

**The Transmission of Indian Buddhist Cultures and Arts towards Funan Periods
on 1st - 6th Century the Evidence in Vietnam**

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Abstract

The article aims to study the background of Vietnam Buddhism in the dimension of the transmission of Indian Buddhist cultures and arts priors on 1st – 6th C. The study has found Buddhist culture and arts on the decisive ideology of this period, which was the premise to create a great landmark in the history of Vietnamese Buddhism transitions by the ruler in the maritime as well through the journey of trending and diplomatic. Several aspects related the Vietnamese Buddhism as influenced by Buddhist culture and arts from India during the Palawan dynasty and the Gupta Dynasty Both Buddhism of Theravada and Mahayana. The Buddhist culture and art have seen the cultures of pray and worship tp Buddha and Bodhisattva as well the temples and idols setting were built base on Buddhist ideology. Therefore, that has been said the Funan State played a very important role in helping spread Indian Buddhist civilization into Indochina and was the foundation state of Buddhist culture and arts in the southern of Vietnam initiative of the first century.

Key works: Vietnamese Buddhism, Buddhist Culture and Arts, Funan, Indian Buddhist

Introduction Vietnam Buddhism in Early Period

Nanyue or Nam-Viet names of Vietnamese accent is the origin of the present Vietnamese name. Before the Han army seized the Kingdom of the union around 111 BC - 939 CE. and annexed it as part of China, called “*Jiao Chu*”, (Soucy, 2007) expanding its territory south to the current city of Da Nang. Then China regularly sends high-ranking governors to govern. It is a time with Chinese people bring Chinese culture in various fields to spread to the Nan-Viet land while reaping the benefits of resources from indigenous people or Vietnamese people, leading to many fierce resistance such as:

1.1 The heroines in the name of *Hayba Ghun* leded Nam-Viet forces to anti-government of the Chinese. But there was defeated 3 years later and became a part of China.



1.2 Chinese intellectual's prisoner names *Li Bone* collaborated with Vietnamese intellectuals to take part in the revolution and established Lee Dynasty dubbed the region as Wan Xuan but was ultimately defeated.



Figure 1: Map of The Funan Empire Periods on 1st-6th Century (Wikipedia, 2021)

Chinese rule in Vietnam have interrupted for the duration of the situation in China itself. Which was an opportunity for the indigenous people in Vietnam to become independent during the time that Vietnam. It was under the rule of the Tang Dynasty, Buddhism began to enter Vietnam. Dalao or Hanoi has been the largest city as a trading and traveling center for Chinese and Indian people Chinese monks and Taoists come to live in this land. Later, the Tang dynasty changed the name of this administrative district to Annan called by Vietnamese accent after defeating the native rebels. But it was the last period that China occupies this land.

The Land of Funan

The existence of an early first millennium polity in the Mekong River basin and delta region of southern Vietnam have been found in 1903 by Pual Pelliot, a renowned French Sinologist. The first referenced to the existence of a political entity near the lower Mekong system appears in a Chinese source of the early third century, which records Chinese missions sent there in the 220s C. to promote trade (Stuart-Fox, 2003). The name assigned Funan likely a phonetic consultative of the Khmer word *pbnom* (hill). Funan , the Chinese Fujian, Phunan (China : 扶南 ; Pinyin : *Fúnán*), or Banan (China : 跋南 ; Pinyin : *Banan*),



northeastern Thailand, some parts of the Chao Phraya River Basin and southern Thailand down to Malaya peninsular. Funan was combined into the first state of Southeast Asia as an irrigation state within the land where people lived by agriculture that was using water from a well-developed irrigation system. In addition, Funan also has been a port for mooring and trading internationally. Funan therefore has revenue from trade and navigation as well.

The story of Funan State based on the records of Chinese people traveling to this area has noted about the phosphorus and constant an orderly virtuous community with a monarchy there are many cities. It was own culture and contacts with foreigners both in Asia together and the Western world. The upper classes were people who speak the language as Malayo-Polynesian language group. The Chinese said Funan indigenous peoples, with a small face, small physical and curly hair, presumably belonging to Negrito and Melanesian. Funan beginning with the integration of a small community of villages from the village developed into a state. The method of development from tribal society to state society had many factors and steps.

Chinese records referred to the diversion kingdom expected Phunphin. It located at Surat Thani province Thailand in present time by saying that the first king of Funan named the Brahmin Kaundinya. Who was traveling from India and stopped at the diversion kingdom before getting a vision to travel to Funan looking at the map, traveling from Ban Don Bay to Laem Yuan present found as Oc Eo port (Thai: แห่ลมนัญจน) is not difficult especially during the southwest monsoon.

Development of Tribal Society Become a State Society

The original society of Southeast Asia was a tribal society and later developed into a state society since the 1st century BC. An example of Funan was a village that later expanded because of the increasing population. Therefore, the cussing had to expand the arable land of agriculture for enough food to be equal with the number of communities that have expanded. There tried to find agricultural technology to help, such as digging ditches to preserved water. In order to sustainable well and enough food. Later, the structure of society was improved and developed into a state.

The reason that Funan developed into a state some commentators, for example, Kenneth R. Hall, said “that because Funan has a lot of development in cultivation and most importantly” (Roginsky, 2014). Funan had a port that is a center of maritime trade as well as citing comments from O.W. Wolter, which describes the development from tribal society to state-society that because of the commercial nature and the geography allows especially at



the Oc Eo, the port city of Funan, which too must stop of ships passing. The Oc-Eo was a catalyst for increased production in the land to meet the needs of people who visit the port and irrigation in Funan facilitates cultivation, causing Funan to expand into a state. And that is the first state in the region as for the entry of Indians in Southeast Asia should start with the merchants coming in first for contacting with the ruler and the Brahmin followed later. So that didn't believe the Funan could be as large as a kingdom demonstrating errors in vocabulary usage. This was most of the information from China. China had looking at the cities in this area with the eyes of Chinese people and used Chinese vocabulary. The Westerners have used the term "Kingdom" means the kingdom in European concepts and styles. That is not comparable with the true state of Southeast Asia from a detailed study. In the contents of the archaeological record and the environment, Funan was not yet suitable to be used with the term Empire or empire Funan at that time was just a combination of tribes. There was a great leader, which was honored by some tribal leaders based on personal ability. So, this great leader will have power only in his generation when he died, his power ended not handed down to heirs.

O. W. Volder said that Funan development came from the state's building of a large irrigation structure resulting in agricultural production especially rice. Although, the Funan state was promoted into the center in the form of duty to create wealth and political stability for the state ruling class. Meanwhile, there is an academic opposition to the idea of such a large irrigation structure, as W.J. Van Liere (Elliott and Mai, 2014) said that there are not any signs showing the large irrigation structures will affect cultivation. Opposite the said structure it is a matter of religion that sustains the position of the King in Devarajism. And it could be a canal to protect the city. The rice cultivation still depends on the natural season as well as small-scale irrigation that the people make themselves, called the Public Irrigation.

Growth and Deterioration of Funan

Chinese evidence has said Funan was found by the Brahmin Kaundinya, who dominated the natives and married the princess Liao-Yeh of this region in the 1st century BC. Funan was in the Mekong Basin under the capital city of Vayadhapura means the city of the hunter king. The name of Funan compared to the Khmer language is Phnom, Bon, or the mountain. The ruler of Funan is called Kurung Bnam is the King of the Mountain. The Vayadhapura city is near Ba Phnom and has an important seashore names Oc Eo. There is a 200 kilometer-long river connecting the port Oc Eo going out with the city of Vayadhapura.



Since the capital is located at the highest part of the Mekong Delta near Mount Ba Phanom where the rivers and lakes flow together, therefore, it helps drain the lake to the west area which helps in cultivation well. The strategic location of Funan making it possible to control the strait that connects the coast of the Gulf of Thailand with the Andaman Sea and various Chinese ports in the south. Clearly, it provided significant wealth and political influence encouragement Funan's power to rule over the city of Langkasuka. Langkasuka is the capital city of Pattani and in accordance with the link Tambralinga capital in Nakhon Si Thammarat or Jaiya, two towns located on both sides of maritime trade routes vital. Funan still has power over Chenla located in the north of Funan. Funan ruled over most of Indochina for five centuries.

Transportation within Funan mainly uses waterways. The population lives on the banks of the water, building high basement houses and the favorite sport is cockfighting and pig smashing. Taxes are paid in gold, silver, pearls, and perfume. Funan also makes business with the West. Because of the excavations, found the foundation of many buildings in the city of Oc Eo have found evidence of the relationship between Funan and the Western, such as various Roman coins with a Roman emperor. Indian inscription of ring stones found evidence on period 2nd - 5th centuries in various designs that are derived from Greek.

Indian Buddhist Cultural And Arts Characteristics Towards Funan

The culture of the Funan through Oc Eo merit port has been a mixture of indigenous and Indian cultures, such as sacred mountain worship traditions. And the princess of the Funan was a serpent inherited later as a tradition for the Cambodian King to follow. The architecture of the culture was Indian culture, including ancient Cambodian temples in Angkor Wat. In addition, there were Gupta Buddha images that appeared. The statue of Vishnu wearing a cylindrical Mala and the image of Phra Harihara all showed that the Funan sculptor was influenced by culture from India during the Palawan dynasty and the Gupta Dynasty Both Buddhism And Hinduism. Sanskrit can be seen from the inscription of the Funan people recorded at the celebration of King Konthinya II (death of 434 A.D) and King Jayavarman 1 (reign 478 – 514 A.D.) (Swearer, 2017). That has been various traditions of events, which aside from showing the influence of Indian culture also showing the ending of King Funan's name "Varman" in Sanskrit, meaning "patronage" in the Indian caste hierarchy. All of this showed the influence of Indian culture on the state of Funan.





Figure 2: Carved Wooden of Buddha Idol Theravada Buddhism period of Funan 4th – 6th C.

The Photo from Vietnam National Museum Ho Chi Min

There are many important excavations in southern Vietnam especially in area of the mud of the Mekong Delta. That has the properties of keeping the wood carving very well. There are 1,500 years old wooden sculptures which are amazing. Because wooden in Southeast Asia usually only last for a few decades will destroy due to the high humidity in this land (Life travel. 2019)



Figure 3: Buddha sculptures adorn the buildings that are still colorful and gilding Funan art (Pinterest,2021)





Figure 4: Bodhisattva Idol in Mahayana Buddhism period of Gupta Dynasty of India 4th C. found in Vietnam (Printerest, 2021)

According to houses of the Funan Kingdom characteristics had been people life thatched under a leafy roof and dig a large pool to share each other. Funan town was surrounded by city walls in the city there will be a palace and residential houses, building ordinary homes as building high basements with plaster bricks for government buildings as make the construction of a brick wall around the capital. The king sat on several levels of the *Rajamanian* castle built of rare wood, luxuriously decorated. Funan people used boats which the appearance appears similar to the picture on the bronze alloy drum as a long narrow dredger, the bow of a boat shaped like a *Naga* and fish, about 80-90 feet long, 6-7 feet wide, probably used in dealing or invading other lands

Funan had diplomatic relations with China. Therefore, the story of Funan appeared in a Chinese record that states noted the several retainer cities of Funan was surrounded by walls. With palaces and houses people of Funan had constructed black skin, curly hair, walk barefoot, cultivate, like carving jewelry, stone carving, with characters similar to those of “Hoo” (located in Central Asia using the Indian alphabet) (Thu Tai, 2018) slaves, prisoners of war, gold trade, silver trade, silk trading, ring making, gold bracelet, silver bowls. There is irrigation for planting. The architecture is a roof with many small layers decorated with small compartments covering.

Archives of China in the Sui Dynasty, Tang Dynasty state presented that Funan states were mixed Buddhism and Brahmin with both Mahayana and Theravada. There is a very prosperous Buddhism education until able to send a diplomatic mission to China. In order to translate the sutra that appears in the 10th century. Buddhist religion there were two



Buddhist monks of Funan envoys named Sangha Pala and Mantrasen traveling to Nanjing. In Nanjing, the Chinese government set up an institution to welcome the Dhammaduta especially the Sangha Pala translated the book of liberation from the Pali edited, accordingly for Mantrasen he has translated many of the doctrine and books from the works of these scriptures. Cussing makes us know that Kingdom of Funan Buddhism is stable and can benefit other countries.

The bring abundance to Funan lasted until the 6th century. Then fall under the rule of the state of Chenla cause of defeat or decay with clear evidence from Chronicles of the Tang Dynasty. Which the Chinese diplomatic mission traveled to Funan at the beginning of the 6th century, only said that lost to the Chenla King. Funan king had fled to Southern of Funan. Funan is the first powerful state in Southeast Asia able to maintain great prestige. It is a memorial to the younger generation as can be seen from the incident after the state of Chenla took over Funan. Each and every king of Chenla inherited the story of the Funan Dynasty. And the latter was the Angkor Wat period every king of Angkor Wat considered him a descendant of the King of The entire city of Vayadhapura. The kingdom of Funan collapsed in the 11th century.

Conclusion

Funan accepts Indian culture both the form of government, society, culture, and influence from Indian culture seen very high among in the class of noble people and governor. The general villagers still adhere to their traditional social customs. Funan looks like an irrigation state, with irrigation for rice cultivation by digging ditches, embankments, water retention, and drainage to various fields. Meanwhile, the Oc Eo port was significant the leading source of income to the benefit of the state. Especially the evidence found the Funan sculptor was influenced by Buddhist culture and arts from India during the Palawan dynasty and the Gupta Dynasty both Buddhism of Theravada and Mahayana. So that can be said the Funan State plays a very important role in helping spread Indian Buddhist civilization in Indochina and is the foundation state of Buddhist culture and arts in the southern of Vietnam initiative of the first century.

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