

Filial Piety in Buddhism: Ethical Transformation and Personality Development in Contemporary Vietnam

Dinh Le Hanh

PhD Candidate, Tran Nhan Tong Institute,
Vietnam National University, Hanoi, Vietnam

Abstract

In the East Asian cultural tradition, particularly in Vietnam, filial piety (*Hĩu*) has long been regarded as the foundation of morality, encapsulated in the maxim “Among a hundred virtues, filial piety comes first”. Within the Buddhist perspective, filial piety transcends familial obligation and becomes a spiritual path of transformation, breaking through ego-centeredness and nurturing universal responsibility. This study examines the current state of moral values among Vietnamese youth in the digital era, drawing on surveys of students and reports from the Vietnam Buddhist Sangha. Findings reveal a significant gap in filial awareness, an imbalance between survival skills and moral cultivation, and limitations in ritual practices that remain largely formalistic. Employing the theoretical framework of Yogācāra (Consciousness-Only School) in Buddhist psychology, the paper explores the mechanisms of planting wholesome seeds and purifying the storehouse consciousness through filial practice. The research argues that filial piety functions as a cultural and ethical resource capable of reshaping personality, strengthening gratitude and responsibility, and contributing to the construction of Vietnam’s human value system in the context of globalization and digital transformation.

INTRODUCTION

For more than 2,570 years, Buddhism has accompanied the Vietnamese people, leaving a profound imprint on culture, ethics, and spirituality. Filial piety (*Hĩu*) has consistently been upheld as the cornerstone of morality, expressed in folk wisdom such as “A father’s labor is as great as Mount Tai, a mother’s love as boundless as flowing water.” In Buddhist teaching, filial piety is elevated from instinctive familial affection to a humanistic and liberative value system, ranging from worldly filiality (care and support for parents) to transcendent filiality (awakening and salvation). The dictum “*Filial mind is the Buddha’s mind, filial practice is the Buddha’s practice*” highlights its role as both ethical norm and spiritual path.

Yet, in the contemporary context of digital transformation and global integration, Vietnam’s moral framework faces severe challenges. Surveys indicate that 32.1% of students either cannot define or do not respond to questions about filial piety, reflecting a rupture in family and school education. The emphasis on academic achievement and survival skills has overshadowed moral cultivation, reducing filial duty to transactional obligations. Moreover, Buddhist rituals are often practiced as formal acts of supplication rather than as opportunities for inner transformation, limiting their educational impact on younger generations.

Against this backdrop, the study of filial piety through the lens of Buddhism becomes imperative. By applying Yogācāra psychology, filial practice is understood as a therapeutic process that implants wholesome seeds, purifies the three karmic activities (body, speech, and mind), and reconstructs personality at the deepest level of consciousness. This perspective affirms that filial piety is not merely a social ethic but a spiritual resource that can heal generational fractures, cultivate gratitude, and foster responsibility. Ultimately, the research aims to demonstrate that filial piety, as articulated in Buddhist scriptures such as the *Kāṭigārbha Sūtra*, the *Ullambana Sūtra*, and the *Sūtra of Repaying Gratitude*, provides a vital foundation for building Vietnam’s human value system in the era of globalization and digital transformation.

THE CURRENT STATE OF DHARMA PROPAGATION AND THE INFLUENCE OF BUDDHISM ON THE YOUNGER GENERATION

Buddhism, with its history of more than two thousand years accompanying the Vietnamese people, has profoundly shaped the nation’s cultural, ethical, and spiritual life. Throughout historical ups and downs, Buddhism has consistently played a positive role, contributing to national prosperity in the fields of culture, society, education, and diplomacy. Since the establishment of the Vietnam Buddhist Sangha in 1981, the Sangha has affirmed its solid position, steadfastly accompanying the Party and Government in the mission of “protecting the nation and bringing peace to the people,” upholding the principle of “Dharma – Nation – Socialism,” and raising the banner of serving both the Dharma and the homeland.

In recent years, the Vietnam Buddhist Sangha has renewed the content and methods of Dharma propagation, gradually expanding its reach to all social strata, especially the younger generation (Vietnam Buddhist Sangha, 2023). Through Dharma lectures, retreats, Buddhist education, and the application of information technology in disseminating teachings, Buddhist ethical values have become increasingly widespread in

society (Vietnam Buddhist Sangha, 2023–2025). Grounded in core doctrines such as the Four Noble Truths, Twelve Links of Dependent Origination, Noble Eightfold Path, Six Pāramitās, and the law of karma, Buddhism nurtures moral awareness, encourages virtuous living, compassion, altruism, and responsibility toward oneself, family, and community. These values remain highly relevant in shaping spiritual life and moral education in contemporary Vietnam.

However, as humanity enters the digital era with rapid technological advancement, society faces unpredictable paradoxes. While technology offers convenience, it also brings consequences such as environmental pollution, ecological imbalance, ideological conflicts, pandemics, and natural disasters. Recent studies indicate that young people are encountering challenges related to lifestyle, mental health, academic pressure, and shifting value systems.

Vietnam, in its phase of deep international integration, stands at the intersection of opportunities and challenges. For sustainable development, alongside strengthening national unity and preserving cultural identity, building a new ethical foundation rooted in traditional wisdom is essential. Cultivating the younger generation - the future custodians of the nation - plays a pivotal role. A sustainable connection between Buddhism and youth not only enhances national resilience but also affirms Vietnam’s position on the global stage.

With a sense of responsibility for the nation’s future, this paper proposes solutions to strengthen the bond between Buddhism and young people, contributing to the formation of a generation that is intellectually capable, deeply rooted in filial and cultural values, and ready to dedicate themselves to the protection and development of the homeland.

According to data from the Central Committee for Lay Guidance, more than 300,000 lay Buddhists regularly participate in practice and study at over 2,700 Dharma centers nationwide each year. These figures clearly demonstrate the strong vitality of Buddhist teachings in modern life. The vibrancy of Buddhist youth is evident in large-scale Buddhist Youth Camps across Northern, Eastern, and Southwestern Vietnam. Summer retreats, weekend retreats, and life-skills training programs provide fertile ground for nurturing virtue and guiding young people amid the temptations of modern society. In parallel, the Buddhist Family movement, especially the training of youth leaders, has been consistently maintained and achieved significant results in Central and Southern provinces. Moreover, the spiritual needs of ethnic minorities in highland and Central Highlands regions have been attentively supported by the Ethnic Lay Buddhists Committee, contributing to religious solidarity. Particularly in response to contemporary challenges and integration demands, digital platforms have been effectively utilized for Buddhist practice. Online retreats during the Covid-19 pandemic created “digital Dharma centers” connecting monks and lay Buddhists worldwide, ensuring the continuity of Dharma despite geographical separation (Vietnam Buddhist Sangha, 2026).

Although Dharma propagation and youth-oriented practice models have achieved positive outcomes, in the context of the market economy and digital transformation, moral education for the younger generation still faces significant challenges. Shifts in value systems, lifestyles, and social relationships call for further research into the role of Buddhist filial piety in nurturing personality and reinforcing traditional moral values. On this basis, this chapter analyzes the current state of moral values and explores the potential of applying filial piety in the *Kāṭigārbha Sūtra* as a cultural and ethical resource to support personality education in Vietnam.

THE CURRENT STATE OF MORAL VALUES AND LIMITATIONS OF CONTEMPORARY EDUCATION

Transformation of Moral Values among Vietnamese Youth in the Digital Era: From Survey Findings

Digital transformation not only changes modes of communication, learning, and labor but also directly impacts the value structures of younger generations. Whereas the family once played a central role in transmitting cultural norms and shaping personality, today’s digital environment creates multiple new centers of influence, including social media, digital platforms, online communities, and open knowledge ecosystems. A survey of 294 students regarding their perception of filial piety (*Hĩu*) revealed the following:

Perception of Filial Piety	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Listening to parents’ teachings, understanding and empathizing with them	123	41.9
Caring for parents when ill or elderly, showing love and respect	126	42.7
Helping with household chores within ability	49	16.7
Studying diligently	23	7.7
Making parents happy, avoiding causing sadness	55	18.7
Becoming a good citizen, contributing to society	29	9.8
No response or unsure	94	32.1
Other	19	6.6

These figures reveal three important points:

Gap in awareness (32.1%): The most concerning result is the proportion of respondents who gave no answer or expressed uncertainty. This reflects a vacuum in family and school education. In the digital age, where moral values are fragmented by algorithms and fast-paced lifestyles, youth appear “disoriented” in defining filial piety, signaling a rupture in cultural continuity.

Pragmatization of practice: The high percentages for “caring for parents” (42.7%) and “listening” (41.9%) show that traditional responsibilities remain. Yet the low figures for “studying diligently” (7.7%) and “becoming a good citizen” (9.8%) suggest a shift: young people increasingly separate personal success (education, career) from filial duty, treating achievement as an individual goal rather than part of repaying parental sacrifice.

Collision with digital lifestyles: The pressure to maximize productivity in the digital era leaves little room for quality time with parents. While youth do not reject filial piety, they lack the space to practice it meaningfully. Thus, filial piety has not lost vitality but is compressed under the weight of utilitarian pressures. Young people strive to provide material care but struggle to sustain emotional and spiritual bonds. This crisis underscores the urgent need to modernize filial practices so they remain relevant to digital lifestyles while preserving their depth of ancestral compassion.

As Professor Tran Ngoc Them noted: *“The rapid transition to a market economy has fostered materialism, leading to a serious decline in traditional moral values, with filial piety and respect for elders facing severe challenges”* (Them, 2016). This erosion is evident in the growing emphasis on survival skills at the expense of foundational moral cultivation.

Imbalance between Survival Skills and Moral Cultivation

In the context of the knowledge economy and the rise of artificial intelligence, contemporary education faces the challenge of balancing professional competence with moral development. While achievements in knowledge and skills training are notable, many studies highlight persistent weaknesses in moral, value, and character education. This imbalance risks undermining personality formation, especially among youth in rapidly changing societies.

Some scholars argue that education today tends toward instrumentalization, prioritizing knowledge and skills to meet labor market demands (Nussbaum, 2010). Success is increasingly measured by grades, language proficiency, professional certificates, and competitiveness. While this approach strengthens human capital, it also necessitates greater emphasis on moral education, values, and social responsibility to ensure holistic development (UNESCO, 2021).

Pressure to optimize productivity: Youth face dense academic schedules, with time consumed by skill acquisition for labor market competition. Compassion, patience, and filial piety—values requiring reflection and empathy—are relegated as outdated or impractical (Them, 2016).

Shift in family expectations: Parents often prioritize survival skills over moral values. A child excelling academically and professionally is celebrated, while filial respect and etiquette are treated as formal obligations. Parent-child relationships increasingly resemble investment contracts, with filial piety distorted into transactional repayment rather than voluntary affection (Dang, 2014).

This imbalance creates paradoxes:

Moral alienation: Survival skills without ethical grounding can fuel selfishness. Youth may achieve career milestones yet fail to empathize with parental struggles. They connect globally through technology but disconnect from family roots. Cases of indifference toward parents’ illness or hardship illustrate the failure of skill-based education to replace moral foundations (Thich Nhat Tu, 2015).

Absence of spiritual values: In Buddhist philosophy, filial piety is not only ethical but also a spiritual orientation. Education focused solely on skills produces individuals who “stand on their own feet but forget whose shoulders they stand upon.” In adversity, they lack spiritual anchors, leading to loneliness, anxiety, and existential emptiness.

In summary, survival skills may enable existence, but moral cultivation enables meaningful living. The absence of a moral education program rooted in filial piety - a system validated over millennia - has left modern society vulnerable to apathy and family disintegration. Addressing this imbalance requires rethinking education to integrate professional training with personality formation, moral values, and social responsibility.

The Absence of Transformative Capacity in Ritual Practice Reduced to Formalism

In contemporary religious life, alongside the increasing demand for participation in Buddhist rituals and practices, many studies have noted the existence of a gap between ritual performance and the transformation of participants’ cognition and morality. This phenomenon shows that, in some cases, rituals are approached primarily as a means of satisfying psychological needs or seeking peace and good fortune, rather than as opportunities for self-reflection and spiritual cultivation (Nguyen Quoc Tuan, 2018).

First, there is the tendency to practice rituals with a petitionary mindset. In Buddhist teachings, rituals are considered supportive means for practitioners to cultivate mindfulness, repentance, and vows of practice. However, in reality, a portion of Buddhists approach rituals with expectations of immediate benefits such as wealth, prosperity, peace, or relief from difficulties. When rituals are primarily viewed as serving personal needs, their educational significance risks being narrowed, while self-reflection and inner transformation are not sufficiently emphasized (Thich Nhat Tu, 2017).

Second, there is the tendency to value form over substance. Some studies on religious life show that participants often devote much attention to preparing offerings, performing complete procedures, or counting the number of chanting sessions, while the study of doctrinal content and the meaning of rituals is not given equal importance. From the Buddhist perspective, rituals only truly manifest their value when grounded in

right view and moral cultivation; without reflection and daily practice, rituals cannot become a driving force for personality transformation (Thich Thanh Tu, 2012).

Third, there is a gap between religious life and moral practice in social life. Buddhist teachings always emphasize the unity between faith, practice, and morality. However, in practice, participation in rituals does not always accompany changes in lifestyle and behavior. This shows that the reception of Buddhist teachings needs closer integration with moral education and the practice of values such as compassion, filial respect, responsibility, and altruism within families and communities (*Dhammapada*, verses 19–20).

Fourth, there are challenges in engaging the younger generation. In modern society, many young people seek values that can address life's problems and guide personal development. If Dharma propagation focuses mainly on organizing rituals without explaining doctrinal meanings or connecting with the practical concerns of youth, Buddhism's appeal to this generation may be limited. Therefore, renewing Buddhist education methods toward dialogue, experiential learning, and applying teachings to daily life is considered an important requirement in current Dharma propagation (Vietnam Buddhist Sangha, 2023).

From these analyses, it is clear that the issue does not lie in rituals themselves but in the way they are approached and practiced. In Buddhist doctrine, rituals are skillful means (*upāya*) supporting the path of cultivation, guiding individuals toward transformation of cognition and behavior. Thus, enhancing the educational value of rituals requires correct understanding of Buddhist teachings, especially the spirit of filial respect, gratitude, and repayment of kindness. On this basis, rituals not only meet devotional needs but also contribute to personality development, strengthening moral values, and nurturing individual responsibility toward family and society.

SCIENTIFIC BASIS FOR THE TRANSFORMATIVE CAPACITY OF PRACTICING FILIAL PIETY

Buddhist Psychology: The Process of Purifying the Storehouse Consciousness and Dissolving Ego-Centeredness

To explain the mechanism of personality transformation through the practice of filial piety, this dissertation applies the theoretical framework of Buddhist psychology, with emphasis on the Yogācāra (Consciousness-Only) school. According to Yogācāra, human behaviors and psychological tendencies are governed by seeds (*bīja*) accumulated in the storehouse consciousness (*ālaya-vijñāna*) (Thich Thien Sieu, 2002). Thus, manifestations such as indifference, selfishness, or lack of filial awareness can be understood as the result of the accumulation of unwholesome seeds. On this basis, practicing filial piety is not merely fulfilling a social moral norm but is regarded as an inner transformative process, contributing to the purification of unwholesome seeds and nurturing wholesome seeds in the mind. Ethical practice in Buddhism is not external imposition but a process of self-awareness that transforms the seeds of greed, hatred, and delusion into energies of compassion and wisdom (Thich Tam Thien, 1998). Through sincere practice of filial piety, the practitioner actively initiates the purification of the three karmas - body, speech, and mind - thus restructuring personality sustainably from the deepest layers of consciousness.

In Buddhist psychology, the storehouse consciousness (*ālaya-vijñāna*) is established as the deepest foundation of all psychological phenomena, serving as the repository of seeds of experiences, behaviors, and thoughts accumulated over countless lifetimes. All manifestations of personality, from psychological tendencies to latent habits, originate from the accumulation of these seeds. Ego-centeredness (*self-attachment*) is not merely a temporary emotion but a deeply ingrained habit, forming a rigid barrier that separates the subject from reality and places the self at the center of all perceptions and actions.

The practice of filial piety is not confined to worldly moral standards but constitutes a therapeutic process capable of directly intervening in the operation of the storehouse consciousness through two basic transformative mechanisms:

First, the mechanism of planting wholesome seeds and transforming consciousness into wisdom: The storehouse consciousness operates by receiving and storing repeated experiences. When practitioners cultivate filial piety with gratitude and service, they actively plant wholesome seeds into the storehouse consciousness. Continuous reflection on parental kindness and actions of repayment saturates the mental environment with compassionate energy, counteracting selfish seeds. Over time, these wholesome seeds grow stronger, weakening and gradually transforming entrenched selfish habits. This process converts negative seeds into positive capacities, shifting consciousness from instinct-driven states to wisdom-guided awareness.

Second, dismantling the structure of self-attachment (deconstructing ego-centered behavior): Ego-centeredness persists through clinging to the self as a fixed and central entity. Practicing filial piety serves as a direct method to dismantle this structure. In filial practice, the practitioner places the well-being and needs of parents above personal gratification. This action compels individuals to expand the boundaries of concern, transcending narrow self-centered desires. As focus shifts away from the self, psychological defense mechanisms built to protect ego-centeredness gradually dissolve. This expansion of consciousness not only enables deeper connection with family but also lays the foundation for embracing universal human values, leading to awareness of interdependence and the non-substantial nature of the self.

In summary, from the perspective of Buddhist psychology, filial piety is a sophisticated practice that profoundly impacts the deepest layers of consciousness. By simultaneously cultivating wholesome seeds and dismantling ego-attachment, filial practice functions as therapy, transforming a selfish, ego-bound personality

into one that is open, empathetic, and responsible, thereby fulfilling the requirements of a sustainable value system in the modern era.

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SCIENTIFIC BASIS FOR THE TRANSFORMATIVE CAPACITY OF PRACTICING FILIAL PIETY

Behavioral Psychology: Forming Empathic Morality through Gratitude and Repayment

Alongside Yogācāra insights, the transformative mechanism of filial piety is also fully consistent with the foundations of modern behavioral psychology. Practicing filial piety provides the most effective environment for cultivating empathy—an essential component of emotional intelligence (EQ). According to educational psychologists, responsible morality cannot be formed through theory alone. Professor Nguyen Quang Uan observed: *“Moral feelings are only formed and firmly consolidated through real behavioral experiences in social relationships, first of all within the family”* (Nguyen Quang Uan, 2010). The process of children practicing care, listening, and understanding their parents' hardships (*Sutra of Repaying Gratitude*) is the most practical behavioral psychology exercise, helping them break through selfishness and develop altruism. From the perspective of behavioral psychology, the formation of moral qualities does not occur spontaneously but is constructed through learning, training, and reinforcement of positive behaviors. In this context, filial practice can be seen as a system of exercises that shape and sustain moral behavior through positive reinforcement and repetition of virtuous actions (Skinner, 1953).

Positive reinforcement and the formation of moral habits: Each filial act—such as caring, supporting, or expressing gratitude to parents—often generates positive emotional feedback and strengthens family relationships. These experiences act as reinforcers, encouraging individuals to maintain such behaviors. When practiced regularly in family and community settings, filial behaviors gradually become stable habits and are internalized as moral qualities of the individual (Skinner, 1971).

Development of empathy and expansion of social responsibility: Practicing filial piety not only involves specific actions but also fosters the ability to care for others' emotions, circumstances, and needs. Regularly placing oneself in the position of parents to understand their sacrifices nurtures empathy and responsibility. When sustained through practice, these values extend beyond the family to broader social relationships, shaping altruistic lifestyles, a spirit of sharing, and a sense of responsibility toward the community (Bandura, 1977).

Convergence between Cultivation Philosophy in Buddhist Scriptures and Modern Psychological Counseling

The philosophy of cultivation presented in three representative scriptures—the *Sutra of the Great Gratitude to Parents*, the *Ullambana Sutra*, and the *Kṣitigarbha Bodhisattva Sutra*—not only embodies traditional moral values but also shares many similarities with modern psychology and counseling approaches, particularly models emphasizing meaning-making, cognitive adjustment, and mental health. On this level, teachings on gratitude, repayment, and inner transformation can be seen as spiritual resources supporting personality development and psychological recovery.

Cognitive orientation and meaning of life: These scriptures provide a framework for individuals to reconsider their relationships with parents, family, and community. Reflection on parental kindness in the *Sutra of the Great Gratitude to Parents* awakens awareness of gratitude and responsibility, while encouraging individuals to view family conflicts with empathy and tolerance. From a psychological perspective, this process parallels cognitive restructuring techniques, where individuals adjust interpretations of negative experiences, reducing prejudice, resentment, or negative emotions, thereby opening possibilities for reconciliation and building a more positive life orientation.

Community support and mental health: The *Ullambana Sutra* emphasizes the role of the Sangha and collective practice in repayment and transformation of karmic burdens. From a psychological viewpoint, this approach resembles community-based support and group therapy models, where the presence of a safe, empathetic collective helps individuals reduce feelings of isolation, guilt, or grief. Through connection with community and shared practice of moral values, individuals gain spiritual resources to overcome difficulties and gradually restore psychological balance.

Compassion as a resource for inner transformation: The vow of Bodhisattva Kṣitigarbha embodies the ideal of compassion and service to all beings, offering a valuable orientation for spiritual development. In modern psychology, cultivating compassion and focusing on others' well-being parallels Compassion-Focused Therapy, which emphasizes empathy and altruism in reducing psychological stress, self-criticism, and isolation. When individuals practice filial piety and extend love from family to community, they not only build positive relationships but also gradually adjust selfish tendencies, nurturing inner peace and responsibility for others. In this respect, the vow of Bodhisattva Kṣitigarbha can be considered a vital spiritual resource, supporting personality development and enhancing mental health in modern life.

MOTIVATION FOR RESTRUCTURING AND HEALING

The Healing Capacity of Filial Piety in Addressing Generational Gaps within Families

The widening gap in intergenerational relationships in contemporary Vietnamese families has become a notable social issue. Under the impact of industrialization, urbanization, and the rapid development of digital technology, the structure and living space of traditional families have undergone significant changes, leading to increasingly visible generational divides. This gap is not only reflected in differences of age or lifestyle but also rooted in divergent value systems: while older generations emphasize community spirit, family order, and responsibility toward relatives, younger generations tend to prioritize autonomy, personal choice, and adaptability to modern social demands. As traditional values gradually shift while new value systems remain unstable, many families face communication conflicts, diminished mutual understanding, and emotional distance between generations.

In this context, filial practice in the Buddhist spirit can be approached as both an ethical and psychological resource, enhancing understanding, dialogue, and connection among family members. By cultivating gratitude, tolerance, and responsibility toward parents and relatives, filial piety not only adjusts individual behavior and cognition but also provides a foundation for healing family relationships and strengthening intergenerational bonds. The value of filial practice can be explained through two primary transformative mechanisms.

Transformation from authority to empathy: The first mechanism highlights the value of filial piety in bridging generational gaps by shifting from authority-based approaches to empathy-based approaches. In Vietnamese culture influenced by Confucianism, traditional filial piety is often associated with norms of hierarchy, family order, and children's obligations toward parents. While these values are important for maintaining family discipline, excessive emphasis on duty and obedience can limit dialogue and mutual understanding. Buddhism, however, approaches filial practice through compassion, equality in enlightenment, and empathy. In this perspective, filial piety is not merely fulfilling obligations but involves listening, understanding, and transforming suffering for oneself and loved ones. Thus, filial practice in Buddhism fosters family relationships based on respect, dialogue, and love, narrowing generational gaps and reinforcing family cohesion.

Buddhism views parents not as absolute authorities demanding obedience but as sentient beings subject to karmic law, with their own limitations, suffering, and burdens of human existence. When children deeply reflect on the psychological struggles and livelihood concerns borne by their parents, their perception shifts from demanding or blaming to understanding and compassion. This empathy softens relationships, transforming respect for duty from coercion into voluntary affection. When children recognize the marks of time and life's pressures on their parents' faces, youthful tendencies to rebel against family expectations are naturally dissolved, replaced by tolerance and service (Thich Minh Chau, 2012).

Establishing dialogue through listening: One major cause of generational gaps in modern families is limited capacity for listening and dialogue. Although members share the same household, interactions often remain

brief, functional, or mediated through technology, reducing emotional sharing and mutual understanding. In Buddhist teachings, filial practice is grounded in compassion and understanding. Thus, filial piety is not only expressed through material care but also requires children to listen with respect, empathy, and mindfulness. Deep listening opens dialogue, heals misunderstandings, and strengthens family bonds.

This process requires listening not to find faults for argument or self-assertion but to help parents release accumulated loneliness and frustration shaped by generational differences. Listening with non-judgmental mindfulness creates a safe and open space for family dialogue. This mechanism aligns with principles of modern psychological counseling, where creating space for emotional expression is the first step toward healing. When deep listening is internalized as the highest expression of filial piety, it dismantles distorted prejudices between generations, rebuilds trust, and establishes a sustainable foundation for kinship bonds in the digital era (Thich Nhat Tu, 2012).

Filial Piety as a Foundation for Personality in the Transformations of Modern Life

In the digital era, the rise of individualism and self-centered lifestyles poses challenges to personality formation and development. Under pressures of competition, fast-paced living, and short-term success standards, many individuals risk weakening their connections with family, community, and cultural traditions. In this context, filial piety is not only a moral norm in family relations but also a foundation for orienting personality, fostering self-regulation, and strengthening resilience amid social change.

Orienting personal value systems: As individualism becomes prominent, people risk narrowing their relational ties with family and community. Practicing filial piety helps individuals become more aware of their roots, responsibilities toward parents, and inheritance of family cultural values. This awareness fosters recognition that one is not an isolated entity but exists in relation to generations and community. Such recognition forms a relatively stable value foundation, enabling individuals to preserve identity and adapt to environmental changes.

Strengthening moral resilience and self-regulation: Practicing gratitude and repayment not only expresses responsibility toward parents but also nurtures empathy, tolerance, and responsibility in social relationships. These qualities help individuals limit selfish tendencies, reduce negative reactions in communication, and enhance emotional balance under modern pressures. In this respect, filial piety serves as a foundation for moral resilience and positive personality development.

Expanding responsibility from family to society: Filial practice extends beyond repaying parental kindness to fostering responsibility toward community, homeland, and environment. The transformation from gratitude within the family to social service reflects the expansion of personality from personal interests to communal interests. Thus, filial piety is not only a traditional moral value but also a foundation for cultivating civic consciousness, social responsibility, and harmonious living in the context of integration and development.

CONCLUSION

This chapter has clarified the value of filial piety (*Hĩu*) in Buddhism not only from the perspective of religious doctrine but also in relation to contemporary psychology, education, and sociology. Filial piety emerges as a moral resource capable of guiding behavior, nurturing personality, and strengthening the bonds between individuals, families, and communities in a rapidly changing society.

First, on the theoretical level, the study demonstrates that filial piety in Buddhism is not limited to moral norms or ritual practices but embodies a systematic mechanism of inner transformation. By engaging with Yogācāra psychology and principles of behavioral psychology, the research shows that filial practice is closely linked to cognitive transformation, behavioral adjustment, cultivation of gratitude, and development of empathy. The convergence between Buddhist cultivation philosophy and modern approaches in psychology and education suggests that filial values can be integrated into models of character education and human development.

Second, on the practical level, the analysis of generational ruptures, the decline of moral values, and challenges to personality formation in contemporary society highlights the crucial role of filial practice in consolidating ethical foundations and enhancing social cohesion. Practicing filial piety not only nurtures responsibility toward family but also encourages individuals to extend responsibility to community and society. In this respect, filial practice can be regarded as a cultural and ethical resource supporting personality development and human growth in today's context.

Third, the findings of this chapter provide both theoretical and practical foundations for the application-oriented direction of the following chapter. While this chapter has focused on clarifying the philosophical basis, transformative mechanisms, and values of filial practice in personality formation, the next chapter will propose solutions to promote these values in Dharma propagation, education, and social life. The aim is not only to affirm the significance of filial piety in Buddhist scriptures but also to adapt its values to the conditions of contemporary society.

In sum, the results of this chapter form an essential basis for advancing strategies to cultivate and apply filial values in the present era. The practice of filial piety must be situated within the broader requirements of educational reform, cultural development, and human construction in Vietnam. By doing so, it contributes to personality cultivation, strengthens family and community bonds, and supports the nation's sustainable development goals in the context of integration and digital transformation.

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