

## **Buddhism Tolerance for the Common Good of the Nation From Aspect of Buddhist Philosophy\***

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*ABSTRACT: At present, under the influence of modernization, industrialization, and especially economic globalization many problems of value, belief, and custom have raised and challenged the common life of people in many nations, including Vietnam. These cultural, religious, race conflicts can not be resolved by modern technique and high standard of life, on the contrary, they are just the bad consequences caused by them. The author believes that, tolerance and religious tolerance come to be an influencing approach to religious solidarity, common peace, and harmony society, that has been much or less experienced by individual country or nation through their histories, to resolve these problems of their own. On a certain extent, tolerance is considered as a fundamental principle for each nation to realize their sustainable way, to integrate into the modern world without dissolution, and to grow up without destroying its own, as well as others' characteristics and identity.*

### **1. Introduction**

*Tolerance* in general and *Religious Tolerance* in particular, had been a question of humanity discussed by both the West and the East from ancient times until our times. In the East, the earliest well-known example is found in Siddhārtha Gautama (the 6<sup>th</sup> century BC), the founder of Buddhism, who did pay attention to tolerance and religious tolerance<sup>1</sup> in his teaching on human suffering and emancipation. The first time in the West, in similar time, under Cyrus<sup>2</sup> the Great's foundation of the Persian Empire<sup>3</sup>, tolerance was mentioned as a practical principle, that governments had to consider the question of which groups and practices to tolerate and which to persecute. Another example, also in ancient India is Asoka, a Buddhist king. He also promoted Buddhist ethnic and religious tolerance and issued many edicts in the Maurya Empire<sup>4</sup>, India now. In Europe, the subject of toleration began about the 16<sup>th</sup>

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and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries, in response to the Protestant Reformation<sup>5</sup> and the War of Religion and religious persecutions that followed the breaks with the Catholic Church headed by Martin Luther (1483–1546). Then, John Locke developed a theory of tolerance, which consists of a principle of *Separation of Church and State, Letter Concerning Tolerance*<sup>6</sup> and *Two Treatises of Government*<sup>7</sup>; they all together basically preceded for the *British Tolerance Act*<sup>8</sup> in 1689.

In the 20<sup>th</sup> century, tolerance emerged as a worthy virtue, a criterion of human rights. We can see typical examples of tolerance in our time, such as: M.K.Gandhi (also called Mahatma Gandhi 1869-1948) with his birth day (2 October) is remembered as the *International Day of Non-Violence*; Martin Luther King (1929-1968) was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize (1964) for his efforts of tolerance to end segregation and racial discrimination through non-violent civil disobediences; a Vietnamese Buddhist - Venerable Thích Nhất Hạnh (b.1926), leader of Buddhist peace-workers in Vietnam war as well as in contemporary world, and he was nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize in 1967; and not long ago, on 10 December 1989, the 14<sup>th</sup> Dalai Lama of Tibetan<sup>9</sup> was recognized his efforts in the struggle for liberation of Tibet by using peaceful resolution instead of violence, he was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize.

“Tolerance” becomes an urgent issue of modern world, and then in 1995, UNESCO declared the *United Nations Year for Tolerance* and the *International Day for Tolerance* as well as inauguration of the *Declaration of Principles on Tolerance* on 16 November, in the same year. This important *Declaration* makes a distinction that, today tolerance is not only the concept on dignity, virtue of individual person, community or nation, but further it becomes one of the important characteristics of humanity of the modern world as the whole, in the global age.

At present, under the influence of modernization, industrialization, and specially economic globalization many problems of value, belief, custom have raised and challenged the common life of people in many nations, not except in Vietnam. These cultural, religious, race conflicts can not be resolved by modern technique and high standard of life, on the contrary, they are just the bad consequences caused by them. So that, tolerance and religious tolerance come to be an influencing approach to religious solidarity, common peace, and harmony society that has been much or less experienced by individual country or nation through their histories, to resolve these problems of their own. On a certain extent, tolerance is considered as a fundamental principle for each nation to realize their sustainable way, to integrate into the modern

world without dissolution, and to grow up without destroying its own, as well as others' characteristics and identity.

Vietnam is a nation of many ethnics<sup>10</sup>, and not less than three Asian religions, Confucianism, Taoism, Buddhism, including Catholicism (first missionary in 1533<sup>11</sup>), and other new Protestant sects introduced from the West after Vietnam War (ended in 1975).<sup>12</sup> Thus, religious discrimination or conflict would be an unavoidable problem in process of globalization that should need the application of religious tolerance, when they are still in harmonious relationship.

In Vietnam, Buddhism is one of the major spiritual components,<sup>13</sup> which is abundant in teachings and experiences of tolerance, and highly appraised by the Vietnamese. Under the modern condition of globalization, Buddhism should be a competent candidate to take the mission of religious solidarity. How about Buddhism's ability to meet the modern request of religious tolerance in tendency of modernization, integration, and globalization of the country? This is a question for us from aspect of religious philosophy and history.

This paper tries to focus on the following points on philosophy and history:

- Terminology: “tolerance” and “religious tolerance” as Western term, then trace back to Buddhist terms and notion on “tolerance”
- Philosophical background of Buddhist tolerance
- India's historical lessons of Buddhist tolerance
- Vietnam's Buddhist tolerance for the common good.

## 1. Terminology

Content of “*tolerance*” has been conceptualized through the *Declaration of Principles on Tolerance* (1995) in the modern context as: “*respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms for all, without distinction as to race, gender, language, national origin, religion or disability, and to combat intolerance*”, and “*...individuals, communities and nations accept and respect the multicultural character of the human family*”, because “*Tolerance promotion and the shaping of attitudes of openness, mutual listening and solidarity... among individuals as well as among ethnic, social, cultural, religious and linguistic groups and nations ... to prevent conflicts or resolve them by non-violent means*”.

However, the applications and understandings of this term also make discussions on larger meanings of toleration, such as: religious tolerance, religious liberty, religious pluralism (diversity), and even more likely to use the term in considering contemporary issues regarding discrimination on the basis of race, nationality, gender, sexuality, disability, and other reasons.

Basically, this research also refers to the fundamental contents of these issues, in order to redefine tolerance from Buddhist philosophical perspective:

➤ *What is religious tolerance?*

- The essence of religious tolerance is community's solidarity, and solidarity among different religions, as well as among believers in the same religion.

- True tolerance in religion involves the capacity to admit differences as real and fundamental, even as profound and unbridgeable, yet at the same time to respect the rights of those who follow a religion different from one's own (or no religion at all) to continue to do so without resentment, disadvantage or hindrance.

➤ *What is religious liberty?*

- Naturally people follow different traditional and cultural practices in the name of religion. Thus, there is no reason to discriminate against others on the basis of different practices, manners and traditions. At the same time, we also can be religious without any of those traditions. Also, there is no need to follow meaningless traditions in the name of religion.

➤ *What is religious pluralism?*

- One's religion is not the sole and exclusive source of the truth, and thus some level of truth and value exists in at least some other religions.

- Promoting the unity, co-operation, and mutual understanding between different religions, or denominations within the same religion.

- Condition of harmonious co-existence between adherents of different of different religions or religious denominations.

Nowadays, "*tolerance*" is the outcome of Western culture and "religion"<sup>14</sup> developed and conceptualized by Western religionists and philosophers, and largely used in social, cultural and religious contexts, basically reflect the common aspiration of human rights.

How about “*tolerance*” as terms in the East? A possible approach to answer is to explore the common features in the content of *tolerance*, that religions in the East share deeply in their tenets and histories (Buddhism is my focus in this research). In fact, in Buddha’s primitive teachings we can find at least three terms concerning the internal content and deep notion of “tolerance”, and even more meaningful in aspect of philosophy and ethics, such as:

- “*karuna*” [*karunaa*] means altruism<sup>15</sup>, benevolence, compassion, kindness, sympathy, pity, the aspiration to find a way to be truly helpful to oneself and others.

- “*dana*” [*daana*] is the name of the first theme in the Buddha's system of gradual training ten perfections (*paramis*)<sup>16</sup> of a Bodhisattva. *Dana* means generosity, liberality, offering, alms, giving without expecting any form of repayment from the recipient.

- “*metta*” [*Pāli: Mettā; Sanskrit: maitrī*] means loving-kindness, goodwill, benevolence, love, sympathy, kindness, benign/benignant, amity, friendship, friendliness, and active interest in others.

These terms of *karuna*, *dana*, *metta* were coined and recorded in Buddhist scriptures and popularized in India in ancient time, but they are not used as the word “tolerance” in the modern world. However, their literal senses over cover all the content of “tolerance”. Buddhist attitude of tolerance is constructed on a profound system of religious philosophy of Buddhism on “emptiness” (*sunyata*)<sup>17</sup>, “no-self” (*anata*)<sup>18</sup>, and “impermanent” (*anicca*)<sup>19</sup>. This research will try to redefine and explain Buddhist perspective of tolerance vis-à-vis Western notions as mentioned definition in the *Declaration of Principles on Tolerance* (1995).

## 2. Philosophical Background of Buddhist Tolerance

Now, Buddhism is one of the major religions spreading on both hemispheres of the globe. Without religious tolerance deeply rooted in its philosophy how should Buddhism have always been accepted peacefully into many communities, countries, cultures where it had been introduced and even adopted as national religion in some countries until now? Dhammananda<sup>20</sup> asserted in his booklet “*Why Religious Tolerance?*” that “We have ample evidence to prove that, for the last 2500 years, in the propagation of Buddhism, Buddhists have never ill-treated or used violence against the followers of other religions”<sup>21</sup>. Buddhist tolerance certainly folds up in

Buddhist religious philosophy and ethics that we can try to open through its tenet and history.

Buddha had produced rational, new interpretations to certain religious-philosophical terms of Brahmanism, which were constructed in Vedas and Upanishads, such as: *karma*, *dharma*, *rebirth*, *moksha* and *nirvana*... and developed the high evaluated terms about tolerance as: *karuna*, *dana*, *metta*, which was spiritual heritage of Brahmanism, and he made a religious twist to the thought and religion of his time.

Considering the whole system of Buddhist tenet, its core consists in the ontological principle. It is the ontological doctrine of “emptiness” (*sunyata*), which illuminates all other aspects of Buddhism, such as on its philosophical system, religious and ethics teachings, and so on<sup>22</sup>.

Buddhist notion of tolerance should be traced back to the doctrine of “emptiness”. It explains that every conditioned existence is without any substance and any attribute of their own. Because, originally, every thing is generated by interdependent causalities. Thus, the original nature of conditioned existence is “impermanent”<sup>23</sup>. According to this, all compounded and constructed things and states are impermanent. And, for human life, the self embodies this flux in the aging process, the cycle of birth and rebirth (*samsara*), and in any experience of loss. Every thing is impermanent, and then attachment to them is futile, and leads to suffering (*dukkha*). Ultimately, the emptiness of the self is “no-self”<sup>24</sup>. The “self”, in meaning as the mundane body and mind of each being, is also compounded and constructed of the five “*skandhas*” (impermanent constituent elements)<sup>25</sup>, indeed “*not the self*”. The “*true self*” or in other word the eternal “*Buddha nature*” deep within each being is just the *no-self*, and this realization is only fully gained on reaching awakening (*bodhi*) through training *introspective self-cultivation* (Buddhist meditation). So that, on aspect of ontology all living beings are the same, no distinction, and equally in every one’s nature. Thus, “emptiness” is just the basic philosophical foundation for Buddhism basically not as exclusive religion.

In Buddhist teaching on consciousness, “*wisdom*” (*prajñā*) is also understood as the *emptiness of consciousness*, or in other word it is called *intuition* (Western term). It is the state of spiritual achievement consists in total freedom due to the enlightened state on emptiness, attaching neither to being nor to none being, neither to dualism nor to non dualism, even to any form of spiritual achievement, no matter how high and deep it is. Here is a distinction between consciousness and wisdom,

and the aim of Buddhist epistemology is converting consciousness into wisdom or to get wisdom (*prajñā*). To convert to wisdom is the way to realize the non-substantial character of the ultimate reality, the emptiness. Wisdom (emptiness of consciousness) in the Buddhist epistemology is the foundation for tolerance view on an opened religion.

Accordingly, emptiness of consciousness also leads to aware that all words, concepts are nothing than but artificially constructed, without any fixed correspondence to the ultimate reality. In fact, Buddha often warned his disciples that his teachings and his words were not the ultimate truth, they were the same as some leaves in his hands, can not compare with leaves in the jungle. Therefore, the Buddha's scripture and teaching, even term "*nirvana*" are not of exclusive religion. His teaching is only one of those hints or means which help people to awaken the ultimate truth. With this perspective on consciousness and knowledge Buddhism was accepted peacefully by many other nations, cultures, religions, and by some meanings, it offered them an open epistemology.

As a religion, Buddhism did not depend on the concepts of God, soul and prayers and animal sacrifices, but on the *emptiness*. For Buddhism, in this world, naturally every one is equal in suffering and salvation. Suffering and salvation are neither special for any one, any caste. This thought of suffering and liberation expresses typically Buddhist tolerance, which is so ever profound. Buddhism affirms that every one is equal in ability of attaining enlightenment and equal on the way to liberation; especially, this way is not paved by any god or supernatural power; on that way every one must decide by oneself, step up by oneself and attain it by oneself. From the notion of tolerance, Buddhism is an open way, without any religious distinction, as an open vehicle of tolerance. This should be the answer for conflicts in some Buddhist countries, such as Myanmar, Sri Lanka, Thailand etc., if we see them as the existence of human beings on the way to emancipation.

In ancient religions in Indian, the way for emancipation is closely combined with the ethic way, not separation between each other. In common, there were two extremes of religious ethical ways: hedonism and mortification, which were non-stop argued by the ancient Indians. The Buddha's teachings paved the *Middle Way* (*Madhyamika*) which proves that the true nature of human is *not-self* (*anatman*), but because of the leading of ignorance and craving, sentient being misunderstands that there is a real *self* (*atman*) and then tries to possess it, by both ways of hedonism or mortification. Buddhist religious ethical way is clearly formulated in the *Four Noble Truths*<sup>26</sup>. *The Truth of Cause of Suffering* (the first truth) analyzes that good or evil,

and right or wrong are neither originally decided by birth nor created or determined by any god, but deeply rooted just in the realization of self or no-self. Because of ignorance (*avidya*) sentient being attaches one's mind to the self, then arising his craving (*kama*) and forming his deeds through body action, speech and thought, which would be stored and accumulated to be *karma* that consists of good, evil, right and wrong... So that, the more *karma* is accumulated the longer people is floating in the circle of birth and death with suffering. On the way to emancipation, *firstly*, sentient being has to avoid the ignorance of the *no-self* by *regular introspection* (*dhyana*). So that one should avoid the attachment of the self; *latter*, he need to consciously practice the *self-discipline of concentration* to control his deed (body, speech and thought). By this ethical way every one should change themselves from wrong (even from evil) to right and good; *finally*, by regular *meditation* (*zen*) one should automatically avoid *kama* and reach the ultimate enlightenment and turn himself to be his own nature of *no-self*. It is the ultimate emancipation where there is no more good or bad, right or wrong, good or evil from the view of *self*... And the perfection of natural character is *human's no self-character*.

*The Noble Eightfold Path* (*Ashtangika-Marga*) (in the fourth truth) teaches eightfold ethical path of *self-cultivation* on the way to final emancipation, also called Nirvana. To practice the *Eightfold Path* man has to concentrate on the moral value of "right" when controlling himself in every conduct such as *right* view, *right* intention, *right* speech, *right* action, and *right* livelihood through *right* mindfulness and *right* concentration without cessation of *right* effort for the ultimate liberation (*Nirvana*) with *right* wisdom (*prajna*). Construction of *The Noble Eightfold Path* is the combination of three parts comprehensively: Commandment (*Sila*) - Meditation (*Samadhy*) - Wisdom (*Prajna*), or in other word, they can be called three sections of self-cultivation: Self-cultivation of *conduct* (by *sila*), Self-cultivation of *consciousness* (by *samadhy*) and Self-cultivation of *wisdom* (*prajna*).

In Buddhist teaching, every one is equal with all others, both from aspect of nature and ethics, and the final judgment of man's deeds is *the law of causes* (*karma*) which acts secretly through lives not by any god's decision. Happiness or unhappiness is the fruit caused by oneself good or bad conduct done in the past. The judgment as the *law of causes* admonishes people of being serious with every action (body, speech, thought) of oneself. Buddhist ideal models are Buddhas, Arahants and Bodhisattvas who already enlightened the essence of the no-self and not be led by any craving or passion... They are omniscient and free from mundane attachment that means the perfect emancipation from the circle of lives, namely *Nirvana*. Actually,

Buddha had more confidence in truth and good than in God (as religious concept). Tolerance in the Buddha's teaching is deeply rooted in the philosophy on nature of human (sentient) being. It is saturated with the spirit of tolerance in its tenet.

In addition, Buddhist doctrine of *Emptiness* (*anatta* and *anicca*) is the foundation for building up a large attitude of tolerance. According to this, Buddhist notion of tolerance is considered as a system of thought (including ontology, epistemology, ethics) which has the content vis-à-vis Western notion of tolerance as well.

### 3. India's Historical Lessons of Buddhist Tolerance

Jawaharlal Nehru (1889–1964)<sup>27</sup> one time appreciated “The Path that the Buddha showed is, I believe, the only Path humanity must tread if it is to escape disaster.” and “His message, old and yet very new and original for those immersed in metaphysical subtleties, captured the imagination of the intellectuals. It went deep down into the hearts of the people...The production of the Buddha is the highest honour so far gained in the history of the world.” One of the precious values of India we also want to appreciate here is the notion of tolerance, which is illustrated by Buddha and his excellent disciple, King Asoka in Indian history.

#### *Siddhartha Gautama (563 BC - 483 BC)*

Siddhārtha Gautama's age represented “the great springtide of philosophic spirit in India”<sup>28</sup>. There were many *Dasanas* (school of thought/philosophy) discussing on the significance of life and ways to get liberation. At the age of 29, as a prince, Siddhartha decided to leave the royal family with strong aspiration of finding the way to free human being from suffering. Siddhārtha had been disciple of some Brahmin Masters, and he also practiced the austerities and self-mortifications for six years. Finally, after his enlightenment under the Bodhi tree he realized that neither hedonism nor mortification is the right ways to cease suffering. And then, he founded a way between, led by wisdom and virtue, in other words, the *Middle Way* (*Madhyamika*). Thus, he is named Buddha, and the way is called Buddhism. From the very beginning, avoiding both extremes was Buddha choice; it also consisted with attitude of tolerance. So that, religious tolerance should be considered as a particular characteristic of its origin, that was obvious in the founder's attitude and orientation.

According to *Jataka*<sup>29</sup>, in Buddha's times Brahmanism was the orthodox, authoritative religion. After observing how people practiced this religion that were controlled by the Brahmins he came to realize that the gate to heaven or eternal salvation of Brahmanism was open only to particular followers and the passport was available from priests of one particular caste, who conducted most of the religious rites and rituals. That means only Brahmins controlled religious activities, and the low castes and people (for instance: *sudra* and female)<sup>30</sup> in India that time, had no opportunity to enjoy any religious service. From viewpoint of tolerance, Buddha did not agree with the religious inequality, injustice and theocracy of Brahmanism. For him a person cannot be condemned or honored according to the caste that he belongs. Man becomes noble or ignoble according to his way of life, but not according to his birth. Because, people are all common in many natural aspects of life, such as common in birth, in sickness, in worries, miseries, in calamities and misunderstandings, as in jealousy, hatred and greed, also common in old age, in unsatisfactoriness of life, and finally, common in death, no exception for the Brahmins. Looking for a tolerant religion, different from intolerant Brahmanism, Buddha explored to the deepest root of human ill, which are in the human mind. It is the ignorance of the *no-self*. It is just the cause of all human being's suffering. On the other side, he assumed that the Brahmins were the learned people and the teachers; they also introduced various spiritual practices of good conduct and belief, and even philosophical vision in the name of religion. He selectively inherited the quintessence values of ethics, philosophy from Brahmanism, in order to establish an equal, de-theocratic and tolerant religion. This attitude towards Brahmanism's values is very consistent with Buddhist perspective of religious tolerance.

In fact, Buddha made a religious revolution, which was later developed as a socio-religious policy to unite the Indian nation under Asoka's reign (the 3<sup>rd</sup> century BC). In this research I consider the Buddha's religious revolution as the first example of tolerance, as well as religious tolerance in Indian, as well as in Asia and in the world.

It is very interesting to find terms in Pali ("*karuna*", "*dana*" and "*metta*") with meanings of tolerance through the stock canonical phrase of Buddhist scriptures, such as: *Kālāmā Sutta*, *Dighajanu Sutta*, *Cunda Kammaraputta Sutta*, *Vatthūpama Sutra*, and especially, *Brahma-jala Sutra* (in *Digha Nikaya*)<sup>31</sup> and probably the very oldest statements of the Buddhist Dhamma, and some of them now extant.

In *Kālāmā Sutta*, Buddha said:

"He keeps pervading the first direction - as well as the second direction, the third, and the fourth with an awareness imbued with **compassion**. Thus he keeps pervading above, below, and all around, everywhere and in every respect the all-encompassing cosmos with an awareness imbued with **compassion**: abundant, expansive, immeasurable, **free from hostility, free from ill will**."<sup>32</sup>

In this canonical phrase, "*karunā*" means *compassion, free from hostility, free from ill will*. It is an important term in all schools of Buddhism, which is considered as moral norm of every Buddhist on the way to emancipation. For Theravada, dwelling in *karunā* is a means for attaining a happy present life and heavenly rebirth as an Arahant. For Mahayana Buddhists, *karunā* is a co-requisite for becoming a Bodhisattva. Here, "*karunā*" is not a blind and narrow tolerance, but clear tolerance "*with awareness imbued with compassion*", and "all-encompassing cosmos" one. "Four directions" in this phrase means four directions of relationship in Buddhist *sangha* in society, as well as in family.

In *Dighajanu Sutta*, the term "*dāna*" as tolerance also refers to the practice of cultivating generosity, as the practice culminates in one of the Perfections (*Paramitas*): "*the Perfection of Giving (dāna-paramita)*". This can be characterized by unattached and unconditional generosity, giving"<sup>33</sup>. It is the exquisite paradox in Buddhist tolerance, the more we give - and the more we give without seeking something in return - the wealthier (in the broadest sense of the word) we will become. It is interesting to compare the board meanings of "*unattached and unconditional give*" or "*dāna*" in primitive Buddhist scripture with "tolerance" as western term.

The term "*metta*", in *Cunda Kammaraputta Sutta*, explained by Buddha that intentional purity (*metta*) is threefold of tolerance: *loving-kindness, free from enmity, free from ill will*:

"He abides, having suffused with a mind of loving-kindness one direction of the world, likewise the second, likewise the third, likewise the fourth, and so above, below, around and everywhere, and to all as to himself; he abides suffusing the entire universe with loving-kindness, with a mind grown great, lofty, boundless and free from enmity and ill will."<sup>34</sup>

And in *Vatthūpama Sutra*, psychological aspect of tolerance is defined in the following manners, and considered as the root of good *karma*:

"The absence of hate, hating, hatred; love, loving, loving disposition; tender care, forbearance, considerateness; seeking the general good, compassion; the absence of malice, of malignity; that absence of hate which is the root of good (*karma*)."<sup>35</sup>

There is a typical phrase in *Brahma-jala sutra* in the *Digha Nikaya*, which is very popular among the orthodox Buddhists, focused on religious tolerance, as follow:

“Should those who are not with us, O Bhikkhus, speak in dispraise of me, or of the Dhamma, or of the Sangha, you are not on that account to give away to anger, heartburning or discontent. Should those who are not with us, O Bhikkhus, speak in dispraise of me, or of the Dhamma, or of the Sangha, you were on that account to be either enraged or displeased, it is you (not they) upon who the danger would fall; for would you then be able to discriminate whether what they had spoken was right or wrong?”<sup>36</sup>

According to this part, Buddha’s perspective on real religious tolerance is not only mere tolerance of other religious beliefs but also the tolerance that we have to bear when others try to irritate us by condemning our religion.

#### *Maurya king Asoka (304 – 232 BC)*

In Asian’s and Buddhists’ mind in general, and Indian’s one, in particular, King Asoka, the third monarch of the Indian Mauryan dynasty is always the Buddha’s most excellent disciple. He is an outstanding example of tolerance, who comprehended deeply the essential notion of tolerance in the Buddha’s teaching and applied it personally as his moral practice then renovated himself from a cruel and ruthless king into a wise and tolerant one. Asoka is also remembered as an excellent Buddha’s disciple who realized Buddhist idea of tolerance as ideal of religious harmony successfully under his foundation of the Maurya Empire (India now).

From the view of tolerance, Asoka’s life can be divided into two periods: *intolerance* and *tolerance*. Through Asoka’s conversion, the value of tolerance of Buddha’s teaching vividly shows its worthy and vigorous truth.

Early in his life, Asoka was told of an exceptionally cruel and ruthless prince, who waded to the throne a sea of blood, securing his position by the massacre of his ninety-nine brothers and he had been described as "the cruel Ashoka" (*Chandashoka*). Even in 262 BC., after eight years of his coronation, Asoka's armies attacked and conquered Kalinga, a country (now Orissa state in India). But, the more power and territories he won by wars as an intolerant king, the more loss of life caused by battle, reprisals, deportations and the turmoil that increased as unavoidable consequences of a predatory foreign policy.

It seems that Asoka called himself a Buddhist for at least two years prior to the Kalinga war, but his conversion to Buddhism was only when he really awaked to the Buddhist notion of tolerance through his subjects’ losses and sufferings in this

intolerant war. In his edicts he himself apologized for the Kalinga war and reassured that he replaced it with a policy of peaceful co-existence.

He ruled from 273 BC to 232 BC, but he wished to be alive in his subjects' heart and mind by the title *Devānāmpriya Priyadarśin* (Sanskrit means *without sorrow*), which he claimed himself in his edicts. Finally, Buddhism brought Asoka a complete change in his personality<sup>37</sup>.

After the Kalinga war Asoka dedicated the rest of his life trying to apply Buddhist principles of tolerance to the administration of his vast empire. Buddhism came to be the most influential spirit in Asoka's life as a Buddhist king, and he also hoped his subjects likewise would adopt this religion. He went on pilgrimages to Lumbini and Bodh Gaya, sent teaching monks to various regions in his empire and even beyond its borders. Every where he and Buddhist missionaries came, numerous edicts were inscribed on rocks and pillars. All the edicts were imbued with the Buddhist values of compassion, tolerance and respect for all life.

According to the twelfth edict, Asoka's perspective on religious tolerance was so clear that when he was an enthusiastic Buddhist, he was not partisan towards his own religion or intolerant of other religions. The protection of all religions, their promotion and the fostering of harmony between them, was also seen as one of the duties of the state:

“King Piyadasi, beloved of the gods, honours all sects, both recluses and laymen: he honours them with gifts and with very kind of honour. But the beloved of the gods attaches not so much weight to alms and honours as to the desire that the good name and the moral virtues which are the essential part of the teaching of all sects may increase. Now the prosperity of this essential part of the teaching of all sects involves, it is true, great diversity. But this is the one foundation of all, that is to say moderation in speech; that there should be no depreciation of others without cause, but, on the contrary, a rendering of honour to other sects for whatever cause honour is due. By so doing, both one's own sect will be helped forward, and other sects will be benefited; by acting otherwise, one's own sect will be destroyed in injuring others. Whosoever exalts his own sect, thinking to spread abroad the fame thereof? But, on the contrary, he inflicts the more an injury upon his own sect. Therefore is concord the best, in that all should hear, and love to hear the doctrines (Dhamma) of each other. Thus is it the desire of the beloved of the gods that every sect should be well instructed, and should profess a religion that is lovely. So that all, whatever their belief, should be persuaded that the beloved of the gods attaches less weight to alms and honours than to the desire that the good name and the moral virtues which are the essential part of the teaching of all sects, may increase. To this end do the ministers of religion everywhere strive, and the officers placed over women, and the inspectors, and the other

officials. And this is the fruit thereof; namely, the prosperity of his own sect and the exaltation of religion generally.”<sup>38</sup>

In Asoka’s the seventh edict, he paved excellent and large ways for all religions, but emphasized the fundamental function of all of them that would be common good way for human life, as follows:

“King Piyadasi, beloved of the gods, desires that all the sects would dwell at liberty in all places. They all indeed seek equally after the subjugation of one’s self and purity of heart: though the people are fickle in their aims and fickle in their attachments. They may pursue, either in part or in whole, the aim they set before them. And let every one, whether he receive abundant alms or not, have self-control, purity of heart, thankfulness, and firmness of love. That this always excellent.”<sup>39</sup>

In addition, Asoka had a crucial part to play in helping Buddhism to spread both throughout India and especially abroad (now as a world religion), and probably built the first major Buddhist monuments, not only as symbol of religion but also one of religious tolerance. Asoka died in 232 BC. in the thirty-eighth year of his reign, but he still obvious in Asian’s and all Buddhist’s mind and heart as a wise and tolerant Buddhist king. What he did applied Buddhist tolerance is the very vivid example for modern in facing the challenge of religious and cultural discrimination and conflicts.

#### **4. Vietnam’s Buddhist Tolerance for the Common Good**

Vietnam is a small country with the population estimate 87,375,000, and the size of 329,565 square kilometers. At present, world Buddhist population is nearly 1,512,013,359, and about more than 72 million of Buddhists in Vietnam<sup>40</sup>. In comparing with the world, the Buddhist percent is small, but in Vietnam it is more than 85%. That is one of the reasons why Buddhism is considered as Vietnamese traditional religion which has been having great affect on Vietnam culture through long history until now. However, Buddhism is not the same as an original religion, in Vietnam it is an integrated product of inter-cultural communications through its long history. This is one aspect concerning the character of religious tolerance of Buddhism in Vietnam.

Vietnam is located in South-East-Asia, with the South China Sea on the East, Laos and Cambodia on the West, Thailand on the South-West borders, and China on the North. Vietnam was named “*Indochinese Peninsula*”<sup>41</sup>, so *Indochinese* or *Indochina* means a region in Southeast Asia between India and China. Vietnam was also famous with important Buddhist centers as “*Tonkin*” or “*Giao Châu*”, now Red

River Delta, where Indian and Chinese traders and monks often stayed before and after a long seaway. According to history of Buddhism in Vietnam<sup>42</sup>, early before Christian Era Vietnam had been a bridge between India and China, the two most ancient civilizations of Asia, and probably, the most of the world as well. In the *Mahavamsa*<sup>43</sup> the name “Golden Land” (*Suvannabhumi*) where Sona and Uttara were dispatched as one of the nine missionary groups abroad by king Asoka seems that Vietnam also including in the region, because in ancient time trade and missionary always accompanied together on voyage, and Tonkin was a famous harbour at that time in the region. So, in ancient time Indochina was an open place accepting cultural and religious values both from great Indian and Chinese civilizations. This beginning has been influenced much on the characteristics of Vietnam.

Buddhism was the first foreign religion introduced into Vietnam and integrated with the native belief. After that, more than three times it integrated with other foreign religions and thoughts (Confucianism, Taoism, Western thoughts, including Marxism) in various contexts of culture, economy and politics. On the other hand, Buddhism was also more than three times reintroduced into Vietnam under different conditions. Therefore Vietnamese Buddhism is considered more practical, flexible and tolerant in compare with Buddhism in other Buddhist countries. And Vietnam is the only one country where together exist harmoniously both Theravada and Mahayana Buddhism with many subjects<sup>44</sup>.

*First time*, through sea route, Buddhism introduced directly from India into Vietnam at Tonkin. At the beginning of the century Vietnamese native belief was simple as totem religion, and Buddhism imported easily and was accepted as a system of knowledge about human being and human society as a religion, but among common people, not for particular classes as in later periods. According to some famous legends and fairy tales such as *Chử Đồng Tử and Tiên Dung* and *Story of Mosquito*, or *Story of Tấm and Cám*, ect., “*Bụt*” is the name “*Buddha*” changed into native language. In these narratives *Bụt* was symbol of a benevolent, tolerant Deity who always appears in urgent cases to help and support all the good, the poor and the weak, and teaching them good way of life as tolerant behavior between man and man, and between man and nature. As a first imported Buddhism from India, “*Bụt-Buddhism*”<sup>45</sup> had influenced on the orientation for development of Buddhism in later periods as well as accepting other foreign religions and thoughts into Vietnam.

*Second time*, Theravada Buddhism entered Southern Vietnam during the fourth century AD<sup>46</sup>. From Khmer ethnic group in the Mekong Delta, so that it is called Khmer Theravada Buddhism. Khmer Theravada till extant in the South of Vietnam,

and its contribution makes the picture of Buddhism in Vietnam not as the same as any other Buddhist countries in Asia, both Theravada and Mahayana co-existing for long history.

*Third time*, by land route, in other word *silk route*, Buddhism with various subsect of Mahayana Buddhism<sup>47</sup> indirectly imported into Vietnam via China. The second Buddhist importation took place during Sino-domination period (from 111 BC to 939 AD) and later in the independent period. In this time, “*Phật*” in Vietnamese was also Buddha’s name but translated from Chinese language. That is why there are two words: “*Bụt*” and “*Phật*” together denoting the same Buddha in Vietnamese. They are different results of different historical periods of Buddhist importation into Vietnam. From the view of social stratification “*Bụt-Buddhism*” means popular Buddhism and “*Phật-Buddhism*” means learned Buddhism. In fact, before imported into Vietnam, Indian Buddhism had inter-communicated with local Confucianism and Taoism, which were founded approximately 6<sup>th</sup>-5<sup>th</sup> centuries BC, thus, a higher standard of religion and philosophy of Buddhist teaching was accepted by the Chinese. In this second time, Buddhism was introduced by Chinese ruling mandarins who were dominating the Vietnamese. Hence, it was possible to say that *Phật* was Buddhism of the scholastic or learned and ruling class. From this time on, there had been being both popular Buddhism and learned Buddhism in Vietnam, they mutual influenced each other and together formed special characters of Vietnamese Buddhism. Due to the sympathy with *Bụt-Buddhism* from India in the first time, while protesting against Chinese invader and their strategy of Sino-assimilation, but the Vietnamese did not boycott *Phật-Buddhism* from China. In contrary, the term “*Phật*” together with Chinese Mahayana theory of Bodhisattva liberation were received by Vietnamese intellectual circles more systematically in order to complement the Vietnamese ontology, epistemology, etc. In this time, learned *Phật-Buddhism* had contributed its particular part in enriching *Bụt-Buddhism*. More than that, in a certain context, both *Bụt* and *Phật* co-rooted in the whole society either in minority or royal court, countryside or city, among poor people and royal family, and they became a spiritual power of the whole nation in defending and building the country in war time as well as in peace time. Its contributions for the nation were highlighted by practice of tolerance in war time as well as in peace time.

Thus, right after the Sino-domination, under an independent state and peaceful condition, many pagodas were erected in the city and country wide. At the same time Buddhism took the position as a national religion while it together coexisted and developed with Confucianism and Taoism as three main parts of thought and culture

of Vietnam. Buddhism was supported by state, Buddhist monks were respected in society. For instance, the victories over Sino domination and Yan invaders (1228 AD) were considered firstly as Buddhist achievements. After defeated the invader, with Buddhist perspective of tolerance the king released all prisoners of war. To remember the victory, a state pagoda was constructed and named “Khai quốc” means Foundation of the Nation (now “Trần Quốc” means Defending Nation Pagoda) which were by the Lý Thái Tổ, that implied the declaration of national independence through or by contribution of Buddhism and Buddhists.

In the peace time, during Lý and Trần dynasties, Buddhism had got its height of respect, and even some kings ceded his throne and lived a monastic life as monks in remote pagodas to study Buddhist scriptures and preach Buddhist teachings, such as: Lý Phật Mã (1000-1054), Lý Nhân Tông (1066-1128) or Trần Thái Tông (1218-1277) and Trần Nhân Tông (1258-1308). Among them, Trần Nhân Tông was the founder of Yên Tử school of Buddhism in the North of Vietnam. In addition, the Buddhist notion of tolerance was vividly realized in aspects of life. They created a precedent for their successors to follow. A favour was given to Buddhism in which an emperor supported Buddhism while his retired father, the supreme emperor, traveled as a monk among the people to promote Buddhism. This specially led to the maintenance of a strong Buddhist presence.

When on the throne, the Lý and the Trần Kings did issue tolerant policies to encourage common people to live in peace, justice and harmony. For instance, in 1052, King Lý Thái Tông ordered that a bell had been manufactured and placed in the courtyard of Thiên Ân Palace for the common people to ring to claim their innocence<sup>48</sup>. Another famous example of him, during the severe winter of 1055, he told his Court officials:

“Living in the palaces heated up with coal stoves and wearing plenty of warm clothing, I still feel this cold. I am quite concerned about the detainees in jails who are miserably locked up in stocks and manacles, without enough food to eat and without clothes to warm their bodies, or some even undeservedly dying while their guilt or innocence has not been determined. I feel a deep compassion for them...”<sup>49</sup>

Thereupon, he ordered blankets and mats to be distributed to the prisoners and two meals a day to be provided them. There were many gems in the history of Buddhist tolerance in Vietnam.

In 1945, after the French colonial period, Vietnam was divided into two parts: South and North Vietnam. In the South, under war condition, Buddhist theory of tolerance as non-violence (*Ahimsha*) was a particular influenced on common

people's patriotic actions. It was applied actively through patriotic spirit in the war time without rigidity. For them nation's suffering is as the same as Buddhist sangha's suffering. Thus, in facing the nation's suffering many Vietnamese Buddhists contributed their part against violence and evil power to liberate the country. Even, in emergency of the nation's existence, Vietnamese Buddhists "*took swear an oath of burning his temporary body*" to make a patriotic torch as a demand for freedom of belief of Vietnamese Buddhism. We can not forget the Buddhist *patriotic-body-torches* such as Thich Quang Duc (self-immolation on 11 June 1963), Thích Nguyên Hương (4 August 1963), Thích Thanh Tuệ (13 August 1963), Thích Diệu Quang (15 August 1963), and Thích Tiểu Diệu (16 August 1963). The extraordinary sacrifice of the Vietnamese only can be flexibly explained by Buddhist theory of non-violence, no-killing (*Ahimsha*) and super-tolerance *through patriotism leading to both personal and national liberation*. Vietnam victories over two big enemies, French and American imperialists, also recorded Buddhist material and spiritual contributions and we never forget the non-violence way of Buddhists in the South in their struggle for the nation and Buddhist Sangha, against the atrocities of foreign domination. It is considered as great examples of Buddhist tolerance.

In the North of Vietnam, during subsidized period (until 1986), Buddhism did not developed much because it was treated as appearance or form of idealism, which is contrary to materialism of Marxism. However, in general speaking, through the long history Buddhism in general, and Buddhist tolerance in particular, has firmly rooted in all aspects of culture and spirit of the Vietnamese. Buddhism is the main *inner feeling-religious* life of the Vietnamese and Buddhism was actively and lively practiced it in their daily life. For example, pagoda was always considered as a complex functional space not only for Buddhist cults but also for traditional customs and ceremonies or folk festivals. Pagoda has been called "*Zen gate*" where every one can come to introspect oneself, to cultivate one's mind and moral both in free time and in emergency. Every village has a pagoda as spiritual place for the whole commune. At home, people also kept practicing meditation and worship Buddha and Avalokitesvara or Maitreya Boddhisattva together with their ancestors on the same altar. In every day life, people also follow Buddhist fast, pray and keep practicing five radical Buddhist precepts together with other Confucian moral rules. Buddhist tolerance silently influences the personal life of the Vietnamese, and during this time we shared our difficulties and suffering as "The intact leaf shields the torn one".

After the Vietnam War, the whole nation reunited and entered a peace period, but with a lot of difficulties remained that need to be healed, rebuilt to gain back the

national self-confidence to stand up from absolute destruction. To meet the need of the country, in 1981, the Conference of Representatives for Buddhist Unification was organized in Hanoi capital with the participation of all nine Buddhist denominations. The Conference unanimously agreed to establish the *Vietnamese Buddhist Sangha (Giáo hội Phật giáo Việt Nam)*, which reunited all Buddhist denominations in Vietnam as in a family, to strengthen religious solidarity for the common good of “*The Dharma - The Nation - Socialism*”, and Buddhist followers have continued the work of national development under the motto, “*For better secular and religious life*”. Buddhist perspective of religious tolerance was clearly expressed in the announced among all Vietnamese Buddhists at home and abroad: “*From this point on, we are no longer Buddhists of the South, Buddhists of the Center, or Buddhists of the North and are no longer split into diversing organizations or forms but are all Vietnamese Buddhists and are all members of the Vietnamese Buddhist Sangha, whether inside the country or outside the country*”.

Nowadays, many Vietnamese Buddhists living abroad also joint together with the Buddhist community at home to contribute their part in resolving challenges of the new Age. Among them, the most excellent is Venerable Thích Nhất Hạnh, who was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize, as mentioned above. Abroad, Nhất Hạnh continues to be active in the peace movement and encourage the Buddhist tolerance over the world. He has sponsored retreats for Israelis and Palestinians, encouraging them to listen and learn about each other; given speeches urging warring countries to stop fighting and look for non-violent solutions to problems; and even conducted a peace walk in Los Angeles in 2005 attended by thousands of people.

In 2005, Nhất Hạnh returned Vietnam, his mother land and contributed his part to try to support new monastics, organize and conduct "Great Chanting Ceremonies" intended to help heal remaining wounds from the Vietnam war, and to lead retreats for monastic and poor people in countryside. Then, in May 2008 Thích Nhất Hạnh is respected and invited to attend the VESAK-2008 in Hanoi<sup>50</sup> as a representative of Vietnamese Buddhist abroad.

## CONCLUSION

Modernization, industrialization economic integration is global trend in the new millennium, and the standard of life will be quite better thanks to progressive of scientific and technical achievements. These fruits are quickly popularized, globalized and become common property of human in the world. However, they are

the reasons to speed up the appearance of a philosophical problem of human rights: What the real happiness is while *high quality of life is just not happiness*. People in modern society is facing modern "worldly suffering" as in the term of Buddhism, such as AIDS, drug, corruption, pollution, nations and races-war etc. The whole picture of modernization and economic integration problems, some how, highlight the question whether high standard of life is an effective and all-round solution for human being's sufferings or not. And more dangerous to realize that with the help of high technique people is more easy, more clean to commit dangerous and sin, even genocide, but not easy to reflect his won intolerant action or behaviour than before.

The desire of understanding the Self once became a philosophical question. In the West, Existentialism, Technoactivism, Psychoanalysis, etc. are the lament of requirements for real happiness when high quality of life was not the answer for "human suffering". In general, Buddhism was a selected system inherited from Indian and Asian traditions which has been tested and improved through long history. So that its preeminent factors of tolerance have become common precious values of mankind, not only belongs to Buddhism in the religious meaning. Buddhism, which already has its advantage of an *internal-equal-anti authority* religion and with its rich and experience tolerant practices, would be a potential capacity to integrate into the modern age and face with the challenges of globalization as well.

Through the long history Vietnamese Buddhism already contributed its brilliant marks in building and defending the nation. Now, at the 21<sup>st</sup> century, Vietnam is much influenced by the global tendency of modernization, industrialization. To develop the nation and country sustainable Vietnam has been accepting human's progressive achievements of culture and civilization, and at the same time tries to preserve and develop its own preeminent characters and dignity, Buddhist tolerance is one of traditional value of humankind that the Vietnamese will develop it and apply it for the common goal of the nation to resolve our modern problems of integration in this new age.

We should learn form the past to find the way to resolve our new problems. Tolerance is one of the possible ways for all humankind to develop sustainable. Historically, tolerance was provided by Western religionists and conceptualized by UNESCO and further developed by Western philosophers, writers and social leaders. Now, in the context of globalization we realize that in the East there has been being a treasure of tolerance deeply in Buddhist teachings. The terms are not the same with the "tolerance" of the West, but the notion is quite the same, and they were even

constructed on a foundation of philosophy systematically. “*Middle Way Approach*” is the tolerance way in practice to avoid extremes, to escape conflicts, to keep off destroys... to live in harmony. Buddhist communities abroad and in Vietnam will unite in the great national unity to promote the content of tolerance in concrete activities and organizations under new condition.

I hope that this research on Buddhist tolerance will be a contribution to general studies of the new issues raised from social religious reality in Vietnam, as well as in other Buddhist countries in Asia. Further, it also can contribute some scientific foundations for the Government policy lines and decision-making process concerning the role and abilities of religions in process of globalization./.

### Reference:

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- <sup>1</sup>. Siddhartha Gautama (563 BCE to 483 BCE), religious name after his enlightenment called Buddha.
  - <sup>2</sup>. Cyrus the Great (ca. 590 BC or 576 — 529 BC or 530 BC).
  - <sup>3</sup>. The most widespread entity considered to have been a Persian Empire was the Achaemenid Empire (550–330 BC).
  - <sup>4</sup>. Emperor Ashoka of the Mauryan dynasty constructed his edicts during his reign from 272 to 231 BC.
  - <sup>5</sup>. The Protestant Reformation was a reform movement in the Holy Roman Empire that began in 1517, though its roots lie further back in time. The Reformation involved cultural, economic, political and religious aspects. It began with Martin Luther and ended with the Peace of Westphalia in 1648.
  - <sup>6</sup>. *A Letter Concerning Toleration* by John Locke was originally published in 1689.
  - <sup>7</sup>. *The Two Treatises of Government* (in the Former, *The False Principles and Foundation of Sir Robert Filmer*, and in the Latter is an Essay concerning The True Original, Extent, and End of Civil-Government. It is as a work of political philosophy published anonymously in 1689 by John Locke.
  - <sup>8</sup>. In 1689 *Act of the British Parliament* that granted freedom of worship to Nonconformists, allowing them their own places of worship and their own teachers and preachers. The act applied to dissenters from the Church of England.
  - <sup>9</sup>. The 14th and current Dalai Lama, with full name is Jetsun Jamphel Ngawang Lobsang Yeshe Tenzin Gyatso, born on 6 July 1935 (age 73) and reign from 17 November 1950 to Present in Tibet
  - <sup>10</sup>. 54 ethnics.
  - <sup>11</sup>. Socialist Republic of Vietnam, Government Committee for Religious Affairs. *Religion and Policies Regarding Religion in Vietnam*, 2006, in Vietnam.
  - <sup>12</sup>. Basically, religions in Vietnam are: Buddhism (both Theravada and Mahayana), Confucianism, Taoism, Roman Catholic, Protestantism, Moslem (Muslim), and some other new religions of Vietnam as Caodaism, Hòa Hảo Buddhism.
  - <sup>13</sup>. According to the update statistic from Wikipedia Encyclopedia (online), latest modified on 29 June 2008, at 21:35, Vietnam is the 3<sup>rd</sup> among top 20 Buddhist countries in the world, with 72,473,003 Buddhists, approximately 85% of total population (85,262,356).

<sup>14</sup>. “Religion” is also a Western term. In fact, in Oriental system of thought there was not any definite term as “religion”, but religion, ethics, philosophy, including history and literature are integrated in each system of thought or doctrine (Buddhism, Taoism, Confucianism). This is the reason why sometimes Buddhism and Confucianism are argued by (Western) scholars that whether they belong to religion or philosophy or ethics... or non-religion or integration of all of them. In this research I use “religion” as a borrowed term, but in concerning Buddhism as a typical Oriental system of thought.

<sup>15</sup>. Altruism is selfless concern for the welfare of others. Altruism is the opposite of selfishness. Altruism focuses on a motivation to help others or a want to do good without reward. Pure altruism is giving without regard to reward or the benefits of recognition.

<sup>16</sup>. “Parami”, “paramita” [*paaramii, paaramitaa*] means perfection of the character, consists of a group of ten qualities of a *bodhisattva*, recorded in the Pali canon of “*Buddha Stories*” (*Jataka*): - generosity (*dana*), - virtue (*sila*), -renunciation (*nekkhamma*), -discernment (*pañña*), - energy/persistence (*viriya*), -patience/forbearance (*khanti*), -truthfulness (*sacca*), -determination (*adhithana*), -good will (*metta*), and -equanimity (*upekkha*).

<sup>17</sup>. In Buddhist philosophy “Emptiness” or “Voidness”, is a characteristic of empirical phenomena arising from the fact that the impermanent nature of form means that nothing possesses essential, enduring identity.

<sup>18</sup>. In Buddhist philosophy “non-self” or “absence of separate self” [*Pāli: anatta, Sanskrit: anātman*]

<sup>19</sup>. “*Anicca*” expresses the Buddhist doctrine of impermanence, that every conditioned existence, without exception, is inconstant and in flux, even gods. Accordingly, human life embodies this flux in the aging process, the cycle of birth and rebirth (*samsara*), and in any experience of loss. The doctrine further asserts that because things are impermanent, attachment to them is futile, and that leads to suffering (*dukkha*). Under the this light of impermanence doctrine, all compounded and constructed things and states are impermanent. Impermanence is intimately associated with the doctrine of *anatta*, according to which things have no fixed nature, essence, or self.

<sup>20</sup>. Venerable Dr. K. Sri Dhammananda Nayaka Maha Thera is a famous Buddhist Master in Malaysia, especially among the English-speaking community.

<sup>21</sup>. Venerable Dr. K. Sri Dhammananda Nayaka Maha Thera (1950). *Why Religious Tolerance?* Booklet, Buddhist Missionary Series No. 10.

<sup>22</sup>. There are differences between Theravada Buddhism and Mahayana Buddhism in teachings, religious rituals and religious life in each sangha (Buddhist community). The most fundamental distinction between Theravada and Mahayana is the model of emancipation, which is for oneself as Arhant’s way or for every living beings as Bodhisattva’s way. However, original basic of Buddhist tenet on *The Four Noble Truths* and *The Eightfold Path* are preserved and shared together by every branch and sect of Buddhism either Theravada or Mahayana. In fact, this research depends much on the expression of Mahayana Sutra-Pitaka, so that its words and expressions will be influenced by Mahayana’s language, it is the limitation of this research.

<sup>23</sup>. Sanskrit: *anitya*, Pāli: *anicca*.

<sup>24</sup>. Sanskrit: *anātman*; Pāli: *anatta*.

<sup>25</sup>. “*skandhas*” means five aggregates (1. form or matter, external and internal matter as the physical world, including the material body and the physical sense organs; 2. sensation or feeling; 3. perception, conception, apperception, cognition, or discrimination; 4. mental formations, volition, or compositional factors, including all types of mental habits, thoughts, ideas, opinions, compulsions, and decisions triggered by an object; 5. consciousness).

<sup>26</sup>. *Four Noble Truths*: (i) *The Truth of Suffering*: realization of the unsatisfactoriness of this life; (ii) *The Truth of Cause of Suffering*: the knowledge that there is a cause for this unsatisfactoriness; (iii) *The Truth of Cessation of Suffering*: the understanding that there is an end to this unsatisfactoriness; and (iv) *The Truth of the Way that Leads to the Cessation of Suffering*: the practical method to follow in order to end this unsatisfactoriness.

<sup>27</sup>. The First Prime Minister of India.

- <sup>28</sup>. Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan & Charles A. Moore. *A Sourcebook in Indian Philosophy*. Princeton, New Jersey, Princeton University Press, USA, 1989, p. 349.
- <sup>29</sup>. Collection Stories of Buddha's life.
- <sup>30</sup>. Before the Buddha, in India women were not allowed to practice religion freely.
- <sup>31</sup>. The *Digha Nikaya*, or "Collection of Long Discourses" is the first division of the *Sutta Pitaka*, and consists of thirty-four suttas.
- <sup>32</sup>. *Kālāmā Sutta* (AN 3.65), trans. Thanissaro (1994).
- <sup>33</sup>. In the Pali canon's *Dighajanu Sutta*, generosity (denoted there by the Pali word "cāga" which can be synonymous with "dāna") is identified as one of the four traits conditioning happiness and wealth in the next life.
- <sup>34</sup>. This particular English text is from the Nyanaponika (1988) translation of the *Vatthūpama Sutta* ("Simile of the Cloth," MN 7), v. 12.
- <sup>35</sup>. T.W. Rhys Davids (2002). *History of Indian Buddhism*. Cosmo Publications, New Delhi, India, pp. 275-276.
- <sup>36</sup>. T.W. Rhys Davids (2002). *Ibid* p. 229.
- <sup>37</sup>. Vincent A. Smith (1990). C.I.E. *Asoka the Buddhist Emperor of India*. Lowprice Publication, Delhi, India. p. 19-74.
- <sup>38</sup>. T.W. Rhys Davids (2002). *History of Indian Buddhism*, Cosmo Publications, New Delhi, India, p. 230-231; or another version in English in Vincent A. Smith (1990). C.I.E. *Asoka the Buddhist Emperor of India*. Lowprice Publication, Delhi, India, p. 182-183.
- <sup>39</sup>. T.W. Rhys Davids (2002). *History of Indian Buddhism*, Cosmo Publications, New Delhi, India, p. 230.
- <sup>40</sup>. See note 13.
- <sup>41</sup>. French historians in the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century (French colonial period in Vietnam) often used these names in their maps. The term *Sino-Indian* is also used to describe relation between India and China.
- <sup>42</sup>. *The History of Buddhism in Vietnam* (2007). Nguyen Tai Thu (chief editor) & George F. McLean (general editor). Institute of Philosophy -Vietnamese Academy of Social Sciences & The Council for Research in Values and Philosophy, Washington, D.C. p. 9-15.
- <sup>43</sup>. *The Mahavamsa (The Great Chronicle of Lanka)*, (1996), translated by Wilhelm Geiger, Asian Educational Services Buddhism, chapter XII.
- <sup>44</sup>. *The History of Buddhism in Vietnam* (2007). *Ibid.*, p. 9-15.
- <sup>45</sup>. I use the term "Bụt-Buddhism" to distinguish between the first imported Buddhism from India and the "Phật Buddhism" imported from China in later period.
- <sup>46</sup>. *Religion and Policies Regarding Religion in Vietnam* (2006). Socialist Republic of Vietnam. Government Committee for Religious Affairs; Andrew Skilton (1994). *A Concise History of Buddhism*.
- <sup>47</sup>. Most of them are sub sect of Mahayana Buddhism, such as: Chan (禪) sect, Vinitaruci sect, Wu Yantong (无言通) sect, Pure Land sect.
- <sup>48</sup>. *Đại Việt Sử Ký Toàn Thư* (The Official History of Vietnam), I:226.
- <sup>49</sup> *Ibid.* I: 229-230.
- <sup>50</sup>. VESAK, celebrated by millions of Buddhists each year, commemorates the birth, enlightenment and death of the Buddha. This year's VESAK celebration, which has been recognized as an international holiday by the UN since 1999, is expected to draw 3,500 delegates from 80 countries to Vietnam for a series of events conducted throughout the country from May 13-17, 2008 in Hanoi.