

Biography of Most Venerable Khippapañño - Kim Triêu

The Most Venerable Khippapañño, often respectfully and dearly addressed by his students as Bhante, was born on the fifth of December, 1930, in Trà Vinh, a seaside city in the southern part of Việt Nam, and was given the name Kim Triêu.

When he was very young, his mother, a devout Buddhist, used to take him to various temples in the region and encourage him to explore the monastic life. His affinity for the Triple Gems manifested early in his childhood, as he adamantly requested to attend the temple school while his father wanted him to acquire secular skills at the village school. His mother passed away when he was nine years old. Three years later, his father also passed away. He then stayed with his married elder sister for a few years. During this time, he had the auspicious opportunity to offer alms to the monks who stopped by his sister's residence every day. The calm and peaceful demeanor of the traveling monks inspired him to leave the household life.

So, at 14, the young Kim Triêu entered the temple. Three years later, he became a novice (Samanera) and immediately developed a keen interest in learning Pāli. He attended introductory classes in Pāli and made good progress. On the eleventh of May, 1949, when he was 20, Samanera Kim Triêu took the Bhikkhu ordination and was given the Buddhist name Khippapañño. Bhante Khippapañño then moved to Saigon, the capital of South Viet Nam. In 1957, he studied Pāli and Dhamma under Venerable Thithasīla (then Head of the Vietnamese Theravada Sangha Organization) and Venerable Shanti Bhadra, who had recently come from Sri Lanka.

In 1958, Venerable Thithasīla sent him on a Dhamma propagation mission to the central part of Viet Nam. While there, Bhante Khippapañño cooperated with the lay community to form Dhamma Youth groups, focusing on imparting the Buddha's teachings to children.

Upon returning to the capital at the end of 1958, he resumed his studies under Venerable Buddhapāla at Pháp Quang Buddhist Institute and was subsequently awarded the diplomas, with highest honours, in Pāli and in Buddhist philosophy. He was invited to stay at the Institute as a lecturer in Pāli grammar.

In 1964, Bhante Khippapañño traveled to India on a scholarship from Nālandā Pāli Institute of Maghadh University. Four years later, he was awarded the Pāli Acharya certification, the B.A. in Special English and the M.A. in Pāli. He then attended the graduate programme in Ancient Indian and Asian History at Maghadh University.

Between 1967 and 1980, Bhante Khippapañño had the good fortune to practise

Satipaṭṭhāna meditation in India, Thailand and Myanmar, under many famous masters, including Shri Acharya Anagarika Munindra, Shri Goenka, Dīpama, Venerable Dr. Rastrapal, Master Joseph Goldstein and Most Venerable Taung Pulu Kaba Aye Sayādaw. In July of 1980, he went to Yangon, Myanmar, to practise Satipaṭṭhāna meditation for six months under Most Venerable Mahāsī Sayādaw and achieved many excellent experiences. In 1997, he returned to Yangon to practise under Most Venerable Shwe Oo Min Sayādaw.

In 1975, his friend Larry Gregory asked him to come to Kathmandu, Nepal, to lead a meditation retreat. The practitioners were so enthusiastic about the good results that more retreats soon followed, totalling seven retreats in seven months. In 1979, he returned to Nepal the second time to lead a ten-day retreat. From 1975 to 1979, Bhante Khippapañño stayed at the International Meditation Centre Bodhgaya and supported Venerable Dr. Rastrapal in various administrative and construction efforts.

In 1978 and 1979, while at Asoka Mission Vihāra for rain retreat, Bhante Khippapañño cooperated with the Vietnamese-American Buddhist Association in Washington, D.C., to offer resettlements for Vietnamese refugees.

In 1981, at the invitation of the President of the Vietnamese-American Buddhist Association, Bhante Khippapañño emigrated to the USA and stayed at Jetavana Vihāra in Washington, D.C. At this small temple, he has organized and led four ten-day retreats every year since 1982.

In 1986, a group of devotees in the Southern California area proposed that he create a meditation center on the West Coast. After much effort in finding a location and making changes to the existing buildings, Sakyamuni Meditation Center officially opened its doors on the fifteenth of July, 1988. Here, also, four ten-day retreats are offered in four seasons of every year. The new meditation hall, the residence and the stupa of Relics were inaugurated in 1997.

In 2007, a Vipassanā Meditation Center was completed in Bodhgaya, India. In 2008, Sadhamma Meditation Society was established in Bumpass, Virginia.

In 2010, Bhante Khippapañño helped establish the Jetavana Temple in Melbourne as the first Vietnamese Theravada Buddhist Temple in Australia. And in 2011, Ananda Meditation Society was founded in Anaheim, Orange County, California.

In 2014, through an auspicious opportunity of receiving a large plot of land donated by devotees in Florida, Bhante Khippapañño began a construction project to build the Mahāsatiṭṭhāna Meditation Center near the Orlando city. Together with peaceful

scenery, fresh air, cool green forest, and a large lake on the property, the project has all the suitable conditions to be developed into an international meditation center in Florida - a state that is strongly dependent on tourism. This is also an aspiration of the Venerable to propagate the Buddha's sāsana for the benefits of many devotees and people.

In addition, there are a couple of monasteries and temples at different locations that have also offered to Bhante Khippapañño by the local Sangha and communities of lay devotees in hopes that the Venerable would be their spiritual leader, namely Tam Bao Monastery in Apopka, Florida; Nhu Lai Thien Vien in Brisbane, Australia; Santi Stupa in San Jose, California; and Thien Truc Tu in Ha Tien province, Vietnam.

From 1981 until recently, Bhante Khippapañño has directed many pilgrimage tours to India and Nepal, the lands that are associated with the Buddha's life. With his great depth of knowledge in Buddhism and the experiences of 17 years living in India, the Venerable has guided many devotees to visit the four sacred sites, and has taught the history of all events in details. These in return have inspired and enhanced many Buddhist devotees the strong faiths in the Triple Gems on their path of practicing the Buddha's teachings.

This year, even though the Venerable is over 94 years old (latest update in 2023), and his health has deteriorated to some extent, the Most Venerable still tirelessly carries on his mission to teach the Buddha's teachings to devotees from many different locations in the world. With the empirical knowledge, great virtue, and a humble life that is full of loving kindness, the Venerable's highly skilled and dedicated teachings have brought great benefits of the Dhamma to many yogis and devotees alike who have crossed his path, together with their endless admirations for him.