

KATHINA ROBE OFFERING FESTIVAL OF THE SOUTHERN BUDDHISM MONKS COMMUNITY IN THUA THIEN - HUE PROVINCE

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Kathina Robe Offering Festival is the traditional and biggest festival of the year of Southern Buddhism in Vietnam in particular and Buddhism countries in the world in general. This festival has existed since the time of Buddha Shakyamuni and to be maintained until today. Every year, during the period from the 15th day of the 9th lunar month to the 15th day of the 10th lunar month, at a temple or a place in accordance with Buddhism law, monks and nuns of Theravada Buddhism will hold a Kathina Robe offering festival. The meaning of the festival is to mark the three-month period of retreat and diligent practice of the monks, the robe will be offered to the elders or those who meet the requirements. In Thua Thien - Hue province, the Southern Buddhism community often organizes the Kathina robe offering festival for seven days at seven different pagodas (the remaining three pagodas are newly established and do not have the conditions to organize). This festival has become a cultural feature bearing the mark of the Southern Buddhism monks here, at the same time it is also a place for Buddhists of all walks of life at home and abroad to have the opportunity to participate and do good deeds. This article will clarify the origin, organization process and significance of the Kathina Robe Offering Festival, especially emphasizing some changes in this festival of Southern Buddhism in Thua Thien - Hue province.

Keywords: *Offering Kathina Robe; Southern Buddhism; Theravada Buddhism; Thua Thien - Hue Province.*

1. Introduction

Vietnam is a country with a unique and long-standing culture closely associated with the history of formation and development of the nation. Since our nation's founding, we have gone through ups and downs but full of glory. Along with the solidarity against foreign invaders, the entire Vietnamese people also protected and maintained a culture with immense values and those cultural values have always been preserved, refined and passed down to this day, as a voice and a true reflection of spiritual life. One of the aspects that most clearly demonstrates this content is the formation, existence and development of festivals.

The festival plays a role as a bond connecting the community, creating a cultural space that is both solemn and sacred, yet jubilant and exciting. The festival becomes a place for the public to express the precious tradition of "drink water remember the source", a place for each person to come to the history of their ancestors and return to the roots of the nation. Festivals are seen as a multi-purpose cultural medium taking place at selected times in localities based on relevant historical, economic,

cultural and social conditions.

As of March 2018, according to statistics from the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism, the whole country currently has 7,966 festivals. Thus, on average, there will be about 22 festivals every day, which means that on average, there is a festival held every hour in Vietnam. Over the years, our Party and State have always paid attention to the management and organization of festivals. On September 12th, 2023, the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism issued Official Dispatch No.3811/BVHTTDL-VHCS on strengthening the management and organization of festivals. These are major orientations for festival development in the context of increasingly deep international integration today.

In the system of festivals in Vietnam, religious festivals, especially Buddhist festivals have profound spiritual and humanistic meanings, expressing respect for Buddha, Dharma, Sangha - the Three Jewels, at the same time, through these festivals, cultural values and social ethics are expressed in a simple and authentic way. Participating in Buddhist festivals is a personal

need of every citizen, with a good wish not only to remember and show gratitude but also to strive for the truth, goodness and beauty in life.

Buddhism in Thua Thien - Hue province is an extremely important part of national Buddhism. In Thua Thien - Hue province today, there are two major Buddhist traditions and an endogenous Buddhist sect coexisting and developing: Northern Buddhism (also known as Mahāyāna Buddhism, Developed Buddhism, Mahasamghika), Southern Buddhism (also known as Theravāda Buddhism, Primitive and Theravāda Buddhism) and the Mendicant Buddhist sect. However, the two most prominent Buddhism traditions are Northern and Southern Buddhism. These two Buddhism traditions have many differences from precepts, doctrines to clothing and even the way festivals are organized. The contents of practices and festivals of Northern Buddhism have become familiar to the majority of people and Buddhists in Hue, while the practices and festivals of Southern Buddhism have only been known for about the past 70 years. The main reason for this is that the process of introduction and formation of Southern Buddhism in Thua Thien - Hue is relatively late compared to Northern Buddhism. Among the popular festivals of Southern Buddhism, the Kaṭhina Robe Offering Festival is the most traditional, typical and largest festival and to be a festival of great significance to the community of monks, nuns and Buddhists at home and abroad. Therefore, the research of the Kaṭhina Robe Offering Festival of the Southern Buddhism monastic community in Thua Thien - Hue will have profound scientific and practical significance in the current period.

2. Research overview

2.1. Group of research works on Buddhism festivals

In the research “*Current Vietnamese Buddhism Festivals (through case research of some pagodas in Hanoi city)*” (Dung, 2017), the author pointed out the cultural value of Buddhism festivals in two dimensions for Vietnamese culture and for Buddhism culture; the issues raised in Buddhism festivals and analyzed the causes, thereby proposing solutions to promote the cultural value of Buddhism festivals in the current period.

Research on “*Buddhism Festivals in Tien Giang: Tradition and Change*” (Tri, 2019), the research shows the changes of Buddhism festivals in Tien Giang today compared to tradition. At the same time, the author analyzes the good cultural values of Buddhism festivals, recommend some solutions to limit negative aspects and preserve, promote the good cultural values of Buddhism festivals in the current context.

In the study “*The influence of Theravada*

Buddhism festivals on the lives of people in Hon Dat district, Kien Giang province” (Trang, 2020), the author analyzes the current situation of the influence of Khmer Theravada Buddhism festivals on the lives of people in Hon Dat district and proposing a number of solutions to enhance the role and value of Theravada Buddhism festivals in Hon Dat district, Kien Giang province.

2.2. Some researchs on the Y Kaṭhina Offering Festival

“*Kaṭhina Robes Offering Festival*” (compiled and translated by Bhikkhu Ho Phap, 2006) is the first document that summarizes this festival of the Southern Buddhism monastic community in Vietnam. The author analyzes very clearly the origin of formation, the regulations in the Buddhism Vinaya related to the festival. Some contents about the merit of the donors who offer Kaṭhina Robes are also specifically stated.

In “*The Kaṭhina Robes Offering Festival of Southern Buddhism*” (Bhikkhu Dinh Phuc, 2022), the author has summarized some contents about the origin and meaning of the Kaṭhina Robes Offering Ceremony. The highlight of this research article, in addition to the basic contents as mentioned above, is that the author also analyzes some characteristics of the Kaṭhina and summarize the Kaṭhina Robes Offering Festival in the current context.

The above researchs only present an overview of the Kaṭhina Robes offering festival, however, there has been no research mentioning the Kaṭhina Robes offering festival of the Southern Buddhism monastic community in Thua Thien - Hue and have not clarified the changes in the festival. Therefore, this article will supplement the missing content, at the same time discuss some solutions to promote the value of the Kaṭhina Robes offering festival of Southern Buddhism in Thua Thien - Hue.

3. Research method

In order to conduct this research, the author combines several main methods such as: Document research methods include document analysis methods, synthesis methods, comparison methods and cross-checking of different sources of information,... The group of practical research methods includes: Ethnographic fieldwork - is an important method in the process of writing the article. Applying this method has helped the author form rich and detailed data on festival organization activities of the Southern Buddhism monastic community in Thua Thien - Hue province). In addition, there are a number of other methods such as practical observation, interviews,...

4. Research result

4.1. Origin of Kaṭhina Robes Offering Festival

In the Buddhism Vinaya Pitaka, it is clearly

stated about the story of the Buddhism allowing the bhikkhus to receive the Y Kaṭhina:

At that time, the Buddha was staying at Jetavana Monastery in Sāvatti (an ancient city in India, the capital of the Kosala kingdom and one of the six largest cities in India during the Buddha's time), donated by the wealthy man Anāthapiṇḍika. At this time, the group of Pāvā monks numbered 30 people (This group of monks came from 30 princes and brothers with the same father as King Pasenadi Kosala), all of these monks had a wandering life, mainly living in the forest, begging for food every day to have food to sustain themselves. Their robes are made from discarded cloth and they strictly follow the rule of using only three robes and one alms bowl. Because the rainy season had come, so the Sangha could not move closer to the Buddha's residence in Sāvatti, if they continued on, they would not be able to complete the rainy season as prescribed, therefore, this group of monks decided to stop at Sāketa (about halfway through the journey) on the 16th day of the 6th lunar month to enter the rainy season at a fixed place. Although they had to enter the rainy season in a far away place, their minds were always directed towards the Buddha. The three-month Rains Retreat ended, on the 15th day of the 9th lunar month, the group of monks from Pāvā celebrated the Pavāraṇā ceremony (Self-reflection ceremony - inviting each other to remind each other of our mistakes). On the morning of the 16th day of the 9th lunar month, the group continued on their journey to the capital city of Sāvatti. At that time, it was the end of the rainy season (In India, each year there are three seasons: rainy season, cold season and hot season. Each season has four months), the roads were muddy, the group of Pāvā monks had difficulty moving, their robes were soaked and stuck to the mud. After arriving at Jetavana, the group of monks went to see the Buddha, paid homage and then chose a suitable place to sit and talk. The Buddha asked the monks if they were patient, if they lived in harmony with each other during the Rains Retreat and how their practice was going. The representative of the group of monks told the Buddha that the entire congregation was patient, lived in harmony, went on alms round every day and their practice was going very well. In the story of the request to the Buddha, the representative of the group of monks from Pāvā also added about why they could not go to the place where the Buddha was staying in Jetavana to enter the rainy season even though it was only six yojanas (1 yojana = 20km) away from the Buddha.

At that time, the Buddha preached to a group of 30 monks from Pāvā. After the conversation, all of them attained Arahantship. A devoted laywoman - the great laywoman Visākhā, heard and witnessed

the situation of the group of monks like that and had the intention to offer new robes for their use and the Buddha accepted that request. Therefore, it was the incident of the group of 30 monks that caused the Buddha to allow monks in Buddhism to receive the Kaṭhina robe after completing the three-month rainy season retreat.

Thus, Buddhism history books have clearly recorded the origin of the Kaṭhina robe offering festival, the Buddha allowed the monks to receive the Kaṭhina robe after observing the three-month rainy season retreat. Since then, the Kaṭhina Robe Offering Ceremony has become a Buddhism tradition and has been maintained by monks of the Therāvada (Southern) lineage to this day. Mahāyāna (Northern) Buddhism enters the rainy season retreat according to the Chinese lunar calendar from April 15th to July 15th of the lunar calendar. After the end of the Rains Retreat, monks and nuns following this tradition often hold the Vu Lan Ceremony to Show Filial Piety, offering and receiving robes but the form is quite simple.

4.2. The process of organizing the Kaṭhina robe offering festival of Southern Buddhism in Thua Thien - Hue

Kaṭhina - in Pāli does not mean clothing but means durability, not easily broken (Bhikkhu Toai Khanh, 2020). It is called so because this Great Ceremony is structured by many important regulations that lead to good fortune and good results for both the Sangha and Buddhists. A person who performs meritorious deeds is too simple, the mind of the giver as well as the receiver often finds it difficult to make the giving reach perfection if it lacks the necessary elements of giving mind, time of giving, gift, recipient and manner of giving. The Kaṭhina Robe Offering Festival includes all of these things, so it is called lasting and perfect.

4.2.1. Ceremonies before the main ceremony

(1) Monks and Nuns Beg for Alms (Placing the Alms Bowl)

Alms-begging is one of the important practices of Theravada Buddhism in Hue. Different from daily alms-begging, in each festival of Theravada Buddhism in Hue, alms-begging is often called the Alms-Begging Ceremony, instead of going out on the street, monks and nuns will carry alms-begging bowls and walk around the temple grounds so that Buddhists can offer food and necessary items. During the Kaṭhina Robe Offering Festival in Thua Thien - Hue, when the Great Elder Venerable Ho Nhan was still alive, this practice was still maintained because of his vow to beg for food every day, so when the monks and nuns of the temples invited him to attend the ceremony, he often brought his alms bowl to sow the seeds of alms-begging. Later, after he passed away, the alms-giving and alms-

giving activities were only held at other festivals of Hue Southern Buddhism and were no longer held at the Kaṭhina Robe Offering Festival, the reason was that the Kaṭhina Robe Offering Festival was the biggest festival of the year of Southern Buddhism, so the preparation of monks, nuns and Buddhists of all levels would take a lot of time and effort. The alms-giving and alms-giving ceremonies will also take a lot of time to organize, so most of the time is spent on the activities of carrying robes or parading Buddha around the main hall.

(2) *Walking around the main hall three times.*

Walking or walking around or walking three times around the Buddha, in Pāli language called padakkhiṇakaraṇa, to be a ritual of showing respect to a revered person. Walking means to go around.

This ritual originated in India, a person who is respecting his or her spouse, respecting an elder in the family, respecting a deity or a religious person usually walks around the object of respect and the circumambulator's right shoulder is always towards the center.

After walking around three times to show respect, the circumambulator will come before the object of respect to pay homage. If the person being respected is still alive, the circumambulator will kneel on the ground, called vi tran le, use his hand to touch the feet of the person being respected and rub them on the head, for statues, he will rub the feet or pedestal of the statue and then rub them on the head. It is an expression of utmost sincerity. Nowadays, in Buddhism countries, believers still maintain the custom of circumambulating the Buddha but only to show respect for the sacred place where Buddha is worshiped. And that action has become a ritual in Buddhism.

During the Kaṭhina Robe Offering Festival, when circumambulating the Buddha, Buddhists will clasp their hands or hold incense, flowers or place offerings on top of their heads, eyes looking forward, not making noise, not rushing, keeping their minds pure. If there are few people performing the ceremony, the crowd will walk in single file, if there are many people, they will line up in double files, triple files,... When circumambulating the Buddha, Buddhists will recite together the verses praising the Kaṭhina Robe Offering Festival.

In addition to the Kaṭhina robe offering festival, the Buddha circumambulation ritual is also performed during festivals such as Māghapūjā (Full Moon Festival in January), Vesak (Full Moon Festival in April) and other festivals such as the procession of Sarira, the procession of Dharma treasures; in some countries such as Thailand, Myanmar, Cambodia, Laos,... this ritual is also performed during the ordination ceremony.

After completing the Buddha circumambulation

ritual, Buddhists will gather in the main ceremony area in the Main Hall to recite a summary of the Three Jewels Sutra.

(3) *Flower offering ceremony*

After the monks and all Buddhists in the main hall finish chanting, the next event will be the flower offering ceremony by the group of young Buddhists. Young Buddhists holding baskets of fresh flowers, kneel in front of the main hall and gradually kneel to enter the main hall. When arriving at the area where the ceremony is being held and in front of the monks and nuns, a representative of the group of young Buddhists will recite Buddha's name and then all together recite the Flower Offering verse.

(4) *Ceremony of receiving the Three Refuges and Five Precepts*

After offering flowers, Buddhists will ask permission from the monks and nuns to perform the ceremony of taking refuge in the Three Refuges (taking refuge in the Buddha, Dharma and Sangha) and the Five Precepts (five principles of healthy living). In some temples, Buddhists ask to take the Eight Precepts (eight principles). The purpose of this ceremony is to purify the Body, Speech and Mind.

4.2.2. *Kaṭhina Robe Offering Ceremony*

(1) *Offering of Robes by Donors*

The selected robe will become the Kaṭhina. The Kaṭhina and alms bowl will then be solemnly offered, placed on the head of the offerer, this duty belongs to the Grand Donor of the ceremony.

The great donor and the donors together with the Buddhists recite the Kaṭhinacīvaradāna offering. After reciting the Kaṭhinacīvaradāna offering together with the necessary items to the bhikkhus, the Buddhists unanimously make the vow: *“May the merit of offering this noble Kaṭhina robe be fulfilled, may the merit be shared with all our relatives and friends, may our relatives and friends be freed from suffering and have lasting happiness (Idaṃ me Kaṭhinadānaṃ āsavakkhayāvahaṃ hotu. Idaṃ no ñātināṃ hotu, sukhitā hontu ñātayo. Imaṃ puññabhāgaṃ mātā pitu ācariya ñāti mittānañceva sesasabbasattānañca dema, sabbepi te puññapattiṃ laddhāna, sukhitā hontu).*

All the monks in the Sangha spoke joyfully in unison: Sādhu! Sādhu! Sādhu (Good! Good! Good).

(2) *Ceremony of receiving robes of monks and nuns*

According to the Buddhism rules, all bhikkhus usually give priority to those who have old or torn robes and to be worthy to receive the Kaṭhina robe ceremony. If at the place of the ceremony there is no bhikkhu with an old or torn robe, so the Kaṭhina robe should be given to the Great Elder. In case the Elder refuses to perform the Kaṭhina robes ceremony, the

bhikkhus hand over the Kaṭhina robes to the junior Elders in turn until a worthy bhikkhu is selected to perform the Kaṭhina robes ceremony.

Once the above regulations are clearly understood, the Kaṭhina robe receiving ceremony is allowed to proceed. The bhikkhus invite two monks to perform the Kaṭhina robe giving ceremony (monastic affairs). The Sangha Declaration is read, the bhikkhu who receives the robe will perform the ritual of making the new robe sign, discarding the old robe, making a vow and receiving the Kaṭhina robe. The Kaṭhina robe receiving ceremony is completed, the bhikkhu who is offered the robe will put on the new robe, sit in the middle of the bhikkhu assembly, join his hands and invite the bhikkhus to say in unison the words of joy of receiving the Kaṭhina robe: *“Ladies and gentlemen, the Kaṭhina robe-receiving ceremony is over, the Kaṭhina robe-receiving ceremony is now legal, please all speak out your joy together”* (Atthatam āvuso (Bhante) Saṅghassa Kaṭhinaṃ dhammiko Kaṭhinatthāro anumodāmi).

After the Kaṭhina robe receiving ceremony is over, the Great Donor will recite words of thanks before the monks, nuns and Buddhists attending the ceremony, then prepare food to perform the offering ceremony to the monks. This is also a common practice in Southern Buddhism, in order to offer food and drinks to monks and nuns for them to use and chant blessings. Blessings are prayers for happiness and good things to come to others.

4.3. The meaning of the Kaṭhina Robe Offering Festival

Kaṭhina robes are often considered *meritorious robes*. Donors who offer Kaṭhina robes will receive immeasurable merit because this offering is directed towards the Sangha of the ten directions who have practiced pure meditation for three months of the Rains Retreat. With this good deed, Buddhist donors will receive the following specific merits:

Āyu: Live long.

Vanna: There is a beauty worth admiring.

Sukha: Body and mind are happy.

Bala: Body and mind have strength and inner power.

Paññā: Have a clear mind.

Besides, the merit of offering Kaṭhina robes can help Buddhist donors dedicate to deceased parents, grandparents and ancestors or pray for good things for living parents and relatives.

The offering of Kaṭhina robes by donors is considered the giving of alms by good friends. In the Sutta on Giving Worthy of the Noble Ones in the Anguttara Nikaya it is clearly stated:

(1) The wise person who does good deeds and gives alms with pure faith will receive the reward of

much money, wealth and prosperity and especially will have a very beautiful body with smooth, white, clean skin, to be worthy of everyone’s admiration.

(2) The wise man who does good deeds and gives alms with respect will receive the reward of much money, wealth and prosperity, especially, his wife, children, servants, employees, friends,... will all listen and respectfully obey and follow his advice.

(3) The wise person who does good deeds and gives alms at the right time will receive the reward of much money, wealth and prosperity, especially when he needs something, he will get it according to his wishes.

(4) A wise person who gives alms with a mind of compassion for the recipient will receive the reward of much money, wealth and prosperity, especially, that person will often care about enjoying wealth and being fully satisfied with the five senses.

(5) A wise person who does good deeds and gives alms without causing suffering to himself or others will receive the reward of much money, wealth, and especially all his property will not be damaged by fire, flood, robbery, confiscation by kings and destruction by people he does not like.

These are the five ways of creating meritorious deeds of almsgiving by the wise and the fruits of giving alms properly.

The Kaṭhina Robe Offering Festival arises purely from great kindness combined with wisdom and the fruit of the offering is noble, not encouraged by any bhikkhu.

The Kaṭhina robe offering ceremony only exists in Buddhism, it does not exist outside of Buddhism. Wherever there are bhikkhus and bhikkhunis who have spent the three months of the rainy season in retreat, there the donor has a good opportunity to offer the Kaṭhina robe to those bhikkhus. The donor can perform the Kaṭhina robe offering ceremony for one month of the year, from the 16th day of the 9th month until the 15th day of the 10th lunar month. In other words, in one year there is only one month, in one month there is only one day, in one day there is only one time at that place, the bhikkhus are allowed to receive the donor’s Kaṭhina robe only once during the Kaṭhina robe offering ceremony season.

If a bhikkhu breaks his rainy season, meaning he does not complete the three-month rainy season retreat, or if a bhikkhu enters the rainy season retreat later from July 16th to October 16th, or if a bhikkhu does not enter the rainy season retreat at a certain place, or if a bhikkhu enters the rainy season retreat from another place and comes to this place, all those bhikkhus are not allowed to accept the Kaṭhina robe from the donor and are not entitled to enjoy the special blessings of the Kaṭhina robe

offering ceremony, but are only allowed to accept regular robes for their own use.

Because of these meanings, the Kaṭhina Robe Offering has become an important and largest traditional festival held in countries following the Theravāda Buddhism tradition, lasting from September 16th to October 15th of the lunar calendar every year, attracting hundreds of millions of Buddhism followers to participate.

For the bhikkhus, after the Kaṭhina robe receiving ceremony, all the bhikkhus spoke words of joy in unison, the Kaṭhina robe receiving ceremony itself had a very clear meaning, which was to protect the bhikkhus from violating the four serious precepts (pārājika) that the Buddha had established and promulgated.

4.4. Promoting the value of the Kaṭhina robe offering festival of Southern Buddhism in Thua Thien - Hue

4.4.1. Advantages and disadvantages

Southern Buddhism has many festivals, but the Kaṭhina Robe Offering Festival is the largest and most popular. All the work related to the organization, management and content of the festival is prepared carefully and meticulously. When the festival takes place in Hue, the Southern Buddhism monasteries are decorated simply but still creating a unique impression and attraction.

The Kaṭhina Robe Offering Festival is a logical occasion to honor the values of Buddhism traditions that have been passed down from the time of Buddha Shakyamuni to the present day (more than 2,600 years), at the same time encouraging Buddhists to practice the Dharma, apply the Buddha's teachings to life and show gratitude for the merits of the Triple Gem.

In addition, it is necessary to mention the process of organizing the Kaṭhina Robe Offering Festival of Southern Buddhism in Hue, which has united monks, nuns and Buddhists into a united, unified, methodical and sequential block; the steps of implementation are planned very specifically with high consensus and unanimity among the Venerable Elders, monks, nuns, leaders of the Executive Committee and lay Buddhists.

Besides the advantages, the Kaṭhina robe offering festival of Southern Buddhism in Thua Thien - Hue still has some limitations, which are:

Firstly, although it is a large festival, but the scale of organization is still mainly limited to the sect, mainly monks, nuns and lay Buddhists of the Southern tradition know and participate, other Buddhist traditions, religions or tourists know but only in small numbers. In addition, the Kaṭhina robe offering festival in particular and the influence of Southern Buddhism in general have not really

penetrated deeply into the community.

Secondly, the connection between pagodas in Theravada Buddhism in Hue is basically good, but there has not been much change in the connection with the Provincial Church, monasteries, monks, nuns and Buddhists in the province and across the country.

4.4.2. Solutions to promote the value of the Kaṭhina robe offering festival of Southern Buddhism in Thua Thien - Hue

From the above-mentioned comments on advantages and disadvantages, Theravada Buddhism in Hue needs to pay attention to and study the implementation of a number of solutions to promote the value of the following festival:

Firstly, preserving intact some basic elements of the festival.

Secondly, enhancing consensus in organizing the festival among participating components (management unit, organizing unit, coordinating units, festival hosts, monks, nuns, Buddhists and tourists from all directions).

Fourthly, promoting the value of festivals in tourism activities, specifically spiritual tourism activities, pilgrimages to Southern Buddhist temples to attend festivals, visit and practice Buddhist learning experiences.

Fifthly, taking advantage of social networks in promoting festivals and activities of Southern Buddhism in Thua Thien - Hue.

5. Discussion

The Kaṭhina Robe Offering Festival is an important festival of Southern Buddhism, the Kaṭhina Robe chosen also needs to be carefully prepared. However, at present, only a few places still maintain the practice of sewing and dyeing their own robes, the rest will mostly use pre-made Kaṭhina Robes (Kaṭhina-cīvara). It is thought that this content needs to be considered specifically to preserve the value of the festival.

Another notable issue related to the change in the participation and organization of the Kaṭhina robe offering festival is the Great Donor of the ceremony. Previously, the Kaṭhina robe offering by the Great Donor was very simple and concise, not placing much emphasis on issues such as money, whether or not there was merit or whether the merit of offering the Kaṭhina robe was actually as desired. On the other hand, being the Great Donor of the Kaṭhina Robe Offering Ceremony is a meaningful thing for the Great Donor and is not just a formality. However, nowadays, a Great Donor who wants to organize the Kaṭhina Robe Offering Ceremony will have to register a long time in advance, some people have to register and wait more than 10 years for the order of registration of

themselves and their family. Becoming the Great Donor of the Kaṭhina Robe Offering Festival means that the Great Donor's family is responsible for making offerings and covering all expenses of the ceremony, in some places, they also have to cover the living and study expenses for the entire three months of the rainy season retreat of the monks and nuns in the temple where the Great Donor performs the ceremony. Therefore, the cost of organizing the festival will be a huge burden for the Great Donor who have registered for a long time, but the socio-economic situation and circumstances at the time of the festival are very different from the time they registered.

In some cases, the Buddhist family or individual chosen to be the Great Donor of the Kaṭhina Robe Offering Ceremony does not want to share the merit with anyone, so when another Buddhist or another family asks to contribute merit to the organization, they do not receive the approval of the Great Donor who is organizing the festival that year. This story is one of the current situations, not only in Theravada Buddhism in Thua Thien - Hue province and in some Theravada pagodas in the country. Therefore, monks and nuns of pagodas also need to have specific measures to make the work of the Great Donor simpler but still maintain solemnity and respect.

6. Conclusion

Wherever and in whatever circumstances, festivals always play an important role in the lives of individuals and communities. Festivals are an opportunity for each person to seek spiritual philosophical values, ethical thoughts, personality, psychology, national culture,... to help life become more peaceful and better. In and through festivals, we can express our wishes, aspirations, and dreams that reality has not or cannot resolve.

Festivals are divided into many types, each type will have its own unique characteristics and impressions. Religious festival, specifically Buddhism festival always attract a large number of people to participate, becoming an indispensable spiritual activity. In the past, organizing and participating in festivals was the internal work of the Church and believers. But at the present stage,

many festivals are no longer the private affairs of an organization but have a great influence and influence in the social community.

Southern Buddhism in Thua Thien - Hue province is a Buddhism lineage with its own identity. Throughout its history since its introduction, formation and development until now, the community of monks and Buddhists of this Buddhism lineage has preserved and maintained traditional festivals while creating new festivals that both preserve the colors of that Buddhism lineage and still blend into the general flow of national Buddhism.

The Kaṭhina Robe Offering Festival of Southern Buddhism in Thua Thien - Hue province is one of the outstanding traditional festivals and to be truly considered a Grand Festival with unique community Buddhism cultural activities, containing many elements reflecting the origin, doctrine, dogma and rituals of Buddhism.

Offering robes to monks and nuns during the Kaṭhina robe offering festival affirms the spirit of going beyond personal views and opinions, beyond the usual meaning of "giving" and "receiving". The aspiration of giving here does not stop at the meaning of offering or charity but also sincerely expresses the goodwill, the desire for noble values, the unity and solidarity of lay Buddhists, with monks and nuns on the path of practicing Buddhism. The robe offered, regardless of the way it is presented, from simple to elaborate and complex, affirming the profound messages of non-discrimination, meaning that no individual monk is chosen to offer the robe and that the monks and nuns receive the robe in harmony, respect and solidarity.

The tradition of offering Kaṭhina robes has become a beautiful feature in the culture of Southern Buddhism. Future generations of monks, nuns and Buddhists need to preserve and maintain the festival in accordance with the spirit of practicing the Vinaya. Although each country and region will have its own culture and customs, but once the importance and meaning of the festival is clearly understood, the consistent ideology throughout the organization and implementation process and the rituals will be strictly maintained.

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LỄ HỘI DÂNG Y KATHINA CỦA CỘNG ĐỒNG TU SĨ PHẬT GIÁO NAM TÔNG TẠI TỈNH THỪA THIÊN - HUẾ

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Lễ hội dâng Y Kaṭhina là lễ hội cổ truyền, lớn nhất trong năm của Phật giáo Nam tông tại Việt Nam Ca còn tại tiền và được duy trì cho tới ngày nay. Hàng năm, trong khoảng thời gian từ sau ngày Rằm tháng 9 âm lịch tới Rằm tháng 10 âm lịch, ở một ngôi chùa hoặc một địa điểm hợp luật Phật, chư Tăng, Ni của Phật giáo Nam tông sẽ tổ chức lễ hội dâng Y Kaṭhina. Ý nghĩa của lễ hội là đánh dấu khoảng thời gian ba tháng an cư nhập hạ, tu tập miên mật của các tu sĩ, tám Y sẽ được dâng tới những vị trưởng lão hoặc vị hội đủ yêu cầu. Tại tỉnh Thừa Thiên - Huế, cộng đồng Phật giáo Nam tông thường tổ chức lễ hội dâng Y Kaṭhina trong bảy ngày tại bảy ngôi chùa khác nhau (ba ngôi chùa còn lại mới thành lập nên chưa đủ điều kiện để tổ chức). Tuần lễ hội này đã trở thành một nét văn hóa mang đậm dấu ấn của tu sĩ Phật giáo Nam tông nơi đây, đồng thời cũng là nơi để Phật tử các giới trong và ngoài nước có cơ hội tham dự và làm việc thiện lành. Bài viết này sẽ làm rõ nguồn gốc, quy trình tổ chức, ý nghĩa của lễ hội dâng Y Kaṭhina, đặc biệt còn nhấn mạnh một số biến đổi ở lễ hội này của Phật giáo Nam tông tại tỉnh Thừa Thiên - Huế.

Từ khóa: Dâng Y Kaṭhina; Phật giáo Nam tông; Phật giáo Nguyên thủy; Tỉnh Thừa Thiên - Huế.