

# The Imprint of Buddhism in Pagoda Architecture under the Ly Dynasty and Historical Values

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**Abstract:** Like in previous dynasties, in the Ly Dynasty Buddhism became a state religion and flourished. The thought of compassion and charity of Buddhism which has quickly integrated into the spiritual life and has become an integral part of the daily life of Vietnamese people. According to *Dai Viet Su Ky Toan Thu* (1697) (the oldest history book of Vietnamese people), at that time, "a lot of people come to the pagoda". Everyone who works also thinks of the support of the Buddha. After Ly Thuong Kiet had defeated the Song Dynasty invaders and punishing Chiem Dynasty has had building Bao An pagoda (Thanh Hoa province today) to show his gratitude for Buddha. At the same time, Linh Nham Queen built for herself to hundreds of the pagoda. When Ly Thai To ascended the king's throne, he did not build the palace but the king built eight pagodas. The old history has depicted pagodas which were very beautiful and solemn, while the palace of the king had depicted in a modest way (*Dai Viet Su Ky Toan Thu*, 1697). That at the time, Buddhism architecture works had an important position and stood out even more than other architectural works. However, today to understand and know about the Ly Dynasty pagodas, we can only imagine through the foundation of the remaining architectural works and ancient archives, because there are no remaining works intact, most of the works have been restored, but through it, partly shows us the magnificent pagoda architecture under the Ly Dynasty and the influence of Buddhism in those pagodas.

**Keywords:** Buddhism, pagoda, architecture, the Ly Dynasty, historical values

## I. Introduction

Buddhism was spread to Vietnam very early (Don, LQ., 1995). There is still no historical document to determine the exact time when Buddhism came to Vietnam. There are conflicting theories regarding whether Buddhism first reached Vietnam during the 3rd or 2nd century BCE via delegations from India (Lang, N., 1974), or during the 1st or 2nd century from China via invasion of the Han Dynasty (Giau, TV., 1973; Thu, NT., 2008). This issue has an important significance in studying the influence of Buddhism on Vietnam. If Buddhism was spread from India to Vietnam, it was primitive Buddhism, with a deep imprint of primitive Buddhism. If Buddhism was spread from China, it was Buddhism that was influenced by Chinese culture and more or less has changed from the original Buddhism. In either case, by the end of the second century CE, Vietnam had developed into a major Mahayana Buddhism center centering on Luy Lau (Bac Ninh province today), northeast of the capital city of Hanoi (today). Luy Lau was the capital of the Han region at Jiaozhi and was a popular place visited by many Indian Buddhist missionary monks en route to China. "The monks followed the maritime trade route with Indian traders from the Indian subcontinent to Vietnam before to China" (Giau, TV., 1973, p. 487).

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Buddhism in Luy Lau had a significant impact on the thinkers of the Lac Viet state (Chu, PH., 1960). The thought of compassion and charity of Buddhism which has quickly integrated into the spiritual life and was received that very warm (Giau, TV., 1973). "When Buddhism was peacefully introduced into Vietnam, with the compassionate and selfless mindset of Buddhism which was quickly absorbed by indigenous people and became the consciousness of the ancient Vietnamese people" (Thuan, NK., 2004, p. 70). At that time, the Lac Viet state had a wet rice agricultural civilization, but the state structure and religious organizations were very primeval (inceptive) and lack close connections. Meanwhile, that nation always has been threatened by northern enemies (Chinese feudal dynasties); which have the risk of being invaded and was assimilated by the feudal dynasties of China via the propagation process Confucianism (socio-political doctrine) and Taoism (indigenous religion of China). Most likely (Giau, TV., 1973) Buddhism has promoted the ideological role of the Vietnamese against the assimilation process of China. "In the Northern domination period, Buddhism did not become a national religion but played a role as a religion of national to participate in protecting the culture and national sovereignty of Vietnamese people" (Tho, HT., 2010, p. 234).

After escaping from the domination of Northern colonialism in the tenth century (the Vietnamese call this period is the Northern domination period), Vietnam has entered the era of independence and autonomy and Buddhism has continued to develop. In the Dinh Dynasty and the Early Le Dynasty, the court has begun to employ some monks with profound knowledge in many fields. The Dinh and Early Le Dynasties issued several patronage policies and developed the Buddhist Sangha system throughout the country as an orthodox religion, many large pagodas were built right at the Imperial city (Dai Viet Su Ky Toan Thu, 1697; Giau, TV., 1973; Thu, NT., 2008). The kings also sent delegations to China to get Buddhism scriptures to print and spread to the people, "the king has built the octagonal houses to contain Buddhism scriptures" (Dai Viet Su Ky Toan Thu, 1697, p. 256). "In this period, Buddhism begins to play its role as a spiritual force of the nation in strategic ways of building and stabilizing the country after a long period of being colonial rule and assimilation" (Tho, HT., 2010).

An important mark in the field of the religion of the Ly Dynasty was the flourishing of Buddhism (Lang, N., 1974; Duy, ND., 1999). In the Ly Dynasty (1009-1225), Buddhism has become the state religion of the Dai Viet state (Dai Viet Su Ky Toan Thu, 1697). In Vietnamese history, the Ly Dynasty was a great dynasty and left many deep imprints in different fields, including the architectural heritage of Buddhism. The Ly Dynasty promoted Buddhism due to many causes. In terms of relations, the king established the Ly Dynasty (Ly Cong Uan) with a special relationship to the contemporary monks, who were once adopted children of the monk Ly Khanh Van and a disciple of monk Van Hanh (Tu Dao Hanh). In terms of religious beliefs, the kings of the Ly Dynasty were very devout Buddhism. "On royal holidays, the king goes to Chan Giao pagoda so that the king could sit and watch chanting" (Dai Viet Su Ky Toan Thu, 1697, p. 257). Some kings themselves were honored as the ancestors of the Buddhism sects. King Ly Thai Tong was the seventh ancestor of the Vo Ngon Thong Zen sect, King Ly Thanh Tong was the second ancestor of the Thao Duong Zen sect (Lang, N., 1974). In this period, Buddhism has been not only for monks and Buddhists but also has affected the whole society (Thuan, NK., 2004). In every village of the Dai Viet, there have been pagodas in the village. The pagoda has been the sacred place of the people of the village, where people send their thoughts, the feelings of myself, the family and the parentage; they have coming to the pagoda to worship Buddha that was the daily work of the people (Lang, NB., 1972).

Buddhism has played an important role not only in culture-social life but also in pagoda architecture during the Ly Dynasty. In the Buddhism architecture of the Ly Dynasty, rich in both quantity and types of pagodas. Many buildings of

the pagoda of Ly Dynasty in some places still remain traces to this day and are renovated and embellished, such as Phat Tich pagoda, Vinh Phu pagoda, Dam pagoda in Ha Bac (Bac Ninh province, Bac Giang province today), Huong Lang pagoda in Hai Hung (Hai Duong province today), Ba Tam pagoda in Thang Long (Hanoi today), etc or it have has to repair and miniature like “Mot Cot” pagoda (one pillar pagoda) in Thang Long (Hanoi today); where the original traces are left with only the Buddha statue in completely renovated architecture such as Cho pagoda (Bac Ninh province today), Thay pagoda, Hoang Xa pagoda (in the old Ha Tay province, Hanoi today), Sung Nghiem Dieu Thanh pagoda (Thanh Hoa province today), etc.

## II. Vietnam's Pagoda System

In Vietnam, up to the present time, there has not been any specific statistics on the number of temples, the size of each temple. The most recent statistic is that Vietnam Buddhist Sangha was published in the Annual Conference of the Central Administration Council (December 26 and 27, 2003) held at Quang Duc pagoda (Ho Chi Minh City) is 14.401 pagodas. According to statistics of the Department of Cultural Heritage, Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism of Vietnam, as of 2012, there were 788 pagodas ranked as national monuments out of 3,374 monuments of the whole country.

Studying the system of pagodas in Vietnam, through ancient documents, epitaphs and ordained documents by feudal dynasties of Vietnam still stored in pagodas, it is realized that there are two types of pagodas:

Firstly, the pagoda was built by the court. These pagodas often had a very large scale and often were built in places that were very beautiful (there were mountains, rivers, forests, etc);

Secondly, the pagodas were built by villagers. These pagodas were built right in the village land. These pagodas were usually small in scale. However, the land was selected for building the pagoda must match the village's feng shui.

For the first type of pagodas: As analyzed above, the Ly and Tran Dynasties were very devout Buddhism, so under these two Dynasties, the pagoda was also built the most. It was the kings who ordered the building of the pagodas (Dai Viet Su Ky Toan Thu, 1697), many famous pagodas in history both in scale, architecture and holiness built under the Ly and Tran Dynasties which have persisted to this day.

Because the Ly and Tran Dynasties were the periods of the devotion of Buddhism, so in Thang Long capital, apart from the architectural system of palaces, multi-storied houses, the Ly Kings had built many Buddhism architectural works that famous as Ngu Hung Thien pagoda (in 1010), Van Tue pagoda (in 1011), Chan Giao pagoda (in 1024), Dien Huu pagoda (in 1049), etc.

Outside Thang Long capital, the court had also built many large-scale, pagodas worship Buddhism such as Phat Tich pagoda, Dam pagoda (Bac Ninh), Ngo Xa pagoda (Nam Dinh), Long Doi pagoda (Ha Nam), Tuong Long tower (Hai Phong), etc. Under the Tran Dynasty, Buddhism continued to develop with many large pagoda architectural such as Pho Minh pagoda and tower (Nam Dinh), Binh Son tower (Vinh Phuc). King Tran Nhan Tong who was the devotion to Buddhism, after leaving the throne and retransmit to his son, specialized in research Buddhism studies and founded the famous Truc Lam Zen school in the history of Vietnam (Quang Ninh province today), etc.

Building the pagoda was an important job for kings, and affecting the whole royal dynasty. Therefore, in order to build a pagoda, in addition to choosing a good land position (the left side has a blue dragon, the right side has a white tiger,

the back of the pagoda relies on the mountain, in front of the temple gate there must be rivers, lakes flowing through it) (Hinh, ND.,1999).

For the second type of pagoda: In the process of establishing the village and since Buddhism was introduced to Vietnam (3rd century BC) (Vietnam Academy of Social Sciences, 1993), besides the image that to be considered Institutions of the village such as banyan tree, water wharf, communal house yard, almost every village had a temple. Vietnamese proverb wrote “king land, village pagoda”, most pagodas belongs to the village community. Building pagodas was always a big deal for the Vietnamese village (Chu, CP., 1960). The pagoda and the village communal house were typical works of the whole village. Not only was architectural work, but the pagoda has been also a symbol of aspiration of the people. After all the busy living, everybody to pagoda feels peaceful and pure in the soul.

Choosing land to build pagodas was often dominated by the concept of feng shui (Hinh, ND., 1999), to build a pagoda, village people had to choose a good land, a good day, a good time. Good land was a place on the left that was empty or had rivers, lakes, and streams; the right must have a mountain (white tiger). The white tiger mountain (or tiger’s hand) on the right is high and thick. Rivers and lakes must be winding, and surround pagodas or in the shape of a lotus flower or dragon-shaped, etc.

The pagodas in villages and communes of Vietnam were usually built with familiar materials such as bamboo, wood, bricks, stone, etc (Vietnam Academy of Social Sciences, 1993). But the people often give the pagoda the best materials. Materials, as well as money used for the construction of the temple, have had often donated in all of the people, called “merit”. The people of the village believed that they would enjoy happiness, peace, health, etc. from offering materials or money for the construction of the pagoda. On wood pillars without termites, some pagodas clearly etched the names of contributors. In addition, these names have had also recorded in stone altars or on crockery, porcelain such as incense bowls, vases, lamp platforms, etc. in a long list.

The first day of building the pagodas as well as the inauguration day were all meaningful moments in the life of the people of the Vietnam countryside. There have had a usually special day during these days such as the village’s founding anniversary, the anniversary of the death of a village’s tutelary god, the first day of the Lunar New Year, etc.

Vietnamese pagodas were usually not a single building but an architectural complex, consisting of houses arranged side by side or connected (Vietnam Academy of Social Sciences, 1993). Depending on the layout of these houses, people divide them into different types of pagodas. However, the village pagoda always has had a temple gate, the main hall worshipping Buddha, the right and the left are two house blocks. These two house blocks are often used to rest or prepare for Buddha worship during the pagoda’s major holidays.

From the perspective of Buddhism art architecture, we see that many pagodas deserve to be honored as typical architectural art relics and lively “museums of sculpture”. Vietnamese often say: “The pagoda roof protects the soul of the nation”. That shows how important and close the Buddha has been to the people of Vietnam. In each pagoda, there has been a Buddhist worship main house with the system of Buddha statues and Bodhisattvas, each of which has been a complete wooden sculpture, arranged in an order to convey the history of Buddhist thought and teachings. Accordingly, standing in front of the Buddha worship main house, all Buddhists can worship and receive much Buddhist knowledge at the same time. The cultural space of the Buddhism pagoda has been quite standard, systematic and synthesized, an organic attachment between architecture, sculpture, painting and natural landscape (pagoda gate, pagoda yard, the main house is to worship

Buddha, ancestral house, bell tower, place of worship for the Mother Goddess, etc). For example, Tay Phuong pagoda, Thach Xa commune, Thach That district (Hanoi today). In particular, the Tay Phuong pagoda has 72 very special Buddha statues. It can be considered as a museum of sculpt.

### III. Buddhism and the Architecture of the Ly Dynasty

Pagoda architecture was one of the special features of Buddhism (Harvey Peter, 2012), is one of the basic characteristics that make the difference between Buddhism and other religions (Tien, DR., & Cohen, GL., 2017). Talking about the pagoda must be a place to worship Buddha (Bhikku, Bodhi, 2000). The pagoda is a basic architectural block that functions as a place to commemorate to recite or is a place of worship (Cohn, W., 1925; Brown Percy., 1959). However, under the Ly Dynasty, apart from being a place of worshipping Buddha, the pagoda also had many different functions, based on those functions, the pagoda architecture also had differences. Based on ancient documents, field surveys, results of researchers, colleagues, the author classified the pagoda architecture of Ly Dynasty as follows:

The pagoda type has built on a pillar, growing in height in the style of tower architecture (Hinh, ND., 1992). Before the Ly Dynasty, in the Hoa Lu (the capital of the Dinh Dynasty) there was the Nhat Tru pagoda, in the garden in front of the pagoda that has a big stone pillar (Figure 1) (Monuments Conservation Institute, 2017). The local legend recounts that the stone pillar as a pillar to support the pagoda above. When the capital moved to Thang Long, the Ly Dynasty built a new capital, one pagoda-like Nhat Tru pagoda has been built at Thang Long (the capital of the Ly Dynasty).



Figure 1: Nhat Tru pagoda (Ninh Binh province today)

Among the Ly Dynasty architectures, old history and ancient epitaphs mentioned a few architectures with only one pillar (made of stone). That was “one pillar bell tower with six lotus-shaped edges”, in the architectural complex of Linh Quang and Sung Nghiem palaces (Dai Viet Su Ky Toan Thu., 1697, p. 284). At the Thang Long (the capital of the Ly Dynasty) had Linh Xung pagoda which had “one pillar in the middle of the pagoda, worshipping a brilliant golden statue of Nhu Lai (Buddha), sitting on a lotus flower floating on the water” (Dai Viet Su Ky Toan Thu, 1697, p. 284). In addition, at the Thang Long capital also has Dien Huu pagoda. The Dien Huu pagoda also is called “Mot Cot” pagoda (one pillar pagoda) (Figure 2). The historical book describing the “Mot Cot” pagoda as follows: “There is a stone pillar inserted deep into the ground, above the stone pillar that is a lotus flower, there is a statue of the Guan Yin Buddha sitting on that lotus flower” (Dai Viet Su Ky Toan Thu, 1697, p. 285). According to the Dai Viet Su Ky Toan Thu (1697, p. 285), “one day the king dreamed that Guan Yin Buddha invited the king to sit on the lotus, then Guan Yin Buddha picked eight white lotus flowers and gave them to the king. When waking up, the king brought that dream to say to the mandarin of the court and the senior monks. Thien Tue monk Zen for that is a good thing so advised the king to build the pagoda as in a dream”. Then, the King built a pagoda-like in his dream, a stone pillar was plug in the middle of the pond, on the top of the pillar made a lotus flower of the Guan Yin Buddha, the monks would recite praying for the king to live long, therefore that the pagoda is called is Dien Huu pagoda with the intention of prolonging the living (Tru, CQ., 1998).



Figure 2: One Pillar pagoda - Dien Huu pagoda (Hanoi today)

In process existed, Dien Huu pagoda was repaired many times, each repair time it was added more new architectural details. However, overall, the architecture and old appearance remain unchanged (Monuments Conservation Institute, 2017). In 1100, Dien Huu pagoda was first repaired, the scale of the renovation was “better than the old one” (Thuan, NK., 2004). Old history records, “on the first time repair, extend Lien Hoa Dai lake, replacing Lien Hoa Dai name,

called Linh Chieu lake, outside the lake, there was a corridor carved flower and leaf extremely delicate, outside the hallway, digging Bich Tri lake, all were bridging to pass. In the middle of the pagoda garden, a stone pillar was erected, above a stone pillar was a lotus flower, put the Guan Yin Bodhisattva statue on that lotus flower (Dai Viet Su Ky Toan Thu, 2004, p. 302). Particularly, that stone pillar was built 10m high, which was suitable with lotus, for the big enough to touch a thousand petals at the top of the column (Quang, TT., 2008). There was an idea of taking a map of Dien Huu pagoda compared to the Tantric Buddhism tower, recognizing many similarities and considering Dien Huu pagoda as a Buddhism tower architecture.

Dien Huu pagoda, from the name of the pagoda until the rituals carried out here are tied to the Ly Dynasty, in the forbidden garden, located on the west side of the citadel, so it became the private pagoda of the Royal family. At the beginning of the construction of the pagoda, the pagoda was simple but it was an image of a giant lotus flower blooming on the water surface. This was the creation of mid-11th century architects; going up from the tradition of “following the old mark”, but “innovating” in the spirit of the dream of King Ly Thai Tong about a lotus flower, the image associated with Buddhism.

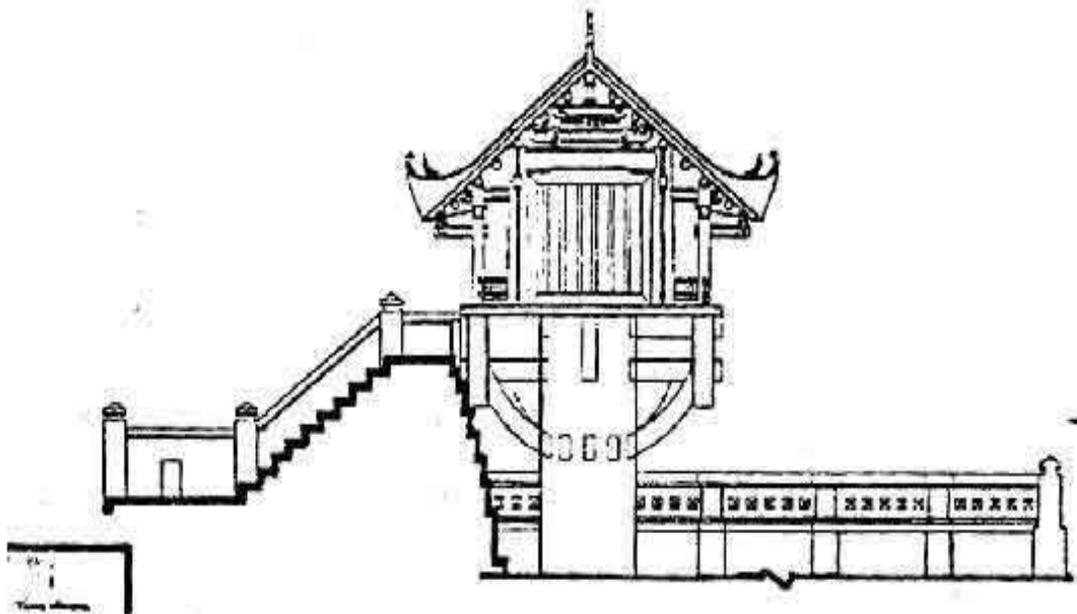


Figure 3: Cross section of Dien Huu pagoda

*Source: Vietnam Cultural Museum 1989*

The Dien Huu pagoda was the development of a traditional architecture type that has recently been preserved, at that altar placed on top of a pillar that plugged deep into the ground (Tru, CQ., 1998). Ethnographic and archaeological documents also confirm tradition "the primitive man who hang yourself on a tree branch to build houses" (Van, VH., 2020, p. 7). In “Dong Son architecture”, with a type of stilt house that was built on a pillar with two walls on both sides, it was engraved on the Ngoc Lu bronze drum and Hoang Ha bronze drum. The architecture on a pillar that also found in China. The scholar Le Quy Don (1995) led a book about the Big Monument in Giang Lang (La Cong Chau house) in China shows, the monument is built on one pillar, all the beams were plugged into the pillar, and the house of La Cong Chau was so big that there was only one pillar. But Dien Huu pagoda was not only an ordinary one-column architecture, but the Ly Dynasty

artists had also created a giant artistic lotus, ensuring a firm, precise structure and graceful, both the Buddhist philosophy and pure aesthetic content.

The kind of pagoda the Ly Dynasty preferred usually placed in remote areas, was both a place to worship Buddha and to bless the Royal family, as well as a "hanh cung" (royal stop step-over place) - a place the king to rest whenever he went to "vi hanh" (discover the life of the people). This type of pagoda, besides the architectural works, also has had a very high tower, which can be found in Tuong Long pagoda (Hai Phong city today), Chuong Son pagoda and Doi pagoda (Nam Dinh province today). There were pagodas with lots of towers were the Phat Tich pagoda (Figure 4) and Dam pagoda (Bac Ninh province today). These pagodas had been visited by the Ly kings.

The Phat Tich pagoda and Dam pagoda were all located in the Ly Dynasty homeland, north of the Duong Rive (30 km far from Hanoi to the north). The two pagodas not far from the river, so you could go to the pagodas by both road and waterway. Both pagodas were on the mountainside; the back of the pagoda rests against the mountain, the front of the pagoda facing the river. Choosing land to build pagodas was often dominated by the concept of feng shui (Hinh, 1999), to build a pagoda, the king had to choose a good land, a good day, a good time. Good land was a place on the left that was empty or had rivers, lakes, and streams; the right must have a mountain (white tiger). The white tiger mountain (or tiger's hand) on the right is high and thick. Rivers and lakes must be winding, and surround pagodas or in the shape of a lotus flower or dragon-shaped, etc. Because the two pagodas are located on the mountainside, the two pagodas have many steps. The Phat tich pagoda was 3 steps, the Dam pagoda was 4 steps on the ground floor, with the width of the surface higher than 60m and run deep into more than 100m for each step. The floors on the floor were embanked, kept from the bucket of soil down by the rows of 2 or 3 layers of stone walls, building the steps and slightly reclining. On that vast surface, in addition to the tower plants, there were many different and magnificent buildings.



Figure 4: Phat Tich pagoda (Bac Ninh province today)

According to records in the old history, the Phat Tich pagoda is very large (Dai Viet Su Ky Toan Thu, 1697). The pagoda's epitaph (1680) also affirms that: "The third king of the Ly Dynasty, in Long Thuy Thai Binh year, 4th (1057), the king build a high tower, carved a statue of himself, planted with gold standing, 6 meters tall, built a vast pagoda that containing over a hundred room, etc. On the top of the mountain, a stone building was opened, and the level of natural electricity was shining like glass, it was wide and bright. On the front steps, there are ten beasts, a dragon pond behind, a high angle drawing phoenix and kind of birds, stars shining brightly, wide floor, dragon hand reaching to the sky, the palace drawing pink roses" (Dai Viet Su Ky Toan Thu, 1697).

Until the eighteenth century, the authors of Tam Thuong Ngau Luc book also saw in the Phat Tich pagoda had many towers in the pagoda garden that existed until today (Figure 5). Today, there is still a 16-meter-high statue on the floor (Figure 6) and 10 animals arranged in horizontal rows, on the second-floor edge, just as the epitaph recorded, which the basis for the existence of the magnificent palaces.



Figure 5: Tower garden in the Phat Tich pagoda



Figure 6: Buddha statue at Phat Tich pagoda

The Dam pagoda built in 8 years (1086-1094) has been completed, especially invested by the court, on a large scale. In the 13th century was described by King Tran Nhan Tong as a true beauty: “12-layer architectural painting, eyes see nature thousands of times” (Dai Viet Su Ky Toan Thu, 1697). At the time that (Dai Viet Su Ky Toan Thu, 1697), local people said that the Dam pagoda had hundreds of rooms, monks closed the pagoda from the afternoon until the moon rises. Today, the rooms of the Dam pagoda is no longer available, but the door system to the basement levels has had very large, in which the steps on the first floor have been high and wide 16m. On the second floor, the left side has a circular area, about a meter high with a diameter of about 4m50cm, around the embankment is carved with a “wave” shape, opposite to the right there is a high square ground was 2m, the long edge was 7m, also bulkheads stone “wave” shape. Two square-shaped land areas at both sides of the main doors create a balance without repeating and very well-organized, with tight constituent elements, expression of very high aesthetic value. That was an expression of ancient Vietnamese thinking about the universe with a view of the sky, the earth, and the harmony with the yang - yin. This meaning was also seen right on the circular land with a stone pillar about 5m high consisting of a cylindrical block (1m30 diameter) superimposed on a box block (a horizontal edge of 1m4 and 1m6) (Figure 7). That harmony manifests the sense of blessing and longevity.



Figure 7: Stone columns at Dam pagoda

The kind of pagoda that was both in the field and next to the mountain, couldn't find traces of the tower, the scale is smaller than the pagoda with the tower. The pagoda was smaller than a pagoda with a tower but it was still quite large and noticed by the Kings Ly. The pagoda was built next to the mountain, only one layer of foundation such as Vinh Phuc pagoda was built in 1100 and Tinh Lu pagoda was built in 1119 and belongs to Ha Bac province (Bac Ninh province today), sometimes the pagodas were built in the middle of the fields such as Ba Tam pagoda (also known as Sung Phuc Tu or Linh Nhan Tu Phuc Tu) (Figure 8), was built in 1115 in Hanoi today, and Huong Lang pagoda (abbreviated to Lang pagoda, whose name is Vien Giac or Thach Quang Tu) has been built around the same time as Ba Tam pagoda in Hai Duong province today.



Figure 8: Ba Tam pagoda

If the Vinh Phuc pagoda and Tinh Lu pagoda have had only one floor in the mountainside with the debris of stone bricks, Ba Tam pagoda and Huong Lang pagoda will also see the scale and location of some architectures. The Ba Tam pagoda has had a doorstep to the pagoda, about 12m wide, marked by a pond digging, a railing into steps, from there to the middle of the upper part of the palace where a pair of lions are in the lotus building is 60m. The pair of lions, the lotus lake and the railing of the gate of Ba tam pagoda were seen at Huong Lang pagoda. However, in terms of the overall architecture, Ba Tam pagoda is much more beautiful.

The Huong Lang pagoda is located in the “internal” of the village, the area is nearly 40,000 square meters, vertically north-south direction is 345m and the east-west direction is 115m. The precinct of the pagoda includes fields, mounds, ponds, and centers, and next to the pagoda there is a river flowing close to the three districts, very convenient for visitors to visit the pagoda; the gate of Tam Quan is high 15m and wide 7,5m, then going further to 84m will come close to the upper power floor with a large stone statue sitting on the Lotus. Through the three-quarters of the pagoda, there are steps to go down to the pagoda pond with two old mounds that are the foundation of old architecture, from 5m to 7m high and about 400m wide. Behind the yard is the shrine area with the upper electric platform over 2m high with the giant lion statue. The whole temple area grows along the length, the deeper it goes and the closer it is to the place of Buddha worship, the two sides of the road have a sign. At the end of the road, there is a temple area near the front of 23m wide and more than 20m high, in which the area of worship Buddha is nearly 18m \* 8m and 10 \* 8m. The inner area is smaller but higher than the outer area, four sides have doors opening to four directions. Considering only the electric area worshipping Huong Lang pagoda, somewhat of the ground relation of the tower architecture; background near the square, four sides of the door are gradually taller with three layers of retractable foundation. Thus, Huong Lang pagoda spread out like a monastery, in which the worship of Buddha was influenced by the layout of the Buddhism tower so that the Buddhists went to worship Buddha.

The Sung Nghiem pagoda (Thanh Hoa province today) represents the third type of pagoda. According to epitaphs built immediately after its completion in 1118, not only has had a large scale but also magnificence: “bent roof like a rainbow after the rain has been protruding, rooftop are beautiful, tile roofs like pheasant are spreading wings, carved heads like phoenix dance and adoration toward the sun. The curved roof gleams under the sun, the winding in front of the wind, before the wall rows of corridors an unmistakable field, fence walls encompass. On the right, there is a garden with a fragrant aroma, soft orchids growing on the roof. On the left side, there are ponds, fresh lotus float to the surface of the water, etc. there are enough mats, beds for guests to rest, and build enough kitchens to provide food for meditators, tidy pagodas, stately Buddha statues”.

Among the thousands of pagodas built during the Ly Dynasty many were small pagodas in villages, hamlets or top on the mountains, few people have access to (Lang, N., 1974). This pagoda type and in remote areas, which may belong to the farmers; documentation of these pagodas are rare and identify the source. These pagodas at first were just small shrines, meant for the monk to cultivate. Linh Xung pagoda on Nguong Son mountain before being widened by Thai Uy Ly Thuong Kiet, as the epitaph in the temple affirmed: “In the past, there was a private hermit who built "Am" in it and charmed read the book, though the precepts are not yet strict”. Before it was enlarged by Chu Cong, according to stele in the pagoda "there is an ancient pagoda relic, an old foundation where the brick and tile remain there are still traces”. After that, the pagoda was restored on the old pagoda foundation.

Thay Pagoda is located in Ha Tay province (Hanoi today) (Figure 9) associated with Sai Son rock mountain with many caves, including Thanh Hoa cave, where Tu Dao Hanh monks practiced, but when he comes down the mountain, the monk set up Thay pagoda to continue cultivation. Near the Thay pagoda, there is Hoang Xa cave which behind the cave door is also a place to a monk to cultivate. At the foot of the mountain in front of the cave, there is still a pedestal of Buddha statue to mark, the construction in 1099, the 8th Year of the reign of King Ly Nhan Tong (Don, LQ., 1995). It was a small pedestal, similar to the Buddha platform of Thay pagoda.



Figure 9: Thay pagoda (Hanoi toaday)

Along with this type of pagoda, in Thai Son commune, Hiep Hoa district (Bac Giang province today) also has traces of a pagoda during the Ly Dynasty, in the pagoda, there was also a stone pedestal dedicated to the Buddha statue, both size and shape like the statue of Hoang Xa pagoda and Thay pagoda.

Bao Ninh Sung Phuoc pagoda (Tuyen Quang province today), follows the remaining epitaph in the pagoda, the pagoda erected by Thai Thu Ha Hung Tong in 1107, staying in remote mountainous areas, but praised had beautiful epitaphs in a compact framework. The pagoda was built on the top of the mountain, in front of the pagoda is a majestic, stretching landscape system. The pagoda scene is extremely quiet, creating a solemn and taciturn space.

There are many pagodas of the Ly Dynasty that have been mentioned by ancient documents or is recorded in epitaphs of the pagoda that exist on the land of Vietnam today, but due to objective and subjective conditions, they cannot be described in this the framework of an article.

#### **IV. A few Comments**

Based on ancient documents still exist today, especially the existing architectural vestiges, the Ly Dynasty architecture has high artistic value, including the architecture dedicated to the imperial court and religious architecture, in which the dominant architecture is a pagoda, tower (Monuments Conservation Institute, 2017). Many pagodas have been destroyed by time, war, disorder while others have been embellished and restored.

The Ly Dynasty's ambition was to build an independent nation, no less than the surrounding countries; in the upward trend, pay attention to building a national artistic culture in the process. Its first face is the Thang Long Citadel where the old history mentions many palaces, citadels, dragon gardens, royal gardens, and even pagoda.

Foreign documents refer to the four-story palace. Meanwhile, contemporary epitaphs, especially Ancient documents (Dai Viet Su Ky Toan Thu, 1697) were clearly cross-recorded, quite thorough about the large, superficial and magnificent scale of pagodas and towers built during this period. Historian Le Van Huu has noted that the Ly Dynasty: “(made) pagoda to worship Buddha more splendid than the palace of the king” (Dai Viet Su Ky Toan Thu, 1697, p. 354).

The architecture of the great pagoda and tower of the Ly Dynasty was built in beautiful, natural places, form a complete architectural landscape with mountains, rivers, trees, houses, etc. In high mountain areas, the pagoda is only built in the ridge mountain (such as Phat Tich pagoda, Vinh Phu pagoda, Dam pagoda, etc); low mountain areas can be built at the top mountain (such as Chuong Son pagoda, Do Son tower, Doi mountain pagoda, etc); in places where there is no mountain, it is built on the mound (such as Ba Tam pagoda, Huong Lang pagoda, etc). Those pagodas, although not close to the people's houses, are still associated with villages and make living areas for the whole community in a large area. The pagoda is a peaceful and cozy place. Taking advantage of the high terrain of the mountain or mound, the pagoda, the tower is often near the river, if far from the river, digging a canal from the river leads to the temple door, convenient for transportation. The Ly Dynasty artists took advantage of the charming scenery to meet Buddhist requirements of compassion, and good in construction and placements of pagodas.

In many pagodas of the Ly Dynasty, the central architecture was a high-pitched tower like a crucifix connecting the heavens, both in harmony with the yin and yang, and offering the Buddha in the sky. The tower of the Ly Dynasty was not the grave of the abbot, but the pagoda of Buddha. The tower often erected in the middle or in front of the pagoda,

covered with patterns all over the outside to emerge from the earth. The entrance to the tower has steps and steps on both sides, such as Chuong Son tower, which has many steps to touch the waves and on it is the female dance. The two sides of the tower gate usually have a diamond statue. From the mundane world, Buddhists walk through the tower door to come to the world of Buddha, wash the dirty to reach purity and longevity.

The pagoda is not only a place to worship Buddha, with a very special system of pagodas built under the Ly Dynasty that has become a place of the spiritual life of the people, a place for people to send feelings, affection, pray for the cover of the Buddha.

With the pagoda system built by the Ly Dynasty, it has become an extremely valuable property, becoming a cultural value of the Vietnamese nation, contributing to creating a unique cultural value of the nation.

## V. Conclusion

The pagoda during the Ly Dynasty and the earliest Buddhism architecture left traces on the ground and in the ancient documents. It affirms a unique national artistic value of Vietnam and is also the era, worthy of opening the beginning for the Dai Viet state civilization, which is equal to the creative work of the highly qualified nation.

Buddhism is associated with famous pagoda during the Ly Dynasty, which has brought into full play and promoted national cultural identity and at the same time become an essential part of the spiritual life and good direction of Vietnamese people since then.

The Ly Dynasty's Buddhism architecture opened the way for the school of architecture (school of architecture of the Ly Dynasty) to build Vietnamese pagodas in the next dynasties. In each of the next feudal dynasties of Vietnam, although there were changes and changes the images, layout, scenery, construction materials of the Ly pagoda were still used by the next dynasties. Although the pagoda architecture system is diverse, it is still very consistent.

Studying Buddhism influence on the pagoda architecture of the Ly Dynasty, apart to understand the history, is important to understanding the spiritual life of the old Vietnamese, the foundation for the Vietnamese way of life today, also to understand how his father had to absorb the values of humanity (especially Buddhism) to enrich the cultural capital of the Vietnamese people.

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