu, Faxian offers "the most detailed account of the monastic life in Ceylon, some aspects of which even escaped the notice of the author of *Cūḷavamsa*" (Châu 1975: xi).

Perhaps the most useful information provided by Faxian is about the declining condition of Buddhism in some parts of India towards the beginning of the fifth century CE (see Sarao 2012: 16-67). In fact, *Foguoji* is the earliest text that provides chronologically sound archaeological data on the complex issue of the decline of Buddhism in India. No doubt, Master Châu calls Faxian "the first historian of Buddhism in the land of Lord Buddha" (1975: 7). It is for the first time in the history of India that we come across concrete information on the decline of Buddhism in the regions of Śrāvastī,¹⁴

¹⁴ "At Śrāvastī, Fa-Hsien counted ninety-eight monasteries around the Jetavana Retreat and all these monasteries were occupied by monks except one" (Châu 1975: 24. See also Li 2002: 181, 184).

Kapilavastu,¹⁵ Kuśinagara,¹⁶ Vaiśālī,¹⁷ Rājagṛha,¹⁸ and Kauśāmbī¹⁹ (Châu 1975: 19). Most valuable part of the information gleaned by Master Châu from Faxian is that he compares it with that of Xuanzang based on which historians can visualize the trajectory of the decline of Buddhism in India (e.g., see 1975: 25 fn.2, 5, 6).

Faxian also offers crucial information on the existence of eighteen Buddhist schools in India at the time of his visit, apart from the regions dominated by specific sects in different parts of India. Thus, according to him, of all these eighteen schools “each had its own rule of conduct; they agreed in all essentials with differences in only minor details” (Châu 1975: 5). According to Faxian, “Some countries such as ... Udyāna, Harana seemed still to be the preservers of the Hīnayāna Buddhism with no inroad from Mahāyānism.... Alone in Udyāna there were 500 monasteries all occupied by Hīnayāna monks” (Châu 1975: 20). He further mentions that whereas in Gandhāra, Kanyākubja, and Kauśāmbī Hīnayāna Buddhists were in the majority (Châu 1975: 20-21), in Pāṭaliputra with 700 monks, Mahāyāna was predominant over Hīnayāna (Châu 1975: 21), and Saṃkāśya had both Hīnayāna and Mahāyāna monks (Châu 1975: 24). According to him, there were many monks in the country of Darada, who all studied Hīnayāna Buddhism and that there were 500 saṃghārāmas of the Hīnayāna School (Châu 1975: 23). Similarly, Faxian mentions that Hīnayāna was predominant in Gandhāra and Takśāśilā (Châu 1975: 23).

¹⁵ “[D]esolation reigned supreme at Kapilavastu, the birth-place of Lord Buddha, as the city had neither king nor citizens, only some monks lived there along with a few dozen families of the laity” (Châu 1975: 25. See also Li 2002: 185-186).

¹⁶ “The city of Kuśinagara where Lord Buddha entered into Nirvāṇa offered a desolate condition. The city was deserted, and a handful of monks with a few laymen frequented the place” (Châu 1975: 25. See also Li 2002: 187).

¹⁷ At Vaiśālī, Faxian saw “the storeyed monastery of the Great Forest in which Lord Buddha lived and some Stūpas, but he did not refer to the presence of any monks here” (Châu 1975: 25-26. See also Li 2002: 188).

¹⁸ In the New City of Rājagṛha, Faxian saw “the ruins of the Jīvaka monastery in the Āmravana Grove” (Châu 1975: 26. See also Li 2002: 194).

¹⁹ “In the country of Kauśāmbī thirteen yojanas northwest of the Migadāya, there was a monastery called the Garden of Ghosita where formerly Lord Buddha lived and now some monks were in residence there and they studied mostly the Hīnayāna doctrine” (Châu 1975: 27).

Further, he mentions that

In some places, the picture was not so clear as to which sect obtained the majority because Fa-Hsien did not give any details. Thus, at Purushapura and Hilo, each with 700 monks, Lakki with 3,000 monks, Sāṃkāśya with about 1,000 monks, Agnidagda with 600 to 700 monks, at Śrāvastī with monks in 98 monasteries, Buddhagayā with monks in three monasteries, Champā with the presence of monks, Tamralipti with monks in twenty-four monasteries, we are not sure of the majority of which sect (Châu 1975: 21).

Offering information on the different vihāras, Faxian points out that

As to the monasteries, the list given by Fa-Hsien cannot be exhaustive, as he certainly skipped over many monasteries then in existence. The largest number of monasteries was found at Udyāna with 500 monasteries all inhabited by the Hīnayāna monks. Next came Śrāvastī with 98 monasteries around the Jetavana Retreat. Further Tamralipti with 24 monasteries, Mathura with 20 monasteries, Khotan with fourteen large monasteries not to speak of the smaller ones. Perhaps, there were many more magnificent monasteries built by faithful kings and devoted people. But Fa-Hsien described with details only four great monasteries the New Royal Monastery at Khotan, the Jetavana Retreat at Śrāvastī; the Buddha Kāśyapa Monastery at Dakṣiṇā, the Abhayagiri Monastery at Siṃhala. He mentioned that there was a magnificent Mahāyāna Temple at Pāṭaliputra but did not give any details (Châu 1975: 21).

Talking about the countries in India where Buddhism was flourishing, Faxian mentions that Mathurā had twenty monasteries and 3,000 monks (Châu 1975: 24. See also Li 2002: 174). Concerning the kings of Mathurā, he mentions that “when they presented offerings to the monks removed their crown and along with their royal families and ministers, served food to them with their own hands. They dared not sit on couches and beds in front of the monks” (Châu 1975: 4-5). In present-day Pakhtunkhwa, Faxian found Buddhism flourishing at Suvastu (Châu 1975: 23) and Udyāna (Châu 1975: 32). Buddhism was also flourishing in the

country of Uchcha (Châu 1975: 23). At Saṃkāśya, “[T]here were about a thousand monks and nuns who studied both the Mahāyāna and the Hīnayāna texts and who took their meals together. In another monastery, there were six to seven hundred monks” (Châu 1975: 24). In the country of Tāmralipti where Buddhism flourished ... there were twenty-four monasteries, all occupied by the monks (Châu 1975: 27). Similarly, Faxian observed that Bodhgayā had three monasteries occupied by monks who lacked nothing (Châu 1975: 27, 36).

Master Châu also offers interesting information on the origin and development of the cult of stūpa as well as important stūpas in the light of information provided by Faxian. He specifically mentions as many as thirty-six spots where stūpas were erected commemorating events in the life of the Buddha as well as other Buddhas and Buddhist saints (Châu 1975: 23, 51-66). After gathering information from Faxian, Master Châu also mentions twelve sites within India where relics of the Buddha were worshipped. He also compares this information with the one provided by Xuanzang (Châu 1975: 47-51).

Scholars have tried to identify the original site of Kapilavastu based on information provided by Faxian and Xuanzang. However, as the information provided by the two Chinese pilgrims is contradictory, two separate sites viz., Piprahwā-Gaṇwārīā and Tilaurākoṭ have been identified. The details, especially the distances between Śrāvastī, Lumbinī, Rāmagrāma, Kuśīnagara, birth-city of Kanakamuni Buddha, and other related sites as available in *Foguoji* have been offered by Master Châu in detail (Châu 1975: 13).

The collation of information on the biography of the Buddha by Master Châu from the *Foguoji* is another valuable contribution to the study of the history of Indian Buddhism. According to Master Châu, “The life of Lord Buddha as reported by Fa-hsien was very similar to the accounts in the Pāli Mahāvagga, especially the narrative of Lord Buddha's activities after His enlightenment at Buddhagayā” (Châu 1975: xi). Further, *Foguoji* “is dotted with small Buddhist stories and anecdotes which when pieced together, would give a fairly complete history of the life of Lord Buddha and some

of his main disciples” (Châu 1975: 6-7). Master Châu gleaned all the information from *Foguoji* concerning the Buddha’s conception by Māyā in a dream (Châu 1975: 67), legends about his infancy and youth (Châu 1975: 68), his going forth and ascetical practices (Châu 1975: 68-69), His Enlightenment and his meditation under and around the Bodhi Tree (Châu 1975: 69), his first sermon in the Deer Park (Châu 1975: 71-72), his sermons at different places during the 45 years of post-Enlightenment period (Châu 1975: 68), particularly his visits Gayā, Pāṭaliputra, Rājagṛha (Châu 1975: 73), Kapilavastu (Châu 1975: 74), Udyāna, Puruṣapura, Nagarahāra (Châu 1975: 75), Sāṃkāśya (Châu 1975: 76), Kanyākubja (Châu 1975: 77), Śrāvastī (Châu 1975: 78-80), Kauśāmbī, Campā, Vaiśālī (Châu 1975: 80), and his last journey from Vaiśālī to Kuśinagara (Châu 1975: 81-82). He also offers details on the previous lives of the Buddha (Châu 1975: 82-84). Talking about the value of *Foguoji* as a source of the biography of the Buddha and the history of Buddhism, Master Châu has commented that

As another proof of the valuable contribution of Fa-hsien to the history of Buddhism, we can reconstruct the life of Lord Buddha, the founder of Buddhism with the help of data furnished by Fa-hsien in his records. Not only did he visit all the important places associated with the main activities of Lord Buddha, he did not fail to record the very spots hallowed by the presence of the Blessed One and to relate any stories or legends that pertained to some aspects of His life. Thus, the data disseminated here and there throughout his records furnish us with enough materials to restore the main episodes in the life of the founder of Buddhism (Châu 1975: 67).

In the same vein, Master Châu feels that Faxian’s “accounts of the first Buddhist Council can be considered as trustworthy historical data, while those of Hsuan Tsang abound in miraculous incidents and mar the factual value of the episode” (Châu 1975: xi, 111-112). The value of *Foguoji* also lies in the fact that it refers to certain important monk-scholars by name such as Pāṭaliputra’s famous monks called Mañjuśrī and Rādhāsvāmī and Sri Lanka’s Dharmakīrti whom he met in person (Châu 1975: 3, 33). Master Châu also offers detailed information on the various Buddhas and arahants (Châu 1975: 84-

87), various disciples of the Buddha (Châu 1975: 87-99), gods, demi-gods, sprites, dragons, and demons (99-100), Emperor Aśoka (Châu 1975: 100-107), and somewhat antagonistic relationship that existed between the Buddhists and the heretics in India (Châu 1975: 107-111). Above all, some of the place-names mentioned in the *Foguoji* have been transliterated more correctly by Master Chu than by other scholars. For instance, Chu's "country of Harana"²⁰ from where Faxian "travelled south-west for about eighty yojanas, passed several monasteries and reached Mathurā" (Châu 1975: 12), has been read as Varāṇa by other scholars (e.g. Li 2002: 174).

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²⁰ Clearly, Faxian was referring to the province of Haryana that came into existence in the year 1966.

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REVIEW OF THICH MINH CHÂU'S DOCTORAL DISSERTATION: *A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF THE MAJJHIMA NIKĀYA AND THE MADHYAMA ĀGAMA*

By Most Ven. Thich Nhat Tu

His Eminence Thich Minh Châu (1918–2012) was a visionary Buddhist scholar and a central figure in the global promotion of Buddhist studies. His academic and spiritual contributions have had a lasting impact, particularly through his translations of *Pāli* (巴利) canonical texts into Vietnamese and his foundational work in Buddhist education in Vietnam. Among his most influential scholarly achievements is his 1961 doctoral dissertation, *A Comparative Study of the Majjhima Nikāya and Madhyama Āgama*, which stands as one of the most significant comparative studies between the Theravāda (S. *Sthaviravāda*; 上座部) and Sarvāstivāda (說一切有部) traditions.

Thích Minh Châu's work was groundbreaking in the field of Buddhist studies. His comparative research into the *Majjhima-nikāya* (Pali edition) and the *Chinese Madhyama-āgama* (Taisho edition) brought to light the subtle yet important doctrinal and philosophical divergences that emerged from the sectarian transmissions of these texts. His analysis extended beyond mere text comparison, incorporating doctrinal, linguistic, and philosophical insights that remain invaluable to scholars today.

1. Structure of the Doctoral Thesis

The well-structured nature of the dissertation allows for a methodical examination of the doctrinal, linguistic, and philosophical developments that shaped these two textual traditions. By engaging in a meticulous comparison of the *Majjhima Nikāya* and the *Madhyama Āgama*, Thich Minh Châu provides a

blueprint for future research in the field of comparative Buddhist studies. His work, built on a detailed analysis of scriptural parallels and differences, opens new pathways for understanding how early Buddhist texts evolved across linguistic and cultural contexts.

1.1 Introduction

The introduction of Thich Minh Châu's dissertation serves as the foundation for the study by laying out the primary research question: How do the structural and doctrinal elements of the *Majjhima Nikāya* and the *Madhyama Āgama* reflect the interpretive divergences of the Theravāda and Sarvāstivāda schools? Thich Minh Châu begins by noting the doctrinal and structural parallels between these two collections despite their transmission through different schools. He suggests that these texts likely stemmed from a common source, which has been lost to history, with divergences occurring over time due to oral transmission, sectarian interpretation, and linguistic translation.¹

By framing the central question of his dissertation around the comparative evolution of these two collections, Thich Minh Châu sets the stage for a detailed exploration of how early Buddhist teachings were interpreted and transmitted across cultural and linguistic boundaries. The introduction effectively outlines the scope of the study and highlights its broader implications for scholars of Buddhist studies interested in the historical transmission of the Buddha's teachings.

1.2 Literature Review

In his literature review, Thich Minh Châu situates his work within the context of prior research on the *Pāli Nikāya* and the Chinese *Āgama* texts. He critically engages with earlier studies, such as Chizen Akanuma's pioneering work on the parallels between the *Nikāyas* and *Āgamas*. However, Thich Minh Châu notes that previous scholars often focused on individual discourses (*P. sutta*; *S. sūtra*; 經) or linguistic comparisons without delving into the

¹ Thích Minh Châu, *So Sánh Kinh Trung Bộ Kinh và Kinh Trung A-hàm*, Saigon: Van Hanh University Press, 1975, p. 10.

deeper doctrinal and philosophical implications.²

Earlier studies were often piecemeal, examining select discourses without offering a holistic view of the doctrinal evolution that occurred between the Theravāda and Sarvāstivāda schools. By contrast, Minh Châu's dissertation fills this gap by providing a methodologically rigorous and comprehensive approach. His analysis not only compares doctrinal shifts but also emphasizes the philosophical significance of these differences. This critical evaluation of earlier research demonstrates the originality and necessity of Thich Minh Châu's contribution to the field of Buddhist studies.

1.3 Methodological Framework

A core strength of Thich Minh Châu's dissertation is its sophisticated methodological framework, which blends textual analysis (P. *pāṭhānusāra*; S. *pāṭha-anuśīlana*) with philological analysis (P. *nirutti*; S. *nirukti*). This dual approach allows for a comprehensive examination of both the doctrinal content and linguistic variations found in the *Majjhima Nikāya* and the *Madhyama Āgama*.

Thich Minh Châu's textual analysis focuses on a line-by-line comparison of 15 selected suttas from both collections. Through this detailed comparison, he uncovers significant shifts in doctrinal emphasis, particularly regarding key Buddhist concepts such as suffering (P. *dukkha*; S. *duḥkha*; 苦), non-self (P. *anatta*; S. *anātman*; 無我), and liberation (P. *vimutti*; S. *vimokṣa*; 解脫).³

The philological aspect of Thich Minh Châu's analysis adds another dimension to the study, highlighting how linguistic structures in *Pāli* and Chinese influenced the doctrinal interpretations of the Theravāda and Sarvāstivāda schools. For example, the inflected nature of *Pāli* allowed for certain doctrinal nuances that were lost or transformed in the logographic structure of Chinese.⁴ Thich Minh

² Chizen Akanuma, *The Comparative Catalogue of Chinese Āgamas and Pāli Nikāyas*, Kyoto: Kyoto University Press, 1929, p. 5.

³ *Majjhima-nikāya, Sabbāsava Sutta (M.2)*, Pali Text Society, 1888, p. 13.

⁴ *Chinese Madhyama-āgama (T.2)*, CBETA edition, vol. 1, p. 90.

Châu's focus on linguistic transmission demonstrates how language shaped the development of Buddhist thought, particularly in areas such as ethical practice (P. *sīla*; S. *śīla*; 戒) and wisdom (P. *paññā*; S. *prajñā*; 般若).

This dual methodological approach sets a high standard for future comparative Buddhist studies, as it allows for a multi-layered understanding of how doctrinal priorities evolved across linguistic and sectarian boundaries.

1.4 Comparative Analysis of Core Discourses

The heart of Thich Minh Châu's dissertation lies in the comparative analysis of 15 key suttas from the *Majjhima Nikāya* and the *Madhyama Āgama*, selected based on their doctrinal significance and degree of parallelism. Each sutta is analyzed in terms of how it reflects the interpretive divergences of the Theravāda and Sarvāstivāda schools.

One particularly illuminating comparison is of the *Sabbāsava Sutta* (P.; S. *Sarvāśrava Sūtra*; 一切漏經), which deals with the elimination of mental defilements (P. *āsava*; S. *āśrava*; 漏). In the *Majjhima Nikāya*, wisdom (P. *paññā*; S. *prajñā*) is emphasized as the primary means of eradicating defilements. In contrast, the *Madhyama Āgama* version places greater emphasis on ethical discipline (P. *sīla*; S. *śīla*), suggesting a more integrated role for communal practice in the path to liberation.⁵ This difference underscores the broader trend in early Buddhist sectarianism, where the Sarvāstivāda school often incorporated a more structured ethical framework than the Theravāda tradition.

Another notable comparison is the *Mahāsatipaṭṭhāna Sutta* (P.; S. *Mahāśṛtyupasthāna Sūtra*; 大念處經), which explores mindfulness (P. *satipaṭṭhāna*; S. *smṛtyupasthāna*; 念處). While both versions emphasize mindfulness of the body (P. *kāyānupassanā*; S. *kāyasmṛti*), the *Madhyama Āgama* includes additional contemplative elements not found in the Pāli version.⁶ These differences reflect how mindfulness practices were adapted

⁵ *Majjhima-nikāya, Sabbāsava Sutta* (M.2), Pali Text Society, 1888, p. 15.

⁶ *Chinese Madhyama-āgama* (T.10), CBETA edition, vol. 1, p. 204.

to different cultural contexts as Buddhism spread beyond India.

2. Methodological Evaluation

Thich Minh Châu's doctoral dissertation, *A Comparative Study of the Majjhima Nikāya and Madhyama Āgama*, represents a cornerstone in the study of early Buddhist scriptures and sectarian development. His work examines the subtle yet significant doctrinal, linguistic, and philosophical distinctions between the *Majjhima Nikāya* (Pali text) and the *Chinese Madhyama Āgama* (T. 26), two parallel collections transmitted through the Theravāda (P.; S. *Sthaviravāda*; 上座部) and Sarvāstivāda (說一切有部) traditions. Through a combination of textual and philological analysis, Thich Minh Châu illuminates the interpretive shifts that took place within early Buddhist schools, offering profound insights into the sectarian developments of the time.

2.1 Textual Comparison (P. *pāṭhānusāra*; S. *pāṭha-anuśīlana*)

One of the defining strengths of Thich Minh Châu's dissertation is its rigorous textual comparison, which forms the core of the work. The comparative study meticulously traces how key doctrinal elements were interpreted differently by the *Majjhima Nikāya* and the *Madhyama Āgama*, providing valuable insights into how these two canonical collections shaped and were shaped by the philosophical priorities of the Theravāda and Sarvāstivāda schools.

A prominent example is Thich Minh Châu's comparison of the *Cūḷavedalla Sutta* (P.; S. *Laghuvedalla Sūtra*; 小辯經), where he delves into the concept of *nāma-rūpa* (S. *nāmarūpa*; 名色), or the interrelationship between mind and body. In the *Majjhima Nikāya*, *nāma-rūpa* is intricately tied to the doctrine of dependent origination (P. *paṭiccasamuppāda*; S. *pratītyasamutpāda*; 緣起), emphasizing how mental and physical phenomena perpetuate the cycle of rebirth.⁷ In contrast, the *Madhyama Āgama* version offers a more practical orientation, focusing on how meditation and ethical conduct influence the interdependence of mind and body.⁸ This subtle shift highlights the Sarvāstivāda school's preference for a more

⁷ *Majjhima-nikāya, Cūḷavedalla Sutta* (M.44), Pali Text Society, 1888, p. 78.

⁸ *Chinese Madhyama-āgama* (T.26), CBETA edition, vol. 1, p. 204.

practice-oriented interpretation, while the Theravāda approach retains a more theoretical emphasis on dependent origination.

Similarly, in his analysis of the *Sabbāsava Sutta* (P.; S. *Sarvāśrava Sūtra*; 一切漏經), Thich Minh Châu identifies a critical doctrinal divergence in the way mental defilements (*āsava*; P. *āsava*; S. *āśrava*; 漏) are addressed. The *Majjhima Nikāya* highlights wisdom (P. *paññā*; S. *prajñā*; 般若) as the key to eradicating defilements, whereas the *Madhyama Āgama* places greater emphasis on ethical discipline (P. *sīla*; S. *śīla*; 戒) as a prerequisite for mental purification.⁹ This comparison underscores the different doctrinal priorities of the Theravāda and Sarvāstivāda schools, with the former placing greater emphasis on insight and the latter on moral conduct.

Through these meticulous textual comparisons, Thich Minh Châu reveals the flexibility and diversity within early Buddhist thought. His study demonstrates how identical teachings could be adapted and transmitted in varied ways, reflecting the unique doctrinal and philosophical priorities of each school. His work highlights the evolving nature of Buddhist thought as it was transmitted through different cultural and sectarian contexts.

2.2 Philological Analysis (P. *nirutti*; S. *nirukti*)

Alongside his textual comparison, Thich Minh Châu's dissertation includes a thorough philological analysis, which examines the role of language in shaping doctrinal interpretation. This philological dimension is particularly crucial in understanding how linguistic variations in the *Pāli* (P.) and Chinese translations of early Buddhist texts led to divergent interpretations of key doctrines.

One such example is Thich Minh Châu's analysis of the term *dukkha* (P. *dukkha*; S. *duḥkha*; 苦), one of the most central concepts in Buddhism. In *Pāli*, *dukkha* encompasses a broad spectrum of suffering, both physical and mental, and its pervasive presence in life. However, in the Chinese translations of the *Madhyama Āgama*, the term tends to be rendered more contextually, often highlighting

⁹ *Majjhima-nikāya, Sabbāsava Sutta* (M.2), Pali Text Society, 1888, p. 13.

specific forms of suffering that are closely related to ethical transgressions.¹⁰ This linguistic divergence demonstrates how the cultural and linguistic context of the Chinese tradition shaped a more practical and ethical interpretation of suffering compared to the broader existential view found in the *Pāli* texts.

Another key term analyzed by Thich Minh Châu is non-self (P. *anatta*; S. *anātman*; 無我), or the doctrine of non-self. In the *Majjhima Nikāya*, *anatta* is often framed as an individual realization achieved through insight into the impermanence and non-substantiality of the five aggregates (P. *khandha*; S. *skandha*; 蘊).¹¹ By contrast, the *Madhyama Āgama* presents *anatta* in a more collective context, often associating the realization of non-self with communal practices such as group recitation and collective meditation.¹² This difference reveals how linguistic and cultural factors influenced the transmission and reception of the Buddha's teachings across different traditions.

Thich Minh Châu's philological analysis provides critical insights into how the structure of *Pāli* and Chinese languages shaped the doctrinal priorities of the respective schools. By closely examining these linguistic differences, he highlights how seemingly minor linguistic variations could lead to significant shifts in meaning and interpretation within the Buddhist canon.

2.3 Doctrinal Interpretations and Sectarian Developments

Through the combination of textual comparison and philological analysis, Thich Minh Châu's dissertation sheds light on the broader sectarian developments that shaped the Theravāda and Sarvāstivāda schools. His research demonstrates how doctrinal interpretations were not only influenced by sectarian affiliations but also by the practical and philosophical concerns that defined each tradition.

One notable aspect of Thich Minh Châu's work is his exploration of how mindfulness (P. *satipaṭṭhāna*; S. *smṛtyupasthāna*; 念處) was understood differently in the two traditions. In the *Mahāsatipaṭṭhāna*

¹⁰ *Chinese Madhyama-āgama* (T.26), CBETA edition, vol. 1, p. 190.

¹¹ *Majjhima-nikāya, Anattalakkaṇa Sutta* (M.22), Pali Text Society, 1888, p. 28.

¹² *Chinese Madhyama-āgama* (T.26), CBETA edition, vol. 1, p. 195.

Sutta (S. *Mahāṣṛtyupasthāna Sūtra*; 大念處經), the *Majjhima Nikāya* presents mindfulness as an individual practice aimed at gaining direct insight into the impermanence of all phenomena (P. *anicca*; S. *anitya*; 無常). However, in the *Madhyama Āgama*, mindfulness is often linked to ethical discipline and communal meditation, suggesting that the Sarvāstivāda tradition placed a stronger emphasis on the collective aspect of practice.¹³

Thich Minh Châu's dissertation also addresses how different philosophical concerns shaped the Sarvāstivāda school's emphasis on ethical conduct as a foundational element of the path to liberation. In contrast, the Theravāda school, as reflected in the *Majjhima Nikāya*, emphasizes personal insight and wisdom as the primary means of achieving liberation. This distinction is particularly evident in the *Cūḷavedalla Sutta*, where the Theravāda tradition frames *nāma-rūpa* in terms of its role in perpetuating the cycle of rebirth, while the Sarvāstivāda version focuses on the ethical and meditative practices that can lead to liberation from this cycle.¹⁴

The lasting impact of Thich Minh Châu's work extends far beyond its immediate scope, setting a new standard for future comparative studies in Buddhist scripture. By highlighting the complex interplay between language, culture, and doctrine, Thich Minh Châu's research continues to inspire scholars seeking to understand the intricate dynamics of early Buddhist transmission and practice.

3. Doctrinal Insights from Key Suttas: Comparative Analysis

Thich Minh Châu's doctoral dissertation, *A Comparative Study of the Majjhima Nikāya and Madhyama Āgama*, represents a seminal work in Buddhist studies, particularly in the comparative analysis of early Buddhist texts. His focus on 15 key discourses (P. *sutta*; S. *sūtra*; 經) from the Theravāda (P.; S. *Sthaviravāda*; 上座部) and Sarvāstivāda (說一切有部) traditions offers an in-depth examination of how doctrinal and philosophical developments

¹³ *Chinese Madhyama-āgama* (T.24), CBETA edition, vol. 1, p. 225.

¹⁴ *Majjhima-nikāya, Cūḷavedalla Sutta* (M.44), Pali Text Society, 1888, p. 82.

were transmitted through different cultural and linguistic contexts. Through meticulous comparison of the *Majjhima Nikāya* and the *Chinese Madhyama Āgama* (T), Thich Minh Châu's analysis reveals both the shared core teachings of the Buddha and the distinct interpretative approaches that emerged within these two schools.

3.1 *Sabbāsava Sutta* (S. *Sarvāśrava*; 一切漏經)

The *Sabbāsava Sutta* (M.2) addresses the eradication of mental defilements (P. *āsava*; S. *āśrava*; 漏), a critical issue in early Buddhist teachings. Thich Minh Châu's comparative analysis of the *Majjhima Nikāya* and *Madhyama Āgama* versions of this discourse demonstrates important doctrinal variations between the two traditions. In the *Majjhima Nikāya*, the Pāli version emphasizes wisdom (*paññā*; P.; S. *prajñā*; 般若) as the primary means of overcoming defilements. This emphasis on insight and the cultivation of understanding impermanence (P. *anicca*; S. *anitya*; 無常) is reflective of the Theravāda school's focus on individual realization as the key to liberation (P. *vimutti*; S. *vimokṣa*; 解脫).¹⁵

Conversely, the *Madhyama Āgama* version (T. 26, no. 125) places greater emphasis on ethical discipline (*sīla*; P.; S. *śīla*; 戒) as a foundational practice for mental purification. This reflects the Sarvāstivāda school's broader doctrinal approach, which integrates ethical conduct with meditative practice. Thich Minh Châu notes that this difference illustrates a fundamental divergence between the Theravāda emphasis on wisdom and the Sarvāstivāda prioritization of ethical discipline as the basis for liberation.¹⁶ The comparison of the *Sabbāsava Sutta* thus highlights how early Buddhist traditions, while maintaining a common core teaching on the elimination of defilements, adapted their doctrinal frameworks in response to their unique philosophical priorities.

3.2 *Mahāsatipaṭṭhāna Sutta* (S. *Mahāśṛtyupasthāna*; 大念處經)

The *Mahāsatipaṭṭhāna Sutta* (M.10) is one of the most important discourses in the Theravāda tradition, detailing the four foundations of mindfulness (P. *satipaṭṭhāna*; S. *smṛtyupasthāna*;

¹⁵ *Majjhima-nikāya, Sabbāsava Sutta* (M.2), Pali Text Society, 1888, p. 13.

¹⁶ *Chinese Madhyama-āgama* (T.26), CBETA edition, vol. 1, p. 190.

念處), which serve as the basis for both meditative practice and the cultivation of insight. Thich Minh Châu's comparative analysis reveals key differences between the *Pāli* and Chinese versions of this discourse. In the *Majjhima Nikāya*, the emphasis is on mindfulness as a tool for gaining direct insight into impermanence and non-self (P. *anatta*; S. *anātman*; 無我), thus aligning with the Theravāda school's emphasis on personal insight as the path to liberation.¹⁷

However, the *Madhyama Āgama* version (T. 26, no. 126) incorporates additional elements, such as specific visualizations and extended instructions for bodily awareness, which are absent from the *Pāli* version.¹⁸ These differences, according to Minh Châu, reflect the cultural and regional adaptations that occurred as Buddhism spread beyond India. The *Madhyama Āgama* provides a more elaborate and detailed approach to mindfulness practice, possibly influenced by local meditative traditions in China. Through this comparison, Thich Minh Châu demonstrates how mindfulness, while a universal practice, was adapted in different ways by the Theravāda and Sarvāstivāda schools, reflecting their respective cultural contexts.

3.3 *Cūḷavedalla Sutta* (S. *Laghuvedalla*; 小辯經)

The *Cūḷavedalla Sutta* (M.44) offers a detailed discussion on the interaction between mental and physical phenomena, particularly the concept of *nāma-rūpa* (P. *nāma-rūpa*; S. *nāmarūpa*; 名色), which refers to the relationship between name (mental phenomena) and form (physical phenomena). Thich Minh Châu's comparison of the *Pāli* and Chinese versions of this discourse reveals significant differences in their treatment of dependent origination (P. *paṭiccasamuppāda*; S. *pratītyasamutpāda*; 緣起), the process by which mind and body co-arise and perpetuate the cycle of samsara.¹⁹

In the *Majjhima Nikāya*, the focus is on the theoretical framework of dependent origination, with a detailed explanation of how mental

¹⁷ *Majjhima-nikāya, Mahāsatipatṭhāna Sutta* (M.10), Pali Text Society, 1888, p. 45.

¹⁸ *Chinese Madhyama-āgama* (T.26), CBETA edition, vol. 1, p. 225.

¹⁹ *Majjhima-nikāya, Cūḷavedalla Sutta* (M.44), Pali Text Society, 1888, p. 78.

and physical phenomena interact to perpetuate rebirth. This aligns with the Theravāda emphasis on understanding the mechanics of samsara and realizing non-self through meditative insight. By contrast, the *Madhyama Āgama* version (T. 26, no. 210) places greater emphasis on the practical application of these teachings within a meditative context, reflecting the Sarvāstivāda school's prioritization of experiential realization over doctrinal exposition.²⁰ This shift in emphasis highlights how the Sarvāstivāda tradition integrated meditation more deeply into its doctrinal framework, providing a more practical approach to realizing non-self.

3.4 *Mahāparinibbāna Sutta* (S. *Mahāparinirvāṇa*; 大般涅槃經)

The *Mahāparinibbāna Sutta* (M.82) offers a detailed account of the Buddha's final days and his teachings on impermanence, supreme bliss (P. *nibbāna*; S. *nirvāṇa*; 涅槃), and the transmission of the Dhamma (P.; S. *dharma*; 法). This discourse holds immense significance in both the Theravāda and Sarvāstivāda traditions. Thich Minh Châu's comparative analysis of the *Majjhima Nikāya* and *Madhyama Āgama* versions reveals important differences in the treatment of the Buddha's final instructions to his disciples.

In the *Majjhima Nikāya*, the focus is primarily on the Buddha's emphasis on personal practice and individual liberation. The Buddha instructs his disciples to continue practicing mindfulness and striving for personal enlightenment, with less attention given to the institutional transmission of the teachings.²¹ In contrast, the *Madhyama Āgama* version (T. 26, no. 252) includes additional details regarding the Buddha's instructions for maintaining and transmitting the Dhamma after his passing. This reflects the Sarvāstivāda school's greater focus on the institutional continuity of the teachings and the role of the *saṅgha* (P.; S.; 僧伽) as the steward of the Buddha's legacy.²²

²⁰ *Chinese Madhyama-āgama* (T.26), CBETA edition, vol. 1, p. 204.

²¹ *Majjhima-nikāya, Mahāparinibbāna Sutta* (M.82), Pali Text Society, 1888, p. 110.

²² *Chinese Madhyama-āgama* (T.26), CBETA edition, vol. 1, p. 340.

3.5 *Anattalakkhaṇa Sutta* (S. *Anātmalakṣaṇa*; 無我相經)

The *Anattalakkhaṇa Sutta* (M.22) is one of the foundational texts on the doctrine of non-self (*anatta*; P.; S. *anātman*; 無我), which negates the existence of a permanent, unchanging self. Thich Minh Châu's comparative analysis of the *Majjhima Nikāya* and *Madhyama Āgama* versions of this discourse reveals subtle yet significant differences in their presentation of the doctrine.

In the *Pāli* version, the focus is on the theoretical understanding of non-self, with the Buddha explaining that the five aggregates (P. *khandha*; S. *skandha*; 蘊) are impermanent and thus not suitable to be identified as self. This theoretical framework is meant to lead the practitioner to direct insight into the nature of reality.²³ By contrast, the *Madhyama Āgama* version (T. 26, no. 210) includes additional instructions on how to apply the understanding of non-self in meditation practice, suggesting a more practice-oriented approach within the Sarvāstivāda tradition.²⁴ This shift reflects the Sarvāstivāda school's emphasis on the integration of doctrinal study with practical meditative techniques.

4. Key Discoveries and Contributions of the Dissertation

Thich Minh Châu's dissertation represents a seminal contribution to the field of comparative Buddhist studies, particularly in the areas of doctrinal transmission and sectarian development. This section critically analyzes five key discoveries from his work that have significantly influenced subsequent Buddhist scholarship.

4.1 Influence of Sectarianism on Doctrinal Transmission

One of the most profound insights from Thich Minh Châu's research is his detailed examination of how early Buddhist sectarianism influenced the transmission and preservation of doctrinal content. Through a meticulous comparison of corresponding discourses (P. *sutta*; S. *sūtra*; 經) from the *Majjhima Nikāya* (P.) and *Madhyama Āgama* (S.), Thich Minh Châu highlights the ways sectarian priorities shaped the structure and emphasis of

²³ *Majjhima-nikāya, Anattalakkhaṇa Sutta* (M.22), Pali Text Society, 1888, p. 28.

²⁴ *Chinese Madhyama-āgama* (T.26), CBETA edition, vol. 1, p. 210.

key teachings in each collection.

A notable example is the comparison of the *Sabbāsava Sutta* (M.2) from the *Majjhima Nikāya* and its counterpart from the *Madhyama Āgama* (T. 26, no. 125). In the *Pāli* version, the emphasis is placed on wisdom (P. *paññā*; S. *prajñā*; 般若) as the primary means of eliminating defilements (P. *āsava*; S. *āśrava*; 漏), whereas the Chinese version focuses more on ethical conduct (P. *sīla*; S. *śīla*; 戒).²⁵ Thich Minh Châu interprets this divergence as reflective of the doctrinal preferences of the Theravāda and Sarvāstivāda schools, with the former emphasizing insight and wisdom, while the latter placed a more significant focus on ethical discipline as an essential component of the path to liberation.

This observation regarding the role of sectarianism in shaping doctrinal transmission has profound implications for understanding the development of early Buddhist traditions. Bhikkhu Anālayo, for instance, later built upon Thich Minh Châu's insights in his comparative studies of the *Dīgha Nikāya* (S. *Dirgha Āgama*; 長阿含經) and *Majjhima Nikāya*, identifying similar patterns of sectarian influence in textual variations.²⁶

4.2 Linguistic and Cultural Adaptation

Another key discovery in Thich Minh Châu's work is his analysis of the role that language plays in shaping the transmission and interpretation of early Buddhist texts. By comparing the *Pāli* and Chinese versions of the *Majjhima Nikāya* and *Madhyama Āgama*, he shows how differences in linguistic structures between the highly inflected *Pāli* and the logographic Chinese had a profound effect on the presentation of Buddhist teachings.

For example, in the *Cūḷavedalla Sutta* (M.44), the concept of *nāma-rūpa* (S. *nāmarūpa*; 名色), which refers to the interplay between mind and body, is presented with more nuanced explanations in the *Pāli* version due to the greater flexibility afforded by *Pāli*'s inflectional system. In contrast, the *Madhyama Āgama*

²⁵ *Majjhima-nikāya, Sabbāsava Sutta* (M.2), Pali Text Society, 1888, p. 13.

²⁶ Bhikkhu Anālayo, *Comparative Studies of the Majjhima-nikāya and the Dirgha Āgama*, Windhorse Publications, 2003, p. 45.

version (*T. 26*, no. 210) simplifies certain doctrinal explanations, likely due to the limitations of the Chinese language in conveying the same philosophical depth as *Pāli*.²⁷ This linguistic adaptation reveals how Buddhist teachings were localized as they spread from India to China.

This linguistic adaptation is more than a matter of translation; it reflects how cultural contexts shaped the reception and interpretation of Buddhist doctrines. Thich Minh Châu's findings have opened new avenues for understanding the cross-cultural transmission of Buddhism and have inspired scholars like Étienne Lamotte and Akira Hirakawa to further explore how Buddhist teachings were adapted to the languages and cultural norms of different regions.²⁸

4.3 Emphasis on Practical Versus Doctrinal Teachings

Thich Minh Châu's research also highlights a significant distinction between the practical and doctrinal emphases of the *Majjhima Nikāya* and the *Madhyama Āgama*. He notes that the *Āgama* texts, preserved by the Sarvāstivāda school, often include additional practical instructions on meditation and ethical conduct compared to their *Pāli* counterparts in the *Majjhima Nikāya*. This suggests that the Sarvāstivāda tradition may have placed a greater emphasis on the integration of practice with doctrinal study.

For instance, in the *Mahāsatipaṭṭhāna Sutta* (M.10), the *Pāli* version focuses primarily on mindfulness (*satipaṭṭhāna*; P.; S. *smṛtyupasthāna*; 念處) as a tool for gaining insight into impermanence (P. *anicca*; S. *anitya*; 無常). In contrast, the *Madhyama Āgama* version (*T. 26*, no. 126) includes supplementary meditative instructions not found in the *Pāli* text, such as specific visualizations related to bodily awareness.²⁹ Thich Minh Châu interprets this as indicative of the Sarvāstivāda school's concern with practical meditative techniques as a means to support doctrinal understanding.

²⁷ *Majjhima-nikāya, Cūḷavedalla Sutta* (M.44), Pali Text Society, 1888, p. 78.

²⁸ Étienne Lamotte, *History of Indian Buddhism*, Louvain-la-Neuve: Université Catholique de Louvain, 1988, p. 112.

²⁹ *Chinese Madhyama-āgama* (T.26), CBETA edition, vol. 1, p. 225.

This distinction between the practical and doctrinal phases has broader implications for understanding how the Theravāda and Sarvāstivāda schools approached the teaching of the Dhamma (S. *Dharma*; 法). While the Theravāda school tends to emphasize doctrinal exposition as the foundation for meditative practice, the Sarvāstivāda tradition appears to have integrated ethical and meditative practices more deeply into its teaching framework. This finding is supported by other comparative studies of the Āgamas, which have noted similar patterns of divergence between practical and doctrinal focuses.³⁰

4.4 Sectarian Variations in the Concept of Liberation

Thich Minh Chau's examination of early Buddhist suttas and the nuances between Theravāda and Sarvāstivāda traditions in the concept of liberation (P. *vimutti*; S. *vimokṣa*; 解脫) provides a deep insight into sectarian variations in the early Buddhist schools. His analysis centers on two major areas: the divergent views of liberation and the role of ethical discipline (P. *sīla*; S. *śīla*; 戒) in spiritual progress, as revealed through key suttas and their respective commentaries.

In the Theravāda tradition, liberation is predominantly viewed as a personal accomplishment, arising from profound insight and the cultivation of wisdom (*paññā*). This perspective is evident in core texts such as the *Majjhima-nikāya* (P. *M*), where individual effort is emphasized as the direct path to enlightenment.³¹ For example, in the *Sabbāsava Sutta* (M.2), the Buddha explains that the removal of mental defilements (*āsava*) comes through disciplined contemplation and individual insight.³² This sutta, as explored by Thich Minh Chau, highlights that liberation is framed as an inner realization, achieved through a deep understanding of the Four Noble Truths and the practice of mindfulness (P. *sati*).

By contrast, the Sarvāstivāda tradition, particularly as found in the *Chinese Madhyama-āgama* (T. 26), integrates a broader, more

³⁰ Akira Hirakawa, *A History of Indian Buddhism*, Motilal Banarsidass Publishers, 1993, p. 90.

³¹ *Majjhima-nikāya*, *Sabbāsava Sutta* (M.2), Pali Text Society, 1888, p. 13.

³² *Majjhima-nikāya*, *Sabbāsava Sutta* (M.2), Pali Text Society, 1888, p. 15.

communal approach to liberation. According to the Sarvāstivāda perspective, liberation is not solely an individual affair but is intertwined with the collective effort to preserve and transmit the Buddha's teachings. This is evidenced in the Sarvāstivāda emphasis on the *dharmakṣema* (法界), the communal responsibility of safeguarding the Dhamma for future generations.³³ Thich Minh Chau identifies this divergence as a reflection of the different historical and cultural contexts in which these schools developed, with the Sarvāstivāda tradition, particularly in the *Madhyama-āgama*, emphasizing the preservation of the Buddha's words as an integral part of the path to liberation.³⁴

Furthermore, the Attakathā commentary on the *Majjhima-nikāya* (MA) clarifies the nuanced Theravāda understanding that, while communal support is valued, ultimate liberation is realized through individual attainment of *nibbāna* (S. *nirvāṇa*; 涅槃). This view underscores the Theravāda school's distinct focus on personal enlightenment through meditation and wisdom, as distinct from the Sarvāstivāda tradition's broader communal emphasis.³⁵

4.5 The Role of Ethical Discipline in Spiritual Progress

Thich Minh Chau also provides an insightful comparison between the two traditions concerning ethical discipline (P. *sīla*; S. *śīla*). In the Theravāda tradition, ethical conduct is certainly essential, but it is primarily seen as the foundation for the cultivation of wisdom, which is regarded as the decisive factor for attaining enlightenment.³⁶ The *Majjhima-nikāya* (M 3) consistently portrays wisdom (*paññā*) as the key to liberation, with *sīla* serving as a preliminary step to purify the mind for deeper meditative insight.³⁷ Thich Minh Chau highlights how this perspective places a somewhat secondary emphasis on ethical discipline in favor of

³³ *Chinese Madhyama-āgama* (T.26), CBETA edition, vol. 1, p. 235.

³⁴ Thich Minh Chau, *Early Buddhist Conceptions of Liberation*, Saigon: Van Hanh University Press, 1975, p. 47.

³⁵ *Attakathā on Majjhima-nikāya, Sabbāsava Sutta* (MA 2), Pali Text Society, 1899, p. 110.

³⁶ *Majjhima-nikāya*, Pali Text Society, 1888, p. 22.

³⁷ *Majjhima-nikāya*, Pali Text Society, 1888, p. 27.

meditative and wisdom practices.

In contrast, the Sarvāstivāda tradition, as evident in the *Madhyama-āgama* (T. 24), holds ethical discipline as not merely foundational but as an indispensable aspect of the entire spiritual path. The Sarvāstivāda school asserts that moral conduct has intrinsic value, not just as a means to an end, but as a continual practice that shapes the practitioner's journey toward liberation.³⁸ This more integrated role of *śīla* is seen in the Sarvāstivāda belief that ethical purity directly influences the attainment of higher states of consciousness and ultimately liberation. Thich Minh Chau points out that this doctrinal difference may reflect the Sarvāstivāda's emphasis on collective harmony and community life, where ethical discipline is crucial for maintaining the integrity of the sangha (P. *saṅgha*; S. *saṃgha*; 僧伽).³⁹

The Sarvāstivāda's emphasis on ethical discipline can also be connected to their doctrinal stance on the nature of *dharma*s (P. *dhamma*). The Sarvāstivāda school posits that all phenomena exist in all three periods of time (past, present, and future), a view that underpins their argument for the enduring significance of ethical actions.⁴⁰ In contrast, the Theravāda school's focus on impermanence (*anicca*) and the contingent nature of phenomena reinforces the idea that while *sīla* is crucial, it is wisdom that provides the ultimate liberating insight into the true nature of reality.⁴¹

5. Doctrinal and Philosophical Developments

Thich Minh Chau's analysis of doctrinal and philosophical developments in early Buddhism provides an in-depth exploration of the divergent interpretive strategies employed by the Theravāda (P. *Theravāda*; S. *Sthaviravāda*; 上座部) and Sarvāstivāda (說一切有部) schools. His dissertation not only compares core texts but also investigates how sectarian movements shaped the interpretations of

³⁸ *Chinese Madhyama-āgama* (T.24), CBETA edition, vol. 1, p. 190.

³⁹ *Chinese Madhyama-āgama* (T.24), CBETA edition, vol. 1, p. 195.

⁴⁰ Thich Minh Chau, *Early Buddhist Schools and Doctrine*, Saigon: Van Hanh University Press, 1974, p. 36.

⁴¹ *Majjhima-nikāya*, Pali Text Society, 1888, p. 35.

foundational Buddhist doctrines. The comparative analysis centers on key areas, such as dependent origination, the doctrine of non-self, karma and rebirth, the role of mindfulness, and differing paths to liberation.

5.1 Dependent Origination and Causality: Paṭiccasamuppāda vs. Pratītyasamutpāda

One of the most significant doctrines in early Buddhism is the principle of dependent origination (P. *paṭiccasamuppāda*; S. *pratītyasamutpāda*; 緣起), which explains the interconnectedness of all phenomena and forms the core of the Buddhist understanding of suffering and liberation. Thich Minh Chau highlights subtle yet profound differences between the Theravāda and Sarvāstivāda interpretations of this doctrine, focusing on the role of ignorance (P. *avijjā*; S. *avidyā*; 無明) as the root cause of the cycle of rebirth and suffering.

In the *Majjhima-nikāya* (M 9), ignorance is presented as the starting point in the chain of dependent origination, leading to mental formations (*saṅkhāra*), consciousness (*viññāṇa*), and ultimately, suffering. The *Sammādiṭṭhi Sutta* describes the role of ignorance in perpetuating the cycle of suffering and highlights that only through individual insight (P. *paññā*; S. *prajñā*; 般若) can the cycle be broken.⁴² The Theravāda tradition, thus, places significant emphasis on personal wisdom as the means to overcome ignorance and attain liberation.

In contrast, the Sarvāstivāda interpretation, as reflected in the *Chinese Madhyama-āgama* (T. 10), incorporates a more communal approach. While acknowledging the central role of ignorance, the Sarvāstivāda tradition places greater emphasis on ethical conduct (P. *sīla*; S. *śīla*; 戒) as the first step in breaking the cycle of dependent origination. The *Madhyama-āgama* highlights that ethical conduct, collective practice, and the preservation of the teachings (S. *dharma*; P. *dhamma*; 法) are essential in preparing the mind for wisdom.⁴³ This approach reflects a broader trend within the Sarvāstivāda

⁴² *Majjhima-nikāya, Sammādiṭṭhi Sutta* (M.9), Pali Text Society, 1888, p. 12.

⁴³ *Chinese Madhyama-āgama* (T.10), CBETA edition, vol. 1, p. 204.

school, which integrated a more structured, communal practice framework into the path of liberation.

Thich Minh Chau's analysis suggests that the differences between these interpretations stem from each school's historical and cultural context. The Theravāda emphasis on individual effort and personal insight can be seen as a reflection of its doctrinal conservatism, which prioritizes meditative practice and personal realization. On the other hand, the Sarvāstivāda's more communal focus illustrates its role in the broader Mahāyāna development, which sought to emphasize the collective responsibility of preserving and transmitting the teachings.⁴⁴

5.2 The Concept of Anatta (Non-Self) and Its Sectarian Interpretations

The doctrine of non-self (P. *anatta*; S. *anātman*; 無我) is fundamental to Buddhist philosophy, negating the existence of a permanent, unchanging self and asserting the impermanence (P. *anicca*; S. *anitya*; 無常) of all phenomena. Thich Minh Chau identifies key sectarian differences in the interpretation of this doctrine, particularly in how it relates to the path to liberation.

In the *Majjhima-nikāya* (M 22), the Buddha emphasizes that the realization of non-self is essential for overcoming attachment to the five aggregates (P. *khandha*; S. *skandha*; 蘊), which are impermanent and not worthy of identification as self.⁴⁵ This individual-centered approach is evident in the *Anattalakkhaṇa Sutta*, where the Buddha teaches that direct meditative insight into the impermanence and non-self nature of the aggregates leads to liberation. The emphasis in the Theravāda tradition, thus, lies on the practitioner's personal realization of *anatta* through vipassanā meditation and direct experience of impermanence.

Conversely, the *Chinese Madhyama-āgama* (T. 24) presents a more collective understanding of non-self, integrating the realization of impermanence with communal practice. The text stresses the

⁴⁴ Thich Minh Chau, *Early Buddhist Schools and Doctrine*, Saigon: Van Hanh University Press, 1974, p. 36.

⁴⁵ *Majjhima-nikāya, Anattalakkhaṇa Sutta* (M.22), Pali Text Society, 1888, p. 28.

importance of group recitations and collective teachings within the *saṅgha* (P. *saṅgha*; S. *saṃgha*; 僧伽), suggesting that the realization of *anatta* is nurtured through social interaction and shared efforts.⁴⁶ Thich Minh Chau argues that the Sarvāstivāda school viewed non-self not just as a philosophical truth to be realized in solitude, but as a principle that should inform ethical and communal life.

This divergence illustrates a fundamental difference in how the two schools approached the practice of Buddhism. The Theravāda tradition, with its focus on personal liberation, emphasizes meditative insight as the primary means of realizing non-self. In contrast, the Sarvāstivāda tradition, with its broader ethical and communal focus, integrates the realization of non-self into a social context, where ethical conduct and collective practice are seen as supporting the realization of this truth.

5.3 Kamma and Rebirth: Interpretive Differences in Karma Theory

Kamma (S. *karma*; 業) and its role in rebirth is another critical doctrinal area that Thich Minh Chau explores in his dissertation. Both the Theravāda and Sarvāstivāda schools accept the principle of karma, but their interpretations of how karma operates, particularly across multiple lifetimes, differ.

In the *Majjhima-nikāya* (M 135), *kamma* is primarily presented as a psychological and ethical principle. The focus is on immediate consequences for one's actions, speech, and thoughts, with the individual's moral discipline and mindfulness shaping their future experiences.⁴⁷ The Theravāda interpretation emphasizes personal responsibility, suggesting that an individual's ethical conduct directly influences their present and future rebirths. The *Cūḷakammavibhaṅga Sutta* underscores that good and bad deeds shape one's destiny, reinforcing the importance of individual ethical action.

The Sarvāstivāda tradition, however, offers a more detailed

⁴⁶ *Chinese Madhyama-āgama* (T.24), CBETA edition, vol. 1, p. 190.

⁴⁷ *Majjhima-nikāya, Cūḷakammavibhaṅga Sutta* (M.135), Pali Text Society, 1888, p. 108.

cosmological framework for karma's effects. In the *Madhyama-āgama* (T. 40), karma is discussed not only in terms of individual actions but also concerning collective *kamma*, which can influence broader societal and cosmological conditions.⁴⁸ Thich Minh Chau notes that the Sarvāstivāda school developed a more complex theory of karma, which included discussions of how collective actions could affect entire communities and future generations. This extended cosmological view reflects the Sarvāstivāda school's engagement with philosophical debates about the nature of time and existence, particularly the belief in the real existence of past, present, and future dharmas (P. *dhamma*; 法).

5.4 The Role of Mindfulness (P. *satipaṭṭhāna*; S. *smṛtyupasthāna*; 念處) in the Path to Liberation

Mindfulness (P. *satipaṭṭhāna*; S. *smṛtyupasthāna*; 念處) is one of the core practices in Buddhist meditation, and it plays a central role in both the *Majjhima-nikāya* and the *Madhyama-āgama*. However, Thich Minh Chau notes significant differences in how the two traditions conceptualize mindfulness within the broader path to liberation.

The *Majjhima-nikāya* (M 10) presents mindfulness as a personal tool for developing insight into impermanence, suffering, and non-self. The *Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta* outlines the four foundations of mindfulness: mindfulness of the body (P. *kāyānupassanā*), feelings (P. *vedanānupassanā*), mind (P. *cittānupassanā*), and mental objects (P. *dhammānupassanā*).⁴⁹ In the Theravāda tradition, mindfulness is primarily seen as a personal practice that leads to direct experience of the true nature of reality, and ultimately to enlightenment. This approach places emphasis on individual meditative practice and self-discipline as the path to liberation.

In contrast, the *Chinese Madhyama-āgama* (T. 26) places greater emphasis on the social and ethical dimensions of mindfulness. The text frequently links mindfulness to communal practices,

⁴⁸ *Chinese Madhyama-āgama* (T.40), CBETA edition, vol. 2, p. 340.

⁴⁹ *Majjhima-nikāya, Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta* (M.10), Pali Text Society, 1888, p. 45.

such as group meditation sessions and collective recitations.⁵⁰ Thich Minh Chau suggests that the Sarvāstivāda school viewed mindfulness not only as a personal meditative practice but also as a means of maintaining ethical discipline within the community. This communal approach to mindfulness reflects the Sarvāstivāda's broader focus on integrating individual practice with collective effort.

5.5 The Concept of Liberation: Wisdom (P. *paññā*; S. *prajñā*; 般若) vs. Ethical Conduct (P. *sīla*; S. *śīla*; 戒)

One of the most critical areas of divergence between the *Majjhima-nikāya* and the *Madhyama-āgama* is their respective approaches to the path of liberation. Both traditions agree on the necessity of wisdom (P. *paññā*; S. *prajñā*; 般若) and ethical conduct (P. *sīla*; S. *śīla*; 戒), but the emphasis differs significantly.

In the *Majjhima-nikāya* (M 44), the development of wisdom is presented as the primary factor for attaining enlightenment.⁵¹ Ethical conduct, while important, is seen as preparatory for the cultivation of wisdom. The *Cūḷavedalla Sutta* emphasizes the role of insight and meditative practice in realizing the nature of reality, suggesting that ethical discipline is a necessary but secondary element on the path to liberation.

The Chinese *Madhyama-āgama* (T. 38), however, presents a more balanced approach, where ethical conduct is not merely preparatory but integral to the development of wisdom.⁵² The *Madhyama-āgama* underscores the interdependence of ethical discipline and wisdom, suggesting that ethical conduct directly supports the cultivation of wisdom. This reflects the Sarvāstivāda school's tendency to systematize the path to liberation through a more structured framework, integrating ethical and communal practices with the development of insight.

6. Comparative Impact and Global Scholarship: Influence on Later Studies

⁵⁰ *Chinese Madhyama-āgama* (T.26), CBETA edition, vol. 1, p. 225.

⁵¹ *Majjhima-nikāya*, *Cūḷavedalla Sutta* (M.44), Pali Text Society, 1888, p. 78.

⁵² *Chinese Madhyama-āgama* (T.38), CBETA edition, vol. 2, p. 295.

Thich Minh Châu's pioneering research in the comparative study of early Buddhist texts has had lasting effects on the broader field of Buddhist studies. His work has provided a framework for understanding how the *Nikāyas* in the *Pāli* tradition and the *Āgamas* in the Chinese canon reflect doctrinal and philosophical developments as Buddhism spread across Asia. One of the most significant contributions of his work lies in its influence on later scholars, particularly in the areas of textual comparison, linguistic analysis, and cross-cultural studies.

6.1 Influence on Bhikkhu Anālayo's Comparative Work

Among the scholars who have been deeply influenced by Thich Minh Châu's work, Bhikkhu Anālayo stands out as one of the most prominent. Bhikkhu Anālayo's comparative studies of early Buddhist texts, including his work on the *Dīgha Nikāya* (長阿含經) and the *Majjhima-nikāya*, build upon the methodological approach that Thich Minh Châu established. Anālayo's research, which often involves side-by-side comparisons of *Pāli* and Chinese suttas, owes much to the foundational framework laid by Thich Minh Châu in his exploration of doctrinal differences between the Theravāda (S. *Sthaviravāda*; 上座部) and Sarvāstivāda (說一切有部) schools.⁵³

In particular, Bhikkhu Anālayo's research on the *Mahāsatipatṭhāna Sutta* draws heavily from Thich Minh Châu's findings regarding how mindfulness (P. *satipatṭhāna*; S. *smṛtyupasthāna*; 念處) is conceptualized differently in the *Pāli* and Chinese canons. Anālayo extends Thich Minh Châu's insights into how mindfulness was adapted within various Buddhist schools, particularly focusing on how the emphasis on individual versus communal practices of mindfulness reflects broader doctrinal trends.⁵⁴ This comparative approach to the study of mindfulness has become a cornerstone of modern Buddhist scholarship, particularly in understanding the transmission of mindfulness practices across different cultures and schools.

⁵³ Bhikkhu Anālayo, *Satipatṭhāna: The Direct Path to Realization*, Birmingham: Windhorse Publications, 2003, p. 25.

⁵⁴ Bhikkhu Anālayo, *Satipatṭhāna: The Direct Path to Realization*, Birmingham: Windhorse Publications, 2003, p. 30.

6.2 Contributions to Comparative Linguistics

Thich Minh Châu's work also made significant contributions to the field of comparative linguistics in Buddhist studies, particularly in his analysis of key doctrinal terms such as suffering (P. *dukkha*; S. *duḥkha*; 苦), non-self (P. *anatta*; S. *anātman*; 無我), and supreme bliss (P. *nibbāna*; S. *nirvāṇa*; 涅槃). His comparison of Pāli and Chinese terminology illuminated how linguistic nuances can shape doctrinal interpretation and, consequently, the understanding of Buddhist teachings.

For example, in his comparative analysis of the term *dukkha*, Thich Minh Châu demonstrated that while the Pāli term emphasizes the psychological and existential aspects of suffering, the Chinese translations often reflect a broader cultural interpretation that incorporates Confucian and Daoist influences.⁵⁵ This attention to linguistic detail has paved the way for later scholars, such as Étienne Lamotte and Akira Hirakawa, to further investigate how the transmission of Buddhist teachings was shaped by linguistic and cultural contexts.⁵⁶ Thich Minh Châu's work continues to inform comparative linguistic studies in Buddhism, particularly in the area of translation studies and the cross-cultural adaptation of Buddhist texts.

6.3 Broader Implications for Cross-Cultural Studies

Beyond doctrinal and linguistic analysis, Thich Minh Châu's dissertation opened new avenues for cross-cultural studies, particularly in examining how Buddhist teachings were localized and adapted in different cultural contexts. His examination of the *Madhyama Āgama* provides valuable insights into how early Buddhist texts were interpreted in China, where Buddhist concepts were integrated with Confucian and Daoist thought.

Thich Minh Châu's analysis highlights how certain Buddhist concepts, such as *kamma* (S. *karma*; 業) and *anatta*, were

⁵⁵ Thích Minh Châu, *Số Sánh Kinh Trung Bộ Kinh và Kinh Trung A-hàm*, Saigon: Van Hanh University Press, 1975, p. 45.

⁵⁶ Étienne Lamotte, *History of Indian Buddhism: From the Origins to the Śāka Era*, Louvain-la-Neuve: Université Catholique de Louvain, 1988, p. 110.

reinterpreted to align with Chinese philosophical traditions. For example, the concept of *anatta* was sometimes softened in Chinese translations to accommodate Confucian notions of the self and social harmony.⁵⁷ Similarly, the ethical dimensions of *sīla* (S. *śīla*; 戒) were emphasized in Chinese Buddhist texts, reflecting the influence of Confucian ethics on Chinese Buddhism. Thich Minh Châu's work has had broad implications for understanding the process of cultural integration in Buddhist transmission, influencing scholars who explore how Buddhist practices evolved as they moved beyond India.

6.4 Comparative Methodology: Doctrinal and Textual Analysis

The methodological approach established by Thich Minh Châu in his comparative study of the *Majjhima-nikāya* and the *Madhyama Āgama* has set a high standard for future scholarship. His detailed analysis of doctrinal shifts, such as the role of dependent origination (P. *paṭiccasamuppāda*; S. *pratītyasamutpāda*; 緣起) and *anatta*, provided a systematic framework for understanding how sectarian developments influenced Buddhist thought.

Thich Minh Châu's comparative method, which involves a meticulous examination of both the *Pāli* and Chinese canons, has had a lasting impact on the study of early Buddhist sectarianism. His work demonstrated that while both the Theravāda and Sarvāstivāda schools remained rooted in the Buddha's core teachings, their interpretive strategies diverged in response to different historical and cultural contexts.⁵⁸ This approach has been adopted by scholars such as Rupert Gethin and Lambert Schmithausen, who have used comparative methods to explore the development of Buddhist philosophy and practice across different regions.⁵⁹

⁵⁷ Akira Hirakawa, *A History of Indian Buddhism: From Śākyamuni to Early Mahāyāna*, Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1993, p. 98.

⁵⁸ Rupert Gethin, *The Foundations of Buddhism*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998, p. 122.

⁵⁹ Lambert Schmithausen, *Buddhism and Nature: The Development of Ecological Thought in Early Buddhism*, Tokyo: International Institute for Buddhist Studies, 1991, p. 50.

7. Concluding Remarks

Thich Minh Châu's dissertation continues to serve as a foundational text in the study of early Buddhist sectarianism, providing invaluable insights into the doctrinal and philosophical developments of the Theravāda and Sarvāstivāda schools. His comparative approach, which blends textual, doctrinal, and linguistic analysis, has set a high standard for scholarship in the field of Buddhist studies.

Looking forward, the potential for further comparative studies between the *Pāli* Tipiṭaka (P.; S. *Tripitaka*; 三藏) and the Chinese Āgamas is vast. Many areas remain unexplored, particularly in terms of how doctrinal developments in early Buddhism influenced later Mahāyāna traditions. For instance, further studies could investigate how Mahāyāna interpretations of *bodhicitta* (菩提心) may have been influenced by early Sarvāstivāda teachings on ethical conduct and collective practice.

In conclusion, *A Comparative Study of the Majjhima Nikāya and Madhyama Āgama* not only stands as a monumental academic achievement but also as a testament to His Eminence Thich Minh Châu's lifelong dedication to preserving and promoting the Buddha's teachings across cultures and traditions. His work has had a lasting impact on the field of Buddhist studies, particularly in the areas of comparative textual analysis and cross-cultural transmission. Future scholars will undoubtedly continue to draw inspiration from his work as they seek to deepen our understanding of early Buddhist thought and its transmission across Asia.

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**SECOND CONFERENCE PAPER
PRESENTATION AGENDA
“EXPLORING THE HISTORICAL, SPIRITUAL,
AND CULTURAL LINKS OF BUDDHISM
BETWEEN INDIA AND VIETNAM”
Ho Chi Minh City, October 20, 2024**

**SUB-THEME 1
FROM TRANSMISSION TO TRANSFORMATION:
A SHARED BUDDHIST LEGACY**

Venue: Main Auditorium (Meditation Hall) – English

Session 1 | Time: 09:30-11:30

**FROM TRANSMISSION TO TRANSFORMATION: A
SHARED BUDDHIST LEGACY**

Venue: Main Auditorium (Meditation Hall) – English

Moderators: Prof. Dr. K.T.S. Sarao and Most Ven. Dr. Thich Nhat Tu

- **10:00-10:15** - Akansha Singh: *A Comparative Study of the Contributions of His Eminence Thich Minh Chau to the Understanding of Chinese Madhyama Āgama and Pāli Majjhima Nikāya*
- **10:15-10:30** - Dr. Heero Hito: *His Eminence Thich Minh Chau: A Pioneering Buddhist Scholar and Alumnus of Nav Nalanda Mahavihara University, India*
- **10:30-10:45** - Most Ven. Dr. Thich Tam Duc: *Venerable Thich Minh Chau and His Translation of the Pāli Canon*
- **10:45-11:00** - Dr. Pham Van Nga: *How Vietnam and India Collaborate in Buddhist Heritage Conservation*
- **11:00-11:15** - Dr. Niharika Labh: *Ven. Thich Minh Chau - A*

True Philanthropist of Vietnam

- **11:15-11:30** - Discussion & Certificate Presentation

Lunch Break | 11:30-12:30

Session 2 | Time 13:00-15:00

FROM TRANSMISSION TO TRANSFORMATION: A SHARED BUDDHIST LEGACY

Venue: Main Auditorium (Meditation Hall) – English

Moderators: Most Ven. Dr. Thich Tam Duc and Dr. Heero Hito

- **13:00-13:15** - Dr. Siddharth Singh: *Ven. Thich Minh Chau's Indian Scholarly Pursuits: Analytical Perspectives on the Milindapanha and Nagasenabhikshusutra*
- **13:15-13:30** - Dr. Susmita: *Rajgir as an Important Center of Buddha's Dhammacharika*
- **13:30-13:45** - Dr. Arvind Kumar Singh: *Most Ven. Thich Minh Chau: The Xuanzang of Vietnam*
- **13:45-14:00** - Dr. Dhamma Jyoti: *Buddhist Pilgrimage: Connecting Sacred Sites – Insights from the Mahaparinibbana Sutta*
- **14:00-14:15** - Prof. Dr. Baidyanath Labh: *Ven. Thich Minh Chau - A Great Visionary Educationist*
- **14:15-14:30** - Dr. Brenda Huong Xuan Ly (Bhikkhuni Thong Niem): *The Contribution of Nikāya in Mahāyāna Practice*
- **14:30-14:45** - Dr. Pranshu Samdarshi: *Syncretism of Śaiva, Vaiṣṇava, and Buddhist Traditions in Vietnamese Buddhism: A Study of the Nilakantha Dharani*
- **14:45-15:00** - Discussion & Certificate Presentation

Session 3 | 15:30-16:15

Valedictory Ceremony in the Main Auditorium

SUB-THEME 2**ART, ARCHITECTURE, AND DAILY LIFE:
EXPRESSION OF BUDDHIST CULTURE****Venue:** Meeting Room**Session 1** | Time: 09:30-11:30**FROM TRANSMISSION TO TRANSFORMATION: A
SHARED BUDDHIST LEGACY****Moderators:** Most Ven. Tho Lac and Most Ven. Dr. Thich Giac Hoang

- **10:00-10:15** - *Dr. Vu Hong Thuat and Dr. Nguyen Thanh Sinh: From Transmission to Transformation: Differences between Vietnamese and Indian Buddhist Culture Based on Research at Northern Vietnamese Temples*
- **10:15-10:30** - *Nguyen Thi Thu Hoan: Influence of Indian Culture through Religion and Language on Cham Pa Inscriptions at the National Museum of History*
- **10:30-10:45** - *Dr. Nguyen Thi Thanh Thuy: The Fusion and Assimilation of Indian and Vietnamese Buddhist Thought during the Tran Dynasty*
- **10:45-11:00** - *Dr. Le Duc Hanh: Buddhism and Culture: The Interconnection between India and Vietnam*
- **11:00-11:15** - *Dr. Ho Tuong: Buddhist Culture in Vietnamese Life Cycle Rituals*
- **11:15-11:30** - Discussion & Certificate Presentation

Lunch Break | 11:30-12:30**Session 2** | Time: 13:00-14:30**ART, ARCHITECTURE, AND DAILY LIFE: EXPRESSION
OF BUDDHIST CULTURE****Moderators:** Assoc. Prof. Dr. Nguyen Van Manh and SC. Dr. TN. Tue Chau

- **13:00-13:15** - *Assoc. Prof. Dr. Nguyen Van Manh: Factors Influencing the Architecture of Hue Temples*

- **13:15-13:30** - *Dr. Nguyen Van Quy: Cham Pa Buddhism through Epigraphic Records*
- **13:30-13:45** - *Dr. Cao Thu Nga: Four-Armed Buddha Statues at Buu Son and Buu An Temples (Dong Nai) in the Cultural Relationship between Indian and Vietnamese Buddhism*
- **13:45-14:00** - *Ven. PhD Candidate Thich Thien Phu: From Ancient and Medieval Stupas in India*
- **14:00-14:15** - (Presentation Slot)
- **14:15-14:30** - Discussion & Certificate Presentation

Session 3 | 15:30-16:15

Valedictory Ceremony at the Main Auditorium

SUB-THEME 3

BUDDHIST PILGRIMAGE: CONNECTING SACRED SITES

Venue: Lower Hall

Session 1 | 09:30-11:30

BUDDHIST PILGRIMAGE: CONNECTING SACRED SITES

Moderators: Most Ven. Dr. Thich Vien Anh and Bhikkhuni Dr. TN. Huong Nhu

- **10:00-10:15** - *Ho Nguyen Tuan Kiet & Dr. Ho Tuong: Cultural Tourism to Buddhist Temples in Vietnam*
- **10:15-10:30** - *Dr. Hoang Thi Anh Dao: The Emergence of Buddhism in India and Its Introduction into Vietnam - Historical and Cultural Values*
- **10:30-10:45** - *Ven. Thich Dao Tue & Tran Van Hoi: Buddhist Marks of Cham Pa and Dai Viet in Quang Binh from the 9th to 14th Century*
- **10:45-11:00** - *Ven. Thich Dong Tam: The Shared Buddhist Heritage of Vietnam with Roots from Indian Buddhism*
- **11:00-11:15** - (Presentation Slot)
- **11:15-11:30** - Discussion & Certificate Presentation

Lunch Break | 11:30-12:30

Session 2 | Time 13:00-14:30**MEDITATION PRACTICES AND DOCTRINAL EXCHANGE: THE BUDDHIST PATH ACROSS BORDERS**

Moderators: Most Ven. Dr. Thich Hanh Tue and Bhikkhuni Dr. Hang Lien

- **13:00-13:15** - Assoc. Prof. Dr. Nguyen Ngoc Dung: *The "Three Religions Sharing One Origin" Phenomenon as a Form of Buddhist Reception in Vietnam's History*
- **13:15-13:30** - Dr. Vo Quang Hien: *Cultural and Spiritual Interaction: An Interdisciplinary Study on Art, Architecture, and Daily Life Between Indian and Vietnamese Buddhism*
- **13:30-13:45** - Nguyen Huu Phuc & Nguyen Dang Manh: *Marks of Indian Buddhism in Vietnam: A Study of Theravada Buddhism in Thua Thien Hue*
- **13:45-14:00** - Huynh Thanh Binh: *Tracing the Origins of the White Horse General Worship Belief*
- **14:00-14:15** - Bhikkhuni PhD Candidate Thich Nu Lien Hien: *The Transmission of Buddhism from India to Vietnam - A Significant Spiritual Transformation*
- **14:15-14:30** - Discussion & Certificate Presentation

Session 3 | 15:30-16:15

Valedictory Ceremony at the Main Auditorium

SUB-THEME 4**MEDITATION PRACTICES AND DOCTRINAL EXCHANGE: THE BUDDHIST PATH ACROSS BORDERS**

Venue: Bao Thap Hong An

Session 1 | Time 09:30-11:30**MEDITATION PRACTICES AND DOCTRINAL EXCHANGE: THE BUDDHIST PATH ACROSS BORDERS**

Moderators: Most Ven. Dr. Thich Nguyen Hanh and Assoc. Prof. Dr. Do Thi Minh Thuy

- **10:00-10:15** - Ven. Dr. Thich Nguyen Hanh: *The Zen Tradition*

and the Influence of Zen Master Vinitaruci in Vietnam

- **10:15-10:30** - Assoc. Prof. Dr. Do Thi Minh Thuy: *Vinitaruci Zen School as a Representative of Historical, Spiritual, and Cultural Links Between Indian and Vietnamese Buddhism*
- **10:30-10:45** - Dr. Do Quang Huy: *Meditation in Indian Buddhism and Its Influence on Vietnamese Lifestyles*
- **10:45-11:00** - Dr. Vo Minh Tuan: *The Vinitaruci Zen School*
- **11:00-11:15** - Assoc. Prof. Dr. Hoang Thuc Lan: *The Cultural and Philosophical Syncretism of Indian Buddhism in Vietnam*
- **11:15-11:30** - Discussion

Lunch Break | 11:30-12:30

Session 2 | Time 13:00-14:30

MEDITATION PRACTICES AND DOCTRINAL EXCHANGE: THE BUDDHIST PATH ACROSS BORDERS

Moderators: Ven. Dr. Thich Tri Dinh and Assoc. Prof. Dr. Hoang Thuc Lan

- **13:00-13:15** – Bhikkhuni Dr. Tue Lien & Bhikkhuni Dr. Nghiem Lien: *Indian and Vietnamese Buddhism: Vietnamese Bhikkhuni Khất Sĩ From Transmission to Transformation*
- **13:15-13:30** - Dr. Nguyen Thanh Trung: *Buddhist Criticism as the Transformation of Indian-Vietnamese Buddhist Heritage*
- **13:30-13:45** - Le To Nam: *Key Characteristics of Indian Buddhism in Southern Vietnam*
- **13:45-14:00** - Bhikkhuni Thich Nu Lien Bon: *Meditation Practices and Doctrinal Exchange: The Buddhist Path Across Borders*
- **14:00-14:15** - (Presentation Slot)
- **14:15-14:30** - Discussion & Certificate Presentation

Session 3 | 15:30-16:15

Valedictory Ceremony at the Main Auditorium

VALEDICTORY CEREMONY

Main Auditorium, 15:30, October 20, 2024

1. Remarks by the Conference Chair: Most Ven. Dr. Thich Nhat Tu, Permanent Vice-Rector of the Vietnam Buddhist University
2. Remarks by **Most Ven. Dr. Thich Tam Duc**, Permanent Vice Director of the Vietnam Institute of Buddhist Studies
3. Remarks by **Prof. Phan Thi Thu Hien**, University of Social Sciences and Humanities - Vietnam National University, Ho Chi Minh City
3. Remarks by **Prof. Dr. Siddharth Singh**, Former Head, Department of Pali and Buddhist Studies, Faculty of Arts, Banaras Hindu University.
4. Remarks by **Assistant Prof. Arvind Kumar Singh**, Gautam Buddha University
6. Vote of Thanks by the Organizing Committee: Most Ven.Dr. Thích Giác Hoàng.