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# An Analytical Study of the Role and Influence of the Most Venerable Thích Trí Tịnh in Propagating Pure Land Buddhism in Vietnam

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## Abstract

This article aims to achieve three primary objectives related to Most Ven. Thích Trí Tịnh 1) To study his life and works, 2) To study the propagation of Pure Land Buddhist teachings associated with him, 3) To analyze his role and influence in the dissemination of Pure Land Buddhism within Vietnam. The research methodology employed is documentary research, involving a study of various documents and an analysis of Buddhist texts.

The findings show that the life and works of the Most Venerable Thích Trí Tịnh, who is a great monk and an excellent student and practitioner of the Buddha's Teaching. Throughout most of his life for sentient beings, he left behind an extremely great work of translating Mahāyāna scriptures for Vietnamese Buddhism. His practice methods and teachings have been adopted and followed by many disciples to practice and achieve happiness in the present. According to his teachings of Pure Land Buddhism faith, vow, and practice are the main teachings, and to achieve good results in daily life vegetarianism practice, sutta chanting, and reciting the Buddha's name are very valuable. In addition, the practitioner should know how to take advantage of "MOT practice" or free time to practice any day any time to improve oneself better. Regarding his role and influence in propagating Pure Land Buddhism in Vietnam, he left behind an extremely great work of translating Mahayana scriptures for Vietnamese Buddhism. Furthermore, the influence on Vietnamese society, the Sangha community, culture, environment, education, etc., made great contributions. In particular, the pure land practice method that he revised and propagated has become one of the main practice methods in Vietnam to this day.

**Keywords:** Role and Influence; Most Ven. Thích Trí Tịnh; Pure Land Buddhism; Propagating; Vietnamese Buddhism

## Introduction

The fundamental goal of Buddhism is the attainment of liberation, a notion succinctly expressed by Buddha Shakyamuni: “Just as the vast ocean possesses only one flavor, the taste of salt, so does this Dhamma and code of conduct proclaimed by the Tathāgata possess only one flavor, the taste of liberation” (Bhikkhu Bodhi, 2012). In the era referred to as the Dhamma-Ending Age (Saddhamma-Vipralopa), amidst adversities, the Most Venerable Thích Trí Tịnh (1917-2014) pondered the methods for achieving liberation in this very life to escape the endless cycle of suffering through birth and death. Acknowledging the uncertainties and hindrances in future existences, he stressed the importance of immediate practice. The Buddha cautioned about the scarcity of human rebirth and the challenges of reaching liberation: “Those who are capable of being reborn as humans are as few as the soil that sticks to their fingernails, yet they still descend into negative realms as numerous as the soil covering the entire vast earth” and likened it to “a blind turtle inserting its head into a hole in a floating tree trunk on the ocean” (Bhikkhu Ñānamoli & Bhikkhu Bodhi, 2009).

The Most Venerable Thích Trí Tịnh believed in the supreme teachings of the Buddha that ensure liberation and lead to Buddhahood. He emphasized the importance of practices like the recollection of the Buddha, as highlighted in the scriptures: *“Bhikkhu, there is one thing that, when developed and cultivated, leads exclusively to disenchantment, dispassion, cessation, peace, direct knowledge, and enlightenment, to Nibbāna. What is that one thing? Recollection of the Buddha is that one thing that, when developed and cultivated, leads exclusively to disenchantment... to Nibbāna”* (Bhikkhu Bodhi, 2012).

Pure Land Buddhism, particularly the practice of reciting the Buddha’s name to aspire for rebirth in Sukhāvatī (the Pure Land of Amitābha Buddha) has deep roots in Vietnam, possibly predating its establishment in China (Hiền, 2016; Gakkai, 2009). The Cựu Tập Thi Dụ Sutra, dating back to 138 CE, is the earliest Vietnamese text referencing Amitabha Buddha. By around 450 CE, belief in Amitabha had become prominent, especially in Tien Son (Thát, 1999).

In 1955, Thích Trí Tịnh established the “Cực Lạc Liên Hữu - The Pure Land of Ultimate Bliss,” advocating ten maxims for practitioners in Vietnam to follow, aiming for liberation in this lifetime (Tịnh, 2014b). Pure Land Buddhism emphasizes reciting the name of Amitābha Buddha (阿彌陀佛) (Kuang, 1993) and visualizing the Pure Land of Ultimate Bliss. Practitioners

rely on both self-effort, characterized by Faith, Vow, and Practice, and the Buddha's power to achieve rebirth in the Pure Land. The practice involves morality (*sīla*), concentration (*samādhi*), and wisdom (*paññā*), with a particular focus on reciting Buddha's name to achieve a concentrated state of mind and attain *samādhi*.

Thích Trí Tịnh's enduring commitment to practice and scholarly pursuits has made a substantial impact on Vietnamese Buddhism. The revitalization of Pure Land Buddhism and the translation of essential *Mahāyāna sūtras* have enhanced the Buddhist practices in Vietnam, enabling adherents to delve deeper into the teachings of the Buddha. Despite the noteworthy contributions made by Thích Trí Tịnh, there has been a lack of academic focus on his efforts to promote Pure Land Buddhism. Nevertheless, the *sūtras* he rendered, which are utilized by Bhikkhu, Bhikkhunī, and Buddhist practitioners, offer a profound insight into the timeless truths expounded by the Buddha for the last 2,600 years. To date, no scholarly inquiry has been conducted on this matter, prompting the need for an investigation into the dissemination of Pure Land Buddhism by the Most Venerable Thích Trí Tịnh within the Vietnamese Buddhist community. The primary objective of this research is to bridge this gap by scrutinizing Thích Trí Tịnh's impact on Vietnamese Buddhism and dispelling misconceptions surrounding the practice of Pure Land. Misinterpretations often arise, portraying Pure Land Buddhism as exclusively suitable for older individuals or those of lower societal status, or characterizing it as a morbid practice fixated on mortality. Furthermore, the study endeavors to delve into Thích Trí Tịnh's propagation of Pure Land Buddhism in the context of Vietnamese Buddhism, challenging the misconceived notion that Pure Land practices cater only to the elderly or less competent individuals. It also aims to rectify the misconception that Pure Land Buddhism solely concerns itself with death, neglecting the present life, by shedding light on Thích Trí Tịnh's pragmatic methodologies and teachings.

## Research Objectives

- 1) To study the life and works of the Most Venerable Thích Trí Tịnh
2. To study the teachings of Pure Land Buddhism taught by the Most Venerable Thích Trí Tịnh in Vietnam
3. To analyze the role and influence of the Most Venerable Thích Trí Tịnh in propagating Pure Land Buddhism in Vietnam

## Literature Review

The role and influence of the Most Venerable Thích Trí Tịnh in propagating Pure Land Buddhism in Vietnam have been profound and multifaceted. This literature review aims to synthesize existing research on his contributions, providing a comprehensive overview of his impact on Vietnamese Pure Land Buddhism. By examining various scholarly works and primary texts, this review aims to comprehensively understand Thích Trí Tịnh's contributions and the broader context of Pure Land Buddhism in Vietnam.

Thích Trí Tịnh's works, such as *Hương Sen Vạn Đức* - The Inconceivable Virtuous of Lotus (2014a), *Đường Về Cực Lạc* - The Path to the Pure Land (2014b), and *Kệ Niệm Phật* - Verse of Reciting The Buddha's Name (2014c), are foundational texts that offer deep insights into the principles and practices of Pure Land Buddhism. Thích Trí Tịnh emphasized the practice of reciting Amitābha Buddha's name (nembutsu), visualizing his image, and the aspiration to be reborn in the Pure Land. These practices, according to Thích Trí Tịnh, are crucial for achieving liberation and enlightenment in the current life, thereby avoiding the cycle of birth and death.

Thích Thiền Tâm's *Buddhism of Wisdom and Faith: Pure Land Principles and Practice* (1994) is a seminal work that explores the doctrinal and practical aspects of Pure Land Buddhism. This text serves as a valuable resource for understanding the philosophical underpinnings of Pure Land practice and its relevance today. Thích Thiền Tâm outlines the core principles of faith in Amitābha Buddha, the practice of reciting the Buddha's name (nembutsu), and the importance of aspiring to be reborn in the Pure Land.

Thích Như Điển's *Tư Tưởng Tịnh Độ Tông* - Pure Land Thought (2019) offers a modern interpretation of Pure Land Buddhism, addressing contemporary challenges and misconceptions. Thích Như Điển argues that Pure Land practice is accessible to all practitioners, not just the elderly or those unable to achieve enlightenment through other means. His work emphasizes the adaptability of Pure Land teachings to modern life, highlighting their potential to provide spiritual solace and guidance in a rapidly changing world.

Duc (2022) in *Influence of Buddhism in the Cultural Life of Vietnamese People* examines the broader impact of Buddhism on Vietnamese culture. This study provides context for understanding Pure Land Buddhism's widespread acceptance and integration within Vietnamese society. It highlights how Buddhist principles permeate various aspects of

Vietnamese life, reinforcing the relevance of Thích Trí Tịnh's teachings in contemporary Vietnam.

Phan Tai Thuc's (2017), the Practical Method of Pure Land Buddhism in Modern Society: A Case Study of Hoang Phap Monastery in Vietnam, examines the application of Pure Land practices in a contemporary Vietnamese context. This study highlights the successful integration of Pure Land teachings into the daily lives of practitioners at Hoang Phap Monastery, demonstrating these practices' continued relevance and effectiveness in promoting spiritual growth and community cohesion.

Nguyen Thi Minh Ngoc (2009) in Social Activities of Vietnamese Buddhism to Charity explores the intersection of Buddhist practice and social activism in Vietnam. This study highlights how Vietnamese Buddhist communities, inspired by Pure Land teachings, engage in various charitable activities, demonstrating the practical application of Buddhist principles in addressing social issues. The work underscores the role of Pure Land practice in fostering compassion and altruism among practitioners, leading to significant contributions to social welfare.

The reviewed literature underscores the profound impact of Thích Trí Tịnh on Vietnamese Pure Land Buddhism. It is evident that the corpus specifically focuses on the Buddha's Teaching as propagated and adopted to followers by the Most Venerable Thích Trí Tịnh as well as the impacts it has exerted upon Vietnamese people in sentient beings at the *Dhamma - Ending Era* (Saddhamma-Vipralopa) and becoming the official Buddhism in Vietnam. Therefore, this research aims to study the basic Buddha's teachings, and the propagation process of Pure Land Buddhism of the Most Venerable Thích Trí Tịnh in Vietnam as well as their practical adoption in modern times.

## Research Methodology

This is primarily based on documentary research. The methodology of the research can be divided into five stages as follows:

### 1. Data Collection

Collecting information from the main source of English translations of *Mahāyāna* texts to more clearly communicate the understanding of Pure Land Buddhism. Additionally, information is gathered from secondary sources, including commentaries, sub-comments, the Most Venerable Thích Trí Tịnh's writings, textbooks, research papers, historical studies, historical journals, and Buddhist journals in English, Classical Chinese, and Vietnamese. Those

are to carefully consider the findings from current literature in a thorough explanation for easier understanding.

## 2. Analysis and Synthesis

Analyzing and synthesizing documents from books, historical texts, and journals are crucial to understanding the true methods and perceptions of Pure Land Buddhism as practiced by The Most Venerable Thích Trí Tịnh. This process involves a thorough examination and integration of primary data, systematically organizing the gathered information. The goal is to provide a comprehensive insight into the current state of Pure Land Buddhist practice and its impact on contemporary Vietnamese Buddhism and its adherents.

The process involves developing a comprehensive outline of the work, covering all relevant dimensions in alignment with the research objectives. This includes examining and discussing the nature of the problems encountered, emphasizing their significance to the research. Finally, conclusions are formulated based on the significant research results, with suggestions for further research, offering useful information and knowledge.

## Conceptual Framework

This research is documentary research. The details are as follows.

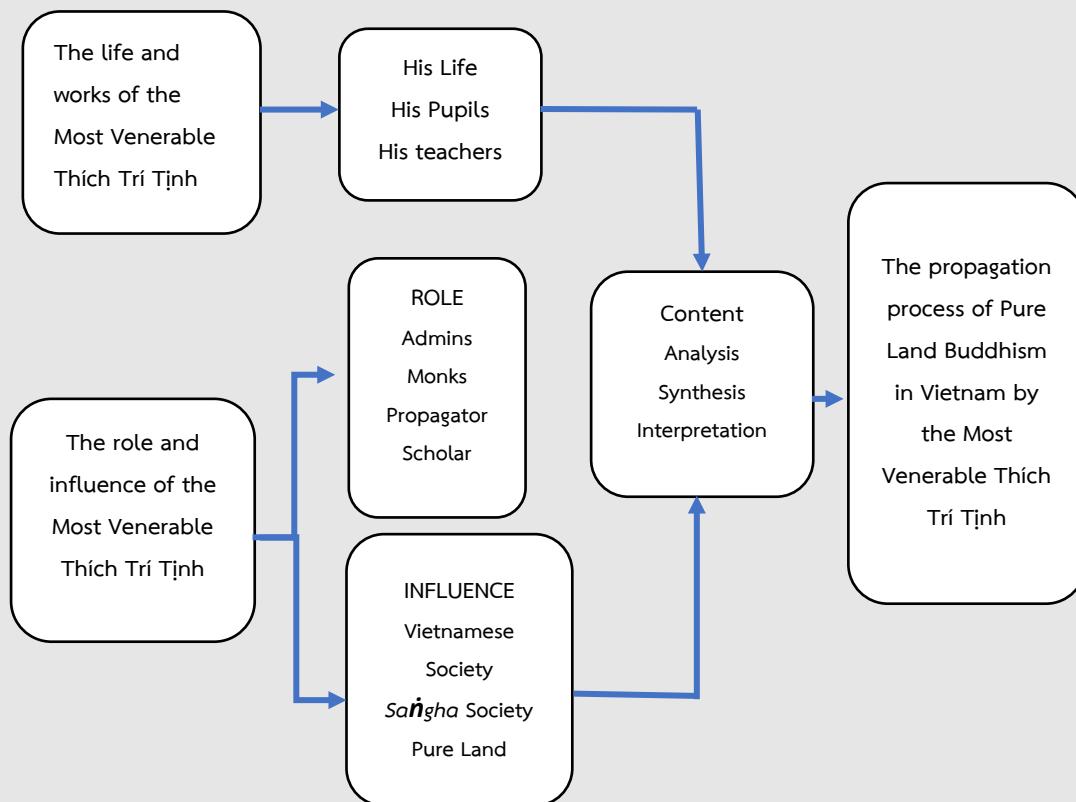


Figure 1 Conceptual framework

## Research Results

### Objective 1. Life and Works of the Most Venerable Thích Trí Tịnh

The Most Venerable Thích Trí Tịnh helped the generation of monks and nuns from the time he held many positions in Vietnamese Buddhism until he passed away (2014) to develop education and train good monks and nuns to preserve Buddha Dharma in Vietnam. The Venerable Master devoted his whole life to the cause of Buddha Dharma, always studying sūtras, chanting sūtras, reciting Buddha's name, teaching, and translating sūtras from Chinese to Vietnamese as the main actions of his life. He translated many great sūtras, causing Mahāyāna teachings to circulate and Buddhism to be transmitted among the Fourfold disciples. Many talented monks received his teachings. Thanks to his works translating major sūtras, it has helped many Buddhist monks and nuns have a deeper understanding of Buddhism.

He is one of the monks with great influence on Vietnam's Buddhism, especially in the context of the country being divided and affected by two consecutive wars. His name is Nguyễn Văn Bình, born on October 17, 1917 (September 2, Đinh Tý year), in Mỹ An Hưng (Cái Tàu Thượng), Châu Thành district, Sa Dec province (Đồng Tháp). His dharma name is Thiện Chánh, his name is Trí Tịnh, his dharma name is Hân Tịnh, and his family name is Nhựt Bình. He belongs to the 41st generation Lam Te Gia Pho lineage. He was disciple of the Most Venerable Thích Thiện Quang founded the Vạn Linh pagoda on the mountain Cấm, Châu Đốc.

During the time did the Buddhist work of his life, Thích Trí Tịnh held many positions in the Vietnam Buddhist. He manages and guides Vietnam Buddhism development and handles and solves many important problems in the sangha. With the ambition to "Truyền Đǎng Tục Diệm - transmission of the Dharma lineage," propagate the Dharma, and build temple, the Most Venerable created a temple named Vạn Đức. Gradually, due to the Most Venerable prestige and morality, Buddhist Monks and Bhikkhunī gathered to build temples around it, turning this place into a large ashram. Today, everyone knows about Vạn Đức ashram with many temples around this area.

In 1955, with the wish to propagate the Pure Land and guide sentient beings in the Dharma Ending Age, he founded "Cực Lạc Liên Hữu - The Pure Land of Ultimate Bliss", encouraging people to recite Buddha's name and pray to be reborn in the Pure Land. "Cực Lạc Liên Hữu - The Pure Land of Ultimate Bliss" was enlightened by Thích Trí Tịnh, arousing

the practice movement and encouraging practitioners to believe in returning to the Pure Land. Thích Trí Tịnh is the current Patriarch who revived the Pure Land Buddhism in the rebuilding of Vietnamese Buddhism (Tịnh, 2014). He was very thorough in the Holy Scriptures and was knowledgeable about Eastern medicine.

Thích Trí Tịnh's translations are very valuable. Vietnamese monks, nuns, and Buddhists were able to absorb the *Mahāyāna* Scriptures largely due to his translation work. He appreciates the basics of translating correctly, accurately, clearly, and truthfully, without being glossy, with a smooth rhythm, so that readers can recite, circulate, and silently receive the meaning very clearly and easily grasp the intention of the *sūtra*. Even though he is busy with a lot of work for the Sangha, Thích Trí Tịnh still takes time to translate and preach *sūtras*. The works that he has compiled, translated and disseminated include:

No.	Sanskrit	English	Vietnamese
1	Saddharmapundarīka Sūtra	Lotus Sutta	Kinh Diệu Pháp Liên Hoa
2	Mahāparinirvāna Sūtra	Great Nirvāna Sutta	Kinh Đại Bát Niết Bàn
3	Prajñāpāramitāhrdaya Sūtra	Heart Sutta	Kinh Bát Nhã
4	Sukhāvatī Vyūha Sūtra	Shorter Amitābha Sutta	Kinh A Di Đà
5	Mahāratnakūṭa Sūtra	Great Jewel Heap Sutta	Kinh Đại Bửu Tích
6	Avatamsaka Sūtra	Flower Garland Sutta	Kinh Hoa Nghiêm
7	Ksītigarbhapranidhana Sūtra	Earth Store Sutta	Kinh Địa Tạng Bồ Tát Bồn Nguyện
8	Vajracchedikā Prajñāpāramitā Sūtra	Diamond Sutta	Kinh Kim Cang
9	Brahmajāla Sūtra	Net Sutta	Kinh Phạm Võng Bồ Tát Giới
10	Samantabhadra Sūtra	Vows Sutta	Kinh Phổ Hiền
11		Three Jewels Sutta	Kinh Tam Bảo
12		Bhikkhu' Rules	Tỳ Kheo Giới
13		Bodhisattvas Rules	Bồ Tát Giới
14		Pure Land Fellowship Society Book	Cực Lạc Liên Hữu
15		The Path Go to the Pure Land	Đường Về Cực Lạc
16		Beholding the Buddha-Nature Interpretation	Ngộ Tính Luận

Figure 2 The Most Venerable Thich Tri Tinh's translation achievements work

The “Lotus Sūtra,” (Tịnh, 2010), also known as the “Saddharmapuṇḍarīka Sūtra,” is highly revered within *Mahāyāna* Buddhism. It offers profound teachings on reality, enlightenment, and skillful means (*upāya-kushala*), emphasizing the universality of Buddhahood and the potential for all beings to attain enlightenment. It introduces the “Bodhisattva of the Earth,” dedicated to aiding all beings in enlightenment.

The “Sukhāvatī Vyūha Sūtra,” commonly known as the “Amitābha Sūtra” or the “Shorter Amitābha Sūtra,” is a pivotal text in *Mahāyāna* Buddhism. It centers on the teachings

of Amitābha Buddha and the Pure Land (Sukhāvatī) he governs, elucidating the virtues of Amitābha Buddha and his vow to assist sentient beings in achieving enlightenment within Sukhāvatī.

Thích Trí Tịnh's pupils were a diverse group deeply influenced by his teachings and guidance, including both monastic disciples (monks and nuns) and lay disciples (practitioners leading secular lives but following Buddhist teachings). His teachings were accessible to a wide range of individuals interested in Buddhism. Some of his pupils assumed leadership roles within the Buddhist community, organizing events, promoting ethical conduct, and maintaining the teachings and practices he emphasized. Among his notable disciples are the Most Venerable Thích Quảng Liêm, the Most Venerable Thích Quảng Huệ, the Most Venerable Thích Bửu Huệ, Zen Master Thích Nhất Hạnh, Zen Master Thích Từ Thông, the Most Venerable Thích Trí Quảng, the Most Venerable Thích Minh Cảnh, Zen Master Thích Thanh Từ, Zen Master Thích Phước Huệ, and numerous others.

**Objective 2.** The Teachings of Pure Land Buddhism Taught by the Most Venerable Thích Trí Tịnh in Vietnam

The Pure Land method of Buddhism emphasizes three fundamental elements essential for practitioners: Faith, Vows, and Practice, likened to the three "sambhāra" necessary for rebirth in the Pure Land. These elements are derived from foundational sutras such as the Amitābha Sutra, which repeatedly underscores the significance of faith. The sutra depicts Buddhas extending their tongues across vast worlds, urging sentient beings to believe in the virtues extolled within Buddhist scriptures (Fo Guang Shan International Translation Center, 2017). Faith, as described in the Avatamsaka Sutra, is revered as the root of the spiritual path, nurturing all virtues and dispelling doubts and cravings, thereby revealing the path to Nirvana (Cleary, 1984). It entails belief in the principles of Karma, Dependent Origination, and the Four Noble Truths, and trust in the existence of Amitābha Buddha's Pure Land of Ultimate Bliss beyond this mundane realm (Bhikkhu Bodhi, 1993; Bhikkhu Buddhadāsa, 2020; Lu, 2022).

Vows, or Pāramitā, represent a solemn commitment to achieve rebirth in Amitābha Buddha's Pure Land, unwavering in the face of adversities such as poverty, illness, or disability. The Amitābha Sutra emphasizes the necessity of steadfastly maintaining this vow, ensuring non-regression from the path to Supreme Enlightenment (anuttarā-samyak-saṃbodhi) (Tịnh, 1997). Practice, or Kammaṭṭhāna, involves continuous recitation of the phrase "Namo

Amitābha Buddha" with unwavering dedication, whether standing, walking, sitting, or lying down, as prescribed in the Amitābha Sutra (Tịnh, 1997). This diligent practice ensures that at the end of life, practitioners will be greeted by Amitābha Buddha and his assembly of sages, facilitating rebirth in the Pure Land.

Thích Trí Tịnh, through his teachings, stresses the fleeting nature of human life and the imperative of utilizing time wisely for spiritual practice. He advocates maintaining practices such as vegetarianism, sutra chanting, and reciting the Buddha's name to cultivate compassion and wisdom (Hiep & Mahathanadull, 2019). These practices are not merely rituals but serve as transformative tools to nurture compassion and wisdom, essential for realizing one's innate Buddha-nature. In another passage, the Buddha said that if any sentient being hears this sutra and hears the names of the Buddhas and accepts and upholds them, he or she will be protected by all the Buddhas and will be irreversible in the path of attaining Supreme and Perfect Enlightenment, and He advised: 是故舍利弗!汝等皆當信受我語,及諸佛所說.” For this reason, Sariputra, all of you should believe and receive my words, and those of all Buddhas (Tịnh, 1997).

In conclusion, Faith, Vows, and Practice constitute the foundational framework of the Pure Land path, essential for achieving rebirth in Amitābha Buddha's realm of Ultimate Bliss. These elements, supported by the teachings of Thích Trí Tịnh and rooted in profound sutras, guide practitioners towards spiritual liberation and enlightenment.

“Sabbe tasanti dandassa sabbe bhayanti maccuno attanam upamam katva na haneyya na ghataye (Dhp. 129). ”

(All are afraid of the stick, all fear death. Putting oneself in another's place, one should not beat or kill others).

In contemporary discourse, the practice of daily chanting serves as a transformative tool, aiming to transcend sources of suffering like greed and anger, a notion underscored by Dieu (2014). Moreover, Vuontam (2024) presents a set of guiding principles attributed to the Most Venerable Thích Trí Tịnh, encapsulating ethical precepts and spiritual directives. These teachings advocate for mercy, forgiveness, and the pursuit of virtue in all actions. They emphasize simplicity in life, advocating freedom from worldly entanglements for achieving inner peace and clarity. Thích Trí Tịnh's teachings also stress the importance of seizing

opportunities and exercising patience during challenges, alongside promoting practices such as vegetarianism, compassion for all beings, and regular sutra chanting. Integral to his teachings is mindfulness, cultivated through recitations of the Buddha, Dharma, and Sangha, and a steadfast commitment to abstaining from harmful actions while actively pursuing virtuous deeds. His profound insights into human existence emphasize the brevity of life and the imperative to use time wisely in spiritual practice. Central to his legacy is the method of reciting the Buddha's name, condensed into a five-stanza poem, which embodies profound techniques and outcomes achievable through disciplined practice, emphasizing the Threefold Training of Precepts, Concentration, and Wisdom essential for spiritual liberation and enlightenment.

Thus, while we practice reciting the Buddha's name, we complete all three subjects of the Threefold training (Precepts, Concentration, and Wisdom). If we follow Precepts, Concentration, and Wisdom, then one day, when reciting the Buddha's name is pure, of course, we will be able to achieve all Threefold training of Anasrava (vô lậu) through reciting the Buddha with one-pointedness of mind (Chih & T'ien, 1992). Thus, we see that in the present life, there is a great benefit in being able to control the body and mind into a place of good dharma, in accordance with the Threefold training.

### **Objective 3. The Role and Influence of the Most Venerable Thích Trí Tịnh in Propagating Pure Land Buddhism in Viet Nam**

When talking about the role and influence of the Most Venerable Thích Trí Tịnh on Vietnamese Buddhism in particular and the country of Vietnam in general, in addition to the aspect of spreading and reviving Pure Land Buddhism in Vietnam, we can't help but recognize the Most Venerable's great contribution in translating *Mahāyāna* scriptures for Vietnamese Buddhism. It can be said that if in China there is a great master named Xuanzang (玄奘) (Tansen Sen, 2006), then in Vietnam, he is the *Tipiṭaka* great master of Vietnamese *Mahāyāna* Buddhism.

The Most Venerable Thích Trí Tịnh played a pivotal role in reviving the unity and harmony of Buddhism in Vietnam, significantly contributing to the nation's cohesion and prosperity. He was a respected master who made substantial contributions to education by founding and maintaining several Buddhist schools, such as Lưỡng Xuyên Buddhist School, Phật Quang Buddhist School, Liên Hải Buddhist School, and Vạn Hạnh Buddhist School (Tịnh, 2014). Through these institutions, he educated and guided hundreds of disciples, instilling in

them the values of compassion, self-awareness, and diligence.

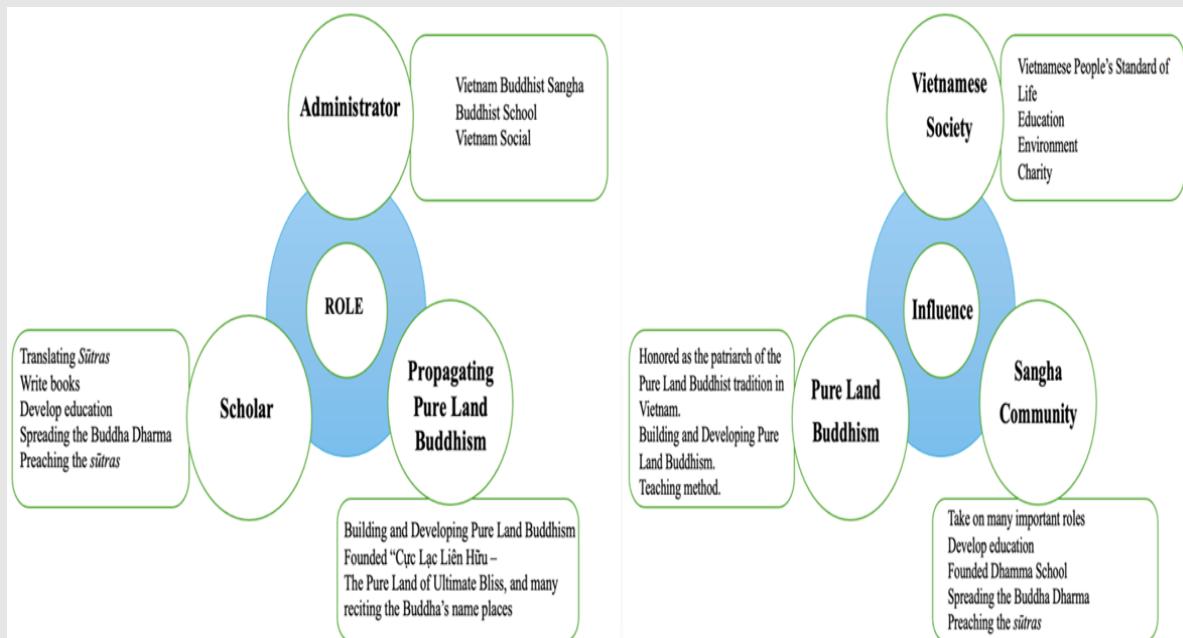


Figure 3. The Role and Influence of the Most Venerable Thích Trí Tịnh

Thích Trí Tịnh's personal conduct and everyday consciousness served as a model for preserving abilities and resources. As the revered abbot of Vạn Đức Pagoda, he consciously refrained from using amenities like air conditioning, refrigerators, televisions, computers, or laptops, even though his position would typically afford such conveniences. His minimalist lifestyle emphasized the importance of conserving energy and protecting the environment, setting an instructive example for both monks and laypeople. He integrated material and intellectual resources to build the Pure Land and used charitable acts to develop people, embodying both wisdom and compassion. Thích Trí Tịnh was actively involved in promoting Buddhism through various activities and by preaching the sūtras. His exemplary life of precepts significantly contributed to his success in spreading Buddhist teachings and achieving notable Buddhist deeds. Among his many contributions to Vietnamese Buddhism and the broader Vietnamese society, Thích Trí Tịnh had a profound influence on the development of Buddhism in the post-war era. Alongside other high-ranking monks, he revived Vietnamese Buddhism by promoting a unified practice and work ethic, moving beyond divisions. The Pure Land practice method he revived and propagated remains one of the most popular in Vietnam today.

Generations of Thích Trí Tịnh's students have continued his legacy by establishing numerous Great Hall Pure Land sites, such as Van Duc Temple, Van Linh Temple, and Hoang

Phap Temple, guiding Buddhists in their practice towards liberation, peace, and happiness. His strong teachings, marked by compassion, tolerance, charity, and adherence to the Buddha's teachings, reflect his profound concern for sentient beings and his enduring impact on Vietnamese Buddhism.

## Discussions

The findings of this study illuminate the profound impact of the Most Venerable Thích Trí Tịnh on the propagation of Pure Land Buddhism in Vietnam. Thích Trí Tịnh's doctrinal elucidations, propagation strategies, and ethical teachings have contributed significantly to the revitalization and adaptation of Pure Land Buddhism within the socio-cultural context of Vietnam.

Thích Trí Tịnh's teachings emphasize the fundamental Buddhist virtues of compassion, mindfulness, and ethical conduct. Thuc (2017) notes that Thích Trí Tịnh's engagement with Pure Land Buddhism is deeply rooted in social activism and environmental stewardship, reflecting a dynamic integration of Buddhist ethics with contemporary issues. This emphasis on engaged Buddhism resonates with Vietnamese practitioners seeking spiritual guidance amidst social and environmental challenges.

Moreover, the efficacy of nianfo practice, or recitation of the name of Amitabha Buddha, as advocated by Thích Trí Tịnh, has garnered widespread acceptance among Vietnamese Buddhists. Tay (2022) discusses the historical significance of Pure Land practices in Vietnam and highlights Thích Trí Tịnh's role in popularizing nianfo as a means of spiritual cultivation and liberation. Through his teachings, Thích Trí Tịnh has empowered individuals to embark on the path of spiritual transformation and transcendence.

Empirical data from surveys conducted among Buddhist communities in Vietnam corroborate the enduring influence of Thích Trí Tịnh's teachings. The prevalence of Pure Land practices and the attribution of spiritual transformation to Thích Trí Tịnh's guidance underscore the resonance of his message with practitioners. These findings align with Nguyen's (2024) comprehensive overview of Buddhism in Vietnam, which emphasizes the enduring significance of Pure Land Buddhism within the religious landscape of the country. Furthermore, qualitative interviews reveal the transformative impact of Thích Trí Tịnh's teachings on personal beliefs and societal engagement. Participants express a deep sense of gratitude for Thích Trí Tịnh's guidance, citing his teachings as catalysts for ethical reflection and compassionate action in

their lives. This underscores the dynamic interplay between religious teachings and socio-cultural practices in shaping individual and collective identities.

In conclusion, Thích Trí Tịnh's role in propagating Pure Land Buddhism in Vietnam extends beyond doctrinal transmission to encompass ethical engagement and spiritual empowerment. By elucidating the core principles of Pure Land Buddhism and adapting them to contemporary contexts, Thích Trí Tịnh has fostered spiritual renewal and social resilience within Vietnamese Buddhist communities. This study contributes to our understanding of religious dynamics in Vietnam and highlights the transformative potential of Buddhist teachings in addressing contemporary challenges.

## Knowledge from Research

Through conducting extensive research, we have acquired a profound understanding of the role and influence of the Most Venerable Thích Trí Tịnh in propagating Pure Land Buddhism in Vietnam. Our study reveals that the Most Venerable Thích Trí Tịnh was not only a great monk of Vietnam but also an exemplary student and practitioner of the Buddha's teachings.

From birth, Thích Trí Tịnh dedicated his life to the welfare of sentient beings, embodying the noble purpose of a disciple of the Buddha. His commitment to learning, practicing, and advancing education led to the dissemination of the Dhamma to the Fourfold disciples for the broader benefit of society. One of his most significant contributions was the translation of *Mahāyāna* scriptures for Vietnamese Buddhism, a noble endeavor that profoundly impacted the religious landscape.

His practice methods and teachings have been widely adopted by many disciples, who have achieved significant results in their daily practices. The study explores the enduring significance of his teachings on Pure Land Buddhism. The guiding principles he left behind are faith, vow, and practice. He emphasized deep belief in Buddha Shakyamuni's introduction to the world of Amitābha Buddha, fervent vows for rebirth in Amitābha Buddha's world, and diligent practice. This path, as taught by Thích Trí Tịnh, leads practitioners to achieve a state of undisturbed single-mindedness and to recognize the true mind of Buddha nature within themselves. Moreover, the study highlights Thích Trí Tịnh's teachings on cultivating the Pure Land and realizing enlightenment. He taught that diligent practice leads to a high level of realization as mentioned in the *Amitābha Sutra*. Enlightened practitioners can then return to save sentient beings suffering due to worldly desires.

Thích Trí Tịnh's life was closely intertwined with the history of Vietnam, from times of division to the eventual peace and independence of the Vietnamese people. Despite the many challenges and events he faced, his infinite wisdom and compassion, along with his application of Buddha's teachings in daily life, demonstrated his sublime personality as a religious leader and a renowned translator. He is often honored as Vietnam's Xuán Zàng (玄奘).

These findings illustrate that Thích Trí Tịnh is a shining example for all Fourfold disciples to follow. His contributions to Vietnamese Buddhism and society in areas such as the economy, culture, environment, and education were substantial. After the war, Thích Trí Tịnh, along with other high-ranking monks, played a pivotal role in reviving Vietnamese Buddhism, fostering unity, and establishing a common direction for practice and work, thereby eliminating divisions within the community.



**Figure. 4** Buddha recitation ashram at Van Duc Pagoda, Vietnam

## Conclusion

Throughout his life, the Most Venerable Thích Trí Tịnh devoted himself to the welfare of sentient beings through learning, practicing, and advancing education. He disseminated the Dhamma to the Fourfold disciples for their broader benefit, leaving a remarkable legacy that includes the translation of eleven significant *Mahāyāna* scriptures, among other works, which profoundly enriched Vietnamese Buddhism.

Vietnamese Buddhism holds deep gratitude for Thích Trí Tịnh. Thanks to his monumental work in translating scriptures, Vietnamese Buddhist monks, nuns, and lay practitioners can gain a profound understanding of the Buddha's teachings. These translations have also allowed them to learn valuable lessons from the Patriarchs, which they can pass

on to sentient beings. Particularly, the teachings of Pure Land Buddhism, as taught by the Most Venerable Thích Trí Tịnh, have left an enduring legacy for practitioners. His entire life dedicated to the Pure Land method has provided guiding principles and an open path for practitioners to follow and achieve results. The essence of Pure Land practice, as taught by him, revolves around three important aspects: faith, vow, and practice, combined with the Threefold training of precept, concentration, and wisdom through Buddha-name recitation with one-pointedness of mind.

The influence of the Most Venerable Thích Trí Tịnh in propagating Pure Land Buddhism in Vietnam is profound. With his extensive knowledge, diligent practice, and application of experiences gained from standard Buddhist training schools, he and other high-ranking monks of his time revitalized Vietnamese Buddhism. They established a unified direction for practice and work, moving away from divisions. The Pure Land practice method that he revived and propagated has become one of the main and popular practice methods in Vietnam today.

As a noble monk deeply concerned about the welfare of sentient beings, Thích Trí Tịnh's teachings were imbued with compassion, tolerance, charity, and respect for the Buddha's teachings. Pure Land practitioners who follow his teachings on vegetarianism, sutra chanting, and Buddha-name recitation are likely to experience positive outcomes in their practice. Consistent daily practice, as advised by him, leads to gradual improvement, inner liberation, peace amidst any circumstances, and eventual rebirth in the Pure Land.

## Suggestions

The study of the Most Venerable Thích Trí Tịnh's role and influence in propagating Pure Land Buddhism in Vietnam has revealed significant insights into his contributions and the impact of his teachings. However, there are several areas where further research could deepen our understanding and provide a more comprehensive view of his legacy and influence. There are some suggestions for future research:

### 1. Comparative Analysis of Pure Land Practices:

A comparative study between the Pure Land practices propagated by Thích Trí Tịnh and those practiced in other countries, such as China and Japan, could highlight unique aspects and commonalities. This would provide a broader context for understanding the regional adaptations and innovations introduced by Thích Trí Tịnh.

## 2. Impact on Contemporary Vietnamese Buddhism:

Investigating the long-term impact of Thích Trí Tịnh's translations and teachings on contemporary Vietnamese Buddhism could provide insights into how his legacy continues to shape modern practices and beliefs. This could include surveys and interviews with current practitioners and scholars.

## 3. Thích Trí Tịnh's Influence on Buddhist Education:

An in-depth study of Thích Trí Tịnh's contributions to Buddhist education in Vietnam, including the establishment and development of Buddhist schools and training programs, could shed light on his role in shaping the educational landscape for future generations of monks and lay practitioners.

## 4. Thích Trí Tịnh's Role in Inter-Buddhist Relations:

Researching Thích Trí Tịnh's interactions with other Buddhist traditions and leaders could offer insights into his role in fostering inter-Buddhist dialogue and unity. This could include examining his efforts to bridge different Buddhist schools and his influence on broader religious harmony in Vietnam.

## 5. Digital Humanities Approaches:

Utilizing digital humanities tools to create a comprehensive digital archive of Thích Trí Tịnh's works and related materials could make his contributions more accessible to a global audience. This approach could include digitizing manuscripts, developing searchable databases, and using digital analysis tools to explore his works in new ways.

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