



CHAPTER II

THE VIETNAMESE AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF ANNAM-NIKAI IN THAILAND

Before going further into the conditions and the forms of adaptation of Annam-nikai, it is necessary to offer a brief review of the migration of Vietnamese people into Thailand as an outline of the historical development of Annam-nikai in Thailand to get a picture of the background of this Buddhist sect.

2.1. Forming Communities

Although much research has been done on the migration of Vietnamese people to Thailand, such as “*The Vietnamese in Thailand*” by Pussadee Chanthavimol¹ and “*The Vietnamese in Thailand: A Historical Perspective*” by Peter A. Pool,² a brief review of the migration of Vietnamese people to Thailand will be examined here to provide a background for the Vietnamese currently residing in Thailand.

2.1.1. Pre-Ayutthaya Period Migration

Though there is no exact record of the first migration of the Vietnamese into Thailand in either Thai or Vietnamese history, it is certain that the Vietnamese people had arrived and been settled in Thailand for a very long time. According to most Thai scholars, the details found in the *Thai Historical Annals*

¹ Pudsadee Chanthavimol, *Vietnamese in Thailand*, Thailand National Research Fund, Bangkok, 1998.

² Peter A. Pool: *The Vietnamese in Thailand: A Historical Perspective*, Cornell University Press, 1970.

– volume 3 (หลักฐานในประชุมพงศาวดารภาคที่3) are the earliest records of the existence of the Vietnamese in Thailand.³

Peter A. Pool also mentions a group of a few dozen Catholic Vietnamese families who, having fled persecution in Vietnam, came and founded a Christian community in Chanthaburi province in 1702.⁴

But in the book “*The History of Vietnamese Buddhism*”⁵ Lê Mạnh Thát, a well known Buddhist scholar in Vietnam, refers to a wave of Vietnamese people who migrated to South East Asia, East Asia and South Asia for trading during the 7th century. Those people founded the earliest Vietnamese communities outside Vietnam⁶ among which, it is interesting to note, the Vietnamese community in the region of Dvaravati (presently Nakhorn Prathom and parts of other provinces in the Central part of Thailand).⁷ However, Thai archeological evidence found in this area from that period does not mention the presence of the Vietnamese people. To verify this Vietnamese community, further archeological study and excavation is necessary.

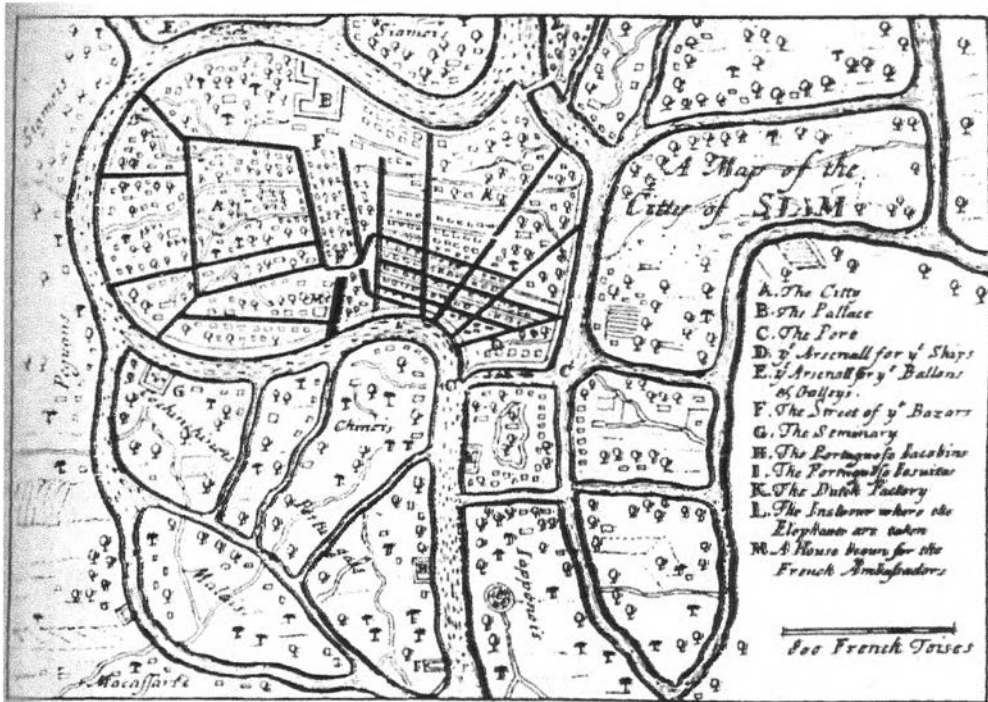
³ It noted that King Mahachakrapat of Ayutthaya had the Mahanaak canal dug in 1548 which passed through a Yuon community and temple named Wat Khun Yuon. No other evidence about this temple has been found. (*Thai Historical Annals* – volume 3, cited from Pussadee Chanthawimol, 1998, p22).

⁴ Peter A. Pool, 1970, p 32.

⁵ Lê Mạnh Thát, *Lịch sử Phật giáo Việt Nam*, tập II, tái bản lần thứ 2, Nhà xuất bản Thành phố Hồ Chí Minh, 2003. [Lê Mạnh Thát, *The History of Vietnamese Buddhism*, Vol II, Second edition, Hochiminh City Publishing House, 2003].

⁶ Ibid., p 150.

⁷ Lê Mạnh Thát also mentions in his book a wave of Vietnamese monks going to India to study Dharma during this period. Among them, the Venerable monk Đại Thừa Đăng was the outstanding one who considerably contributed to the translation of the Prajna Sutra into Chinese – the official language of Vietnam in the past. The history of Đại Thừa Đăng was recorded in *Đại Đường Tây Vực câu pháp cao tăng truyện* (*The Stories of the Journey to the West for Dharma Study During the Great Tang Dynasty*) Đại Thừa Đăng followed his parents from Aí Châu (presently Thanh Hoá province, Vietnam) to the region named Dvaravati and was ordained in Mahayana Buddhism there. Then, he followed the Tang ambassador to China. In China, he met and became an outstanding disciple of the historical monk Huyền Tráng (or the Tripitaka monk) of the Tang Dynasty. After translating the Tripitaka into Chinese, he left China for India and died in Kasia (India). According to Dr Lê Mạnh Thát, the detail of the ordination of Đại Thừa Đăng in the Dvaravati region proved that there was a community of Vietnamese migrants who settled in Thailand during the 7th century; certainly, they had established their own temples following Mahayana Buddhism there. (Lê Mạnh Thát, 2003, p 173).



Picture No 6: Map of Simon de Laloubère : Ayutthaya in 17th century

2.1.2. Ayutthaya Period Migration

In the sixteenth century, the Hậu Lê (Later Lê) dynasty in Vietnam faced a recession in both economics and politics. During the reign of King Chân Tông Cung Hoàng (1516-1527), the Lê dynasty was overthrown by Mạc Đăng Dung. Taking advantage of this situation, the Trịnh family in the North and the Nguyễn family in the South began to interfere in the country's politics by rallying people under the so-called title of "Support the Le Dynasty." But in fact, they were, little by little, taking power from the Court. This resulted in a civil war, which lasted for more than fifty years and recovered power from the Mạc dynasty. But after the Lê's regained the throne, these two powerful families continued to wrestle over power causing the two hundred year Trinh-Nguyen conflict.

During this time, in the seventeenth century, groups of Western missionaries arrived in Vietnam. Their purpose was to introduce and spread western religion (Roman Catholicism and Protestantism) among the indigenous people. Being afraid that the influence of these missionaries could potentially harm national security, the Vietnamese Royal Court and the provincial authorities adopted a strict policy towards Western people, especially Catholics. They were persecuted by the Vietnamese authority. Therefore, these people fled to other countries; Thailand (known as Siam at that time) was their best choice since it was easily accessible from the South China Sea.⁸

If the details found in the Thai Historical Annals – volume 3 are considered the first attestation to the existence of the Vietnamese Buddhist community in Thailand, then the Vietnamese Christian community found in Chanthaburi in the early eighteenth century could be the first Vietnamese Christian community in Thailand. Additionally, in Siam, under the reign of King Narai Maharat (1656-1688), the 27th King of Ayutthaya, an open policy towards foreigners, both Asian and Western, was adopted. Simone De la

⁸ Pudsadee Chanthavimol, 1998, p 22.

Loubère, the second French Ambassador to Siam, wrote in his “*Chronicle from Siam*” that “...foreigners, who had migrated to Siam, increased gradually in number since Ayutthaya was known as the city of justice and freedom....the number of foreigners found in Siam at this time included up to forty languages.”⁹

Thus, Siam at that time was the shelter of people from forty different countries. Simone’s map of Ayutthaya shows a camp of Vietnamese located near a Chinese camp in the southwest of the city. The camp was named “The Cochin China camp.” (See Map of Ayyutthaya, picture No 5.)

Thus, early Vietnamese migration to Siam was to escape the persecution of the Vietnamese authorities or to look for a better life.

2.1.3. Migration of Tôn Thất Xuân During Thonburi

At the end of the eighteenth century, there was a peasant revolution led by three brothers, Nguyễn Nhạc, Nguyễn Huệ and Nguyễn Lữ, in Qui Nhon (Central Vietnam). This revolution was known widely as the Tây Sơn uprising. The outbreak of Tây Sơn spread to the South driving out many members of the Nguyễn family, as well as people with close ties to the Nguyễn. Tôn Thất Xuân, a member of the Nguyễn, with his family and followers ran from Hue and took refuge in Hà Tiên.¹⁰ In 1778, King Taksin of Thonburi, sent a force to fight against Hà Tiên and destroyed it. Taksin brought Tôn Thất Xuân and his vassals to Thonburi.¹¹ King Taksin allowed Tôn Thất Xuân and his family to stay with other foreigners camped on the eastern side of the Chaophraya River (now known as the Ban Moo district, Pahurat Road, Bangkok).

At the end of King Taksin’s reign, it was rumored that King Taksin had a mental problem. One day, he dreamed that Tôn Thất Xuân had swallowed a big

⁹ *Chronicle of LaLoubère*, cited from Pusadee Chanthavimol, 1998, p24.

¹⁰ This southernmost town of Vietnam was known in Thai historical records as Banthaimat town. It was the important border town which Siam and Vietnam used to gain control over Cambodia. (Thawee Sawangpanyangkoon: *Comparison of Vietnamese history and Thai history*, Vietnamese Studies. trimonthly periodical, Institute of Language & Culture for Rural Development, Mahidol University, Vol 8, p 4).

¹¹ Kham Bunnaak (Praya Thipwakornvong): *The Royal Historical Records of Rattanakosin (Rama I)*, 1983, p 15.

diamond. When the King asked Tôn Thất Xuân about that diamond, Tôn Thất Xuân denied the King's accusation. In the meantime, some people told King Taksin that Tôn Thất Xuân planned to flee. Thus, King Taksin had Tôn Thất Xuân and 53 of his followers executed.¹²

After the death of Tôn Thất Xuân, all the Vietnamese in Pahurat had to move out of Bangkok. During the Reign of King Rama I, the King allowed them to move back to their old places in Bangkok. But some of them chose to join the new incoming group of Nguyễn Anh in Bang Po. Presently, it is impossible to find a Vietnamese descendant living in this area. The only remaining evidence of a former Vietnamese community is a small *Soi* named *Trook Yuon* (Yuon Alley) at the back of Pahurat Street.

2.1.3. Migration of Nguyễn Anh during King Rama I's Reign

The migration of Nguyễn Anh and his vassals marked the first large group of Vietnamese immigrants in Thailand. In 1782, Nguyễn Anh, a nephew of Tôn Thất Xuân, and a few survivors from the Tây Sơn movement came to take refuge in Kra Bu Island near the Cambodian border.¹³ The border guards of King Rama I met and took them to Bangkok to attend court. Nguyễn Anh asked King Rama I to allow him and his followers not only to stay in Siam, but to also assist the Nguyen's to recover power in Vietnam. King Rama I treated them in the same way he treated Ang Eng, the Cambodian Prince, who, at that

¹² Kham Bunnag, 1983, p 35.

Concerning the death of Tôn Thất Xuân, *Đại Nam Thực Lục* or the Historical Records of the Nguyễn Dynasty record a different version of the story: the King of Vietnam sent Sâm and Tĩnh to Siam for a friendship negotiation. Coincidentally, at that time, a Siam junk, on the way back from Quang Dong, was pillaged at Hà Tiên. Additionally, a Champa man named Bo Ong Giao brought to Taksin's ears that Gia Định (the Saigon government) planned to seize Bangkok and asked Tôn Thất Xuân and Mạc Thiên Tứ (Saigon's governor who also took refuge in Bangkok with Tôn Thất Xuân) to stay in Bangkok as a Trojan horse. Being unsettled by the news, King Taksin had all of them questioned, but they denied the King's accusation. Thus, Tôn Thất Xuân and his 53 vassals were executed. [*Đại Nam Thực Lục chính biên*, Viện sử học, Hanoi 1963 (*The Official Historical Records of the Nguyen Dynasty*, Institute of History, Hanoi 1963), p 34, 35].

¹³ In her book "*Viet Kieu in Thailand in Thai-Vietnamese Relationship*" Thanyathip Sripana said that Nguyễn Anh came to Bangkok in 1782. (Thanyathip Sripana, *Viet Kieu in Thailand in Thai-Vietnamese Relationship*, Institute of Asian Study, Chulalongkorn University, 2006, p15). But in the book "*Vietnamese History in Brief*," Trần Trọng Kim said that after loosing Mỹ Tho to Tây Sơn in 1785, Nguyễn Anh escaped to Siam and took refugee until July 1787. (Trần Trọng Kim, *A Brief History of Vietnam*, Culture and Information Publishing House, Hanoi 2000, p499.

time, also took refuge in Siam, allowing them to stay on the Eastern side of the Chaopaya River called Ban Ton Sam Rong, Khook Kra Bu area.¹⁴

There are different accounts about the number of Vietnamese people who followed Nguyễn Anh to Siam during this time. Nevertheless, they certainly did not come to Siam all at one time, but little by little. In the Vietnam Historical Records translated by Mr. Yong,¹⁵ it was said that the first vassals of Nguyễn Anh numbered about 20 people. The rest, mostly soldiers, upon knowing that Nguyễn Anh had settled in Bangkok, gradually arrived in Chanthaburi; some of them later moved to Bangkok.¹⁶

During Nguyễn Anh's stay in Thailand, there continuously were groups of Vietnamese people who followed him and came to stay in Thailand. By 1783, there were 5,000 Vietnamese soldiers who followed Nguyễn Anh to Thailand.¹⁷ These soldiers served in the Siam Royal Army like Thai soldiers. In response to Nguyễn Anh's request for assistance in regaining power, the King granted a troop of 10,000 soldiers, together with Nguyễn Anh's troops, to twice fight against Tây Sơn in Rạch Gầm-Xoài Mút. But both battles ended in defeat for the Siamese-Nguyen Anh forces.

In addition to the Buddhist Vietnamese who showed their loyalty to Nguyễn Anh and those who ran from the unstable situation in Vietnam, there were also other groups of Cochin China Christian Vietnamese who migrated to Siam. Fleeing from the suppressive anti-Christian authority in Vietnam, these Christian Vietnamese arrived in Bangkok. King Rama I allowed them to stay on the bank of the Chaophraya River in the Samsen area.

In 1787, impatient to recover power in Vietnam, Nguyễn Anh left Bangkok secretly to seek help from the French government. A number of the Vietnamese immigrants followed him. The rest, about 1,000 -2,000 people, decided to stay in Bangkok. These Vietnamese gathered with the immigrants from Tôn Thất Xuân's period in the community of Bang Po. Since the

¹⁴ Pusadee Chanthawimol, 1998, p27.

¹⁵ Yong: *The Historical Records of Vietnam*, Mahamakut Ratchawithayalai Print shop, 1966.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p 417.

¹⁷ Pusadee Chanthawimol, 1998, p 29.

Vietnamese immigrants in Siam at that time consisted of both Buddhists and Catholics, their living areas in Bangkok were distinguished according to their religion. The Catholic Vietnamese lived in Samsen, while the Buddhist Vietnamese lived in Bang Po.¹⁸



Picture No 7: Nguyen Anh (Ong Chiangsu) attended Court of Siam

¹⁸ Sowatree Na Thalang: *Vietnamese Temples: The role of ceremonies and the relation with their community in Bangkok*, 1994, p49-50, 57.

2.1.5. Migration up to World War II

Upon taking power in Vietnam, Nguyễn Anh proclaimed himself Emperor Gia Long, establishing the Nguyễn Dynasty in Hue in 1802. As a supporter of Buddhism, the Nguyễn Dynasty continued a strict policy towards Catholic people, especially during the reigns of King Minh Mạng, Tự Đức, and Thiệu Trị when Confucianism was highly recognized in and outside the Court. Even though trade with Western countries was expanding in the region – especially in Siam, India and China – with the threat of a seemingly inevitable Western invasion, the Nguyễn Dynasty chose to close the door to the West. In contrast, Siam held an open-door policy toward France, Portugal, and England. Thus, the Vietnamese Court held a severe policy towards western Catholic priests and Catholic Vietnamese. These people, in order to survive, once again chose Siam, known for its open policy towards religion, as their place of refuge.

In addition to this group of Catholic immigrants, another group of about 5,000 Vietnamese led by General Nguyễn Huỳnh Đức, a southern commander loyal to Nguyễn Anh, came to Bangkok to join forces with Nguyễn Anh.¹⁹ But since Nguyễn Anh secretly returned to Vietnam before their arrival in 1787, Nguyễn Huỳnh Đức decided to follow Nguyễn Anh back to Vietnam. King Rama I at first persuaded them to stay and serve in the Siam Royal Forces. But seeing his determination to return to Vietnam, the king finally agreed to let him and his soldiers go. Nevertheless, some of Đức's followers expressed their wish to stay in Siam. King Rama I accepted their request and allowed them to stay with the Vietnamese in Bang Po and Samsen serving in the Siam Royal Army as Thai citizens.²⁰

¹⁹ According to Pudsadee Chanthawimol, Nguyễn Huỳnh Đức arrived in Siam in 1783 and did not meet Nguyễn Anh. But since Nguyễn Anh returned to Vietnam in 1787, this detail seems unconvincing. In fact, Nguyễn Huỳnh Đức and his soldiers were captured by Tây Sơn in 1783 then escaped and ran to Siam where he heard that Nguyễn Anh had taken refuge. By the time he and his soldiers arrived in Bangkok, Nguyễn Anh had returned to Vietnam. Therefore, it is probable that Nguyễn Huỳnh Đức came to Bangkok in 1787 or afterwards.

²⁰ The remaining group of Nguyễn Huỳnh Đức was about 1,000-2,000 strong and, joining with the old group of Nguyễn Anh, made the Vietnamese community in Bangkok probably number up to 3,000-4,000. (Peter A. Pool, 1970, p 32-33.).

Siam and Vietnam experienced a long period of good relations, lasting until the Reign of King Rama III of Thailand and King Minh Mạng of Vietnam. Then a seven-year war between Siam and Vietnam occurred from 1828 to 1834.²¹ Another conflict to gain preponderant control over Cambodia ensued from 1833 to 1846. The conflict was also the impetus for the migration of numerous Southern Vietnamese (Cochin China), as well as prisoners of war, to Siam.²² They were sent to Chanthaburi province. Other groups of volunteer Vietnamese were also sent to serve in a cannon troop in Kanchanaburi. Later, after finishing their military service, many of them requested to go back to Bangkok. King Rama IV allowed them to re-settle in Bangkok and set up a new village in Pradung Krungkasem Canal (presently the Saphan Khao-Bobe area).²³

In 1858, as stated in the agreement between Nguyễn Anh and Louis XVI, the Hội An port in Đà Nẵng and Côn Lôn Island were to be given to France for the assistance of the French government in recovering power from the Tây Sơn; the first French troops arrived and took over Đà Nẵng. After several attempts, France took Hanoi in 1884 and established its first colonial regime over Vietnam, then extending control to the whole of Indochina in 1887. The expansion of France in Indochina arrested Siam's attempt to exert control over Laos and Cambodia, and encouraged a large number of Vietnamese to migrate into Cambodia where they worked on farms and plantations, as well as in administration, such as civil servants for the French government.

The French domination in Indochina spurred another wave of Vietnamese immigrants. These Vietnamese, mostly common people, migrated to seek a peaceful life in Siam. Once they arrived in Siam, these Vietnamese stayed with the old group of Vietnamese people living in Bangkok and the provinces. During the Reign of King Rama IV, four Banyuon (Vietnamese villages) were started in Bangkok. They were Banyuon Pahurat, Banyuon

²¹ Trần Trọng Kim, 2000, p 591-594.

²² Pudsadee Chanthawimol, 1998, p 19.

²³ Thích Kính Chiếu (ed), *Commemorative book of Kusolsamakhorm temple*, Mahachulalongkorn Printing, Bangkok 2001, p 4.

BangPo, Bangyuon Samsen, and Banyuon Phadung KungKasem.²⁴ These Vietnamese villages were known as one of the strongest foreign communities in Bangkok during the early Rattanakosin period.

At the end of the nineteenth century, anti-French activists in Vietnam began to regard Siam as a safe place to gather and organize revolutionary training. During the reign of King Rama V, a new wave of immigrants from Vietnam arrived in Thailand via Laos and Cambodia. These immigrants came to Thailand for political reasons and became known as Vietnamese nationalist activists. Their purpose was to use Thailand as a temporary, safe house for their movement. Many of the old Vietnamese in Thailand joined and supported these newcomers because they shared the same dream of freeing their homeland. The new comers mostly stayed in provinces near the Lao-Thai border such as Nakhonpanom, Ubonratchthani, and Nongkhai.

2.1.6. Post World War II Migration up to 1975

As mentioned earlier, during the first French colonial regime in Vietnam, before the end of the World War II, many Vietnamese people left the country settling in Laos and Cambodia. These Vietnamese migrants mostly lived near the Thai border. After WW II, France returned to Vietnam, taking over power from Japan and establishing the second colonial regime in the country, which, once again, was extended to the whole of Indochina. France's oppressive regime in Vietnam, especially in the North, caused a large number of Vietnamese people (both common and nationalist) to move further out of the reach of the French authority into Laos and Cambodia.

The Vietnamese national liberation movement reached its peak after WW II, when Ho Chi Minh declared the nation's independence in September 1945. Afraid that the Vietnamese in Laos and Cambodia would be a good source of funding and support for the nationalist movements in Vietnam and in turn spur other liberation movements in Indochina, France extended its severe policy to

²⁴ Pudsadee Chanthavimol, 1998, p 25-27.

the whole of Indochina. Therefore, Vietnamese people were displaced. Once again, they chose Thailand as the base for their anti-French movement. After the fall of Japan in Cambodia to the French in 1945, many of the Vietnamese in Vietnam and Cambodia fled to Siem Riep and Battambang provinces, which were, at that time, under Thai administration.²⁵ At the same time, many Vietnamese in Laos joined Lao Issara (Free Laotians) to resist the French regime in 1945. But the movement ended with defeat. France seized Luang Prabang, Vientiane, Thakhek and Sawannakhet causing thousands of Laos and Vietnamese to cross the Mekong River into Thai territory. According to the Thai Ministry of Interior, the exact number of Vietnamese refugees who registered with the Thai authority in 1946 was 46,700.²⁶ It is considered the largest migration of Vietnamese people into Thailand. However, registration records from December 1959 showed a total in excess of 80,000 refugees in Thailand.²⁷ But another figure, given by Thai Foreign Minister Upadit Pachariyangkun during an exclusive interview with the correspondent of Radio Norway at the Thai Foreign Ministry on August 1979, was about 150,000 in total.²⁸ The majority of those people, who came from Laos, were originally from North Vietnam.

The 1954 Geneva Conference enabled discussions between the Thai, the South Vietnamese, and the North Vietnamese governments; on August 14, 1959, an accord on the repatriation of Vietnamese refugees was signed in Rangoon. The agreement provided necessary assistance and procedures for the repatriation of refugees who voluntarily registered to go back to Vietnam. However, many Vietnamese refugees expressed their wish to remain in Thailand. Consequently, after the agreement was completed in 1964, only half of the refugees were sent home. The rest, about 36,000, registered to stay in Thailand with 'Alien

²⁵ Peter A. Pool, 1970, p 39.

²⁶ Chan Ansuchote: *The Vietnamese in Thailand: A Case Study in Decision- Making*, Thammasat University, Bangkok 1960, p 20.

²⁷ Peter A. Pool, 1970, p 62.

²⁸ Makata Ma, *Consequences of the Vietnam War on Thai Foreign Policy*, California State University, 1980, p 78.

status.’²⁹ The Thai government had to rearrange the remaining refugees in Thailand, requiring them to settle in restricted areas, mostly in Northeastern Thailand. The detail of the Thai government’s policy towards the Vietnamese refugees during this period will be studied in the following chapter.

The liberation of Saigon on April 30, 1975 by the Communist government brought about the reunification of Vietnam. The fall of Saigon also caused a wave of evacuees from South Vietnam to other countries. Thailand was one of their choices. Most of these refugees wished to be settled in a third country, usually the United States or in Western Europe. Thus, during their stay in Thailand, the Thai government sent them to refugee camps. Nevertheless, not all of these new refugees were accepted by a third country. In fact, some of them escaped from the camp and stayed in Thailand.³⁰

Though there are diverse classifications regarding the migration of the Vietnamese into Thailand, most of the previous studies about the Vietnamese migration to Thailand divide Vietnamese immigrants into two groups based on the period of time and their purpose for coming to Thailand. The first group called “*Yuan Kao*” or “Old Vietnamese” refers to those who came to Thailand from the Ayutthaya period to early Rattanakosin and up to World War II; and the second group identified as “*Yuan Mai*” or “New Vietnamese” or “Vietnamese refugees” refers to those who came to Thailand since World War II through the period after the end of the Vietnam War in 1975. Presently, the exact number of Vietnamese people in Thailand is still unanswered for both Thai and Vietnamese authorities. According to Peter A. Pool, in 1959 there were 70,000 to 80,000 Vietnamese recorded as living in Thailand; after the Rangoon Accord ended in 1964, the official number was 36,437.³¹ Adding approximately 15,000 for the arrival of illegal entries, the number should be more than 50,000.³² According to Dr. Samira Jijaladakorn, in the research of

²⁹ Peter A. Pool, 1970, p 66.

³⁰ See more details in the next chapter.

³¹ On 14th August 1959, Thailand and Vietnam signed an agreement providing procedures to enable Vietnamese refugees to voluntarily repatriate to their country. (Peter A. Pool, 1970).

³² Peter A. Pool, 1970, p 66.

the “*Evaluation of the Impact of Vietnamese Refugee’s Policy*,”³³ most of the first generation of Vietnamese refugees (Yuon Mai) was married and over eighteen years old. Moreover, the average birth rate of Vietnamese people was quite high at 4.42 children per family. Thus, in my rough evaluation, there might be more than 150,000 Vietnamese of the first, second and third generations now living in Thailand. Therefore, they are to be considered a significant minority of the Thai population.

2.2. Development of Annam-nikai in Thailand

There are numerous sources regarding the establishment of Vietnamese temples in Thailand. Peter A. Pool noted in his research “*The Vietnamese in Thailand: A Historical Perspective*” that the first Vietnamese temple was completed in 1787 by two Vietnamese captains, Thong Dung Gian and Hồ Dương Đắc, in Bang Po.³⁴ This temple was widely known among the Thai and Vietnamese community as Wat Yuon Bang Po or Annamnikaiyaram temple. This was confirmed by the present Chief Abbot of Annam-nikai at Phổ Phước temple (Wat Kusolsamakhorn) during a personal interview.³⁵ Another book, edited by the former Chief Abbot of Annam-nikai, Po Rien Pao (Phổ Liên), also emphasized that the first Vietnamese temple was established in Siam during the reign of King Rama I (1782-1809).³⁶

Since most Annam-nikai temples in Thailand did not keep records about the history of the temple, especially old temples, what is now known about this Buddhist sect was mainly passed down orally. So far, there is no further evidence to support Pool’s study of the first Vietnamese temple in Thailand.

³³ Samira Jittaladakorn, *Evaluation of the Impact of Vietnamese Refugee’s Policy*, Faculty of Political Science, Ramkhamheang University, 1991.

³⁴ Peter A. Pool, 1970, p 25.

³⁵ The interview was conducted by the author in June 2005 with the Chief Abbot of Annam-nikai. But in most Annam-nikai books, the development of Annam-nikai is still based on the classification of Prince Damrong Rachanuphap. The given reason is because Prince Damrong Rachanuphap was a well known Thai historian, so it is more reliable to refer to his work since temples do not have any written evidence to prove an alternative time of origin.

³⁶ Po Rien Pao (Phổ Liên) (ed), *History of the Annam-nikai Buddhist Denomination in Thailand & Historical Background of the Annamese in the early Ratanakosin Period*, Bangkok, 1992, p 7.

Nevertheless, “*The Legend of Annamese Monks*,” a work of the well-known Thai historian, Prince Damrong Rachanuphap, is considered the most reliable document about this Buddhist sect. (Books and articles in Thailand about this Buddhist sect are also based on Prince Damrong Rachanuphap’s work.) In his book, Prince Damrong divided the development of Annam-nikai into 4 periods in which the first period was under the Reign of King Tak Sin (1767-1782); the second period was during the reign of King Rama I; the third period was during the third reign; and the last period is from the fourth reign to present. Books of Annam-nikai also have the same division. This division, however, does not garner support from the study of Peter A. Pool nor Annam-nikai monks, who testify that the first temple of Annam-nikai was established during the reign of King Rama I. But looking at the location of the temples, the study of Prince Damrong has some merit because the first Vietnamese temple in his study is Cam Lộ Temple (Wat Thipwawirihan) at Ban Mo, Bangkok. This area was the place where the first Vietnamese village of Tôn Thất Xuân was found. When Tôn Thất Xuân and his followers were executed, the Vietnamese immigrants living in this area were ordered to move out. Thus, this temple was left abandoned. The area was thereafter inhabited by Chinese immigrants. That is why this temple later belongs to Jin-nikai (The Chinese Buddhist Order). Nevertheless, this study argues that the key factor leading to the adaptation of Annam-nikai in Bangkok is the gradual change of temple’s supporter, especially the replacement of the Chinese and Thai communities since WWII. Therefore, the development of Annam-nikai in this research will be divided according to this relationship as follows:

2.2.1. First period – Undefined Time to King Rama II

Since no exact document supporting the foregoing suppositions has been found so far, the first period of Annam-nikai will be a combination of both

opinions. Since Buddhism was the major religion in Vietnam,³⁷ when Buddhist Vietnamese immigrants, from both Tôn Thất Xuân and Nguyễn Anh, came and settled in Bangkok, they invited Vietnamese monks to come and start a temple in their living area.

During the first period, four Vietnamese temples were established in Bangkok. They are:

1. Cam Lộ Temple or Wat Thipwariwihan at Ban Mo, Bangkok.
2. Quảng Phước temple or Wat Annamnikairam at Bang Po, Bangkok.
3. Khánh Vân temple or Upai Ratchabumrung at Talat Noi Market, Chroenkrung Road, Samphanthavong, Bangkok.³⁸
4. Hội Khánh Temple or Wat Mongkol Samakhom at Yaowarat, Bangkok.³⁹

When Nguyễn Anh or Ong Chiangsue came to Bangkok in 1782, King Rama I allowed him and all of his followers to stay on the Eastern side of the Chaophraya River (Bang Po at present). There, the Quảng Phước temple (Wat Annamnikairam) was established.

However, the immigrants from Cochin China in Siam at this time were not only of Vietnamese origin. Many of them were Chinese or Vietnamese of Chinese descent. Although there is no record written about the support of the Chinese to Annam-nikai temples during this period, it could be possible that Annam-nikai was known not only among the Buddhist Vietnamese community but also the Chinese Buddhists in Siam. But the main supporters of the temples were still the Buddhist Vietnamese. Monks ordained in Annamese temples all

³⁷ See more details in Nguyễn Lang, *A Historical Interpretation of Vietnamese Buddhism*, Vol III, Hanoi Literature Publishing House, 1992.

³⁸ During the Reign of King Rama III, the King had special interest in this Mahayana Buddhist sect from Vietnam. He invited Ông Hưng (Chân Hưng), a senior monk from Khánh Vân temple, to be his consulter of this Buddhist sect. When King Rama IV ascended to the throne, the King gave a lot of support to this temple. Up to the Reign of King Rama V, the King continued to support this temple and granted the name Upai Ratchabumrung to the temple. This name means the temple which receives double support from the Court.

³⁹ At first, this temple was built at Wang Burapapirom, but during the reign of King Rama V, the King had a road built through this temple. Thus, King Rama V granted another place at Samphanthavong District to build a new temple with the old name. [Po Rien Pao or Phó Liên (Ed), 1992, p6. (Extracted from *The Legend of Annamese Monks*, Prince DamRongRajanuphap)].

had Vietnamese origins and came from Vietnam.⁴⁰ Additionally, the Vietnamese immigrants in Siam at that time were mostly first-generation Vietnamese. They were all born in Vietnam but moved to live in Siam. They lived relatively cloistered within their community; thus, their Vietnamese identity was strictly maintained in language, customs and religion. For example, many Vietnamese customs such as Vietnamese dances, folk games and many kinds of gymnastic performances were performed by the Vietnamese during their traditional festivals.⁴¹ These customs were widely known in Thai society. The performances of the Vietnamese in Siam were also found beautifully described in one poem of Somdet Praborom Mahachanok during the reign of King Rama I.⁴² Moreover, the Buddhist Vietnamese immigrants in this period were mostly from the royal family or the Nguyễn's vassals and came from An Nam (the Central) and Cochin China (the South of Vietnam) where Buddhism was highly recognized during the rule of the Nguyễn.⁴³ Thus, they were strict Buddhists. Therefore upon their stay in Bangkok, they built their own temples following the Mahayana Buddhism of Vietnam and invited Buddhist monks from Vietnam to come and serve their spiritual life. The possible explanations for this invitation might be the differences in practice between the Mahayana Buddhism of Vietnam and the Theravada Buddhism of Thailand, or the wish to maintain their religion inline with Vietnamese tradition. Since most of the monks of this period were from Vietnam or Vietnamese immigrants ordained in Siam,⁴⁴ their Buddhist practices and ritual ceremonies were closely related to what the Buddhists in Vietnam did. Additionally, because the leaders of the Vietnamese immigrants were from the noble family, the religious ceremonies of Annam-nikai remained the same as in the Court of Huế (the Central part of Vietnam); for example, the Công Đức ceremony (or Kongtek: the merit making

⁴⁰ Po Rien Pao (Phổ Liên) (ed), 1992, p7.

⁴¹ Prince Thipkornwong *Royal Historical Records of the Rattanakosin during the First Reign* (Rama I), cited from Pusadee Chanthawimol, 1998, p 116-117.

⁴² *Ibid.*, p 118.

⁴³ See more details in Nguyễn Lang, *Việt Nam Phật Giáo sử luận*, tập II, Nhà xuất bản Văn Học, Hà nội 1992. [Nguyễn Lang. *A Historical Interpretation of Vietnamese Buddhism*, Vol II, III, Hanoi Literature Publishing House, 1992].

⁴⁴ Thích Kính Chiêu, (ed), 2001, p 8.

ceremony for dead people). Before being introduced to the Court of Siam during the reign of King Rama IV, this ceremony was known as *Pithi Luang* or the Royal ceremony and originally serving only the members of the ruling Nguyễn's family from Huế. After it was introduced to the Siamese Court and became popular within Thai society, this ceremony was condensed for common Thai (but the Royal Kong Tek was kept in tact for the royal funerals).⁴⁵

Living considerably closed within their communities, therefore, by the end of this period, their religion – Annam-nikai or the Annamese Buddhist sect – was still largely unknown to most Thai people. In its pristine time, the Vietnamese temples were known only among the Vietnamese community and some Chinese in Bangkok. The temples served as an important part of the spiritual and ritual life of the Vietnamese people in the area.

2.2.2. Second period – King Rama III to King Rama IV

From the end of King Rama II's reign to the reign of King Rama III, Vietnam and Siam had a conflict over the territory of Cambodia and Laos. The good relationship between Vietnam and Siam was interrupted. This Vietnamese – Siamese war prompted a whole new wave of immigrants and prisoners of war to enter Siam. These prisoners of war were sent to Chanthaburi province. There, a new Vietnamese temple was established. Besides, a number of volunteer Buddhist Vietnamese were sent from Bang Po to Kanchanaburi province to serve in a cannon troop. Although some of them requested to return to Bangkok after finishing their service, most of them were happy to stay. These soldiers, along with their families, had set up, for the first time, another Vietnamese community in Kanchanaburi, including one Vietnamese temple. The Vietnamese, who were allowed to come back to Bangkok, set up a new village at Pradung Krungkasem (present day: Lukluang Road, Dusit District). Then, another new Vietnamese temple was founded. Thus, three temples had been set up in and outside of Bangkok. They were:

⁴⁵ Pusadee Chanthavimol, 1998, p 114.

1. Khánh Thọ temple or Wat Thavornvayaram in Kanchanaburi province.
2. Cảnh Phước temple or Wat Samanam Boriharn at Dusit district, Bangkok.
3. Phước Diện temple or Wat Khetnabunyaram in Chanthaburi province.

This period features a major turning point for Annam-nikai in Thailand. King Rama IV, known at that time as Prince Mongkut, during his ordination, paid special interest to Vietnamese temples as well as Vietnamese Buddhist monks. He invited two famous Vietnamese Buddhist masters, Ông Hưng and Ông Diệu Trạng,⁴⁶ from Vietnamese temples to be his consultants concerning this school of Buddhism. Later, when King Rama IV ascended to the throne, the King gave a lot of assistance to the development of Annam-nikai, making this Annamese Buddhist sect known and studied beyond the Vietnamese and Chinese community. This royal support continued through the reign of King Rama V. This time came to be known as the peak of the Annam-nikai's development in Thailand.⁴⁷

The Annam – Siamese conflict made the Vietnamese immigrants in Siam in general and Vietnamese monks in particular, unable to keep in touch with their compatriots in Vietnam. Their religion's relation to its base was interrupted for a period of time. Excluding Ông Hưng or Venerable Thích Chân Hưng and Ông Diệu Trạng who originally came from Vietnam but were ordained in Siam, no further monks directly from Vietnam were found in Annam-nikai temples in Siam. The Annamese monks of this period were all Thai-born Vietnamese who were ordained in Siam.⁴⁸ Although extensions of Vietnamese temples were found in other provinces outside of Bangkok such as

⁴⁶ Because Vietnamese names in Thai books were transliterated into Thai, due to the differences in the pronunciation of the Vietnamese language, it is not easy to trace the origin of a name in Vietnamese. However, all the records about the Annamese monks and Buddhism in Thailand are available only in Thai or Chinese. In order to find the correct words in standard Vietnamese, I had to consult the Chief Abbot of the Annamese Buddhist sect to have the right name in Chinese characters, which I then, translated into Vietnamese.

⁴⁷ See details in the later development of Annamese Buddhist sect in Thailand.

⁴⁸ Thích Kinh Chiếu (ed), 2001, p 12.

in Kanchanaburi, temples still served as the spiritual center of the Vietnamese Buddhist community. When the Vietnamese settled in new places and established new communities, new temples were found in their living area. Thus, the purpose of building these temples as the spiritual and ritual center of the Vietnamese is clear.

However, the Annamese temples of this period served not only the Buddhist Vietnamese but also the Chinese community. More Chinese in Bangkok began to know about the Mahayana temples of the Vietnamese, paying attention to Annam-nikai.

The Vietnamese people, though maintaining good relations with Thai society as well as with other foreign communities like the Chinese community, still remained in their limited original area. Thus, up to this period, the Vietnamese immigrants in Siam maintained a strong, traditional community as well their religious heritage.

2.2.3. Third period – King Rama IV to WWII

Being impressed by the practice and knowledge of Venerable masters Chân Hưng and Diệu Trạng as well as Mahayana Buddhism from Vietnam, after ascending to the throne, King Rama IV contributed a lot to the spread of Annam-nikai in Thailand. It was recorded for the first time that during the reign of King Rama IV, Annamese monks were invited to participate in important ritual ceremonies of the Royal court. In 1861, “Công Đức” ceremony was introduced to the Court for the funeral of Queen Somdet Thepsirinthra. Later, in 1865, Annamese monks were again invited to perform this ceremony at the funeral of the Crown Prince Phra Pin Klao; this “Công Đức” ceremony became a part of every royal funeral since that time.⁴⁹

It was noted that during the reign of King Rama V, the King often invited Annamese monks together with Mon and Thai monks to perform in the Buddhist ceremonies of the Court. Mon monks were already accepted to the

⁴⁹ Thích Kinh Chiếu, 2001, p. 13.

Court and had ecclesiastic order like Thai monks, but not the Annamese monks. Thus, it was inconvenient to arrange their Court attendance order. Besides, by the reign of King Rama V, a Chinese monk named Sok Heng came to Bangkok and took shelter at a Sala next to Phở Phước temple (Wat Kusolsamakhorn). The Chinese living in this area donated money and set up a temple for him. Likewise, the first Chinese temple was established.⁵⁰ Following him, numerous Chinese monks came to Siam making the number of Chinese monks increase significantly. Thus, on the 13 August 1899, Chao Prayapaskornwong submitted a letter to King Rama V to ask for official recognition of the Annamese Buddhist sect as well as the Chinese Buddhist sect in Thailand. The King approved the request and allowed both Annamese and Chinese Buddhist sects to register with the Ministry of Culture.⁵¹ Therefore, officially, the name Annam-nikai and Jin-nikai, the Vietnamese Buddhist Order and Chinese Buddhist Order, respectively, were first known in the reign of King Rama V.

Together with this official recognition, King Rama V reorganized the Annamese monastic order according to the Thai ecclesiastic order. Besides ecclesiastic titles, the King also granted to the Annam-nikai monks other personal objects but different in size and material according to their title.

After the Annamese Buddhist sect began to be accepted in Thai society, during the reign of King Rama IV, it reached its full bloom in terms of the number of newly-built temples in Bangkok, as well as receiving the respect and belief of both Chinese and Thai people.

Consequently, during this period four Vietnamese temples were built under the support of both Chinese merchants and Vietnamese immigrants in Bangkok. These new temples are known as:

1. Phở Phước temple or Wat Kusolsamakhorn in Yaowarat, Bangkok.⁵²
2. Túy Ngạn temple or Wat Chaiyabhumikaram in Sampanthavong district, Bangkok.

⁵⁰ Mangkorn Kommalawas Temple, *The History of the Chinese Order*, Bangkok, 1969.

⁵¹ Thích Kính Chiếu, 2001, p 14-15.

⁵² This temple was built on the land donated by a wealthy Chinese family of Hokkien origin named Lauhasethi. (Kusolsamakhorn, *The History of Kusolsamakhorn Temple*, Bangkok, 2006, p.6).

3. Biếu Phước temple or Wat Bampenchinprod at Sampanthavong district Bangkok. (This temple now belongs to Chinese monks.)
4. Từ Tế temple or Wat LoKanukro in Sampanthavong district, Bangkok.

French colonial policy led to the loss of contact between people in Vietnam and the Vietnamese in Thailand. Relations between the monks in Thailand and the monks in Vietnam had been interrupted. The political situation inside and outside the country had a big impact on its development. During the first French colonial regime in Vietnam, especially from the end of the 19th century to the beginning of the 20th century, the Vietnamese who escaped the repression in their country continued to migrate to Siam. At first, their purpose of coming to Siam was to seek a better life; but later, many of the nationalist Vietnamese started to see Siam as their safe base for anti-French movements.⁵³ Although most of those immigrants lived along the Lao-Thai and Cambodian-Thai borders, a number of them came to Bangkok. These newcomers, together with the old group of Vietnamese who had been living in Bangkok since the early Rattanakosin period, continued to support Annam-nikai temples.

During the 1920s, the Vietnamese in Bangkok still often went to Annam-nikai temples. According to 95 year old Khun Ying Ya, a woman of Vietnamese origin,⁵⁴ when she was a child, she often followed her grandmother to Wat Yuon (The Vietnamese temple) such as Cảnh Phước Temple (Wat Samanam Boriharn), Quảng Phước Temple (Wat Annamnikairam) and Khánh Vân Temple (Wat Upai Ratchabumrung). The Vietnamese in Bangkok liked to gather at Vietnamese temples for merit making ceremonies. Her grandmother never missed the grand ceremonies such as Vietnamese New Year, or Star Worshipping Day, because on those days many Vietnamese people came to the

⁵³ See more details in *Thailand and the Southeast Asian networks of the Vietnamese revolution, 1885-1954*, Christopher E. Goscha, Richmond, Surrey: Curzon Press, 1999.

⁵⁴ The interview was held on May 22nd 2005 with a Khun Ying who has Vietnamese origin. She has married to Bunnag family and was granted the Khun Ying title when she was 57 years old. She did not want to mention her full name. The name Khun Ying Ya is used by her children to call her at home.

temples. Besides making merit, they could talk and exchange information with other Vietnamese as well. As she remembered, people attending temples were mainly first and second generation Vietnamese who came to Bangkok since the beginning of the Rattanakosin period. They lived relatively closed within their community and most knew each other. In addition to the temple's ceremonies, sometimes the Vietnamese went to the temple to consult with Vietnamese monks. Because many Vietnamese in Bangkok could not speak Thai well, they preferred to go to monks who could speak Vietnamese. However, not all Annam-nikai temples were frequented by Vietnamese people. Other temples, such as Wat Kusolsamakhorn, they rarely attended. This was because at that temple, the temple's attendants were mainly Chinese.⁵⁵

Also, according to Khun Ying Ya, the Old Vietnamese like her family knew about the new Vietnamese immigrants, but they did not establish a close relationship with them the way they had done with the Old Vietnamese immigrants from the early Rattanakosin period. Those new Vietnamese arrivals also went to Annam-nikai temples, but later they mainly gathered at Từ Tế temple (Wat Lokanukro) where Cù Ba (Venerable Thích Bình Lương) stayed. It was further confirmed by the Old Vietnamese and other Vietnamese in the Northeast that during the time when Cù Ba (Venerable Thích Bình Lương)⁵⁶ stayed at Từ Tế temple, the Vietnamese from the Northeast and the new comers from Vietnam often went to his temple. There, they always received assistance from Cù Ba as well as the temple's followers.⁵⁷ At present, many old Vietnamese from the Northeast and in Bangkok who know about Annam-nikai still recall him as their benefactor. Sukprida Banomyong also mentions in his

⁵⁵ The interview with a Khun Ying with Vietnamese origin was held on May 22nd 2005. She married to Bunnag family and was granted the Khun Ying title when she was 57 years old. She wishes to keep her full name anonymous.

⁵⁶ Cù Ba was from Hà Tĩnh province (Central Vietnam). When he was 22 years-old, he followed his parents to Thailand and received ordination in the Annam-nikai Order at Khánh Thọ Temple, (Kanchanaburi province). He had stayed at Từ Tế Temple from 1920 to 1964. Towards the end of his life, due to health problems, Cù Ba submitted a resignation letter to the King and returned to Vietnam in 1964. (Stone Inscription at Lokanukro temple).

⁵⁷ The fervent assistance of Cù Ba can be explained by his origin. Since he was Vietnamese and came to Siam with the new group of immigrants, he still kept a close connection with his people and was sympathetic to them, especially the patriotic Vietnamese.

book about the life of Ho Chi Minh that when Ho Chi Minh arrived in Siam in 1928, he firstly came to Từ Tế Temple (Wat Lokanukro) to seek assistance from the temple's abbot.⁵⁸ Ho Chi Minh went there, because he knew that Từ Tế Temple was frequented by the Vietnamese in Bangkok, and the temple's abbot was sympathetic towards the Vietnamese.

In addition to the group of long-time immigrants and the new coming Vietnamese, this period saw the attendance of the Chinese people in Annam-nikai temples more often. The Chinese in Bangkok began to provide more support to Annam-nikai in terms of establishing new temples such as Phổ Phước Temple (Wat Kusolsamakhorn),⁵⁹ and renovating an old temple named Khánh Vân Temple (Wat Upai Ratchabumrung).⁶⁰

This period could be considered the transitional period in the development of Annam-nikai. The special interest of Thai Leader (King Rama IV) in this Buddhist sect made Annam-nikai better known and more widely accepted in Thai society, especially after the official recognition of Annam-nikai during the reign of King Rama V. This recognition led to the naming of this Buddhist sect and the organizing of the monk's order according to the Thai ecclesiastic order. Concerning Annam-nikai monks, besides monks of Vietnamese origin such as Thích Thanh Khiết (Upai Ratchabumrung Temple), Thích Bạch Ngọc (Thavornvayaram Temple),⁶¹ Thích Mật Ngôn (Mongkol Samakhom Temple);⁶² up to the end of this period, monks with Chinese origin were found more often in Annam-nikai temples such as Thích Phổ Sái (Upai Ratchabumrung Temple) and Thích Phổ Liên (Chaiyabhumikaram Temple). In regards to the temple's supporters, this period saw the beginning of the clear division in a temple's community: from mainly Vietnamese to Chinese,

⁵⁸ Sukprida Banomyong, "*Ho Chi Minh: The God who is still Alive*", Bangkok, 2006.

⁵⁹ Kusolsamakhorn temple, 2006, p 5-6.

⁶⁰ Upai Ratchabumrung temple, *Upai Celebration*, Prachachon Printing, Bangkok, 2000, p5-7.

⁶¹ There is no record of the temple where Venerable Bạch Ngọc had stayed before he was assigned to be the Abbot of Thavornvayaram in 1912. But Thavornvayaram's book mentions that he was reassigned from Bangkok in 1912. Therefore, it is supposed that he had stayed in a Annam-nikai temple in Bangkok before moving to Kanchanaburi. (Thavornvayaram temple, *Commemorative Book on the Occasion of 100 Years of Official Name Granting*, Sawan Printing, Kanchanaburi, 1996.

⁶² See more details in Thavornvayaram temple, 1996.

especially after garnering the special support from King Rama IV and Rama V. Moreover, in the Vietnamese community, the Vietnamese began to distinguish themselves into two groups of early Bangkok Vietnamese and new coming Vietnamese.

2.2.4. Fourth period – World War II to Present

This period saw the great migration of the Vietnamese from Indochina into Thailand. This group of new immigrants was known as the Vietnamese refugees. Due to political reasons inside and outside the country, the Thai government applied fluctuant, repressive policies towards Vietnamese refugees, especially the anti-communist law and the anti-Vietnam campaign during the Cold War. The political factors of this period caused a deep impact on the Vietnamese, particularly the Vietnamese in Bangkok. As a consequence, the Vietnamese Buddhist community gradually lost its unity as well as its relations with Annam-nikai. Its supporters have changed to the larger Chinese-Thai and Thai communities outside Bangkok. The reason for this change will be studied later in chapter III. This change in its temples community had a remarkable impact on the development of Annam-nikai in Bangkok, leading to the extension of its temples to the provinces. Consequently, during this period, Annam-nikai developed numerically in terms of newly-built temples in provinces with the support of the Chinese and Thai Buddhist communities. They are:

1. Khánh Thọ Temple or Wat Thavornyaram in Hatyai, Songkhla province.
2. Khánh An Temple or Wat Sunthornpradit in Udonthani province.
3. Tam Bảo Công temple or Wat Ubhaipakaram in Chachengsao province.
4. Long Sơn Temple or Wat Thamkhaunoi in Kanchanaburi province.

(This temple was established during the previous period but was registered as Annam-nikai temple later.)

5. Mahayana Kanchanamat Ratsadornbamrung Temple in Yala province.
6. Annam-nikai Chalermprachonapansakan in Supanburi province.
7. Phổ Chiếu Temple or Wat Sathayayimpanit in Samutsakorn province.
8. Phước Thành Temple or Wat Thammpanyaram Bang Muong in Nakhornprathom province.

Due to political reasons, the Thai government divided the Vietnamese in Thailand into two groups: first, the Old Vietnamese which means the Vietnamese who came to Thailand before WWII, second the New Vietnamese consists of the Vietnamese who came from Indochina after WWII. The strict policy of the Thai government during this period, especially the negative attitude derived from the anti-Vietnam campaign, caused the Vietnamese in Bangkok to hide their Vietnamese origin and gradually integrate into Thai society. The Vietnamese temples, consequently, received less and less support from its people.

However, Vietnamese attendance did not suddenly stop. It was a gradual process. There is no exact time frame for the loss of relations between temples and the Vietnamese in Bangkok as well as the fracturing of the Vietnamese Buddhist community. But most of the Vietnamese who lived in Bangkok through the Vietnam War often referred to the death of Ho Chi Minh as the benchmark of their activities. Recalling their past, they like to say, “*during the time Uncle Hồ still alive.*” Most of their activities were organized during “*Uncle Hồ’s time*” such as gathering at temples to make merit to Ho Chi Minh, to celebrate their Vietnamese festivals. Since Ho Chi Minh passed away in 1969, it could be supposed that from 1970s their activities in Bangkok were reduced. The reason for this change could be attributed to the war in Vietnam. During the early 1970s, the war in Vietnam was almost coming to its close; the uniting purpose freeing their homeland was not as strong as during the Indochina War. Additionally, towards the end of the Vietnam War, Thai anti-communist policy changed to an anti-Vietnamese campaign, raising negative

sentiments among Thai people towards the Vietnamese. The negative attitude of Thais accelerated the assimilation process. The Vietnamese hid their identity and did not go to Annam-nikai temples.

Concerning the monks in Annam-nikai, this period saw a remarkable change in the origin of the monks ordained in Annam-nikai. This change led to the gradual replacement of Vietnamese monks with monks of Chinese-Thai and Thai origins.

At the beginning of this period, from 1940-1958, during the time of the 4th abbot of Khánh Thọ Temple (Venerable Phong Điều), he had ordained hundreds of monks in the Annam-nikai Order.⁶³ Those monks were mostly Chinese-Thai. Only a few of them were not of Thai origin.⁶⁴ By the end of the Vietnam War, there were no further monks with Vietnamese origins being ordained in the Annam-nikai Order. The last Chief Abbot of Annam-nikai with Vietnamese origin, was Cù Ba (Venerable Thích Bình Lương). The last Vietnamese monk of Annam-nikai was noted during the Vietnam War and called by the Vietnamese people in Bangkok as Ông Quyền⁶⁵ at Từ Tế Temple (Wat LoKanukro).⁶⁶ After Ông Quyền, there were no more Vietnamese people found in the Annam-nikai Order. Presently, all of the Annam-nikai monks are Thai people or Thai with Chinese origin.

Due to the Buddhist Vietnamese in Bangkok not keeping close relations with Annam-nikai temples, the temple's supporters are now mainly Chinese and Thai.

⁶³ Originally, Annam-nikai was from the two Zen sects of Lâm Tế and Tào Động in Vietnam. The Tào Động sect usually holds the ordination ceremonies at Khánh Thả Temple (Wat Thavornvayaram) in Kanchanaburi while The Lâm Tế sect often have the ordination ceremonies in its temples in Bangkok. Therefore, monks who are ordained in Khánh Thọ Temple (Wat Thavornvayaram) belong to The Lâm Tế sect. Later, those monks were sent to other temples of Annam-nikai. The details of the origin of Annam-nikai are available in the appendix A.

⁶⁴ Thavornvayaram Temple, 1996, p 12.

⁶⁵ No record about Ông Quyền has been found so far. The name Quyền may not be a Buddhist name. It was because the Vietnamese coming to temples did not pay attention to the Buddhist name of Annam-nikai monks -- they preferred to call Vietnamese monks by their common name such as Cù Ba, Ông Quyền.

⁶⁶ Thawee Sawangpanyakoon, *The Vietnamese temples in Thailand, Vietnamese Studies Gazette*, Vol 14, Institute of Language & Culture for Rural Development, Mahidol University, p 20.

Since the official recognition of Annam-nikai as Thai Sangha during the Reign of King Rama V, to the present, Annam-nikai has had a total of 10 Chief Abbots (Chao Khana Yai) as follows:⁶⁷

1. Diêu Trạm at Chùa Quảng Phước (Annamnikairam Temple).
2. Thích Chí Lập at Chùa Cảnh Phước (Samanam Boriharn Temple).
3. Thích Thanh Khiết at Chùa Khánh Vân (Upai Ratchabumrung Temple).
4. Thích Mật Ngôn at Chùa Hội Khánh (Mongkol Samakhom Temple).
5. Thích Viên Mãng at Chùa Phổ Phước (Kulsol Samakhorn Temple).
6. Thích Phổ Sái at Chùa Khánh Vân (Upai Ratchabumrung Temple).
7. Thích Bình Lương at Chùa Từ Tế (Lokanukro Temple).
8. Thích Phổ Liên at Chùa Túy Ngạn (Chaiyabhumikaram Temple).
9. Thích Giác Mẫn at Chùa Hội Khánh (Mongkol Samakhom Temple).
10. Thích Kính Chiếu at Chùa Phổ Phước (Kulsol Samakhorn Temple).

Throughout its more than 200 years of history, Annam-nikai has gone through many changes in its development. From a few modest temples at the beginning of the Rattanakosin period to seventeen temples throughout the country at present, Annam-nikai has adapted significantly in terms of its religious practice, language, and structure, for example: it expanded from the purpose of serving mainly the Buddhist Vietnamese to the Chinese and Thai Buddhist communities; from the Vietnamese Mahayana to the adoption of some

⁶⁷ According to the temple's records, Chân Hưng or Ông Hưng at Chùa Khánh Vân (Upai Ratchabumrung Temple) was the 40th generation of the Lâm Tế sect and the first Chief Abbot of Annam-nikai before this Buddhist sect was recognized. (Po Rien Pao or Phæ Li²n, 1992, p 9). According to the temple and the records of Prince Damrong Rachanuphap, Ông Hưng was the first Vietnamese monk who aroused interest in Prince Mongkut for learning about the Mahayana Buddhism from Vietnam during the 3rd reign. The monk who was credible enough to bring interest to Prince Mongkut must be a senior monk and was at least more than 40 years old. From the reign of King Rama II to 1899, when Annam-nikai was officially recognized, it was about 45 -50 years. If he had not died, he would be more than 90 years old. This is extremely unlikely, given average Thai life spans in the past. The possible explanation here is that since Ông Hưng was very well known as the Master of Annam-nikai, upon the official registration of Annam-nikai in 1899, he was recognized as the first Chief Abbot of this Buddhist sect. This recognition was a way to pay respect to him.

Thai Theravada practices; from individual management to a hierarchical administrative system.

During the reign of King Rama I, Annam-nikai temples were established and Vietnamese monks were invited to Siam to serve the Buddhist Vietnamese community. Besides serving mainly the Buddhist Vietnamese in Bangkok, Vietnamese temples were known among the Buddhist Chinese in Bangkok as a Mahayana Buddhist sect of Vietnam. During the reign of King Rama III, due to the Annam-Siamese conflict, no further monks direct from Vietnam were found in Annamese temples. There were still monks of Vietnamese origin, but they were ordained in Siam. This period saw the Chinese community attendance at Vietnamese temples increase. During the reign of King Rama V, Annam-nikai was officially registered in Siam, beginning the structural change in this Buddhist Order such as the adoption of the hierarchical order of the monks. However, its temples still functioned as the spiritual center of the Buddhist Vietnamese, though the attendance of the Chinese Buddhists was more often than in the previous period. It was only when France took Indochina and the resistance against French colonization was taken seriously in the region, that the attention of Vietnamese people to Annam-nikai temples decreased. Especially after WWII, the new wave of Vietnamese immigrants coming to Siam caused many changes in Thai policy towards the Vietnamese refugees. The last period witnessed an important change in the community of the Buddhist Vietnamese in Bangkok leading to the lack of support of Annam-nikai from the Vietnamese people and replacement support through the Chinese Buddhist community. If the previous periods saw gradual adjustments in Annam-nikai temples, the loss of connection with the Buddhist Vietnamese from post Vietnam War to present caused rapid changes in Annam-nikai. For example, the absence of the Buddhist Vietnamese and monks of Vietnamese descendant in Annam-nikai temples led to the replacement of the Chinese Buddhist community and monks with Chinese and Thai origin in the Order; the language used in temples; the

adoption of some Thai Buddhism practices, namely Thot krathin (the temple's merit making festival in Thai style).

The details of the conditions and forms of these changes and adjustments will be studied in the following chapters.