



**A STUDY OF THE ACTIVITIES OF  
DUC SON TEMPLE FOR STRENGTHENING  
THE YOUTH WELFARE IN VIETNAM**

**BHIKKHUNĪ HOANG THI HA  
(THICH NU LIEN UYEN)**

A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of  
The Requirements for the Degree of  
Master of Arts  
(Buddhist Studies)

Graduate School  
Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University

C.E. 2017



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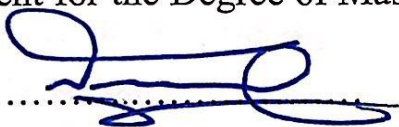
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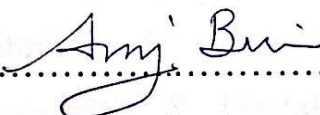
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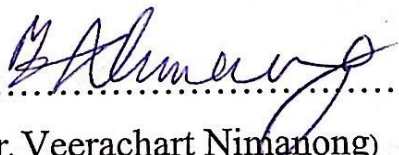
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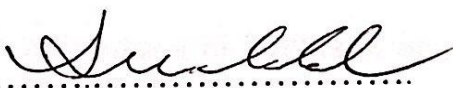
  
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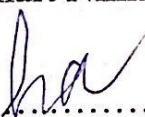
  
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### **Abstract**

This research has three objectives, namely: 1) to study the problems and the factors that causes child abandonment in Vietnam, 2) to study the role of Duc Son temple in strengthening the youth welfare in Social Work, 3) to study the principles and activities of Duc Son Temple and their application for strengthening the youth welfare in Vietnam.

In this research, the researcher expects to explore the following findings: firstly, the problems and factors that cause of child abandonment and its consequences in the Vietnamese society, laws procedures and

measures adopted by the government of Vietnam and other organizations for preventing child abandonment in Vietnam. Secondly, exploring the history of Duc Son Center and understanding its role for youth welfare in Vietnam. Thirdly, how Duc Son center applies the Buddhist Principles in educating the youth with secular, vocational and religious teachings in order to develop their moral and intellectual quality and thus strengthening the youth welfare in Vietnam. Finally, how such an institution can be a model working for the youth who can contribute to the social development.

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Bhikkhunī Hoang Thi Ha

12/ March/ 201

### List of Abbreviations

A	Aṅguttara Nikāya
D	Dīgha Nikāya
Dhp	Dhammapada
Dīp	Dīpavaṁsa
Khp	Khuddakapaṭha
M	Majjhima Nikāya
Mil	Milindapañha
S	Saṃyutta Nikāya
Ud	Udāna
Vism	Visuddhimagga
Vin	Vinaya Piṭaka
CPD	A Critical Pali Dictionary of V. Trenckner
CPED	Concise Pali-English Dictionary of Buddhadatta
DOP	Dictionary of Pali by M. Cone
DPPN	Dictionary of Pali Proper Names by G.P. Malalasekera
JIP	Journal of Indian Philosophy,
JPTS	Journal of Pali Text Society, London
PED	Pali-English Dictionary
NBD	Nyanatiloka's Buddhist Dictionary
PTS	Pali Text Society, London



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## Chapter I

### Introduction

#### 1.1 Background and Significance of the Research

The youth is the most significant section of any society. It is the blooming age with full of energy, ability and potentiality to prepare themselves as the future leader of society. If these young folk are nurtured properly they can develop into the strongest instrument of the society and nation. In today's world the young people are becoming the prey of many detrimental effects and getting involved in the evil practices such as, drugs, corruption, criminal activities, and so on that destroy both their life and the society itself. There are multitudes of temptations that drive them to the destructive paths. Buddhism offers a very essential guidance for strengthening the youth welfare and making the strongest and the most useful part of the society. Duc Son Temple in Vietnam has been successfully doing this great task of educating the young people with

proper Buddhist knowledge and training since 1986.<sup>1</sup> After the violence of the war of 1975<sup>2</sup>, four Bhikkhunis who were dhamma sisters namely Minh Duc, Minh Tu, Minh Nhat, Minh Hang came together in the mountain areas, named Kim Phung, in order to live peacefully cultivating loving-kindness (metta) and compassion (Karuṇā)<sup>3</sup>. They had to plant

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<sup>1</sup> **The Annual Report of of Duc Son Center Submitted to the President of Vietnam**, No. 01/BC-CDS, Hue 8/8/2016.

<sup>2</sup> **Kevin Hillstrom and Laurie Collier Hillstrom, Vietnam War Almanac**, (San Francisco: U.X.L. 2001), pp. 187-196.

<sup>3</sup> Loving-kindness (metta) and compassion (Karuṇā) are the two of the four brahmaviharas. The other two are mudita and upekkha.

wet-rice, cassava<sup>4</sup>, sweet potato etc. After a longtime of hard working, they built a very simple wooden-temple by themselves, cultivated morality and studied Buddha's Teachings in a harmonious environment. Later on this temple came to be known as Hoa Luong Temple<sup>5</sup>. Due to the great righteousness and generosity, the Bhikkhunis were deeply respected by the devotees of the village. Gradually, the villagers and the devotees started to come to the temple in order to participate in the dhamma activities, listen to the Dharma and practice meditation under the guidance of the Bhikkhunis.

In 1966 a small temple called, Duc Son, was established on the opposite side to Hoa Luong Temple<sup>6</sup>. It was controlled by a group of lay Buddhists. After sometimes, they realized that the Bhikkhunis were very kind and virtuous and so they decided to invite the bhikkhunis to abide in Duc Son temple. Since then, two Bhikkhunis namely Minh Duc and Minh Tu went to Duc Son temple to help people in improving their spiritual life.

In a very stormy night of 1989, one lady found a child of around three years old left alone in a field. She did not know the identity of the father of the baby. She just heard that the mother of the baby had passed away some days back and assumed that the relatives of the baby might be extremely poor and so they abandoned the baby callously. That generous lady brought the child to the temple and requested the bhikkunis for help. It was a bit difficult for the bhikkhunis to take care of the baby especially

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<sup>4</sup> “Also called Manioc, Mandioc, or Yuca (*Manihot esculenta*), tuberous edible plant of the spurge family (*Euphorbiaceae*) from the American tropics. It is cultivated throughout the tropical world for its tuberous roots, from which cassava flour, breads, tapioca, a laundry starch, and even an alcoholic beverage are derived. Cassava probably was first cultivated by the Maya in Yucatán.” Source: “cassava.” *Encyclopædia Britannica*. *Encyclopaedia Britannica Ultimate Reference Suite*. (Chicago: *Encyclopædia Britannica*, 2010), Retrieved on March 25, 2017, <http://global.britannica.com/plant/cassava>

<sup>5</sup> The name “Hoa Luong” is the Temple of Harmony and Honest.

<sup>6</sup> Interview with Mr. Pham Hung, the Present Leader of Duc Son Buddhist Group, May 26, 2016.

in those adverse circumstances. However the bhikkhunis decided to help her. They named the baby as Kieu Thi Thuy Chung (Constant or Loyal). It can be said that that child was the very first inspiration behind the establishment of Duc Son Orphanage Center<sup>7</sup>.

It is a known fact that after the war, the Vietnamese people were passing their lives in extremely appalling situation. Almost all the families were in miserable situations. Bomb and bullet shattered their life into pieces. Gallons of Agent Orange<sup>8</sup> destroyed the lives, trees and vegetation; the effect of which still prevails. Each and every family lost their members and relatives. Children lost their parents. They did not have food to eat let alone education. It was such a dreadful situation to be overcome by people of Vietnam at that time.

This situation deeply moved the bhikkhunis who had the firsthand experience of the war and hence, were committed to take care of the deserted children<sup>9</sup>. In 1990 the number of the abandoned children increased to fifteen. Since then The Duc Son Orphanage Center started the journey as the refuge to the destitute and homeless children. During that time, the financial condition of the temple was very limited but the bhikkhunis were determined to grow and prevent every piece of cassava and every grain of rice so that more than twenty five people could survive their lives every day. Currently there are two hundred children living in the orphanage.

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<sup>7</sup> Duc Son orphanage is an institute for orphaned children. It is located near Hue city. It was founded in 1986 by Nha Su Thich Nu Minh Tu. For more information: <http://www.ducsonorphans.org/>.

<sup>8</sup> Agent Orange, mixture of herbicides that U.S. military forces sprayed in Vietnam from 1962 to 1971 during the Vietnam War for the dual purpose of defoliating forest areas that might conceal Viet Cong and North Vietnamese forces and destroying crops that might feed the enemy.” See: “Agent Orange.” Encyclopædia Britannica. Encyclopaedia Britannica Ultimate Reference Suite. (Chicago: Encyclopædia Britannica, 2010),

<sup>9</sup> Duc Son Prphanage, Vietnam Retrieved on March 05, 2017, <http://www.ducsonorphans.org/history.html>

All these children are brought up with proper Buddhist education, ethics and discipline. The common family name for all girls and boys are Gotami<sup>10</sup> (Kieu) and Gotama (Cu) respectively because all are considered as the children of the Buddha. These family names have been approved by the government of Vietnam and the tradition has been continuing for thirty years. The purpose of the temple is all of them to be brought up under the guidance and great blessings of the Triple Gems and the devotion and caring of all the nuns residing in the temple.

The temple provides them with necessary Buddhist education as well as general education so that they can grow up as self-dependent. Besides, it also provides education on computer, sculpture, garments, planting fresh vegetable, dance and so on. There is a very well-planned daily routine for all the children and nuns so that they can perform their everyday religious and other activities. This routine helps to train them on regular basis. Apart from imparting teaching to the residential children the orphanage also provides educational assistance to the poor children in mountainous areas. Besides, it also organizes various cultural and religious programs in order to aware them about the Buddhist culture. Thus the institute has been contributing to the development of the society and the country.

Apart from taking care of the children the temple also contributes in the development of education. It sponsors 96 classes of pre – primary school (for 3–5 year old children) who live in the unprivileged mountainous districts having very poor opportunity of education.

This study has manifold significance. As an ideal Buddhist organization contributing to the welfare and development of the society, it is important to explore the history and activities of the institute. Besides, the contribution made by the institute is also important to be brought to light. How is the society being benefitted by the institute? What impact it has created upon the society? How does it apply Buddhist

---

<sup>10</sup> Gotami and Gotoma are the family name for women and men of the Buddha family respectively. The Buddha himself was called Sraman Gotoma. These names are given to the orphanage children since all of them are considered as the Buddha's offspring.

principles to train the young people? By studying the history and activities of the institute throughout the ages and examining its impact upon the society we will be able to know about the significance and necessity of the institute and how this kind of institute can be helpful in the welfare and development of a society.

## **1.2 Objectives of Research**

The purpose of this research is threefold as follows;

1.2.1 To study the problems and the factors that causes the child abandonment in Vietnam.

1.2.2 To study the role of Duc Son temple in strengthening the youth welfare in Social Work.

1.2.3 To analyze the principles and activities of Duc Son Temple and their application for strengthening the youth welfare in Vietnam.

## **1.3 Statements of the Problems Desired to Know**

There are a few research questions that the researcher intends to explore through this research, such as,

1.3.1 What are the problems and the factors that cause the child abandonment in Vietnam?

1.3.2 What is the role of Duc Son temple in strengthening the youth welfare in Social Work?

1.3.3 What are the principles and activities of Duc Son Temple and their application for strengthening the youth welfare in Vietnam?

## **1.4 Scope of the Research**

This research will mainly focus on history and activities of Duc Son temple and its conjoined institutes since its establishment. Besides, in order to justify the contribution and impact made by the institute upon the

society this research will also cover a survey across the society and the people who have been directly and indirectly benefited from it.

## **1.5 Definition of the Terms Used in the Research**

1.5.1 Youth Welfare refers to the development of the quality of life of the young people living at the Duc Son Temple, providing them with education, both general and religious, which would turn them into significant resource for the society and the country.

1.5.2 Social Work means the works of Duc Son Temple in providing food, accommodation, education that includes general, religious, cultural and technical in order to make self-dependent and thus to improve the conditions of those orphan, homeless, disabled children in Vietnam community.

1.5.3 Vietnamese Buddhism means the form of Buddhism practiced by the Vietnamese. The predominant form of Buddhism followed in Vietnam is Mahāyāna which is a combination of Chan (Zen) and Pure Land, with some Tien-t'ai. Besides, Theravadin Buddhism is prevalent in Vietnam.

1.5.4 Strengthening implies the development of the youth welfare to be stronger, more forceful and effective for the betterment of the society in four aspects: Physical, behavioral, mental and intellectual.

## **1.6 Methodology for Research**

This is a documentary research mainly involves the discussion of case study taking the institute and its contribution as a model of strengthening the youth welfare in development of social work in Vietnam. It also emphasizes on how Buddhist principles has played role in encouraging such beneficial works. Therefore, its methodology can be divided into these ways as follows:

1.6.1 Gathering data from primary sources such as Theravāda and Mahāyāna texts.

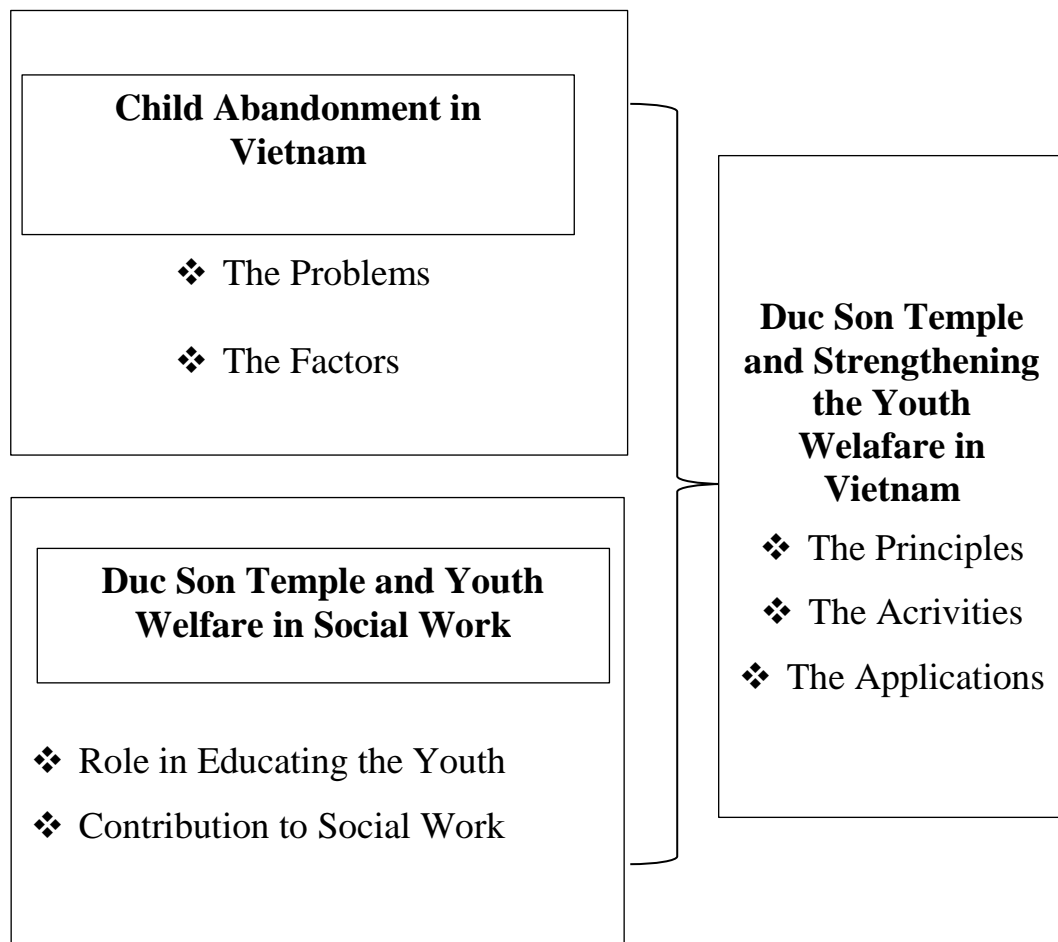
1.6.2 Collecting data from sources such as books, research works, Buddhist congregations, newspaper, Buddhist journals, interviews, documents, pictures and other Buddhist books and scriptures.

1.6.3 Analyzing the relevant concepts of Youth Welfare from books, theses and reports on Buddhism from Buddhist Scholars.

1.6.4 Analyzing the various views on Youth Welfare from the famous scholars to find the answers to the question in the Statements of the problem.

1.6.5 Drawing conclusions and the results for further research.

## 1.7 Conceptual Framework



## **1.8 Outcome of Research Expected To Obtain**

This research paper contributes of the advantages as follows

1.8.1 Understanding the problems and the factors that cause the child abandonment in Vietnam

1.8.2 Understanding the role played by the Duc Son Temple for youth welfare in Vietnam.

1.8.3 Understanding the principles and activities of the temple to strengthen the youth welfare.



## **Chapter II**

### **Problems and Factors That Cause Child Abandonment in Vietnam**

Child abandonment is a very serious social phenomenon in Vietnam. There are various causes behind this problem. It entails difficulty in distinguishing exact causes. Based on the available sources this section provides a brief description of the problems and factors that cause child abandonment in Vietnam.

#### **2.1 Definition of Child Abandonment**

There is notable difficulty in determining the scope of the term. It includes various categories of children. A research project conducted by International Social Service (from now on ISS) with support from UNICEF Vietnam and MOLISA entitled “Qualitative Research into the Root Causes of the Child Abandonment and Child Relinquishment in Vietnam” offers the following definition of Child Abandonment:

Child abandonment in its common understanding in Vietnam concerns a process and a situation in which children are anonymously left behind by their biological mother’s or parents.<sup>11</sup>

It is further noted that the term “abandoned” children commonly used in Viet Nam in an amalgam of children who are abandoned, relinquished and other groups of children. The term abandonment in its true sense of parents anonymity (Tre bi bo roi hoan toan) exists, but is considered so harsh that it is not used in legal texts and social analysis.

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<sup>11</sup> Qualitative Research into the Root Causes of Child Abandonment and Child Relinquishment in Vietnam, (Geneva: International Social Service, 2015), p. 8.

As a result (tre bi bo roi) is used which captures various categories of children.<sup>12</sup>

These children are left out in “public places” such as road side or park or any hidden place just after their birth. The mother or parents keep their identity unknown. They hope that the child will be picked up by someone and will be looked after.

## **2.2 What is Behind Child Abandonment in Vietnam**

It is not an easy task to pinpoint the exact causes of child abandonment because the parents of the abandoned children are difficult to identify and hence it is impossible to know why they abandon their children.<sup>13</sup> Besides, the causes vary from case to case. Based on the information offered by the professionals of the family welfare and child protection services system, ISS reports that “poverty, unemployment, homelessness, migration, lack of sex education and son preference”<sup>14</sup> are the root causes of child abandonment. Following is a brief description of these causes:

### **2.2.1 Poverty**

Although poverty is considered as the key factor of child abandonment it is accompanied by various other problems. It is noted that “when poverty is mixed with a culmination of intra-familial and extra-familial factors it leads to the child’s separation from his or her family”<sup>15</sup>. There are many people especially in the remote areas suffer from extreme poverty. Parents cannot afford the fundamental the discrimination faced by single mothers requirements such as: food, clothing, education,

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<sup>12</sup> Ibid, p. 30.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid, p. 38.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid, p. 39.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid, p. 18.

medicine and shelter to their children. As a result, they leave out their children in hidden places.

### **2.2.2 Unemployment**

This is another important cause of child abandonment. Many people in the country do not have a job. It leads to poverty. Being unable to take care of their children, these people discard them.

### **2.2.3 Homelessness**

This cause is also linked with poverty. There many homeless people in the country. Most of them just live at different temples. Hence, their children are adopted at temple.

### **2.2.4 Migration**

Migration is another cause of child abandonment. It happens in various ways. “There are three groups of children that migration has an impact on: those left behind while their parents migrate, those who migrate with their parents and those who migrate on their own.”<sup>16</sup> The most important reason behind migration is looking for work. According to UNICEF, “migration of people from rural areas to urban cities contributed to an increased number of abandoned, neglected, abused and exploited children as well as youth crimes”<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> Jones Nicola, Presler-Marshall Elizabeth and Thuy Dang Bich, *Falling between the cracks How poverty and migration are resulting in inadequate care for children living in Viet Nam’s Mekong Delta*, p. 33, Retrieved on March 8, 2017, <https://www.odi.org/sites/odi.org.uk/files/odi-assets/publications-opinion-files/9306.pdf>.

<sup>17</sup> Child Protection, Vietnam, Retrieved from <https://www.unicef.org/vietnam/protection.html>, Ron April 24, 2017.

### **2.2.5 Lack of Sex Education**

Lack of sex education is another very important cause of child abandonment. Lack of enough sex education leads to many girls unwanted pregnancies. Most of them are teenagers, students or young workers in industrial areas. According to UNICEF “the number of abandoned children will still increase due to an increase in the number of unwanted births among young women and especially because of the AIDS epidemic.”<sup>18</sup> Being afraid of familial and social condemnation, they adopt the means of abortion or try to maintain the fetus until birth. They discard the child immediately after giving birth.

### **2.2.6 Son preference**

There is a tendency of having male children among many parents. If they have female children, they just leave them out.

Due to the causes explicated above child abandonment has become a big problem in Vietnam. The research conducted by ISS lists down the following probable types of women who are prone to abandon children:

- a. “Teenage mothers;
- b. Students with unexpected pregnancies;
- c. Young women in industrial zones (in big cities of the country);
- d. Women with health problems (including HIV+ and mental illnesses);
- e. Unmarried mothers (“single mums”);
- f. Women with economic difficulties (low incomes);
- g. Divorced women;
- h. Mothers who want to re-marry;
- i. Women with children suffering from disability;
- j. Internal migrants and

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<sup>18</sup> The Qualitative Research... op. cit, p. 39.

k. Families with too many children.”<sup>19</sup>

There are some procedures after a child is identified as abandoned. At first police investigation is done and based on the police investigation necessary measures are taken. There are several ways regarding how the child should be taken care of. If any one of the parent is identified, he or she is asked to take the child back. In some cases, although the mother or father is identified, decision is taken to “hand over the child to others who have the principal responsibility to identify form of care options- with input from the parents.” Those whose parents are not identified are “registered as parentless” and are “taken care of by an institution”<sup>20</sup>.

After having identified as “abandoned child”, the child goes through a few “protection measures” such as “temporary care” provided by the Vietnam. There are also other alternative ways of taking care are such as: “guardianship, kin-based care, community care (e.g. social houses), informal foster care and social protection centers. Adoption, both domestic and inter-country, is another option available to children deprived of their families.”<sup>21</sup> There is very clear law regarding adoption. The commune People’s Committee looks into the matter and to decide for the adoption whether domestic or inter-country adoption is suitable for the children. According to the Law on Adoption international adoption is determined if there is no option for domestic adoption.<sup>22</sup> An emphasis on how an adopted child should be taken care of is indicated in the Law on Marriage and Family stating “child adoption means the establishment of the parent-child relationship between the adopter and the adoptee, ensuring that the adoptee will be looked after, reared, cared for and brought up in conformity with social morality.”<sup>23</sup> People’s Committee is chief decision-maker about the adoption or guardianship. There are

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<sup>19</sup> Ibid, p. 38.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid, pp. 39-40.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid, p. 40.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid, p. 40.

<sup>23</sup> Molisa and Unicef, **Creating A Protective Environment for Children in Vietnam: AN Assessment of Child Protection Laws and Policies and Especially Children in Special Circumstances in Vietnam** , (Hanoi, 2009), pp. 41.

regulations about the eligibility of children and those who want adopt. According to the rule, the following categories of children are eligible for adoption: “children must be under the age of 15 years, children over 15 can be adopted only if they are disabled or have lost their civil act capacity.”<sup>24</sup> With regard to the Vietnamese children eligible for adoption are of two types “a. children who are living in nurturing establishments lawfully set up in Vietnam; and b. children who are living in families if they are orphans, disabled or relatives of the child adopters”<sup>25</sup> but, the emphasis is given on the capability of the adopters to take care of the children.

## 2.3 Preventing Child Abandonment

Child abandonment is considered as very crucial social issue in Vietnam. It demands necessary measures not only to protect the abandoned children but also to eliminate abandonment for good. Various public and private organizations are working on this issue.

### 2.3.1 Law Enforcement

After a child is identified as abandoned “efforts should primarily be directed to enabling the child to remain in or return to the care of his or her parents, or when appropriate other close family members.”<sup>26</sup>

In order to prevent child abandonment and protect the rights of child, the government has adopted a number of laws. According to article 7.1 of Law on Child Protection, Care and Education “abandoning children by their parents or guardians” is strictly prohibited<sup>27</sup>. In article 11.2, it is mentioned that “children whose parents are not yet identified, if having request, shall be assisted by the competent agencies to identify

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<sup>24</sup> Ibid, p. 42.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid, p. 42.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid, p. 43.

<sup>27</sup> **Law on Child Protection, Care and Education, Article 7.1, Chapter 1, No: 25/2004/QH11, June 15, 2004.**

their parents according law provisions.”<sup>28</sup> The necessity of children to stay with their biological parents is emphasized in article 13 of chapter 2 and article 24 and 25 chapter 3. It is stated that parents and guardians are closest relatives and hence most important people who can play vital role for the normal growth of the children. As it is mentioned “parents and guardians are the first persons responsible for the care and nurture of children, giving the best conditions for development.”<sup>29</sup> In article 25.1 “parents have the responsibility to ensure conditions for their children to live with them.”<sup>30</sup>

Apart from these protective measures, laws have also been enforced regarding the children who are identified as abandoned. These laws vary regarding the place where the child is found.

### **2.3.2 Abandonment in Maternity ward or Hospital**

It is noted that “if the child is left behind in a maternity ward or hospital the mother has run away just after the delivery, the hospital either takes care of the child or hands him or her to the closest social protection center (SPC) and sometimes even directly to the childless couples.”<sup>31</sup> Special careful attention is given regarding the placement of the abandoned children in social protection center because as

The UN Committee on the Rights of the Child repeatedly emphasized that the placement of orphaned or abandoned children in an institution (orphanage, shelter, compassion house) should be a measure of last resort, meaning that it should be used only if there are no other options. This is because institutions have been shown to be detrimental to

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<sup>28</sup> Ibid, Article 11.2, Chapter 2.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid, Article 11.2, Chapter 2.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid, Article 11.2, Chapter 1.

<sup>31</sup> The Qualitative Research...op. cit., p. 43.

the child's development, and children placed in institutional care are at great risk of abuse and maltreatment.<sup>32</sup>

### **2.3.3 Child Abandonment in a Public Place**

It means that such children are left out on the roadside, park, or in pagoda or institution. These children are more vulnerable and their life is more endangered<sup>33</sup>.

There are a number of abandoned children living at Duc Son Center. These children are picked up at the gate of Duc Son Center and sheltered at the orphanage. They are discarded by their parents or guardians in public places such as: in front of a social protection center, temple, church, hospital or market and hidden places. Most of these children are newborns and bear birth defects on their body. The number of abandoned children at Duc Son Center is gradually increasing.

Apart from the abandoned children there are also other children who live at Duc Son Center. Following is a brief description of it.

#### **Orphan<sup>34</sup>**

These children lost their parents at a very early age. After the death of their parents, they are considered as burden to their relatives who bring them to the orphanage.

#### **Poor children who live at Duc Son Center**

These children are born in poor families. Their parents cannot afford education and other necessities to them. Therefore, they are

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<sup>32</sup> Creating A Protective Environment for Children in Vietnam...op. cit., p.

<sup>33</sup> The Qualitative Research...op. cit., p. 44.

<sup>34</sup> See the illustration of Duc Son Orphanage children at figure 20, p.101.



brought to Duc Son Center. Most of these children come from the rural and mountainous areas.

### **Children with Physical and Psychological Disabilities**

Apart from, the above categories there are another group of children who have certain bodily or mental defects such as: blindness, deafness, or cerebral palsy<sup>35</sup> due to the effects of Agent Orange.

Children with disabilities living at Duc Son Center can be divided into two sub-categories according to the causes of disability:

#### **Disabilities caused by Agent Orange**

Although more than four decades have elapsed since the Vietnam War, the country has not been completely recovered from the fatal effects of the war yet. During ten years of war, the United States sprayed nearly 20 million gallons of chemical upon Laos, Cambodia and Vietnam.<sup>36</sup> The toxic effect of the Agent Orange still prevails across the region. Even today many children are born with serious physical defects. These children turned into burden to the poor families. As a result, the parents or guardian leave out the children. There are many deformed babies who have been picked up and sheltered at Duc Son Center<sup>37</sup>.

#### **Generic Disabilities due to the Psychological Disorder of Parents**

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<sup>35</sup> Cerebral palsy (CP) is the term used for a group of non-progressive disorders of movement and posture caused by abnormal development of, or damage to, motor control centers of the brain. CP is caused by events before, during, or after birth. The abnormalities of muscle control that define CP are often accompanied by other neurological and physical abnormalities". Retrieved on March 08, 2017, <http://medical-dictionary.thefreedictionary.com/cerebral+palsy>.

<sup>36</sup> Alvin Young, *The History, Use, Disposition and Environmental Fate of Agent Orange*, (New York: Springer, 2009), p. 104.

<sup>37</sup> See the illustration of Duc Son Handicapped Children at figure 21, p. 101.

There is another group of children who are healthy enough but have certain problems in their brain. Problems of this kind are resulted from the influence of parents who suffer from mental illness. These children are often hyperactive, mischievous, unstable and with poor cognition. Therefore, it is difficult to train them with education like other normal students.

### **Poor Children who live at their home**

Apart from the children who live at Duc Son center, there is another group of children who live at their home with parents and/or relatives. Duc Son center also help this type of children. These children are mainly from ethnic minorities who live in the mountainous areas. Their parents or guardians cannot afford the fundamental necessities to these children. They suffer from chronic malnutrition<sup>38</sup>. In these cases the guardians of the children approach the local government authorities who confirm the case and ask Duc Son Center for necessary help. Duc Son has several schemes to nurture such children till their adulthood.

## **2.4 Concluding Remarks**

In the above, it has been discussed how Duc Son has been contributing to the welfare of the children living at the center. It has adopted various measures and implemented them properly. It has been noticed that the center is highly attentive and dedicated to provide all the necessary requirements to the children so that they lead a happy life. It is careful about both physical and psychological development of them and in order to ensure their healthy growth it follows required methods and maintains a good association with local government, sangha community and other social organizations. It is obvious from the above discussion that the measures and training offered to the children are very important

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<sup>38</sup> Interviewing with Nun Minh Tu, The founder of Duc Son, 10/03/2017 at Duc Son Temple, Vietnam.

for their overall development and essential to prepare them for the responsible citizen of the country. This is how Duc Son Center has been playing a very significant role for the youth welfare in Vietnam.

## **Chapter III**

### **The Role Played by the Duc Son Temple for Youth Welfare in Vietnam**

This chapter is devoted to the discussion about the role played by Duc Son Center for the welfare and development of the youth in Vietnam. It provides a discussion on the historical background of Duc Son Center from its origin to the present. In order to understand the history of the institute, it also includes a brief biography of the founders. Besides, it will concentrate on the contribution made by other supporters and well-wishers who have offered their generous help for the overall development of the institution and the orphanage children. There is a lack of written document about the center. The most reliable sources that the researcher collected information from are the interview with the founder and director of the center, annual report of the center submitted to the government and several other official documents and one article published in one magazine.

#### **3.1 The Historical Background of Duc Son Temple**

##### **3.1.1 Location**

Duc son Center is officially known as Center for Orphaned Children Parenting Duc Son Pagoda. It is affiliated with Duc Son Pagoda, Cu Chanh 1 District, Thuy Bang Commune, Huong Thuy Town, Thua Thien Hue Province. It was established within the area of Duc Son Temple<sup>39</sup>.

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<sup>39</sup> See illustration of Duc Son Orphanage at Appendix, figure 1, p. 92.

### 3.1.2 The Establishment and Development Process

Duc Son Center adopted an orphan girl in 1986<sup>40</sup>. After that, more children were coming to the center: some of them were abandoned children who were left out at hospital, road side, under tree, at temple gate and other public places. The number of children was gradually increasing. In a very short period of time, the number of children grew up to 200<sup>41</sup>. But the figure is not constant because those who graduate every year leave the center and find job outside. The total number of fostered children at the center is 165 in 2016<sup>42</sup>. They are from a wide range of ages, from new born baby to the teenagers and young boys and girls who attend the Intermediate school and university. The youngest ones are only some days old and the oldest child is 39 years old who is physical handicapped.

Duc Son Center was recognized as an affiliated institution of Hue Buddhist Sangha in the beginning of 1997<sup>43</sup>, and was given the permission to be maintained and developed by the Government Committee of Thua Thien Hue province. They offered a piece of 1010 m<sup>2</sup> feet of land<sup>44</sup> to construct the two-storey building for the accommodation of the children.

Taiwan Association, a charity organization CI, Compassion International (CI), an organization from Taiwan<sup>45</sup> visited Duc Son Center in 1998<sup>46</sup> and witnessed the problems and difficulties of the center in accommodating and taking care of so many children. Then, they decided

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<sup>40</sup> The Annual Report...op.cit.

<sup>41</sup> Interview with Nun Minh Tu, the Founder and Director of Duc Son Center, Vietnam, December 28, 2016.

<sup>42</sup> The Annual Report...op.cit.

<sup>43</sup> Decision of the provincial People's Committee on the Allocation and Construction of Duc Son Orphanage", No. 2115 QL/UBND, February 24, 1997.

<sup>44</sup> Planning Certificate by Mr. Nguyen the Truyen, Director of the Department of Construction of Thua Thien Hue Province, No. 56/ CC-QH, Dated 24/4/1997

<sup>45</sup> Zhi-shan Foundation Taiwan, Taiwan Alliance in International Development (Taiwan AID), Taipei, official website: <http://www.taiwanaid.org/en/book/125>

<sup>46</sup> The Annual report...op.cit.

to support a certain amount of money as daily fee for children and scholarship for those who are good students. They supported Duc Son center through the Child Welfare Association in Thua Thien Hue Province<sup>47</sup>.

Besides, the expenses offered by C.I, the Buddhist Charity Committee of Thua Thien Hue Sangha to provide food, accommodation and education to the children. Many donors from various places also contribute to the expenditure of the children. Some part of these expenses comes from Tinh Tam's vegetarian restaurant of Duc Son Pagoda. Furthermore, there is also a big of 2000 m<sup>2</sup> of garden<sup>48</sup> made by the Duc Son Center and taken care of by the children and other members of the center. Various kinds of vegetables are produced in the garden. They contribute to the demand of nutrition and vitamins for the children besides providing vegetables to restaurant for sale. The children learn how to make garden and grow different kinds of vegetables. They work during holidays and vacation.

Since establishment, Duc Son Orphanage Center, under the supervision and guidance of the late Master Thich Nu Minh Duc and Master Thich Nu Minh Tu, Director of the center and the executive committee of center - the nuns of Duc Son pagoda have been endeavouring to rebuild the models of social charity by taking care of and supporting the children in terms of education, financial activities and offering training to specialize students so that they can help people. However, the institute has undergone many difficult stages in managing all these activities.

### **3.1.3 Support and Patronization Received**

Throughout its journey, the Executive Committee of Duc Son Orphanage Center has received generous support from several

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<sup>47</sup> Ibid.

<sup>48</sup> Planning Certificate...op.cit.

organizations and many devotees both from home and abroad<sup>49</sup>. It is worth mentioning that the help offered by these organizations have greatly contributed to overcome the obstacles that the institute has encountered and thus was able to stay firm on its mission. Based on the “Annual Report of Duc Son Center Submitted to the President of Vietnam” on August 8, 2016 following is a brief note on these organizations and individuals:

- The Duc Son Center has received generous help from the Government, its relevant departments and local authorities.

- It has received highly valuable advice and guidance from the Buddhist Sangha at Hue Province, Thua Thien Hue province and the Sangha at districts, at towns as well.

- Venerable monks and nuns from both home and abroad have significantly contributed to the development of the institute.

- Other social and Buddhist organizations<sup>50</sup>.

### **3.1.4 Difficulties Encountered**

In the development process of Duc Son, it has encountered a lot of difficulties<sup>51</sup>, such as:

- Financial limitations, mobilization resources.

- Limitations in Administrative procedures

- Lacking of qualifications of the People and hence it was difficult to mobilize people to participate in promotion activities and encourage learning.

- Insufficiency of human resources.

- Children who have already graduated from Universities or colleges leaving out of center were not finding good jobs.

Buddhist monks and nuns always take the value of good life and beautiful religion invented by Buddha as a guideline to work on wishing

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<sup>49</sup> The Annual Report...op. cit.

<sup>50</sup> Ibid

<sup>51</sup> Ibid

to achieve the vow that “serving beings as offerings to the Buddhas”, this is the motto that the Director of the Center placed out although the process of implementation is really difficult.

To perform the roles and responsibilities of the Buddhists in during the period of instability of economy and insecurity of life of people of the country, Duc Son Center has tried to mobilize and encourage the Buddhist followers, patrons, generous sponsors both at home and abroad to ensure the security of the life of the orphans at the Center<sup>52</sup>.

Besides, the central executive committee is trying to find all the required resources, specific plans appropriate to support the poor, elderly, disabled persons and the children from underprivileged section of the society so that they received proper education. Therefore, the center has established preschool system, and has offered generous support to the schools in the area by offering necessary educational materials and toys, providing scholarships to the poor students.

### **3.1.5 The Founder: Master Thich Nu Minh Tu<sup>53</sup>**

Master Thich Nu Minh Tu is the founder of Duc Son Orphanage. This section offers a brief biography of the founder. The biography consists of 1) Birth, 2) Ordination and 3) Achievements and Recognitions.

#### **a. Birth**

The secular name of the founder is Mai Thi Dong. Her Five Precepts name<sup>54</sup> is Tam Du, and Dharma name is Venerable Minh Tu.

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<sup>52</sup> Interview with Nun Minh Tu, the Founder and Director, Duc Son Center, December 28, 2016

<sup>53</sup> See illustration of Most Ven. Thich Nu Minh Tu at Appendix, figure 1, p. 92.

<sup>54</sup> In Vietnam Buddhist Tradition, everyone after taking refuge in Triple Gem and receiving five precepts from high master, gets a new name called Dharma



She was born on July 2, 1950<sup>55</sup> in a Buddhist family in the Kim Long village, Thua Thien Hue province. Her father's name was Mai Van Thuan and mother's name was the lady Nguyen Cuu Thi Thi<sup>56</sup>. They had ten children consisting of six sons and four daughters. The immediate younger sister of the founder is also a Bhikkhuni whose name is Thich Nu Minh Hang. She is an assistant at Hoa Luong Pagoda in Hue city.

### **b. Ordination and Participation in Buddhist Activities**

In between the age of 20 to 28, most venerable nun Minh Tu was gradually ordained as a nun following the three stages of ordination under the two Most Venerable Nuns named Thich Nu The Quan and Thich Nu Cat Tuong at Hoang Mai Pagoda, Thua Thien Hue<sup>57</sup>. Having ordained, she participated in charity works with monks and nuns in Thua Thien Hue province, and she herself was in charge of taking care of leprosy patients<sup>58</sup>.

a) At 28 years, she and late Nun Thich Nu Minh Duc became abbot and vice-abbot of both Duc Son and Hoa Luong temples respectively<sup>59</sup>. She took the responsibility to guide Buddhist followers and to teach Buddhism.

b) From the age of 28 years till now she has been living at Hoa Luong and Duc Son temple. She established the Duc Son Orphanage

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name (Five Precept Name) and really become a Buddhist. For Buddhist Nuns, they have both Five Precept name and Fully Ordain Name.

<sup>55</sup> Curriculum Vitae of Master Thich Nu Minh Tu the Founder and Director of Duc Son Orphanage Center, collected from the library of Duc Son Temple, April 15, 2016.

<sup>56</sup> Ibid.

<sup>57</sup> ibid

<sup>58</sup> Interview with Nun Minh Tu, the Founder and Director, Duc Son Center, Vietna, December 28, 2016.

<sup>59</sup> Curriculum Vitae of Master Thich Nu Minh Tu the Founder and Director of Duc Son Orphanage Center, collected from the library of Duc Son Temple, April 15, 2016.

Center in 1986<sup>60</sup>. Since then, she has been carrying out the responsibility of the director of Duc Son Orphanage. Besides, performing the duties and responsibilities at the center she is also actively involved different social works such as: helping the poor, opening pre-school classes on over the province, participating in the charitable works organized by the Buddhist Sangha and the local government as well.

c) Participating Organizations: following is an account of her participation and responsibilities performed for different organizations<sup>61</sup>.

- i. Abbot of Duc Son temple 1 and Duc Son temple 2.
- ii. Director of Duc Son Orphanage Center.
- iii. Children Sponsor Association of Thua Thien Hue province.
- iv. Member of the Executive Committee of Thua Thien Hue Provincial Study Encouragement.
- v. Sponsored leprosy patients Committee of Thua Thien Hue province.
- vi. Head of the Humanitarian Class of Thua Thien Hue province.
- vii. Head of Economics - Financial Committee of Vietnam Buddhist Association at Thua Thien Hue province.
- viii. Member of the Regular Committee of Bhikkhunis at Thua Thien Hue.

### **c. Achievements and Recognitions**

In recognition of the contribution to the society and education Master Thich Nu Minh Tu and Duc Son Center have been honored with medal and certificates by different public and private organizations. Based on the annual report submitted to the government of Vietnam, following is a brief account of the achievements and recognitions of Duc Son Center<sup>62</sup>:

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<sup>60</sup> The Annual Report... op. cit.

<sup>61</sup> Ibid.

<sup>62</sup> Ibid.

## Medals

Medal for Studies Promotion Work<sup>63</sup>.

Medal for Career Education Work<sup>64</sup>.

Medal for the Happiness of the Blind<sup>65</sup>.

Medal of Good Person Good Work<sup>66</sup>.

## Honorary Certificates

2016: Duc Son Center was awarded with certificates of merit from the Chairman of the People's Committee of Huong Thuy town for its contributions to the work of the Social Protection in Huong Thuy town, the period 2012 – 2016<sup>67</sup>.

2015: Women's Union of Thua Thien Hue province awarded the individual merit certificate to Most Ven. Thich Nu Minh Tu for her excellent achievements in directing the patriotic emulation movement in the period 2010 - 2014<sup>68</sup>.

2011: Central Executive Committee of Study Encouragement Association offered award of “Vietnam School Promotion” to Duc Son Orphanage Center<sup>69</sup>.

Central Committee of the Vietnam Fatherland Front offered the certificate of merit for the contribution to the movement of promoting an educated and financially self-dependent society (1996 - 2011)<sup>70</sup>.

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<sup>63</sup> Ibid; See illustration of Medal for Studies Promotion Work at Appendix, figure 3, p.111

<sup>64</sup> Ibid; Bonus Book Decision No. 6204/GD-ĐT, Hanoi, November 7, 2003; See illustration of Medal for Career Education Work at Appendix, figure 4, p. 111.

<sup>65</sup> Ibid; See illustration of Medal for The Happiness of The Blind at Appendix, figure 5, p. 112.

<sup>66</sup> Ibid; See illustration of Medal of Good Person Good Work at Appendix, figure 6, p.112.

<sup>67</sup> Ibid, Bonus Book Decision No. 1776 / QĐ-Committee dated 30.06.2016, See the figure 7 at Appendix, p.113.

<sup>68</sup> Ibid, Bonus Book Decision No. 02 / QĐ-BTV 16 / 1/2015; See the figure 8 at Appendix, p.113

<sup>69</sup> Ibid, Bonus Book QĐ-KHVN NO: 163, Hanoi, September 26, 2011 See the figure 9 at Appendix, p.114.

2006: Committee of the Vietnam Fatherland Front at Thua Thien Hue province offered personal merit certificate for her contribution to the prevention and remedying the storm 6<sup>71</sup>.

2005: People's Committee of Thua Thien Hue province's gave certificates of merit for outstanding achievements in patriotic emulation movements period 2001 - 2005<sup>72</sup>.

The Committee for Population, Family and Children gave personal merit certificate for outstanding achievements in the Population, Family and Children in 2004<sup>73</sup>.

Vietnam Blind Association gave the certificate the contribution to promoting the “happiness of the blinds” for many years<sup>74</sup>.

2004: People's Committee of Huong Tra District awarded certificates of merit for contribution to the social work of education, the period 1999 - 2004 in Huong Tra district<sup>75</sup>.

2003: People's Committee of Thua Thien Hue province gave the certificate of merit to Duc Son Center for outstanding achievements in promotion educational activities in the province<sup>76</sup>.

Vietnam Fatherland Front Committee of Thua Thien Hue province gave individual certificate with the title of “Good Person – Good Work” in 2001 - 2002<sup>77</sup>.

<sup>70</sup> Ibid, Bonus Book Decision No. 1072 / MTTW KT September 26, 2011; See the figure 10 at Appendix, p.114.

<sup>71</sup> Ibid, Bonus Book No. 131, dated 15/11/ 2006; See the figure 11 at Appendix, p.115.

<sup>72</sup> Ibid, No. 2460 in the book reward QĐ/KT, dated 09.08.2005; See the figure 12 at Appendix, p.115.

<sup>73</sup> Ibid, Decision No. 45/QĐ-CPFC, carrying No. 136 reward, date 26/01/2005; See the figure 13 at Appendix, p.116.

<sup>74</sup> Ibid, book of commendation No. 144 / HNM – QĐ/KT, Date 8/6/2005; See the figure 14 at Appendix, p.116.

<sup>75</sup> Ibid, Bonus Book No QĐ-UB, August 4, 2004; See the figure 15 at Appendix, p.117.

<sup>76</sup> Ibid, Bonus Book No. 1141 QĐ / KT, April 22, 2003; See the figure 16 at Appendix, p.117.

People's Committee of Thua Thien Hue province awarded individual certificates with the title "Good Person – Good Work" in 2001 - 2002<sup>78</sup>.

2000: Vietnam Study Encouragement Association awarded the certificates of merit to Duc Son Center for its achievements in activities to encourage and support the development of education<sup>79</sup>.

People's Committee of Thua Thien Hue gave the merit certificate to Duc Son Center that has made outstanding achievements in the protection and care of children in 2000<sup>80</sup>.

### 3.1.6 The Co-founder of Duc Son Center: Most Ven. Thich Nu Minh Duc

This section focuses on the biography of Most Ven. Minh Duc (1941-2012), who also played a very crucial role in establishing and managing Duc Son Center. The biography comprises of 1) birth, 2) ordination and Involvement in Buddhist Works, and 3) last days.

#### **a. Birth**

Most Ven. Thich Nu Minh Duc was born in 1941<sup>81</sup> in Thanh Thuy Thuong village, Thuy Duong Commune, Huong Thuy district, Thua Thien Hue province. Her father is Mr. Nguyen Thanh Thich (Dhamma name Tam Thanh) and her mother is Mrs. Le Thi Bon (Dhamma name Nguyen Tu)<sup>82</sup>. Her family has twelve members including her parents. She

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<sup>77</sup> Ibid, No. GCN: 59, August 16, 2003; See the figure 17 at Appendix, p.118.

<sup>78</sup> Ibid, book reward No. 3054/QĐKT UB on October 29, 2003; See the figure 18 at Appendix, p.118.

<sup>79</sup> Ibid, Reward Book No. 172 QĐ-KT, dated October 26, 2000; See the figure 19 at Appendix, p.119.

<sup>80</sup> Ibid, Reward Book no. 3371 Book QĐ/KT, December 14, 2000; See the figure 20 at Appendix, p.119.

<sup>81</sup> Dinh Cong Hao et. all (ed), Mai Nha Xua [Ancient Home], (Da Nang Publication: Da Nang, 2015), p.37.

<sup>82</sup> Ibid, p. 37

is the sixth child among ten siblings. She was ordained at a very early age<sup>83</sup>.

She was sent to Nha Trang at 12 to live with her uncle in 1952<sup>84</sup>, during the calamitous war. During those years while she used to follow her uncle to the temple she met the Most Venerable Chi Tin, the abbot of Long Son Pagoda. He led her to the way to be a nun. She received the five precepts from him. Since that time, her Bodhi seed had the opportunity to conceive.

### **b. Ordination and Involvement in Buddhist Works**

While visiting every day to Dieu Quang Nunnery, Nha Trang, she met most venerable Thich Nu The Quan who was the abbot of Hoang Mai nunnery in Hue city. On the full moon day of April of the year Giap Thin, 1964<sup>85</sup>, she was ordained as a novice nun under him at Dieu Quang Nunnery when she was 24<sup>86</sup>. Then she was sent back to Hue to continue her nun life at Hoang Mai nunnery.

She followed a simple lifestyle and was always close to the masters. She was educated by the two most venerable The Quan and Cat Tuong, who were seen as the typical model of the Bhikkhuni Sangha in Thua Thien Hue at that time<sup>87</sup>. Since then, she took a vow to serve the people in need, following her masters, Most Ven. The Quan and Cat Tuong, on all roads of social welfare since the early days of her process of training in Hoang Mai.

After four years of learning suttas and practicing discipline, with the consent from her master Thich Nu the Quan she became samaneri (received 10 precepts) in 1968<sup>88</sup>. In this year, following the order of the

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<sup>83</sup> Ibid, p.37

<sup>84</sup> Ibid, p. 37

<sup>85</sup> Ibid, p. 38

<sup>86</sup> Ibid, p. 38

<sup>87</sup> Ibid, p. 38

<sup>88</sup> Ibid, p. 38

two masters she went to Tay Loc Orphanage Center to take care of orphan children.

After a three-year term at Tay Loc Center, in 1971<sup>89</sup> she was sent to work at Hong, a medical office that provides free medicine to poor patients and assisted the two masters in social security work. In the same year, she was ordained Thuc Xoa Ma Na<sup>90</sup>.

On September 19 of the year Quy Suu (1973)<sup>91</sup>, after nearly ten years of devoted practice of discipline, she was allowed to receive the full ordination at the Phuoc Hue Buddhist Congregation, Nha Trang, by the late Supreme Venerable Thich Tri Thu as the Chief of the forum.

After the unification of the country, with the blessing and guidance from two masters she and her dhamma sisters Minh Tu, Minh Nhat and Minh Hang went to Hoa Luong nunnery to guide the Buddhist followers in Buddha Teachings In 1975<sup>92</sup>. Also in this year, according to the earnest petition of the Buddhists at Duc Son temple, nun Minh Tu and she were ready to face any difficulty to take the duty of guiding Buddhists here. Duc Son provides the first good opportunity to her and Minh Tu to fulfill their wish to serve the society. They together build Duc Son orphanage, with a view to taking care of the orphaned children in Thua Thien Hue in accordance with the spirit of Buddhist teachings such as: loving kindness and compassion.

In the beginning years when taking charge of the Duc Son temple, she and her dhamma sisters guided the Buddhists for self-cultivation of morality and observance of bhikkhuni's daily life. In any circumstances, she did not neglect her vow to work for social welfare. She and nun Minh Tu have established the Fund for the Protection of the Poor students, opened 96 classes for pre-primary children who belong to

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<sup>89</sup> Ibid, p. 38

<sup>90</sup> Thuc Xoa Ma Na is one step of ordination for nun before going to be fully ordained Bhikkhuni

<sup>91</sup> Mai Nha Xua (Ancient Home)...op. cit., p. 39

<sup>92</sup> Ibid, p. 39

poor communities such as: Thuy Bang, Duong Hoa, Binh Thanh, Binh Dien , Huong Tho, Huong Ho, Huong Chu<sup>93</sup>.

Duc Son Orphanage Center was born from the tragic circumstances of abandoned children and orphans in 1986<sup>94</sup>. Although the center was built in the context of national crisis, with her strong determination, will-power and infinite compassion for the unprivileged children, she gradually established Duc Son that has spent been over 30 years. During this period, more 600 hundred children has stayed and passed out after completing their education<sup>95</sup>.

### **c. Last Days**

After finishing the three-month retreat in the year Nham Thin, despite her physical sickness caused by her old age, she returned to Long Son - Nha Trang to see the Most Venerable Master and that was the last journey of her life. At the 3:15 p.m. on August 19, 2012, she has emitted the last breath at Duc Son Temple at 72 years of age spending 40 vassas<sup>96</sup>.

## **3.2 Role Played by Duc Son Center for the Youth Welfare in Vietnam**

This section discusses the motifs and objectives of the founder in establishing the institute and various measures, methods, programs and activities adopted to run it. It also focuses on the facilities and training provided to the children in order to ensure their healthy living, proper physical and psychological development so that they can grow up as responsible citizens and be able to contribute for the socio-economic and cultural development of the country.

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<sup>93</sup> Ibid, p. 39

<sup>94</sup> The Annual Report...op.cit.

<sup>95</sup> Interviewing with Nun Thich Nu Minh Tu, the Director of Duc Son center, February 28, 2016

<sup>96</sup> Mai Nha Xua (Ancient Home)...op. cit. p. 41



### 3.2.1 Motif and Goal

As discussed in chapter two, in the beginning, the major motif of the founder was to offer necessary requirements to the orphans so that they can have a better life and education. Along with the gradual increase of the number of children, the plans and activities have also extended. The founder has been more and more motivated to adopt required measures in order to take care of the children and provide them with other basic training besides good education. The teaching and training imparted to the children include both religious and secular aspects and aim at the overall progress of the children. The plans taken by the Duc Son Center are well consolidated, well-maintained and well performed. They bear a clear objective not only for the improvement of education but also for ensuring happiness of the children so that they can grow up as responsible citizens and contribute to the development of the country in future. Such a vision is evident in the following statement by Nun Minh Tu, the director of the center,

We are aware of the proper enactment of the measures in taking care of and nurturing the orphans and abandoned children; helping those who are poor and studious; providing special education and vocational training are also directly contributing to improve their education. It will help the children to fulfill their dreams<sup>97</sup>.

In order to succeed with the goal, the institute offers the following training to the children along with formal education at school and temple:

#### a. Gardening<sup>98</sup>

One of the significant aspects of the training is to teach them gardening. There is a clear purpose behind providing this training.

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<sup>97</sup> Interview with Nun Minh Tu, the Director of Duc Son Temple, Vietnam, December 28, 2016.

<sup>98</sup> See the figure 22 at Appendix, p.102.

Recently, food poisoning has become a challenging problem in the country. Fresh food, meat, fish are infected with various germs. Therefore, the institute has taken a measure to make a fresh vegetable and fruits orchard of about 10,000 m<sup>2</sup>. There are twofold objectives of making this garden; first, to produce enough vegetables and fruits for the children and thus tackle the nutrition problem and second, to teach the children how to grow vegetables and make fertilizer. This kind of training helps them to spend their time in fruitful task. Most importantly, it teaches them to value the importance of agriculture, respect laborious work and be self-dependent in future. A portion of the vegetables grown in the garden is sent to the restaurant where the orphanage children cook and sell them. Through this practice, the children learn about skill of management, skill of cooking, method of preserving food and the ways of serving the customers. It also adds an extra income to the Duc Son Center.

#### **b. Physical Exercise<sup>99</sup>**

Another important part of the training is physical exercise. Duc Son Center has created a playground where the children do various kinds of exercises and play games such as swimming, football, Kongfu Karatedo and different types of sports. It helps them to keep fit and healthy.

#### **c. Other Extra-curricular Training<sup>100</sup>**

The children also involve in various other extra-curricular training such as: dance, learning computer, tailoring, handcraft and so on.

Since the establishment in 1986, Duc Son center has been taking care of more than 600 children. It focuses on providing them a happy life, good education and other necessary training so that they can grow up as valuable assets and useful citizens of the country. Apart from the facilities

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<sup>99</sup> See the figure 23&24 at Appendix, p.102.

<sup>100</sup> See the figure 25&26 at Appendix, p. 103.

provided to the orphanage children, Duc Son Center has also taken the following projects<sup>101</sup>:

1. Construction of 100 kindergartens in different regions around Hue Province and remote places where there is no school and hence, children cannot have access to education.

2. Sponsoring and offering monthly allowances to the skilled teachers who teach at the newly established schools.

3. Motivating the local people to send their children to school, especially the people living in the mountainous areas.

4. Providing other necessary staff for the schools and buying toys for the children who study at the kindergartens.

5. Establishing clean water and hot water systems with solar power for these kindergartens.<sup>2</sup>

6. Organizing various entertaining events for the pre-school children on International Children's Day and the Mid-Autumn Festival every year.

7. Organizing Teacher's Day Vietnam for all pre-school teachers in disadvantaged areas to encourage them.

8. Offering regular support to help elementary schools, junior high schools in the province in general and supplying the necessary teaching equipment to the local schools.

In order to carry out such a huge scale of activities, Duc Son Center always maintains close relationship with the Central Study Encouragement Association, Provincial Study Encouragement Association, district/town and Veterans Thuy Bang commune to help create proper conditions for students, especially the poor ones, so that they can continue learning in a healthy and positive environment. The Ministry of Education and the Chairman of the Vietnam Study Encouragement have acknowledged the contribution made by Duc Son Center in the field of education and honored Master Minh Tu, the founder and Director of the center, with four medals. Besides, acknowledging her relentless hard work and sacrifice for the children. Tran Duc Luong, the

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<sup>101</sup> The Annual Report...op. cit.

President of Vietnam, also honored her with a letter of commendation<sup>102</sup>. In the letter it is mentioned that,

Through the Vietnam People's Police newspaper, I am glad to know that from very young age, you – the Buddhist Nun, Thich Nu Minh Tu, has established one Orphanage Center right inside Duc Son temple, a collection of abandoned children, orphans, handicapped that are having taken care of. In recent years Master Minh Tu and her followers have devoted much effort to establish nearly 100 free classes for poor children in the communes of Huong Thuy district have condition to go to school; taking care of almost 200 orphans. Among them, there are 70 children have left the center and went to the society life, become honest citizens with education, and 50 students have stability job, can be nourishing by themselves.<sup>103</sup>

### **3.2.2 Providing the Fundamental Requirements**

Food, clothing, shelter and medicine are the fundamental requirements for normal human survival. These are essential in the life of every human being. Absence of any one of these four, leads to imbalance in our life. If the children are provided with these necessities, they will be able to grow as healthy human resource of the country. They will be able to acquire the capability to work for the country. Therefore, in order to develop the socio-economic system, it is urgent to have citizens who are strong and healthy both mentally and physically. For this, people need to have a good health of both physical and mental. Realizing the significance these fundamental requirements, Duc Son Center puts special emphasis on securing them for the children living at the center.

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<sup>102</sup> See the figure 27 at Appendix, p.104.

<sup>103</sup> “The Honor Commendation Letter to the Director of Duc Son Orphanage Center Thich Nu Minh Tu from President of Vietnam”, Ha Noi December 14, 2004.

### **a. Food**

Food is the most indispensable need for the survival. Hence, Duc Son Center is always highly concerned about this necessity and provides sufficient food to all the children living at the orphanage. Food offered at the orphanage is classified according to the different age group of the children, such as:

#### **For the infants between 1 and 6 months<sup>104</sup>**

The main food for the children between this age group is only milk. Therefore, a very special concentration is given to them. The milk for them is carefully chosen to ensure the nutrition and safe growth of the children.

#### **For children between 6 months to 3 years old<sup>105</sup>**

Milk, cheese and nutritional porridge are the main foods for the children of this category. Although they take other extra food, milk is always an important source of nutrition for them. This is the easiest way to ensure that children are provided with necessary nutrients, especially when they just start to eat solid foods because a small amount of food cannot provide all the necessary nutrients. Milk is the major source of vitamins, minerals, fats and nutrients that ensure proper growth of the children.

#### **For children between 4 years old and above<sup>106</sup>**

Rice, fish, meat and vegetables are the major food for these children. Besides, they also drink milk in order to fulfill the demand of enough nutrition.

Duc Son Center always pays close attention to secure healthy diet for all the children living at the orphanage. A variety of food is prepared at the orphanage. This food contains various kinds of nutrition such as protein, carbohydrates, fats, vitamins and minerals that are

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<sup>104</sup> See the figure 28 at Appendix, p.105.

<sup>105</sup> See the figure 29 at Appendix, p.105.

<sup>106</sup> See the figure 30 at Appendix, p.105.

essential for a normal growth. A balance diet is important not only for proper mental and physical growth but also for the resistance from the attack of various diseases. On the contrary, unhealthy food leads to illness and causes unrecoverable risk to health. Duc Son Center takes extra care of the children so that no such illness happens to them and they can lead a happy and healthy life. In order to satisfy the necessity of food, it has made a vegetable garden in 2,000 acres of land. Different kinds of vegetables and fruits are grown in the garden. What is most is the vegetables and fruits produced in the garden are fresh and free from any chemicals, harmful poisonous elements.

#### **b. Clothing<sup>107</sup>**

The second most fundamental necessity for humans is clothing. It is highly important not only to cover the body but also to protect it from cold, heat and various other problems. Providing enough garments to all the children is one of the most significant concerns of Duc Son center. At the time of establishment, while providing food was primary thinking of the founders of the center, the immediate second subject of thought was providing necessary clothing to all the children. In the beginning, pieces of mourning clothes were collected. Then the nuns cut these pieces, dyed and knitted into usable garments. The dresses for the children were chosen and sewn from old clothes that the visitors brought. Besides, extra pieces of clothing were also collected from the tailor shop and knit them together to make dresses for them. The children were taught that clothing is important to cover and protect our body, not to show off as fashion. However, with passage of time, the center acquired ability to provide better dresses to the children. Students from pre-school to university goers are given uniforms. Besides, other necessary garments including jackets, socks, towels etc. for winter season are also provided. A separate section with full of apparel instruments has been established in order to teach the girls about needlework so that they can stitch the torn clothes and make new dresses as well. During the weekends or holidays

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<sup>107</sup> See the figure 31 at Appendix, p.106.

they learn about it. This training will be useful for them in future even after they leave the institute. They will be able to make clothing at least for themselves.

### **c. Accommodation<sup>108</sup>**

The third basic requirement for our survival is shelter, a place to relax and sleep after our daylong activities. It is an indispensable necessity for human beings. Duc son center has been able to construct a building within the area of Duc Son pagoda. In the beginning, it did not have enough space for accommodating all the children. When, the number of the children was increasing significantly, the provincial government of Thua Thien Province gave license to carry out the activities of the center and granted a piece of 1010 m<sup>2</sup> land to build house for the children. Along with the increase of the number of children, many other activities appeared leading to proper and durable building where all other tasks can be performed. Now, it has been transformed into a complete building complex for accommodation of all the children and other residents. The structure of Duc Son Center includes the main hall, guest house, dormitory for nuns and the residential quarter for the children. There are two separate sections for boys and girls adjoining with the kitchen and dining hall.

#### **Girls' Section**

There are several sections in the girls' area.

- The basement is a place for bicycle parking for the High School and University students
- The 1st Floor has the bedrooms for girls. There are separate divisions for primary, secondary, high school and university students, physically handicapped children and a general hygiene area.

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<sup>108</sup> See the figure 32 at Appendix, p.106.

- The 2nd floor is used for the kindergarten students, apparel room, weekend's playhouse for preschool students, computer room and general hygiene area.

- There is also a space for learning martial arts, kongfu and other community activities.

- There are two other classrooms for children with intellectually disabled and three additional classrooms for extra classes for primary and secondary school children.

### **Boy's Section**

It also includes several divisions.

- There are bedrooms for primary school, Secondary school, High school and University students. Besides, there is a general hygiene area.

In addition, the center also has:

- One building ten minute away from the main center. It has been built for safety during flood.

- One library that has books for the people of all ages such as: religious books, novels, stories and so on.

- One football field for the children.

Overall, currently the infrastructure of Duc Son Orphanage Center is much more extended and developed since its establishment thirty years ago. It has a wider space and it includes all the basic necessities important for comfort and safety of the children. But, it is true that it needs to improve more and the endeavour has been continuing.

### **d. Healthcare**

One of the most significant demands related to the fundamental necessities of our existence is proper 'healthcare'. Realizing the need of it, Duc Son Center provides healthcare to the children. Since the time of establishment, the center has given utmost priority to the necessity of healthcare as an indispensable factor. Most of the children who live at the



orphanage are infants. They are prone to have disease if necessary care is not taken. Therefore, it is always important to look after them carefully and provide them with proper healthcare so that they are protected from any probable diseases. In order to secure proper healthcare, Duc Son Center has assigned a doctor who visits the orphanage three days a week. Additionally, a nun and a girl at the center have been imparted necessary medical training so that they can observe, take care and offer immediate treatment to the children, especially who have fever, scurvy, itching, wounds and other less dangerous diseases that are caused due to the change of weather. In case of any serious disease, such as: heart problem, lung disease, kidney disorder, the patients are immediately taken to the Central Hospital to be treated following proper method. Infants are vaccinated periodically according to the instruction given by the Ministry of Health. In parallel with the Western medicine, the center also has its own medicine produced from natural herbs. A team of healthcare professionals and doctors offer completely free treatment not only to the orphanage children but also to all other people who come for treatment. Numerous people from the places near and far come to the center for checking up their health, especially the poor, the middle-aged and elderly people. In addition, the center regularly organizes charitable medical campaign with participation of a group of volunteering professional Medical Physicians. They go to many different places to provide free treatment to the poor people and help them with the opportunity to track their diseases and improve their health. The group of Dentists are always most enthusiastic in offering free treatment. As a result of this campaign, children who live at the center in particular and everyone who live in the places around the center can have a good healthcare. They are living in a safe environment and possess good health.

### **3.2.3 Protection of the Children in special circumstances**

In order to take care of the children who are in special conditions at Duc Son Orphanage Center, the authority of the center has established several important methods and rules that are appropriate with each case of children. Such rules and methods help them develop in the best way

acquiring necessary efficiency in leading their lives. The children who fall under these special conditions are divided into two groups: a. normal children and b. children with disabilities.

### **a. Normal Children**

The children, who have the ability to realize, are taught a set of skills that train them to overcome probable obstacles in their life and to survive in different adverse circumstances. The most significant responsibility in providing such skills is to ensure their normal and healthy growth. At the same time they are also taught and familiarized with the practicalities of the external world so that they can gain the abilities to handle any hostile experiences that may come in their way. In order to do that, Duc Son center has formulated a well-planned schedule which is followed by the children regularly. The purpose of such a routine is to train them about how to adjust with the different environments and comply with the disciplines that are essential for individual or collective living.

### **Psychological and emotional counselling**

The children who come to Duc Son center are from various places. They already have a very bitter experience about life. Many of them do not have parents. Hence, it is very important to teach them how to survive in different circumstances. They are provided with both mental and physical caring so that they can tackle their bad psychological and emotional experiences and feelings of frustration that they had in the past. This kind of support is important for them to grow up as normal human being. They are also taught how to control themselves; take their responsibility and learn from their mistakes. Besides, in the modern corporate world, knowledge about sex is very essential. An obvious reason for providing sex education is making them aware about the consequence of child abandonment because of which many of them are in such unfortunate situation. Therefore, if they are not given this teaching

at their early life they may encounter the same problems as their previous generation did and their future life would be vulnerable and chaotic.

### **Time management**

They are also taught how to manage their time properly. The children learn how to identify the activities that they participate in and how to manage their time every day following the daily routine. It prepares them with the skill and awareness of time management which will be very fruitful in future when they will enter into different careers.

### **Collective living**

Another very significant aspect is to teach them how to live in community. This is necessary for them to develop the habits of collective living among the children who come from various places because they have to spend their everyday life together like family members. They have to study, eat, sleep, work and play together. Therefore, it is necessary to learn to live in group. It teaches them consistency and uniformity; the sense of caring themselves and others; the skill of interacting with people and so on. They also learn how to respect the elders and love the youngers like real brothers and sisters; be polite to everyone and refrain from quarrel with each other.

### **Discipline**

There are a set of rules that are applied equally to all the children living at the institute. It is essential for them because by following these rules they learn to be disciplined and aware of their behavior. Besides, they become self-conscious about their individual and collective duties and responsibilities, such as: performing their regular duties, keeping their room neat and clean, doing homework timely, getting ready for school in time, arranging their belongings properly etc.

The rules are applied to each and every one equally according to their age. If someone makes mistakes for the first time, she or he is warned, but the mistake is repeated then adequate punishment is given to offenders. At the same time, those who follow the rules properly and work hard both in their academic pursuit and performing their duties at the center and thus set example for others are awarded. They are considered as inspiration for others to follow them. Just as the punishment is given depending on the degree of violation of rules so as the award is offered to those who make good result in their studies and work.

Award is not always the physical thing or any valuable gifts but sometimes they just receive blessings and praise from the master or the senior ones. The children are happy with such good words. For example, if someone behaves politely in front of guests or if someone does not climb up tree or sit on table, she or he is praised for that nice behavior. They feel happy when they receive such good words. A single “well-done” for doing something good or just a pat on their back or an encouraging smile acknowledging their positive behavior make them pleased. They are inspired to keep up their good work. As result of their good work, sometimes, they are just allowed to watch TV for extra thirty minutes, relax or play sports longer than usual time.

On the other hand, those who violate the rules are punished. The penalties also vary on the basis of their offenses. If someone commits any wrong she or he is deprived of some privileges. For instance: the offender does not have the opportunity to participate in a special activity that she or he loves. Less time is given for watching TV and playing sports if someone is not obedient to the rules and disciplines of the institute.

All these rules and simple strategies are effective for them to be disciplined and be aware of their behavior. They learn to be responsible to themselves and to everyone around them.

### **Allowing privacy and independence**

Although the children are monitored and controlled to some extent according to the disciplinary rules when they are very young, the strictness of the rules is made lenient when they become matured enough. They are given due respect and are allowed their rights to be independent and self-reliant in some cases. When they grow up enough and become careful about their life, understand the safety and appropriateness of their attitude and behavior, they are allowed to follow their dreams. They are permitted to complete freedom to make their own choices and decisions. At this stage of their life, they are just reminded to follow the right direction and advised to have enough courage to take responsibility for themselves and the society as well without committing any error which would endanger their life.

#### **b. Children with Disabilities**

It is believed by the people at the Duc Son center that the children with disabilities also have the rights and ability to live independently with self-esteem and dignity. They also possess the capability to work and contribute to the society in multifarious ways. They have the rights to receive proper education like the normal children. Strongly believing in the rights and dignity of the children with disabilities, Duc Son Center provides all the necessary facilities to them as it does to the normal ones. It sends them to school along with other children and prepares the opportunity for community integration with their fellow kids so that they do not feel isolated from the group. Besides, the center has taken special measures to offer vocational training to them such as: wood artwork<sup>109</sup>, carvings, sculptures and so on. It is worth mentioning that they have learned the crafts very well and produced a lot of artistic products that have been purchased by tourists who come to visit the temple both from home and abroad.

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<sup>109</sup> See the figure 33&34 at Appendix, pp. 106-107.

Duc Son Center has opened two special classes for the children who suffer from physical and psychological disabilities<sup>110</sup>. Two specially trained teachers have been employed to teach and take care of them. Although the children with congenital problems of the brain may not be completely cured, yet the specialized teachers have been able to gradually improve their awareness through specially prepared lessons and class-games. As a result, it has been noticed that the disable children who were unable to eat food by themselves and to do their personal works; after several years they were able to eat their food by themselves and perform their own tasks although not properly. They still need a lot of help from teachers and other care-takers. Furthermore, the teachers, care-takers and all other responsible people implement special methods and skillful means in order to encourage them and help them to acquire confidence so that they incorporate themselves into the community life with people around them because there are still prejudices and discriminations against the children who have this kind of disabilities.

With all the assistance and facilities provided to these children, Duc Son Center has proven that many children with disabilities have the ability to succeed in life like other normal people of the society if they get proper care and opportunities. What is important is that the physical defect makes these children more determined to succeed and prove themselves to the society that they also possess the same skill like the normal children; sometimes even they do better than the normal ones. By depriving them of their rights, the society pushes them to the life of poverty and loneliness. Hence, their potential is disregarded and the country loses a valuable section of workforce. Therefore, barriers between the disable children and normal ones have to be demolished thoroughly. Disable children should be protected so that they have the opportunity to integrate with the community and can participate in the social activities. They should not be evaluated based on their disabilities; rather their qualities should be valued and respected. Duc Son Center has set a great example to society through spreading loving kindness towards these deprived children.

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<sup>110</sup> See the figure 35 at Appendix, p.107.

### **3.3 Further measures adopted by Duc Son Center**

Apart from the measures and programs implemented mentioned above, Duc Son has also adopted several other measures to help these children, such as:

#### **Opening pre-primary school in the mountainous areas**

In order to provide education to the poor and deprived children, Duc Son center has opened schools in mountainous regions where there is not enough schools. It also offers a helping hand to the anti-illiteracy campaign in the provincial area. Besides, it helps over 150 teachers to have a stable job.

#### **Taking care of homeless children**

It helps the homeless children providing a stable place to live in.

#### **Vocational guidance**

It offers vocational training and guidance so that the children can be self-dependent in their life even after leaving the center.

#### **The Free Treatment**

It offers free treatment to the Buddhist monks and nuns, poor and old people.

#### **The vegetarian restaurant<sup>111</sup>**

With a view to encouraging people to lead a holy life, protect the natural environment and reducing the slaughtering of animal, it has opened vegetarian restaurant.

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<sup>111</sup> See the figure 36 at Appendix, p.108.

### **3.4 Concluding Remarks**

Above is the brief discussion of the history of Duc Son Center and the process through which it has become a huge orphanage sheltering more 600 hundred, children since its establishment. We have also focused on the hardships, contributions and achievements of the founders, Most Ven. Thich Nu Minh Tu and Minh Duc who have dedicated their entire life for these children in order to offer them a bright future. The most important aspect is the government has recognized the institute and its contribution. It has encouraged the founders to work harder to development of the children, and also to the Vietnamese society as a whole. For last 10 years, further plans have started flourishing with contribution to the promotion of education, construction of social training, establishing special education center, vocational orientation.

It is evident that several categories of children live at the Duc Son center. There are a number of significant causes that bring them to the institute. Duc Son center is one of the institutes that offer food, accommodation, education, clothing and various other necessities to the children. But, there are many more children of this kind who suffer from similar crisis in their life. The causes responsible for such wretchedness of these children demand very especial attention from the government and the people from all walks of society. It is time to check and take proper steps to remove all the conditions that lead to the miserable life to these children. These children are future of society and the state. If they are provided with proper care and necessary requirements, they will be able to contribute to society and the country. This is how we can build a happy and healthy society in Vietnam.



## Chapter IV

### Principles and Activities at Duc Son Temple and Their Application for Strengthening Youth Welfare in Vietnam

This chapter has been devoted to the explanation of the principles and activities at Duc Son Center and how they can be applied to the youth welfare in Vietnam. Since Duc Son Center is a Buddhist institution, the principles followed at the center are also inspired by Buddhist teachings. There are several principles observed at the Duc Son Center, most important of them are compassion, loving kindness and generosity. In fact, these two are the initial stimulants that encouraged the founders to establish the institute. Since establishment, Duc Son has been continuing the practice of compassion and loving kindness. Besides, the Buddhist ethical teachings and various vinaya rules have been influential in training the children. Apart from, the ethical aspects, there are various activities performed at the center. These activities have also been influenced by Buddhist principles.

#### 4.1 Principles of Duc Son Center in the Light of Buddhist Teachings

The goal and activities of Duc Son Center are based a few most important principles, such as; loving-kindness (metta)<sup>112</sup>, compassion (Karuṇā)<sup>113</sup>, generosity (dāna)<sup>114</sup> and Buddhist ethics (vinaya)<sup>115</sup> etc.

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<sup>112</sup> T. W. Rhys Davids and William Stede (Ed.) Pali Text Society. **The Pali-Text Society's Pali-English Dictionary**, p. 46

<sup>113</sup> Ibid, p. 222,

<sup>114</sup> Ibid, p. 356

<sup>115</sup> Ibid, p. 691.

### 4.1.1 The Practice of Loving-kindness (Metta) and Compassion (Karuṇā)

Loving-kindness (metta) and compassion (Karuṇā), the two of the four Sublime abodes (Brahmaviharas)<sup>116</sup> described in Buddhism. These two were the driving forces in establishing the institute in 1986. The significance of these principles is clearly evident in the aim of Nun Minh Tu, the founder of the institute,

To help abandoned children feel secure, to be well cared for and well prepared for their future lives. Her driving passion is the hope that every one of her “little birds will fly freely to a future of fulfillment and contentment”<sup>117</sup>.

The aim of the founder is to provide a safe secure life to the abandoned children and equip them with the necessary skills and qualities so that they can acquire the capabilities to build successful lives by themselves. She dreams to see the children have free, successful and happy in future. Such an altruistic attitude of the founder is motivated by the Buddhist concept of loving kindness. In Buddhism loving-kindness (metta) is defined as follows, the Pali word “metta” is a multi-significant term meaning loving-kindness, friendliness, goodwill, benevolence, fellowship, amity, concord, inoffensiveness and non-violence.

The Pali commentators define metta as the strong wish for the welfare and happiness of others (parahita-parasukha-kamana). Essentially metta is an altruistic attitude of love and

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<sup>116</sup> Bhikkhu Bodhi (tr.) “The Connected Discourses of the Buddha: A New Translation of Saṃyutta Nikaya” (S. V. 115), (Boston: Wisdom Publication, 2000) pp. 1607-1611; Maurice Walshe (tr.) “The Long Discourses of the Buddha: A New Translation of Dgānikaya”, (D.I. 235), (Boston: Wisdom Publication, 1995), p. 194, Bhikkhu Bodhi (tr.), “The Numerical Discourses of the Buddha: A New Translation of Aṅguttara Nikaya”, (A. II. 128 & 130), (Boston: Wisdom Publication, 2012) pp. 507-510.

<sup>117</sup> Duc Son Orphanage, Vietnam, Retrieved on April 30, 2017, <http://www.ducsonorphans.org/history.html>.

friendliness as distinguished from mere amiability based on self-interest<sup>118</sup>.

All these aspects of loving-kindness are manifested through the aim and practice of Duc Son center. The founder of the center was deeply moved when she witnessed the atrocity of the Vietnam War and took a very firm decision to dedicate her life in order offer a better and a better future to the children, most of which are orphans. “She was heart stricken by the plight of the thousands of children in Hue orphaned by the war. She resolved to devote her life to easing the suffering of traumatized children.”<sup>119</sup> Such a sacrificing attitude cannot be possible without the deep impact of loving kindness and compassion, the two greatest virtues of human beings explained in Buddhism. Since the establishment, the founder has been taking care of the children with motherly love and care. The motivation of such a virtue is evident in Karaniya Metta Sutta where the Buddha said, “in the same way as a mother would protect her son, her only son, with her life, so toward all beings he should develop the measureless thought of friendliness”<sup>120</sup>. The same motherly love and care inspired by Buddhist principles of loving kindness and compassion have been radiated among all the nuns and lay people who take care of the children and also the children as well. They themselves care of one another with brotherly and sisterly love and care<sup>121</sup>.

In today’s world most people are occupied their interests. They do not think of others. Others suffering does not influence them. They are engrossed in narrow selfish purpose of their own development and success. But, the founder of Duc Son center has dedicated her life in removing the suffering of others. The most disadvantaged section of the society. She finds joy happy in the happiness of the children. This kind of view is known as compassion in Buddhism. Compassion is that,

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<sup>118</sup> Acharya Buddhakkhita. **Metta: The Philosophy and Practice of Universal Love**, (Kandy: Buddhist Publication Society, 1989), “Introduction”

<sup>119</sup> Duc Son Orphanage, Vietnam...op. cit.

<sup>120</sup> Anandajothi Bhikkhu, (ed. & tr.) **Khuddakapatha: The Short Readings**”, (Khp. 9) p. 19.

<sup>121</sup> See the figure 37 at Appendix, p.109.

Which makes the heart of the good quiver when others are subject to suffering, or that which dissipates the suffering of others.... This (compassion) isn't self-pity or pity for others. It's really feeling one's own pain and recognizing the pain of others... Seeing the web of suffering we're all entangled in, we become kind and compassionate to one another<sup>122</sup>.

This is exactly the vision of Duc Son center. The founder of the center was shaken by by the suffering war-torn people of Vietnam especially the young children. Being suffered seeing the suffering of these children she has determined to devote herself to eliminate their suffering. This is how Duc Son center came to exist. From the very beginning it has been the shelter of the shelter less and the founder has been the mother of them and sacrificed every bit of her life in the eradication of the sorrow of the children. Her ultimate aim is to give a better future life so that they can be able to forget all their suffering and enjoy a happy life.

#### 4.1.2 The Practice of Giving (dāna)<sup>123</sup>

Besides, it also emphasizes on cultivating generosity in the mind of the children. For which it performs charitable work where the children actively participate. Duc Son Center believes that generosity is a very essential quality in human life. But, it has cultivated gradually so that it becomes a part of life. Believing it, Duc Son Center trains the children with Buddhist teachings of generosity. The practice of giving or generosity occupies a significant portion in Buddhism. In Buddhism, dāna is considered as:

As one of the most basic human virtues, a quality that testifies to the depth of one's humanity and one's capacity for self-transcendence.... the foundation and seed of spiritual

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<sup>122</sup> Elizabeth J. Harris, (2013), “**Detachment and Compassion in Early Buddhism**”, (Kandy: Buddhist Publication Society), p. 7

<sup>123</sup> A. IV.59,...op.cit., pp. 1041-1043

development...the first of the three bases of meritorious deeds (puññakiriyavatthu), as the first of the four means of benefiting others ( saṅgahavatthu), and as the first of the ten perfections (pāramis)...and the essential attributes of the, the good or superior person (sappurisa), along with such other qualities as faith, morality, learning and wisdom.<sup>124</sup>

All these qualities are essential for building oneself as good person. A good person can contribute to build a good society. If the society is good, country will also be good. Duc Son believes in such positive aspect of generosity and emphasizes on the practice of giving. It trains the children with this sublime quality of humans so that they become good humans. The outstanding impact of the practice generosity is stated in the Anguttara Nikaya as follows,

And what is the wealth of generosity? Here a noble disciple dwells at home with a heart devoid of the stain of miserliness, freely generous, openhanded, delighting in relinquishment, one devoted to charity, delighting in giving and sharing. This is called the wealth of generosity<sup>125</sup>.

Therefore, a person who practices generosity acquires the qualities mentioned above and by acquiring these qualities; she or he spreads them to others. Thus she or he not only purifies herself or himself but the entire society. Not only the giver but also the receiver attains the fruits of giving or generosity. In another place of Anguttara Nikaya, three fruits of offering enjoyed by giver and receiver are explained as follows:

The donor is joyful before giving, she has a placid, confident mind in the act of giving and she is elated after giving. The recipients are devoid of lust or are practicing to remove lust, they are devoid of hatred or are practicing to remove hatred;

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<sup>124</sup> Bhikkhu Bodhi, (Ed.), **Dāna: The Practice of Giving**, (Kandy: Buddhist Publication Society, 2011), p. 3

<sup>125</sup> A. IV.5,...op. cit., p. 1001

they are devoid of delusion or are practicing to remove delusion.<sup>126</sup>

Both donor and the recipient enjoy the threefold fruits of giving. These fruits make them gratified and averse to greed and craving. When they are not greedy they do not engage in wrong deeds of stealing or gravating others property. They are happy with whatever they possess. Satisfaction gives them happiness. When they are happy they can practice the Buddhist teachings. The more the practice the more they learn to improve their inner and outer qualities. Hence, they not only contribute to their development but also to the development of the entire society. Duc Son center has such a vision and mission in training the children with the virtue giving or generosity so that they can play vital role for the benefit of both individual and society.

#### **4.1.3 The Threefold Training (Tisikkā)**

Ethics is another significant principle observed at Duc Son Center. The aim of the center is to prepare the children as the responsible and ethically good members of the society. With such a great purpose, Duc Son center focuses on Buddhist ethics as the foundation of moral development of the children. The founder of Duc Son Orphanage believes that the population of the age between children to teenage and youth is very important element of the society. This is the period when they have the full potential to build up the foundation of their life and prepare themselves for future. Whatever learning, values of life and experiences they receive during this period is ingrained in their mind and their character is formed accordingly. These experiences and education contribute to formulate their personality as a good or bad citizen of the country.

Duc Son Center considers that young people have important responsibility of receiving the norms and values from the former generation, nurturing them carefully and handing over to the future

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<sup>126</sup> Ibid, p. 399

generation. This is how the society progresses with the contribution by the youth of the society. Children are the future of the nation in any country. If they are not trained and prepared with all aspects of life, they will not be able to take over the mission continued by the earlier generation and will not be able to prosper it for the future. In this case, the fate and future of the entire country will be threatened seriously. Therefore, children should be nurtured and trained carefully with every aspect of life and knowledge.

Duc Son Center also perceives that ethics is key aspect for building an honest citizen. Immoral citizens are threat to the healthy growth of a nation. Therefore, the children should be taught the ethics of life at the early age. Material satisfaction cannot provide complete happiness. In order to achieve perfect happiness the society also has to morally good. Aristotle, a great thinker of the Western philosophical systems states that: “the purpose of human live is beauty, beauty that is happiness. Happiness is a totally development of human qualities ... Happiness is synonymous with morality”<sup>127</sup>. Spinoza, a famous seventeenth century philosopher expresses the same perspective on ethics, “happiness is the purpose of every action. Happiness is the presence of the comfort and the absence of suffering”.<sup>128</sup> If morality is understood as synonymous with happiness, we can say that Buddhism is the religion of Happiness, because Buddhism teaches the doctrine of right morality, to help people eliminate suffering and achieve happiness in present; here and now. By practicing Buddhist principles devotedly, people can replace their suffering with happiness. It is a skillful means for people to improve themselves, cultivate their personality and developing themselves from the ordinary human beings to the noble ones such arahants or Bodhisattva.

It also teaches the principles of ethics, a goal of achieving perfection. Humans can achieve such perfection through efforts. In the Dhammapada, Buddha points out the principles of achieving ethical

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<sup>127</sup> Buu Dinh, (tr.) “**Cau Chuyen Triet Hoc**”, (The Philosophical Story), (Ho Chi Minh: Van Hanh Publishers, 1971), p. 92.

<sup>128</sup> Ibid, p.228

perfection as follows: “abandoning all evil,- entering the state of goodness, and purifying one’s mind by oneself, - this is the teaching of the Buddha.”<sup>129</sup> Thus, the practice of the principles to attain happiness is divided into three steps as we see in the above verse of the Dhammapada. These three-step principles represent the three-fold training, namely moral ethics (Sīla), concentration (Samādhi) and wisdom (pañña)<sup>130</sup>. Following is a brief description of these doctrines of Buddhism:

a. To avoid doing all evil deeds means to follow the precepts that require one to abstain from doing evil actions by body, mind and speech.

b. To cultivate all that is wholesome denotes practicing meditation as well as the practice to enhance wholesome qualities for one's own and others' welfare and well-beings.

c. To purify one's mind refers to wisdom that arises from practice of meditation aimed at purifying the mind from being defiled by greed, anger and delusion.

These three-fold training Sīla – Samādhi - Pañña always co-exist when one of the three methods that are practiced. In fact, Sīla- Samādhi - Pañña are three sides of an issue, three aspects indispensable whenever referring to Buddhist teachings. In Soṇḍanda Sutta of Dīghanikaya Buddha says: “Wisdom (Pañña) is purified by morality (Sīla) and Morality is purified by wisdom: where one is, the other is, the moral man has wisdom, and the wise man has morality, and the combination of morality and wisdom is called the highest thing in the world”<sup>131</sup>. They are the heart of Dhamma practice that leads us step by step to freedom. As stated in the Pali Canonical Text:

Sīla-paribhavito Samādhi mahapphalo hoti mahanisamsa,  
Samādhi paribhavita Pañña mahapphala hoti mahanisamsa,  
Pañña paribhavitā cittā Sammādeva asavehi vimuccati,  
seyyathidam, kamasava, bhavasava, avijjasava.

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<sup>129</sup> Ven. Weragoda Sarada Thero, “**Treasury of Truth**” (Dhp. 52), (Taipei: Buddhist Education Foundation, 1993) p. 602.

<sup>130</sup> D.II. 72,...op. cit., p. 240

<sup>131</sup> D.I. 111,... op. cit., p. 131



Once moral practice is well established, it is directly fruitful and beneficial to concentration. A well-established concentration is directly fruitful and beneficial to wisdom. Once wisdom is well-developed, the mind is free from all fermented negativities of the mind.<sup>132</sup>

The inter-connectedness of three principles is evident in all aspects of the Dhamma practice. When these three principles are separated from one another, the practice of the Dhamma will be less fruitful and beneficial. Here the first stage “to avoid doing all evil” is comparable to one taking a bath to clean the body. The second stage “to cultivate good” is likened to dressing up appropriately. The third stage “to purify the mind” can be compared to taking good care of one's health so that one remains healthy and strong. All these three activities have to have connection with each other. For example, in observing the first precept of refraining from killing beings, one should develop all the three aspects:

- (1) To refrain from killing beings,
- (2) To promote welfare and well-beings of all beings, and
- (3) To purify the mind from hatred, and to instead cultivate harmony and conciliation.

Besides, Sīla, Samādhi and Pañña are the ethical foundation to create a righteous society. We recognize that, to build ethical standards in our personal lives, family and society we need to have standard rules of human behavior to value the moral or immoral behavior. For Buddhism, the standard conduct must rely on Sīla.

In Buddhism proposes different vinaya rules for different group of Buddhist followers Bhikkhus, Bhikkhunis, Novices, Lay Buddhists<sup>133</sup>. The following section deals with the five precepts, the fundamental Vinaya for a Buddhist. They are also five minimum ethical conditions to

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<sup>132</sup> Ven. Brahmapundit, “**The Heart Of The Buddhist Teaching: The Ovāda-pātimokkha**” (Buddhism Higher Education and Vision), (Shan State Buddhist University Press: Taunggy, 2016), p.10,

<sup>133</sup> Bhikkhu Ariyesako, “**The Bhikkhus’ Rule: A Guide for Lay People**”, (Kallista: Sangaloka Forest Hermitage, 1998), Introduction.

be followed the Buddhists and are standard ethics to create an ideal individual with its truthful meaning. Duc Son Center strongly emphasizes on the observation of the five Precepts<sup>134</sup>. They are:

- a. I undertake the precept to refrain from destroying living creatures. (Panatipata veramani sikkhapadam samadiyami)
- b. I undertake the precept to refrain from taking that which is not given. (Adinnadana veramani sikkhapadam samadiyami)
- c. I undertake the precept to refrain from sexual misconduct. (Kamesu micchacara veramani sikkhapadam samadiyami)
- d. I undertake the precept to refrain from incorrect speech. (Musavada veramani sikkhapadam samadiyami.)
- e. I undertake the precept to refrain from intoxicating drinks and drugs which lead to carelessness. (Suramerayamajja pamadatthana veramani sikkhapadam samadiyami)

In order to protect morality and dignity of human beings *sīla* should be observed. When one person observes the five-precepts (Pañcasīla), his or her mind would be pure and peaceful because he or she is aware of abiding in morality, staying far away the wrong deeds. From that state, he will feel happy and peaceful in his daily life. If a person observes the five precepts honestly his or mind will be completely free and comfortable.

So, we can say that, five-precepts are the essential rules to be good human beings. And children need to be educated about these five precepts in order to train them an ethically. Of course, the precepts of Buddhism in general and the five precepts in particular are not only important for the disciples of the Buddha they are necessary for all people of all ages, all races and all eras.

Duc Son Center emphasizes on the physical, moral and intellectual development of the children living at the orphanage. For that, it provides necessary training and education to the children. The training is based on Buddhist teachings. In Buddhism, it is believed that “dhamma

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<sup>134</sup> A. 171-174,...op.cit. pp. 786-788; D. I. 1, ...op.cit., p. 68; D. IV. 26,...op. cit. pp. 402-403; D. IV. 31, ...op. cit., p. 462.

is the way for training mind, speech and body”<sup>135</sup>. As discussed above, the five precepts are the foundation of ethical practice. “Each of the five precepts is called a sikkhapada or ‘step of training’...they have been formulated for the welfare and security of everyone and their observance means peace and happiness, not only to the individual undertaking to preserve them in purity, but also to all others with whom he has contact”<sup>136</sup>. Therefore, it can be said that the five precepts are essential in order to attain individual and social stability and happiness.

According to Buddhism, the threefold training (sīla, Samādhi and pañña) can be established by following the noble eightfold path (ariyo attangiko maggo)<sup>137</sup>.

<i>Samma diṭṭhi</i>	<i>Pañña</i>
<i>Samma sankappa</i>	
<i>Samma vāca</i>	<i>Sīla</i>
<i>Samma kammanta</i>	
<i>Samma ajīva</i>	
<i>Samma vāyama</i>	<i>Samādhi</i>
<i>Samma sati</i>	
<i>Samma Samādhi</i>	

<sup>135</sup> Bhikkhu Khantipala, **Lay Buddhist Practice: The Shrine Room, Uposatha Day and Rains Residence**, (Kandy: Buddhist Publication Society, 2006), P. 9

<sup>136</sup> Prince Vajirananavarorasa, **The Five Precepts: The Buddhist Golden Rule**, retrieved from [www.dharmaflower.net](http://www.dharmaflower.net), on 24 May, 2017.

<sup>137</sup> S. V. 8 ...op. cit., pp. 1528-1529.

According to the above chart, the first two comprise panna, the third, fourth and fifth comprise sila and the sixth, seventh and eight comprise Samadhi. Although the sequence is as shown above, it is not necessary “to be followed in sequence, one after another. They can be more aptly described as components rather than as steps, comparable to the intertwining strands of a single cable that requires the contributions of all the strands for maximum strengths”<sup>138</sup>. A sequence corresponding to the sequence of the threefold training can be as follows: sila- right speech (samma vāca), right action (samma kammanta), right livelihood (samma ajiva), samadhi- right effort (samma vayama), right mindfulness (samma sati), right concentration (samma samādhi) and pañña (samma diṭṭhi), right intention (samma sankappa).<sup>139</sup>

In order to train body, speech and mind one has to refrain from ten unwholesome actions three bodily, four verbal and three mental, such as:

### **Bodily actions**

1. destroying life
2. Taking what is not given
3. Wrong conduct in regard to sense pleasures

### **Verbal actions**

4. False speech
5. Slandorous speech
6. Harsh speech
7. Idle chatter

### **Mental actions**

8. covetousness
9. Ill will

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<sup>138</sup> Bhikkhu Bodhi, *The Noble Eightfold Path: The Way to the End of Suffering*, (Kandy: Buddhist Publication Society, 1984), p. 12

<sup>139</sup> *Ibid*, p. 12

10. Wrong view”<sup>140</sup>**Right Understanding (Samma Diṭṭhi)**

In order to be free from the unwholesome actions mentioned above one has to have “a correct grasp of the law of kamma, the moral efficacy of action.”<sup>141</sup> With regard to wholesome and unwholesome the Buddha explains right view as follows, “when, friends, a noble disciple understands the unwholesome and the root of the unwholesome, the wholesome and the root of the wholesome, in that way he is one of right view, whose view is straight, who has perfect confidence in the dhamma<sup>142</sup> and has arrived at this true dhamma”. Therefore, it is required to have a right understanding of the wholesome and unwholesome actions.

**Right Intention (Samma Sankappa)**

Right Intention or right thinking denotes the aim, intention, determination and motivation which are followed after right View. There are three kinds of Right Intention: “The Intention of renunciation, the Intention of Good Will, the Intention of harmlessness” These three types of Right thinking are opposite to the three wrong thinking, such as: aberrant thinking, thinking of feeling, and thinking of harm or evil<sup>143</sup>. Such an attitude motivates us to abandon the malice and hatred, as well as all the violence and cruelty towards others. Right thought helps to prevent two defilements such as: greed and anger.

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<sup>140</sup> **The Noble Eightfold Path**...op. cit. p. 18

<sup>141</sup> Ibid, p. 15

<sup>142</sup> M. I. 46...op.cit., p. 132.

<sup>143</sup> Ibid, pp. 26-39

**Right speech (samma vāca), right action (samma kammanta),  
right livelihood (samma ajiva)**

The verbal actions are explained under the “right speech” ((Samma Vācha), which is the third of the noble eight fold path. Abstaining from lying refers to pledge of Honesty and Truth. Abstaining from slander, intentionally divisive speech, harsh, angry or bitter words creates enmity among the people, community and society. Instead using peaceful, polite, gentle and affectionate words promotes friendship and harmonious co-existence.

Here, the bodily actions fall under “right action” (Samma Kammanta), the fourth of the noble eightfold path (ariyo aṭṭaṅgiko maggo). The principles of right action show the positive psychological factors of large capacity along with moderation. For example: not killing animals bears the implications of a commitment of Compassion, respect for life of all other living beings. Refraining from stealing indicates a commitment to honesty or respect of wealth owned by others. Abstaining from sexual misconduct implies the respect of the dignity of human beings.

The Buddha taught his disciples to avoid any business or work that is harmful and causes suffering to sentient beings. Instead, people should earn an honest living which is harmless and peaceful. In Vanijja sutta of Aṅguttara Nikaya, five kinds of trade are asked to avoid such as: “trading in weapons, trading in living beings, trading in meat, trading in intoxicants, and trading in poison”<sup>144</sup> Buddha also taught his disciples to avoid deceit, hypocrisy, trickery or any type of dishonesty in business or work.

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<sup>144</sup> S. III. 177, ...op.cit., p. 790.

### **Right Effort (Samma Vāyama), Right mindfulness (Samma Sati), Right Concentration (Samma Samādhi)**

The Buddha begins the step of training mind by right Effort. He puts a special stress on this factor as the practical path that requires work, effort and energy. Buddha is not a savior: “enlightened points the way, the effort you have done it”. He added, “Target” is for those energetic, not for the lazy. Here we come to the great Buddhist optimism, which has denied all allegations of cynical pessimism. Buddha taught, through right effort we can convert the whole structure of life. We are not helpless victims of past conditions. They are not victims of our genes or environment, but through mental training we can develop our minds to the pinnacle of wisdom, enlightenment and liberation.

#### **Right mindfulness (Samma Sati)**

This is the seventh factor of the eightfold path. This is the basis of the mental development. It refers to being mindful and completely conscious of any act being performed. Although, human beings have a certain degree of mindfulness, it is not strong and hence, it needs to be strengthened through deep practice of meditation. In order to develop mindfulness people should go through real practice, diligence, perseverance, hard work and strong will. Most importantly, development of internal mindfulness is required to be established. Following are the four foundations of mindfulness:

- (a) “Contemplation of the Body (kāyanupassana)
- (b) Contemplation of Feeling (vedānanupassana)
- (c) Contemplation of the State of Mind (cittānupassana)
- (d) Contemplation of Phenomena (dhammānupassana).”<sup>145</sup>

After establishing mindfulness on all four faculties, the practitioner realizes the difference between the good and bad. She/he acquires complete control over her/his mind. Thus, nothing can deter him from pursuing the way to the highest wisdom and ultimate happiness.

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<sup>145</sup> Ibid, pp. 74-85.

### **Right Concentration (Samma Samādhī)**

Right concentration is the eighth element of the eightfold path. As defined by Bhikkhu Bodhi, it refers to “one-pointedness of the mind” (citt’ekaggata) and “represents an intensification of a mental factor present in every state of consciousness”. It unifies “the other mental factors in the task of cognition”, singles out every “aspect of consciousness” and ensures that “every citta or act of mind remains centered on its object.” As a result mind is completely aware of any sensory or mental experiences. At this level of one-pointedness, the mind and its “concomitants” are get united and the concentration is so focused that “the entire objective datum points from its outer peripheries to its inner nucleus”<sup>146</sup>.

Finally, the results of the eightfold path in relation to the bodily, verbal and mental actions are explained as follows,

Bhikkhus, for a person of right view, right intention, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness, right concentration, right knowledge, and right liberation, whatever bodily kamma, verbal kamma and mental kamma, he instigates and undertakes in accordance with that view, and whatever his volition, yearning, inclination, and volitional activities, all lead to what is wished for, desired and agreeable, to well-being and happiness. For what reason? Because the view is good.<sup>147</sup>

Therefore, the noble eightfold path is way to destroy unwholesome actions and cultivate wholesome actions. By following noble eightfold path one can achieve perfection in the threefold training of sila, Samadhi and panna. And thus can attain the ultimate happiness in nibbana.

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<sup>146</sup> Ibid, p. 86.

<sup>147</sup> A. V. 212,...op. cit., p. 1485.



#### 4.1.4 The Fourfold Development

Duc Son Center also emphasizes on the four fold development such as: development of body, development of feeling, development of mind and development of wisdom. These four foundations (cattaro satipatthana) are called “the one way to the purifications of beings, for the overcoming of sorrow and distress, for the disappearance of pain and sadness, for the gaining of the right path, for the realization of nibbana”<sup>148</sup>. These four aspects of development are viewed as the goal of human development in the Buddhism. Of the four applications of mindfulness, the contemplation of the body is concerned with the material side of existence; the other three are concerned principally (though not solely) with the mental side.<sup>149</sup> Following Buddhist teachings, Duc Son Center believes that the ideal persons are those who achieve four kinds of development. Therefore, it provides necessary training and education to the children based on Buddhist principle of fourfold development. Following is a brief discussion of it.

##### a. Development of Body

There are a numbers methods of practicing the the development (kāya-bhāvanā).<sup>150</sup> One of the significant aspect related to this discussion is contemplating on the “the body’s real nature”<sup>151</sup>. The body is composed of various elements and parts. But, the human beings being unaware of the ephemerality of their body cling to it and keep themselves busy in the vain effort of making it more attractive. Due to ignorance, they forget the fleeting nature of it and run after the temporary external beauty. It causes suffering to them. The aim of this meditation is to perceive the impermanent nature of existence and pursue the higher beauty and happiness. The contemplation that the body is consisted of many parts and elements helps to realize the truth “the body as body”- not

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<sup>148</sup> D. II. 290, ...op. cit., p. 335.

<sup>149</sup> The Noble Eightfold Path...op. Cit., p. 74.

<sup>150</sup> Ibid, pp. 74-79.

<sup>151</sup> Ibid, p. 77.

as my body or as myself, but simple as a physical form like all other physical forms. Like all forms, the body comes into being, remains present for a time and then passes away.”<sup>152</sup>

### **b. Development of Feeling<sup>153</sup>**

Feeling is used in the sense of “hedonic quality”... and it arises in dependence on mental event called concomitant (*phassa*)<sup>154</sup>. “In *Majjhimanikaya* three principal types of feeling are mentioned, such as: “pleasant feeling, painful feeling and neither painful nor pleasant feeling”<sup>155</sup>. The purpose of this contemplation is to develop an awareness of “each type of feeling at any given moment”. It helps to realize the impermanence of any particular type of feeling. When one has such a realization he or she no more clings to pleasant feeling or suffers from unpleasant feeling and acquires the knowledge of the true nature of “feelings as feelings rather than as my feeling.”<sup>156</sup> Thus the contemplation on mind helps to the development of good mental qualities, such as, love, compassion, sympathetic joy, equanimity, mindfulness, concentration, mental strength and perfect mental health, consisting of peace and happiness. The practice of concentration, meditation enables one to possess these mental qualities and purify the mind from all defilements and mental illness.

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<sup>152</sup> Bhante Gunaratana, “The Foundations of Mindfulness”, (Boston: Wisdom Publication, 2012), p. 5.

<sup>153</sup> Bhikkhu Analayo, “From Craving to Liberation- Excursions into Thought World of the Pali Discourses”, (New York: The Buddhist Associations of the United States, 2009), pp. 77-97; *The Noble Eightfold Path...*, pp. 80-82.

<sup>154</sup> *The Noble Eightfold Path...* op. cit. p. 80.

<sup>155</sup> M. I. 59, ...op.cit. p. 502.

<sup>156</sup> *The Foundations of Mindfulness...* op. cit., p. 6.

### **c. Development of Mind**

Contemplation on the state of mind helps to understand the nature of mind. Through this one is able to realize every state of mind at every moment. As it is stated in the sutta,

A monk knows a lustful mind as lustful, a mind free from lust as free from lust; a hating mind as hating, a mind free from hate as free from hate; a deluded mind as deluded, an undeluded mind as undeluded; a contracted mind as contracted as contracted, a distracted mind as distracted; a developed mind as developed, an undeveloped mind as undeveloped, a surpassed mind as surpassed, an unsurpassed mind as unsurpassed, a concentrated as concentrated, an unconcentrated mind as unconcentrated; a liberated mind as liberated, an unliberated mind as unliberated.<sup>157</sup>

Likewise, every single function of mind is clearly perceived through the contemplation of the state of mind.

### **c. Development of Dhamma**

There are several meanings of the term “dhamma”. The term “phenomena” is used because it includes the two interconnected meanings “cetasikas” (the mental factors)<sup>158</sup>. The teaching of Buddha is also another meaning of the dhamma. Contemplation on the dhamma refers not only to “be mindful of Buddha’s teachings but also the dhamma within us, which is the truth within us”<sup>159</sup>. It is by looking inside and contemplating within ourselves we can realize the dhamma. There are “five sub-sections” of the “phenomena”, each devoted to a different set of phenomena: the hindrances, the five aggregates, the six inner and outer sense bases, the seven factors of enlightenment, and the four noble

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<sup>157</sup> D. II 22, ...op.cit. p. 340.

<sup>158</sup> The Noble Eightfold Path, ...op.cit. pp. 83-84.

<sup>159</sup> The Four Foundations of Mindfulness...op.cit., pp. 6-7.

truths.”<sup>160</sup> By contemplating on these dhammas one can perceive the true nature of the dhamma. This is the development through knowledge and wisdom. This kind of development includes a high capacity of perceiving and learning, free-thinking and judgment, and the knowledge of all things as they really are. Intellectual development is achieved through the practice of insight meditation.

## 4.2 Activities of Duc Son Center

Above is the discussion on the principles of Duc Son center and how they are motivated by Buddhist teachings. Following section describes the various activities of Duc Son center and how these activities are inspired by the aforementioned principles.

### 4.2.1 Activities inside the Temple

The time-table of Duc Son Center is given bellow. All members, excluding the babies who are too young, of the center perform their regular activities following this time-table.

#### a. Daily Routine for the children

5:00 a.m.:	Wake up, do exercise, do individual tasks such as, washing face, brushing teeth etc.
5:30 a.m.:	Perform daily duties
6:00 a.m.:	Have breakfast
6:45 a.m.:	Go to school
11:00 a.m.:	Have lunch

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<sup>160</sup> The Noble Eightfold Path,....op.cit. p. 84.

12:15 p.m.:	Take nap
1:00 p.m.:	Go to school
6:00 p.m.:	Have dinner, wash dishes, clean the tables and floor.
7:30 p.m.:	Do home works
9:00 p.m.:	Go to bed (People who want to continue study use lamp)

Figure: Time-table

Every morning, the nuns usually get up at 3:30 a.m. to perform morning chanting section. At 4:45 a.m. the wake up bell is rung and all the children leave their bed and begin a new day. Firstly they gather together at the yard to do 15- minutes-morning-exercise. They then return to the bedrooms to arrange their beds properly. Then, they brush their teeth and wash face and do their regular duties which are divided appropriately according to different age group. The division of duties is as follows:

### **Primary School children and Secondary School children<sup>161</sup>**

Keeping in mind that they cannot do too hard work, they are just assigned to clean the floors. The orphanage has a very big area that includes both living and other houses. Each room is allocated for two secondary students and one or two primary school students (grade four or grade five). Usually, the older students are in charge of cleaning and instructing the younger ones so that they can become familiar with their duties.

### **High school students and Universities**

There are a lot of works for this age group. Hence, few more subgroups have been formed according to the nature of work.

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<sup>161</sup> See the figure 38 at Appendix, p.109.

## **b. Girls' daily Activities for the children**

### **Washing clothes of children<sup>162</sup>**

5 to 6 girls are assigned to this work of washing clothes of more than 40 children. It is a huge task. Although there are washing machines, yet the clothes and blankets need to be soaked, cleaned by hand before putting them into the machine. After washing, they have to put all the clothes to dry in fixed place for drying.

### **Bathing the children<sup>163</sup>**

Six girls are assigned for this job of bathing two groups of infants and preschool students in the morning. After bathing them, they have to take the children to the cafeteria before the end of the morning work.

### **Feeding the children**

The preschoolers also have to go to school every day. So they also wake up at 5:30 a. m every morning. After that the elders bathe them and feed them before going to school. This task of feeding them is assigned to 2-3 high school girls who take food from the kitchen, distribute to all the preschool children. Although these children can eat by themselves, the girls have to be there and observe them until they finish eating. After finishing their meals, the children are taken to school.

## **c. Boys' activities for the boys group**

### **Cleaning the yards and watering plants**

Boys are tasked with cleaning the yards and watering the garden and taking care of vegetables. A nun is in charge of supervising the boys. Every morning she instructs the boys how to grow vegetables, how to fertilize and take care of the gardens. In the early morning, some of the boys collect vegetables from the garden and take them to the kitchen to prepare food.

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<sup>162</sup> See the figure 39 at Appendix, p.109.

<sup>163</sup> See the figure 40 at Appendix, p.110.

Besides, the children have to perform regular scheduled duties for about 30 to 45 minutes. Then they take breakfast and get ready to go to school. After breakfast, the duties are distributed to two groups for morning and afternoon session.

### **The students who go to school in the afternoon**

The students who go to school in the afternoon have to complete their morning duties. After breakfast, they wash the dishes and clean the cafeteria. Then, join the extra classes according to the schedule or they do their self-studies such as, reading books in the library till lunch time at 11:00 a. m. after that, they go to school.

### **The students who go to school in the morning**

They go to school immediately after breakfast and come back in between 12 a.m. to 12:30p.m. After finishing lunch, they wash dishes and clean the cafeteria. Then, they take a nap for some time. After that, they take extra-classes or do self-studies till evening.

### **University students<sup>164</sup>**

After they come back from university in the afternoon, the children take rest and have dinner at 6 p. m. after dinner; the task of washing dishes and cleaning the cafeteria are done by the university students.

At 7:30 p.m, the children sit in groups and continue self-studies, prepare school home works in the common room for the next day.

At the weekend on Saturday and Sunday, children are allowed to play sports, practice kungfu and watch movies after completing their duties.

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<sup>164</sup> See the figure 41 at Appendix, p.110.

#### **4.2.2 Activities Outside the Temple for the Youth: Socio-cultural and Educational activities**

Apart from the indoor activities, Duc Son center also performs a number of outdoor activities. This section focuses on the outdoor activities performed by Duc Son center.

##### **a. Buddhist Association / Program**

Every Sunday afternoon, children from 6 years old and above participate in the Buddhist Association, a program for young Buddhist people (a form of activity similar to Sunday School in Thailand). This section focuses on the outside activities.

##### **b. Camping<sup>165</sup>**

Every year on the International Children's Day (1st June), Duc Son Centre cooperates with the Chi Thien foundation from Taiwan (CI foundation), the sponsor that organizes picnic for the children's recreation and joining extracurricular activities. Every year, different areas are chosen for camping, such as: the Quoc Hoc Park - Hue, Thanh Tan Hot Springs (Thanh Tan Spa), Sport Competition House. The children participate in many useful and enjoyable activities that include Emulation Arts (singing and dancing), painting and many other games. Besides, the places are full of various instruments for children and furnished with a reading room, drawing room so that they can choose any game or activity according to their preferences.

Apart from the Duc Son Center, all centers which are taking care of the children in Thua Thien Hue province also join together. The gathering is organized and supported by CI foundation. Such a gathering provides the opportunity to familiarize and learn from other children. They can acquire new experiences and make new friends who are like them. It teaches them the skill of socialization, generosity and sympathy towards others. The camping continues for two days and one night. Total program is organized in a safe environment under the guidance and

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<sup>165</sup> See the figure 42 at Appendix, p.111.



supervision of the nannies that are in charge of the management of the center.

**c. Visit the historical attractions**

In addition to school hours, Duc Son always gives the opportunity to visit historical sites like ancient palace, museums to acquire more knowledge about the history and culture of the country.

**d. Charity work**

The children are also encouraged in charity work. They are taken to visit and offer gifts to leprosy patients center, blind center, mental problem center and poor people from ethnic minority groups who live in mountainous areas.

After the visits, gentle reminders are given to the children so that they realize that we all are humans having same red blood, salty tears. We all look for the same happiness. The aspirations, the wishes of the people are also alike but the fate makes us different. Someone is happy since her/his birth, but there are a lot of very poor people who do not find happiness since childhood to old age. There are lucky people but there are also many people who are unlucky. The purpose of going out to visit, offer gifts to those who are unlucky is to help them to be more motivated to overcome both mental and physical difficulties in life. Helping people who are in miserable circumstances is a beautiful activity of extending human-love to them. Such lessons of caring others will help the children to perceive the meaning of life by witnessing the unhappy circumstances of others. They will learn to appreciate their situations thinking that they are more fortunate than many others. Hence, they will also be careful about what they have and know how to save and share with others.

**e. Organizing the Vesak ceremony**

Vesak Festival is a great Buddhist festival which is held to celebrate the three major events of the Buddha's life: the Birth, the Enlightenment and the Passing of the Buddha on the full moon day of the

lunar April. This is the most important festival in the Buddhist lunar calendar.

In Vietnam, Vesak Festival has long been a great festival of the nation, solemnly organized by the Vietnam Sangha Order. Many people call this day “Buddha's Birthday Season” to share the joys with people all over the world through celebrating the birthday of the Buddha. This is also an occasion to encourage traditional Buddhist culture to build and defend the socialist fatherland of Vietnam and at the same time clearly demonstrate the religious policy of the Party and State should be organized. It not only attracts the Buddhist but also the non-Buddhists.

In addition to celebrating the main ceremony on the full moon day of April, the Vietnamese Buddhist Sangha of all the provinces and cities also organized banquet cars (car-art for vesak) in the streets; floating the candle flowers on the river. Thousands of Buddhist monks and nuns from different pagodas and organizations enthusiastically come together to celebrate by exhibiting Buddhist art and Buddhist teachings. Lanterns are lighted and Buddhist flags are hoisted all over the pagodas. In particular, the Buddhist Temples of different provinces collaborate with the National committee to organize local charitable activities, build charity houses, visit and offer gifts to the poor people. These programs affirm the stable development of Buddhist activities from the central to grassroots level in the spirit of harmony and unity of the Buddhists and the Buddhist Sangha Order of Vietnam.

Although Duc Son is a small part of the total Buddhist community in Vietnam, it actively participates in organizing the festival. The children have a great time experiencing and learning many new things such as the significance of this day in Buddhism and its history. Besides, they also learn how to organize the event, how to decorate the stage, how to do car-art offerings to the Buddha on this day as well as the domestic science (housework, cooking, needlework); household arts activities, flower-art arrangement, singing, dancing and so on. Every year, Duc Son Center, along with other temples and organizations, makes a great contribution to the annual Buddhist festival to show the spirit of

Buddhist unity and express the gratitude to the Buddha, the founder of the religion for the liberation of mankind.

#### **f. Ullambana Ceremony**

Vu Lan (Ullambana) is derived from Sanskrit. It means “deliverance from suffering,” and specifically refers to the liberation of spirits suffering in hell. This concept is rooted in the story of “Moggallana’s rescuing his Mother from Hell.”

According to this Buddhist legend, the protagonist Moggallana knows that his mother is tortured in hell by hanging backwards and starving. So he begins his difficult journey to free his mother. He goes to hell and brings food to ease his mother's hunger. When he finally succeeds in finding his mother, he offers the food to his mother, but the bowl of rice breaks into flame before she eats. Being despaired, Moggallana goes to Shakyamuni Buddha and asks him to guide how to dedicate merits to save his mother. The Buddha said:

Your mother's offenses are deep and firmly rooted. You alone do not have enough power. Although your filial sounds move heaven and earth, the heaven spirits, the earth spirits, twisted demons, and those outside the way, Brahmans, and the four heavenly king gods, are also without sufficient strength. The awesome spiritual power of the assembled Sangha of the ten directions is necessary for the liberation to be attained.<sup>166</sup>

With the guidance of the Blessed One, Moggallana begins a Buddhist ritual quickly and recites the scriptures until he finally succeeds in liberating his mother from hell. This story has been passed down through the ages to this day and is celebrated on the full moon of the seventh lunar month of the Mahayana Buddhists every year around the world by the name Vu Lan. The rituals are held to save the spirits who suffer from hunger in the hell. Therefore, Vu Lan ceremony has become a great holiday. Buddhists offer prayers to the ancestors, their living parents

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<sup>166</sup> The Ullambana Sutra : The Buddha speaks of The Ullambana Sutra , Retrieved on April 20, 2017, [http://dharmaflower.net/\\_collection/ullambana.pdf](http://dharmaflower.net/_collection/ullambana.pdf)

and elders. Because people often believe that the person who performs good deeds will accumulate merit. It is considered to be a more meaningful action when the merit gained from the practice of good kamma is shared with the souls, which alleviates their suffering and helps them to be reborn in the good realm. And as well this is also a chance to teach the children always respect the filial piety and always pay homage to parents and grandparents who are our nurturers.

Vu Lan is celebrated by Buddhists all over the world. Although there are some differences in culture, organization and belief, the basic rituals are still identical. In addition to prayers for the dead- ancestors and prayers are done for peace and good health of the living parents, for the happiness of the family, the Buddhists also offer four necessary things to the Triple Gem on this holiday.

Today, Vu Lan ceremony has become a great holiday for the Vietnamese Buddhists as a day of honoring Filial Piety. Duc Son Center also organizes the ceremony, pins roses on the children's chests as a reminder of expressing gratitude to their origin, their birthplace as well as the nurturers who have fed them.

#### **g. The Guan Yin Spirituality Festival on June 19 of the Lunar Calendar**

At the Guan Yin Buddhist Spirituality Center in Bang Lang Village, Thuy Ban Commune, Huong Thuy Town, the Memory Day of Avalokitesvara is annually celebrated, praying for "Fatherland's glory, everlasting of the dharma, world peace and strength".

The festival is a bold spiritual culture. It speaks out the manifestations of the Bodhisattva Avalokitesvara in the world to bring the world peace and happiness. The image of Bodhisattva Avalokitesvara is very close to the spiritual life of Vietnamese people for a long time. Attending the festival, people experience the need of spiritual culture, understanding the culture and the traditional values, extending the good and improving the inner value.

Avalokitesvara or Guan Yin Festival is evidence which deeply bears the spirit of both national and religious culture and merges them together. Bodhisattva Avalokitesvara is a great universal icon for the humankind. Her mercy, special prominence and selfless spirit immensely cover the sky and spread to infinite space.

Thousands of Buddhist followers and visitors from home and abroad are attracted to the festival and gather together to make prayers. It spreads into the spiritual life of the people in many regions and becomes a sacred pilgrimage site of thousands of people and visitors.

#### **h. Supporting the students during the entrance exam**

Every year, during high-school graduate examinations and University entrance examination period in Vietnam, being driven by the spirit of help and companionship Duc Son Center together with some other temples under the guidance of the Buddhist Sangha in Thua Thien Province collect and cook over five thousand boxes of vegetarian meals to offer to the examinees and their guardians for free. This generous activity bears the testimony of the geniality and enthusiasm of the monks and nuns and the Hue Buddhists. The aim of this free service is to help the students so that they do not have to waste time in searching for food because most of them come from the places far from the city.

“Welcoming the contest season” is a large-scale annual activity that reflects the reflecting the generous and sympathetic spirit of the Buddhist of Thua Thien Hue Buddhism. It is hoped that the program contributes to some material aspects and to encourage the contestants. It is an opportunity to sow the seed of Buddhism in their mind.

#### **i. Traditional medical Spot**

If modern medicine plays an important role in the diagnosis and treatment of first aid patients, traditional medicine is useful for patients with chronic diseases or sequelae.

Patients suffering from hemiplegia hemorrhagic seizures may not recover if they are applied only Western medical treatments. The

traditional medicine methods such as acupuncture and massage will help them to recover the normal functions of the body. Traditional medicine and Western medicine should have a close relationship and work together to support patients with the best treatment.

The dominant advantage of the traditional medical treatment such as Herbal medicine is it has relatively less adverse reactions and side-effects. In fact, we can see that there are few cures or treatments that are sustainable without harming the products of herbal origin. However, it is good if the patient is examined, prescribed and guided by a doctor and applies selected herbs properly.

Considering the abovementioned purpose, Duc Son Center founded Hoa Duc traditional medical treatment. The center provides free medical treatment, free medicine for people in difficult circumstances, especially the elderly and the poor. Hoa Duc pharmacy hopes to develop medical skills and medical equipment in future so that it can serve people well.

#### **j. The Buddhist Family**

The Buddhist Family in Vietnam<sup>167</sup> (GDPTVN): Since the unification of the Vietnamese Buddhism, the Charter of the Vietnamese Buddhist Sangha was born. In the charter it is clearly stated that there are five types of organization: Buddhist students, Buddhist Scouts, Buddhist Youth, Buddhist Pupils and Buddhist Family (GDPT). The Vietnam Buddhist Family was established in the 1940s by Dr. Tam Minh - Le Dinh Tham and was officially named the Buddhist Family in 1951 on the basis of educating the youth following the Buddhist teachings. Since then it has been contributing to educate the Buddhist youth in Vietnam. In the beginning of the 21st century, the organization has than 150,000 leaders and members who participate in regular activities nationwide. Duc Son Buddhist community is one of the GDPT of Huong Thuy Town with 150 members regularly participating at Duc Son Pagoda every Sunday.

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<sup>167</sup> Lu Ho – Nguyen Minh Hien, Su Menh Gia Dinh Phat Tu [Buddhist Family Mission], (Saigon, 1965), p.2.

There is no limit of age or sex to be member of GDPT, a program to train young people to become good Buddhists and contribute to building a better society in the spirit of Buddhism. As stated in Lu Ho's book, entitled “The Buddhist Family Mission”,

The children enter the Buddhist Family to imitate the Buddha. They are fortunate to enjoy the Buddhist spirit (Bi, Tri, Dung) without a religion, a theory that cannot match. But enjoyment is not just to enjoy yourself, but to distribute around you the beauty or beauty that you have gained ... actively work to improve life, bring happiness to society.<sup>168</sup>

Therefore, it can be said that the Buddhist Family is an organization that performs the role of sowing the seed in the heart of the children so that they can grow up with an ethical and healthy mind. It cultivates morality in the children and nurtures them. By emphasizing the idea that happiness should not be limited to one or few people, it should be disseminated to others, it also teaches the idea of kindness and compassion.

### **Motto and Principles of GDPT:**

#### **Motto**

“Bi-Tri-Dung” (Compassion-Wisdom-Strength)

#### **Principles**

The soul has principles, in order to distinguish the identity of the conflict, to distinguish between the good with evil, towards aesthetic or rudimentary. These principles motivate people to perfection or sin. As a youth education organization, the Buddhist Family sets rules and vows to guide the noble ideals.

#### **Five rules for leaders and teenagers boys and girls (adults)**

- a. Buddhists take refuge in Buddha, Dharma, Sangha and keep the precepts.
- b. Buddhists extend compassion and respect for life.
- c. Buddhists cultivate wisdom, respect the truth.

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<sup>168</sup> Ibid, p.21.

- d. Buddhists are pure from physical to mental, from words to deeds.
- e. Buddhists living happy discharge to brave on the path.

### **Three laws for young boys and girls (7-12 years)**

- a. I remember Buddha.
- b. I love my parents and agree with you.
- c. I love people and things

### **Activities of GDPT:**

Content learning and practice:

Activities of GDPT consist of 4 training contents:

- a. Buddhism: The teachings of the Buddhism are allocated according to the ranks suitable for each age.
- b. Youth activities: The classes teach skills to help the students to adapt to all living conditions such as forest, river crossing, mountain climbing ... and combine with skills in daily life such as communication Information (Morse Transmitting, Semaphore and other signals), secret mail, gutters, tents, ambulance and escape skills.
- c. Social activities: Social-related activities such as: Relief, support visit, participation in community activities ...
- d. Performing arts: holding contests, singing and dancing performances, offering festivities or celebrations, activities in the field of GDPT.

Lu Ho further mentions that the subjects taught by the Buddhist family are important to lead them to pursue the “footprints” of the Buddha. These subjects are equally useful for individual, familial and social life.

The culture of the Family such as singing, literature, music drama will help children decorate the beautiful life. The ambulance, gout, morse will help children rescue the daily crashes around them. Embroidery, housework will help the children in housework and Buddhist



teachings will help them understand the meaning of life and live it right...<sup>169</sup>

Hence, it is evident that Buddhist Family plays a significant role in establishing both material and spiritual life of the children. Being trained by this organization they are sure to have happy and religious life in future.

### **Early Childhood Education System - Kindergarten class**

Preschool education is the first level in the national education system. It builds the foundation for the physical, cognitive, social and aesthetic development of children. The skills that children acquire through early childhood care programs will be the foundation for their future learning and success. Therefore, the development of preschool education and the enhancement of school for children are important factors in the development of high quality human resources for the country.

The early years of life play a very important role in shaping the personality and developing the capacity of the children, because while congenital babies are able to acquire learning, the brain is programmed to receive Sensory information and use to form understanding and communicating with the world, but the child's educational outlook may be limited by many factors such as physical, cognitive and emotional. Having good care and development from childhood will contribute to a solid foundation for child's future development. Preschool education will prepare children for skills such as self-reliance, restraint, clarity, and excitement for primary schooling, increasing readiness to enter the stage of general education section.

Being aware of the significance of the impact of early experiences on the development of children, and to help the children in remote areas so that they have the opportunity to go to school, Duc Son

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<sup>169</sup> Ibid, p.23.

Center has helped build schools, provide teaching and learning tools as well as support salary for teachers. The Center encourages under-qualified teachers to continue refresher courses to improve the quality of early childhood education and to expand access to high quality early childhood education, especially focus on disadvantaged children and ethnic minorities. With the goal of increasing enrollment rates, improving the quality of preschool education through better teaching methods to meet basic educational standards, to improve readiness for 5 years old child.

Just starting with the simple bamboo leaf walls in the beginning years of struggle the classrooms have become much more spacious now; facilities are also more adequate ensuring the quality of teaching and study for both teachers and the children. Since establishment, Duc Son center has helped the disadvantaged children with education and more than 150 pre-school teachers solving their employment. All of them were on pension at that time. It has been a great benefit to them and to the community as well.

### **4.3 Concluding Remarks**

In the above discussion, we have focused on the principles and activities of Duc Son Center and how they can be applicable for the youth welfare of Vietnam. We have noticed that the principles are deeply influenced by the sublime Buddhist doctrines of compassion, loving kindness, generosity and the Buddhist ethics. These principles are essential for building a happy, ethical and successful society. But, they should be practiced wholeheartedly and make them part and parcel of their life. Duc Son center has been training the children by following these principles so that they can grow up as responsible members of the society and hence, contribute for the development of the country the aim of the center is to establish a happy and successful society in general and the orphans in particular. Therefore, the center is determined to offer them good education and a bright future. At the same time, it also trains them to be good human beings and be useful for the society. The children

learn how to extend love and compassion to the others, their fellow brothers and sisters at the center and everyone around them. They also learn the qualities of kindness, sympathy for others, forgiveness and generosity. They are trained through actively engaging in the practical social activities organized by the center and other socio-cultural organizations. Therefore, it can be said Duc Son has been successfully going ahead with its goals and principles for the establishment a responsible and dedicated young generation in the country.

## **Chapter V**

### **Conclusion and Suggestions**

This research has focused on Duc Son Center and its contribution to the youth welfare in Vietnam. We have discussed the history of the center and how it has been contributing to accomplish its aims, mission and vision. Undoubtedly is a gigantic task that the center has taken responsibility. But, the determination and dedication of the founder and all people associated with it has proven that if there is honesty and firmness in helping the society everything is possible.

In the second chapter we have discussed the history of Duc Son center from its origin to present. We have also talked about the brief biography of the founder. We have noticed that the starting of the institute was full hardships and difficulties. But, through determination and sacrificing mentality, the founder has managed to establish the institute and have been running it for about four decades. The journey throughout this huge period of time was not smooth but it has received support and patronization from several individual and organizations. Gradually her work has been recognized by the government. She has been awarded with

a number honors and certificates acknowledging her contribution to the society.

In chapter three we have explored the several problems in Vietnamese society and how Duc Son center has been contributing to solve these problems. One of the most significant issues is child abandonment in Vietnam. We have concentrated on problems and factors of child abandonment and noticed that there are a number of interrelated causes behind this social problem such as: poverty, unemployment, homelessness, migration lack of sex education, son preference and so on. After the children are left out by the parents or guardians, Duc Son center

adopts these children and take care of them with motherly love and care. It offers shelter, food, clothing and education so that they can grow up as normal human beings. Besides, it offers moral teachings to these children so that they contribute to the elimination of child abandonment in the society.

In the fourth chapter, we have discussed the motifs and objectives of Duc Son Center and various methods, program and activities adopted by the center. At the same time, this chapter has focused on the multifarious facilities and training offered to the children for their physical and psychological development. We have noticed that the training includes many aspects which are really useful for the healthy growth and overall progress of the children. It is evident that the program, activities training are contributive to make the children responsible citizens of the country.

Chapter five is the biggest of all. It has dealt with the principles and activities of Duc Son temple and their application for strengthening youth welfare in Vietnam. We have seen that the core principles of the center are loving-kindness (metta), compassion (Karuṇā), giving (dāna) or generosity (caga) and ethics. All these principles are influenced and motivated by Buddhist teachings. From the discussion, it is obvious that the principles as they practiced at Duc Son center are highly useful for the development of the youth in their daily life and making them as responsible members of the society. Duc Son center is not just an ordinary institute, rather wholeheartedly concentrates on the development of the children. It not only provides normal education but also trains them with moral teachings so that they can grow up as good people. It teaches the highest human qualities of loving-kindness, compassion, generosity and the great Buddhist principles such as: the five precepts and meditation. Such training is very necessary for their ethical and intellectual development. The application of such teachings is evident in the regular practices and activities performed by the children. We have seen that the children themselves take care of one another like brother and sisters. Besides, the children also participate in the socio-cultural activities organized by Duc Son center and other organizations. Most

important of these activities is charity work and camping. Through participating in the charity work, the children can practice the quality of generosity and caring others. Through camping they can have the opportunity to meet other children from other institutes. It teaches them the sense of fellow feeling and socialization.

At Duc Son center all the members at center live like a family enjoying equal advantages and freedom. Unlike other child care centers, it lets the children to grow up as pure secular people. The children at Duc Son center allowed wearing normal colorful clothes as they like, to grow long hair and other normal aspects. It does not force them to follow strictly monastic rule because it believes such an action would be harmful for their normal growth. Duc Son center maintains an equal attitude to all the children such as: abandoned children, full orphans, part orphans, poor children, mental problem children and children with disabilities. It offers equal love and care to all. The Head of the Center, Nun Minh Tu believes that the purpose of the Duc Son Orphanage is to fill the children with love and attention so that they can grow up as “complete” individuals although they lack parents and family. Unlike other institute, Duc Son center lets the children to stay until they are able to have a job and support themselves. In terms of ethical training, the person in charge always follows, teaches and guides the right path. They are encouraged to follow the kind of education they like so that they can prove themselves in the field they study.

Finally it can be said that Duc Son center has been supporting many children to offer them necessary facilities, training and education so that they can establish themselves in their life and to become good human beings. Yet, it lacks proper organizational and institutional structure and system so that it can work in a systematic way. One of the reasons behind is the founder has focused on providing the children the basic needs so that they can survive. They did not have enough financial and other related support to concentrate on every single aspect. Even though there is no deficiency of the dedication, determination and endeavor of the founder, but, due to lack of financial support she is not able to provide all the necessary elements to the children.

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## Appendix

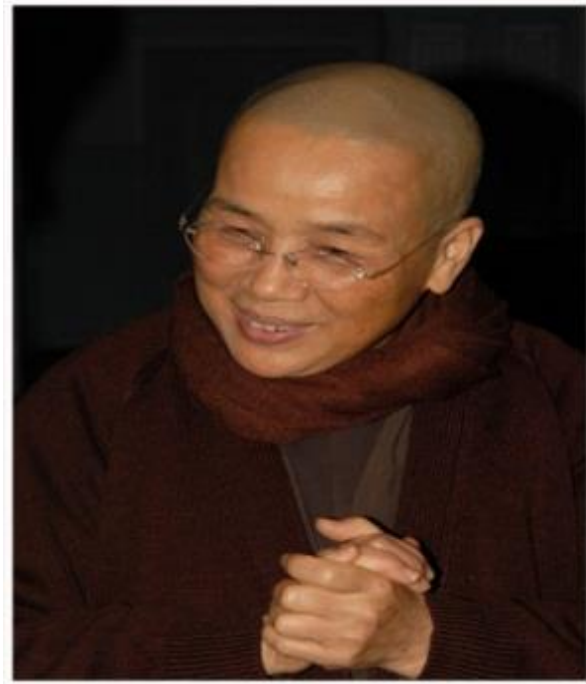


Figure 1: Master Thich Nu Minh Tu, the Founder and Director of Duc Son Orphanage Center, Vietnam



Figure 2: Duc Son Orphanage



Figure 3: Medal for Promoting Education



Figure 4: Medal for Career Education Work, Decision No. 6204/GD-ĐT, Hanoi, November 7, 2003.



Figure 5: Medal for Contribution to the Happiness of the Blind



Figure 6: Medal for “Good Person Good Work”



Figure 7: Certificates of merit from the Vietnam Prime Minister Nguyen Xuan Phuc and from the Chairman of the People's Committee of Huong Thuy town for contribution to the work of social protection.



Figure 8: Certificate awarded to Most Ven. Thich Nu Minh Tu by Women's Union of Thua Thien Hue province for her excellent achievement in directing the patriotic emulation movement in the period between 2010-2014



Figure 9: Certificate awarded to Duc Son Center by the Central Executive Committee of Study Encouragement Association for the contribution to “Vietnam School Promotion”



Figure 10: Certificate Awarded by the Central Committee of the Vietnam fatherland Front for contribution to the movement of promoting an educated and financially self-dependent society.





Figure 11: Certificate Awarded by Committee of the Vietnam Fatherland Front, Thua Thien Hue Province for contribution to the prevention and remedying the storm 6.



Figure 12: Certificate of merit awarded by People's Committee of Thua Thien Hue Province for outstanding achievements in patriotic emulation movement in 2001 - 2005



Figure 13: Certificate awarded by The Committee for Population, Family and Children for outstanding achievements in the Population, Family and Children in 2004



Figure 14: Certificate awarded by the Vietnam Blind Association for contribution to promoting the “happiness of the blind”



Figure 15: Certificate awarded by the People's Committee of Huong Tra District for contribution to the social work of education, during the period between 1999 - 2004 in Huong Tra district.



Figure 16: Certificate awarded by People's Committee of Thua Thien Hue Province to Duc Son Center for outstanding achievements in promoting educational activities in the province.



Figure 17: Certificate awarded by Vietnam Fatherland Front Committee of ThuaThien Hue Province with the title of “Good Person – Good Work”



Figure 18: Certificate awarded by the People’s Committee of Thua Thien Hue Province with the title “Good Person – Good Work” in 2001 – 2002



Figure 19: Certificate awarded by People’s Committee of Thua Hien Hue Province for the protection and care of children in 2000



Figure 20: Children with the Nuns of Duc Son Center



Figure 21: Physically Challenged Children with the Director and nuns of Duc Son Center



Figure 22: Students are picking up vegetables in the Garden



Figure 23: Children are practicing Kung Fu and playing with toys during their leisure time



Figure 24: Duc Son Orphanage Football Team posing for a photo-shoot wearing the temple football jersey



Figure 25: Class room where the orphanage children learn computer



Figure 26: Figure Orphanage girls pose for a photo-shoot wearing dancing costume

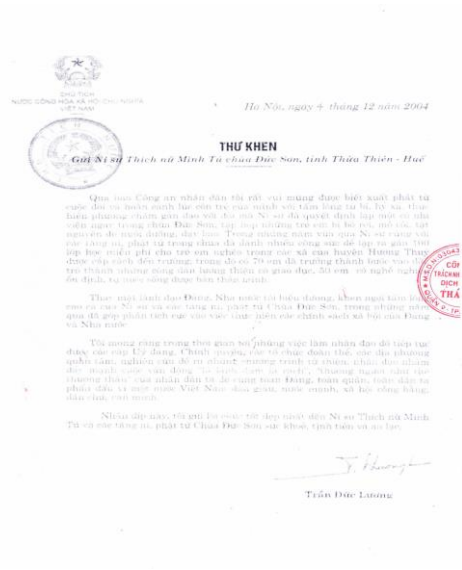
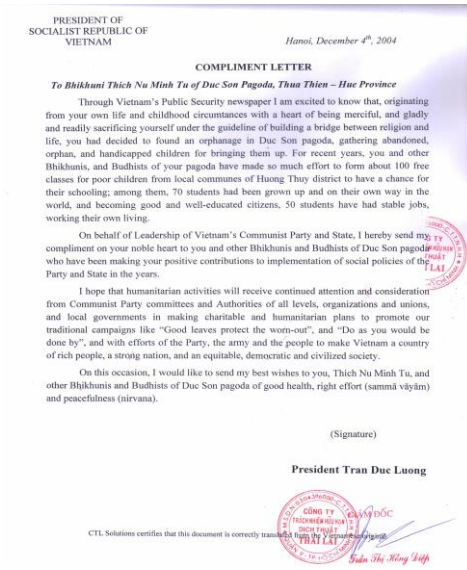


Figure 27: Letter of Commendation offered by the President of Vietnam acknowledging the hard work and contribution of Most. Ven. Nun Minh Tu, the founder and director Duc Son Center





Figure 28: Infant is drinking nutrient and carefully prepared milk



Figure 29: Children between 6 months to 3 years old eating nutrient porridge



Figure 30: Four year old children are eating rice



Figure 31: Tailoring room where the orphanage learn ressmaking

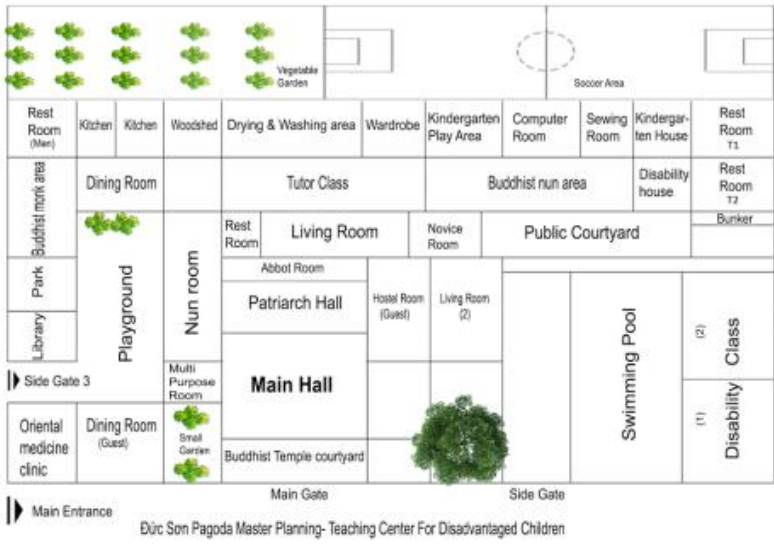


Figure 32: Map of Duc Son Center



Figure 33: Craftwork done by the orphanage children for selling



Figure 34: Craftwork done by the Children for selling



Figure 35: Diable children are learning in special classroom with special teachers



Figure 36: Duc Son Center vegetarian restaurant in which vegetarian food are prepared for the orphanage members and also for selling to the customers



Figure 37: The Founder and Director Venerable Minh Tu with orphanage kids



Figure 38: Primary School Children (Left) and High School Children (Right) posing for a photo-shoot before going to school



Figure 39: Assigned girls are washing clothes



Figure 40: Assigned girl is bathing an orphanage boy



Figure 41: Orphanage girls who study at the university pose for a photo-shoot with the founder and director of Duc Son Center.



Figure 42: Dục Sơn Orphanage children participating in camping Trip organized by CI foundation for children in special circumstances

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