

The Worship of a Hundred Deities and Purge of Spirits in Thiệu Trị Reign

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Abstract: Worship of deities is the popular belief of the Vietnamese people. The Vietnam feudal dynasties have policies towards religious beliefs in central and local. The Nguyễn dynasty is no exception. In this paper, first, the author presents an overview of the worship of deities of the first kings of the Nguyen dynasty as Gia Long, Minh Mạng, then set up the worship of gods, gods policies of the court and some cases of deities purged under King Thiệu Trị (the third king of the Nguyen Dynasty).

Some features on the worship of deities of the first kings of the Nguyễn dynasty

The Nguyễn dynasty was established after a long time our country had been divided and feudal groups warred against each other. Confucian ideology which had been prosperous in the Lê dynasty weakened. By Nguyễn dynasty chose Confucianism to be an orthodox ideology, Confucianism was revitalized with more severe aspects. Gia Long and Minh Mệnh kings thought highly of Confucian ideology and they built a concentrated government to control easily. Gia Long king built foundation of government then Minh Mệnh king perfected this government. The main lines of religious policy were took shape in this stage.

The monarchy pursued to Confucian model. On power, king was central figure; he had absolute power over all aspects. On spiritual power, Confucianism raised high theory 'Heaven's will': King is Heaven's son; he receives Heaven's order to rule people. The throne is appointed by Heaven, only king is allowed to offer sacrifices to Heaven.

Worship of deities has been popular belief of people. The spiritual world has reflected thought and dream of the masses. The world of spirits was placed under the control of the court that is king's power in the holy world was heightened. The management of a hundred deities was one of many important tasks of the court.

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Confucian theology considered king as Heaven's son. He had a right to master of a hundred deities in the world. This right was carried out throughout the Management of a hundred deities belonging to Ministry of Rites. Administratively, the system of worship of the court could be divided into two levels: central level and local level. Any deities who were written in the regulations of the court on worship were subsidized all aspects by the court: building, repairing, equipping worshipping objects, worshipping expenses and personnel who took the responsibility to worship, etc. If any deities of the masses (their names were not written down in the regulations of the court on rite) satisfied given standards, the court would apotheosize, confer titles on them and order people to worship them.

A hundred deities depending on the importance, merit and magic of deities were divided into three levels: Supreme deity, Middle deity, Inferior deity. In the Minh Mệnh dynasty, a hundred deities were divided into: genie, natural spirits, earth genie, sea god, mountain spirits and any one who became fairy. Deities were recognized by honors of the court. If any deities who proved sacredly on the occasion of national great jubilee or when king made royal progress or made offerings were dignified with new titles and their places of worship were upgraded.

Kings had the right to demote or purge spirits. Kings could lower spirits' hierarchy, expunge the names of spirits from the regulation of rite, expel spirits from their worshipping places or forbid people to worship spirits when they do not meet the standard, they were not magical or their actions harmed to power of royal dynasty. All these matter were discovered and submitted by Ministry of Rites, kings gave the final decision.

In fact, the management of a hundred deities was carried out intensely and achieved good results in Gia Long, Minh Mệnh periods. Some results as follows:

In 1806, King Gia Long ordered to build Nam Giao and Xã Tắc platforms in Huế capital. The system of Temples of deceased kings of Nguyễn family was established. The mountain spirits and the lords who had merit of looking after royal tombs were worshipped together in Nam Giao platform.

The essence of Nam Giao altar was the platform. Heaven and Earth were the masters of platform and seated in the round altar at the top of platform. The universal

genies: the Sun, the Moon, Stars and other gods were seated in square altar below. The ancestors of Nguyễn family were seated in the right and left of the God.

The Nguyễn dynasty chose Huế as Capital, and then Thăng Long became Bắc Thành (North Citadel). Thăng Long turned into local city so the system of genies in North fell into disgrace. Because of all authorities concentrated in Huế capital, the system of genies relating to Nguyễn family and the cause of expansion our territories towards South were heightened.

Thừa Thiên - Huế where the Nguyễn dynasty was established so the mountain god and river god in this place were ranked first in the famous mountain gods. In 1840 King Minh Mệnh approved of offering sacrifices to mountain gods in many regions.

The Nguyễn dynasty was much obliged to people for following Nguyễn lords in expanding territory. Thousands of meritorious officials were worshipped in temples which were built in Huế capital and in many regions. The primary meritorious officials were worshipped in the temple of deceased kings.

The former royal dynasties also were worshipped in Huế capital and in regions. The general rule of Confucian feudal state attached importance to ancestral worship, at the same time defined the orthodoxy of new royal dynasty as the continuing dynasty of nation. By heightening loyal consciousness, the Nguyễn dynasty did not sacrifice Hồ, Mạc, Trịnh, Tây Sơn dynasties because these dynasties were considered to usurp the throne.

Besides Vietnamese people many Chinese, Champa and Kampuchean people took part in expanding territory... The important kings and genies of these nations were written in the regulations on worship of the Nguyễn dynasty.

A hundred spirits were worshipped in Huế capital. In the regulations of worship there were full attendance of deities from the gods who protected agriculture, mountains, rivers and seaports to the gods who looked after woodwork, medicine and ammunition. In general, all deities in economic and military levels were inherited privileges of the court.

The management of deities of people was vital question. Local deities were worshipped in Miếu Hội Đồng (temple dedicated to all deities in region) and in temple of tutelary god. These temples were built early in Tây Sơn region and in North where was influenced by the Lê kings and the Trịnh lords. Miếu Hội Đồng in

Thừa Thiên region (where Nguyễn dynasty was established) and in Bình Định region (the village of Tây Sơn dynasty) were established immediately after Gia Long king took the throne (1802). Miếu Hội Đồng was established in Thăng Long, the old capital in 1803. Miếu Hội Đồng was established in Quảng Ngãi region in 1804, and then other regions were followed. So we can find that Gia Long king brought the deities of essential regions and the deities of regions where his old enemies had lived back to the court. Bình Định region had the first temple of tutelary god in 1802.

The essence of the apotheoses in people was the process of selection and management of deities according to orthodox standards of the court. The court allowed to worship deities meeting the spiritual need of people; this worship helped the court won the heart of people. But the apotheoses met many difficulties because popular beliefs were plentiful and developed excessively in trouble regions. In villages there were many deities, their titles were disorderly. People arbitrarily worshipped many deities who were conferred titles in former dynasties but their stories were not clear and their actions contrasted to orthodox mind, even some of them were evil spirits. When conferring titles on deities many mandarins took advantage of deceit for self interest ⁽¹⁾ so the process of conferring titles on deities were behindhand.

The Nguyễn dynasty promulgated royal written orders to correct the titles of deities, to forbid worship of statues of deities and to reject unnecessary formalities in worship.

In 23 continuous years from the 2nd of the Gia Long reign (1803) to the 7th year of the Minh Mệnh reign (1823) the process of conferring titles on deities had been fundamentally completed after the court had corrected, changed and rejected many titles of deities.

When Thiệu Trị came to the throne (1840) the system of temples and rites of worship of Confucian court ⁽²⁾ were full made in Huế capital and regions. Thiệu Trị ruled in 7 years, how did he carry out his religious task? What did he correct and supplement?

¹ In special the case of apotheosis which was punished by king Gia Long in 1881

² The system of a hundred deities of Confucian court: worship of Heaven and Earth, of a hundred deities, of ancestor and Confucian

The worship at national level was carried out in capital and regions under the Thiệu Trị dynasty

Every year king Thiệu Trị offered sacrifices to Heaven in Nam Giao platform. In the second year of throne he had to make a royal progress in North so he offered sacrifices to Heaven in Nam Giao platform in the first lunar month. Every year king Thiệu Trị worshipped in Xã Tắc platform, in the Temple of former kings, the temple of Confucius and he carried out Farm-work initiation ceremony. The rite of seeing four seasons was carried out in the Temple of the deceased kings. The other rites were carried out carefully as king Minh Mệnh did.

Following the examples of Chinese emperors, the Nguyễn dynasty invited his ancestors for worship with Heaven in Nam Giao platform. In 1807 after coming to the throne king Gia Long invited Nguyễn Hoàng for worship in Nam Giao platform. In 1822 king Minh Mệnh invited Gia Long for worship in Nam Giao platform. The temples of mountain gods who looked after king tombs were established in turn. These gods were conferred titles and invited for worship in the altar of mountain god in Nam Giao platform.

After king Minh Mệnh died, king Thiệu Trị built Minh Mệnh mausoleum in Hiếu Sơn Mountain. In the spring of the first year of the Thiệu Trị era (1841) king carried out his father's burial service. Before carrying out burial service king Thiệu Trị commanded to build a temple for worship of Hiếu Sơn mountain god, the title of this god was Chung anh Linh hựu Quảng vận Tôn thần. In the 3rd year of the Thiệu Trị era (1843) king invited Minh Mệnh for worship in Nam Giao platform. Hiếu Sơn mountain god was also worshipped in the altar of mountain gods in Nam Giao platform. In king Thiệu Trị period there were three ancestors of Nguyễn family were worshipped in the highest altar of Nam Giao platform and five mountain gods were worshipped in the altar of mountain gods in Nam Giao platform.

The system of a hundred deities of the court from centre to regions was nearly enough. The deities who were in the regulations of the court on rites had their own functions to support country and supervise their regions. Every year all deities were worshipped. On the occasion of the Great Jubilee of nation many deities were conferred titles. Especially, any deities showed scarcely in the praying to God for

rain ceremony, they would be conferred titles. Under the reign of Thiệu Trị mausoleums, temples were regularly repaired.

On the place of worship, there are some considerable constructions of worship as follows:

The first year in throne king Thiệu Trị ordered to build a small palace where kings were abstinent near Nam Giao platform.

King Thiệu Trị continued to build the temple for worship of king Chân Lạp⁽³⁾. The temple for worship of King Chân Lạp was built in Dương Xuân village. King Chân Lạp was offered sacrifices in the Spring and in the Autumn. Worshipping objects of this temple were similar to worshipping objects of king Champa's temple in the capital⁽⁴⁾.

In the 3rd year of the Thiệu Trị reign (1843) Temple of Literature was restored.

In the 5th year of the Thiệu Trị reign (1845) king ordered to change and rebuild two temples of Thiên Phi and Quan Công. These two deities were the primary deities of Chinese people. These two temples were formerly built in the left and in the right of Thiên Mụ pagoda in the period of Lords. In the 17th year of the Gia Long reign, these temples were repaired. In the Thiệu Trị reign, king found that these temples were small and badly damaged so he ordered Ministry of Public work to chose other place for building these two temples. Quan Công temple was built in Eastern gate of Huế capital. Thiên Phi temple was built in Sa Cương, Thuận An seaport. Although these two temples were rebuilt, they were far from the centre of capital.

Personnel and the temple had corrections:

Because people of villages in the North requested the keepers and cleaners of former kings' temples, in the 5th year of the regime (1845) king promulgated regulations on the keepers of former kings' temples. Ministry of Rites found that the distribution of temple- keepers was not equal; even some temples had not keepers. Ministry of Rites decided that every temple or every mausoleum was provided 20 temple keepers. The provisions are as follows:

³ In the 21st year of the Minh Mệnh era, Ministry of Rites intended to build the temple of Chân Lạp in the capital but this plane was not carried out because Minh Mệnh died

⁴ In the 7th year of the Thiệu Trị era (1847) king withdrew troops from Kampuchea, in the 10th year of the Tự Đức era (1875) king abolished to worship in temple of kampuchean king

The mausoleum of Kinh Dương Vương (in Á Lữ village, Siêu Loại district, Bắc Ninh province);

The temple of Hùng Vương (in Nghĩa Cương village, Sơn Vi district, Sơn Tây province);

The temple of Thục An Dương Vương (one temple in Cổ Loa district, Bắc Ninh province; one temple in Đông Thành district, Nghệ An province);

The mausoleum of Đinh Tiên Hoàng (Xã Trường An Thượng village, Gia Viễn district, Ninh Bình province);

The temple of 8 kings of the Lý dynasty (Đình Bảng village, Đông Ngàn district, Bắc Ninh province);

The temple of 12 kings of the Trần dynasty (Tức Mặc village, Mỹ Lộc district, Nam Định province);

The temple of Lê kings (in Bồ Vệ village, Đông Sơn district, Thanh Hóa province)

The temple of Mai Hắc Đế (in Hương Lãm village, Nan Đường district, Nghệ An province);

The temple of Ngô Vương Quyền (in Cam Lâm village, Phúc Thọ district, Sơn Tây province);

The temple of Sĩ Nhiếp, Chinese Governor in Châu Giao was also provided keeper;

The temple of Hùng Vương was in mountain top so it was provided 50 keepers;

The temples where worshipped other kings of other dynasties were not provided keepers⁽⁵⁾.

So the number of the temple of former kings was reduced in the regulations of Rites. These temples were not subsidized by the court. Comparing to Minh Mệnh reign the number of temple keepers in Thiệu Trị reign was reduced. The list of temples of court was added the temple of Sĩ Vương. In this list the temple of Lê Thái Tổ in Nam Lữ, Cao Bằng province was replaced by the temple of kings of the Lê dynasty in Thanh Hóa province. In general every dynasty had only temple to be worshipped by the Nguyễn dynasty.

⁵ The temples were not recognized by the court as: temple of Hùng Vương in Vi Cương village, Sơn Tây district; the temple of Triệu Vũ in Xuân Quang village, Bắc Ninh province; the temple of the founder of the Lê dynasty in Nature Lữ village, Cao Bằng province....

In the 6th year of the Thiệu Trị era (1846) king promulgated regulations on building Miếu Hội đồng in regions. The first year of the Gia Long era all regions had Miếu Hội đồng but they were built not according to standard. Some temples were wide, some temples were narrow. The worshipping objects and practices of these temples were different. King Thiệu Trị defined that temple had three rooms and two wings. In the middle room there was a tablet (the names of Yang deities ⁽⁶⁾ - super deity were written on it). The room on the left had two tablets (one table had the names of Yang deities – Middle deity and one tablet had the names of Yang deities – inferior deity). The room on the right had three tablets (one tablet had the names of Ying deities – super deity; one tablet had the names of Ying deities middle deity; one tablet had the names of Ying deities inferior deity). The east wing had one tablet (the names of God of the soil, sea god, sea monster, river god... were written on it). The west wing had one tablet (it had the names of ancestors, kitchen God...). Bronze and earth statues were buried in clean land. The worshipping objects were arranged in accordance with regulation. Every year people carried out two sacrifices in Miếu Hội đồng. Offerings were one buffalo, one horse and one goat ⁽⁷⁾.

The promulgation of new regulations on Miếu Hội đồng showed that king Thiệu Trị maintained united ideology in the local system of worship and heightened Confucian hierarchy and rites. The size of temples had to obey the united regulation. Deities were arranged in accordance with order and function; Goddesses were worshipped in other altar. King prohibited to worship statues of deities, tablets took place of statues of deities. These works were did by king Gia Long and Minh Mệnh

In the 6th year of the Thiệu Trị era (1846), king ordered to worship meritorious officials in three temples: Trung Hưng, Trung Tiết and Hiền Trung.

Hiền Trung temple was established in Gia Long dynasty in Gia Định province. All those who had done great services to Nguyễn dynasty (in 1774-1789) were worshipped in this temple. In the Minh Mệnh reign, there were 1015 men to be worshipped in Hiền Trung temple. Trung Hưng and Trung Tiết temples were built in Huế capital. Trung Hưng temple was established in the Gia Long reign, this temple dedicated to meritorious officials in the stage of rehabilitation. 227 men were worshipped in this temple. Trung Tiết temple was established in the Minh Mệnh

⁶ Yang deities were masculine deities; Ying deities were feminine deities

⁷ The main record of Great Vietnam, volume XXVI, p.81

reign. This temple dedicated to loyal and this temple had 114 men. The men who were worshipped in these temples were chosen from the subjects to be worshipped in Hiễn Trung temple (in Gia Định province), in Hà Ra Sơn (in Diên Khánh) in Bát Giác Đường temple, in Thi Nại temple (in Bình Định province), in Cù Mông temple (in Phú Yên province).

The number of subjects who were worshipped in Trung Hưng and Trung Tiết temples was not many and they had clear merits though family names of some subjects were not clear they had titles so the court could rearrange tablets of subjects. But the number of men who were worshipped in Hiễn Trung temple was so many. Some of them had low functions; some of them had unclear family name. Their tablets were heaped up together so mandarins suggested to reject tablets, names of them were written in paper, burned after offering sacrifices. Finally king Thiệu Trị decided:

“There are not changes in worship in Trung Hưng temple. In Trung Tiết temple, the name of all those who were worshipped were written on stone tablet. The subjects who were worshipped in Hiễn Trung temple were over one thousand; their tablets were heaped up together and disordered. But Gia Định region where king came to the throne, he ordered to build a temple that dedicated to all those who had done great services to our country. This temple was built many years ago, the soul of many loyals took shelter in this temple and our people had tradition to worship them. In the old times we had a sentence “what we did we never destroy”, we ourselves are at fault if we reject their tablets because their tablets are so many and disorderly. We need to have regulations in accordance with the soul of the dead. According to me the names and the titles of men who were worshipped in this temple are engraved on good wood or granite for worship”⁽⁸⁾.

King Thiệu Trị requested to seek men who were left out in order to take into the worshipping list of the court. In the past kings Gia Long Minh Mệnh ordered local mandarins to seek any one who had done great services to the court in order to fill in the worshipping list.

In the Nguyễn dynasty there were three kings, they had led our people to repress many rebellions. In the 6th year of the Thiệu Trị era (1846) king ordered Ministry of Rites to build Hiễn Lương temple and Trung Nghĩa temple for worship of all those

⁸ The main record of Great Vietnam, volume XXVI, p. 96-103

who devoted their lives to our country. But king's order was not carried out yet because he died in 1847.

The policy towards a hundred deities in people and purge of spirits under the reign of Thiệu Trị

The essence of apotheosizing and conferring titles on a hundred deities in people was the process of statistics, selection, division and management of deities according to Confucian mind. This was constant work of the court. When doing this work king Thiệu Trị following the mind of kings Gia Long and Minh Mệnh in the past.

In the first year of the Thiệu Trị era (1841) king issued edict with 12 favorable points, the 6th point was that any just deities who were not conferred titles would be listed and reported to Ministry of Rites by local mandarins. Ministry of Rites examined report then conferred titles these deities ⁽⁹⁾.

At the end of this year, king accepted titles of deities in regions. The old titles as: *đại vương, công chúa, công hầu thánh phi, quý phủ...* were replaced by *tôn thần, chi thần, phủ quân, phu nhân...* But princess Liễu Hạnh and the titles of former kings, the founders of former dynasties were not changed ⁽¹⁰⁾.

On the titles of deities, all deities who had former titles were arranged into Super deity, Middle deity and Inferior deity. All deities who had not former titles were conferred titles according to regulation of the Minh Mệnh dynasty and arranged into three levels Super deity, Middle deity and Inferior deity ⁽¹¹⁾.

In the 3rd year of Thiệu Trị era (1843), Ministry of Rites reported: the former titles as *quân, công, hầu, bá* were replaced and *tả thánh* or *á vương* were rejected". King accepted report ⁽¹²⁾.

On the system of worship for former kings of the court in central and local levels, the Nguyễn dynasty definitively abolished the courts were considered as usurpers. Kings and famous men of the Hồ, Mạc, Trịnh, and Tây Sơn reigns were not present in regulations of worship of the Nguyễn dynasty. The worship of a hundred deities in people had to follow this way. In the 10th year of the Gia Long era (1811) Đặng Trần Thường and Nguyễn Gia Cát deceived in apotheosizing Trịnh - Hoàng Ngũ Phúc so

⁹ The main record of Great Vietnam, volume XXIII, p. 174

¹⁰ The main record of Great Vietnam, volume XXIII, p. 363

¹¹ The main record of Great Vietnam, volume XXIII, p. 440,441

¹² The main record of Great Vietnam, volume XXIV, p. 331

they were punished. King Gia Long ordered to take back all honors and Ministry of Rise was compelled to discuss on apotheosis again.

In Thiệu Trị reign there were many purges of spirits.

First, it must speak of worshipping to have a concern with the Tây Sơn dynasty who was considered sworn enemy of Nguyễn family was worshipped not only in people but also in the rank of mandarins.

In the second year of the Thiệu Trị reign (1842), in Bắc Ninh province, there was a Phù Ninh villager worshipping Nguyễn Huệ's relations in secrecy. The villager was Nguyễn Thị Huyền, a wife of king Lê Hiến Tông and mother of Ngọc Hân princess. Ngọc Hân was wife of Nguyễn Huệ. Ngọc Hân had two children, one boy and one girl, and all of them died. About the first year of the Gia Long reign, bones of Ngọc Hân and her children were buried secretly in Phù Ninh village by a Nguyễn Huệ's Admiral named Hải; Madam Nguyễn Thị Huyền built their graves and temple for worship of them under the false name. When the fact was discovered, the king ordered to destroy temple and excavated their bones ⁽¹³⁾.

In the 4th year of the Thiệu Trị era (1844) in the prison in Thừa Thiên prefecture, jailer Lê Trường Lộc worshipped secretly soul of enemy. When this worship was discovered, he was lost his position. The king said to Ministry of Justice that "Tây Sơn enemy had many crimes. Our ancestor retook citadel, our country is unity. The descendants of Nguyễn Nhạc, Nguyễn Huệ were killed in turn. The bones of Nguyễn Nhạc and Nguyễn Huệ were excavated. The servants of Nguyễn Nhạc and Nguyễn Huệ were kept in Vũ Khố prison. In the 2nd year of the Minh Mệnh reign, the bones of Nguyễn Nhạc, Nguyễn Huệ and Quang Toàn were put in wood truck to keep in Thừa Thiên prison. I order jailers to watch servants of Nguyễn Nhạc and Nguyễn Huệ as well as their bones carefully. Any jailers who do not carry out this order will be punished" ⁽¹⁴⁾.

The case had a connection with Trịnh family in the 4th year of Thiệu Trị reign (1844).

King ordered to destroy Nguyễn Sĩ Cố and Phạm Đức Cồn temples because when living Nguyễn Sĩ Cố and Phạm Đức Cồn leaned on Lord Trịnh's help to struggle against court. When they died, Lord Trịnh appointed them to be god genius. Hà Tĩnh

¹³ The main record of Great Vietnam, volume XXIV, p. 183-184

¹⁴ The main record of Great Vietnam, volume XXV p. 168, 169

and Quảng Bình provinces gave their names in the list of a hundred deities, Ministry of Rites reported this matter to king. King scolded that “Nguyễn Sĩ Cốc and Phạm Đức Cồn were evil spirits, people made mistake in worshipping them (The temple of Nguyễn Sĩ Cốc was in Phù Việt village, Thạch Hà district and the temple of Phạm Đức Cồn was in Phù Lưu village Bình Chính district), provincial mandarins do not know this matter and give their names in the list of a hundred deities...”. King ordered to destroy these temples; some of contemporary mandarins were punished⁽¹⁵⁾.

Because of these cases, king checked the deities’ titles in regions and rejected all men who followed Trịnh, Mạc and Tây Sơn reigns from the list of a hundred deities.

In the 5th year of the Thiệu Trị reign (1845) king ordered mandarins to check deities who were worshipped formerly in their regions. In the past, Hà Tĩnh, Quảng Bình people had worshipped Nguyễn Sĩ Cốc and Phạm Đức Cồn, this worship was banned. King thought that the titles which were conferred on deities in Mạc and Tây Sơn reigns were not long valid then king rejected 300 titles.

This policy was continuously carried out, it related to the spirits of Lý and Trần dynasties. In the 6th year of the Thiệu Trị reign king destroyed Trần Thủ Độ and Đỗ Anh Vũ temples⁽¹⁶⁾.

The policy of the Nguyễn dynasty on religion, belief and worship was tolerant. It did not damage the power of dynasty, Confucian ideology and social morals. The Nguyễn dynasty firmly rejected superstitious manifestation.

In 1841, Trấn Tây citadel had a revolt, Ba Xuyên region had chaos, Lâm Sâm was original mandarin of Kampuchea, and he used magic to charm people. Many people followed him to demolish citadel. King had Nguyễn Lương Nhân quelled a revolt. By the end 1841 a revolt was suppressed⁽¹⁷⁾.

In the 6th year of the Thiệu Trị reign (1846) king ordered to destroy a stone stele dedicated to Buddhist monk (in Văn Thai village, Cẩm Giàng district, Hải Dương province). According to legend this Buddhist monk was embodied by Huệ Tĩnh so he treated very well. Every day thousands of people made offerings to him, provincial mandarins could not ban people so they had to report the fact to king. King said that

¹⁵ The main record of Great Vietnam, volume XXV, p. 173-174

¹⁶ The main record of Great Vietnam, volume XXII, p.188

¹⁷ The main record of Great Vietnam, volume XXII p. 188

“This matter is fabulous, we should destroy stele immediately” and the stele was shattered. When judge Nguyễn Khắc Trạch reported that “Your Majesty’s humble subject carried out king order to destroy the stele so people did not make offerings to stele. King said “people know little so they were cheated by lie, leaders need to advise them.”⁽¹⁸⁾

The Thiệu Trị reign lasted 7 years. Kings Gia Long and Minh Mệnh pointed out the policy on religious beliefs. King Thiệu Trị carried out definite policies and rites. For the world of a hundred deities, king corrected unperfected problems of worship system and thought highly Confucian ideology at the same time king rejected all matters which caused damage to power of dynasty and political ideology. In general, Thiệu Trị’s behavior towards a hundred deities showed that all his actions served the Nguyễn dynasty; though his reign was short he has left deep impressions on people./.

¹⁸ The main record of Great Vietnam, volume XXVI, p. 171-172