

Luy Lau: The First Buddhist Center in Vietnam

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Abstract: Buddhism entered in a small country Vietnam and became a religion of the nation. Due to geographical position between India and China, Vietnam has been influenced immersed by both ancient civilizations. Historical evidences indicate that Indian brought Buddhism to Vietnam before it arrived from China. In fact, located in the center of the Red River Delta that is present Thuan Thanh district in Ha Bac province in Vietnam, Luy Lau was on the main trade route between India and China; therefore, Luy Lau naturally became a focus of different cultures and language. The Giao Chau language, Han characters, and Sanskrit were all used in trading and to spread Buddhism. Undoubtedly, Luy Lau became a favorable and prosperous resort for Indian pioneer missionaries to stay and preach the Buddha's Teachings before continuing their journey to the North.

Keywords: administrative center, domination, missionary delegation, belief, politic

1. Introduction

Luy Lau (Chinese: 贏婁, 贏婁) was the first capital of the Han Dynasty-Chinese domination of Giao Chau (the ancient name of the region that encompassed present day - Bac Ninh, province of Northern Vietnam). The literal meaning of Giao is 'connection', Chau means 'place'. Thus, the name Giao Chau reflects the fact that at that time, the land of Vietnam was the meeting place of two great cultures, those of India and China.

The Buddhist belief promoted after Asoka's dynasty in the year 300 BC., following the voyages of sailors and traders were probably the journeys of Buddhist monks to propagate Buddhism. With their boarded knowledge contributions, the influence of Buddhism, Hinduism and Sanskrit literature could be thoroughly integrated into Cambodia, Champa, Indonesia, and Malaysia. In Cambodia, archaeologists have found four stone tablets carved in Sanskrit. Relations between the Champa kingdom and China began in the years 190-193 A.D. in Quang Nam province the Dong Duong Buddha statue, one of the most beautiful examples belonging to the Indian Amravati carving school, was found.

All of the geographical and historical facts above refute the theories that Buddhism first came second hand from China, spreading from India to China and then from China to Vietnam. In fact, nobody denies that there were water and overland routes connecting India and China without crossing Vietnam, most importantly the two land routes through Central Asia. Nobody can also deny the fact that Vietnam is almost influenced by Chinese Buddhism. According to historical materials, however, Indian monks introduced Buddhism directly into Vietnam a very long time before it entered Southern China. When did Buddhism firstly emerge into Vietnam? How many of Buddhist monks come? In addition, where did they come from? These questions are not easy to answers until now.

Ne Le Fort and Asoka's missionary delegation

In Giao Chau Record of Liu Han Qi, he wrote: "*Ne Le Fort in the Southeast of Dinh An district, distant seven miles from the river still remains the tower and dhamma-hall which built by King Asoka, the woodcutters call it Kim Tuong*" (Le Manh That, 1999).

Where, then, did Ne Le Fort stay in An Dinh district? The earliest known mention of that fort is *Shui jing zhu* of Li Dao

Yuan: "*The Quan Tac wharf comes from it, but it goes from the east of the district to An Dinh and Truong Giang of Bac Dai. When the tide was low, we can see the trace of the dragon ship of Viet King. Flowing to the east, there was Ne Le Fort which was built by King Asoka*" (Book 37, p. 6b4-6).

The name of An Dinh appeared early in the *Han qian shu* (Book 28, 10b9-11a-25) where it is the one of among ten district in Giao Chau, including Luy Lau, Lien Lau, Phu Lau, Me Linh, Khuc Duong, Khuc Bac Dai, Khe Tu, Tay Vu, Long Bien, and Chu Dien.

According to Prof. Le Manh That, the word Ne Le, which is Han form, is often used as a transcription of the Sanskrit word 'naraka' means hell (*Lich Su Phat Giao Viet Nam I*, p.31). In Tam Dao Mountain, there was Tay Thien pagoda, which had a genealogy on Hung Kings. This pagoda is also named Chua Dia Nguc, or Hell Temple (Naraka Temple) (Li Dao Yuan (?-529), *Shui Ching Chu* 37, p.6b4-6.) Did this temple take name by the word 'naraka' out? The point of interest is that An Dinh located around the mountain of Thach Ban or Tam Dao ranges, Phuc Yen province, where there was ancient Co Loa with evidence from the iron made-arrow. Straightforward, such as archaeological records show that since the Hung Kings (reign 2000 B.C. - 43 A.D.) this land was once the military and political center of Lac Viet government. In his work-'*History of Buddhism in Vietnam*', Prof. Le Manh That wrote that the woodcutters in Vietnam, thus to the 380 to 420 A.D., could see the temple and tower built by King Asoka (reign 247-232B.C.) in Ne Le of An Dinh district. It is more or less an allusion to Sona's mission sent by King Asoka. So it is not unreasonable for Linh Nam Chich Quai to record Chu Dong Tu was taught Buddhism by the Buddhist monk named Phat Quang.

Based on one Chinese scholar's materials, King Asoka's stupa can been found in Giao Chau (ancient Northern - Vietnam) at the Nele ("muddy") wall, affirming that the Nele wall is the present Vietnamese coastal city of Do Son. South India was the first region, which witnessed the appearance of the Mahayanist Bat Nha Sutra (or *Zhi hui jing* in Chinese, and *Prajna* in Sanskrit). For example, the Diamond Sutra, well known in Vietnam, is one of the most important Mahayana Sutras in the *Prajna* collection. Based on the collection of *Prajna* Sutras, the learned Nagarjuna promoted the famous "Middle way" (Madhyamaka), which had a profound influence on Vietnamese Buddhism, as it did on China. An analysis of the Zen (*Chan* in Chinese)

literature of the Zen masters of the first two Zen sects in Vietnam, *Vinitaruci* and *Vo Ngon Thong*, shows clearly the deep influence of *Prajna* ideology. It is quite likely that the *Mahayana Prajna* was directly transferred from South India to Vietnam through Indonesia and Champa. In China, although *Lokesama* translated the first *Prajna* sutra during the Han dynasty, by the end of the second century AD, its influence was not enduring and wide. Only after *Kumarajiva* came to China at the beginning of the fifth century did the *Prajna* sutra become widely popular there (P.K.Murkerji, 1919).

Chu Dong Tu-the first Buddhist in Vietnam:

In *Linh Nam chich quai*, the couple Chu Dong Tu and Tien Dung made business with many foreign traders. One day, Dong Tu set off in a boat with a foreign merchant. They stopped at Quynh Vien Mountain for fresh water and food. Dong Tu met an Indian monk called Phat Quang in a tent there. This monk taught him Buddhism. Before his leaving for home, his master gave him a stick and a hat and said to him, "Everything is coming from here". Arriving back in his country, Chu Dong Tu explained Buddhism to Tien Dung. Later, they left their business and set out to practice Buddhism (Le Manh That, 1999).

If Chu Dong Tu was the first Buddhist, when did he live?

Nhat Da Trach story only wrote him live in the Hung King's third generation. Of which was the third generation of Hung King?

Buddhism began to spread to countries around India during the reign of *Asoka* Emperor. This Great King ordered the monks to travel everywhere to spread Buddhism, in particular the *Sona's* delegation to land of gold (*Suvanabhumi*). Is this gold land in Southeast Asia? This issue is still controversial. However, based on Chinese archaeological records, namely *Shu ji* and *Qian han shu* as well as such as Oc Eo archaeological site, the southern Vietnam in the early centuries AD was full of beach of the trader ships not only of the nations of Indian civilization, but also of the distant countries of the Roman civilization. So spreading Buddhism to this land is issue event (Le Manh That, 1999).

Moreover, the Southern Vietnamese land from the South of Sot port brought back traces of Indian culture. Vo Canh stele, which wrote in Sanskrit, was found in Vo Canh village in Nha Trang, was identified by researchers in the second century AD. For the Sanskrit language to be engraved on stone, Indian civilization at that time was the dominant Buddhist religion, which spread in this land for a relatively long time. Indirectly, Indian civilization must exist in South Vietnam in the centuries before and after the Western calendar. Thus, the Hung King of the Chu Dong Tu time can be identified in the preceding centuries of the Western calendar, possibly the first or second Hung Nghi King, around the 2th-3th century BC. According to Prof. Le Manh That, this guess of the date of Chu Dong Tu's acceptance of Buddhism's event is perfectly in line with the views of Zen Master Chan Nguyen (1647-1728) in his *Thien Nam Ngu Luc* (see *Chan Nguyen Thien Su Toan Tap III*, 1983). Master Chan Nguyen recorded the story of Lu Gia is defeated by

Han Vu Empire. In this work, he wanted to emphasize that Truc Vien Pagoda had existed from Lu Gia reign in Mount Thay in Son Tay, about 110 BC. This also means that Buddhism existed in Vietnam in the second century BC (Le Manh That, 1999).

In his *Dao jiao yuan liu* (1845, pp.9a11-b5), Master An Thien wrote again the Chu Dong Tu's story as: "*Under Hung King's reign, at Mount Quynh Vi, there was Chu Dong Tu who travelled and mounted to a hermit's hut. A Buddhist monk namely Phat Quang stayed there. He was an Indian monk with over 40 years old. That monk gave to Chu Dong Tu a hat and a stick, and said that, "All of psychic power is from these things". Dong Tu taught Buddhism to his wife-Tien Dung after go back. Later, both of them left home to practice Buddhism. On the way of their return, Dong Tu had to build a cone stick. In the midnight, the castle appeared with curtain is covered with gold and jewels, soldiers are guarded in the courtyard*" (Le Manh That, 1999).

As it is said, *Linh Nam Chich Quai* tells us Buddhism that Chu Dong Tu was taught was psychic power Buddhism. This Buddhist tradition remained until the 6th century AD; later is added by meditated Buddhism, but it does not lose its influence. It still exists as the first tradition class in Vietnamese Buddhism, a basic one from which to build new Buddhist traditions, complementing it through the history of Buddhism development in Vietnam.

An Overview of Luy Lau's economic and political position:

For many centuries, Luy Lau was a political center of the Chinese domination authority. It had been founded long before by the Si Nhiep (or *Shi She*)'s reign (BC.179). After occupying Nam Viet in Trieu Da (or Zhao Tuo)'s reign, the Han dynasty still considered Luy Lau as the center of Giao Chi. At this time, Si Nhiep became the governor of Giao Chau. He intended to found a kingdom in Nam Viet independent from China. Therefore, Si Nhiep attempted to build up Luy Lau into a big town and secure fortress. Unfortunately, he died before his intention realized. His son Si Huy (or *Shihui*) became governor. At that time, Giao Chau was under the rule of Wu dynasty. The Wu Emperor learned about the Si Nhiep's ambition, he sent Lu Da to Giao Chau instead of Si Huy. When Lu Da came to Giao Chau, he killed Si Huy and moved the administrative center. Luy Lau lost its central position and became only a district. Under Tang dynasty rule of Vietnam (618-907AD), the invaders established the administrative center in Tong Binh (present-day Hanoi) (Nguyen Tai Thu, 2008).

Therefore, as the administrative center of Giao Chi for many centuries, Luy Lau was in a convenient position to spread and develop Buddhism. Although the rulers were from the China with their Confucian and Taoist outlook in the beginning, they later recognized the superiority of Buddhism over Confucian and Taoism in explaining man's misfortune and the way to leading freedom from all sufferings. Gradually, they changed their minds and studied in Buddhism. They invited Indian monks to teach them Buddhism. Such a situation influenced the native people. More and more people began the Buddhist.

In Luy Lau, people grew mulberry trees to raise silkworm that produced silk and cloth; forest products like precious woods, sandalwood, perfumes and elephants' tusks from the north and the west of Vietnam were gathered here; and agricultural products, handicrafts and fine arts from the Red Delta River were brought here. Therefore, in the first and second centuries AD, merchants from India and Central Asia came here to do business. Luy Lau became a great international commercial center that many foreigners called on and stayed. They not only brought goods here for exchange, but also knowledge from their homeland about medicine, agriculture, astronomy, customs, and beliefs. They stayed here for a short time to study the language and situation in China before going to *Jianye*, *Changan*, or *Luoyang*.



Luy Lau center

Luy Lau was also a convenient port for monks from India, Sri Lanka or Central Asia who intended to spread Buddhism in China. From India via sea trade routes, the Buddhist scholars and the monks continued to reach Giao Chau from India, travelling along with traders. They came to Luy Lau to learn the custom and Chinese language with the help of Vietnamese monks who knew both Chinese and Sanskrit. For example, the famous monk Khuong Tang Hoi was very successful in spreading Buddhism during King Wu Sun Quan's reign in Jiangdong, China. In fact, Indian merchants often invited the monks to accompany with them for being safe in long journey. It is believed that among the three Buddhist centers of ancient China (*Luoyang*, *Pengcheng* and *Luy Lau*), *Luy Lau center* in *Giao Chau* was then the first to be founded under the Han Dynasty (around the early part of the first century A.D.). Chinese ancient materials do not clearly record the formation of *Luoyang* and *Pengcheng* centers. Only *Luy Lau* in *Giao Chi* (or *Jiaozhi*) was clearly identified and the earliest and a springboard for the formation of the other two centers. From the second half of the second century, *Luy Lau* existed as an important and prosperous Buddhist center.

At the end of the Han dynasty, in the second century, the war broke out, so many Han people ran down to *Giao Chau* (or *Jiaozhou*) to flee. Si Nhiếp was the ruler of *Giao Chau* at that time. He was a very talented scholar. He brought the Han and Han culture to enrich the *Giao Chau's* culture. He cleverly kept the area of *Giao Chau* peaceful.

Due to escaping from fighting in China, some politicians and intellectuals went to the South as refugees in *Giao Chi* (or

Jiaozhi). Among the Han refugees in *Giao Chi*, there was a scholar named *Mau Tu* (or *Mou-tzi*), who brought his mother to the refugee camp. In the beginning, he did not know anything about Buddhism. Living in *Giao Chau*, he was exposed to Buddhism, because *Luy Lau* was very prosperous Buddhist center. With his background in Confucianism and Taoism, he studied Buddhism very fast. In the second century, he wrote a book to answer the question of the Han scholars. This is the first book on Buddhist writing in Chinese characters, named *Ly Hoac Luan* (or *Li Huo Lun*). *Ly* means answer, *Hoac* is doubts, and *Luan* is commentary. In this book, *Mau Tu* answered the doubts about Buddhism. In *Ly Hoac Luan*, *Mau Tu* wrote that the number of native and foreign monks in *Giao Chau* was large. Corrupt practices appeared among them that *Mau Tu* criticized as, "Some of monks drink too much wine, have wives and children, have too much money and many valuables and often deceive people" (Le Manh That, 1999).

The other Vietnamese Buddhist work entitled *Thien Uyen Tap Anh* (*Biographies of Prominent Masters in the Chan Garden*), which was compiled from the late 11th century to the early 13th century, refers in some details to the Buddhist situation at *Luy Lau*. This book recorded how the Queen mother *Phu Cam Linh Nhan* (or *Y Lan*) of the *Ly* dynasty asked the monk *Thong Bien* who was the teacher of the prince that when and how Buddhism had been introduced into Vietnam. Ven. *Thong Bien* (or *Tri Khong*) quoted the monk *Tan Tian's* answer to *Sui Wendi* Emperor about Buddhism in *Giao Chau* as follows: "*Giao Chau has routes leading to India. By the time that Buddhism was introduced into China, twenty Buddhist stupas had already been built, more than five hundred monks trained and fifteen books of Buddhist sutras were translated in Luy Lau. Then monks like Ma Ha Ky Vuc, Khuong Tang Hoi, Chi Cuong Luong, and Mau Bac went to China to spread Buddhism*" (*Thien Uyen Tap Anh*, 20b7-21a7). This quotation is direct evidence that Buddhism flourished in *Giao Chau* a long time prior to its introduction to Southern China.

Moreover, in *General Quan De Yu's* Preface, he wrote that, "After *Hui Neng* passed away, meditation was in vogue and inherited. Ven. *Zhang Jing Yuan* used the *Ma Zu's* mind press propagated in *Wu, Yue*. *Wu Yan Tong* took *Bao Zhang's* credo to practice in *Giao Chau*" (Le Manh That, 1999).

Luy Lau Buddhist's beliefs

What was the religion of *Jiaozhou* at that time? The Heaven God is high; he can see through the ground, punish the wicked, help good one. However, Heaven God is not the creator of all things, especially not the deity of most theologians. He has the subordinates near and far. Nearly there is Thunder God, Lightning God. Farther is *Son Tinh*, *Thuy Tinh*, mountain god *Tan Vien*, god of trees, Kitchen God, Earth God, etc... The human soul is mortal, it can exist long time around the corpse, and maybe around his loved relative still lives for a while to protect. Xo Ghost is the soul of the dead still in the house, as the guardian. Tomb house is a place where the dead stayed in the forest; for some time, there is rice to worship the dead. Mo bonze is the middleman who can contact between the dead and the outside world. Tombs buried in *Lach Truong* buried since

the first century B.C., they had often three parts, the middle to coffin, side to altar, brass lamp, and the other side for food, utensil, etc... (Nguyen Lang, 1994).

Being a harmony religious, Buddhism that advocates equality without any cast could easily adapt itself to the customs, habits and political historical situation of every country where it was introduced, particularly in Giao Chau. At the beginning, Buddhism in Luy Lau, however, was not like the Buddhism of the contemporary India. It was influenced by the ideological traditions and beliefs of Giao Chau and other Asian lands. In Luy Lau, Buddhism had features in common with the popular beliefs of the peasants. The word But - a phonetic transcription of the word Buddha from Pali-came into being in the Vietnamese language, which we can find it in many Vietnamese folk tales; for example, in the "*Tam Cam story*" - a kind of Vietnamese Cinderella, the But was presented to be a God who had a power to perform miracles. That But presents to be everywhere and know everything. He could change the natural phenomena into Gods who could bring happiness, such as the stick and the hat in the story of "*Chu Dong Tu*" or the stone and the statue of *Tu Phap* in the "*Man Nuong story*". Based on concrete details about Man Nuong and the four vessels in Linh Nam Chich Quai, Tran Van Giap in Vietnamese Buddhism from its beginning to the 13th century agrees with this interpretation.

In the story of Kalacarya and Man Nuong in Linh Nam Chich Quai, the name Kalacarya was transliterated into Vietnamese as 'Gia La Do Le' that was possibly another transcription of the Sanskrit Kalacarya, meaning the black sage. This strange name suggests that Kalacarya was not an Aryan but a Dravidian, the aboriginal population of Southern India before Aryan tribes from the North conquered it. The Dravidians were pushed further to the South, so Kalacarya was possibly from the south. Man Nuong was not the true daughter of Tu Dinh, but an orphan with a miserable life who spoke in a non-standard accent. Nevertheless, she had a firm belief in religion, taking care of the cooking for monks, including Kalacarya. The following paragraph is similar to one in Kien Van Tich Luc by Le Quy Don:

In the fifth lunar month, Man Nuong hurriedly finished her cooking. When everything was ready, she fell asleep, as the monks had not finished their prayers. Returning to his room Kalacarya found no other way than to step over her body. Suddenly Man Nuong felt her heart throbbing and she got pregnant three or four months later. Man Nuong felt ashamed, leaving the place. Kalacarya also left for a pagoda by the riverbank and stayed there. When the time came, Man Nuong gave birth to a baby girl. She came to see the monk and handed the baby over to him. Kalacarya carried the baby to the place under a bam an tree at the crossroads by the river head, putting her into the tree stem and saying: "I entrust this Buddhist adherent to you, take care of her and you will become a Buddhist disciple." Before their separation, the monk gave her a stick, and said, "You carry this stick home. Whenever there is a drought, you will just wave the stick. - the water will come out to save the people."

When Man Nuong was 80 years old, the banyan tree collapsed, drifting on the river to the ferry from of the pagoda. People came to cut at the tree, but all their axes and knives broke in the process: Some 300 villagers tried to pull it out of the water, but the tree did not move. When Man Nuong, who went down to the ferry to wash her hands, slightly pulled at it, the tree suddenly drifted ashore. Everybody was stupefied, asking her to pull the tree up so that carpenters could make four statues of Buddha. When they worked to the core of the tree where the monk had hidden the baby, their tools broke and that part of the tree turned into a slab of stone. The workers look the stone out and threw it into the water. Everyone implored Man Nuong for mercy, and then asked a fisherman to dive into the river and bring the stone up. People staged a procession to the stone into the Buddha temple for their worship.

The four statues were named Phap Van, Phap Vu, Phap Loi and Phap Dien and put into the Dau pagoda for worship. Every year, on the eighth day of the fourth lunar month, people from different parts of the country, young and old, male and female, would gather at this pagoda for entertainment and singing. This ritual was named the Buddha Bathing Festival (Nguyen Tai Thu (ed.), 2008).

The symbol of *Tu Phap* was introduced everywhere in the country. Notably, two monks named *Mahajivaka* (or Ma Ha Ky Vuc) and *Ksudara* (or Khau Da La) came to Vietnam at the end of the second century AD (about 189AD). *Ksudara* stayed in Vietnam for an extended period, whereas *Mahajivaka* continued journey to *Luo Yang* in China. These two monks are considered two of the most important figures in the early period of Buddhist penetration into Vietnam. *Ksudara's* religious activities in particular are connected with a famous legend concerning *Man Nuong* (175-255AD) and the veneration of *Tu Phap* (*Four Dhammas*) as *Phap Van* (Cloud), *Phap Vu* (Rain), *Phap Loi* (Thunder), and *Phap Dien* (Lightning). The Cuong Muc Chinh Bien (3, 32a1-3) wrote: "Phap Van Temple was located at Van Giap Village, Thuong Phuc District, Ha Noi Province. Legend recorded that one day during a great thunderstorm, a mangrove tree fell down. People in the village used it to carve statues and erect a temple to worship them. That is how the temple got its name." According to Le Manh That, the Cuong Muc Chinh Bien was only following the Bac Thanh Dia Du Chi to which the temples of Tu Phap (Phap Van, Phap Vu, Phap Loi, and Phap Dien) were all at Van Giap Village, Thuong Phuc District (Le Manh That, 1999).

The metaphor of a thunderstorm would have been very clear to people living in an agrarian society, such as that which existed in the Red River Delta. Later, people in Van Lam (Hai Hung province) and Son Tay (on the bank of the Red River) worshipped "*Tu Phap*". Every year, people from all over the country come here to attend the traditional festival. There were folk ballads as follows (Le Manh That, 1999):
*"Although you do business everywhere,
 You should return for the Dau's festival on the eighth."
 (On the 8th of the fourth lunar month)*

The Dau pagoda in Luy Lau, also known as Phap Van, Dieu Ung or Co Chau, is located in Thuan Thanh district, the northern province of Bac Ninh. Due to materials and

antiques left at the Dau pagoda, especially a wood block Dau pagoda is the oldest Vietnamese Buddhist pagoda in Giao Chau (with construction in 187-226 A.D.) (Catherine, 2003).



This pagoda was built near palace, markets and along the streets of Luy Lau. It became the Buddhist center. Under the Ly and Tran dynasties, the Kings expanded the Dau pagoda.

Pengcheng and Luoyang Buddhist center

There were another two contemporary Buddhist centers with Luy Lau such as *Pengcheng* and *Luoyang* center in China. *Pengcheng* was located in the *Chu* kingdom (220-265 AD) on the lower part of the *Yangzi* River, which is now in *Jiangsu* province, China. Here, from the middle of the first century AD, the gentle folk followed both Taoism and Buddhism. The *Chu* Emperor *Liu Ying* (*Han* Emperor *Guang Wu*'s son) migrated to *Pengcheng*. He did penance, fasted, and made offerings here. In the year 265, there was a Buddhist organization consisting of foreign monks and Chinese scholars there (Nguyen Tai Thu, 2008).

The origin of Luo Yang center

Luo Yang, which is on the banks of the *Luo* River, is south of the Yellow River in the northwest of *Henan* province in China. It was the capital of the Eastern Han Dynasty (ruled in 165 AD). At that time, Indian and Central Asian monks with the cooperation of Chinese monks translated Buddhist sutras from Sanskrit into Chinese. For examples, the two Iranian monks, An The Cao and An Huyen translated Buddhist sutras with a Chinese monk named Fu Tiao. In *Luo Yang*, there were two famous pagodas as *Bai Ma Si* (White Horse Temple) and *Xu Chang*.

The name of *Xu Chang* gave us some facts about the origin of the establishment of *Luo Yang*. In 65th century C.E, the Han Emperor said that those who found themselves guilty could offer gold or silver to make atonement. One small king called *Chu Wang Ying*, although he was not guilty, but also had a feeling that he was not worthy, so he offered thirty pieces silks for atonement. The Emperor encouraged him. Feeling happy, *Chu King* made a penitentiary, fasting for three months, offerings to the monks and all people. Of course, the monks were Indian monks there, because the Han people were not allowed to be ordained at that time. That ceremony was held in *Peng Cheng* (Nguyen Lang, 2004).

When visiting *Luo Yang*, *Chu Wang Ying* resided at his cousin house. His cousin's name was *Xu Chang*. His cousin, then, offered his own house to set up a temple, called *Xuchang* pagoda. This detailed demonstration shows that

Luo Yang center was established after the *Peng Cheng* center, and due to events from the *Peng Cheng* center where *Chu Wang Ying* King originated. This detailed demonstration shows that *Luo Yang* center was established after the *Pengcheng* center due to events from the *Peng Cheng* center where *Chu Wang Ying* originated.

The origin of Peng Cheng center

Peng Cheng was located in the *Chu* Kingdom (220-265 A.D) on the lower part of the *Yang zi* River, which is now in *Jiangsu* province, China. The *Chu* Emperor *Liu Ying* (*Han* Emperor *Guang Wu*'s son) migrated to *Pengcheng*. He did penance, fasted, and made offerings here. In the year 265, there was a Buddhist organization consisting of foreign monks and Chinese scholars there (Nguyen Tai Thu, 2008).

We can assume that Buddhism was introduced into *Peng Cheng* by sea route. *Jiaozhi*, then, was the important communicate point between China and other countries. The presence of *Luy Lau* center during the *Han* dynasty was a tangible fact. *Luy Lau* was the base and springboard for Buddhism to enter China.

As mentioned above, it is due to the geographical and cultural role of *Jiaozhi* that the *Luy Lau* Buddhist center was founded in the first half of the century. In *Jiaozhi*, local refugees learned Sanskrit from their teachers-Indian monks. Regarding to Master Thong Bien's quote, Luy Lau had about 500 local ordinances, and at least 15 sutras were translated into Chinese (Le Manh That, 1999).

In the first century, the Indian merchants and pilgrims could not go straight up to the lower *Yang zi* River while they were not yet known *Han* language. The monks companied with the merchant ships, whether set foot on Phu Nam, Champa, Nhat Nam, or Guang Zhou, must gather at the main communicate point, which is *Jiaozhi*. *Jiaozhi* had all the advantages for them, such as; *Jiaozhi* is close to India's influential civilization such as *Funan*, *Champa* with using Sanskrit language; in *Jiaozhi*, the Han language is used. Therefore, *Jiaozhi* was the only place where Indian monks could find translators easily. After their break for studying language, political and custom situation, Indian monks departed to China for propagation Buddhism there.

2. Conclusion

As above, Luy Lau was combined closely with traditional beliefs. This Buddhist center has played an important and everlasting role for thousands of years. As the cradle of Vietnamese culture, it showed the desire, the psychology and the outlook of ancestor Vietnamese peasants who grow wet rice in the Red River Delta.

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