CHAPTER II
PERIOD OF SOME PROSPERITY FOR BUDDHISM

I. Buddhism Under The NGO, DINH, and LE Dynasties

The Chinese imperial domination was brought to an end by the Vietnamese victory on the banks of Bach Dang in the year 938. In 939 C.E. Ngo-Quyen proclaimed himself as the King and established his capital at Co-Loa,\(^1\) and set up a centralized government. It was the first truly independent Vietnamese state. In the tenth century, this newly independent State of Vietnam was faced with numerous difficult tasks: gradual consolidation of the country, preparation for wars against foreign invaders, countering of separatist tendencies within the country and the formation of freedoms. At this juncture, it was natural that the kings and state apparatus would resort to violence and show of military strength. It was surprising then that in such circumstances. Buddhism in Vietnam would enter such a vigorous period of development.

It is only by trying to understand this contradictory situation that one can grasp the characteristics of Buddhism in Vietnam in the tenth century. By the end of Chinese domination, Buddhism had spread to all regions of An-Nam, Do-Ho-Phu.\(^2\) A stratum of Vietnamese bonzes had emerged, endowed with vast knowledge of Han\(^3\) as well as Sanskrit, who can be considered to have been the intelligentsia of that time. Many of them went to China, Indonesia, and India. And faith in Buddhism—among the bonzes and followers of Buddhism played a major part in the people's struggle against foreign oppression as well for national independence.

After the regaining of independence, the prestige and role of Buddhism were strengthened in Vietnamese society. While the young independent state needed a spiritual and moral support in order to progress, Confucian thought was not yet fully

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\(^1\) Previously a capital in the third century B.C.E.
\(^2\) The Vietnam of that era.
\(^3\) Han period of China. The Han emperor Wu-Ti, in the first century B.C. – 220 A.D.
developed. In such a situation Buddhism naturally had an important role to play. Thus, as soon as the period of Chinese domination came to an end, Buddhism not only to Giao-Chau i.e. the Red River basin but also to Ai Chau and Hoan Chau, i.e. the territory of present day. Thanh-Hoa and Nghe-An. During the tenth century, it flourished primarily in the region north of the Red River. Besides Lay Lau and Kien-So-Long⁴ - the Standing Buddhist Center in Ha Bac province witnessed the construction of a large number of pagodas. Many famous monks and many of these pagodas were to become well-known, including Kien-Duong in Hoa-Lam, Song Lam in Phu-Ninh and Cam-Ung on Mount Ba Son.

According to the History of Buddhism in Vietnam. Buddhism not only spread among the masses but also many Buddhist centres are known to have appeared during the same period, particularly that of Dai-La which would be called Thang-Long from the time of the Ly Dynasty onwards. It was here in the sixth century that Ly Nam De⁵ who has built Khai-Quoc Pagoda (now it is known with a new name of Tran-Quoc Pagoda in Hanoi).⁶

Unit the middle of the tenth century, the Khai Quoc Pagoda was home to the bonze Van-Phong of the third generation of the branch of the Wu-Yan Tong Set (Thien-Vo-Ngon-Thong).⁷ A disciple of Van Phong, the leading monk Ngo Chui Luu

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⁴ See Vietnam’s Famous Ancient pagodas. Publishing house Ha-Noi; 1996 by Vo Van Tuong: Kien-So Pagoda located in Phu Dong Village, Gia-Lam district, Ha Noi city. Formerly, the place was called Phu-Dong village, Tien-Du district, Tu-Son Country, King-Bac province. According to the authors of Thien-Uyen-Tap-Anh (A Collection of Outstanding Figures of the Zen Garden) and Dai Nam Thien-Uyen-Truyen-Dang-Luc (A Record of Transmission of The Lamp in the Zen Community of Dai Nam) the pagoda was built before 820 by Bonze Superior Cam-Thanh, Tien-Du district. He previously practiced Buddhism at Phat-Tich Pagoda, then was requested by a rich landlord, whose last name was Nguyen, to move to Kien-So Pagoda and built it. Kun So is one of Several old Constructed before the tenth century. Since then it has become the Center of the Zen of The Wu-Yun-Tung Sect.

⁵ The Ly emperiod. Ly Nam De in the sixth century.

⁶ Tran Quoc is one of the oldest Pagodas of Vietnam. It was said that the Pagoda was built in the Ly Nam De Period (544-548) and previously called Khan Quoc Pagoda. a Sino-Vietnamese Character. Up to the Ly-Thai-Tong Period (1440-1442) it was renamed An Quoc Pagoda. In the Le-Kinh-Tong period (1600-1618) it was moved to the Gold Fish islet in the middle of Tay Lake its present place. Again, the pagoda was named Tran Quoc in the Le-Hy-Tong period (1680-1705).

⁷ Thien in Vietnam (or Jhana in Pali, Dhyana in Sanskrit, Chan in China, Zen in Japan and meditation in English.
bore the title *Khuong Viet*. As the principal bonze under the Dinh Dynasty; he enlarged the *Khai-Quoc* Pagoda turning it into a center for the spread of Buddhism.⁸

Another Buddhist Center was *Hoa-Lu*, the nation’s capital under the Dinh and early Le Dynasties. The Kings of those dynasties held Buddhism in high regard and patronized many pagodas, the remains of which can still be found. The remains of *Thap* Pagoda can still be found on its ancient site because of the Hoang Long River. The Square stones anchoring the columns measure with sides 1.06 meters long and round ones 0.60 meters, thus suggest the great size of this ancient institution. From another *Lu*’s Nhat True Pagoda, vary few traces of ancient architecture still exist. There also three rates high, light sided columns erected in 995 on which were carved the central tables of *Lang-Nghiem*.⁹ These columns might have been set up during the same period as the pagoda.

The *Ba-Ngo* Pagoda, also from Hoa Lu, was supposedly also built during the Dinh dynasty. Its stele from the Yuan period bears the following inscription: “Ba Ngo in our Hamlet was a well-known site from the old capital of *Dai-Co-Viet* (old name of Vietnam). The *Ba-Ngo* agricultural goddesses are worshipped in this pagoda suggesting that Buddhism may have merged at this site (as at *Luy-Lau*) with a popular indigenous cult.”

As Buddhism expanded and penetrated into Vietnamese Society, the royal court formerly recognized it as an official religion. After taking the throne in 971 King *Dinh-Tien-Hoang* standardized the different grades for the Buddhist monkshood as well as for cultural and military dignitaries. Ngo–Chan-Luu was named "*Tong-Thong*" the highest rank in the monkshood, and awarded the further appellation of

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⁸ See in *Thien-Uyen-Tap-Anh* book it is said that the great monk *Khuong-Viet* led the expansion of Buddhist Studies in the *Khai-Quoc* pagoda and that the Buddhist monk *Da-Bao* attended courses there.

⁹ *Lang Nghiem* or the *Suraṅgama Sūtra*, also known as the *Suraṅgama Samādhi Sūtra*, "the *sūtra* of the concentration of" Heroic Progress. An early Mahayana Sutra, of which only a few fragments of the Sanskrit original survive. The work is preserved in an early fourth century Chinese translation by Kumarajiva, and a Tibetan translation dating from the beginning of the ninth century. The content is related of that of the *Vimalakirti-nirdesa* sutra, and the concentration (*samādhi*) referred to in the title is state of mind fixed on one point (*Citta–ekayra-ta*) which is said to be unlimited and unimpeded like the free movement (*gama*) of a hero (*sūtra*).
"Khuong-Viet."10 Truong-Ha-Vi was named "Tang-Leu" one grade below that awarded to Ngo-Ehan Luu. The grades "Tang Phong" and "Tang Luc" continued to be used by succeeding royal courts. That the standardization of different grades within the Buddhist clergy occurred, simultaneously with the consolidation of the State apparatus, suggests that the Dinh Kings held Buddhism in high regard. The succeeding Le Dynasty pursued similar policies. Many monks became advisors to the Dinh and Le Kings on matters of domestic and foreign policy. The title "Khuong Viet" awarded by Dinh Tun Hoang to Ngo Chan Luu meant "to help the Viet country."

According to Thien-Uyen-Tap-Anh, Dinh-Tien-Hoang frequently visited Khuong Viet and paid him great respect. The King Le-Dai-Hanh held Khuong Viet in such high esteem that he was "permitted to participate in the great military affairs of the nation". Do-Phap-Thuan (died in 990), a monk of the Vinītarūci Chan Sect, was also an advisor to Le-Dai-Hanh.

In the book Thien-Uyen-Tap-Anh it has been written that “from the foundation of the early Le Dynasty, Do-Phap-Thuan worked very hard for the national interest, but when peace was reestablished, he refused every title and award. This attitude increased the respect which King Le Dai Hanh accorded him and the King dared not call the bonze by his name. Instead, King Li Dai Hanh called him the Great Monk Do and instructed him to indulge in literary pursuits.”11 Other bonze such as Ma-Ha. Sung-Pham12 and Van-Hanh were also often consulted by King Le Dai Hung about the resistance against the Song in 980. Van Hanh was to gain a reputation for his work contributing to the enthronement of Ly-Cong-Uan. In the Dinh and Le dynasties were

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10 According to the Thien-Uyen-Tap-Anh (Rethinking Vietnamese Buddhist History) Khuong-Viet as born in Cat-Li Village, Thuong-Luc district. The location of this village is unknown. Dai-Viet-Su-Ky-Toan-Thu. (original edition, book 1, page 16) wrote that Pham Hap fought against Le- Hoan was defeated and came with his soldiers to Cat-Loi village in Bac-Giang, Cat-Loi village as well as this Pho-Da Pagoda where the monk Khuong Viet had cloistered, are in Bac Giang (belonging to Ha Bac today).


12 According to TUTANL, King Le-Dai-Hanh often invited Sung Pham to come to the place for consolations on religious matters and treated him very kindly. It also claimed that Sung Pham died in 1887, at the age of 84, the third year of Quang-Huu under Ly Nhan-Tong's reign. Sung-Pham was born in 1004 (or 1003) and Le Dai Hanh in 1005. So that it would have been impossible for him to have consulted with the King on religious matters. Perhaps the information on Sung Pham's life and deaths incorrect.
interested with diplomatic missions such as welcoming Chinese ambassadors. In 987 King Le Dai Hanh ordered the bonze Phap-Thuan to disguise himself as a river commander and welcome the Chinese ambassador Giac. After Ly-Giac returned to China, the King ordered Khuong-Viet to write a farewell poem entitled "Ngoc Lang Quy".

“Sunshine and farewell wind swell the sails.
His Excellency returns to his imperial country.
He crosses the blue waves of the very large ocean.
To come back to his vast sky
Our feelings are deeply heartfelt.
Have some cups of Wine before leaving
I touch the ambassador's state coach and my heart is full of affection, forward to the Emperor our will to work for the Southern Country.”

This elegantly worked diplomatic poem clearly expresses the will of the Vietnamese to be independent and the masters of their own country. It also represents the earliest known work of Vietnamese literature. While monks contributed little to the functioning of the administrative apparatus, their influence on politics was nevertheless significant. The influence of Buddhism on society also increased. In the heavily populated delta region, hundred of pagodas sprang up.

As mentioned above, the formation of new Buddhist centers indicates the growing social influence of Buddhism. Since its inception, Buddhism has always fused closely with traditional popular beliefs. Even after its influence spread far from its original centers, Buddhism still retained a strong sincerity and character, routinely adapting to accommodate older indigenous popular beliefs. The following eleventh

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13 Two copies of this poem are recorded, one in Dai-Viet-Su-Ky Toan Thu and one in TUTANL. Here is quoted the copy restored by Hoang Van Lau, based “on a number of sentences from farewell Poem Nguyen-Lang-Quy”. See Hoang Van Lau. "On the Farewell poem in the Tenth Century" in "Problems in the study of Han Nom Documents". (Ha Noi, 1983 p. 191-211).
century story about the Monk Maha taken from *Thien Uyen Tap Anh* is instructive.\(^{14}\)

"Ma ha went to Ai Chau, and continued on till the outskirts of San Dang. The people there worshipped evil spirits and took great joy in slaughtering animals. The monk advised them to fast but the people replied." Our spirits have the power to bless us or harshly punish us: were daring not provide them. The monk responded, "You must abandon evil and do good. If anything bad happens, I will bear full responsibility". A villager answered, "In this village, a man has been stricken with leprosy for years. Physicians and sorceress can do nothing. If you could cure him, we will behave as you have said." The monk poured holy water on the leper and he was immediately cured".\(^{15}\)

The aim of this story was to praise Ma Ha's religious skills. It also reflected the reality that people tended to abandon their religious beliefs for Buddhism, only if Buddhism could prove itself better to be able to serve and protect them.

The disorder plagued the period of the twelve warring lords also tended to bring people closer to Buddhism. The ruling class, while ordering mass slaughters, is simultaneously prayed to the Buddha to for give them their crimes. A good example is the South Viet Prince. Dinh Lien, the Son of Dinh Tien Hoang, who after Killing made this gesture both to seek the emancipation of his brother's soul and to ensure the future maintenance of his own wealth and prestige.\(^{16}\)

As it penetrated deeper into popular spirit life, Buddhism carved out a durable niche in society. While its full flavoring obviously did not occur until the Ly and Tran Dynasties, historical and archaeological evidence available to us today from Hoa Lu suggest that the development of Vietnamese Buddhism in the tenth century was also quite significant.

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\(^{14}\) The bonze Maha or Monk Maha (Mahamaya in Sanskrit, meaning "great Chimera" was a Champa.

\(^{15}\) Historical data in *Thien Uyen Tap Anh Ngu Luc* (Volume II).

\(^{16}\) Based on *Hoa Lu* prayer columns discovered in 1987. See the following section.
II The Continuing development of Chan Sects

The Vinītaruci and Wu-Yan-Tong were names of two masters. Tradition has it that the oldest Zen School in Vietnam was founded by an Indian monk named Vinītaruci. Master Vinītaruci of Phap Van Temple, Co Chau Village, Long Bun province, hailed from South India. He belonged to a Brahman lineage. As a young man he already harbored the aspiration to go beyond the conventional world. He wandered throughout India searching for the Zeal of the Buddha-mind. However, his affinity for the Dharma was not met there. So he carried his monk's staff to East Asia.

Master Wu Yan Tong of Kien So Temple at Phu Dong District, Tien Du Prefecture was originally from Guang-Zhou Province (China). His family name was Zheng. From a tender age he respected the Buddhist lore and did not attend to the family property. He entered religious life at Shuanglin Temple in Wuzhai. By disposition he was generous, profound, and a man few words. He silently comprehended and realized the true nature of things, so his contemporaries called him Wu Yan Tong (which means "Wordless Realization") or Bu Yu Tong, “the transmission of the Lamp.”

The Chan Sect of Vinītaruci and Wu Yan Tong founded during the period of Chinese domination, and continued to develop under The Ngo, Dinh and Le Dynasties. In Thien Uyen Tap Anh lists the names of prominent members of the Vinītaruci Sect including famous tenth generation monk such as Phap Thuan master

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17 Kien So Temple was probably one of the most important sites in the history of Vietnamese Buddhism. Kien So Temple thus can be considered as sacred place in Vietnam religion.
18 According to the Nhat Dai Nam Thong Chi (28:11), Bac Ninh Province, Section Kien Tri Deon each”. Tien Du District was located ten (one li even 500 meter) to the northeast of Tu Son Produce. Its width from east to west measured eighteen li, from north to south, ten miles, Nowadays it known as Tien Son prefecture, Ha Bac Province (North of Vietnam).
19 Wu Zhou was a sub-prefecture of Jinhua in Zhejiang, China now Wuchuan District, Guizhou.
20 In the original text, a term that literally means "the study of Emptiness". Since Emptiness (Sūryata) is a concept that loans largest in Mahayana Buddhist Philosophy and Soteriology the term Emptiness has become an epithet for Buddhism for the Buddhist
and Ma-Ha master\textsuperscript{21} eleventh generation monks like Thien-Ong master and Sung-Pham master\textsuperscript{22} and those of the twelfth generation including Van Hanh master. In the Wu Yan Tong Sect, third generation monks such as Khuong Viet and the fifth generation monk Da Bao were also acclaimed.

About Zen Masters Phap Thuan of Co Son Temple,\textsuperscript{23} of the Thu village, Ai prefecture, no one knew where he comes from. His family name was Do. He was widely learned and skilled in poetry, and he possessed the talent of a royal minister. With clear understanding of contemporary affairs. As a child he had left home to become a monk and studied with Zen Master Phu Tri of Long Tho Temple.\textsuperscript{24} After attaining the Dharma, every word he uttered became prophetic. When the Le Dynasty (980-1009) started to establish itself, he was instrumental in deciding its political policies. When independence was gained and the country was at peace,\textsuperscript{25} he did not hold any office, nor did he accept any reward. Emperors Le Dai Hanh (980-1005) was more and more respectful towards him. He never called him by his name but always referred to him as Do Phap Su (which means "Dharma Master Do") and entrusted him with literary responsibilities.\textsuperscript{26} In the seventh year of Hie Tianfu era (986) the Song envoy Li Jue’s\textsuperscript{27} came for some diplomatic mission. Emperor Le Dai Hanh

\textsuperscript{21} TUTANL mentions the order of those generations excluding the founders of the sects as the Vinitaruci and Wu Yan Tong. The founder’s followers were called the fist generation. If the Vinitaraci included, The Phap Thuan's generation will be called the eleventh generation. Here as elsewhere, we follow the original way of listing generations as that of the Thien Uyen Tap Anh Ngu Luc.

\textsuperscript{22} As previously mentioned, we are skeptical about the birth date of Sung Pham.

\textsuperscript{23} In the Dai Nam, Nhat Thong Chi (29:47) the Son-Tay Province Section on Mountain and Rivers is mentioned a mountain named Co Son located to the north of Tam Duong Village, six miles from the district town. Phap Thuan's Temple might be on this mountain.

\textsuperscript{24} "Phu Tri" must have been one of the three patriarchs belonging to the ninth generation of the Phap Van (i.e., \textit{Vin\texttwon{}ītaruc\texttwon{}}) school whose biographic are lost.

\textsuperscript{25} Up to the time of the (Former) Le dynasty Vietnam had enjoyed independence for some time.

\textsuperscript{26} It is regrettable that of Phap Thuan's literary works have been lost, except for a better requesting the investiture of Dinh Tuyen which was submitted to the Song dynasty in 980 by Giang Cu Hoang and Vuong Thieu. To this letter can be found in the Toan Thu Ban Ky 1: 1208-62. For a complete record of this event, see, ibid. 1: 180.

\textsuperscript{27} The \textit{Cuong- Muc} (Summary) recorded Ly Giac’s (Li Jue) trip to Vietnam as follows: "In the second year, \textit{Binh Tuat} (\textit{Binh Tuat} name of the lunar calendar). Of the Tianfu era (962), the Song Court Sent Ly- Nhuc- Chiec (Li Rouzhuo) and Li Giac (Li Jue) on a diplomatic trip bringing a decree investing the \textit{An-nam} King as Prince of Giao Chi". See also Toan Thu, "Ban Ky" 1" 190 "Le Bouddhisme", p. 196.
asked Phap Thuan to disguise himself as a diplomatic officer\textsuperscript{28} to spy on Li Jue's activities. There happened to be a pair of wild geese swimming in the river. Li Jue playfully hummed:

\begin{quote}
Geese, geese, a pair of wild fees
Looking upward to word the sky.
\end{quote}

Phap Thuan still holding on to the oar completed the poem, Chanting:

\begin{quote}
White feathers spread over blue water
Red oars cutting through green waves.\textsuperscript{29}
\end{quote}

Li Jue was greatly impressed by this.

Emperor Le Dai Hanh once asked Phap Thuan how song the good fortune of the state would last. Phap Thuan said:

\begin{quote}
The good fortune of the country is like
A spreading vine,
In the Southern land there is a great place
If your Majesty stays in the palace
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{28} Tan Lai (Ch: jinLi) means "River Officer".
\textsuperscript{29} The Toan Thu, "Ban Ky", 1: 191-92, Wrote: "(In the eighth year of the Thien- Phuc era (987) the Song again Sent Li Jue to Sach-Giang Temple. The emperors then asked Dharma Master [Do] Thuan disguised as a 'river officer' to great Li Jue. Who was well versed in literature, happened to notice two geese swimming in the river? He playfully hummed: Geese, geese, a pair of wild geese looking upward to ward the Sky
The Master Chanting:
While feathers spread over blue water
Red oars cutting through green waves.
This is nothing but an anecdote, though not an insignificant one. In express Vietnamese confidence and asserts its people’s identity and dignity less than thirty years after gaining independence. These lines are obviously based on a poem entitled "Ode to the Goose" by Luo Binwang, composed when he was a little over ten years old. The poem reads as follows:
Goose, goose, goose,
Raising its head toward the Sky Singing.
White feathers spread over blue water.
Red feet cutting through green waves.
Quote in the poetry of the Ly and Tran. 1: 202, n.2.
Without contrived activity.\(^{30}\)

Then everywhere the clash of weapons will cease.

In the Second year of the *Hung Thong* era (990), Phap Thuan passed away at the age of seventy-six. He had composed a one-volume work entitled “*Bo Tat Hieu Sam Hoi Van*” (*A Bodhisattva's Words of Repentance*) which has been circulated widely in the contemporary world.

In the famous *Thien Uyen Tap Anh* it has been mentioned that he was "an erudite scholar, well versed in poetry with a special talent for helping Kings and profoundly understanding the basic problems of life. The advice he gave to King Le Dai Hanh has already been mentioned. When the King La Don Hanh asked him something about the country's destiny, he answered with the following poem:

Country's destiny is like the entwining clouds.

The Country Nam enjoying place

Nothing hovers the imperial palaces.

Fighting has ended everywhere.

The famous bonze, Mahā’s full name in Sanskrit, Mahāmāyā, means “great illusion”.

He also had a disciple called Do Thuan, who lived in the Quan Ai Temple. Da-Gia Village, Co-Mieng,\(^{31}\) was of Champa descent. His adopted family name was Duong. His father Boi Ba was learned in Buddhist literature and helped the office of Boi-Truong (formerly called Da Phien)\(^{32}\) at the Le court.

Zen Ma Ha was erudite and sagacious: He mastered Chinese and Sanskrit. At the age twenty-four, he settled down at Quan-Ai Temple to carry on his father's work.

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\(^{30}\) Which means without contrived activity, also or "no action". Therefore the sages manage affairs with no action, carry out teaching without speech".

\(^{31}\) *Co-Mieng* is in Thanh Ha District, Hai Duong province, North of Vietnam, because this province was the territory of *Hong Lo* under the Ly and the Tran.

\(^{32}\) *Bo Da*, He was in charge of Buddhist ritual music.
Once, while he was explaining a Buddhist Sutra, the Dharma Protector\textsuperscript{33} appeared and reproached him:

"What is the use of external learning".\textsuperscript{34} You surely can't comprehend its principle from this Maha lost his eyesight: deeply regretting his error, he was about to hurl himself into an abuse to commit suicide. Dong-Lam-Vien\textsuperscript{35} Saw him and stopped him, saying; "Stop: Stop: At these words, Maha dissolved (into enlightenment).

Subsequently, he came to Co Son Temple to Study with Do Phap Tuan and devoted himself to the practice of repentance as well as chanting the Great Compassion Mind Mantras for three years without slacking off. Thus he was able to move Bodhisattva Avalokiteśvara,\textsuperscript{36} who poured pure water from “her” willow branch on his head and sprinkled his face and eyes. Mahā immediately regained his eyesight, and his mind became even more pure and calm.

In the fifth year of the Thuan Thien era (1014), Mahā moved to Mount Dai Van\textsuperscript{37} in Trung An. He practiced diligently every day and attained the "Samadhi or retention" and other magical skills. No one could fathom him.

Emperor Le Dai Hanh\textsuperscript{38} had many times invited him to the court to inquire

\textsuperscript{33} The Dharma protector means those who support the true dharma of Buddha Dharma protector include all categories of Sentient beings, from Heavenly Kings non human beings, and worldly monarchs to ordinary human beings.

\textsuperscript{34} Chanting is also considered external learning. (Not profound, not thorough knowledge).

\textsuperscript{35} Dong Lam Vien might have been a contemporary of Phap Thuan.

\textsuperscript{36} Note that according to the description here Avalokiteśvara was already conceived of as being a female Bodhisattva.

\textsuperscript{37} Also called Mount Long Trieu, located at present-day Truong Yen Ha Village, Gia Vien District, Ninh Binh province. Ninh Binh province, Section on Mountains and Rivers, Mount Long Trieu, another name Dien Vien, is ten miles from Gia Vien District. At the foot of the mountain were Shrines worshipping the emperors of the Dinh and the Le Dynasties.

\textsuperscript{38} According to the Vietnam Short history The King Le Dai Hanh died in the eleventh year, (At Ty (name of lunar calendar). Of the Ung Thien era (1005) and we reading from Maha's biography that he did not move to Mount Dai–Van until 1015. The entire episode thus must have happened under Ly Thai To. Moreover, both the Vietnam Short history, 2: 3 a6, Anh the Toan, Thu (total books) Ban Ky in 2: 209 tell us that the Van Tue Temple was erected by Ly Thai To in 1011. Thus, the event of Mahā being held in custody must have happened after sol.
(about Buddhist), but Mahā only joined his palms and bowed his head. Only after Le Dai Hanh had repeated his questions several times did he answer: he simply said, “I'm just a crazy monk of Quan Ai Temple”. Le Dai Hanh was engaged and ordered him to be helpful in custody at Van Tue Temple in the imperial palace, and assigned men to guard the door. The next morning, they saw him outside the monk quarters though the door remained locked as before. Le Dai Hanh was amazed and Set him free.

Once, Mahā traveled south to Ai Chau and arrived at Sa Dang Province. The people there had the custom of worshipping ghosts and spirits, and most of them (were hunters and thus) were in the profession of taking lives. When Mahā exhorted them from eating meat, they all said" it is our gods who bestow merit or impose misfortune – we dare not go against them Maha said: "If you can renounce evil and do well, and there is any harm incurred, I will bear the responsibility for it". The people in the village said: "For a long time in this area, there have been many people who die of leprosy. All the medicine men and sorcerers have given up (trying to cure this malady). If you can cure it, we will follow your advice". Mahā then blessed water with Mantras and spat it on them those who suffered from leprosy were immediately cured. Although they admired him, it was impossible to convert them overnight because they had been deeply influenced by these bad habits. One a village notable named Ngo was drunk. So he put wine and meat on the table and pressured Mahā (to consume them) Saying: "If you can enjoy this with us, Master, then we will follow your teaching" Mahā said: "If dare not refuse your kind invitation, I'm only afraid of a Stomachache"., Ngo was pleased and said:

"Should there be any stomach ache, I will take it on for you". Mahā accepted his invitation. After a while, Mahā pretended to have a swollen stomach and from it came rumbling noises and heavy jointing. Mahā cried out: "Mr. Ngo, Why don't you take this pain for me"" Ngo face become pale. He did not know what to do. Mahā then

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39 Ai Chau was what now Thanh Hoa Province is.
40 In the Vietnam Short history 2:12 al mentioned a cavern named Sa Dang also the Sa Dang Cavern revolted. The emperor led the Campaign and won, Sa Dang Cavern and Sa Dang Province might be identical.
joined his palms together and chanted: "Homage to the Buddha, homage to the Dharma, homage to the Saṅgha. Please help me" After a while, he poured out the wine, and it turned into verdigris. Everyone was appalled Mahā said "when you have a disease cure it. When I have a Stomachache, you can't take it on for me. From now on are you going to follow my teaching? The people (in the Village) all paid homage and accepted his teaching.\(^{41}\)

In the Second year of the Thien-Thanh era (1029). Governor General Nguyen-Quang-Loi invited him to take over Khai Thien Temple in Thai Binh Prefecture. After living there for six years, Mahā left for Hoan Chau.\(^{42}\) Nothing is known about his activities after that.

When the feudal Vietnam restored its independence from China, Vietnamese Buddhism under the Ngo-Dinh-Le with its prestige in society at that time was implicitly affirmed and regarded as a socio-political entity. The newly–independent Feudal State above all, needed an ideology as spiritual fulcrum to kind and run the state machine. Confucianism and Taoism, which were the pure products of the aggressive imperialism were certainly not to be trusted by the newly independent state. Hence, Buddhism would keep the dominant position.

The new era of Vietnamese Buddhism also started. The rulers of Ngo, Dinh and early Le Dynastic opted for Buddhism as a national religion of Vietnam and made sincere efforts for the development of Buddhist Sangha. As a result of the formation of Vietnamese independent state, a stratum of Vietnamese monks emerged endowing with vast knowledge of Chinese language. They were good scholars and had acquired prominent place in the Vietnamese Society. The newly independent state needed a spiritual and moral support for the development of the society. In this situation, Buddhism had important role to play and it had taken up good shape by that time.

\(^{41}\) One of Part Maha's biographies remarkably resembles the activities of a certain Master Xiang in the Xu Gaoseng Zhuang. No one knows where Master Ziang hailed from. He came to Feifu Templet at Mount Qingsheng in Yizhou around the beginning of the Liang dynasty. He was happy and had a mind to spend the rest of his life there.

\(^{42}\) Ai Chau and Hoan Chau provinces were the Sites where Phap Hien had Stupas built to house Buddha's relic given by Sui Gaozu.
Multitudinous texts were already translated. The work for the prosperity of Buddha Dharma was done enormously, at that time many centres of Buddhist learning had come into existence and they were largely confined to Giao-Chau province i.e. On the Red River basin as well as in Ai-Chau province and Hoan-Chau province i.e. in the province of present day Thanh-Ha and Nghe-An. But by that time a large number of pagodas had also come up in these Buddhist centres namely Luy-Lau, Kien - So and some other place. Towards the development and propagation of religion, more Buddhist centres were opened. One such important Buddhist centre set up by the Dinh and early Le dynasties was Hoa Lu.

Under the Dinh Dynasties, Vinītaruci and Vo-Ngon-Thong, a disciple of Van-Phong did tremendous work. Khuong-Viet (Ngo-Chan-Luu) was also very famous. These two were of the Thien School as were Vinitaruci and Vo-Ngon-Thong in Vietnam in that time. And that time there were also many eminent Buddhist priests. They were well-versed in Buddhist studies as well as in politics and foreign affairs having the active contribution to the agitation for the national liberation period of King Dinh-Tien-Hoang in the second year of Thai-Binh title (971) started conferring mandarins titles in evil and military services. The same was done in the case of the Buddhist monks and Taoism. Among these titles, the notable ones were the following: Tang-Thong (as Saṃgharājā), Dai-Su (as great master), Dao-Si (as Taiosm) Uy-Nghi (as grand) (for example, Tang-thong, Ngo-Chan-Luu, with title Khuong-Viet, Dai-Su, Truong-Ma-Ny, with title Tang Luc, Dao-Si, Dang-Huyen-Quang with title Sung-Chan-Uy-nghi.

The establishment of mandarin titles for Buddhist monks and Taoism in the state machine proved that King Dinh-Tien-Hoang attached special importance to the role of religions particularly Buddha. Further Le dynasty also followed the way of the Dinh- a fact that Kings highly respectful to religion also made some people discontented.

Some Buddhist Zen masters were King’s counselors in home and foreign policies. The title "Khuong-Viet" which Dinh-Tien-Hoang conferred on Zen master Ngo-Chan Luu (means (Serving the Viet Kingdom) Khuong- Viet Dai Su belonged to
the fifth generation of the Vo-Ngon-Thong Zen School, who stayed at the Phat-Da pagoda at Cat-Loi village (today Ha-Bac). He was a pupil of Van-Phong’s at the Khai-Quoc Pagoda at which later he himself opened school for teaching. He was well-known at the sage of 40. Since then he became the counsel of kings Dinh-Tien-Hoang and then Le-Dai-Hanh. King Dinh-Tien-Hoang greatly admired him. King Le-Dai-Hanh respected him further and invited him for discussion in every important state affair.

When Master Khuong-Viet became old, he retired to the pagoda in the Du-Hy Mountain, and died in 1011. Fire refers to the nature of universe which is permeate and invariable so is the truth. Do-Phap-Thuan belonging to the tenth generation of the Vinitaruci Zen School was also King Le-Dai-Hanh’s counselor.

Zen masters Mahāmāyā (died 1029), Master Phap-Thuan (died 991) Master Van-Hanh (died 1018) all of Masters were also invited by King Le-Dai-Hanh to consult about religious as well as wordily affairs. Phap-Thuan used prophecy to help King Le-Dai-Hanh, and the King asked him about the Stability of the State destiny. King Le-Dai-Hanh consulted Van-Hanh about the result of the resistance against the Sung troops in 980, and Van-Hanh himself later agitated with prophecy for enthroning. Ly-Cong-Uan, the founder of the Ly dynasty.

The Buddhist monks under the Dinh Former Le Dynasties were also assigned foreign affairs, receiving Chinese envoys. In 986, two monks, Master Phap-Thuan and Khuong-Viet, were assigned to receive Sung’s envoy named Ly-Giac. Phap-Than dressed as a boatman, with his skill in steering it impressed Ly-Giac greatly and won his admiration. The reception was successful and when the envoy returned back home, Phap-Thuan presented him a poem title *Vuong-Lang-Quy*. That was a diplomatic poem with beautiful words praising the sovereignty of Vietnam.

Buddhist influence in Vietnamese society accelerated now-on-wards, particularly in the plains where most of the people lived. So many Buddhist pagodas rose such as Khai-Quoc Pagoda, Thap pagoda. Nhat-Tru pagoda, Ba-Ngo pagoda. The dominant region of Buddhism in the tenth century C.E. was still in the north of

43 According to the *Thien-Uyen-Tap-Anh* (Rethinking Vietnamese Buddhist History).
44 Ibid.
the Red River.

In the tenth century C.E., the two Zen Schools under Vinītaruci and Vo-Ngon-Thong continued their development work alongside that of master Phap-Thuan, Mahamaya, Thien-Ong, Van-Hanh, Van-Phong, Khuong-Viet and Da-Bao. Further, the influence of mysticisms, in the tenth century C.E. can also be seen. The mystic practices, particularly those belonging to the Vinītaruci Zen School became quite popular. Master Mahāyānā became known for reciting the spells of Dai-Bi-Tam (Mahākaruṇahṛdeya).45 Afterwards he exerted himself further and could understand the Dhārāṇī, Samādhi and esoteric magic. The master Van-Hanh also often practiced Dhārāṇī-Samādhi. As a result, the Dhārāṇī-Samādhi became popular for the practice of Mysticism. This means that the use of yoga became quite popular for maintaining (dhārāṇī), wisdom, knowledge, and also for preserving good and preventing evil.

In addition, Buddhist monks also used prophecy or the like to agitate the public particularly for politics. Phap-Thuan spoke in prophetic words and whatever Van-Hanh said the people considered it as prophecy. Van Hanh used the prophetic words to predict the enthronement of Ly-Cong-Uan. Apart from prophecies, Taoism Buddhist monks also used omens in dreams and other prophetic phenomena.

In the story of Khuong-Viet, Thien master of the Vo-Ngon-Thong Thien School, writes.

“He used to visit the Ve-Linh mountain in Binh-lo district Finding a secrete sport, he decided to build a pagoda there. One right he dreamed a deity who was wearing a golden armor, holding a golden spear in his left hand and a germ stupa in his right, and followed by ten hideous persons. The deity approached saying ’I am the Vaisramana heaven, my followers are Yakṣas. The Heavenly Emperor ordered me to

45 Mahākaruṇā-hṛdeya.
Mahākaruṇā (s) means Great pity great mercy and great compassion;
Hṛdeya (s) means Heart; mind, intention, desire.. the great of the compassion
46 Dhārāṇī(s) Mantra or magic words. Samādhi(s). Putting together, composing the mind, intent contemplation, prospect absorption, union of the mediator with the subject of meditation.
guard the boundaries of this country for flowering Buddhism. We had a predestined relation, now I am coming to ask for your help. Being paralyses with fear Khuong-Viet woke up and heard the roars with rage coming from the mountain. In the next morning, he entered the mountain and saw a secular tree 10 Truong high with fresh leaves covered by good clouds. He had the tree cut and carved into the image of the deity in the dream for worshipping. In the first year of Thien-phuc title (980) the Sung troops invaded (Vietnam). Hearing of this deity, king Le-Dai Hanh sent a messenger asking for his help. Knowing this, the Sung troops were afraid and retreated to defend the Huu-ninh River. And yet, seeing huge waves and water dragons dancing and jumping, the enemies disbanded and ran away."

The above story is similar to that of the Vaisramana heaven (devaloka) and monk Amoghavajra, the second patriarch of Chinese Mysticism in the eighth century C.E..

"In the Quy-li year of Thien-bac title (753), the Tay-phien troops besieged Luong-chau Monk Amoghavajra recited spells asking for help from heavenly troops. One deity wearing armor came. Answering the Tang Emperor Huyen-Tong's question about the deity, Amoghavajra said he was the eldest son of the Vaisramana heaven coming from the north. Few days later, the victory news came from Luong-chau for the help of the heavenly troops. Emperor Huyen-Hong ordered his soldiers to build a shrine for worshipping the Vaisramana heaven.

Vaisramana was the wealth deity in the ancient India legends, now he became the deity defending the dharma in the Buddhist legends. Perhaps the religious beliefs of Vaisramana were spread into Vietnam together with the influence of Chinese Mysticism. The Vaisramana heaven taking in charge of the north quarter together with three other heavens form Caturmahārājās or the four giant temple-guardians introduced as such to China by Amogha. The names of three other heavens are Dhararāṣṭra keeping the East; Virudhaka the South, and Virupakṣa the West in 1011, the Caturmahārājā Pagoda was built outside the Thang-long fort. Particularly, mysticism was used by the Feudal rulers to protect their reigns.
Till now, archaeologists have found out nearly twenty inscription pillars at Hoa-lu near the Hoang-long river, about two kilometres from the King Dinh-Tien-Hoang chapel. They are eight-sided stone pillars ranging between 50 and 70 centimetres long. On the first pillar found in 1965 reads, "Tinh-hai-quan Tiet-do-su Nam-viet-vuong Dinh (Khuong) Lien erected one hundred Bao-trang in the Quy-dau year (973)". Bao-trang or Ratnadhvaja are banners decorated with gems, but here they are pillars inscribed the Buddhist sutras. Dinh-Lien was king Dinh Tien-Hoang's eldest son.

On several pillars found in 1987 revealed the reasons for the erection of the pillars Nam-viet-vong Dinh-Khuong-Lien erected one hundred Bao-trangs in order to pray for the peace of his younger brother's (Dinh-noa Tang-noa) and other's souls. Dinh-noa Tang-noa was killed by Lien on charges of 'not being filial to his father (king Dinh-Tien-Hoang) and his brother (Dinh-Khuong-Lien), and having evil mind'.

According to DVSKTT, in the Spring of Ky-mao Year (979), Nam-viet - vuong Dinh-Lien killed his younger brother – Hang Lang – for Hang lang was appointed by Dinh-Tien-Hoang crown prince instead of Lien. Perhaps Hang-lang and Dinh-noa Tang-noa was a person.

Remarkably, all the pillars found at Hoa-lu were inscribed the special Buddhohsnisa-dharam in Chinese script transliterated from Sanskrit syllabus. This is a popular spell of Mysticism found in Fijaya-Buddhosnisa-dharam-sutra.

According to this sūtra, there was a king named Supratishita leading a luxurious and sensual life. One night he heard a voice from the sky informing that he would die in the next seven days and reincarnate in seven forms of the animal – pig, dog, fox, monkey, poisonous, snake, vulture and crow, then, he must suffer in the hell; if the reincarnated in the form of human being he would be blind in both eyes. Supratishita feared and asked for Indra's help Indra, then, came to request the Buddha. The Buddha recited a spell named Vijaya-Buddhosnisa-dharani for Indra to transmit to Supratishita and sentient beings. According to the Buddha, this spell could eliminate all sufferings from birth-and-death, bad karma as well as tortures in the hell.
Besides, reciting this spell could extend one's life long and get the support and protection from Bodhisattvas and deities.

When having the pillars erected with the inscription of the spell of Vijaya-Buddosnisa-dhāraṇī, certainly enough, Dinh-Lien wanted to clear all his bad karmas, sins including the crime of killing his younger brother. Besides, on a pillar writes: "Firstly, wishing Dai-Thang-Minh Hoang-De a king of the South Heaven forever, secondly, wishing Khuong-Lien stable wealth and position.

Nevertheless, Mysticism could not protect king Dinh-Tien-Hoang and his son, Dinh-Lien. "Do-Thich, a clerk in Dong-Quan district administration office, one night, slept on a bridge, dreamt a star falling into his mouth and thought it was a good omen. So, one night in October of the Ky-mao year or the tenth year of Thai-Binh title (979), on the occasion of King Dinh-Tien-Hoang and his son, Dinh-Lien, sleeping soundly after eating Yen Do-Thich slid in and assassinated both of them. After that, Do-Thich who hid in a royal residence was denounced by ladies-in-waiting and was arrested by Dinh-Quoc-Cong Nguyen-Bat. Nguyen-Bat killed him smashing his bones and flesh into pieces.

Mysticism at that time and later as well did not become an independent Mystic school as it did in China, even it was despised. Thien master Thong-Bien (1134) belonging to the tenth generation of the Vo-Ngon-Thong Thien school did not want to record monk. Bat-Nha's biography, for this monk belonging to the Thao-Duong Thien school attached special importance to the mystical magic but did not live up to the traditional of the Buddhist monasteries.

It may not be out of context to mention something about of Master Van-Hanh, of Luc-To Temple, of Dich-Bang Village, Thien-Duc Projection, who hailed Co-Phap. His family name was Nguyen, and he served the Buddha and Dharma for generations. As a child he was outstanding uncommon. He was well versed in all three learning and had studies hundreds Buddhist treatises. 47 He was plainly indifferent to game and

47 Here the return Bach-Luan (Chinese bailum) should be taken as a common noun and means 'hundreds' of treatises. It is definitely misleading to take is as the title of a treatise –
fortune. At the age of twenty-one, he left home to become a monk and together with master. Dinh-Hue He served for Master Thien-Ong of Luc-To Temple whenever he had time away from his status, he studies indefatigably. After master Thien-Ong passed away, he devoted himself to the practice of retention (†hāraṇī) and concentration (Samādhi)\(^{48}\). From then on, every word he uttered became prophetic for the people. He was very much revered by emperor Le-Dai-Hanh.

When the King Le-Dai-Hanh wanted to conquer Champa, he helps long discussions (with court officials) without reaching any decision. Van-Hanh submitted a memorial advising him to act quite and not miss the opportunity. After word Le-Dai-Hanh in fact did win the war.\(^{49}\)

At this time Le-Ngoa-Trieu (1005-1009)\(^{50}\) was on the throne, a cruel tyrant. Both Heaven and men deterred her behavior. Emperor Ly-Thai-To was then his by body guard and had not ascended the throne. During those years strange omens appeared in constantly in many form: a white dog with hair in his back that looked like the characters Thien-Tu (Son of Heaven)\(^{51}\) appeared in the Ham-Toai Hall, Ung-Thai-Tam Temple, Co-Phap Prefecture; lighting struck the Kapok tree and left writings on its trunk.\(^{52}\) Sound of chanting at night were heard around the grave of

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\(^{48}\) See Da Zhidu, T25.398b24 and 401 c27-28.

\(^{49}\) Precepts (Sīla) meditation (Samadhī) and wisdom (Prajna).

\(^{50}\) Le-Ngoa-Trieu whose personal name was Long-Dinh was le-Dai-Hanh's fifth Son. He unsurpassed the throne from Crown Price Le-Trung-Tong and became a psychopathic tyrant who loved to torture people for fun. Due to his hemorrhoids, he hhttp://quicknews.infoelp audience lying down. Thus, he was called "Ngoa- Trieu" [ which means" The King Who Held Audiennes Lying Down"] . See Toan-Thu, Ban-Ky 1: 198-201.

\(^{51}\) The Viet history , 2:2b5-7, were “Once a bitch at Ung-Thien Temple of Co-Phap Village gave birth to a white pup with black hair on his back figuring the two characters Thien-Tu (Son of Heaven).Now the emperor was born in the year Giap-Tuat ( tuat is Zodiac sign for dog).See also Toan-Thu, 2:207. According to the Viet-Tieu-An History, p. 106, this happened at Thien-tam Temple.

\(^{52}\) The Viet history 2: 1a9-b3, wrote: “In his (Ly-Cong-Uan’s) native village, a kapok tree was struck by lighting, which left character-like traces reading as follows: 

Deep are the root of the tree,
Green is its bark
The tree, the rice plants and the sword fall,
Eighteen seeds are formed
The sun appears in the east,
The stars hide behind the west mountains
Great Lord Hien-Thanh,\textsuperscript{53} insets gnawed at the bark of a bastard banyan tree at Song-Lam Temple, forming the character nation. Everything was explained as omens that the (Former) Le dynasty was going to collapse and the Ly was going to flourish.

Therefore, on the day when Ly-Thai-To ascended the throne, Van-Hanh was at Luc-To Temple, but he already knew in advance about the event and told the two uncles\textsuperscript{54} of Ly-Thai-To:

"The Son of Heaven has passed way. The Bodyguards is in duty (in the imperial palace) thousand of Ly men are inside the city (ready to act). Before the day is out, the Bodyguard will control the country".

He then place announcement at the crossroads that said:

The Thrones\textsuperscript{55} Sink into the North Sea,
The Plum tree\textsuperscript{56} grows under the southern sky.
On all Sides the weapons are silent.
In all areas the people celebrate peace. At these words the two lords were very

\textsuperscript{53} When the Ly-Cong-Uan ascended the throne he made his father Great Lord Hien-Thanh note about the vent around the grave of Lord Hien-Thanh as follows: As regards the event around the grave of Lord Hien-Thanh, at night when the masters Van-Hanh was sitting in meditation, voices could be heard from the four sides of the grave, the Voice from the east said:

\textsuperscript{54} The Viet history 2: 2b3 wrote that after ascending the throne Ly-Cong-Uan conferred lordships on his father and brothers but did not mention any of his uncles. The Toan-Thu, Ban-Ky 1: 204, however, informs us that an uncle of Uan was made Lord (Vu Dao).

\textsuperscript{55} The character Le, which means "thorn", is pronounced the same as "Le" the name of Le Dynasty.

\textsuperscript{56} Ly means, plum tree, but also means the family name of Ly, or Ly dynasty.
afraid and sent their men to hasten the imperial palace for information. In turned out to be exactly as Van-Hanh said.

On the fifteenth day of the fifth month of the sixteenth year (At-Suu) of the Thuan-Thien era (1025).\(^{57}\) Without any illness Van – Hanh Spoke a Verse.

The body is like lightening: it's there and then it's not.

It is like myriad plants and

Tree fresh in the spring but facing in autumn.

Trust in your mutiny unafraid of ups and down.

Because ups and downs are (as evanescent)

As drop of dew on a blade of grass.\(^{58}\)

He again instructed his students:

Where do you want to abide: I abide without abiding place, but do not depend on not abiding to abide". Shortly after that he passed way.

The emperor, court literate, and common people (were present as they) cremated his body, collected the replies, and built a Stupa to worship them.

Ly-Nhan-Tong had written a poem to commemorate him.

Van-Hanh fused present, past, and future

He matted the working of ancient prophecies.

\(^{57}\) Our text records that when master Van-Hanh passed away on the fifteenth day of the fifth month of the ninth year of Ung-Than era (1003). But according to the facts in his biography, Van-Hanh could not have died before Ly-Cong-Uan ascended the throne in 1010. Therefore, some scholars as Tran-Van-Giap, for instance – have suggested the date of Non-Hanh's death as the ninth year of the Thuan-Thien era (1018) instead of the ninth year of the Ung-Thien era (1003).

\(^{58}\) According to the *Viet-Tieu-An*, history 1: 83a 7-b1 also recorded the same event together with the verse with some slight difference.
His native village was Co-Phap

He planted his staff there to guard he royal territory\textsuperscript{59}

In a nutshell, Vietnamese Buddhism in the tenth century C.E. under the Ngo, Dinh and Former i.e. dynasties progressed in every class of the society, common people as well as the nobility. In fact, Vietnamese Buddhism acquired socio-political entity as early as the beginning of the sovereignty era of the Vietnamese Feudal State, which laid the foundations of its apogee during the succeeding Ly and Tran dynasties.

\textsuperscript{59} According to the \textit{Kien-Van-Tieu} – \textit{Luc} (The Subcontinent, erudition book), 4: 294, and the \textit{Viet-Tieu-An} history, p. 104, also record this poem. The expression \textit{Tam-Te} stands for the past, present, and future. It means that \textit{Van-Hanh} knew clearly about all the events of the past, present, and future.