
An Application of the Buddhist Teachings to Promote the Wedding Ceremony (Le Hang Thuan) at Monasteries in Ho Chi Minh City

Phan Tai Thuc¹ Sanu Mahatthanadull² Phramaha Nantakorn Piyabhan³

International Buddhist Studies College, Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University^{1,2,3}

Email: thichtamthuchpm@gmail.com ¹

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Abstract

This research aims to explore three objectives: 1) the problematic situations in marriage life and their causes in Ho Chi Minh City; 2) the concept and benefits of the wedding ceremony based on Buddhist teachings in marriage life; and 3) the application of Buddhist teachings to promote the Le H  ng Thu  n wedding ceremony at monasteries in Ho Chi Minh City. The study utilizes a qualitative research methodology, drawing on dissertation-based article analysis and in-depth interviews with key informants, including Buddhist scholars and venerable monks.

The findings reveal that the primary issues affecting marriage life in modern Ho Chi Minh City stem from internal and external factors, particularly those associated with contemporary societal changes. Problems such as the pervasive influence of social media and digital connectivity, rapid social transitions, economic pressures, psychological issues, limited communication, domestic violence, and the erosion of ethical standards all contribute to marital challenges. The Le H  ng Thu  n wedding ceremony, which originated in Vietnam in the 1940s, offers a unique response to these issues by integrating Buddhist teachings into the marital framework. Couples who participate in this ceremony, which is held in monasteries, report higher happiness and stability in their marriage. The research suggests that this is due to their consistent application of Buddhist teachings, which provide ethical guidance and conflict-resolution strategies. These couples often serve as role models within their communities, demonstrating the positive impact of Buddhist principles on married life. The ceremony, initially conceived by lay Buddhist scholars, provides a valuable opportunity for young couples to learn about Buddhist teachings, especially the practice of mindfulness, the Noble Eightfold Path, the Five Precepts (Pa  cas  la), the Four Immeasurables, and the Six Harmonies. These teachings, when applied effectively, transform marital relationships and promote ethical behavior. The research highlights the practicality and effectiveness of these teachings in contemporary marital practices, advocating for their broader adoption to foster

harmonious relationships and a morally grounded society. Additionally, the ceremony offers practical benefits, such as reducing the financial burden of modern weddings and providing an opportunity for couples and their families to interact with venerable monks, and learn Buddhist teachings that can be applied to their married lives. This research advocates for the promotion of this wedding ceremony as a means to strengthen marriages and promote social harmony.

Keywords: Buddhist teachings; Wedding Ceremony at monastery; Marriage life; Five Precepts; Le Hằng Thuận; Upaya-kaushalya

Introduction

The wedding ceremony holds significant importance in the lives of lay Buddhists. However, married life often brings more challenges and stress than anticipated. Annually, Vietnam sees approximately 600.000 marriages and 50.000 divorces, highlighting widespread issues leading to unhappiness, insecurity, and anxiety among couples (CRV: Country Report Vietnam, 2022). Buddhist teachings offer pathways to address these marital challenges through mindfulness in thoughts, words, and actions (Ven. Anan Akiñcano, 2011). Introduced in the 1950s, the wedding ceremony (Le Hang Thuan) has spread across Vietnam, particularly in bustling urban centers like Ho Chi Minh City, influencing southern Vietnamese lifestyles (Nguyen, 2016).

Research in this area remains scarce in Vietnam, especially in recent years, particularly focusing on the challenges faced by newlywed couples in Ho Chi Minh City. The challenges include family care, economic issues, work environments, and interactions with extended family members from both sides (Ta, 2019). Despite these challenges, every couple aspires to cultivate happiness and healthy relationships but may unknowingly cause suffering due to misguided actions (Spring & Spring, 2021). Applying Buddhist teachings in daily life can help individuals manage emotions and behaviors, establishing ethical guidelines for living harmoniously with one's partner. While psychological research addresses family and marital issues (Jung, 2019), it often falls short of addressing root causes, unlike Buddhist teachings, which emphasize the role of ignorance in guiding actions (Ven. Anan Akiñcano, 2011).

This research paper explores the temporary challenges of married life in Ho Chi Minh City, highlighting both internal and external factors affecting couples. It proposes Buddhist teachings as a solution, emphasizing their practical application through the wedding ceremony at monasteries (Le Hang Thuan) as a gate to Buddhist practices (Schneider, 2024). Furthermore, the article examines the origin of the younger generation across the country. It discusses which Buddhist teachings are most suitable for marital life, envisioning married couples as role models who promote these ceremonies within their communities following their monastery wedding. Understanding the origins and effects of these challenges allows couples to identify their sources and manage them effectively.

Research Objectives

1. To study the problematic situations of marriage life and their causes in Ho Chi Minh City.
- 2) To study the wedding ceremony concept and its benefits based on Buddhist teachings in marriage life.
- 3) Apply Buddhist teachings to promote the wedding ceremony (Le Hang Thuan) at Ho Chi Minh City monasteries.

Literature Review

This literature review explores the application of Buddhist teachings to promote the wedding ceremony known as Le Hằng Thuận at monasteries in Ho Chi Minh City, focusing on how these teachings influence the tradition and modern adaptation of wedding practices. The review analyzes a range of studies examining the impact of Le Hằng Thuận, the intersection of Buddhism with Vietnamese cultural traditions, and how the teachings provide solutions for marital challenges.

Nguyen (2016) explores the significance of Le Hằng Thuận in contemporary wedding traditions within Ho Chi Minh City. This research highlights how the ceremony, performed at Buddhist pagodas like Thien Ton Pagoda in District 5, differs from traditional Vietnamese wedding practices. Nguyen's work provides an insightful comparison between Le Hằng Thuận and conventional wedding ceremonies, revealing how this Buddhist-infused ritual creates a

spiritual foundation for marriage, emphasizing the moral and ethical responsibilities of the couple based on Buddhist teachings.

In contrast, Ta (2019) focuses on engaged Buddhism through the lens of the Le Hằng Thuận ceremony, demonstrating how Buddhist teachings are integrated into the wedding process. Her research highlights the ceremony's role in promoting mindfulness, compassion, and ethical living, thereby helping couples navigate the stresses and challenges of married life. Ta emphasizes that Le Hằng Thuận offers a framework to apply the Buddha's Dharma in daily life, addressing common marital issues such as stress, miscommunication, and emotional disconnect.

The broader context of family development and marital dynamics is explored by Crapo (2020), who studies the development of relationships within families and the difficulties they face over time. His research provides valuable insights into how couples can sustain a successful marriage over the long term. While not directly focused on Buddhist weddings, Crapo's work on relationship development offers important principles that align with Buddhist teachings on mindfulness, patience, and compassionate communication, all of which can be applied to marital relationships.

Eller (2003) presents a comprehensive historical study of Buddhist wedding rituals in Vietnam, tracing their evolution from the pre-colonial era to the present. Eller's work examines how Buddhist teachings have shaped these rituals in the context of Vietnamese cultural traditions and state policies, showing the dynamic interplay between religion, culture, and politics. His research provides a detailed understanding of how Le Hằng Thuận has developed into a significant part of modern Vietnamese Buddhist practice, especially in urban centers like Ho Chi Minh City.

Ven. Dr. Dhammananda's (2007) book, *A Happy Marriage Life: A Buddhist Perspective*, offers practical Buddhist wisdom for married couples. Dhammananda emphasizes that marriage is a partnership based on mutual respect and personal growth. He explains that Buddhist principles, such as mindfulness, compassion, and ethical behavior, play a key role in fostering healthy, loving relationships. His teachings provide a foundation for understanding how Le Hằng Thuận can be used as a vehicle for promoting these values within the marital context.

Thich Nhat Hanh (2016), in *Yêu Thương Theo Phương Pháp Bụt Dạy* (Loving Based on Buddha's Teaching), emphasizes the Four Immeasurable Minds—loving-kindness, compassion, appreciative joy, and equanimity—as essential elements for sustaining a happy and peaceful married life. Thich's teachings offer valuable guidance for couples preparing for marriage through the *Le Hằng Thuận* ceremony, helping them to cultivate the emotional and spiritual qualities needed for a successful partnership.

The research by Jung (2019) sheds light on the well-being of Vietnamese women who marry South Korean men, focusing on their adaptation to a new cultural environment. While this study is not directly related to Buddhist wedding ceremonies, it provides a sociocultural context for understanding the challenges that transnational marriages may face. The Buddhist teachings integrated into *Le Hằng Thuận* can offer similar guidance for couples facing cultural or relational challenges, emphasizing mindfulness, compassion, and mutual understanding as tools for adaptation and well-being.

This review reveals that Buddhist teachings offer a robust framework for addressing the challenges faced in modern marriage, with *Lễ Hằng Thuận* ceremonies providing a platform for couples to reflect on Buddhist values. The integration of compassion, mindfulness, and mutual understanding into these ceremonies promotes a more harmonious and spiritually enriching marital life. Future research could further explore how *Lễ Hằng Thuận* is evolving in urban settings and how the application of Buddhist principles continues to adapt to contemporary marital challenges. Expanding the study to include interviews with abbots, couples, and scholars may also deepen the understanding of how Buddhist teachings can be effectively applied to promote the sustainability of marriage in modern Vietnamese society.

Conceptual Framework

This research is a research study. The conceptual framework of this research exhibits the significant research process in terms of input, process, and output as follows:

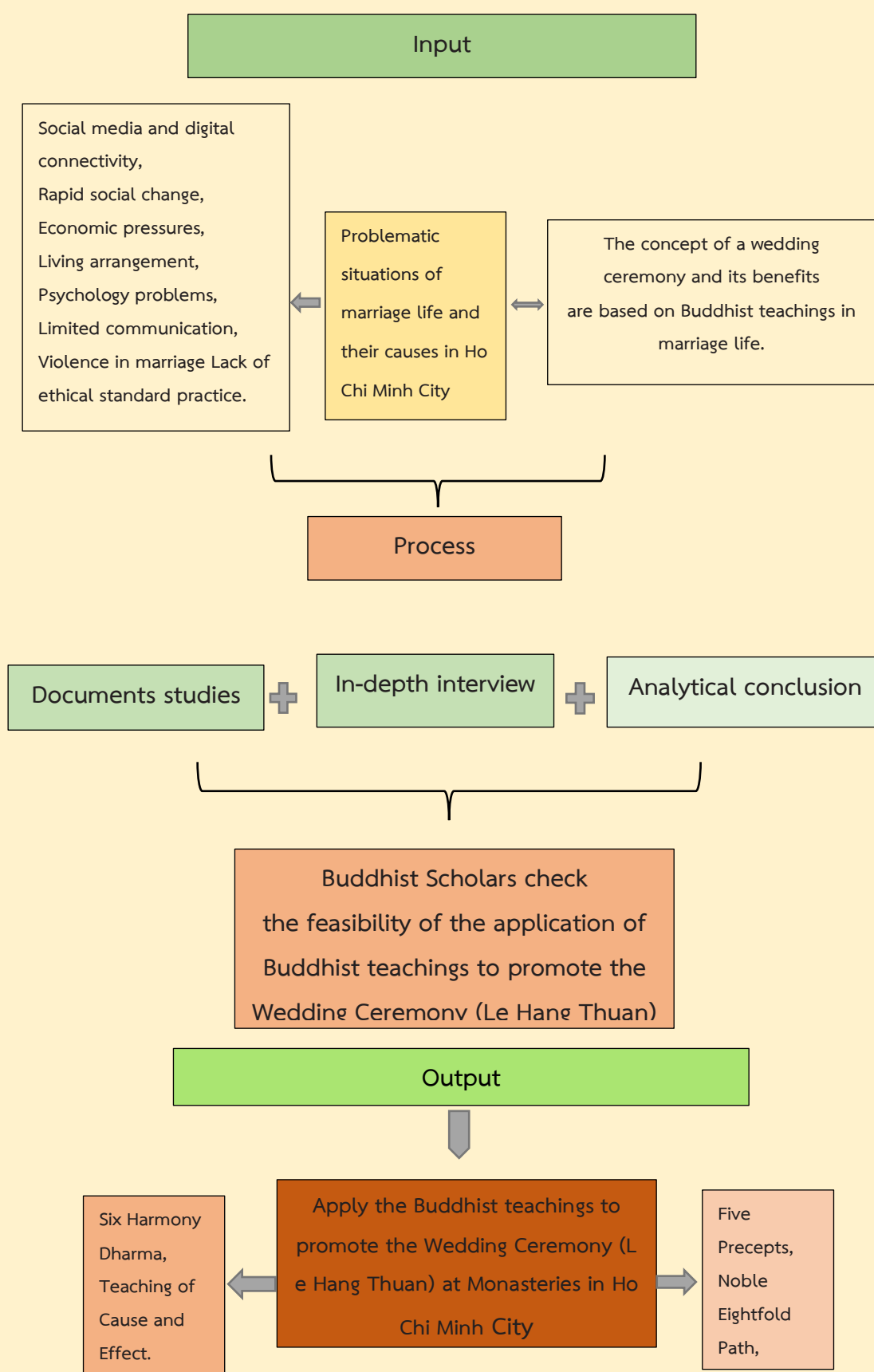


Figure 1 Conceptual Framework

Research Methodology

The research methodology of this research is qualitative, with in-depth interviews with three groups of key informants: venerable monks who are abbots or active abbots of a monastery or pagoda; a married couple who attended their wedding at the monastery; and Buddhist scholars. Therefore, this research can be divided into four stages, as follows:

Data Collection

Data for this research paper will be found from primary sources of the Pāli Canon with translations of the English version and commentaries, as well as secondary sources, which are Buddhist textbooks, consulting e-book databases and related network resources, psychology books, articles, journals, and other relevant literature, specifically the works of wedding ceremony and marriage life in the application of Buddhist teachings. This paper collects and reads a large amount of related literature, which provides the theoretical foundation and empirical reference for the research of this paper and helps to determine the research topic and construct the analysis model.

Analysis and Synthesis

Analyzing and synthesizing the raw data, as well as systematizing the collected data, to give a clear background on the problem and its causes through the fact of marriage life. Then find out if the Buddhist teachings are suitable to apply in marriage life to solve their problems. It is the way to have a model family to be emotive to the community in Ho Chi Minh City.

Conclusion and Suggestions

To draw conclusions, what was presented above was the identification of significant research findings, the promotion of the research in this area, and suggestions for suitable information points for further research.

Research Results

Objective 1: To study the problematic situations of marriage life and their causes in Ho Chi Minh City. Marriage and family life in Ho Chi Minh City currently face numerous

difficulties, obstacles, and pressures (N. T. Thich, 2019). Some couples contend with workplace stress, family care responsibilities, economic pressures, and the maintenance of crucial relationships such as those with siblings, relatives, and parents on both sides. (Spring & Spring, 2021). Research indicates that every family encounters specific challenges, whether economic hardships, child-rearing difficulties, or financial strains exacerbated by divergent economic aspirations between spouses (Purves, 2019). Furthermore, marital issues can stem from personality changes in one spouse, including addiction to gaming gambling (N. T. Thich 2019; Spring & Spring, 2020/2021), and involvement in ambiguous relationships (Barua., 2023). Overall, it's recognized that every family experiences its own set of challenges (Dhammananda, 2007). Therefore, the objective of this study is to identify the underlying cause of these marital problems. So, what were the causes of these problems?

The research indicates that the problems affecting marital life in Ho Chi Minh City stem from several factors:

1) Social media and digital connectivity have a significant impact on marital relationships. Excessive time spent on social media can lead to a feeling of loneliness, especially when individuals are alone or facing difficulties. This impact extends to activities such as online gaming and interaction on dating applications. Individuals in the field of information technology are particularly susceptible to influences from the internet when experiencing strong emotions, stress, or feelings of loneliness (CRV, 2022). Women are more active internet users compared to men in Vietnam, constituting approximately 80 percent of the 70 million users compared to men; of the 80 million users, women are about 80 percent (Thi, 2021).

2) Rapid social change: Vietnam is undergoing rapid modernization, and Ho Chi Minh City, at the forefront of many things, has been changing in a very short time. Traditional gender roles are evolving, leading to potential conflict as couples navigate changing expectations around housework, finances, and careers.

3) Economic pressures are a significant factor impacting marital life in Ho Chi Minh City. Despite stagnant incomes over many years, the city's high cost of living continues to rise annually, leading to financial stress, which is a major source of discord in marriages. Even with increased working hours, many families find their financial situations unimproved (Chapman,

2010/2022). Economic difficulties often exacerbate stress levels in couples facing financial challenges compared to those not experiencing such issues.

4) Living arrangement: multi-generational households were common in the past until the present, which can be both a source of support and a cause of tension, especially regarding childcare and decision-making (Purves, 2019).

5) Psychology problems: A psychology problem is also the objective impact on a human being that the human body is not ready to adapt to, such as the changing of wealth, losing something, being cheated on by someone that they love, or unexpected care from someone, such as a daughter or son (N. T. Thich, 2019).

6) Limited communication: if the couple does not talk and share with each other day by day, it could make the situation stressful. This causes many problems when the life of a family is limited to sharing and communicating (Kim, 2020).

7) Misunderstand each other: this is happening in any family, but they do not solve it and often led it to continue, becoming a hidden problem between couples (N. T. Thich, 2019; Kim, 2020).

8) Unexpected partner: after getting married and living together, they found out their husband or wife was not an expected one with many characters they felt unsuitable to live with (Chapman, 2022).

9) Violence in marriage: this problem was quite common in Vietnamese society before, even though it has been reduced in recent years, it is still an issue in Ho Chi Minh's family (N. T. Thich, 2019; Purves, 2019; Spring & Spring, 2021).

10) Lack of ethical standard practice: this comes not only from their educational background but also from the culture of their family. So that its conditions could be limited after getting married (N. T. Thich, 2019).

Objective 2 To study the concept of a wedding ceremony and its benefits based on Buddhist teachings in marriage life. The research found that Le Hang Thuan, translated into English, is a wedding ceremony at monasteries. This ceremony was inspired by the idea of a layman named Do Nam Tu (Nguyen, 2024). Based on the main idea of skillful means (upaya-kaushalya) in the Lotus Sutra. Later, in March 1940, another layman, Le Dinh Tham, organized

his daughter's wedding at Tu Dam Pagoda in Hue City (Bui, 2020). This was like the first wedding in a monastery at that time. Later, in 1971, the most venerable Thich Thien Hoa named this wedding Le Hang Thuan, with Hang meaning (always, usually) and Thuan meaning (harmony, and consonance (Bui, 2020). In this ceremony, the monks bless the couple for always living a harmonious life with their partner.

This is the progress of the steps in the wedding: First of all, (1) the couple gathers in the reception room, (2) the couple is guided to process the invitation for the monks, (3) monks arrive at the reception room, (4) the couple leads the invited monks to bless their wedding at the main hall or wedding hall; at this time, both families and guests are already at the wedding hall, (5) monks arrive at the wedding hall, (6) monks perform blessing chants; the master of ceremony offers incense to the Triple Gem, respects the Triple Gem, and chants the sutta, (7) a parent representative respects the monks and requests that they bless their child's wedding, (8) the master of ceremony announces the process of the wedding and explains the meaning of Le Hang Thuan, (9) the bride and groom exchange vows, (10) respect each other, (11) respect the four gratitude, (12) listen to a monk explain the meaning of rings for couples, (13) receive rings from a monk and exchange them with each other, (14) the abbot monk gives a Dharma talk for the couple and guests, (15) closing ceremony, (16) group photo session, (17) monks return to the reception hall, (18), couple takes photo with family and friends, (19) tea party, and finally (20) wedding ceremony completed (Chua Hoang Phap, 2011).

The concept of marriage in the Buddhist tradition is not common or directly mentioned in the three doctrines, but we can also find out some suttas the Buddha taught about marriage life, such as the kind of it. The sutta is the Pathamasamvasutta: There are four kinds of living together, based on what Buddha taught in this sutta: "1) A male witch living with a female witch; 2) A male witch living with a goddess; 3) A god living with a female witch; 4) A god living with a goddess" (Bhikkhu Bodhi, 2012).

In the other sutta named Samajivina in Aṅguttara Nikāya too, the Buddha guided for husband and wife on the ways to meet each other in the next life:

If both husband & wife want to see one another not only in the present life but also in the life to come, they should be in tune [with each other] in conviction [saddhā], in tune in virtue [sīla], in tune in generosity [cāga], and in tune in discernment [paññā]. Then they will see each other in this life and the next life (Bhikkhu Bodhi, 2012).

On the other hand, Buddha also taught about it in Bhariyāsutta:

The kinds of wives here are called: killers, thieves, and lords; immoral, harsh, and lacking regard for others, when their bodies break up they set course for hell. But the kinds of wives here called mothers, sisters, friends, and bondservants; are steadfast in their morality, and restrained for a long time (Bhikkhu Bodhi, 2012).

This teaching is one of the direct sermons in which Buddha talks about the role of the wife in the household and how she should serve her family, especially their husband. This is a really meaningful teaching in the life of a married woman in modern times. Many things develop too fast to get old, but the moral is that the basic and essential will not change in any case. There are five things the spouse should do to each other in Sutta Sigālovāda (Narada, 2013).

In addition, the idea of Mahayana traditions is that: 佛法在世間不離世間覺 The Dharma is applied in the present life; it cannot be achieved in another world (T. T. Thich, 1999). Therefore, many Mahayana venerable masters have been spreading the teachings of Buddha in many forms, and a wedding ceremony in a monastery is one of them. Based on this idea, engaged Buddhism also appeared in Master Thich Nhat Hanh's philosophy. It means that Buddhist teachings should apply to daily activities for everyone.

Objective 3 To apply Buddhist teachings to promote the wedding ceremony (Le Hang Thuan) at Ho Chi Minh City monasteries. As the writer presented in the above sections, any Buddhist teachings can be applied to each person to transform themselves, thereby changing their lifestyle and the way they treat people around them based on their beliefs, discernment, openness, generosity, and fairness in their views of everything. Therefore, the teachings proposed in this study are easy to absorb and practice in family life and achieve results in the present time if applied properly. Among them is the Six Harmony Dharma (Bhikkhu Nanamoli & Bhikkhu Bodhi, 1995), which is one of the popular Dharma taught to newlywed couples to apply to family life and will lead to peaceful and stable development and happiness. For example: practicing verbal kindness is avoided by arguing with each other when having a problem to discuss. This situation also applies mental kindness to fit divergent views.

Next is the teaching of cause and effect (Bhikkhu Nanamoli & Bhikkhu Bodhi, 1995), which is also a method that anyone can apply to balance their life based on awareness of

the good or bad karma that is being created every day and the consequences that are being created. Regularly reflecting on cause and effect helps each person be aware of his or her own lifestyle and easily understand all problems that occur, including family discord. It will balance their own lives and reduce stress in stressful situations because of a deeper understanding of simpler cause-and-effect-based problems.

The next practice is the Five Precepts (Bhikkhu Bodhi, 2012) by lay Buddhists; this is the basic foundation of a peaceful and happy life. Practicing the five precepts based on the explanation and guidance of the Zen master Thich Nhat Hanh's life will also fulfill the spirit of a layperson. The explanations from the Zen master's profound wisdom will help practitioners continue to learn the five precepts, which are extremely new and profound, easy to practice, and flexible in family life.

The next Dharma is the Noble Eightfold Path (Bikkhu Nanamoli and Bhikkhu Bodhi, 1995), which is equally important as a guideline for practice and behavior in daily life. It will certainly increase great peace and happiness and should be practiced in these four Dharma. And an extremely essential dharma is the path to escape suffering that the Buddha taught in the Sutta Dhammacakkappavattana (Bhikkhu Bodhi, 2011), the first sutta when he met his fellow practitioners after a few years. Among the eight parts of the Eightfold Path, each part is equally important and difficult to determine, but according to the general guidance of many masters, everyone can choose any part of it to start their practice. For example, in the Dharma of Right Speech, one can carefully study the theoretical part explaining the meaning of Right Speech in a specific way and then apply it carefully step by step to achieve peace of mind, because there is no worry about your speech when you have a Right Speech.

In addition, mindfulness is also a method that many teachers have guided practitioners to use as the basis for daily practice anytime and anywhere (Ven. Anan Akiñcano, 2011). Zen Master Thich Nhat Hanh has many books about this application, one of which is "The Miracle of Mindfulness (Hanh, 2016). For mindfulness, the instructional materials and applications are extremely diverse and extensive in many fields, as well as professions and social classes, so everyone can easily find a method that suits them (Ven. Nyanabhadra Pháp Tử et al., 2023).

Following the teachings explained in Chapter 2, we can apply more teachings, such as Four Methods of Pacification (Catvāri-saṃgrahahavastuni (Bhikkhu Bodhi, 2012). Six Warm-hearted or Six Harmonies Dharma (Bhikkhu Nanamoli & Bhikkhu Bodhi, 1995) Ten good acts

(Sa: *aśakuśalakarmāṇi*) (CBETA, n.d.) to solve the problems of marriage life based on the practice of spouse to transform their mind, action, and speech in daily.

Discussions

The study objectives focused on analyzing the problematic situations in marriage life in Ho Chi Minh City, the wedding ceremony concept in Buddhism, and the potential for applying Buddhist teachings to promote the Le Hằng Thuận ceremony in local monasteries. These objectives offer a comparative analysis of existing literature on marriage, wedding ceremonies, and Buddhist teachings.

The first objective aimed to identify the challenges faced by married couples in Ho Chi Minh City, particularly in the context of modern urban life. Previous research by Crapo (2020) on family development and marital relationships emphasized that as couples progress through various stages of life, they often encounter communication issues, emotional distance, and stress due to societal and economic pressures. Similarly, Ta (2019) identified that many Vietnamese couples face problems in their marriage due to societal expectations, financial burdens, and the fast-paced nature of contemporary urban life, which creates stress and tension within relationships. These factors often lead to conflict and dissatisfaction in marriage, as couples struggle to balance their personal, professional, and family responsibilities.

In line with this, the present study confirmed that marriage problems in Ho Chi Minh City are often rooted in similar factors. Cultural expectations, economic struggles, and the pressures of modern life frequently lead to conflicts, especially in the early years of marriage. Additionally, the rise of individualism in urban settings can clash with traditional family values, further complicating the dynamics of marriage. The findings of this study suggest that these problematic situations are not unique to Ho Chi Minh City but are part of a broader pattern observed in modern urban centers (Nguyen, 2016; Crapo, 2020).

The second objective explored the concept of the Le Hằng Thuận wedding ceremony and the benefits of integrating Buddhist teachings into marriage life. Previous studies, such as those by Nguyen (2016) and Eller (2003), have highlighted the role of Buddhist ceremonies like Le Hằng Thuận in providing spiritual guidance for couples. These ceremonies serve as a reminder of Buddhist values such as mindfulness, compassion, and ethical conduct, which are essential for maintaining a harmonious relationship.

Ven. Dr. Dhammananda (2007) emphasized that marriage, according to Buddhist teachings, is not merely a social contract but a spiritual journey where both partners are encouraged to practice mindfulness and cultivate virtues such as patience, empathy, and loving-kindness. These teachings help to strengthen the bond between husband and wife by promoting understanding and reducing conflicts arising from misunderstandings or emotional impulsivity. The benefits of incorporating Buddhist teachings into wedding ceremonies include fostering a strong foundation for marriage by focusing on the spiritual, emotional, and ethical dimensions of the partnership, which goes beyond mere material concerns.

The present study supports these findings by demonstrating that couples who participate in Le Hăng Thuận ceremonies often report a deeper sense of commitment and emotional connection. The ceremony's emphasis on mindfulness and compassion helps couples navigate marital challenges by offering them tools to manage stress and peacefully resolve conflicts. This aligns with Thich Nhat Hanh's (2016) teachings on the Four Immeasurable Minds—loving-kindness, compassion, appreciative joy, and equanimity—which are essential for sustaining a balanced and harmonious relationship.

The third objective focused on applying Buddhist teachings to promote the Le Hăng Thuận wedding ceremony at monasteries in Ho Chi Minh City. Ta (2019) argued that Le Hăng Thuận not only brings Buddhism closer to people's daily lives but also integrates Buddhist ethical teachings into a crucial life event—marriage. By promoting this ceremony, Buddhist monasteries play an active role in addressing the moral and emotional needs of the community.

This study confirms that the promotion of Le Hăng Thuận can serve as a powerful tool for promoting Buddhist teachings within the broader societal framework. The ceremony's inclusion of Buddhist prayers, vows, and teachings on ethical conduct provides couples with a moral compass that can guide them through the complexities of marriage life. Monasteries in Ho Chi Minh City, by offering these ceremonies, not only strengthen their connection with the local community but also promote Buddhist values in a practical and accessible way (Nguyen, 2016; Ta, 2019).

Moreover, the promotion of Le Hằng Thuận can serve as a means of preserving traditional Vietnamese culture while adapting it to modern life. As Eller (2003) notes, Buddhist wedding rituals in Vietnam have evolved to reflect changes in society, and the modern promotion of Le Hằng Thuận can help preserve these traditions while making them relevant to the lives of contemporary couples. This study supports the argument that Buddhist teachings when applied in the context of marriage ceremonies, can play a vital role in promoting social harmony, moral conduct, and emotional resilience in modern Vietnamese society.

The study's objectives contribute to the understanding of the role of Buddhist teachings in addressing marital challenges and promoting harmonious relationships in Ho Chi Minh City. By comparing previous studies, it is evident that the integration of Buddhist values into marriage ceremonies such as Le Hằng Thuận provides practical tools for couples to navigate the complexities of modern marriage. The promotion of these ceremonies by monasteries offers both spiritual and emotional benefits, helping couples build strong foundations for their relationships based on mindfulness, compassion, and ethical conduct. Future research could explore how these teachings are applied over the long term and how Le Hằng Thuận can be further adapted to meet the needs of contemporary society

Knowledge from Research

This research yielded significant insights through the analysis of various documents, books, articles, journals, websites, and other sources, as well as in-depth interviews with key informants, venerable monks, and Buddhist scholars. The study revealed that contemporary challenges in marriage, particularly in the context of wedding ceremonies held at monasteries, are increasingly influenced by modern societal factors such as social media, economic pressures, psychological issues, and workplace stress. This represents a shift from traditional marriage problems, highlighting the growing complexity of married life in urban settings like Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam.

A major discovery from this study is the need to reassess marriage problems from both external and internal perspectives. External problems, often seen as stemming from outside influences, such as societal expectations, financial burdens, and interpersonal relationships, are ultimately linked to internal issues. Similarly, internal struggles, such as emotional

imbalance and psychological stress, frequently manifest as external conflicts in the form of marital discord or professional challenges. Buddhist wisdom teaches that these problems are not caused by one singular factor but are the result of multiple conditions.

The findings suggest that Buddhist teachings provide effective solutions for resolving these marital challenges. Specifically, the research identifies that many of the issues in married life are rooted in a lack of wisdom, right mindfulness, right speech, and ethical conduct. This lack fosters the accumulation of the “three poisons” - craving, anger, and ignorance - within the marriage, which exacerbates both external and internal problems.

Buddhist practices, such as mindfulness, ethical conduct, and wisdom, were highlighted as key methods for addressing marital difficulties. By cultivating these qualities, couples can foster greater emotional balance, communication, and mutual understanding, thereby reducing conflict and enhancing marital satisfaction. However, the study also emphasizes that for these teachings to be effective, they must be applied correctly and with consistent effort. When properly implemented, Buddhist teachings not only help in resolving marital issues but also promote the broader understanding and practice of Buddhism within the community.

Furthermore, the study identified a gap in public recognition of couples who apply Buddhist teachings in their marriage. There is a lack of real-life examples where couples openly demonstrate how Buddhist principles have positively impacted their married life. Promoting such examples could enhance public interest in the Le Hăng Thuận ceremony and encourage more people to apply Buddhist teachings in their personal lives. This presents an opportunity to extend the role of Buddhism beyond religious rituals, positioning it as a practical guide for navigating modern marital challenges.

Conclusions

In contemporary society, the intricacies inherent in daily existence frequently result in elevated stress levels and myriad challenges, thereby complicating the pursuit of happiness and fulfillment for individuals. The institution of marriage, in particular, is influenced by a multitude of factors including occupational commitments, familial interactions, and social affiliations, all of which necessitate meticulous oversight and adaptability. Prominent concerns affecting matrimonial partnerships encompass the omnipresent impact of social media and

digital engagement, rapid societal transformations, economic strain, psychological difficulties, communication failures, domestic abuse, and the absence of ethical frameworks in interpersonal relationships.

The underlying aspiration of the Le Hằng Thuận wedding ceremony, conducted within Buddhist monasteries, is fundamentally grounded in the Mahayana Lotus Sutra, specifically the section of “skillful means” (upāya-kauśalya), which advocates for the utilization of varied methodologies to impart the Buddha’s teachings. Motivated by this doctrinal principle, the inaugural Le Hằng Thuận ceremony occurred in 1940 at Tu Dam Pagoda in Hue City, initiated by layman Le Dinh Tham in honor of his daughter. This ceremony functions as a platform for couples and their families to assimilate Buddhist teachings from esteemed monks. Furthermore, it provides numerous advantages, such as cultivating a sincere and dedicated relationship between the bride and groom, alleviating the financial strain associated with traditional nuptials, and facilitating a significant and secure matrimonial experience.

In any relational context, especially within the institution of marriage, the capacity to listen and demonstrate empathy is paramount for the establishment of enduring mutually advantageous partnerships. When disputes emerge, the ability to actively listen and comprehend one another facilitates amicable problem resolution and appropriate outcomes. The teachings of the Buddha, including the Noble Eightfold Path, the Four Noble Truths, the Six Harmonies, the Five Precepts, and the Four Immeasurable Minds, possess substantial relevance to marital life and familial dynamics. These teachings provide pragmatic guidance that can be adaptively implemented without necessitating the participation of monastic figures, as the fundamental principles are derived from the foundational Buddhist texts.

For the effective promotion of Le Hằng Thuận, married couples must exemplify the role of moral paragons by diligently embodying Buddhist teachings in their quotidian lives. By representing peaceful coexistence, nurturing harmonious familial units, and exemplifying constructive citizenship within the Ho Chi Minh City community, they can motivate others to embrace these practices and integrate them into their marriages, thereby disseminating the wisdom of the Buddha’s teachings throughout society.

Suggestions

The research has identified the problematic situations and causes affecting married life in Ho Chi Minh City, but it has not explored the experiences of remarried couples, which could significantly influence people’s lifestyles. Therefore, the researcher suggests researching the

lives of individuals before marriage to better understand this aspect. Additionally, while the research has demonstrated the application of Buddhist teachings in addressing marital issues, it has not focused specifically on individual teachings such as mindfulness in daily living. Therefore, the researcher recommends that there be research on the application of each lesson, illustrating concepts and practical applications for easier implementation. Furthermore, this research provides a broad study encompassing the general population, which may yield different results based on factors such as occupation, educational attainment, and age. Hence, the researcher suggests conducting more targeted research that adequately considers these various conditions for each married couple.

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