



**AN ANALYTICAL STUDY OF THE WAY OF THE PRACTICE
OF TRUC LAM ZEN SCHOOL IN VIETNAM**

Bhikkhuni Bui Thi Thu Thuy
(TN. Huệ Từ)

A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of
The Requirements for the Degree of
Master of Arts
(Buddhist Studies)

Graduate School
Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University
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The Graduate School of Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University has approved this thesis entitled "An Analytical Study of the Way of The Practice of Truc Lam Zen School in Vietnam" as part of education according to its curriculum Master of Arts in Buddhist Studies.

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Abstract

This thesis is qualitative research with three objectives: 1) to study the origin and development of the Way of the Practice of TLZS, 2) to analyze the content of the way of practice of TLZS and 3) to study the influences of the way of the practice of TLZS in Vietnam. The research methodology used is primarily documentary; data were collected from Vietnamese Zen texts; Taisho Tipiṭaka sources. The need for the current study is significant and provides a comprehensive, emphasize the meaning and value of the way of practice TLZS in the history of Vietnam.

The perspective of the thesis figured out the origin of the way of the practice of TLZS in Vietnam. Zen Buddhism stretched of the long-term in golden historical pages in Vietnam, especially TLZS, This is the culmination of Zen Buddhism in Vietnam perfectly both form and content. TLZS's essence can be cut right to the core of the matter and can only be answered by our own and the best answer itself is "practice". The big deal in this case, one of the key points of Vietnamese Zen Buddhism is intuitive understanding, to break the ice of voidness and attain into the realm of Buddhahood without effort but naturally. In the first objective, I

would like to return and take a deep look of the origin and process of development of TLZS for us to catch and understand the past and present. I think it is really important to listen what those before us discern. We need to keep in touch their origin, preserve it, and pass it down to those after us for bright development. In the second objective, I would like to analyze and emphasize the value and meaning of the way of practice of TLZS, because I want to let me comprehend this kind of beautiful meditative technique. Using it becomes a effective link to revive prosperous the Tran Dynasty time for now. Above all this, I also want to let others know, how beautiful and useful TLZS brings us to enjoy and throw ourselves into the realm of endless happiness. And the last objective I would like to make deep and large clarification the important role of TLZS by researching its influences on Vietnamese society through values and meanings and hope to cultivate good enough to make us feel attractive, impressive, honorable and respectful to our devoted life, attainment, and achievements. TLZS itself is the great and bold marks of Vietnamese Buddhism population, As a result, beyond the words and sentences, the way of the practice of TLZS has been giving the spiritual way to adapt to meditators in earnest to reach the higher realm of welfare and revive the golden period of Vietnamese Zen Buddhism for later generations contribute the Buddhist foundation more and more spreadable and thriving.

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Bhikkhuni Bui Thi Thu Thuy

List of Abbreviations

Primary Sources

A	Āṅguttara Nikāya
D	Dīgha Nikāya
Dhp	Dhammapada
M	Majjhima Nikāya
Mtu	Mahāvastu
Pm	Paṭisambhidāmagga
S	Saṃyutta Nikāya
Vism	Visuddhimagga
SA	Saṃyukta Āgama

Other Abbreviations

BC	Before the Common Era
BPS	Buddhist Publication Society
CA	California
Ca.	Chief author
CBETA	Taisho Tripiṭaka, Chinese Electronic Tripiṭaka Collection, version 2016.
CE	Common Era
Cf.	confer or compare
ed.	Edited by
edn	edition
etc.	et cetera/ and others
HCM	Ho Chi Minh
IABU	The International Association of Buddhist Universities

ibid.	ibidem/ in the same book ibid.
MA	Master of Arts
MCU	Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University
Mr	Mister
Ms	Miss
NY	New York
op cit.	opere citato/as referred
p(s)	page(s)
pi	Pāli
PTS	Pāli Text Society
Skt	Sanskrit
tr(s).	Translated/ Translator (s)
UK	United Kingdom
USA	United States of America
Vol	Volume
Vols	Volumes
TLZS	Truc Lam Zen School

Notes on the use of the abbreviations

In quoting Pāli sources, the references are given according to the volume and the page number of the PTS edition. For example: D.I.16: D=Dīgha Nikāya; I= Volume I; 16=page number 16.

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Biography of Research

Chapter I

Introduction

1.1. Backgrounds and Significance of the Problems

Meditation lies at heart of the Buddhism and plays an important and meaning role to express an imprint on the welfare and peace all of the human beings. The true happiness of individual has to begin with one's moral and ethics and meditation is really a magic and significant training to help human beings to attain and harvest the sweet and fragrant fruits. In Vietnamese meditation with covering fundamental factors of Buddhist practice such as posture, lay meditation and meditative technique it provides comments. Suggestions both daily activities and the divine path lead to enlightenment.

According to the spirit of Dhamma ” Bhikkhus, both formerly and now what I teach is suffering and the cessation of suffering”¹ and these also are the value and benefit of meditation bring us the right and adequate way. Zen Buddhism is the name of a Mahāyāna Buddhist schools². Additionally, Vietnam has Buddhist colors of Mahāyāna Buddhism and so many transmissions of Zen Buddhism. (In the sixth century CE, it went to Vietnam as “Thien, in the eighth century to Koreo

¹M.I.140; Bhikkhu Ñāṇamoli and Bhikkhu Bodhi (trs), **The Middle Length Discourse of the Buddha: A Translation of Majjhima Nikāya**, (Boston: Wisdom Publication, 2009), p. 234.

²Heinrich Dumoulin, **Zen Buddhism: A History, India and China, Vol. 1**, (Bloomington: World Wisdom Inc, 2005), p. 17.

as “ Seon”, and in twelfth century to Japan as “ Zen”³). Vietnam and China shared many common features of cultural, philosophical and religious heritage. This was due to geographical proximity to one another and Vietnam being annexed twice by China. During the Đinh dynasty (968-980), Buddhism was recognized by the state as an official faith (~971), reflecting the high esteem of Buddhist faith held by the Vietnamese monarchies.⁴ The Early Lê dynasty (980-1009) also afforded the same recognition to the Buddhist church. The growth of Buddhism during this time is attributed to the recruitment of erudite monks to the court, as the newly independent state needed an ideological basis on which to build a country. Subsequently, this role was ceded to Confucianism.⁵⁶

The culmination of Zen Buddhism in Vietnam was the system and doctrine of TLZS, established by Tran Nhan Tong and became official and typical Buddhist quintessence in Vietnam at that time. On the other hand, “having presented this account of early Buddhism Desmoulins goes on to connect the threads as the Prajñāpāramitā, Mādhyamaka and Zen with the Buddha himself were completed, no doubt, by Zen Masters themselves. Such attributions are based on the belief that the basic teachings of the Buddha remained unchanged until the time of Zen.”⁷ Decorating the form and color of Vietnamese meditation, I made the decision to figure out the thesis “ An Analytical Study of the Way of Practice of TLZS in Vietnam”. Beside of the common notion “the initial task of the meditator is to learn to dampen down wandering thoughts.”⁸ And Zen was not certain to meditate in order to tie the mind but Zen should be combined into the daily activities of people. We can say that

³Simon Child (Jing-hong Chuan-fa), “**Chan Buddhism and its Origins**”, Middle Way, (Aug 2015), Vol. 90, Issue 2, p. 115.

⁴Nguyen Tai Thu, **History of Buddhism in Vietnam**, (Cultural Heritage and Contemporary Change: South East Asia, 2008), p.77

⁵ **Ibid.** p.75.

⁶ S.III.141, IV 49, III 114, II133, IV 28, IV 130-166;

⁷David J. Kalupahana, **Reflection on the Relation on the Relation between Early Buddhim and Zen in Buddhist Philosophy: A Historical Analysis**, (Honolulu: University Press of Hawaii, 1976), p. 165.

⁸Peter Harvey, **An Introduction to Buddhism: Teachings, History and Practices**, 2nd Ed, (UK: Cambridge University Press, 2013), p. 362.

this reasoning influenced the policy of Huineng Zen.⁹ Vietnamese meditators, we can give us a big and massive dig in knowledge and *Paññā* to be able to fly into a higher realm of liberation.

The Way of Practice of TLZS in Vietnam lets us know how to cultivate the cultural spirit and traditional essence of the Vietnamese population during the war and peace life. This technique of meditation, another way is perfect skillful living, puts the foundation not only Vietnamese persons but also human beings on the world admired that the way of a founder of TLZS who delicate whole life for Vietnamese nation and population. The golden historical pages are still being alive inside of Vietnam forever.

1.2. Objectives of the Research

1.2.1 To study the origin and development of Truc Lam Zen School in Vietnam.

1.2.2 To analyze the way of the practice of Truc Lam Zen School in Vietnam.

1.2.3 To study of the influences of the way of practice of Truc Lam Zen School in Vietnam.

1.3 Statement of the Problems to Research

1.3.1 What is the origin and development of Truc Lam Zen School in Vietnam?

1.3.2 How to analyze the way to the practice of Truc Lam Zen School in Vietnam?

1.3.3 What are influences of the way of practice of Truc Lam Zen School in Vietnam?

⁹Lu Trung, **History of Chinese Buddhist Thoughts** (Vietnamese version) Thich Hanh Binh (tr), (HCM: Phuong Dong Press, 2013), p. 676.

1.4. Scope of the Research

The scope of research can be divided into two dimensions as follow.

1.4.1 Scope of Sources of Data.

The process of data collection for the research will rely on textual sources, both ancient and modern. The researcher will deepen in the study of Vietnamese texts, historical transcripters to tell the origin and development of the way of practice of Truc Lam Zen School. Additionally, the research will rely on modern scholars and modern sources as Buddhist textbooks, academic articles, and journals.

The researcher will focus on studying the way of practice of meditation in Truc Lam Zen School in English transcripts of “Diamond Sutra”. Additionally, the transcripts of ancient Chinese and Vietnamese textbooks to express the concept and practical theory in Vietnam like as “Awakend in the Dust of Life” and books of contemporary master Truc Lam Zen School the Most Venerable Thich Thanh Tu who delicate for meditation in Vietnam, “Thiền Uyển tập anh ngữ lục (禪苑集英語錄),” of meditative masters in Dinh, Le, Ly and Tran dynasties. The Complete History of Đại Việt (大越史記全書) is completely written and firstly published in 1697,

1.4.2 Scope of Content.

The research will be composed of three main sections; initially the research will deepen in studying:

a. The concept of the origin and development of Truc Lam Zen School relying on ancient and modern sources,

b. The second section focuses on analyzing the doctrine as it appears, as well as presenting a case study and reality of the way of practice of Truc Lam Zen School in Vietnam.

c. The third and final sections focus on the influences the way of practice of Truc Lam Zen School in Vietnam and its value brings to in particular in Vietnam, in general over all the world.

1.5 Definition of the Terms Used in the Research

1.5.1 Meditation is a kind of technique which a meditator observes, trains the mind and study from the process and way of consciousness to lead the mind get stable shelter of peaceful thoughts. Meditation is often used to observe the mind, keep mindfulness, reduce stress, promote relaxation and cultivate wisdom.

1.5.2 Zen School refers to a school of the Mahāyāna Buddhist sect that was introduced into Vietnam around 580 CE. The Zen Buddhism is a special word that describes it as the concept, doctrine and practice of meditation to emphasize the insight of Buddha-nature of every human being.

1.5.3 Truc Lam Zen School (竹林安子), or simply Trúc Lâm ("Bamboo Grove"), is a Vietnamese Thiền (i.e. zen) sect. It is the only native school of Buddhism in Vietnam. The school was founded by Emperor Tran Nhan Tong (1258–1308) showing influence from Confucian and Taoist philosophy. Truc Lam's prestige later waned as Confucianism became dominant in the royal court. Literature relating to the concept of Lotus sutta and Diamond sutta.

1.5.4 Transmission: refer to lineage of transmission of Zen Buddhism in Vietnam and it has are many lines of transmission. For example, Vinītaruci school (580 CE to 1213 CE), Vo Ngon Thong Zen school (820 CE to 1291 CE), Thao Duong Zen school (1069 to 1210 CE) and the higher development like as: TLZS (1292 CE to 1400 CE), Caodong school (曹洞宗) (17th to 18th Century) and Linji Zen school (臨濟宗) (17th to 18th Century).

1.6. Review of Related Literature and Research Works

The review of related literature and research works for this research: Literature relating to the meditation concept in the way of practices Truc Lam Zen School in Vietnam.

1.6.1 Thich Thien An, *Buddhism and Zen in Vietnam: In Relation to the development of Buddhism in Asia*. Los Angeles: College of Oriental Studies, Graduate school, 1975.¹⁰

His work was written after immigrating to the United States and reflect his efforts to establish himself as a Zen master in Western context and he mentioned many importance Buddhism and Zen disseminated to Vietnam in the early A.D and the way Zen become prosperous over India and Chinese missionaries with Nguyen Thieu, Lieu Quan sect. Additionally, the Pure Land Zen union still popular method in Vietnam.

1.6.2 Nguyen Cuong Tu, *Zen in Medieval Vietnam: A Study and Translation of Thien Uyen Tap Anh*. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1997.¹¹

Analyzing between origin and evolution of the so-called Zen tradition or Zen school in Buddhist history in Vietnam. Thien Uyen Tap Anh is collection of biographies of eminent Zen monks in Vietnam from sixth to the thirteenth century, presented in the form of transmission of three Zen lineages.

1.6.3 Nguyen Dang Thuc, *Vietnamese Meditation* (Vietnamese version), Saigon: La Boi 1966.¹²

This book studies the practice of Vietnamese Zen Buddhism and critically evaluates many Zen masters' thoughts of practice and biographies during the domination by northern invaders and the period of Dai Viet mentioned the masters Vinītaruci, Vo Ngon Thong, Thao Duong and Van Hanh to explore the meditation's philosophy. Hence, the documents is researched on the enlightenment method of Zen Buddhism.

¹⁰ Thich Thien An, ***Buddhism and Zen in Vietnam: In Relation to the Development of Buddhism in Asia***, (Los Angeles: College of Oriental Studies, Graduate school, 1975), p. 9.

¹¹ Nguyen Cuong Tu, ***Zen in Medieval Vietnam: A Study and Transmission of Thien Uyen Tap Anh***, (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1997), p. 3.

¹² Nguyen Dang Thuc, ***Vietnamese Meditation***, (Saigon: La Boi, 1966), p. 12.

1.6.4 Zen Master Thich Thanh Tu, Vietnamese Zen Masters, HCM Press, 1999.¹³

Life, achievement and thoughts on meditation of Vietnamese Meditation to receive the Chinese Zen Buddhism. Therefore, Vietnam master created the individual original features and pass on through many time. The Linji Zen school (臨濟宗) and Lieu Quan Zen school appeared and are flourishing to this day. This book only reference as far as the 18th century.

1.6.5 Nguyen Giac (Tr. And commented), Teaching from Ancient Vietnamese Zen Masters, California: Phap Vuong University, 2010.¹⁴

The ancient monks composed Many beautiful Dhamma poems, verses and talks. Khuong Tang Hoi (3rd century), also the founder of Vietnamese Buddhism and the most recent one. The most venerable Thanh Dam in the 19th century. This book is also a bilingual selection of many Dhamma talks, poems and verses made by Zen Masters from the 3rd to the 19th century and consequently this book carries the core of Buddhist teaching, especially and prominently Zen teachings.

1.6.6 The Most Venerable Thich Minh Chau, Thich Thanh Tu, Thich Phuoc Son, professor Minh Chi, The Original Meditation and Developed Meditation, HCM city: Vietnamese Buddhist Research Institute, 1994.¹⁵

This book is collected the knowledges about the experiences of practice of Theravāda Buddhist meditation and Zen meditative master. Through it, we can make clear the purpose, final goal and opinions of ancient meditative masters. Moreover, it expose the interesting and lively ways, stories and methods of Zen meditative masters let their students attain enlightenment.

¹³Thich Thanh Tu, Vietnamese **Zen Masters** (Vietnamese version), (HCM: HCM Press, 1999), p. 5.

¹⁴Nguyen Giac, **Teachings from Ancient Vietnamese Zen Masters,** (California: Phap Vuong Monastery, 2010), p. 6.

¹⁵The Most Venerable Thich Minh Chau, Thich Thanh Tu, Thich Phuoc Son, professor Minh Chi, **The Original Meditation and Developed Meditation,** (HCM city: Vietnamese Buddhist Research Institute, 1994), p.60.

1.6.7. The Most Venerable Thich Thanh Tu, *Picking up the Bodhi Leaves*, Ha Noi: Religious Press, 2009.¹⁶

This book is the collection of stories and discussion about the Dhamma between master Thanh Tu and his students. According to level and abilities of each persons, he gives the suitable methods and techniques to let them attain the enlightenment and make clear the characters the Mahayana sutra for later life.

1.6.8 The Most Venerable Thich Thanh Tu, *Vietnamese Meditative Masters*, Ha Noi: Religious Press, 2010.¹⁷

The book consists of the stories of Vietnamese meditative masters. From the origin, development till now. Each of them practiced and left the imprints of their foot of the Vietnamese historical pages. The process of them taught and instructed in next generations to discern new way and adequate methods to live happier lives.

1.7. Research Methodology

1.7.1 Research Design

This qualitative research work is a kind of textual studies and documentary research methodology.

1.7.2 Data Collection

Collecting data to be analyzed and categorized Vietnamese texts and historical data, documents including related Truc Lam Zen School transcripts, dissertations and thesis, journals, university library and Internet books and document.

1.7.3 Data Analysis

Analyzing the data as well as systematizing and studying the collected data in order to make clear a structure and methods of

¹⁶The Most Venerable Thich Thanh Tu, ***Picking up the Bodhi Leaves***, (Ha Noi: Religious Press, 2009), p.45.

¹⁷The Most Venerable Thich Thanh Tu, ***Vietnamese Meditative Masters***, (Ha Noi: Religious Press, 2010), p.12.

practicing meditation of the human beings all over the world in general and in Vietnam in particular.

1.7.4 Outline Construction

Constructing the entire outline of the work and writing manuscript.

1.7.5 Problem Discussion

Discussing the problem integrated and collected according to the significance and practical benefit of the studies.

1.7.6 Conclusion and Suggestion

Conclusion and suggestion for further studies, reciting and practice.

1.8. Advantages Expected to Obtain from the Research

1.8.1 Obtaining knowledge of the concept of the origin and development of Truc Lam Zen School in Vietnam.

1.8.2 Obtaining knowledge of the concept of analyzing the way of practice of Truc Lam Zen School in Vietnam.

1.8.3 Having understood a comprehensive knowledge to find out the influences of the way of practice of Truc Lam Zen School in Vietnam.

Chapter II

The Origin and Development of the Way of Practice in Truc Lam Zen School

After thousand years of domination by China, Vietnamese religion was influenced by the philosophy and tradition of that country directly. According to the viewpoint of Professor Tran Hong Lien, China spread Mahayana Buddhism, which literally means the "Great Vehicle" and propagated the origin of Buddhism. In term of this Zen Schools under the Ly and Tran dynasties (1009-1400) had the opportunity to review Buddhism in Vietnam. Especially, King Tran Nhan Tong is said that he achieved Buddhahood in Vietnam. He is the profound King who founded the TLZS - the first form of Vietnamese Buddhism - by the rational combination of Chinese and Indian teachings. This chapter presents the process of TLZS in Vietnam. It focuses on 1) The origin of the way of practice of TLZS in Vietnam, 2) The development of TLZS in Vietnam.

2.1. The Origin of the Way of Practice of Truc Lam Zen School in Vietnam

In this part, the researcher will explore the period of Zen School came into Vietnam and traces of TLZS were imprinted in Vietnam's history and Zen School and created the evidence of heroic and proud milestones of TLZS. This part expresses characteristics 1) Introduction the origin of Zen schools in Vietnam, 2) Introduction the traces of TLZS in Vietnam.

2.1.1 Introduction the Origin of Zen Schools in Vietnam.

In general, though Mahāyāna Buddhism appeared as a new phase of the religion about the 2nd or 1st century B.C., along with a vast

literature on the subject, it may be stated that in the *Nikāyas*, dated about 487 B.C. and compiled from Buddha's discourses in the First Buddhist Council, there are however definite traces that *Bhagvān* Buddha had at the back of his mind the philosophical outlook of Mahāyāna Buddhism. Prof Keith¹⁸ and later Prof Venkataraman¹⁹ and Bhikkhi Jñānānda²⁰ have drawn our attention to this fact.²¹ In particular, Vietnamese Buddhism propagated and was introduced from India and Khuong Tang Hoi, had the origin of Mahāyāna meditation, called *Dhyāna* in India. From the 6th century on three Chinese Zen schools (Vinītaruci, Vo Ngon Thong and Thao Duong) were established in Vietnam, flourished and developed to the 12th. The doctrine of Vietnamese Zen is overwhelming the color and perfume of essence Nikaya and be able to adapt to the outside of phenomena. It lasted long period of time gorgeously and perfectly.

Vietnam is a country located on the Indochinese Peninsula between India and China. It is bounded in the northern China, in the east and south by East Sea (the Pacific Ocean) and in the west, Lao and Cambodia border it, Vietnam is in the intersection of international highway in Southeast Asia. Getting to Vietnam involves crossing Sri Lanka, Indonesia, China, Mongolia, Tibet, Vietnam and China. Following of Vietnamese scholars and pieces of evidence, Buddhism was brought by first Indian who came to Vietnam before Bodhidharma traveled to South of China.

Vietnam's geographical position has made it a prime candidate for trade with India. The Indochinese peninsula is formed by several mountain ranges which span from Tibet in the Northwest to the sea in the Southeast. Among these ranges lie valleys of big rivers, most importantly the Mae Nam which forms

¹⁸Buddhist Philosophy, 1950.

¹⁹The Central Philosophy of Buddhism (1954)

²⁰Concept and Reality (1971)

²¹Nalinaksha Dutt, **Mahāyāna Buddhism**, (India: Shantilal Jain at Shri Jainendra Press, 1978), p.71.

*the Thai delta, the Mekong River, and northern Vietnam's Red and D Rivers.*²²

After the Buddha entered into Nirvana in 554 BCE Buddhist thoughts were established and developed from India and spread to many regions and then all over the worlds. Dhamma is unlimited of languages, cultures, traditions, geographies, thoughts and history, it still emerges the private voice according to every human being's wish and hope. Under the reign of King Asoka in India from 273 to 232 years BCE²³ and the King donated and support anyways. On hands, he confirmed, instructed and developed the Dhamma took deep and bright imprints in his subjects. On the other hand, he tried to transmit to many countries outside of India by delegations to propagate Buddha's teachings in the West, East and Southeast Asia.

At that time, the Indian merchants also went to countries: Malaysia, Indonesia and Vietnam by boat to the merchant the product of cloths. By the way, they brought Bodhisatta and Buddha images to worship when they arrived in Giao Chau. Those divined images were gradually imprinted on the minds of Giao Chau's persons. Through the solving and discussions of the hope and love belonged to honor, divined and miracles, people understood and get the deep and useful domestication the trend of worship images of enlightenment ones. After that, it eveloped quickly and spread positive way through other locations. At the time the Luy Lau Centre was located in the territory of the later Han dynasty.²⁴

Buddhism from India was transmitted and came to Vietnam directly earlier than China.²⁵ In the biography of profile Zen Master

²² Nguyen Tai Thu (ed), **The History of Vietnamese Buddhism**, (Washington: The Council for Research in Values and Philosophy, 2008), p.9.

²³D.C. Sircar, *Inscriptions of Asoka*, (New Delhi: Government of India, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Publications Division, 1967), p.14.

²⁴In 110 BCE, Nam Viet became a colony of Han Dynasty; Cao Huy (tr.) and Dao Duy Anh (ed). **The Complete History of the Dai Viet**, vol I (Vietnamese version), (Hanoi: the Culture and Information Press, 2006), p.105.

²⁵**Thien Uyen Tap Anh**, this writing can be composed by Venerable Kim Son in 1337 CE, mentioned many problems and events of history, thoughts and literature of Vietnamese Buddhism.

Thong Bien (?- 1134), an imperial Teacher at the Ly, the discussion of King Ly and Quee Y Lan had good, obvious grounds for in knowing the origin of Vietnamese Buddhism exactly. Moreover, Thong Bien showed proofs and evidence that master Dam Thien (542 - 607) and Tuy Cao De had a conversation that includes some details:

Giao Chau that had the way connected with Thien Truc. When Buddhism began to enter Giao Chau, Giang Dong did not have Buddha Dhamma yet. But there were over twenty temples, more than five hundred monks, fifteen volumes of sutras in Luy Lau. At that time in Giao Chau there were many famous people such as Khau-ni-danh, Ma-ha-ky-vuc, Khuong Tang Hoi, Chi-cuong-luong, Mau Bac.²⁶

In the second half of the 2nd century, Chu Dong Tu, Tien Dung, Bat Nan lady, the monk Phat Quang and two foreigner monks named Khau Da La and Ma Ha Ky Vuc who arrived in Vietnam. Tu Dinh and Man Nuong²⁷ created the foundation of next Vietnamese Buddhism. Till 3rd century BCE, Phat Quang became the first propagator of Buddhists in Vietnam and replaced Khuong Tang Hoi. Combining with other lively and accurate evidence and states of Buddhism to prove the Buddhism could have been transmitted to Vietnam by Asoka in the third century BCE by the leader of Sona's missionaries.

2.1.2 Introduction the Traces of Truc Lam Zen School in Vietnam

From to the works of Mau Tu and Sutra in Forty-Two Sections (*Dvachatvarimshat-khanda Sūtra*) scholars knew quite clearly ideological beliefs and about the Buddhist state in Giao Chau in the 2nd century.²⁸ It's said Khuong Tang Hoi considered to be the first person who laid the foundation of Vietnamese Zen. He propagated Buddhism in Luy Lau,

²⁶Le Manh That, **History of Buddhism in Vietnam**, vol I (Vietnamese version), (Hue: Thuan Hoa Press, 1999), p.11-12.

²⁷Nguyen Dang Thuc, **op.cit.** p.228-232.

²⁸Lang Nguyen, **op.cit.** p.42.

The Buddhist center of Giao Chau (Bac Ninh today) and promoted in China.²⁹

The biography of Khuong Tang Hoi showed that although he was a native of Sogdian, he was born and trained in Giao Chau³⁰ and went to the Wu kingdom to become the first Buddhist propagator in Southern China in 247 CE.³¹ He and An The Cao are considered to have established Chinese Buddhism.³²

The facts in Thien Uyen Tap Anh's book show that the Khuong Tang Hoi sect was founded and extended for thousands of years. The story about the Zen Master Thong Bien was presented to Queen mother Cam Linh Nhan in 1096 CE.

The Present representatives of the Vinītaruci stream are Lam Hue Sinh and Vuong Chan Khong. For the Vo Ngon Thong stream, they are Mai Vien Chieu³³ and Nhan Quang Tri.³⁴ The successor of Kang Senghui (Khuong Tang Hoi)³⁵ is Loi Ha Trach. The other side branches of these two streams are too numerous to mention them all.³⁶ From Chinese Buddhist scriptures catalogs, Khuong Tang Hoi was not only a translator but also a commentator, composer and missionary.³⁷ He discerned clearly

²⁹ He went to Tung-Wu (Central China now) to expand the Buddha Dhamma, Cf. **Taisho Tripitakam** vol 50, no. 2059, p. 325, b47.

³⁰See: E. Zürcher, **The Buddhist Conquest of China- The Spread and Adaptation of Buddhism in Early Medieval China**, (Leiden: Brill, 2007), p.23; Matteo Comparati, “ **Traces of Buddhist art in Sogdiana**”, **Sino-Platonic Papers 181** (2008), p3-4. “ He was born into a Sogdian family that transferred from the region of Samarkand to India and then Tonkin.”

³¹Nguyen Dang Thuc, **op.cit.**, p134.

³²Collection of Records Concerning The Tripitaka, vol I, (**Taisho Tripitaka**, vol 55, no. 245, p.1, a18-19) Until the end of Han period, An The Cao translated clearly, the beginning of Kingdom of Wei, Khuong Tang Hoi noted more.

³³Mai Vien Chieu (998-1091) belonged to the 7th generation of the Vo Ngon Thong school.

³⁴Nhan Quang Tri also belonged to the 7th generation of the Vo Ngon Thong school.

³⁵The phrase “the successor of Kang Senghui” figures out only in the Dai Nam (16b3) in smaller characters as a marginal note obviously by the compilers of the Dai Nam. Quote by Nguyen Cuong Tu.

³⁶Nguyen Cuong Tu, **op.cit.** p226.

³⁷**Ibid**, p10.

the three Buddhist Canon baskets and learns six Classics³⁸ and astronomy. He knew all and he was good at speaking and fast at writing.³⁹ He edited the “The Collection of Six Pāramitā Sūtra” (*Ṣaṭparamitāsamgrahasūtra*)⁴⁰ book and wrote the preface of “the Sūtra found in the 3rd section of the Majjhimanikāya⁴¹ The equivalent in Sanskrit literature that was later translated into the Chinese language of scriptures, Āgama was “the Sūtra on the Full Awareness of Breathing”. This Sūtra uses a method of breath based to control the mind that called “Six wonderful doors.”⁴²

In addition, he also refers to the sequence of the four classes of meditation (*Dhyāna*) in “The Collection of Six Pāramitā Sūtra” as the method to get sincerity, contemplation of mind keep good thoughts in mind, have awareness of eradicating the bad concepts.⁴³

In the 2nd century, Giao Chau had some Indian monks who brought Mahāyāna scriptures such as “*Aṣṭasāhasrikā Prajñāpāramitā Sūtra*”. The preface of “Sūtra on The Full Awareness of Breathing” emphasized about “The Full Awareness of Breathing” is Mahāyāna Buddhism at the beginning can save and heal the mental sufferings. These proved his ideas of meditation had a trend and influences of teaching about emptiness (*sūnyatā*) and thusness (*tathatā, Bhūtatahatā*) of Mahāyāna. We can say, Khuong Tang Hoi is the first person open the origin mold the trace of Mahāyāna meditation.⁴⁴

³⁸ The origin confucian teachings through exegesis, there are the Six Classics(1) classic of Poetry, (2) Classic of History, (3) Classic of Rites, (4) Classic of Music, (5) Classic of Changes, (6) Spring and Autumn Classic.

³⁹ Le Manh That, vol I, **op.cit.** p.316.

⁴⁰ The Collection of Six Pāramitā Sūtra (vol 152), translated by Khuong Tang Hoi in the 3rd century CE. According to Le Manh That, this sūtra was translated from Chinese into Vietnamese.

⁴¹ M III. P79-88.

⁴² Nguyen Lang, **op.cit.** p. 63-64. Complication of Notes on the Translations of The Tripitaka, vol 6, **Taisho Tripitaka**, vol 55, no. 2145, p.43, a1-b13.

⁴³ **Ibid**, p.64.

⁴⁴ Nguyen Lang, **op.cit.**, p.67.

2.2. The Development of Truc Lam Zen School in Vietnam.

The climax of development of Zen schools in Vietnam was the complete formation and perfect spread of TLZS. Later, when Tran dynasty couldn't keep their position and leader, TLZS decayed time by time. The formation of TLZS is a combination of extracting the essence of previous Zen schools. This part tells us to know the process of development of TLZS by stages: 1) Vinītaruci School (580 CE to 1213 CE), 2) The Vo Ngon Thong Zen School (820 CE to 1291 CE), 3) Thao Duong Zen School (1069 CE to 1210 CE), 4) The complete formation and development of TLZS.

2.2.1 Vinītaruci School (580 CE to 1213 CE)

Zen school started from Zen master Vinītaruci who found the Vinītaruci (毗尼多流支) School Zen school in Vietnam and after that, it changed Vo Ngon Thong (无言通) and Thao Duong (草堂) Zen schools. Both of three schools originated from Zen Buddhism in China.

Vinītaruci School (580 CE to 1213 CE). The end 2nd century, Luy Lau (Bac Ninh today) seemed common Mahāyāna Buddhism Center in Vietnam. By the 6th century, the trends of Buddhism in India and China were integrated and developed easily and zealously in Vietnam. In 580 CE Vinītaruci, an Indian disciple of Chinese 3rd Patriarch Sengcan, founded the first Zen school in Vietnam and had name Ty-ni-da-luu-chi (Vietnamese language).⁴⁵ Next, according to the legend Bodhidharma had disciple sometime later named Huike propagated the Dharma to Sengcan and Buddhism was persecuted by the reign of Emperor Wu in 557-581 CE⁴⁶

Vinītaruci Zen School conveyed the stream of Buddhist in the 6th century around the problems, which happened nearly 100 years before, and it could explain why the Buddha's real image didn't appear in the 5th

⁴⁵Kiew Kit Wong, **The Complete Book of Zen**, (Boston: Tuttle Press, 2002), p.148.

⁴⁶Comprehensive Registry of the Successive Ages of the Buddhas and the Patriarchs (Fozu Lidai tongzai), **Taizho Tripiṭaka**, vol 49, no. 2036, p.557, a2-3.

century.⁴⁷ Nowadays, basing the study of this problem on passed-away verses, we can figure out the origin, development and doctrine of the Vinītaruci school. Explaining the meaning and method to attain the Bodhi, in Sutra answer:

*Bodhi is only the name without the real character, no color, no sound, no vision, no entering, no knowing, no going, no coming. It arises from “the twelve causes and conditions”, no place, no vision. Knowing like that, we call it Bodhi.*⁴⁸

Enlightenment can't be expressed in words and writing. It is beyond the concepts of existence and non-existence or coming and going. To enter the Bodhi we must enter the place where we can't enter. It means we stick to nothing.⁴⁹ These are matters that Vietnamese Zen as well as Chinese Zen developed in the koans for penetrating enlightenment. Bodhi also is said to be the nature of things which Vinītaruci called “the seal of mind”⁵⁰ and before his death, it was transmitted to his disciple Phap Hien.

The translation of “*Mahāyāna Vaipulya Sūtra of Total Retention*” also focuses on the presentation of six perfections for achieving the Bodhi. They who want to see the Buddha must practice the six perfections. And this sutra also mentions the need to cultivate six perfections. Bodhisattvas practice six paramitas; they will attain supreme enlightenment.⁵¹ Practicing six paramitas is the basic foundation to cultivate the great compassion.⁵² Expressly this Sūtra mentions the method “six times of doing penance for the sins of three karmas of body,

⁴⁷Le Manh That, **History of Buddhism in Vietnam**, vol II, (HCM City: HCM Press, 2001), p.29.

⁴⁸**Taisho Tripitaka**, vol 14m no.466, p.487, a21-29.

⁴⁹**Ibid**, p.487, a12-20.

⁵⁰The seal of mind (Japanese: Shin-in) means the mind with total silence and it has received the seal of transmission from Buddha nature. This mind is called the True Nature.

⁵¹The Mahāyāna Vaipulya Sūtra of Total Retention, **Taisho Tripitaka**, vol 09, no.275, p.381, a 26-27.

⁵²The six perfections: 1) Dāna Pāramitā: giving of oneself, 2) Sīla Pāramitā: morality, 3)Kṣānti Pāramitā: patience, 4) Vīrya Pāramitā: energy, 5) Dhyāna Pāramitā: one-pointed concentration, contemplation, 6) *Prajñā Pāramitā*: wisdom, insight. **Taisho Tripitaka**, vol 03, no.152, p.1, a11-13.

speech and mind all day.⁵³ This method later had a strong impact on the development of Vietnamese Zen thought.⁵⁴

So through a combination of two translations of Vinītaruci and “Thien Uyen Tap Anh” records we get a clear insight into Vinītaruci’s Zen that is basically the meditative tradition with a blend of elements of Pure Land Buddhism and Esoteric Sect. In Vietnam, the Vinītaruci school⁵⁵ spread through nineteen successive generations⁵⁶ up to 1213 CE in the Tran dynasty when Vinītaruci sect no longer continued.

2.2.2 The Vo Ngon Thong Zen School (820 CE to 1291 CE),

In the 9th century, about 820 CE, Zen master Wuyantong was known as Vo Ngon Thong (820 CE to 1291 CE) in Vietnam, he was a Chinese Buddhist monk and went to reside in Phu Dong village, Kien So temple of Bac Ninh today. He founded the color of Vo Ngon Thong sect utilizing Bich Quan, or “wall-contemplation,” a practice originating with Bodhidharma to realize the ultimate real nature of the mind.⁵⁷ The Vo Ngon Thong Zen school transmitted through 17th generation until Tran dynasty. In 820 of about 2nd century, Vo Ngon Thong came to live in Kien So temple located in the village of Phu Dong, Bac Ninh (Ha Bac today).⁵⁸ He left many precious Buddhist traces and passed away in 826. Master Cam Thanh became the 2nd Patriarch of Vo Ngon Thong Zen School and Tue Trung Thuong Si was the last patriarch of this Zen School.

“Sudden Zen” under the influence of his method from master Baizhang(百丈). (This idea was reflected in the answer of master

⁵³ The Mahāyāna Vaipulya Sūtra of Total Retention, vol 1, **Taisho Tripitaka**, vol 09, no.152,p.1, a11-13.

⁵⁴Le Manh That, **op.cit.**, p.82.

⁵⁵ Thien Buddhism was already established in Vietnam before Vinītaruci’s arrival...” see: Taylor, Keith Weller, **op.cit.**, p.157.

⁵⁶ Thich Thien An, **Buddhism and Zen in Vietnam: in Relation to the Development of Buddhism in Asia**, (Los Angeles: College of Oriental Studies, Graduate School, 1975), p.50.

⁵⁷Thich Thien An, **op.cit.** p.55.

⁵⁸Nguyen Tai Thu, **op.cit.**, p.65.

Baizhang (百丈) when a monk asked him:⁵⁹ what the Mahāyāna doctrine of sudden enlightenment is, and Baizhang (百丈) replied: When the mind-ground is empty, the sun of wisdom spontaneously shines. Baizhang (百丈) had Chinese meditation nuance with the thought of the truth in peoples' mind: The Buddha is in your mind, without standing on letters of words, the mind especially transmitted besides the doctrine, and it directly points the human mind to see the nature of mind for attaining Buddhahood.⁶⁰ When the mind can overcome the “inside and outside” dualism to able reveal and discern the Buddha nature.⁶¹ All human beings and Buddhas have a common point that is the mind; if awakened, the mind is the Buddha; if not yet enlightened, the Buddha (mind) is just a being. Your own mind is the Buddha; nothing can be established outside the mind.⁶² Observing the mind, living with the mind, focusing on the mind, Dharma will reveal as they really are. To attain the Sudden Enlightenment, we have turned back the self-nature of the mind.

Tue Trung Thuong Si is the 17th and last patriarch of the Vo Ngon Thong Zen school and considered as “a great lamp of the Buddha, tool mind-to-mind transmission to develop the fresh winds of Buddhism,”⁶³ He started up and founded the thoughts, doctrine and method of Vietnamese Truc Lam Zen.

2.2.3 Thao Duong Zen School (1069 CE to 1210 CE)

In the 11th century, Zen master Thao Duong (1069 CE to 1210 CE) came from China and became a national teacher in the Ly Thanh Tong dynasty,⁶⁴ he founded the Thao Duong zen school in Vietnam. In

⁵⁹Nguyen Cuong Tu, *op.cit.*, p.106.

⁶⁰IABU, **Buddhist Philosophy and Meditation Practice**, (The 2nd IABU Conference MCU, Main Campus Wang Noi, Ayutthaya, Thailand, 2012), p.28.

⁶¹Trung Lu, *op.cit.* p.683-684.

⁶²Master Hua, **The Sixth Patriarch's Dharma Jewel Platform Sutra**, (Burlingame: Buddhist Text Translation Society, 2001), p.412.

⁶³Institute of Literature, **Ly Tran Poetry and Literature**, vol II, (Ha Noi: Society and Science Press, 1989), p.594.

⁶⁴Ly Thanh Tong: ruled (1054-1072), were the 3rd emperor of the Ly dynasty of Vietnam. He was considered as one of the most talented and benevolent kings in Vietnamese history.

1069 Kinh Ly Thanh Tong fought Chiem Thanh⁶⁵ and captured many prisoners, including Thao Duong. By Zen studies, the teacher of the prince had new features compared to two contemporary sects of Vinītaruci and Vo Ngon Thong so Master established a Zen sect with the name Thao Duong Zen School. Zen Thao Duong was Koan ideology and Pure Land Buddhism.⁶⁶ The extension of the Thao Duong tradition spanned five generations and eighteen patriarchs from 1054 to 1210 CE.⁶⁷

The influence of this sect was only transmitted until 1210 CE. This sect brought literarily and an intellectual tendency and so did not strike root in the masses and only affected some intellectuals who had knowledge of literature.⁶⁸ Through the historical record of “Thien Uyen Tap Anh”, mentioned about the salient features of this Zen School. But, especially, the monks of this time had no monopoly of enlightenment as two previous Zen monks possessed. Because of the big and deep influences of Vinītaruci and Vo Ngon Thong Zen school, it had no private and particular voice in their tradition.

Thao Duong Zen dominated the operations of the Buddhist period at that time and this was considered as the engaged Buddhist period. The practices can be adapted to so many fields and various social activities.

2.2.4 The Complete Formation and Development of Truc Lam Zen School.

According to the researchers the founder of Yen Tu school was Zen master Hien Quang – a disciple of Zen master Thuong Chieu in Luc To pagoda (Bac Ninh Province). Zen master Thuong Chieu was the 12 The generation of Wu-Yun T’ung Zen sect and Zen master Hien Quang

⁶⁵Le Manh That, **History of Buddhism in Vietnam**, vol III, (HCM city: HCM Press, 2002), p.114.

⁶⁶The Thao Duong School of Vietnamese Buddhism unified practice of Zen and Pure Land Buddhism. Janet McLellan, **Many Petals of the Lotus: Five Asian Buddhist Communities in Toronto**, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1999), p.110.

⁶⁷Thich Thien An, **op.cit.**, p.107.

⁶⁸Nguyen Lang, **op.cit.**, p. 151.

was the 14th generation of Wu-Yun T'ung Zen sect (?-1221). Zen master Hien Quang was Thang Long inhabitant; he left his family to become a monk when he was 11 years old, and he was good at Three Religions. After traveling everywhere he lived in Yen Tu mountain.⁶⁹ The name TLZS originated from the name of the first founder. After ordain the monastic life, Tran Nhan Tong called himself Truc Lam dai si, so this School has the same name, Truc Lam, was in Yen Tu mountain. This School was sponsored by the court and its influence gradually pervaded and propagated everywhere. In 1292, master Tran Nhan Tong combined two previous Zen schools and settled up the firm and rational system to establish the new Zen school, called TLZS⁷⁰ or another name “a unified sect of Buddhism”. In August 1299, after leading two wars of resistance against Mongols Empire, the nation was back into unity and peace, King Tran Nhan Tong left this throne to his son and to lead his spirit to a religious life as an ascetic in Yen Tu mountains. He founded the TLZS, which laid it's on the climax. TLZS was considered a continuation based on the three previous Vietnamese zen schools lines of 12th century: Thao Duong, Vo Ngon Thong and Vinītaruci.⁷¹

Tue Trung Thuong Si was a most transcendent and excellent disciple of Zen master Tieu Dao who was a famous character at the end of Ly dynasty. He himself is the master of King Tran Nhan Tong gave the endless value to Zen scholar and considered as “a great lamp of the Buddha and took mind-to-mind transmission to develop the fresh winds of Buddhism⁷² and also the person founded the TLZS. Master Tran Nhan Tong was an excellent heir of King Tran Thai Tong, wanted to honor and spread the Dharma idea. He sought the best way to lead people to step by step to believe in Buddhism and to observe themselves, to search their mind to see nature. He believed that practice should consist in concrete actions and be based on the ten wholesome actions. In this way, a

⁶⁹**Thiền Uyển Tập Anh**, (Hanoi: Literature Press, 1990).

⁷⁰Chan Nguyen and Nguyen Tuong Bach, **Buddhist Dictionary**, (Hue: Thuan Hoa Press, 1999), p. 333.

⁷¹The Most Venerable Thich Phuoc Son, Vice Director of The Vietnamese Buddhist Research Institute, **Interview**. 2 January, 2016.

⁷²Institute of Literature, vol II, **op, cit**, p.594.

virtuous society based on Buddhist practice could be built.⁷³ That's the way seeing into the One's self-nature. If a person possesses the right mindfulness that can look at the intuitive nature of that state. "Looking into shining up oneself is the main duty". Not only the TLZS but other meditative schools also took the realization and dwelling of nature as the breath of life.⁷⁴ The special thing in this zen school is the Buddha in our mind because of without the discrimination of living a secular life or a secluded life in the forest, without the discrimination of lay people of monks, it is mainly for the cultivation of the mind.⁷⁵ Buddha is only present in your mind, can't seek anywhere. Moreover, TLZS still emphasized the idea of emptiness⁷⁶ that is the particular and featured thoughts of Mahāyāna Buddhism.

This great career is built by contributions of three most venerable monks including Nhan Tong, Phap Loa and Hien Quang. Most Venerable Nhan Tong unified and systemized previous Zen Schools and the Buddhist population of the Tran dynasty. Professor of Philosophy Thai Kim Lan says King Tran Nhan Tong dedicated endless valuable Buddhist philosophic ideology: "Ideologically, he initiated a Vietnamese Buddhist school and applied Buddhist theory flexibly and creatively, creating a civilized lifestyle for the Vietnamese during the Ly and Tran dynasties. His way of life was simple. Although being a King, he thought of others and advocated humanity, wisdom and morality". Nowadays, TLZS still stores the particular culture and tradition and develops all of Vietnam. Caodong school (曹洞宗) was a Zen school in China that was established by 2 two monks: Dongshan Liangjia and disciple Caoshan Benji and propagated to Vietnam in the 17th century in both Northern and Southern Vietnam.⁷⁷ Later, TLZS (1292 CE to 1400 CE) decayed when the Tran dynasty collapsed. In the 17th the 18th centuries two Chinese Zen schools

⁷³ Truong Huu Quynh, ca, General History of Vietnam, (NVietnamese version), vol I, (Hanoi: Education Press, 2005), p.133.

⁷⁴ Venerable Tue Dung, a lecture of Buddhist College in HCM City, Vietnam, **Interview**, 31, December, 2013.

⁷⁵ Tran Thai Tong, **Khoa Hu Luc Giang Gai**, viewed 7 January, 2014,.

⁷⁶ Christmas Humphreys, **A Popular Dictionary of Buddhism**, (New York: Taylor and Francis, 2005), p.154.

⁷⁷ Nguyen Lang, **op.cit.**, p.464.

were Linji Zen School (臨濟宗) and Caodong Zen School (曹洞宗) (propagated and founded as Zen school in Vietnam).

The TLZS have had a long rhythm of the up and down, rise and fall tones lasted brilliant periods time, possessed the deep and highlight features and structures. In 20th and 21th centuries, this Zen school began to come back to life. Master Thich Thanh Tu was interested in TLZS which had been the soul and personality of the Vietnamese nation. He took on the task of ‘renovating’ the TLZS’ of Vietnam.⁷⁸ Nowadays, TLZS revived and prospered, had particular and special features and colors of many zen schools in Vietnam. Most Venerable Thich Thanh Tu unites three Chinese and Vietnamese Zen traditions.⁷⁹ Since 1970, TLZS put the structure in Vung Tau province, building in Long Thanh. Huike is the first tradition, the 2nd is Huineng (638-713), and 3rd is transmitted to Vietnamese king Tran Nhan Tong who was also the TLZS founder.

The most Venerable Thich Thanh Tu opened up an opportunity for practitioners who wanted to cultivate meditation and to understand what the Buddhist Zen school is from Sutras, Abhidharma and history. He taught his disciples how to pacify or keep the mind from being driven and control by illusory thoughts. Whenever a thought arise while we are meditating we recognize it and knowing that it is illusory we simply let it go.⁸⁰ TLZS has 3 large temples in Da Lat, Dong Nai and Vung Tau provinces.

During existing more than 700 years of the decoration of buildings and protection of Vietnam, the TLZS has inspired the spirit of entering into life: living an honor religious life and fulfilling a citizen’s responsibility for the welfare of Vietnamese in particular and settle up the meaning dedication of spirit of non-violence all the world in general. Cultural researcher Nguyen Huu Son told VOV: “Tran Nhan Tong

⁷⁸The Most Venerable Thich Nhat Quang, Rector of Buddhist College in Dong Nai Province, **Interview**, 3 January, 2016, 7:30am.

⁷⁹Thich Thanh Tu, (c) “**Vietnamese Zen from the late Twentieth Century- Part I**”, view 22 February 2014, <http://nttvblog.blogspot.com/2011_12_01_archive.html>.

⁸⁰The Most Venerable Thich Nhat Quang, Rector of Buddhist College in Dong Nai Province, **Interview**, 3 January, 2016, 7:30am.

opened the Truc Lam Zen sect based on the knowledge he had learned from his grandfather and father. The sect typifies the spirit of harmony between religious and secular lives. Buddhism is connected with the country, the nation, the humans and the social life. That's the reason why Tran Nhan Tong idea always expressed about a secluded life without isolation from the world". Building and consolidating the independence ideological system of the nation; built a new spiritual education having particular identities of Vietnamese Buddhism. The Tran dynasty lasted in 174 years (1226-1400). The first king of the Tran dynasty, Tran Thai Tong, was earnestly devout Buddhist student but the last king, Tran Thuan Tong, was Taoist follower. King Tran Nhan Tong was the founder of TLZS. The bases of Truc Lam were land under the instruction of religious spirit. The shortcomings and disadvantages of this economic and political structure led the reform of Ho Quy Ly. There was many aristocrats' land were seized and many bases of TLZS were been the similar condition. The role and duty of Tran dynasty wasn't clear, the influence of TLZS also declined and dimmed by the soul of people at that time. Although the Tran dynasty collapsed, the huge ideological system of TLZS has been in the spiritual life of people forever.

Chapter III

The Way of Practice of Truc Lam Zen School

After introducing the origin, traces and development of TLZS, in this chapter, It is focused on the doctrine of the way of practice of TLZS. emphasizing the typical core of this Zen School, these are 1) Bodhisattva's spirit to enter into the worldly life. 2) Humans are inseparable beings from Nature. 3) The voidness of all Dharmas. 4) Seeing into Buddha Nature in every human being. 5) Sudden enlightenment.

3.1. Bodhisattva's Spirit and the Nature of Humans

‘Needless to say, Buddhism did not escape from any of the evils of monasticism. The original ideal of the monk (Bhikkhu) was very high; his social function was the important task of acting as ‘guide, philosopher and friend’ to the community,’⁸¹ to adapt to the worldly life and company with the sentient beings, TLZS rise the spirit of Bodhisattva and look through the humans’ nature practically and clearly for building the better lives and establishing the Pure Land in this world, no need to wait any moments.

3.1.1 Bodhisattva's Spirit to Enter into the Worldly Life

It is an obvious connection of personalities of a Bodhisattva and a Noble Man must be combined each other to produce Buddhist features according to the tradition of practice of the TLZS. The reason why that is A Bodhisattva's completion of the six Perfections (*Pāramitās*) is also termed *Golra-bhūmi*, in which the aspirant, who had developed

⁸¹Alan W. Watts, **The Spirit of Zen**, (NY: Grove Press, 1958), p.83.

Bodhicitta and completed the *Pāramitās*, was entitled to take up the course of spiritual progress as indicated in the ten *Bhūmis*, and was therefore qualified to take up the *Adhimukti-caryā*, i e., he could make progress in the ten *Bhūmis*.⁸² And Buddhism does not include non-Buddhist knowledge of all kinds in turn embrace and overview the data of Buddhism. Tran Nhan Tong did insist “mind-precepts” and “form-precepts” were of an “Adorning Bodhisattva”. “Mind-precepts” or “nature-precepts” is a short form of the phrase “the precepts of Bodhi-mind,” or rather, “the precepts of Bodhisattva,” which are of a general elements type observed to both monastic and lay Buddhist practitioners like as the Buddha’s way “he refrains from killing, lays aside the cudgel and the sword; full of kindness and compassion, he lives for the welfare and happiness of all living beings.”⁸³ On the way, about the pre-Bodhisattva stage⁸⁴, it is found very often in the *Prajñāpāramitā* and other Mahāyāna works a general remark that a being, who has performed meritorious acts (*avaropitakusa-lamūla*) served many previous Buddhas (pūrvajina-kṛtādhikāra), and had many *kalyāṇamitras* (spiritual guides) is destined to attain the Bodhi.⁸⁵ This is the basic foundation for attaining the Buddhahood that has same way with “in the Buddhist world, the word “Buddha is often synonymous with compassion and loving kindness. The deeds of a preacher are far more eloquent than his words. There are many incidents in the life of the Buddha the illustrate his gentle nature”.⁸⁶

Tue Trung Thuong Si is the first person to see the Bodhi tree inside of the founder of The TLZS. Overwhelming the spirit of Bodhisattva, breaking the ice of fence of prejudice and languages, he left our posterity transcendent and magic lessons through his daily life. As the Queen Mother and King Tran Nhan Tong were taught to practice vegetarianism, to hate the evil, and to grasp the good. If you follow a routine and don’t truly live the profound meaning, you will become a

⁸²Nalinaksha Dutt, *op.cit.*, p. 83.

⁸³Dīgha Nikāya I, 63

⁸⁴Nalinaksha Dutt, *op.cit.*, p. 89.

⁸⁵Mtu, I, p.57.

⁸⁶Susunaga Weeraperuma, *Nirvana, The Happiness, Meditations on Buddhist Issues*, (India: Shri Janinendra Press, 1987), p.8.

robot. Tue Trung just tried to take them out of the land of robots.⁸⁷ Bodhisattva failed to perform a miracle, failed to perform a rules, traditions and bondages but he or she just obtain success of speeding compassion and only compassion for sentient beings and right reflected the idea of our Buddha It is in this fathom-long body endowed with perception and mind that I proclaim 1) the world, 2) the origin of the world, 3) the cessation of the world and 4) the way leading to the cessation of the world”⁸⁸ and “on general religious and historical grounds the opinion may be hazarded that early in the career of Buddhism, the agnostic negativism of such replies as the above was modified. In addition, it must be kept in mind that the Buddhist negativity concerning the final goal (*Nibbāna*) was intended as a methodological and psychological device rather than an ontological statement; later on in the growth of the tradition and its conflict with other traditions, such statements were ontologized into “descriptions” of the Supreme Reality”.⁸⁹

However, “what is the beginning of higher states? Morality of perfect purity⁹⁰. But the culmination of the morality of Bodhisattva itself is compassion.” The qualities that become a real Bodhisattva can be cultivated from various perspectives, but in the general term of mentioning of a particular relevance and help to human justifiable wishes. The Bodhisattva observes a vow to save others and get them from the ocean of mental and physical suffering, which is a spontaneous and unforced voice of altruism which the bodhisattva devotes her or his entire being. Normally, the image of Bodhisattva is the image of a woman, because the women are the typical example for unconditioned-love of mothers who always take care and give her children. On the other hand,

⁸⁷Nguyen Giac (tr), **Teachings and Poetry of the Vietnamese Zen Master Tue Trung Thuong Si (1230-1291)**, Email: nguyengiac@yahoo.com -- California, 2007), p.10.

⁸⁸Bhikkhu Thanissaro (tr), **Itivuttaka: This was Said by the Buddha**, (Barre, Massachusetts: Dhamma Dana Publications, 2001), p. 28-29.

⁸⁹The books of the kindred saying, III, 59-60. (XXII.59.7) p.37.

The Book of Kindred Sayings, IV, trans. F.L. Woodard, (London: Luzac, 1965), p .281-282.

⁹⁰Samgyutta Nikāya(V, 143)

morality is of paramount importance in meditation, because it is an antidote to remorse and mental waverings, which are inimical to the concentration of the mind,⁹¹ cultivating the morality is the best way for us to settle each of brick to build for our own happier and better house with “a successful non-violent procedure in mind-control has to start with the right attitude”.⁹² Non-violent inside and outside of mind, and the best way for preventing the non-violent that is to emit the unconditioned love that is the way we love but never hope get give back. Through the energy of Bodhisattva, we can get there in the right way and right view.

Furthermore, in the Lotus Sutra, the pure white lotus rises from the waters of a muddy pond. This spirit illustrates and decorates the states of a pure and beautiful state of life in the midst of the sometimes-worldly life which full of dust of lust, anger and illusion. The Bodhisattva never tries to escape from life, never leaves suffering people unsaved and overwhelm into the impure waters of life in the effort to help each person who is sinking into suffering onto the great realm of happiness.

In the urgent situation, the practice of TLZS expresses the spirit of Bodhisattva not to ignore or abandon those who suffer and practice “all the six Pāramitās have the power to carry us over to the other shore so that we will not suffer anymore. After some time, training yourself, you'll arrive at the state of being when you can cross the stream of suffering very easily and very quickly. You have to master the practice, and you are no longer afraid”.⁹³ They initiate and undertake countless wholesome attainment for the benefit and welfare of population in Tran Dynasty, striving to encourage and relieve the anguish of that human beings without distinguishing whoever you are, whatever you are and

⁹¹Paravahera Vajirañāza Mahāthera, New Edition Revised and Edited by Allan R. Bomhard, 3rd edited, **Buddhist Meditation in Theory and Practice**, (Colombo: Charleston Buddhist Fellowship, 2010), p.58.

⁹²Ven. Nyanaponika Thera, **The Power of Mindfulness**, (Penang: Wheel Publication, 2001), p.14.

⁹³Thich Nhat Hanh, **All in One, One in All, The Nature of Interbeing**, (Taiwan: The Corporate Body of the Buddha Educational Foundation reprinted and donated, 2007), p.80.

however you do. The spirit of Bodhisattva of this Zen School can be entering into the world life without a little dust attachment to adapt to wartime and peacetime till now because we also know “those spontaneous reactions which so often stand in the way of direct vision do not derive only from our passionate impulses. Very frequently they are the product of habit In that form, they generally have an even stronger and more tenacious.”⁹⁴ Tue Trung Thuong Si Tue Trung Thuong Si was a profound heir of transcendent teachings of Zen Master Tieu Dao who was a famous and interesting appearance at the end of Ly dynasty. Tue Trung Thuong Si was not Zen Master of the King Tran Nhan Tong but also a brilliant thinker and outstanding poet. It’s said him that was a Zen scholar and considered as “a great lamp of the Buddha and took mind-to-mind transmission to develop the fresh winds of Buddhism”⁹⁵. To be unlimited name, form, space and time, the spirit of Bodhisattva entered into the world life excellently. He himself is the person who put basic and the first brink for establishing of the way of practice of TLZS.

We should also take a look at what is happening to Buddhism in the world. Should Buddhism meet with any disaster or destruction, we must protect our spiritual heart of religion for our own faith as well as for all sentient beings. There are many things a Bodhisattva, which appeared through the spirit of TLZS to start to take this every step in practicing the Mahayana Buddhism. Try to be a Bodhisattva-child or Bodhisattva’s seed, spread your compassion and practice the Ten Meritorious Deeds. In short term, the meaning Bodhisattva that is such a one is known as an Arhan as distinct from a Bodhisattva, the ideal man of Mahayana philosophy. Here is one who is not content with the mere attainment of Nirvana; the Bodhisattva feels that he cannot eternal bliss while other beings suffer, because he knows enjoy that there is no essential difference between them and himself, and his Nirvana cannot be complete if they do not share it. Because he affirms all life as the self he regards all beings as his her selves, and for him Nirvana is a vanity and selfishness if there is a single creature still unenlightened. Therefore after lives of painful

⁹⁴Ven. Nyanaponika Thera, **op.cit.**, p.47.

⁹⁵Institute of Literature, vol, **op.cit.**, p.594.

striving against self the right to eternal bliss, only to renounce it in order that he may work for the enlightenment of every living thing.⁹⁶

3.1.2 Humans are Inseparable Beings from Nature

Humans and nature refer to the completed pattern of unit that is typical of our species or our kind. All humans grow up and are suit for the rule of nature; the Humans and nature go hand in hand, if we know how to nature react, we easily get more convenience to live and enjoy the life. In the practice of TLZS, Zen masters never ignore the way internal and external world, to symbolize for humans and nature.

The mind is Buddha; Buddha is the mind.

That profound meaning shines brightly since endless time.

When spring comes, the spring flowers blossom naturally.

*When autumn comes, the autumn waters reflects the
sorrow*

*Removing the false mind while keeping the true nature
is like searching for the reflections while missing the
mirror.*

*You don't know that reflections come from the mirror,
and that the false appear from the truth.*

That the false come is neither real nor unreal.

*That the mirror reflects is neither wrong nor right.*⁹⁷

The living is suited to being nature, breathing is suited to be nature, eating is suited to be nature and taking a rest is to be nature. We can contribute the foundation of happiness naturally without effort. But the most important point in this case, I would like to say that developing a strong and intensive desire to achieve Buddha but if we can't know how

⁹⁶ Alan W. Watts, **op.cit.**, p.28-29.

⁹⁷ Nguyen Giac (tr), **Teachings and Poetry of the Vietnamese Zen Master Tue Trung Thuong Si (1230-1291)**, Song of Buddha Voice, Email: nguyengiac@yahoo.com -- California, 2007), p.12.

to harmonize and settle up the desire, it will be harmful, that's bad. But desire to self right that also the concept of "ego, I, self", itself is natural and in fact in order to develop self-confidence, patience and iron-will, "when one is negligent of insight meditation, once becomes negligent of the Buddha's noble message in *toto*⁹⁸", we need a sense of strong self and "by refraining from busying ourselves unnecessarily, external frictions will be reduced and the internal tensions they bring will loosen up. Greater harmony and peace will pervade the life of every day, bridging the gap between normal life and the tranquillity of meditation."⁹⁹ In Tran Dynasty, they always stick this thought in beautiful poems. Because of the ideas of Zen, "a pebble, a cloud, a flower, all are wonderful, all are mysteries".¹⁰⁰ Although he was a famous Ch'an scholar, Tue Trung maintained a close link to reality and understood the lives of ordinary people. He was not conservative or intolerant but was light-hearted and attached to nature.

*How spacious is Phuc Duong (name of his hermitage)
And well-ventilated with Ch'an winds
The thin fence is adorned with slim bamboo sprouts
The courtyard shrouded in wild pine trees
The time is not ripe for talents to emerge
Yet deep forests are good shelter for valuable animals
Sooner or later, old Heaven will expose Buddha's sun
And then peaches and apricots at the gate will enjoy spring
sunlight.¹⁰¹*

Damma is everywhere, we have the same problem, that is we always try to get something or to become someone because we always dig our mind into the thought the lack of conscious control can turn even

⁹⁸Venerable Uda Eriyagama Dhammajīva Maha Thero, (tr) **Maha-Si Insight Meditation**, (Srilanka: Mitirigala Nissarana Vanaya), www.vipassana.com, p2.

⁹⁹Ven. Nyanaponika Thera, **op.cit.**, p31.

¹⁰⁰Thich Nhat Hanh, **op.cit.**, p.25.

¹⁰¹Nguyen Thanh Xuan, **Religions in Vietnam**, (Ha Noi, The Gioi Publishers, 2012), p. 33.

the smallest habits into the uncontested masters of our lives. It bestows upon them the dangerous power to limit and rigidify our character and to narrow our freedom of movement environmental, intellectual and spiritual.¹⁰² But in this spirit of TLZS, the more we follow the way nature is, the more we attain the enlightenment. Just relax and enjoy the life, put each step and step on the world gently and slowly. It would be absurd if we followed a practice that makes us suffer. The Buddha always reminds us his Dharma, his practice, is pleasant in the beginning, in the middle, at the end. So the practice should be lovely, should be pleasant, should be joyful, whether you are sitting or walking or eating or drinking. Whether you are cooking or cleaning. Cooking and cleaning should be done in such a way that it could provide you with peace and joy and nourishment.¹⁰³

The real mind is being with us, nor far away. Same scenery, springs come and goes but enlightenment still here, lives harmoniously, peacefully before those changes. Master Chan Khong answer the question of a monk:

The spring comes and goes, it ended in our signs.

The flowers bloom and fade, but spring is still itself.¹⁰⁴ Inside of human beings is operating according to nature, belong to its rule. Even Buddha, he really loves Nature, both of the important events, giving the birth, attaining the enlightenment, moving the Dharma vehicle and going into the Nibbana. All attached the signs of nature. Every his step, every his lectures, every his thought love trees, plants and animal. Never have intention harm in sentient beings. Whether in a village for in a forest, whether on low land or on high ground, whether arahants live, that is a delightful place.¹⁰⁵ Holmes Rolston wrote: “The nature is considered as the ecosystem and that includes stable, fully, beautiful living community”.¹⁰⁶ People live harmony in Mother nature and can't

¹⁰²Ven. Nyanaponika Thera, **op.cit.**, p.49.

¹⁰³Thich Nhat Hanh, **op.cit.**, 2007,

¹⁰⁴Thich Thanh Tu, **op.cit.**, p.170.

¹⁰⁵ Dhp 98-99; K.R. Norman (tr), **The World of the Doctrine** (Dhammapada), (Oxford: PTS, 1997), p.14-15.

¹⁰⁶Quoted in Nguyen Dinh Cuu's **The Learning Philosophy of Nature**, (Ha Noi Press, 2006), p.73.

inseparable from it. We must be mutual respect and love. That's the way insight of "non-duality" master Thien Lao declared or the verse of master Tri Huyen that answers master Dao Hanh about the Real mind as follows " All worlds as sand of Ganges are the Buddha's truth."¹⁰⁷

Tue Trung Thuong si is the teacher of King Tran Nhan Tong He praised Tue Trung thus:

"You stand higher for those who try to look high,
become hardwood for those who try to drill
and appear suddenly in front then in rear of those
who try to portray you.

That is called as the strong Zen
from Tue Trung Thuong Si.¹⁰⁸

Each of us both has their own stories, wishes, perspectives, beliefs and goals in life; and yet they are also same in a vast amount of higher realm and state. For Buddhists that is to seek wisdom and Nirvana is the final point. We always try to look forward and struggle with whole obstacles for wishing happier, but once we can ability let them go, let them be, we can throw ourselves into the realm of the freedom of mind and freedom of wisdom available to take refuge in every door of Dharma. According to nature, that is the fastest way and the most simple way for us to attain Nirvana.

3.2. The Voidness and Buddha Nature

'Primitive Buddhism is built on the opposition, on the insuperable different between *samsarā* and *nirvāṇa* being considered as the full extinction of *samsāra*. For Nāgārjuna there is no difference: *samsāra* and *nirvāṇa* are the same, since both are Voidness,'¹⁰⁹ *samsāra* and the realm of nirvana without rising nor falling, are interpreted by

¹⁰⁷ **Ibid.**, p.109.

¹⁰⁸ Giac Nguyen (ed), **op.cit.**, p.123.

¹⁰⁹ Fernando Tola Carmen Dragonetti, **On Voidness, A Study on Buddhist Nihilism**, (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass Publishers, 1995), p.19.

most people as a realm of non-existence and obscurity. If we can see the Buddha Nature inside of each sentient beings, we can touch the meaning of *saṃsāra* is of substantial, worthy and positive significance.

3.2.1 The Voidness of All Dharmas

An ancient Chinese book states: “In making things end, and in making things start, there is nothing more glorious than keeping still.”¹¹⁰ “Voidness” is a core of all Mahayana Buddhism, but its true meaning is often misunderstood easily. This definition spreads Buddhism properly all over the world. Through the works of Zen masters in Tran’s Dynasty, this theory is clear about meaning and practice without a wrong understanding of its meaning can be confusing, even harmful and suitable with “in the remaining verses Upasva does not ask how this meditative practice leads to liberation, but instead questions the Buddha about the condition of the person who has attained the state of ‘nothingness’”.¹¹¹ And destroying the belief in self’ (*aṭṭanudiṭṭhimūmacca*) refers to an intellectual practice: ‘The giving up of this seeing [belief] was very likely done by judging the constituents of a person as nonpermanent and

¹¹⁰Ven. Nyanaponika Thera, *op.cit.*, p.25.

¹¹¹ Nakamura, Hajime, **A Process of the Origination of Buddhist Meditation in Connection with the Life of the Buddha’**. In **Studies in Pali And Buddhism (A Homage Volume to the Memory of Bhikkhu Jagdish Kashyap)**, 1979, p 272. ed. Dr A.K. Narain, pp. 270–77, Delhi: B.R.Publishing Corp., this dialogue states that ‘in the primitive Buddhism nonBuddhist thought was adopted and the state of non-existence was a goal’. But the meditative state of nothingness is certainly not the goal in the dialogue with Posfla. Nakamura’s view depends upon taking the compound *saññāvimokkhe* in v. 1071–72 as the goal identical to nothingness. In one place he translates this as ‘emancipation by thought’ (p. 272), but in another place (p. 273) he translates it as ‘deliverance from thought’, a translation that implies that the compound *saññāvimokkha-* refers to a state different from the meditative state of nothingness. It is hard to take Nakamura’s argument seriously considering these conflicting translations of *saññāvimokkha-*. See p. 80 n. 34 on Nakamura’s reading of the dialogue with Upasava

therefore unsatisfactory and therefore non-self ...'¹¹² but there is no evidence to support this claim at all.¹¹³

In that way, the theory of voidness in the practice of TLZS reflect completely meaning and role through the stories of daily activities of Tran Zen master Tue Trung Thuong Si. One day, the Queen Mother held a royal banquet, and showed surprise when she saw Tue Trung eating meat.

“You practice meditation, and now you eat meat. How can you become Buddha?” asked the king’s mother.

“Buddha is Buddha,” replied Tue Trung. “And I am what I am. I don’t need to be Buddha. And Buddha doesn’t need to be me. You probably heard the words from old sages,

‘Manjusri is Manjusri; enlightenment is enlightenment.’”

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Voidness is not complete nothingness and it doesn’t mean that nothing exists at all. This makes us think of a nihilistic view contrary to common sense. And the more it doesn’t mean that is things do not exist the way our grasping self-centred inherent we have, according to Dalai Lama’s words, voidness calls “the true nature of things and events”. And because the religious culture of Buddhism is essentially a direct inheritance from the Buddha and His great disciples¹¹⁵, only practice of Dhamma, we can see Buddha. And one of the best ways is to ask questions "Dear Buddha, what do you mean? Emptiness? Empty of what? What do we mean by extinction? Extinction of what?" Extinction first

¹¹² Vetter Tilmann, **The Ideas and Meditative Practices of Early Buddhism**, (Leiden: E.J.Brill, 1990), p39.

¹¹³ Alexander Wynne, **The Origin of Buddhist Meditation**, (London: Routledge Taylor and Francis group), p 83.

¹¹⁴ Nguyen Giac (tr), **Teachings and Poetry of the Vietnamese Zen Master Tue Trung Thuong Si (1230-1291), The Superior Person**, Email: nguyengiac@yahoo.com -- California, 2007), p.5.

¹¹⁵ Nyanaponika Thera and Hellmuth Hecker, **Great Disciples of the Buddha**, (Boston, MA: Wisdom Publications, 1997), p.87.

means extinction of ideas, like ideas of birth and death, being and non-being,¹¹⁶ idea of wrong things and right things without attachment.

In the teaching of the Buddha there are also two terms that are equivalent: *lokadhatu* and *dharmadhatu*. *Lokadhatu* is the world and *dharmadhatu* is also the world, but in *lokadhatu* it seems that everything is outside of everything else. You are not I, I am not you. You are not your father; your father is not you. But if you live deeply and you touch deeply, you will touch the *dharmadhatu* where everything is in everything else.¹¹⁷ In another way, voidness is not something of paradise or separate realm apart from this world and its woes that some persons got misunderstood but it's free from "the self", which is free from evil, ageless, deathless, sorrowless, hungerless, thirstless, whose desire is the Real, whose conception is the Real. He should be searched out, He should one desire to understand. He obtains all worlds and all desires who has found out and who understands the Self.¹¹⁸

Tue Trung wrote the work Tue Trung Thuong Si Ngu Luc which was full of his profound Ch'an thoughts, which focused on emptiness, impermanence and enlightenment:

From "non-existence" emerge "existence"
"existence" and "non-existence" are no different
The same are "affliction" and "Bodhi" (perfect wisdom)
And no "suchness of existence" and no "misleading thoughts"

Or

in illusion, one distinguishes "emptiness" and
When enlightened, one stops such distinction
"emptiness" and "outward appearance" are no different

¹¹⁶Thich Nhat Hanh, *op.cit.*, p.123.

¹¹⁷Thich Nhat Hanh, *op.cit.*, p.38.

¹¹⁸ S.Radhakrishnan and C.A. Moore, eds, **A Sourcebook in Indian Philosophy**, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1967), p.72.

Such are “illusion” and “enlightenment”¹¹⁹

And

If you want to find the mind, stop searching outward.

The nature of the mind is naturally still and void.

Nirvana and the birth-death cycles are illusionary shackles.

The fetters and Enlightenment are hollow oppositions.¹²⁰

Finally, since voidness doesn't seem so difficult to understand but become more beautiful and charming through the meditative poems which deeply sinking the way of living into the spirit of TLZS. Why did the Buddha leave us it at all? It is because of his transcendent insight into why we suffer. Basically, we are under the mental and physical suffering because we love and grasp after things thinking they are fixed, substantial, real and capable of being possessed by the instinctive *Attā*. It is only when we can see through this illusion and open ourselves and take:

Just know that!

Just realize the mind; There is no other way.

This is the way to calm the mind: keep the bright nature of mindfulness.

Stop the false thoughts; just watch the thoughts fade away unmistakably.

When not a thought of self and others arises in your mind, you will see the true appearance of the diamond mind.

When not a thought of greed and hatred arises in your mind, you will see clearly the mind of perfect enlightenment.¹²¹

Stretching thousand years of Vietnamese Zen transmission and after many generations of foundation the great practice of TLZS, the Vietnamese Buddhism now has a *dharma* treasure, in which hundreds of *dharma* texts have shown the typical way and encouraged learners via poems, verses, chants and praises more beautiful and traditional that let persons easily understand. The complicated and complex theory of voidness is expressed more charming and lighter. Carrying on the

¹¹⁹Nguyen Thanh Xuan, *op.cit.*, p. 32-33.

¹²⁰*Ibid*, p. 33

¹²¹Giac Nguyen (ed), *op.cit.*, p.54.

profound meanings and practical instructions, those *dharma* texts have helped so many practitioners to experience the awakening and attain liberation. Above of this, if we can cut our flesh-seeing from the attachment of desire and hate, we can figure out the rule and core of voidness in Buddhism same as ‘when not a thought of self and others arises in your mind, you will see the true appearance of the diamond mind’ and ‘the characteristic of intrinsic nature and the three universal characteristics of impermanence, suffering, and non-self are described. The aim of this study is also to distinguish between the knowable and knowledge. It also explains the causes and conditions of the arising and weakening of insight knowledge’.¹²²

Breaking the ice of the fence of instinctive ego, even the tiniest wrong thought, Zen master Tue Trung frankly refused attachment, although that’s enlightenment:

Buddha is Buddha,” replied Tue Trung. “And I am what I am. I don’t need to be Buddha. And Buddha doesn’t need to be me. You probably heard the words from old sages, ‘Manjusri is Manjusri; enlightenment is enlightenment.’”

¹²³

Moreover, if we want to practice of detachment of prejudice of ego to get voidness. But don't misunderstand that "detachment" means to give up desire and wish. Desire must be there because how can we live our life without desire? if desire doesn't exist, how can we attain the Buddhahood? but we can ride our ship of fate forward the wholesome karma because “The idea of mind' is really a mirage. In our everyday lives we have to use words such as 'mind' and 'I' as it facilitates

¹²²Sudarat Bantaokul, “Vipassanā–Ñāna (Insight knowledge): An Analytical Study of Solasañāna (The Successive stages of Sixteen know ledges) in Theravada Buddhism” **M.A. Thesis**, (Graduate School: Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University, 2003), p.2.

¹²³Nguyen Giac (tr), **Teachings and Poetry of the Vietnamese Zen Master Tue Trung Thuong Si (1230-1291), The Wisdom Within**, Email: nguyengiac@yahoo.com -- California, 2007), p.5.

communication between people, but philosophically speaking, both 'mind' and I have no real existence as abiding entities”.¹²⁴

3.2.2 Seeing into Buddha Nature in Every Human Beings

Every sentient being, even insects, both have Buddha nature. The seed of Buddhahood inside of them means consciousness, the cognitive power, the seed that can be cultivated the attainment of enlightenment because “the practice is simple and you have the sangha around you”¹²⁵ But, it must assure that, all these defilements can be removed and cleaned from both surface and underneath of mind. So each of sentient being also has kind of this seed, therefore there’s no reason to believe some sentient being cannot attain Buddhahood. To decorate the overview of meaning complicated of Buddha Nature, Tue Trung Thuong Si wrote:

Buddha! Buddha! Buddha! Impossible to be seen!

Mind! Mind! Mind! Impossible to be told!

When the mind arises, Buddha is born.

When Buddha is gone, the mind vanishes.

There is never a place where the mind is gone while Buddha remains.

There is never a time when Buddha is gone while the mind remains.

If you want to understand the mind of Buddha,

and the mind of birth and death,

just wait for Maitreya and ask him.

There was no mind anciently;

there is no Buddha now.

All unenlightened beings, holy beings, human beings, heavenly beings are just like flashes of lightning.

¹²⁴ ¹²⁴ Susunaga Weeraperuma, **op.cit.**, p.172.

¹²⁵ Thich Nhat Hanh, **op.cit.**, p.25.1

The mind nature is neither right nor wrong.

*The Buddha nature is neither real nor unreal.*¹²⁶

Buddha in the common and general eyes is still a normal human being, he acted like a human being. but the way he thinks, the way he talks, the way he does, both of that have final destination to lead human beings happy and wisdom. Whether Buddha's flesh body is still there or not, Buddha's spirit is always there. The history of Buddha lasted for more than 2600 years, but for the Buddha himself is still very much alive now and here. it seem to look like superstition and sometimes nonsuitable because 'the Buddha does not come into our midst as a savior descended from on high. He comes as an enlightened teacher, a man who has found the way to the end of suffering and who points the way out to others'¹²⁷, and only through his detailed activities, we can see by our "flesh eyes".

But when we still practice the Dhamma, the way of practice of TLZS, the Buddha's spirit of Buddha Nature still live now and here, no need to wait or hope that is same as the spirit of: The emerald green Bamboo, the yellow cloud is not the outside scenery able to enjoy the peace present moment "The white cloud, the bright moon clearly appear the perfect truth"¹²⁸.

On the other hand, King Tran Thai Tong said: "A religious learner just needs to see the Buddha nature"¹²⁹ let human beings be able to figure out the capacity of attaining the realm of Buddhahood, there's no reason for us to have any doubts about the most decisive zen and important Dhamma. At the time we have already realized our Buddha nature then does not commit sins and generate circle of *samsāra* and "the more clearly and deeply our minds and hearts respond to the truth of suffering manifest in the very common facts of our existence, the less often shall

¹²⁶Nguyen Giac (tr), **Teachings and Poetry of the Vietnamese Zen Master Tue Trung Thuong Si (1230-1291), Song of the Buddha Mind**, Email: nguyengiac@yahoo.com -- California, 2007), p.11.

¹²⁷Bhante Henepola Gunaratana, **A Critical Analysis of the Jhānas in Theravāda Buddhist Meditation**, (Washington: The American University Library, 1980), p.11.

¹²⁸Thich Thanh Tu, **op.cit.**, p.65.

¹²⁹Thich Thanh Kiem (tr), **Khoa Hu Luc**, (HCM City: HCM City Press, 1992), p.49.

we need a repetition of the lesson and the shorter will be our migration through *samsāra*”¹³⁰. Ignorance and defilements are main reasons of creating the karma. He often practices the way of purifying the six organs and they go to via the 'six "dusts" and a method of practicing repentance and regret. By this way, the Buddha Nature can be lightened inside of any sentient beings. To emphasize that King Tran Thai Tong compiled 'The Rites of Repentance' to help people return to their self-nature which is naturally pure and not defiled by "dust." We must always be aware of and prevent producing the 'sin karma' caused by the interaction of the six organs with the "six dusts". He divided the six organs into six periods and in each period we repent of one organ.¹³¹

Through a survey of historical transcripts, we can see the controversies as well as the practical methods of TLZS expressed by Master Tran Nhan Tong are general and rational suitable for King Tran Thai Tong's perspective be in "The Khoa Hu Luc". Mentioning the state of enlightenment in his 'Buddha Recitation essay', King Tran Thai Tong wrote: "The mind means the Buddha, does not want to add. The idea is dust without any point in the mind"¹³²

Sinking into the faith of spiritual and magic aspect of our practice of TLZS. We can establish the paradise for our own now and here, no need to wait for more any moments. Then, we can say hello with "Buddhas" who living around us, because the simplest reason that is once we have the ability to see and accept the seeds of Buddhahood inside of us, it's so easy for us to see inside of others'. This is also the essentially long process that consists of the struggle we wage in our hearts against our inner delusion or darkness, the mess and obstacle against the negative and chaotic forces within us. To break through the darkness clouding our Buddha nature and bringing forth the realm of Buddhahood through the power of practice of spirit of TLZS.

¹³⁰ Ven. Nyanaponika Thera, *op.cit.*, p.69.

¹³¹ Institute of Literature, vol II, *op.cit.*, p.157-158.

¹³² Nguyen Dang Thuc, **Tran Thai Tong's Meditation** (Vietnamese version), (Ha Noi: Vietnam Culture and Information Press, 1996), p.224.

3.3. Sudden Enlightenment

The phenomenal world and nature as it is are not different or separate: they are one. The biggest problem is the mind. With a calm mind we can see *samsāra* is nirvana; the mind is the Buddha.¹³³ But with a bustling, unsteady mind we see that birth is birth and death is death. All are one or separated from the mind.¹³⁴ As Master Tran Nhan Tong understood: "In the house, there is a gem, no need to look outside; in front of a landscape we have the empty mind; that is Zen mind."¹³⁵ Attaining enlightenment was a process to require overcoming the unfathomably deep chasm and dark hole between the honor states of a Buddha and ordinary people. But the big deal in term of this, we can actualize the principle of attaining Buddhahood in one's present form in which we have been born as human beings that is revealed in the Lotus Sutra. This kind of thought is what led us to elucidate the profound teaching of attaining Buddhahood in this lifetime.

One day, being asked by King Tran Nhan Tong about the essence of Zen, Tue Trung replied, "Reflect inwardly to see the essence of yourself. Don't follow other ways."¹³⁶ This is the only one link and also the basic way of practice of The TLZS can be contracted by Tue Trung while talking with King Tran Nhan Tong: "Looking inward to words shine up one is the main duty". Not only the TLZS but other meditative schools also took the realization of nature as the breath of life.¹³⁷ Cultivating the enlightenment, cultivating the realm of Buddhahood that means cultivating of mind as Tran Thai Ton receive the Dhamma teachings from the National Teacher Phu Van " in the mountain, there is

¹³³Record of the lamp's Transmission from the Jingle Era, vol 28, (**Taisho Tripitaka**, vol 5, no.2076), p.437, c19-20.

¹³⁴Le Ngoc Son, "A Study of the Zhulin Zen School during the Chen Dynasty in Vietnam, (**MA Thesis**, Fo Guang University, 2007), p.59-60.

¹³⁵Giac Nguyen (ed), **op.cit.**, p.55.

¹³⁶Nguyen Giac (tr), **Teachings and Poetry of the Vietnamese Zen Master Tue Trung Thuong Si (1230-1291)**, Email: nguyengiac@yahoo.com – California, 2007, p9.

¹³⁷Venerable Tue Dung, a Lecturer of Buddhist College in HCM City, Vietnam, **Interview**, 31, December, 2013.

no Buddha, the Buddha is only in the mind.”¹³⁸ The main responsibility of Zen meditator only is to cultivate the mind in another term for us to seeking out the gradual enlightenment is so full that we can sink into the state of Buddhahood through the golden-turn and decided-step for us to free from the circle of suffering. And the attainment of Nirvana or spiritual Liberation is the religious aspiration of every Buddhist. It is the summum bonum: the highest or the supreme good ¹³⁹ is our final goal which must be through the threshold of “Sudden Enlightenment” which have no intention to create any karma of *samsāra*.

The Sixth Patriarch's Dharma Jewel Platform Sutra emphasizes an essence of Zen "The identity of mind and Buddha'. He showed that all human beings and Buddhas have a common point that is the mind and if awakened, the mind is the Buddha or if not yet enlightened, the Buddha is just a being. Your own mind is the Buddha and nothing can be established outside the mind.¹⁴⁰ This case, our Buddha also spoke of the power of mindfulness in a very emphatic way: “Mindfulness, I declare, is all-helpful”¹⁴¹ and “All things can be mastered by mindfulness”.¹⁴²

3.4. Concluding Remarks

This rare opportunity will not last forever. A human lifespan is short and has its limitations. Aging is a rapid process and final death is unavoidable. No one can be sure of their time of death.¹⁴³ And we should live in this life according to the Buddha’s words “ Ānanda, the benefit and advantage of moral virtues is the absence of remorse”¹⁴⁴. This is the meaning life is worth for us to be alive.

At the beginning of Zen history, the center of interest was in the Buddha-nature or Self-nature which is inherent in all human beings and

¹³⁸Lang Nguyen, *op.cit.*, p.221.

¹³⁹Susunaga Weeraperuma, *op.cit.*, p.169.

¹⁴⁰Master Hua, *op.cit.*, p.412.

¹⁴¹Samyutta, 46:59

¹⁴²Anguttara, 8:83

¹⁴³ Venerable Uda Eriyagama Dhammajīva Maha Thero, (tr) **Maha-Si Insight Meditation**, (Srilanka: Mitirigala Nissarana Vanaya, www.vipassana.com), p3.

¹⁴⁴Anguttara Nikāya V, 1

its absolutely pure¹⁴⁵ The original and primary nature of all sentient beings is like as Buddha's nature if they aren't covered by defilements which are greed, anger and illusion. Every person both all gets happiness and avoid suffering. That's the final purpose of life. Happiness is inside of us, no need to struggle to seek anywhere. Looking into internal soul and mind, we can find out the Buddha's nature, your own mind is Buddha, nothing can be established outside the mind¹⁴⁶ observing the mind is the best way to dig the treasure of Buddha's nature, or have another name also know as cultivating the mind (*cittānupassanā*), like as the way Zen master Tran Nhan Tong of TLZS wrote in "Awakened in the Dust of Life". We don't need to look at anywhere or need to wait for anytime, now and here "In the house is gem, no need to look outside; in front of a landscape we have empty mind; that is Zen mind."¹⁴⁷ Our mind is freed from the circle of birth and death, and return the intuitive nature (*ehipassiko*) the practitioner will realize *nibbāna* (the truth of the cessation of suffering, the truth of the right way), satisfied with the Buddha's teaching:

The Buddha taught that meditation must be accompanied by a careful attention to the basis of one's experience, the sensations caused by internal and external objects, and eventually an insight into the nature of this meditative experience.¹⁴⁸ Living in harmony is the way that we love and protect yourself and next generation. Don't let the greed and illusion make us fall into the abysses of sensible pleasures and physical satisfies. 'Nature' does not mean something 'out there', but the very ground-of-being within and all around us; both of the intangible (psychic) and tangible (physical) worlds we are immersed within. If we don't know how to open ourselves us to this ground-of-being, we can't rob the illusion of its conscious energy by bringing our attention to reality. Through the quality of our wholesome thoughts, we can learn to attune

¹⁴⁵ Daisetz Teitaro Suzuki, **The Zen Doctrine of No-mind: The Significance of the Sūtra of Huineng (Wei-Lang)** (ed), (Christmas Humphreys, York Beach, ME: Samuel Weiser), 1991, p.31. William Barrett (ed), **Zen Buddhism: Selected Writings** of D.T. Suzuki, (New York: Doubleday, 1996), p.197.

¹⁴⁶ Master Hue, **op.cit.**, p.412.

¹⁴⁷ Nguyen Giac, **op.cit.**, p.55.

¹⁴⁸ Alexander Wynne, **The Origin of Buddhist Meditation**, (London: Routledge Taylor and Francis group), p 113.

and be with Nature friendly and united. This is also what all the wisdom traditions agree on and understand this primordial truth. Lightening the candle of mindfulness inside-outside of us that is “mindfulness of the mind-objects (*dhammānupassanā*) means understanding or knowing the arising of the five hindrances (*nīvarana*), the nature of each of the five groups (*khandhas*), the 12 bases of all mental activity (*āyatana*), the fetters (*samyojana*), the seven factors of enlightenment (*bojjhanga*), Each of the four noble truths (*saccas*) according to reality”¹⁴⁹.

Nowadays, the development of economy and equipment make human beings live more comfortable and relax, to free from the heavy burdens of physical aspect. People gradually forget the present and important of Mother Nature, leave environment behind to get the temporary happiness and achievement, created an ecological crisis on a national scale. P.D said:

*Ecological studies during the first half of the 20th century could make it evident that humans are an integral part of the complex ecosystem “ the ecosphere” and how anthropogenic activities disrupted the ecological processes leading to degradation of the environment that affected the humans as much as other forms of life, plants, animals and microbes.*¹⁵⁰

Through the master mind of the Buddha, mindfulness is finally revealed as the point where the vast revolving mass of world suffering is levered out of its twofold anchorage in ignorance and craving.¹⁵¹ I have always felt the need to create a conceptual box in my mind big enough to fit the world into. Most people seem to have a talent and intelligence for denying or ignoring life's contradictions, suffering and grief as the demands of life time take them over. If we can discern the thought nothing in life is more important than meditation. A life that is devoid of

¹⁴⁹ Paṭhamakyaw Ashin Thiṭṭila (Seṭṭhila) Aggamahāpaṇḍita, (tr.), **Vibhaṅga: The Book of Analysis**, (Oxford: PTS, 1995), p.166.

¹⁵⁰ P.D. Sharma, **Ecology and Environment**,(1st ed), (Meerut: Rastogi Publications, 2005), p.3.

¹⁵¹ Ven. Nyanaponika Thera, **op.cit.**, p.6.

meditation soon becomes dull and superficial.¹⁵² Happiness will open a beautiful smile with us.

¹⁵²Susunaga Weeraperuma, **op.cit.**, p.41.

Chapter IV

The Influences of the Way of Practice Truc Lam Zen School on Vietnamese Society

Vietnamese Buddhism is beautiful, and TLZS is the most. This Zen School gives us the reasons why we know right from wrong. It made communities, contribute and build the important value and endless meaning of arts, culture, literature, education and establishing the happy society. Until now, the role of this Zen School still exists.

4.1. Influences on Arts and Culture

Zen Master Tran Nhan Tong and the way of practice of TLZS left later generations the positive and proud impacts and effects on the arts and culture for enriching the Vietnamese tradition. This part describe the beauty of arts and culture that had influences by TLZS.

4.1.1 Influences on Arts

TLZS left the later generations the proud arts of architecture and valued Buddhist Sūtra Woodblocks that preserved and protected at Vinh Nghiem temple (Tri Yen Commune, Yen Dung District, Bac Giang Province) are the original woodblocks that contain the exceptional, featured content expressing the shape and evidence of developed process of this typical Vietnamese Buddhist school of philosophy as well as other works of arts written by monks. All woodblocks are produced by material that is thi (diospyros) wood, this kind of wood is soft, smooth, flexible, durable and convenient to carve on and comfortable to distorts or cracks. The largest woodblock is over 100cm in length and 40-50cm in width, the

smallest one is only 15 x 20cm, of which majority of Hoa Nghiem woodblocks (more than 2,800 pieces) is 33x23x2.5cm.

With 3,050 woodblocks, most of which are Buddhist transcripts, sūtras, writings of three patriarchs and some other Zen masters of TLZS. Besides, Vinh Nghiem Temple also has some woodblocks to print, kinds of works are only available in TLZS. In this pagoda stores some wood texts on treatment by medicinal herbs, acupuncture and medicine. Woodblocks at Vinh Nghiem Temple are unique, original features. On the other hand, this is irreplaceable and durable material, because now woodblock carving craft has been lost, Nowadays, only Vinh Nghiem Temple stores and preserves the woodblocks with the large number and relatively intact. Especially, the large of amount of the blocks elements printed on two sides and have been carved with Han (Ancient Chinese) and Nom characters in a mirror like decorative arts. Through this collection and formation of woodblocks, readers can exploit colorful and affluent information and knowledge on many fields relating religions, languages, literatures, medicines, arts.

The temple is laid outside of the center of Da Lat city and near Tuyen Lam Lake, located on Phuong Hoang Hill.¹⁵³ Its entrance is somewhat isolated, directly get temple through 61 steps or climbing, or on the other way, we can go directly past Tuyen Lam Lake Tuyen Lam Lake at the foot of the monastery. From the high place, we can look down and see 5 streams flowed to Tuyen Lam like as hands 5 human's finger glitter silver under the sun, draw a beautiful and charming picture, let viewers attain the fresh and interesting feeling. Far away is the top of the elephant dressed as a legendary witness. Then after climbing 222 steps past the triple-gated greeting door to enter the main courtyard in front of the temple.¹⁵⁴ The temple is located on large and beautiful land encompassing 24 hectares with two hectares that are occupied by buildings, divided into two areas, the domestic areas and public areas. Two domestic quarters for monks and nuns respectively is closed to the

¹⁵³ Vo Van Tuong. "Các Chua Mien Trung" (Vietnamese version). **Buddhism Today**. Retrieved 2008-02-06.

¹⁵⁴ **Ibid.**

public. Each of the domestic quarters has two gathering rooms for sangha, a meditation hall, daily activities rooms and a shed.

Truc Lam Zen monastery was the complete combination of designed with a new style of architecture by Mr. Ngo Viet Thu and the sanctum by Huynh Ngoc An who designed the rectangle shape which is toward the South and surroundings by a lot of traditional Vietnamese pagodas which were established and built by ferro-concrete. The monastery is featured elements modernly but modern in structure, architecture and use.

Superior Zen master Thich Thanh Tu was found out and built in 1993 – 1994 with the gentle and delicate oriental architecture style. With the beautiful landscapes, the pagoda is not only a place for practicing Zen meditation but also an ideal place for visiting and having the tourism. Inside the Main Hall of this temple, Buddha statues are decorated simply but meditatively. It's easy for us to be attractive and interested in the bright spacious sanctuary of statue of Sakyamuni Buddha raising a lotus in his hand, a symbolic image of Buddha in Linh Son Dharma Conference, remind the Buddhist milestone of deep and transcendent philosophy of 'existence in nihilism' in meditation.

4.1.2 Influences on Culture

Culture is the core of the system of human's society. Every individual is spending his or her life within a certain cultural community, in that way, frequently, it makes us able to defines what kinds of person a man or woman is and what essential values will they delicate. The cultural environment has a direct effects on the both form and content aspects within a community for anthropology, psychology and sociology. In addition, each of historical stage, Buddhism has had typical opportunities to change. The Buddhism plays more and more important role in Vietnamese people. Early to fight against the most ferocious and veteran Mongolian army of the time in such glorious battles as Ham Tu, Chuong Duong, Bach Đang, and Tay Ket for protecting the national independence, Vietnamese Buddhism was assured step by step clearly in social and spiritual and cultural life of people. The Emperor also

succeeded in holding and uniting the country's boundaries, laying a strong and firm foundation for the population's common cause of 'marching southward' - a milestone that the Vietnamese will always imprint with deep gratitude on their mind. Under the Dinh and pre-Le dynasties, Buddhism was thought highly and it had a strong attachment to administrative machine of nation “Sangharaja Ngô Chân Lưu was appointed to be Khuong Viet Great Monk, Truong Ma Ni was appointed to be Tang Luc,¹⁵⁵ In 987 Song ambassador Ly Giac visited Dai Co Viet, king Le Dai Hanh sent monk Phap Thuan to meet Ly Giac¹⁵⁶. In some periods, Buddhism misleads out of the core and essence of real Buddhism which wants to offer its perfume and colors suffering human beings because this ideology was the flexible and traditional combination of social ideologies (Buddhism, Confucianism, and Taoism) with the national color.

TLZS was the Buddhist school of royalty; it was sponsored by the government so it had many pagodas. According to statistics, in the Tran dynasty, there were about 9.500 pagodas¹⁵⁷ and cast 1.300 bronze statues of Buddhas. At that time, TLZS developed strongly and firmly, pagodas were built everywhere, the large of amount numbers of Buddhist monk, nuns and believers increased so Congregation could not control this School.

Moreover, in Vietnamese culture, the image of temples are cultural and deeply attached to perfect, pure and peace, the place's let all sentient beings throw away the burdens of suffering and tiredness, can purify the market, the sample for noisy, complicated and crowded place, become more and more “temple”. Today, Dau market is still right in front of the Dau temple. Water puppetry is still performed is the Thay temple, Ha Tay where the novice and the dragon are images of Buddhism.

The Truc Lam congregation printed four division Vinaya and organized precepts classes for monks. The four division Vinaya was inscribed and printed for the first time in a run of 5000 copies in 1322.

¹⁵⁵ **The Complete History of Đại Việt**, (Ha Noi city: Social Sciences Press), Volume 1, p. 212- 224.

¹⁵⁶ **Ibid**, p. 212- 224.

¹⁵⁷ Nguyen Lang, **op.cit.**, p. 453.

Certain enlightened monks e.g. Tong Canh and Bao Phac who were national teachers were invited to open these classes. The monks and nuns from 1313 to 1329 CE numbered 15000 people. At every formal ordination ceremony, 3000 people were ordained. The total number of monks at that time was about 30000.¹⁵⁸ And The kings had pagodas constructed in the royal and citadel, others renovated and repaired, and new pagodas built in many places. Almost every village had a pagoda, which together with a communal house came to typify the Vietnamese village. In his time Phap Loa had five stupas and two large Buddhist centers built at Quynh Lam and Bao An, more than 200 cloister and 1,300 Buddhist statues cast. In 1322, after hearing Phap Loa's sermon, court mandarins donated thousands of Buddhist statues. In 1324, Prime Minister Van Hue Vuong and Princess Thuong Tran donated 900 kilograms of gold to cast a statue of Matreya. Truc Lam patriarchs put much effort printing of Buddhist sutras, into the 1331 Loa Bao organize the printing of Tripitaka, which was brought from and under the Ly Dynasty and preserved in Thien Truong Prefecture. In 1319, the clergy and laypeople donated blood to printing 5,000 copies of Tripitaka to be stored at the Lam Pagoda. Ten years later, in 1329, Phap Loa ordered 5,000 books printed, including the works of Tran Thai Tong, Tue Trung and his own. Importance was attached to the training of the clergy and ordination. the leader of the Shan Phip Loa organized many Buddhist assemblies to initiate king royal members and people into Bodhisattvasila. Thanks to leadership, over a period of twenty years, the number of monks and nuns in the country grew to 15,000. Buddhism in Vietnam also benefited from the wide support of the court at this time. In 1308, King Tran Anh Tong donated 100 mau of rice fields owned by the Iran family to Bao An pagoda. In addition, he gave Phap Loa 500 mau of rice fields and 50,000 of piastres in support of Triratna and as alms to the poor Queen Mother Bao Tu donated 300 mau of rice fields to the Sieu Loai Pagoda. Prime Minister Hue Vuong donated 7,000 piastres and 75 mau of rice fields to the Quynh am Pagoda.¹⁵⁹ Ngo Si Lien in the Complete History of Dai Viet: Wherever the people inhabit they build a

¹⁵⁸**Ibid**, p.515-516.

¹⁵⁹Nguyen Thanh Xuan, **op.cit.**, p.38.

temple that is always restored when ruined and rebuilt or destroyed. The pavilions, towers of bell and drums numbers as many as a half of population. Buddhism flourished so favorably and is held in the highest esteem by the people.¹⁶⁰ The Emperor Nhân Tông went on to lay the foundation for establishing two districts Thuận and Hóa and under the spirit of Bodhisattva-in-Precepts Hưng Long Nguyễn Phúc Chu, General Nguyễn Hữu Cảnh built Saigon City and developed an integral Southern Vietnam nearly 400 years later.

Under the Tran Dynasty, with the support and encouragement of powerful kings and mandarins and the emergence of the Truc Lam Chan sect, Buddhism developed strongly in the capital and rural areas.¹⁶¹ Material culture includes power, transportations, communications and others. The language itself is the next aspect of culture. Because it can be a right and direct reflection of the values and nature of a certain Tran society or Dynasty. It could be sub-cultural languages Vietnamese and Chinese languages. Through the work “Awakened in the dust of life” and “Song of the Realization of the Way”, that were greatly enjoyed at the time have continued to be popular right up to the present time.¹⁶² He contributed the great hoards of treasure to literature and poems by Nom language script, let the later generation enjoy and learn from the history, culture and tradition at that time. On the other hand, his work could support the art and architectures, protected and organized and cultural relics in the golden ages enriched Dai Viet culture. Linguist Nguyen Tai Can remarked:

The appearance of the Nom language is considered as an outstanding landmark on the way of progress in history. And the hoard of treasure of writing in Nom language, also the Nom language itself is considered as a highly valuable cultural property of our nation.¹⁶³

¹⁶⁰Sinh Dao, **op.cit.**, p.252-253.

¹⁶¹Nguyen Thanh Xuan, **op.cit.**, p.37.

¹⁶² Sinh Dao (tr), **op.cit.**, p.257.

¹⁶³Institute of History, **Studies on Vietnamese Society under the Ly and Tran Dynasties**, (Ha Noi: Social Sciences Press, 1981), p.515-516.

4.2. Influences on Literature and Education

This kind of meditation brought, is bringing and will bring for us the spiritual and moral philosophy by influences of TLZS for the life. To encourage the Vietnamese people able to establish the foundation and development of literature and education now and in future.

4.2.1 Influences on Literature

All literature, whether poems, essays, novels, help next life address human nature and conditions which affect all labor and intelligence. These may be the enough want and necessary need for growth, reduce the doubts and fears of success and failure, the bonding rope for friends and family, the warm inspiration of compassion, empathy and trust, or the realization of shortcoming and disadvantage. The theory of imperfection isn't known always bad and that normal can be tedious. We learn that life must be lived to the extra-prosperous. Literature is in order to connect with our own humanity.

The majestic works and beautiful poems of meditative masters Tran Thai Tong, Tue Trung Thuong Si, Phap Loa, Huyen Quang that written in works “ Tam Tổ Hàng Trạng” (The Appearances of three Meditative Masters) and “Tam Tổ thực lục”, especially, “ Đại Việt Sử Ký Toàn Thư” (Dai Viet Historical Writing Collection) in second book and “ Thơ Văn Lý Trần” (Ly Tran Poems) in second book.

Tran Nhan Tong combined elements and features of Confucianism and Buddhism, to meet the system for skillful managing and building ideology of national independence, truly reflect the meaning “the Pāli word ‘bhāvanā’ has a broader meaning than meditation. It means ‘mental culture’, and includes all efforts to develop the spiritual side of life. Inside and outside of meditators can let themselves and others feel and catch the process of culture beautiful and colorful. However, Vietnamese Buddhism had many different Zen Schools but TLZS always lead the first one for a next life have to learn and imitate.

In addition, two contemporary developments occurred in Vietnamese culture at that time. Firstly, the usage and application the

combination of Vietnamese language and Chinese were the official and formal transcripts of the royal classes and knowledge classes. In the earlier dynasty, the Vietnamese language must have been used to some particular extent, yet this fact had not been proven by any documentary evidence until his reign of Tran Nhan Tong. the formal and typical appearance of national and proud literary works composed in Vietnamese such as the *Tiêu Ân Quốc Ngữ Thi Tập* by Chu Văn An; a monk of the An Quốc Temple; a translation of the *Shih Ching* by Hồ Quý Ly; poems of Nguyễn Biểu and Trần Trùng Quang, notably, the *Quốc Âm Thi Tập* by Nguyễn Trãi; especially, the earliest Vietnamese translations of Buddhist texts *Phật Thuyết Đại Báo Phụ Mẫu Ân Trọng* and *Phật Thuyết Báo Phụ Mẫu Ân Trọng*, which are said to have been carried out by Zen Master Viên Thái are present till nowadays. Behind all of these achievements by such talented and energetic sons of the Fatherland, there must be some philosophical foundation which may be studied in the poem "*Cư Trần Lạc Đạo*" (Worldly Life with Joy in the Way) by the Emperor Nhân Tông. For, being originally preserved in the monasteries of the Trúc Lâm School, it may be employed for the intensive study of its strategic and statecraft implications.¹⁶⁴

The spirit of TLZS actively engaged in life and profound humanity and moral orientation. In the King Tran Nhan Tong time, that's the most gold and the most prosperous ages in Vietnamese history. In general, let the world give great admiration of the way population fight against the enemies in the moral and intelligent way, in particular, let Vietnamese write eloquent historical pages save millions of lives for proud of imitating. King Tran Nhan Tong always encouraged independent thinking an creativity in the education systems. The poems and songs in the Tran dynasty were under the influence of profound Zen studies; and poets emerged the bright colors of tranquil spirit in meditation.

¹⁶⁴Le Manh That, translated by Dao Sinh, **Trần Nhân Tông a Biographical Study**, (HCM City: HCM Synthetic Press), p.83.

4.2.2 Influences on Education

Education, as it is easy to discern, includes the connection and transfer of ideas, attitudes, skills and training in certain rule and law as well. Moreover, education is looked like as actively messenger of a transmitter of cultural and social values. Human beings were introduced to the cultural value by school or later by society. Moreover, religion offer the humans' behavior the best insight (*pañña*) and as well it helps us how to answer different, difficult and complicated questions, for example, why people behave in this way and not in another. It doesn't matter which religion it belongs to or even religious or non-religious, those who practiced meditation trusted in benefits and meanings it brought to, for its nature, meditation more and less lead us to be in happier realm and level. TLZS itself is a golden time for transcendental meditation in Vietnamese history and contemporary. Scientifically, meditation's effects and impacts on brain directly were still a great topic for scientists to work hard and relax for recovering the energy. According to P.A. Payutto, meditation means “the base of work for the mind” or the mind's working place. It may also mean the object used for developing meditation and training the mind, the meditation object.¹⁶⁵

Meditation (*kammaṭṭhāna*) can be called *bhāvanā* which means a systematic training of the mind, cultivation or development of the mind.¹⁶⁶ In that way, meditation of TLZS is not only complete form but also the perfect process of the development of humans dignity, perseverance and wisdom for the war and peacetime.

Educational success plays an important role in deciding the level cost of ordaining in activities and organization such as religion. If the opportunity spends time devoted and made up to religious activities is beautiful and rational related to education, then one would predict an inverse relationship between the religious organization and educational purpose. Furthermore, TLZS firm and reasonable combine to education to become a perfect unit at that time. Over 4000 years of history protect and

¹⁶⁵P.A. Payutto, **Buddhadhamma Expanded and Revised (abridged)**, p. 509.

¹⁶⁶Phra Mahā Singhathon Narāsabho, **A Guide to a Happy Life**, (Bangkok: Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya Press, 1971), p.78.

development of Vietnamese population, our Vietnamese ancestors tried to put the typical foundation to prove national strength and spirit of Vietnam “never give up” combined with the spirit of “meditation is the intelligent heart of the Buddha’s way; the only criterion is that you should apply it to daily life.”¹⁶⁷ TLZS impacted into Vietnamese Education to perfect and gorgeous form. Then we can predict a positive and perfect association between education and religious activities in now and here.

4.3. Influences Establishing a Happy Society

The most important thing of TLZS is that offer endless value and honorable meaning for Vietnamese people, to free humans from mental and physical suffering and attain the final goal of happiness and peace. TLZS’s position in Vietnam society can’t be measured and thought of but practice and enjoyed by our own. TLZS lasted in Tran dynasty and nowadays gorgeously.

4.3.1 Influences on Establishing a Happy Society in Tran Dynasty Time

No matter, Theravada or Mahayana meditation is, as long as, we are real meditators, we can cultivate happiness because “one who practices this meditation will be calm, period of sleeps, happily, awakes happily; he is calm in the senses, calm in mind; endowed with strong faith, noble in intention, he is revered by his fellow-beings. If he fails to attain Nibbanā in the present life, he is bound for happiness in the future.”¹⁶⁸ And nature has a harmonic correlation, society and relationship. According to local circumstance, habits and customs, the relationships between people are established by the community.¹⁶⁹

¹⁶⁷ Ven. Pannyavaro, **Insight Meditation Workshop**, (Australia: Buddha Dharma Education Association Inc, 2000), p .2.

¹⁶⁸ Bhadantācariya Buddhaghosa, **Visuddhimagga: The Path of Purification**, tr. by Ñāṇamoli Bhikkhu, p. 320.

¹⁶⁹ Vien Minh, **Living in the Reality**, (Vietnamese version), (HCM city: Phuung Dong Press, 2001), p.225-226.

Human beings are bound in their own named relationships to hold them for becoming the inherent habit.

As one day, the King Ly Thai Tong asked master Thien Lao how long he stayed in the mountain; the master answered: “I only take a deep discernment not remember the previous years at all”.¹⁷⁰ *Nibbana* is the realm of freedom and have no signs of any attachments, it doesn’t mean not to cling to *Nibbāna*. Living in harmony in many situations, any circumstances means living according to *Dharma*. Basing on the elements of time, position, intrinsic nature, a tolerant and simple life. On the other way, in general, Zen let us come back to present moment, live deep and insight each of them. Though only the moment, it still has the full transformation of birth, existence, death.¹⁷¹ Mankind lives in the present¹⁷² not for regretting and dreaming about the past and wished or afraid of the future. Drawing colorful and illusory world imprinted of a foot on the mind to become stupid subconscious. Hence, when we know how to live and shelter ourselves in the present moment, we will know how what the real meaning and value of our lives is.¹⁷³ Focusing on the present moment, we can figure out the value each of lifetime and respect them and finally, we try our best to prevent and protect our lives happily and comfortably and in regard to practice meditation, the practitioners should start with proper behaviour and speech (*sīla*), then continue with mental training (*samādhi*) and then reach the final level, developing wisdom (*paññā*) to the point of overcoming ignorance (*avijjā*), craving (*tanhā*) and attachments (*upādāna*) as explained in the Three-fold Training (*tisikkhā*) which are training in higher morality (*adhisīla-sikkhā*), training in higher mentality (*adhicitta-sikkhā*) and training in higher wisdom (*adhipaññā-sikkhā*).¹⁷⁴

¹⁷⁰Thich Thanh Tu, (a), **op.cit.**, p.64.

¹⁷¹Verse on the Faith-Mind: ‘When all things are seen equally the timeless Self-essence is reached.’ **Taisho Tripiṭaka**, vol 48, no. 2010, p.376. c23-24.

¹⁷²M I 37: ‘*Svākkhāto bhagavatā dhammo: sandṭṭhiko akāliko ehipassiko opaneyyiko paccattaṃ veditabbo viññūhī ti*’

¹⁷³Nyanaponika Thera, **The Heart of Buddhist Meditation**, (Colombo: Word of the Buddha Publishing Committee), 1953, p74.

¹⁷⁴Bhikkhu Bodhi, (tr.), **Samyutta–Nikāya: The Connected Discourses of the Buddha, vol 1**. (Oxford: PTS, 2000), p.374.

The essence of this Zen School makes human beings cultivate more and more the happiness and peace in the daily life, here and now, free from the attachment of sufferings that come from the greed, anger and illusion. Master Tran Nhan Tong had a final and sole purpose is to build “good lives, beautiful religious.” Like as these beautiful poems of Zen master Tue Trung Thuong Si, master of King Tran Nhan Tong:

Emerging from the formless, your body is originally emptiness.

The illusion is manifested and scattered, giving dualistic views.

The self and others are like dew, like fog.

The holy and unholy are like lightning, like flash.

Position, fame, wealth and honor are like clouds floating away.

Your life, days and months are like arrows flying fast.¹⁷⁵

He undertook to lay the groundwork of compassion and wisdom. In the spirit *metta bhāvanā* is also called universal love. The way to practice *metta bhāvanā* is given in the *Tevijja Sutta* of the *Dīgha Nikāya*:

*Then, with his heart filled with loving-kindness, he dwells suffusing one quarter, the second, the third, the fourth. Thus he dwells suffusing the whole world, upwards, downwards, across, everywhere, always with a heart filled with loving-kindness, abundant, unbounded, without hate or ill will.*¹⁷⁶

That's rope through form policy to human's souls. In fifteen years of his reign, he led the people carry on this kind of spirit and ceded the throne to his son. This insight helped him unify the core and essence of Buddhist Dharma as an ideology, a great and idea nation, had many strong faces, economy, education, festival traditions, policy, laws and

¹⁷⁵Nguyen Giac (tr), **Teachings and Poetry of the Vietnamese Zen Master Tue Trung Thuong Si (1230-1291)**, Holy or Unholy, No Difference, Email: nguyengiac@yahoo.com -- California, 2007), p19.

¹⁷⁶DN.I.251-2; also Maurice Walshe, **op.cit.** p.194.

strategies. Together with monks of the same ideals established the nation more and more beautiful inside and outside of people's souls.

According to the Thanh Dang Ngu Luc (Recorded Sayings of the Saints) in 1304 CE the master Tran Nhan Tong: “wandered through villages, teaching the people to practice the Ten Good Things to put the law of application the Ten Good Things in policy and rule. Indeed, King Tran Nhan Tong's peaceful diplomatic policy actually brought about unexpectedly great achievements in politics and security of Dai Viet.

Nowadays, human beings always struggle for many things, better life and money, they try to rush forward but even they don't know wherever they get there, bright places or dark stuck, they keep moving but blind and deaf in directions. Mindfulness of meditation is like a lamp of wisdom can brighten every dark corner outside and inside of yourself. The method of master Tran Nhan Tong has been giving the deep and positive benefits and impacts of the development of national culture. Through the sharpened awareness developed in strict practice, the postures, too, will afford an opportunity to observe the momentary rise and fall of phenomena, and to make those other observations on the nature of the body to which we have referred earlier.¹⁷⁷

As from 1299 when Tran Nhan Tong entered religion to found TLZS into 1400 when the Trần dynasty was declined, TLZS had been in one century. At that time Dai Viet seemed to be peaceful. In this time, people seem a just little bit of attachment sensible pleasures, the spiritual life lift up as high as possible. The Tran dynasty continues and developed national independent ideology system which was manifested by the spirit of TLZS. King was the founder of TLZS, he was a model mirror for a large member of the royal family followed; for example, Hung Ninh Vuong Tue Trung Thuong Si, Van Hue Vuong Tran Quang Trieu, princess Tuyen Chan, princess Le Bao and so forth. Huyen Quang had been a doctor and a mandarin but he left his house to enter monastic lives and became the third patriarch of TLZS. Many populations ordained under the instructions of TLZS, estimated 30.000 Buddhists in the

¹⁷⁷ Nyanaponika Thera, **The Heart of Buddhist Meditation, A Handbook of Mental Training Based on the Buddha's Way of Mindfulness**, (Sri Lanka: Buddhist Publication Society, 2012), p.60-61.

prosperous and divine period of TLZS. The name and influences of TLZS was so great and far that Le Ba Quat wrote that “From the princes and high ranking mandarins down to ordinary people, if they give alms and contributions to Buddhist work, they are not at all stingy, even if they use up all their money and property... wherever there are people there are sure to be Buddhist pagodas...”. The Emperor Tran Nhan Tong who founder TLZS is the national hero, made great contributions to historical golden pages in various and particular aspects. It was under his leadership that the Vietnamese people could to be at the zenith of happiness. People believed and loved each other, didn't let the material and outside of conditions made out the reasons get more attachment and suffering, and they freed from them voluntarily and carefully.

After 700 years since King Tran Nhan Tong's attainment of Nirvana, his wisdom and compassion still remain a bright mirror and model of excellent leader. The play Buddhist King brighten the Vietnamese historical pages and evokes people's pride in the contribution of protection and development of the nation inspired next generations to proud of and imitate every aspect of culture, literature, tradition, education and the way of living, on another way, the skillful life. Nowadays, this excellent spirit still live inside of Vietnamese Buddhists.

The first success in Tran dynasty, through the development of culture, literature and education, under the influence of TLZS said its own voice for people all the world able figure out : Who is Vietnamese person? How is Vietnamese person? The second is that the Emperor himself founded a new line of development of the Zen school, namely, the Trúc Lâm Yên Tử, holding that the Way to enlightenment may be cultivated peacefully right in worldly life.¹⁷⁸ And under the Tran Dynasty (1226-1400), the centralized feudal regime was restored and strengthened. Thong Che was compiled to define state regulations and rites. Agricultural production developed under a policy on farms and fiefs. Arts and literature of the Thang Long Culture flourished. National spirit was enhanced by three great victories against Yuan-Mongol

¹⁷⁸Le Manh That, translated by Dao Sinh, **Trần Nhân Tông a Biographical Study**, (HCM City: Synthetic HCM Press), p.76.

invasions.¹⁷⁹ Tran Dynasty can build a perfect society in the mind of Vietnamese persons as the same way to assure under the leadership of Phap Loa and others, the Truc Lam sect–Vietnam Buddhist Congregation- became stronger and stronger.¹⁸⁰

We both know, they`re also suffering the same grief and we also have a thundering urgent need. When we perceive that we have fallen into an ocean of suffering , and we look around and we can see that others also have the same physical suffering and mental anxiety. If we look at carefully there are many people drowned in sorrow impuissance, why don`t give them a gentle hand! Maybe we have differences ? Our skin isof different colors we speak different languages or we have different positions in society, in our families but that is only on the surface, we are all human beings. So, our natural appreciation of kindness is there and we don`t have to spend days and nights wracked by suffering ... that is what binds us to each other. That is what makes it possible for us to understand and love each other. I make sure for that if we contribute to other people`s welfare and benefit, we will find the true meaning of life. TLZS, firmly catch this thought, widely spread to others know and study and let`s smile to other and keep the world smiling! Basically because at the beginning of human civilization, man had faith in natural phenomena. This was followed by faith in the Power of a God and faith in the power of outstanding members of society, such as the rulers. This subsequently developed into confidence in today`s system of democracy and human rights. From the beginning of human civilization, humanity has constantly sought not to live only a material life, but also to promote a spiritual life based on faith.¹⁸¹ Our future is determined by our present state of mind our now karma.

4.3.2 Influences on Establishing a Happy Society in Nowadays

Rising and falling is the common feature of every phenomenon, and have to change for adapt to the outside of conditions, TLZS lasted a long

¹⁷⁹Nguyen Thanh Xuan, *op.cit.*, p.19.

¹⁸⁰ *Ibid*, p.36.

¹⁸¹Venerable Master Hsing Yun, **Humanistic Buddhism a Blueprint for Life**, (Taiwan: Buddhist Light Press, 2003), p.75.

period time make bright for Buddhism in particular and for Vietnam in general. In 20th to 21st centuries, This School, return back to the life. Zen Master Thich Thanh Tu discerned and revived this religious system newly and lively and obviously became the soul and personality of Vietnam. He played the renovating and essential role of the TLZS in Nowadays, in Thuong Chieu Zen Monastery in Long Thanh and other Truc Lam Zen Monasteries in Vietnam established the method and way of practice this school, with its root is Truc Lam temple in Da Lat, founded by The Most Venerable Thich Thanh Tu who dedicated and united Chinese and Vietnamese Zen tradition.¹⁸² Vietnam.¹⁸³

The establishment and development of Truc Lam Zen Buddhism from beginning till now, is being the core in Vietnamese Buddhism, especially during wartime. Travelling across the nation to teach Zen practices to monks and encourage his subjects to observe the Ten good acts theory (*Daśakuśalakarmāṇi*)¹⁸⁴. The philosophy of this Zen school fully contained reflected the spirit of *tự lực* (self-reliance) and *tùy duyên* (*pratyaya* or indirect cause), which means to consider Buddha Nature as a available gem inside of each human beings, believe in oneself without being negatively and distorted influenced by mysterious forces, be completely optimistic and harmonious with the essence of nature. And this school of thought is renewed and be quite different from the Indian and Chinese doctrine and the way of practice that Vietnam used to follow. The most important findings show that regular meditation influences the emotional state, health and stress reduction¹⁸⁵ helps reduce

¹⁸² Thich Thanh Tu, “*Vietnamese Zen from the Late Twentieth Century – Part I*”, viewed 22, February 2014, <http://nttvblog.blogspot.com/2011_12_01_archive.html>

¹⁸³ The Most Venerable Thich Nhat Quang, Rector of Buddhist College in Dong Nai Province, **Interview**, 3 January, 2016, 7:30am.

¹⁸⁴ Tai Thu Nguyen 2008, **The History of Buddhism in Vietnam**, (Washington. D.C: CRVPC), pp. 146-151.

¹⁸⁵ C.N. Alexander, M.V. Rainforth, P. Gelderloos, Transcendental Meditation, Self-Actualization, and Psychological Health: A Conceptual Overview and Statistical Meta-Analysis, “**Journal of Social Behavior and Personality**” 1991, no. 6, p. 189–247; J.A. Astin, Stress Reduction through Mindfulness Meditation: Effects on Psychological Symptomatology, Sense of Control, and Spiritual Experiences, “**Psychotherapy and Psychosomatics**” 1997, no. 2, p. 97–106.

anxiety and depression and contribute to the decline in mortality¹⁸⁶ increases resistance to chronic pain¹⁸⁷ acute pain and migraine headaches¹⁸⁸ Some effects of meditation on chronic diseases were also found¹⁸⁹ as well as effects in reducing fear, curbing drug abuse, increasing empathy in counselors¹⁹⁰, decreasing generalized anxiety¹⁹¹, decreasing test anxiety and reducing blood pressure and hypertension.¹⁹²

The way of practice of TLZS became very popular and attracted many followers then, and as a result the Vietnamese people respected Buddhism and began established Buddhist temples throughout the country's length. With the durable schedule:

Truc Lam self-regulation technique can be divided into basic and advanced. The first is the strategy for beginners and is called counting breaths. On this basic level, one should keep position (lotus position is the best one) and count the breath until 10, being aware of inhalation and exhalation. At the end of each exhalation, person increment the count by one. Person reset the counting to one after 10 is reached. At any time one loses track of the sequence, must reset to 1. It is happening because mind is not concentrating on the observation. The mind cannot think of two things at once. If one remembers the counting, he would not be able to remember other things. Therefore, when it happens,

¹⁸⁶ H.G. Koenig, M.E. McCullough, D.B. Larson, Handbook of Religion and Health, New York 2001.

¹⁸⁷ F.J. Keefe, G. Affleck, J. Lefebvre, L. Underwood, D.S. Caldwell, J. Drew, Living with Rheumatoid Arthritis: The Role of Daily Spirituality and Daily Religious and Spiritual Coping, "**Journal of Pain**" 2001, no. 2, p. 101–110

¹⁸⁸ A.B. Wachholtz, K.I. Pargament, Migraines and Meditation: does Spirituality Matter?, "**Journal of Behavioral Medicine**" 2008, no. 31, p. 351–366.

¹⁸⁹ J.S. Brookes, T. Scarano, Transcendental Meditation in the Treatment of Post-Vietnam Adjustment, "**Journal of Counseling and Development**" 1985, no. 64, p. 212–215; R. Bonadonna, Meditation's Impact on Chronic Illness, "**Holistic Nursing Practice**" 2003, no. 17, p. 309–319.

¹⁹⁰ T. Lesh, Zen Meditation and the Development of Empathy in Counselors, "**Journal of Humanistic Psychology**" 1970, no. 10, p. 39–74

¹⁹¹ M. Girodo, Yoga Meditation and Flooding in the Treatment of Anxiety Neurosis, "**Journal of Behavior Therapy and Experimental Psychiatry**" 1974, no. 5, p. 157–160.

¹⁹² K.K. Datey, S.N. Deshmukh, C.P. Dalui, L. Vinekar, Shivasan, a Yogic Exercise in the Management of Hypertension, "**Angiology**" 1969, no. 20, p. 325–333.

*practitioner should discipline the mind by recounting and focusing on the breaths.*¹⁹³

To base on the method in the Visuddhimagga says that there are eight stages in the practice of Ānāpānasati, the first four of which are (1) counting, (2) connection, (3) touching, and (4) fixing with “the certain predecessors taught four ways of practising mindfulness of respiration. Q. What is counting? A. A new yogin counts the breaths from one to ten, beginning with the outgoing breath and ending with the incoming breath. He does not count beyond ten. Again, it is taught that he counts from one to five but does not count beyond five. He does not miss. At that time (i.e., when he misses) he should count (the next) or stop that count. Thus he dwells in mindfulness of respiration, attending to the object. Thus should counting be understood”¹⁹⁴. As the spirit of Bhikkhu Bodhi says: that wealth be acquired by right livelihood and be utilized in meaningful ways to promote the happiness of oneself and others.¹⁹⁵ This way of Zen practice is also an important means of emitting beautiful empathy for others and of support politicians apply simple, people-oriented, and peaceful policies toward around countries, like Champa or Laos can be happy and peace like as the Tran Dynasty. Moreover, this way of practice can be adapted to modern society and young generations who are buds for bright future. The special one of this, that is the practicing is not limited to sitting meditation, but applied in each moment of each of daily activities: grounding, cooking, cleaning, eating, playing and walking. The instruction is as following: ‘Be aware and mindful of whatever you do, physically or verbally, during the daily routine of work in your life. Whether you walk, stand, sit, lie down, or sleep, whether you stretch or bend your legs, whether you look around, whether you put your clothes on, whether you talk or keep silent, whether you eat or drink, whether you answer the calls of nature – in these and other activities you should

¹⁹³ Thich Thanh Tu, **Vietnamese Zen in the Late Twentieth Century**, Dai Dang Monastery 2002, p. 33

¹⁹⁴ Arahant Upatissa, **The Path of Freedom, Vimuttimaggā**, (Ceylon: Buddhist Publication Society, 1961), p.159.

¹⁹⁵ Bhikkhu Bodhi, **Walking Even Amidst the Uneven**:
http://www.accesstoinsight.org/lib/authors/bodhi/bps-essay_33.html.

be fully aware and mindful of the act performed at the moment, that is to say, that you should live in the present moment, in the present action. That is the idea of zen: whenever a thought arises, let it go.¹⁹⁶

This Truc Lam self-regulation technique is quite consistent with theoretical model of process of zen meditation (a behavioral analysis) described by Shapiro and Zifferblatt, where person has learned to observe his or her breathing without a reactive effect and without habituation. This meditative process serves the dual function: of desensitizing the individual to the thoughts (i.e. detached observation of thoughts) and eventually removing those thoughts by the continued focus on the competing response of breathing. In this way, the person feels relaxed, calm and with a “mind emptied of internal chatter.”¹⁹⁷ This is the common model of perfect society makes us think of and imitate. Most people in the world have a same and ultimate dream to live in an ideal society and be covered by a happy and meaningful life. However, in our mind, there have no same idea and way about what the perfect society would look like. But, for me, I think that there are three essential indicators that can operate and complete the perfect structure of a society in the modern world: religious spirit, proper production and suitable plans with ‘in modern science, the most interesting field for psychologists is psychophysiological approach. Bagchi and Wenger’.¹⁹⁸ One more, Fromm and Suzuki claims that the aim of psychology and zen is the same: total awareness and self-control: “If we would try to express enlightenment in psychological terms, I would say that it is a state in which the person is completely tuned to the reality outside and inside, a state in which one is fully aware of it and grasps it. One is aware of it – that is, not his/her brain, nor any other part of his/her organism, but he/she, the whole person”¹⁹⁹.

¹⁹⁶ Thich Thanh Tu, **The Carefree Leaves Paperback**, 2000.

¹⁹⁷ D.H. Shapiro, S.M. Zifferblatt, **op.cit.**, p. 519–532

¹⁹⁸ B.K. Bagchi, M.A. Wenger, **Electrophysiological Correlates of Some Yoga Exercises, “Electroencephalography and Clinical Neurophysiology”** 1957, no. 7, p. 132–149.

¹⁹⁹ E. Fromm, D.T. Suzuki, R. De Martino, **op.cit.**, p. 162

Chapter V

Conclusion and Suggestion

5.1. Conclusion

Zen gradually developed the assertive theory and practice in the system of Buddhism. The utmost spirit of adapting to life originated from the teaching of the monastic life for Tran Thai Tong: “*In the mountains, there is no Buddha; Buddha is right in our hearts*” and cultivate the seed so that our Buddhist persons can lead a religious life either far from home or at home and to live sincerely. According to Doctor Nguyen Huu Son, the spirit of entering into life has been upheld by generations of Truc Lam Zen sect’s disciples: “Truc Lam Zen sect is associated with famous pagodas including Vinh Nghiem, Con Son and Hoa Nghiem. These pagodas and the system of Buddhist books retain their vitality, showing the immortality of the sect. Many pagodas, which were built in Hue and Sai Gon and in the Vietnamese community areas in India and Eastern Europe, follow the TLZS”.

The mind is the core of Zen Buddhism: without mind, there is no Zen. Observing the mind is a vital way of carefulness and self-discovery. It is the experience of deep-living from moment to moment and respect each of them to be more meaningful and lively in the here and now. Skillful interacting with internal and external phenomena. Applying to this thought, in the beginning stage of fighting against invaders for national independence and freedom the role of Buddhism was assured and affirmed clearly, firmly in the social and spiritual life of people. Under the Đinh and pre-Lê dynasty, the indomitable spirit is emphasized and drawn by meditative essence through the humanism and moralism of TLZS made the world bend their head down in front of beautiful and holy non-violence, completely suitable with “virtue and concentration,

wisdom, supreme release - these are the things that were understood by the famous Gotama who fully comprehending them and extremely skillful means.

On the other hand, TLZS can speak up the typical spirit of even in the war situation, the death, suffering and hate couldn't prevent the essence of meditation itself want to let human beings know. Under the reign of Tran Nhan Tong, Vietnamese golden history were written many great and inter-related pages in cultural, political, educational and military success: the victories over Mongol-Yuan invaders, the annexation of the two districts Ô and Lý to the country's territories, the usage of Vietnamese and Chinese together, as the official and formal written language; and eventually, new developments in thought. This is the firm and scientist lineage to link generation to next ones. In that way, we can confidently answer the question "What is Nibbana?" by our own. TLZS make the lively and practical dedication to emerge the absorbed culture, bold Vietnamese identities. This kind of practice is a technique of spiritual mindfulness, which when practiced, can be inspired the mind and body source from which of daily activities as walking, working, washing, drinking, sleeping, talking, watching... Then, the opportunity for us to attain enlightenment in every position is the feasible truth.

Above all this, TLZS is not a theory, an idea, words, speeches or a piece of knowledge. It is not a blind belief, "old-fashioned" dogma, or outdated religion; but rather, it is a practical experience, constant process. It's so stupid when we take intellectually grasp the spirit of Zen because human knowledges and conscious are too limited is different from the phenomanon of world. TLZS itself is the spiritual education system not a moral teaching and dogma, it does not require anybody to believe in it earnestly and intensively. A true path does not mean to tell people what to believe in; rather it's the way shows us how to know, see and touch.

Buddhist followers are basically the practitioner who understand the meaning and rule of life and truth of the world. TLZS doesn't only give us the flexible techniques and beautiful works by last meditative masters. They spent their lives for the dedication of the Buddhist national development. To assure Vietnamese Zen Buddhism by its own and wrote

the golden historical pages for later generations to proud of this kind of beautiful system and excellent theory.

5.2. Suggestions for Further Study

In that way, this research can be inspired others figure out the value and meaning of meditation to brings for us. It itself can be marked in process of proud construction and development of Vietnamese population. Moreover, I wish to see more and more researcher who can know the essence and to apply the meditation in practice daily life and for the nation.

Nirvana is the final goal and desired purpose for every human being and still only and only exists when we know how to cultivate the meaningful life and contribute to others' happiness. We can build more Emperors like as the time of King Tran Nhan Tong in practice of TLZS in society now and then. Meditation is just for practicing not theory. Researchers should figure out its role to assure and throw ourselves into the serious and earnest practice to bright the happiness. Furthermore, in particular, Vietnamese people and in general Zen Buddhism's people love practicing this kind of Zen, try to dig in the valueable treasure of Pali Canon, flexible combine both of them, to speak up the international Buddhism, scale up the effectual practice and theory. Everybody isn't too distracted to care about preserving or developing our own Zen spiritual, traditional and cultural heritage by spreading to other realms.

I wish to see more and more researchers look and revive the spirit of Vietnamese Zen Buddhism, give a compassionate hand for establishing lively and colorful. I think temples follow the TLZS apart from the common actions worship the Buddha, where religious practice is a meditation and enjoy happy state. There is also a special place for us to worship and pay respect for Truc Lam Patriarchs Buddhist, the statue of Tran Nhan Tong. This kind of habit proves beyond value of time, space and art architecture. Furthermore, later researchers could emphasize the huge importances of cultural relics to encourage the later generations love, protect, respect and conserve time by time.

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