

MOTHER GODDESS LIỄU HẠNH: A PRINCESS BECAME THE CHIEF DEITY IN THE MOTHER GODDESS CULT IN VIETNAM

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I The new documents on Mother Goddess Liễu Hạnh

1- Mother Goddess Liễu Hạnh is belauded by people. There are many legends about her. Many writers, Confucian scholars try their best to revise her stories written on stone slabs and the works which were written by Han Nom language. According to preliminary statistic data, there are nearly 100 books and documents written about Mother Goddess Liễu Hạnh, among them there are documents written by Han-Nom language, national language and foreign languages. Many documents were written by French and English. The ancient Han-Nom documents are very important¹

Basing on details of Mother Goddess Liễu Hạnh's life we can divide documents of Mother Goddess Liễu Hạnh into three different categories.

(1)The documents which are considered popular stories. They were created by people. They are stories about Mother Goddess Liễu Hạnh, specially the *story about Liễu Hạnh princess* collected by Nguyễn Đông Chi in *The treasure of Vietnamese legends* and the story about *Sông Sơn great war* which is revised and published by Vương Duy Trinh and Nguyễn Văn Huyền in their work.² These stories are simple.

(2) On the Han- Nom documents, first of all we should mention *Vân Cát Thần nữ* (Vân Cát goddess) story written by Poetess Đoàn Thị Điểm (in the 18th century) and *Tiên Phả dịch lục* (at the beginning of 20th century) written by Kiều Oánh Mậu⁴. Some documents dealt with two reincarnations of Mother Goddess, one in Vân Cát (Phủ Giầy), one in Nga Sơn (Thanh Hóa).

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¹ Ngô Đức Thịnh Mother Goddess in Vietnam Religious Publishing House. H. 2009

² Nguyễn Đông Chi The Treasure of Vietnamese Legends, Volume 4 . H. 1980

Nguyễn Văn Huyền Liễu Hạnh Goddess in the Worship of the immortals in Vietnam, 1944. But now it is in Contributing to Studying Vietnamese Culture, Volume 2. Social Science Publishing House. H. 1996.

³ Đoàn Thị Điểm *The Story about Vân Cát Goddess* in *Truyện kì tân phả*, 1993

⁴ Kiều Oánh Mậu *Tiên phả dịch lục* was translated by Nguyễn Xuân Diện in *Mother Goddess in Vietnam* Religious Publishing House. H. 2009

The story of Liễu Hạnh written by Nguyễn Đồng Chi describes that Liễu Hạnh was the second daughter of the Jade Emperor (Ruler of Heaven). She was self-willed girl. When descending into this world she became a salesgirl and she gave much trouble to people including king and mandarins. Because of her actions, the Court had to depend on the eight classes of supernatural beings to arrest Liễu Hạnh. She was released by magical power of Avalakitecvara. Princess bravely answered back the condemnation of the Court so she escaped punishment. Since then she entered into religion, practiced charity and shared out perquisite people.

Liễu Hạnh was a beautiful girl but self-willed. Under Đoàn Thị Điểm's pen Liễu Hạnh was Quỳnh Hoa princess. She broke a treasure cup so king reproached and compelled her to descend into this world.

The appearance of Quỳnh Hoa princess was different from the appearance of Liễu Hạnh. Liễu Hạnh was a self-willed girl. She made Jade Emperor angry so she was descended into this world. Poetess Đoàn Thị Điểm described that Quỳnh Hoa princess broke a treasure cup of Jade Emperor so he compelled her to descend into this world. She was reincarnated in Lê Thái Công family. She was grown up in good educational environment so she was not only beautiful girl but also talented girl. She was good at four knowledges (music, chess, poetry and drawing). She had four attributes of an ideal woman (industry, appearance, speech, behavior).

Poetess Đoàn Thị Điểm was imbued with Confucian thought and her style was very refined. She described that Liễu Hạnh princess was beautiful, talented girl but Liễu Hạnh had a strong personality and compassion. Liễu Hạnh was a great amateur of poem and she liked to converse about poem. Could it be that this characteristic of Liễu Hạnh copied the image of poetess Đoàn Thị Điểm? When Liễu Hạnh became a genie, this characteristic of Liễu Hạnh was not dealt with in popular legends. Afterward, *Vân Cát Goddess's appearance* in poems made more poetic and supernatural characteristics of Liễu Hạnh.

(3) In recent years we find some Han -Nom documents which are kept in Nam Định museum, in Nấp palace (Yên Đồng village, ý Yên district, Nam Định

province) on the stele *Quảng Cung linh từ bi ki*⁵ was composed in 1741 by Đại An district chief Bắc Từ Nguyễn Đình Việp; on *Quảng Cung linh từ phả ki*⁶ was composed in 1781 by Vũ Huy Trác; in the work *Cát Thiên Tam thế thực lục*⁷ was composed by Đoàn Triển, Dr. Khiếu Năng Tĩnh, Bắc Ninh provincial education officer Nguyễn Xuân Thiều, Hải Phòng education officer Nguyễn Văn Tĩnh, provincial education officer Đặng Quỳ and Đỗ Huy Liệu ...These authors were people in Sơn Nam town. They had friends who lived in adjacent provinces and they had special relation with Nấp palace and they were grateful to Mother Goddess. Among these above works there was *Quảng Cung linh từ phả ki* was composed in 1781 by Vũ Huy Trác. Its date was near *Vân Cát Goddess* written by Đoàn Thị Điểm.

2- Comparing to popular legends, Nom anonymous stories and works were composed from middle of the 18th century to the beginning of the 20th century by Confucians who were influenced by Đoàn Thị Điểm, Kiều Oánh Mậu dealt with two reincarnations of Mother Goddess Liễu Hạnh, one in Vân Cát and one in Nga Sơn (Thanh Hóa). However, the works of Sơn Nam group which were the same time with the works of Đoàn Thị Điểm, Kiều Oánh Mậu dealt with three reincarnations of Liễu Hạnh princess. They were:

The first reincarnation: She was reincarnated in family of Mr. Phạm Đức Chính and Mrs. Đoàn Thị Phương in Trần xá village, Đại An district, Nghĩa Hưng district. She was under the name of Phạm Tiên Nga. She lived about 40 years from 1434 to 1473. She did not get married. She served her parents and did charity. When she was 40 years old she returned to Heaven. Resident people established temple for worship of her. It is Quảng Cung palace (Nấp palace) (Palace means *Phủ* refers to temple complex of various building, while one single *temple* is *dền*- VTA)

The second reincarnation of Liễu Hạnh princess happened from 1557 - 1577 in Vân Cát hamlet, An Thái village, Thiên Bản district, Nghĩa Hưng palace, Nam Định province. She was born as Lê Thị Thắng, the daughter of Mr. Lê Thái Công and Mrs Lê Thái Bà. She got married to Trần Đào Lang and they had two children, one son and one daughter. Her son was Trần Nhâm and her

⁵ Bắc Từ Nguyễn Đình Việp (Đại An district chief) *Quảng Cung linh từ bi ki* was translated by Dương Văn Vượng. This document is kept in Nấp palace

⁶ Dr. Vũ Huy Trác *Quảng Cung Linh từ phả ki* was translated by Dương Văn Vượng

⁷ *Cát Thiên Tam thế thực lục* was translated by Dương Văn Vượng. This document is kept in Nấp palace

daughter was Hòa (some documents only speak of her son). She returned to heaven when she was 21 years old. Her grave became Mother Goddess tomb.

The third reincarnation of Liễu Hạnh princess happened in Sóc hamlet, Tây Mỗ village, Nga Sơn district, Thanh Hóa province. She was born as Hoàng Thị Trinh. Family name of her husband was Mai whom was thought to be an incarnation of her old husband. She had one son. His name was Cỗn. She returned to heaven when she was 19 years old. At present Phố Cát temple has still kept titled certificates of Nhâm and Cỗn. They were Liễu Hạnh's sons.

At present, in Han-Nom documents there are differences on the date of three reincarnations and returns to Heaven" of Mother goddess Liễu Hạnh. But these documents have a general characteristic on her reincarnations. In three reincarnations, Liễu Hạnh always manifested as beautiful, well behaved, unshakeable girl. She did charity and helped people. She had the four attributes of an ideal woman (industry, appearance, speech and behavior)⁸. After she died, natives expressed their deep gratitude to her and they built temple to worship her.

3-Besides these above Han-Nom documents there are pairs of wood panels which were written about reincarnations of Mother Goddess Liễu Hạnh. The pair of wood panel in Tiên Hương palace (Phủ Dầy) written that " three reincarnations of Mother Goddess Liễu Hạnh in Vĩnh Nhuế, Vân Cát, Nga Sơn. After 500 years her story has been bright in royal annals. Dynasties nominated her for Daughter of King, Royal Highest, Mother, and Immortal. Her fame has remained in this world for ten thousand years.

The pair of wood panel in Nấp palace written that the first reincarnation of Liễu Hạnh Mother Goddess was in Vĩnh Nhuế. She became a genie in Sông Sơn

The stories of three reincarnations and returns to Heaven of Liễu Hạnh also present in ritual songs in some temples and other popular stories.

There is another way of researching new documents on *three recantations and returns to Heaven* of Liễu Hạnh. We should exploit family records of Phạm family in Nấp palace and of Lê, Trần families in Phủ Dầy.

When writing Phạm family records, it is supposed that Phạm Thị Nga (Liễu Hạnh) was born in Phạm family in Phạm Xá, Yên Đông. Her father was Phạm

⁸ At present Phạm family in ý Yên, Xuân Trường, Nam Định elevates Liễu Hạnh princess to great- grandaunt of Phạm family

Đình Chính. He might be descendant of great grandfather Phạm Đạo Soạn who was first man of Phạm family changed waste land into cultivated land in Nam Định in the Trần dynasty, in 1386. At first, his name was Hoàng Xá then his name was changed into Phạm Xá. In Phạm family in Phạm Xa there were two doctors, Phạm Đạo Chú and Phạm Đảo Bảo. Their names were written in stele.⁹

Recently, researchers are interested in family records of Trần family and of Lê family in Phủ Dầy. *Vân Cát Lê gia ngọc phả* was written by Nguyễn Quốc Trinh (Nguyễn Quốc Khôi). He wrote Lê family records in Vân Cát, in the 18th of Vĩnh Tự era.

According to this family records, in the 16th century, the fifth prince of King Lê, might be Lê Chiêu Tông or Lê Tư Vinh hid in Vân Cát hamlet, An Thái village, Vụ Bản district, Nam Định province when the Mạc dynasty usurped the throne of the Lê dynasty. He got married to Trần Thị Thục. They had a son. He was Lê Tư Thắng. Lê Tư Thắng got married to Trần Thị Tự. Giáng Tiên (Liễu Hạnh) was Lê Tư Thắng daughter. She died on the 3rd March when she was young. Lê Tư Thắng donated a sum of money and a piece of land for worship of Giáng Tiên. It was the 5th of Gia Thái era under Lê Thế Tông reign (1577). It is noted that in 1939 when Thanh Hóa province chief ordered to repair Sòng temple to find family record which was made by brass . The above story was written on this record.

If this family record is true document, Giáng Tiên – Mother Goddess Liễu Hạnh would be a true person. She was person of Lê lineage. She was born in Vân Cát. In the 17th -18th centuries, Giáng Tiên became Liễu Hạnh princess then she became Mother Goddess Liễu Hạnh

II From princess with three recantations and returns to Heaven to Mother Goddess Liễu Hạnh.

As Khiếu Năng Tĩnh in *Cát Thiên tâm thế thực lục* or in pair of wood panels in Nấp palace, the life of Liễu Hạnh Mother Goddess was divided into two stages : the first stage was the period of three reincarnations and returns to Heaven of Liễu Hạnh princess in Nấp palace, in Vân Cát and in Nga Sơn. Liễu Hạnh princess became Liễu Hạnh Mother Goddess in the second stage. Sòng Sơn great war and vestige of Sòng temple were datum points of this stage. In the first stage, Liễu Hạnh princess's life was very happy. She helped many

⁹ We conversed with Mr. Phạm Minh Liên. He supplied us with documents.

people so her services were extolled. In the second stage her life was ups and downs. At last she became Liễu Hạnh Mother Goddess , the chief deity in the Mother Goddess cult.

We only find the stories on the second stage of Liễu Hạnh Mother Goddess in *Truyện kể dân gian* (folk stories) written by Nguyễn Đông Chi, in *khảo cứu về tục thờ tiên* (research on the worship of fairies) written by Nguyễn Văn Huyền and in *Sông Sơn đại chiến* (Sông Sơn great war) written by Chu Mạnh Trinh. Han- Nom works written by Confucian scholars did not speak of the second stage of Liễu Hạnh Mother Goddess except *Tiền phả dịch lục* written by Kiều Oánh Mậu at the beginning of the 20th century.

According to me (Ngô Đức Thịnh), if we would like to know the second stage of Liễu Hạnh we should research the social background of Vietnam in the 17th – 18th centuries, it means that the last stage of monarchistic system.

In this stage, commerce developed in the whole country and women played an important in trade. Many temples were built in commercial line from Thăng Long to other provinces. It is said that from the agricultural belief Mother Goddess cult became the commercial belief in this stage.

From the Lê Mạt regime, Vietnamese history had many changes. They were: the competition of Lê and Mạc; the establishment of Lê king and Trịnh Lord in the North; the conflict between the Trịnh and the Nguyễn and many peasant revolts especially in Tây Sơn- Nguyễn period.

Because of historical and social changes, people were very miserable so they looked for spiritual life. Furthermore, from the 15th century State thought highly of Confucianism. When Confucianism became ideology, Buddhism and Taoism tended to become folk religions. They went down in people life in rural areas so many temples, pagodas and communal houses were built in villages.

When Buddhism went down in popular life, it left scriptures and lofty philosophy. It became principle of behavior. The role of Avalokitevara became closely to people so folk Buddhism of our country had tinge of Avalokitevara. Because Buddhism tended to penetrate into folk belief so Buddhism has various nuances. Because of Avalokitevara's help in Sông Sơn đại chiến (Sông Sơn great war), Liễu Hạnh entered into religion and the integration of Buddhism and worship of Mother Goddess was established. This integration created form "Buddha in the front, Mother Goddesses behind" in Northern pagodas.

Chinese Taoism also penetrated into Vietnam since period of Chinese domination and it developed strongly in Vietnam. In feudal period, Taoist thoughts had influenced king and mandarins, thoughts of three religions were even brought in examination questions of the Court. Many aristocrats of the Trần dynasty used to be Taoist hermits. After the 15th century, Confucianism became unequalled religion in our country, Taoism and Buddhism penetrated into the life of people in villages. Taoism developed strongly in villages and it combined with folk beliefs to establish folk Taoism. Then it was called *Nội đạo* (another sect of Taoism) by researcher . This religion worships Trần Saint, Mother Goddesses...In this background the worship of Goddess and native Goddesses combined with the influence of Taoism to establish religion of tam phủ -tứ phủ (three - four palaces does not refer literally to the number of palace or temple) and Liễu Hạnh Mother Goddess has been chief deity of this religion.

From the 16th -17th centuries Taoism influenced the establishment of Mẫu Tam Phủ (Mother of three palaces) on aspects: the conception of cosmology; the world division (the world could be divided into three parts- Heaven, Earth and Water or four parts- Heaven, Earth, Water and forest) and the management of Mother Goddesses. Here, we can find that universe is identified with femininity. It is thinking of traditional Vietnamese people. In according to this thinking mother is exalted. Trần Quốc Vương considers this thinking as Maternal principle. In Chinese Taoism there is conception of three mandarins (Heaven mandarin, Earth mandarin, River mandarin) but the representatives of mandarins are gods. When Chinese Taoism came into Vietnam the representative of mandarins are goddesses. These goddesses managed different regions.

In the temple of three palaces and four palaces there is altar of the Jade Emperor. Because Liễu Hạnh princess entered into religion so Avalokitecvra penetrated into three palaces, four palaces and she is the highest position. In fact, chief deities of three palaces and four palaces are Mother Goddesses among them Liễu Hạnh Mother Goddess is the central position.

Some researchers think that God of the sea of Cham participated in creating image of Liễu Hạnh Mother Goddess¹⁰. We can not deny cultural

¹⁰ Tạ Chí Đại Trường *Deity, Human being and Vietnamese country*. Culture and Information Publishing House. H. 2006

exchange of Viet- Cham but this phenomenon is only cultural similarity, especially, culture of worship of Goddesses. The worship of Liễu Hạnh Mother Goddess did not originate from Cham or other peoples.

We recognize that from the 16th century Christianity and image of Virgin Mother Maria influenced our country, especially in coastal areas in North Vietnamese plain. Because Christianity and Mother Goddess cult worship Mother (Mother Goddess and Virgin Mother Maria). Two religions interfered in each other while they competed against each other in influence. This competition made Mother Goddess cult develop in the 17th - the 18th centuries.

The worship of Goddesses and of Mother Goddesses was born for long time and it has occupied an important position in shrines of Vietnam. However, the worship of Goddesses and of Mother Goddesses was folk belief and it was only present in village communities. After Liễu Hạnh Mother Goddess appeared in the 16th- the 18th centuries, Mother Goddess cult was set the model. Liễu Hạnh herself enhanced the worship of Goddesses into folk religion. Liễu Hạnh made this religion close to people. That was why the worship of Mother Goddess has developed in all sections of people.

The event *Sông Sơn đại chiến* happened in the 16th - the 18th centuries after three reincarnations and returns to Heaven of Liễu Hạnh princess. In this stage Liễu Hạnh resisted the Le- Trinh court and punished people in regions where she traveled because they did not respect and worship her. People and the Court fell into bad situation. At last, great war of *Nội đao* and Liễu Hạnh princess happened. In this confliction Liễu Hạnh princess found another way. She entered into Buddhism. She saved people from misfortune and danger. So people admired for her. She was worshipped every where. She was considered as Liễu Hạnh Mother Goddess, Mother of the world. The court did not punish her. She was elevated to *Mạ vàng chế thắng đại vương*. She was considered as Supreme Divinity

III Liễu Hạnh Mother Goddess, the chief deity in Mother Goddess cult.

In three -four palaces, Liễu Hạnh Mother Goddess is considered as Holy Mother of Heaven. On the altar she sits in the middle, Goddess of Water is on the left, and Goddess of Mountain is on the right. Sometimes Liễu Hạnh Mother Goddess is Mother Goddess of Earth. All shrines where worship Mother Goddesses have the symbol of Liễu Hạnh Mother Goddess. Liễu Hạnh mother Goddess is worshipped in Nấp palace (ý Yên), in Dây palace (Vụ Bản), in Tây Mỗ

(Nga Sơn, Thanh Hóa) because she reincarnated three times in these palaces. She is worshipped in Sông Sơn palace (Thanh Hóa) where she became a genie there. She is worshipped in Tây Hồ palace (Hà Nội) because she met and conversed with Phùng Khắc Khoan and other students about poems there. She is worshipped in many shrines in all parts of our country from South to North, from the lowland to the highland regions.

1- When speaking of places of Liễu Hạnh worship, we should mention Dầy palace. At first, Dầy palace was one of three places where Liễu Hạnh princess reincarnated. After Liễu Hạnh became a genie, Dầy palace became the center of Mother Goddess cult. At present, nobody can answer why Dầy palace has become the center for worship of Liễu Hạnh Mother Goddess although Liễu Hạnh became a genie in Sông Sơn (Thanh Hóa). According to me this problem consists of many reasons. First of all the stamp of the second reincarnation of Liễu Hạnh princess in Dầy palace was much remembered by people. Poetess Đoàn Thị Điểm described the second reincarnation of Liễu Hạnh princess in famous book *Vân Cát Goddess*. Because Dầy palace was in cultural area and Thiên Bản region has 6 strange events¹¹. Dầy palace was in favorable position on 10.000 mile road from the North to the South. The feudal kings and mandarins, especially Kings and mandarins in the Lê- Nguyễn dynasties were interested in Dầy palace. They not only visited but also contributed to reconstruct Dầy palace¹² so Dầy palace became more and more famous.

2- *Nấp palace is in Vĩ Nhuế, Yên Đông village*, Nghĩa Hưng district, Nam Định province (now Yên Đông village, ý Yên district, Nam Định). According to inscriptions and books in Nam Định museum, the first reincarnation of Liễu Hạnh princess was in Nấp palace. In this region there are two temples, one for worship of Liễu Hạnh, one for worship of Liễu Hạnh parents and some relics concerning with the first reincarnation of Liễu Hạnh princess.

According to *Quảng Cung linh từ phả kí*, Quảng Cung palace appeared in 1601 but it was begun to build in 1741¹³. Before building this palace was spare. Many people contributed their wealth to building of this palace. We specially pay attention to Liễu Hạnh Mother Goddess statue which is made of copper. Because the style of this statue is different from Liễu Hạnh Mother Goddess

¹¹ Lương Thế Vinh, Giáp Goddess, Liễu Hạnh Goddess, Phùng Thị Ngọc Đài are Tutelary Gods

¹² See 20 vestiges of Dầy palace in *Mother Goddess in Vietnam written by Ngô Đức Thịnh*. Religious Publishing House. H. 2009

¹³ *Quảng Cung linh từ bi kí*. ibid

statues in other temples and palaces. It is the most precious object of Nấp palace at present.

Besides Nấp palace there are two temples (one is in Đông hamlet, La Ngạn village and one is in Nhuế hamlet, Vĩ Nhuế village) and Kim Thoa pagoda in Đồi Trung village. Liễu Hạnh often visited this pagoda in her lifetime. At present the temple in La Ngạn is being repaired. Liễu Hạnh princess's parents are worshipped in this temple.

In the period of Trịnh- Lê, Quảng Cung palace (Nấp palace) received many congratulatory certifications. Among them there was the congratulatory certification of King Lê Kính Tông (1600-1619). When Vũ Huy Trác wrote *Quảng Cung linh từ phả kí*, this palace received 23 congratulatory certifications. Many congratulatory certifications were lost now we have only four congratulatory certifications.

Every year Liễu Hạnh Mother Goddess's death anniversary was hold on the 2nd of lunar third month in Quảng Cung. Liễu Hạnh Mother Goddess's death anniversary was held on the 3rd of lunar third month in Dầy palace. From 1740 the mandarin of Nghĩa Hưng district obeyed the decree of the Court to officiate Liễu Hạnh Mother Goddess's death anniversary. After sacrifice is festival. Liễu Hạnh Mother Goddess is pleased to the temple to ancestors of Phạm family (relatives on the father's side of Liễu Hạnh Mother Goddess) in La Ngạn, then she is pleased to Kim Thoa and Phúc Lâm pagodas, at last she is pleased to Quảng Cung palace. Next day Liễu Hạnh Mother Goddess is pleased to Vĩ Nhuế where worships the ancestors of Đoàn family (relatives on the mother's side of Liễu Hạnh Mother Goddess). In February, 2005 Quang Cung palace has been recognized as place of historical and cultural interest by State¹⁴.

3. We have few documents speaking of the temple in Tây Mỗ village, Nga Sơn district, Thanh Hóa where Liễu Hạnh Mother reincarnated third time. We have just visited this temple but we have not enough time to research deeply the origin of worship and building of this temple. This temple is small and spare. Native people and pilgrims often visit this temple.

According to Han-Nom documents, Nấp palace, Dầy palace and Nga Sơn related to each other more friendly in former centuries. People of these regions

¹⁴ Trịnh Quang Khanh. *Quảng Nạp place worships Mother Goddess Liễu Hạnh*

not only took part in their rites but also contributed their wealth to building palaces, for example, Nga Sơn contributed wealth and wood to repairing Nấp palace. But nowadays, this relation has been interrupted. Although Nấp palace and Dây palace are in the same province (two palaces are separated by 7 km), the relation of two palaces is not close. We are to blame for this problem.

IV Conclusion and discussion

1- New documents, specially Han- Nom documents are kept in Nam Định museum as *Quảng Cung bí kí*, *Quảng cung linh từ phả kí* and *Cát Thiên tam thế thực lục*... deal with the period of “three reincarnations and returns to Heaven’ of Liễu Hạnh Mother goddess much. Nấp palace was dealt with in books of predecessors but we do not understand why Nấp palace is considered newly as one of three places where Liễu Hạnh descended on earth. Is it true that it is an implication of Mother Goddess?

2- Three places as Nấp palace (*Quảng Cung linh từ*) in ý Yên; Dây palace (Vụ Bản) and Tây Mỗ (Nga Sơn, Thanh Hóa) (Liễu Hạnh Mother reincarnated and returned to Heaven three times in theses places) and Sòng temple, Phố Cát (Thanh Hóa) (Liễu Hạnh became a genie in these places) have created the “ Holy place”. It is the center of Mother Goddess cult.

3- New documents help us to know further Mother Goddess cult in general and Liễu Hạnh Mother Goddess in particular including two her stages.

The her first stage that is the period of three reincarnations and returns to Heave of Liễu Hạnh in Nấp palace, Vân Cát and Nga Sơn. In this period she was a beautiful and well behaved woman. She had four attributes of an ideal woman (industry, appearance, speech and behavior). Many legends told that she was a woman of merit. People were grateful to her for her helps. That is reason why she is worshipped in all parts of our country. This reason also rejects the view that people worship Liễu Hạnh Mother Goddess because they are afraid of her punishment.

-Halo of Liễu Hạnh princess in the period enlightened her second stage when she became a genie. In this stage she met many troubles, especially, Sòng Sơn great war. In this war, Liễu Hạnh princess had to struggle against *Nội đạo* and the Lê- Trịnh Court.

At that time Liễu Hạnh princess escaped from the life of normal woman to throw herself in violent struggle. This struggle fought against bad habits of

society. She argued with King Lê to defend her actions. In fact her struggle is the struggle of worship of Mother Goddess to resist religion which had magic elements. She opposed to Confucian thought and claimed human rights, especially the right of women who were oppressed and disregarded.

In this struggle there was victory, defeat and integration of Mother Goddesses cult and Buddhism.

Two stages of Liễu Hạnh Mother Goddess should be considered as two parts of a picture. The first part was painted by beautiful color. This part manifests her peace and romantic life. The second part is also fine but it manifests woeful and majestic epic. In Sông Sơn great war, Liễu Hạnh Mother Goddess scarred with wounds but she was seated in the highest position of temple. She has been the Chief Deity in the Mother Goddesses cult in Vietnam

Some people think that two her stages contradict each other. In fact two stages harmonize with each other in common aspect so Liễu Hạnh Mother Goddess is mysterious and attractive goddess. /.