

Social Services for the Community: Leveraging Buddhist Religious Resources in Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam

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Abstract

Religious resources have become a significant topic of interest and discussion in Vietnam, particularly regarding their potential to enhance the role of religions in contributing to national development and the process of international integration. This study examines the role of Buddhism in delivering social services to the community in Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam, by exploring its religious resources. The findings reveal that Buddhism in Ho Chi Minh City actively provides free educational and healthcare services to support the poor and urban migrants in overcoming hardships. These efforts highlight the religion's social function in promoting social justice in Vietnam. The study concludes that through its practical contributions to the community, Buddhism serves as a valuable religious resource in Vietnam, especially in Ho Chi Minh City. Based on these insights, the article proposes several solutions to enhance the role of Buddhism in offering social services to the community in Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam.

Keywords: *Social Services, Religious Resources, Community, Ho Chi Minh City.*

Introduction

The Vietnamese state currently acknowledges that religion, beyond its ethical and cultural values, serves as a resource contributing to the nation's development. Efforts focus on mobilizing, uniting, and engaging religious organizations, dignitaries, and followers to lead virtuous lives, practice their faith, and actively contribute to the cause of national construction and defense. Promoting the positive cultural and ethical values of religion, along with its resources, is integral to advancing national development (Communist Party of Vietnam, 2021).

This perspective underscores the significance of religion as a vital resource in the country's development, aiding in the construction of a strong national unity bloc and fostering patriotism in the era of integration and growth. In recent years, religious resources have garnered significant attention from Vietnamese scholars. Their research provides a foundation for scientific arguments that can guide the state in formulating appropriate policies and solutions to identify and harness the potential of religious organizations. By doing so, the nation can strengthen its internal resilience, particularly in addressing the challenges Vietnam faces today.

Religious resources have recently emerged as a significant research topic in Vietnam. The concept has been actively discussed and debated by scholars in scientific conferences and research articles. Notably, Tran Van Doan (2022) emphasized that religious resources are an inseparable part of the life force, rather than a tool to be imposed or controlled. He argued that religion, as a life force, has two primary functions: preserving and elevating life.

Similarly, Chu (2023) defined religious resources as a form of social resource encompassing the inherent potentials of religion. These include scriptures, doctrines, canon laws, rituals, organizational structures, places of worship, religious establishments, forms of religious culture, heritage sites, assets, activities, and religious human resources (dignitaries and followers). Additionally, religious resources include the potentials that religion draws from society and the values it generates concerning various aspects of social life. Chu viewed religious resources as a comprehensive concept, integrating both the internal and external dimensions of religion.

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Expanding on these perspectives, Trần (2023) proposed an ontological approach to understanding religious resources. He suggested examining them through dimensions such as social consciousness, social entities, social culture, and social capital. This multidimensional framework enables a deeper understanding of religious resources and their transformative role in fulfilling their function of enhancing the world and contributing to the healthy development of the community. Tran also highlighted the role of religious ethics in shaping religious resources.

In this article, religious resources are understood as the sum of a religion's internal and external assets, with social capital and religious ethics identified as critical components in their creation and development.

Ho Chi Minh City is Vietnam's economic hub and the primary economic center of the southern region, boasting the highest economic growth rate in the country. It contributes approximately one-third of the nation's GDP, making it a critical driver of Vietnam's economy. The city serves as a focal point for service and trade activities, an import-export hub, and the largest financial and banking center in the country. As of 2020, the population of Ho Chi Minh City was 8,899,866, accounting for 6.6% of the national population and making it the most populous city in Vietnam (Hà & Trần, 2020). Since 1986, the city's population has steadily increased due to urbanization and industrialization, attracting people from various regions across the country who move to the city to settle and seek opportunities. This rapid urbanization and population growth have given rise to numerous social challenges, including ensuring social security for migrants and the poor, creating employment opportunities for workers, reducing environmental pollution, and addressing food safety and hygiene concerns. Over the years, Ho Chi Minh City has implemented various policies to tackle these issues. Additionally, the active participation of social organizations has played a significant role, with religious organizations - particularly Buddhism - standing out as notable contributors to addressing these social challenges.

Buddhism in Vietnam, and particularly in Ho Chi Minh City, is a religion deeply intertwined with the history and development of the region. It has significantly influenced the cultural and social activities of the local population. Currently, Ho Chi Minh City is home to 13,240 monks and nuns, 1,469 pagodas, and 12 dedicated religious activity centers. Organizationally, the Vietnam Buddhist Sangha (VBS) in Ho Chi Minh City oversees 22 affiliated units, including the Executive Committee of the VBS in Thu Duc City and 21 district-level units (EBVBSH, 2022). Operating in a city characterized by a thriving economy, a culture of friendliness, and a strong emphasis on caring for the underprivileged, Buddhism in Ho Chi Minh City plays an active role in social charity. It extends its contributions not only within the city but also to remote and disadvantaged areas across Vietnam, particularly those affected by natural disasters and epidemics. In its mission and operations, Ho Chi Minh City Buddhism has set clear goals: alongside diversifying Buddhist activities to meet the spiritual and cultural needs of monks, nuns, Buddhists, and the broader population, it strives to foster and sustain the great national unity bloc. Its focus includes enhancing the quality of life in ethics, culture, society, and spirituality, contributing to social stability, security, economic growth, and the realization of a "civilized, modern, friendly, and compassionate city" during this period of integration and development (EBVBSH, 2022). In practice, guided by Buddhism's principles of compassion and its alignment with worldly concerns, Ho Chi Minh City Buddhism proactively delivers social services to the poor, immigrants, and other vulnerable groups. These efforts play a vital role in strengthening the social safety net and ensuring societal stability.

Thus, the objective of this study is to examine Buddhism's contributions to social services in the community, highlighting it as a valuable religious resource. By promoting these contributions, Buddhism can further support the goals of social justice and sustainable development in Ho Chi Minh City.

Literature Review

Social services are defined as organized charitable activities aimed at helping individuals and communities overcome challenges in life. According to Vickar (1936), "Social services are organized charitable actions or activities, programs, or methods that utilize social workers and related professionals to achieve social security goals—namely, maintaining and enhancing human well-being in the face of losses caused by socio-

economic changes, unemployment, illness, old age, and other factors." The role of social services extends beyond addressing basic needs; they also play a crucial part in fostering equality of opportunity for disadvantaged groups and ensuring fundamental human rights such as education, healthcare, and gender equality. In the face of increasing socio-economic fluctuations, social services have become indispensable tools for promoting sustainable and harmonious development.

Social services possess distinctive characteristics that define their importance in societal life. According to Trần & Đoàn (2012), social services not only address immediate needs but also create long-term impacts, closely tied to the developmental cycles of individuals and society. They are considered foundational to national and ethnic development, rooted in ethical and humanistic values. The organization and management of social services require careful coordination between the state and civil organizations while aligning with local cultural, religious, and traditional contexts. Moreover, social services have a global dimension, necessitating international collaboration and the active involvement of non-governmental organizations to achieve maximum effectiveness.

The classification of social services often varies based on the social context and characteristics of each country, leading to differences in approach. Vickar (1936) categorized social services into key groups, including social assistance, education and public health, family and community services, preventive healthcare, social insurance, and urban social housing. In the United Kingdom, Mannheim (2001) identified three major groups: services for children and youth, services for the elderly and disabled, and public services.

In Vietnam, social services encompass areas such as employment, vocational training, social insurance, and unemployment insurance programs. Recently, a notable trend has emerged, shifting from purely public services (provided exclusively by the state) to non-public services (offered by the private sector and social organizations). This transition not only alleviates the financial burden on the state but also enhances support for disadvantaged groups, promotes social equity, and helps narrow the gap between the rich and the poor.

Vietnamese Buddhism, guided by its principles of compassion and social engagement, has played a vital role in the provision of social services. Historically, pagodas have functioned not only as places of worship but also as schools and clinics managed by monks (Hà, 2019). During the war in the South of Vietnam (1945–1975), Buddhism implemented numerous social assistance programs, providing essential education and healthcare in areas severely affected by conflict. As noted by Thích (2008), pagodas have served as sanctuaries and centers of practical support, helping people escape poverty through specific, impactful initiatives.

Ho Chi Minh City is a major socio-economic hub in Vietnam, where Buddhism plays a significant role in delivering social services. As noted by Trần (2010), Buddhism in Ho Chi Minh City extends its support beyond healthcare and education for the poor by collaborating with international organizations such as UNICEF to implement humanitarian projects. A notable example is the Buddhist Leadership Initiative Project launched in 2002 to assist individuals living with HIV/AIDS. This initiative exemplifies the compassionate and deeply humanistic values of Buddhism. Such efforts have greatly improved the lives of disadvantaged groups while reinforcing the role of religion in advancing sustainable development and social justice (Nguyễn & Dương, 2016).

In short, the social services provided by Buddhism primarily focus on two critical areas: education and healthcare. These services address fundamental needs, alleviating the hardships of vulnerable populations and enhancing the overall quality of life within communities. The contributions of Buddhism not only reflect its spirit of compassion but also highlight its proactive involvement in social life. By doing so, Buddhism fosters the development of a more harmonious and humane society while significantly contributing to sustainable development across various dimensions.

Methodology

To collect and analyze data for this study, I employed qualitative research methods to ensure a comprehensive and in-depth understanding of the research objectives. The methods included the following:

Document Analysis: I gathered documents from the Executive Committee of the Vietnam Buddhist Sangha in Ho Chi Minh City. These documents provided access to statistics related to social charity activities and detailed information on the involvement of prominent pagodas in offering educational and medical services to the community. Additionally, I visited these monasteries to collect summary reports of their activities in recent years. These materials allowed me to gain a clear and detailed perspective on Buddhism's practical contributions to education and healthcare, thereby evaluating its role as a social resource.

Participant Observation: Over six months (January to June 2023), I conducted fieldwork at Buddhist facilities actively engaged in providing educational and healthcare services. The sites included: (1) Thanh Tam Pagoda (Binh Chanh District) – A kindergarten catering primarily to children of workers and migrant laborers. (2) Trung Tam Monastery (Binh Thanh District) – A clinic offering free medical services. (3) Dieu Giac Pagoda (Thu Duc City) – A counseling center for individuals living with HIV/AIDS. Through observation, I witnessed the dedication and challenges faced by monks, nuns, and Buddhists, including working without pay or with minimal allowances. Their efforts reflected immense passion, patience, and a strong sense of service. The data from these observations were meticulously recorded in a research diary, serving as a foundation for assessing current activities, analyzing their significance, and affirming the role of Buddhism in Ho Chi Minh City as a religious resource supporting the community.

In-depth Interviews: I conducted a series of in-depth interviews with key stakeholders, including (1) The head of the Ho Chi Minh City Buddhist charity and social sector. (2) Abbots of five monasteries are involved in education and healthcare initiatives. (3) Five beneficiaries of these services. (4) A government representative overseeing religious affairs. The interviews were coded and analyzed to extract critical insights, highlight stakeholder perspectives, and identify advantages and challenges in implementation. This data provided valuable input for proposing solutions to enhance the effectiveness of educational and healthcare services offered by Buddhist establishments, ensuring the community benefits optimally.

The qualitative research approach enabled me not only to gather comprehensive data but also to gain a nuanced understanding of the context, roles, and contributions of Ho Chi Minh City Buddhism in delivering essential social services. These findings form an essential foundation for the discussions and recommendations presented in this study.

Results

Ho Chi Minh City is confronting numerous social issues, presenting significant challenges for both the city and its residents. The rapid influx of migrant workers has placed considerable pressure on housing and basic living needs. For workers, access to healthcare and education remains a critical concern that requires attention. In response, Buddhism in Ho Chi Minh City, particularly many temples, has made notable efforts to provide free or low-cost education and healthcare services to these populations.

Regarding Educational Services: Currently, the poor, particularly migrant workers, make up nearly 70% of Ho Chi Minh City's workforce (Đỗ, 2024). These individuals often face significant challenges in accessing educational services, as many migrant workers are of marriageable age or have school-age children. In response, Buddhism has established charitable education programs to support them.

Ho Chi Minh City Buddhism has set up 13 charity classes across districts 1, 3, 7, 9, Go Vap, Binh Thanh, Thu Duc, and Binh Chanh. These classes serve approximately 1,500 children, primarily at the primary and secondary levels. The pagodas offering these classes include Huynh Kim Pagoda (Go Vap District), Chau Lam Pagoda (Binh Thanh District), Lien Hoa Pagoda (District 8), Hung Phuoc Pagoda (District 3), Phuoc Thien Pagoda (District 7), and Sung Duc Pagoda (Thu Duc District), among others.

Survey results show that these pagodas are located in densely populated areas with large numbers of migrant workers and impoverished families. The charity classes are designed to provide children from these families the opportunity to study, focusing mainly on kindergarten and first-grade education. For instance, Lien Hoa Pagoda, situated near Nhi Thien Duong Bridge in District 8, has been offering charity classes since 2006, serving around 50 children from low-income and immigrant families. Similarly, Phuoc Thien Pagoda (District 7) has been providing literacy education to street children without household registration or birth certificates since 2000.

Sung Duc Pagoda (Thu Duc District), established in 1995, serves primary and secondary school children, mostly from migrant families. This pagoda not only waives tuition fees but also provides clothing and books to encourage families to send their children to school, ensuring they have opportunities to succeed in the future. Additionally, in 2020, the Sen Vang preschool class at Thanh Tam Pagoda was established, attracting approximately 50 children from poor families and migrant workers in Le Minh Xuan commune, Binh Chanh District. Depending on the subject, the classes offer fee exemptions or reductions, alleviating the financial burden on these families.

I also observed that, in addition to monks, nuns, and Buddhist volunteers, retired local teachers actively participate in teaching these classes, fostering community involvement in social welfare efforts and contributing to the eradication of illiteracy and promoting universal education in the suburban areas of Ho Chi Minh City.

The establishment and growth of educational institutions within urban Buddhist communities, including teacher-monks and recent tuition assistance policies, have provided valuable educational opportunities for children from working families. This is especially significant given the current overburdening of state-run public facilities, which are unable to fully meet the demand for social services. For many poor children and orphans, these charity classes provide a vital path to education.

Failing to educate children can have long-term negative consequences for society. Individuals deprived of education not only suffer personally, but their lack of knowledge also diminishes the quality of human resources and has broader societal impacts. The global evidence linking unemployment, poverty, disease, social vices, crime, and environmental degradation underscores the importance of improving educational access, particularly for poor communities. Education is often the first step in overcoming these challenges (Trần & Đoàn, 2012).

Moreover, research on the free or low-cost educational services provided by Buddhism in Ho Chi Minh City highlights their social significance, especially in creating future opportunities for the young generation and offering stability for families facing difficult circumstances as they strive to settle permanently in the city.

Regarding Medical Services: Over the years, Ho Chi Minh City Buddhism has not only supported poor families, people with disabilities, the sick, and migrant workers through various initiatives - such as issuing health insurance cards, organizing blood donations, mobilizing doctors for free consultations, providing medicines, and sponsoring surgeries for conditions such as cataracts and heart disease - but also established Tue Tinh Duong pharmacies and free medical clinics within city monasteries. These clinics have become familiar destinations for many patients, including manual laborers, small traders, individuals in difficult circumstances, people with disabilities, and migrant workers.

Currently, Ho Chi Minh City Buddhism operates two Tue Tinh Duong clinics: one at Phap Hoa Pagoda (Phu Nhuan District) and another at Tinh Xa Trung Tam (Binh Thanh District). These clinics employ medical professionals with training ranging from intermediate to university level, with expertise in both traditional Eastern and modern Western medicine. The medical infrastructure at these sites meets the necessary health sector standards for examination and treatment. From 2020 to the present, the Tue Tinh Duong clinic at Phap Hoa Pagoda has examined approximately 15,000 patients, provided acupuncture treatments to over 4,500 individuals, and issued around 123,000 prescriptions for herbal medicines. Similarly, the clinic at Trung Tam Pagoda has examined over 33,000 patients and issued 57,600 prescriptions.

For nearly 40 years, the clinic at Van Tho Pagoda (District 1) has been a key resource for workers in Ho Chi Minh City and neighboring provinces, providing treatment for sprains, dislocations, fractures, and other injuries, using the temple's traditional medical practices. The clinic is staffed by four monks who are trained in traditional medicine. Additionally, Linh Quang Tinh Xa (District 4) established a clinic specializing in the treatment of sciatica, sinusitis, paralysis, osteoarthritis, and other conditions, providing free healthcare to the local community, which includes many poor and working-class individuals.

More recently, pagodas such as Ky Quang II (Go Vap District), Dinh Huong Pagoda (District 12), Tap Thanh Pagoda (Binh Thanh District), Loc Uyen Pagoda (District 6), and Phuoc Hoa Pagoda (Go Vap District) have opened their clinics and provided free medicine to the community, combining Eastern and Western medical practices. This approach of treating the community within the pagodas serves as a way to apply Buddhist medicine in everyday life while promoting the value of traditional Vietnamese medicine.

Ho Chi Minh City Buddhism's medical initiatives extend beyond the poor, reflecting the Buddhist principle of "all living beings are equal." Since 2002, the Vietnam Buddhist Sangha has implemented the "Buddhist Leadership Initiative" project, which supports HIV/AIDS patients and has had a significant positive impact on society. In Ho Chi Minh City, Buddhism has established four counseling centers for HIV/AIDS patients, their families, and communities affected by the disease. These centers are located at Dieu Giac Pagoda (District 2), Ky Quang II Pagoda (Go Vap District), Quang Tho Pagoda (Hoc Mon District), and Linh Son Pagoda (Binh Thanh District), with the coordination office at Pho Quang Pagoda (Tan Binh District).

Survey results show that for HIV/AIDS patients, monks, nuns, and Buddhists provide compassionate care both at home and in the hospital when patients are ill or injured. They teach meditation methods, perform religious rituals, and organize retreats to help patients overcome crises and insecurity, thus supporting their well-being. Additionally, they offer food, and medicines, and even provide a space for patients in the final stages of their illness. This approach restores vitality and comfort to patients, fostering a spirit of equality and non-discrimination, helping them reintegrate into society.

The project also offers various training courses and competitions for monks, nuns, Buddhists, and volunteers to enhance their knowledge, enabling them to better support patients while also mobilizing the community to prevent discrimination against those affected by HIV/AIDS. Each year, this initiative organizes 12 short-term training courses to improve volunteers' professional knowledge, 20 communication sessions to raise awareness about HIV/AIDS and provides direct and indirect counseling by phone to about 300 infected children and their families. Furthermore, the project monitors and assists over 300 infected children, organizes 50 life skills education sessions to prevent HIV/AIDS, and distributes gifts and medicine to those affected.

The results of the discussion show that Ho Chi Minh City Buddhism's provision of health services to the poor, workers, immigrants, and particularly individuals infected with HIV/AIDS, has made significant contributions to improving community health. These services have alleviated anxiety and sadness caused by illness for many individuals, demonstrating deep compassion and humanity. Many individuals have expressed that without such healthcare, they would suffer from worsened health conditions, leading to other social issues such as poverty, unemployment, stress, and social isolation. This is especially relevant given the current healthcare situation in Vietnam and Ho Chi Minh City in particular.

The research highlights several pressing issues within the healthcare system, including inadequate public spending on healthcare, with the financial burden largely falling on patients. Additionally, health insurance has not yet fully fulfilled its role, with its coverage remaining limited. The conditions of healthcare facilities, the medical environment, and the overall service attitudes are often subpar, which creates inconvenience for patients and results in dissatisfaction with the quality of services provided.

The rise of private healthcare providers represents a step forward in meeting the growing demand for medical services. These private facilities have made notable advancements in customer service and have rapidly modernized their infrastructure. However, they lack the necessary support from the state and are still heavily reliant on hospital fees as their main source of revenue, which continues to place a financial

burden on patients. This situation exacerbates inequalities in access to healthcare services, limiting their availability to disadvantaged groups (Trần & Đoàn, 2020).

The research findings indicate that through its provision of free educational and healthcare services, Ho Chi Minh City Buddhism has made a substantial contribution to the maintenance and expansion of the social security network, especially since 1986. This is particularly significant in the face of the city's growing social challenges. The direct social impact of this initiative is the reduction of social disparities, contributing to the improvement of social security for marginalized groups, such as the poor, migrant workers, and rural-to-urban laborers.

Discussion

Based on the research findings, I conclude that the social service activities provided by Ho Chi Minh City Buddhism serve as a religious resource that has been and continues to play an effective role in creating social value for the community. More specifically, this religious resource is manifested through its contribution to social security. To establish and sustain these religious resources, Ho Chi Minh City Buddhism has fostered social capital, not only through the involvement of Buddhist followers but also by mobilizing a wide range of societal components and organizations to participate. These groups contribute both financial and human resources to support educational and healthcare initiatives aimed at benefiting the community.

It is also important to acknowledge the contributions of Buddhist communities abroad (in countries such as the USA, Australia, Korea, Taiwan, etc.), who have played an instrumental role in providing funding and medical supplies to support these activities. Furthermore, compassion—a core moral value of Buddhism—serves as the driving force behind the dedication of monks, nuns, and lay Buddhists in these pagodas to serving humanity.

Additionally, a defining characteristic of the people of Saigon - Ho Chi Minh City - is their humanity and compassion. The residents are often willing to share and help others through numerous charitable social activities, not only within the city but also in other regions facing difficulties (Trần & Trần, 1998). These factors contribute to Buddhism's role as a significant religious resource in Ho Chi Minh City.

In the current context of Vietnam, where religions have made numerous positive contributions to social development, promoting religious resources has become a crucial perspective. The ongoing process of national development requires additional resources to improve both the material and spiritual well-being of the people. Like other resources, religious resources will go to waste if not effectively utilized (Chu, 2020). Therefore, I propose several solutions to further enhance the role of Buddhism as a religious resource in providing educational and healthcare services to the community:

First, the city government should implement policies and create favorable conditions to mobilize and coordinate with the Buddhist community in actively participating in social security activities that serve the community, particularly the poor, migrants, workers, and others. These activities should focus on providing free or low-cost healthcare and educational services, helping individuals navigate the difficult stages of their lives. Consequently, it is crucial to assist monasteries with administrative procedures to establish clinics, classrooms, and schools. This will contribute to the expansion and development of non-profit educational and healthcare initiatives, thereby strengthening the social security network for disadvantaged groups in Ho Chi Minh City.

Second, the city government, in collaboration with the Vietnam Buddhist Sangha of Ho Chi Minh City, should regularly organize forums to facilitate communication and cooperation. These forums would help strengthen the relationship between the government and Buddhist organizations, aligning their shared goals for social security and sustainable development in the city. Representatives from pagodas providing educational and healthcare services should be given opportunities to express their needs, challenges, and suggestions. Such dialogue would allow the government to understand their perspectives and offer targeted

solutions to support the expansion of these volunteer services. Additionally, recognizing and publicly celebrating exemplary Buddhist organizations and individuals at these forums and through mass media will promote the role of religious resources in supporting social security.

Third, given the increasing social pressures faced by the city, the provision of educational and healthcare services by Ho Chi Minh City Buddhism should be expanded to suburban and densely populated areas, industrial zones, and other areas where vulnerable populations are concentrated. This will ensure that more individuals have the opportunity to stabilize their lives and improve their quality of life through the assistance of local monasteries, monks, and nuns. These services should prioritize workers, immigrants, disadvantaged students, homeless elderly individuals, street children, unemployed women, and others facing significant health challenges and limited access to educational opportunities.

Fourth, human resources are pivotal in maximizing the impact of religious resources in social services. To meet the growing demand for educational and healthcare support, the Vietnam Buddhist Sangha in Ho Chi Minh City should implement training policies to enhance the knowledge and skills of monks, nuns, and lay Buddhists involved in these activities. Additionally, policies should be developed to attract qualified, experienced individuals—whether monks, followers, or professionals—to participate in educational and medical service efforts at monasteries throughout the city.

Conclusion

Through research on the educational and healthcare services provided by Ho Chi Minh City Buddhism, it has been demonstrated that these activities are a vital and effective religious resource, directly contributing to social security. The primary beneficiaries of these services are individuals facing difficult circumstances, including immigrants, low-income workers, and other vulnerable groups in society. This initiative plays a significant role in reducing social inequality and providing access to essential social services for marginalized groups.

The success of these activities can be attributed to their organizational flexibility and the close collaboration between Buddhism, the government, and the community, tailored to the unique needs of different local populations. Buddhist monks and nuns in Ho Chi Minh City continue to exemplify their social role by embodying the principles of "bringing joy and alleviating suffering," offering compassion, and assisting those in need with unwavering dedication. Notably, their support for HIV/AIDS patients stands as a powerful example of this commitment.

As a religious resource, Ho Chi Minh City Buddhism upholds the spirit of "Protecting the nation and protecting the people," contributing to the city's development towards civilization, modernity, and sustainability (Viên, 2018). This reflects the worldly nature of Vietnamese Buddhism, a prominent tradition where Buddhism, depending on specific circumstances and contexts, either refrains from engaging in political or social matters or actively participates in social activities. This flexibility has made Buddhist initiatives more dynamic and impactful.

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