

Dai Viet Diplomatic Relations with Neighbouring Countries under Ly Dynasty

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Abstract: Vietnam, or Dai Viet (Great Viet) as named under Ly dynasty, had diplomatic relations with its neighbours, including China, Champa and Chenla. It pursued a peace-loving foreign policy, while resolutely resisting foreign aggression. The foreign policy was aimed at building and upholding friendship among neighbouring countries for the purpose of creating and maintaining a peaceful environment for national construction and defence.

Keywords: Diplomatic relations, Ly dynasty, Song dynasty, Champa, Chenla, Laos.

1. Introduction

In the political life under the Ly dynasty (1009-1225), an extremely important aspect was the diplomatic relations between Dai Viet and its neighbouring countries, including China, Champa (also known as Chiem Thanh), Chenla (or Chan Lap), Siam (now Thailand), Ai Lao (now Laos), etc. The recognition by the feudal state in Vietnam under the Ly dynasty (and, subsequently, the Tran dynasty) of the importance of the relations, and their handling were viewed as tasks of government, which would exert decisively significant impacts on the success or failure of the national construction and development as well as the safeguarding of national independence. Regarding this aspect, in the section titled “*Bang giao chí*” (“Foreign Relations Records”) in *Lịch triều hiến chương*

loại chí (Regulations of Successive Dynasties by Subject-Matter), Phan Huy Chu remarked emphatically: “In government, a major task is to have friendly relations (lit. relations of harmony/concord) with neighbouring countries; the way we treat and behave towards them is very important, which cannot be disregarded; thus, the ties of peace mentioned in *Chunjiu* (Spring and Autumn Annals - 春秋) and the way of having relationships with neighbours recorded in the Works of Mencius² imply the trust-based relationship, of which those who rule over a nation must take care” [3, p.533]; and, “diplomatic relations are always considered important by all dynasties” [3, p.533].

Overall speaking, Dai Viet’s diplomatic relations with its neighbouring countries were extremely noteworthy and complicated. It was, therefore, significant for the Dai Viet

feudal state to realise and deal with those relations in a proactive, flexible, clever, but resolute, manner, which not only made decisive contributions towards the national building and development during the period, but also created new “advantage” and “impetus” for the national development afterwards. This paper analyses the relation between Dai Viet and China as well as those between Dai Viet and Champa, Chenla and Laos. Based on the analysis, some lessons are drawn to be applied to the development of the relations of sustainability and friendship between Vietnam and other countries in the region and the world in the current international context.

2. The relation between Dai Viet and China

The relation between Dai Viet and the Song, which is the name of China when the Ly dynasty was ruling Vietnam, was particularly important to the former. China was a vast country with a large population and a much more powerful economy as well as much more prominent military capacities than Dai Viet's; the Chinese culture had taken its roots in the contemporary Vietnamese culture, and the two nations were neighbours that “share the mountains and the rivers”. After the period of the Chinese domination, noticeably, Chinese feudal states never gave up the intention of occupying Dai Viet to turn the latter into “a dependent district” or “a vassal” of China and step by step eliminating completely the Vietnamese culture and turning it into part of the Chinese culture.

Well aware of that, Vietnam's feudal state under the Ly dynasty (and the Tran dynasty later) implemented a consistent and

long-term policy on keeping a friendly and peaceful relation with China, based on the tradition of humanity and peace-loving, especially for the purpose of creating and maintaining a stable and peaceful environment for national construction and development in all aspects and ensuring resolutely the national sovereignty and independence. As written clearly by Phan Huy Chu in *Lịch triều hiến chương loại chí*: “Our Viet country is located in the south, so we maintain a relation of friendship with China. Although [the monarchs of] our country breed[s] the people and develop[s] the state in a separate territory, where the rulers proclaimed themselves “*đế*” (“emperors” -帝) within the country, they just proclaimed themselves “*vuong*” (-王, the word which can also be translated as “king”, but a *vuong* is usually under an emperor – editor's note) towards the [Chinese] neighbours; and accepted the title bestowed upon him by the Chinese emperors. Considering the context and situation, it should be that way, really” [3, p.533]. The policy can be described specifically as below:

Firstly, the tribute-paying, title-bestowing and reception protocols basically reflect the diplomacy of closeness (intimacy) and friendship between Dai Viet and China. They show most obviously the “normal” diplomatic relation between two neighbouring countries.

As mentioned above, after the period of the Chinese domination, Vietnam gained independence, but in “the eye” of the Chinese feudal dynasties, Dai Viet was just a “dependent district” or “a vassal” belonging to Peking; and, in the practice of diplomatic relations, consequently, they treated Dai Viet as if it were a subordinate administrative unit

of China. As recorded in *Đại Việt sử ký toàn thư* (*Complete Annals of Dai Viet*), the Song dynasty requested Dai Viet to pay tributes, including precious things such as gold, silver, treasures, elephants and horses etc. annually as well as on the occasions of enthronement of Vietnamese kings. Whenever a Dai Viet monarch ascended onto the throne, the Song dynasty always sent high-ranking envoys, usually Ministers of Rites, to Dai Viet to confer the titles of “*Giao Chỉ quận vương*” (King of Giao Chi District) and “*Nam Bình Vương*” (“Nam” means “South”, “Bình” means “to pacify”, “pacified”) on the monarch. It was not until the 7th lunar month of 1164, during the reign of King Ly Anh Tong (1138-1175) that the Song dynasty changed “Giao Chi District” into “An Nam country”, sending the envoy to Dai Viet to confer the title of “*An Nam quốc vương*” (King of An Nam country/Kingdom) on King Ly Anh Tong [4, pp.244-245]³.

So as to cope effectively with the “big country diplomacy” of the Song dynasty, minimising all the pretexts that the enemy could use to invade Dai Viet, and to maintain an environment of stability, peace and friendship, all Ly kings took initiative in sending envoys, who were often high-ranking erudite mandarins, to the Song court to pay regular tributes; and, additionally, they sent people to the Chinese court on many other occasions to pay tributes for the purpose of establishing “a good linkage” (for example, in the 2nd lunar month of 1010, the 3rd lunar month of 1013 and the 8th lunar month of 1026) or “continuing the previously-established peace” (in the 8th lunar month of 1039 and the 9th lunar month of 1043) or “returning the favour” after the Song dynasty conferred the above-mentioned titles. During many of such trips, the envoys of Dai Viet

were also assigned the tasks to learn about the situation of the Song dynasty and observe discreetly the Song’s intention of invading Dai Viet. Remarkably, in 1081, to maintain the relation of peace and friendship between the two countries, the King of the Ly dynasty promulgated an edict releasing Song people arrested after Dai Viet troops attacked 3 *châu* of the Song (zhou 州 - a feudal administrative division which is similar to a county), including Yongzhou (Vietnamese: *Ung Châu*), Lianzhou (*Liêm Châu*) and Qinzhou (*Khâm Châu*), for the purpose of destroying the facilities that the Song used to prepare for an invasion of Dai Viet [4, p.203]. In the 12th lunar month of 1044, King Ly Thanh Tong gave the order to “set up Hoai Vien station by the river in Gia Lam, where foreigners who came for the audience with the king could rest” [4, p.190]. In addition, those who were sent by the Song emperor as envoys to Dai Viet were ceremonially met and treated by the king of Dai Viet personally or those assigned to do it on behalf of the monarch.

From the side of the Song, apart from the demands such as those for tributes to be paid, they did on occasions have activities to reciprocate the friendliness from Dai Viet. In response to the fact that Dai Viet kings sent envoys to China to pay tribute, the Song emperors personally many times met or assigned high-ranking mandarins to see and entertain the envoys. The emperors also sometimes granted ceremonial turbans, belts, silk... to the envoys [4, p.164]. The Song emperor in 1034 dispatched envoys to Dai Viet to take part in the obsequies, when the king of Dai Viet passed away. Imperial envoys from China were also present when the Tripitaka was delivered as a gift to Dai Viet [4, p.178]. Especially, in 1079, the Song dynasty returned the land of Quang Nguyen

county to Dai Viet; and, in the 6th lunar month of 1084, it returned the land of six districts and three communes and the local residents to the southern neighbour [4, p.203]. The Song dynasty also, on many occasions, arrested Vietnamese rebels who escaped to China and sent them back to Dai Viet. Examples included Mac Hien, the chief of Quang Nguyen county, and his underlings, who escaped to Yongzhou, and were returned in the 1st lunar month of 1125 [4, p.215]. The Song forces arrested and delivered another rebel of Quang Nguyen county, Mac That Nhan, over to Dai Viet in the 11th lunar month of 1127 [4, p.217]. The Song dynasty also asked Dai Viet to arrest those rebelling against it, as recorded in *Đại Việt sử ký toàn thư*. During the reign of King Ly Anh Tong, for example, upon the request by the Song dynasty, the king of Dai Viet gave the order to arrest the accomplices of Tan Youliang (譚友諒), who, said to be good at sorcery, escaped with his underlings to Quang Nguyen. They were delivered to the Song dynasty in the 8th lunar month of 1145 [4, pp.236-237].

Secondly, regarding the issues of the border, invasion and anti-invasion, under the Ly dynasty, there were various extremely complicated issues related to the border between the two countries.

As shown in *Đại Việt sử ký toàn thư*, besides the fairly friendly relations described above, the situation of the border between the two countries became increasingly strained and thorny. It can be generally divided into two groups of events/issues as below:

One, the land and territorial occupation carried out by the rebels in the border areas of the two countries. Such incidents took place many times beyond the control of both sides.

Most typically, in the 8th lunar month of 1145, Tan Youliang, a citizen of the Song, who “claimed himself Excellency Zhao (趙先生), and, dishonestly, the one “appointed by the Song emperor” to be an envoy to An Nam” [4, p.236], took his accomplices to Quang Nguyen of Dai Viet for looting and pillaging. For their part, many Vietnamese chieftains induced local people in the border area of Dai Viet to join their revolts, crossing the border to occupy land and go on the rampage in the border area that belonged to China. In the 10th lunar month of 1036, for example, “the areas of Lam Tay and the counties of Do Kim, Thuong Tan and Binh Nguyen rebelled, rampaging the county of Si Ling (思陵, which is located in the current Guangxi province). They pillaged buffaloes, horses and set fire on houses before leaving” [4, p.180]. Nung Tri Cao, a citizen of Dai Viet, many times took his accomplices to the Song territory for plundering. In the 4th lunar month of 1052, he “turned traitor, proclaiming himself as Emperor Nhan Hue and naming his kingdom Dai Nam (Vietnamese: *Đại Nam*, or the Great South). Cao then conducted rampages and robberies in many areas under the rule of the Song dynasty” near the border with Dai Viet. He also invaded many counties (*châu* or *zhou*) of the Song such as *Ung* (Yong 雍), *Hoành* (Hong 宏), *Quý* (Gui 貴), *Đằng* (Teng 滕), *Ngô* (Wu 梧), *Khang* (Kang 康), *Đoan* (Duan 端), *Củng* (Gong 鞏) and *Tầm* (Xun 浚) (now parts of Guangxi and Guangdong provinces), killing more than 3,000 army officers and troops of the Song dynasty and arresting thousands of people in Yongzhou. It was not before the 10th lunar month of 1053 that the dynasty successfully defeated Nung Tri Cao and his army [4, p.192]. To sustain the security and safety for the local people in

the border areas and ensure a peaceful and friendly relation between the two countries against the acts of rampaging and pillaging, Ly kings either personally carried out suppressions of the revolts in Dai Viet, or, upon the request made by the Song emperor, helped the Song troops in suppressing the revolts, as in the case of Nung Tri Cao.

Two, the Song invasion and Vietnam's resistance against the invasion, which included the most remarkable events reflecting the complexity in the diplomatic relation between Dai Viet and the Song dynasty.

During the period of the Ly dynasty, despite the above-described friendly relation, which was called that of harmony/concord, between the two countries, the Song dynasty did carry out many invasions/infringements of Dai Viet land, as recorded in *Đại Việt sử ký toàn thư*. In the 7th lunar month of 1060, "the Song army carried out failed attempts of infringing our land" [4, p.195]. Allied with Champa and Chenla, the Song dynasty appointed Guo Kui (郭逵), the ruling mandarin (宣撫使) of Guangnan (廣南) to be the Zhao-tao-shi (招討使 – Commander of Pacifying and Suppressing [Revolts]) accompanied by Zhao Xie (趙禕) as Vice Commander, "leading the troops under nine generals to invade Dai Viet in the 3rd lunar month of 1076" [4, p.201]. In the 3rd lunar month of 1089, "the Song troops occupied Thach Te (Cao Bang province) [4, p.205], and then, in the 3rd lunar month of 1205, they "went pillaging the border area" of Vietnam [4, p.254]. To achieve the objective of annexing Dai Viet, the Song dynasty pleaded many causes for its invasion. In the 2nd lunar month of 1075, for example, under the reign of Dai Viet's King Ly Nhan Tong, Wang Anshi (王安石), a chancellor of the Song

dynasty, was thirsty for achieving feats in the frontier. Knowing his wish, Xiao Zhu (蕭注), the county chief of Yongzhou, submitted a petition to the Song emperor that read: "Although Giao Chi has been paying tribute, indeed it is double-faced in behaviour. If we do not attack it now, it will cause worries to us in the future" [3, p.643]. The county chief then personally told the Song emperor: "Dai Viet was just raided by the Champa forces, so it has now fewer than fifteen thousand troops left; thus, it is possible to use tricks to annex" [4, p.200]. Making preparations for the invasion of Dai Viet, consequently, the Song emperor assigned mandarins to recruit secretly troops among ethnic groups, building warships and boats and conducting naval drills. And, Chinese people in the border areas were banned from doing business with Dai Viet.

So as to safeguard the territorial integrity, national sovereignty and maintaining a peaceful and friendly environment between the two countries, the feudal state of Dai Viet under the Ly dynasty made every effort to prevent the Song dynasty's invasion, such as paying tribute and suppressing revolts in the border areas...

Besides assigning envoys to study the situation in China and the Song dynasty's schemes, the Ly dynasty took the initiative in discussing the border issues with the Song dynasty, whenever a dispute or infringement occurred. In the 7th lunar month of 1060, King Ly Thanh Tong dispatched Phi Gia Hau to Yongzhou to attend a meeting with Yu Jing (余靖), Vice Minister of Interior of the Song; and, in the 6th lunar month of 1084, the Ly king sent Le Van Thinh, Vice Minister of War, to the Yongping camp in China to negotiate border and territorial issues.

In order to get prepared and cope effectively with the Song dynasty's intention of invading Vietnam, the Ly kings personally investigated and assigned his people to study the situation in the border and coastal areas. They encouraged all the people and the army to temper the militant spirit, while preparing weapons, horses and food and building battleships and boats. As revealed in *Đại Việt sử ký toàn thư*, in the 11th lunar month of 1161, King Ly Anh Tong requested To Hien Thanh and Do An "to take twenty thousand troops to patrol the southwestern coast for the safeguarding of the faraway frontiers" [4, p.244]. Meanwhile, the king himself sailed to Than Dau sea gate in Dai An district. In the 2nd lunar month of 1171, he personally "patrolled the isles and investigated the country's situation, studying the border topography and the transport systems and the local people's living conditions" [4, p.246]. One year later, in the 2nd lunar month of 1172, "the king again patrolled the isles near the north and south borders, drawing a map with notes on the local conditions, characteristics and products" [4, p.246].

3. Dai Viet's relations with Champa, Chenla and Ai Lao

Firstly, Dai Viet aimed at the maintenance of the relations of friendship and a peaceful environment.

Let us draw a comparison: in the diplomatic ties between Dai Viet and China, the Song dynasty always "treated" the former as a "small country"; whereas in the diplomatic relations of Dai Viet with Champa, Chenla and Ai Lao, the Ly dynasty (and, later on, the Tran dynasty as well) viewed those countries the same way, and

regarded their kings as "vassals". For their parts, the countries did regard Dai Viet as a "big country", although they did not always behave towards Dai Viet like the way a "small country" does towards a bigger one.

It is recorded clearly in *Đại Việt sử ký toàn thư* that the countries paid tribute to Dai Viet quite periodically as from 1011. In addition to precious and rare things which are similar to what Dai Viet gave to the Song dynasty, they also brought lions, crocodiles, white elephants, coins, gold, silver, buffaloes, horses and other local produce to the Ly dynasty. Especially, the countries sometimes offered land and local people as a tribute to Dai Viet. For example, after being defeated and arrested by King Ly Thanh Tong, Champa King Rudravarman III (Vietnamese: *Chế Củ*) offered 3 counties (*châu*), including Dia Ly, which is now at the central and southern parts of Quang Binh province, Ma Linh – now at the northern part of Quang Tri province, and Bo Chinh – now the land in the south and north of Gianh river, to the Ly dynasty in exchange for his release [4, p.197]. Later on, Champa King Jaya Indravarman II (Vietnamese: *Chế Ma Na*) launched attacks and took control over the three counties. Only after Ly Thuong Kiet commanded the army to attack Champa in the 2nd lunar month of 1104 did he give the three counties to the Ly dynasty. The "tribute" offered could even be a princess - in the 10th lunar month of 1154, "Champa King Jaya Harivarman I (Vietnamese: *Chế Bì La Bút*) offered his daughter and the [Ly] king accepted" [4, p.242].

In general, the countries paid tribute to Dai Viet the way a small country aimed to sustain the good relation with a bigger one for the purpose of maintaining the territory or proposing for a ceasefire after being attacked

by Dai Viet troops. However, the tribute payment was also made by other ways and due to other reasons. For example, in the 4th lunar month of 1039, a Champa prince, whose name was “*Địa Bà Lạt*” in Vietnamese, and five other people came to Dai Viet, submitting themselves to the Ly dynasty; in the 8th lunar month of 1040, the head of Bo Chinh camp (Kingdom of Champa) accompanied by more than 100 people submitted themselves to Dai Viet; and then, in the 5th lunar month of 1124, over 30 people came from Champa to Dai Viet for submission. When foreigners, most of whom were from Champa and Chenla, arrived in Dai Viet for submission, they always offered precious things and local produce as tributes [4, pp.182, 183 and 214]. Or, so as to be allowed to come to Dai Viet to do business, merchants and people from other countries such as *Trào Oa* (Java), *Ngưu Hống* (northwest of Da River), Laos and Thailand etc. offered a lot of gold, silver, rhino’s horns, elephant’s tusks and other types of their local produce.

For the sake of friendship, the kings, mandarins and people of Dai Viet always showed humanity in behaviours and activities towards the kings, mandarins and people from those countries. Thus, both the people who came to Dai Viet for submission, seeking asylum, scared of being revenged if they stayed in their native countries, and those arrested by Dai Viet troops after battles, who included kings, mandarins and commoners, were all absolved and released. They could then come back to their native countries or choose to stay in Dai Viet, where they would be provided with accommodation and jobs to earn a living in the new homeland. They were also allowed to keep their original customs and lifestyles if settling down in Dai

Viet. According to *Đại Việt sử ký toàn thư*, in the 9th lunar month of 1044, King Ly Thai Tong promulgated a royal edict releasing 5,000 Champa prisoners of war, who were all allowed to live within an area from Vinh Khang (Tuong Duong district, Nghe An province) to Chau Dang (Quy Hoa, Quang Binh province) and set up villages named after the native land in Champa [4, p.190]. Merchants and people who came from those countries to Dai Viet to do business were all facilitated with favourable conditions. In addition to the Hoai Vien station built so that foreigners who came for the audience with the king could have a place to rest, Dai Viet kings on many occasions invited envoys and people from the Kingdom of Champa to the royal ceremonies. In the 1st lunar month of 1124, which was an intercalary month, when King Ly Anh Tong stayed in Ung Phong royal-step-over place to watch people ploughing, he allowed “an old man named *Cự Ông* and three of his cousins, all from Champa, to attend the king’s audience” [4, p.214]. On the occasion of Quang Chieu ceremony of decorative lanterns held in *Long Trì* (Dragon Yard) in the 9th lunar month of 1126, King Ly Anh Tong promulgated an edict inviting the Champa envoy to come for enjoyment” [3, p.216]. In the 12th lunar month of 1130, when the king was playing shuttle cocks in *Long Trì*, he also invited the Champa envoy to come and watch [4, p.225]. Earlier, in 1046, King Ly Thanh Tong built a palace dedicated to Champa women.

Secondly, the relations also included acts of invasions and rampages against Dai Viet.

Under the Ly dynasty (and later on, the Tran dynasty), Dai Viet incessantly had to cope with acts of infringements and invasion of the Song dynasty in the North, and the

Kingdom of Champa as well as the Kingdom of Chenla in the South and Southwest.

As recorded in *Đại Việt sử ký toàn thư*, although the Kingdoms of Champa and Chenla periodically paid tribute to the Ly dynasty so as to maintain friendship and propose for peace, they many times sent troops and border people to Dai Viet for land occupation and pillage. They even on occasions entered into alliances with the Song to attack Dai Viet (in the 3rd lunar month of 1076, for example), causing severe damage to Dai Viet people, especially those who lived in the border and coastal areas.

During the period of the Ly dynasty generally, the invasions carried out by Champa and Chenla often took place on a small scale and in a limited area - the border and the coast. They caused disturbances, infringed the land, killed Dai Viet people and looted.

It is written in *Đại Việt sử ký toàn thư* that during the rule of the Ly dynasty, Champa and Chenla more than ten times infringed Dai Viet's land, rampaging, looting and arresting people in many areas of the bordering Nghe An county. In 1074, "Champa people caused disturbances in the border area again"; in the 8th lunar month of 1132, "Champa and Chenla people went on the rampage in Nghe An county"; in the 8th lunar month of 1128, "Chenla people used 700 boats to come and pillage Do Gia commune (now Huong Son district, Ha Tinh province)"; "Champa people often hid themselves in places with rough topography and difficult of access to kidnap people of Nghe An and then sold them to Chenla"; in the 3rd lunar month of 1177, "Champa people went looting and pillaging in Nghe An"; in the 12th lunar month of 1216 and the 10th lunar month of 1218, "Champa and Chenla people went on the rampage in Nghe An again"; especially, in the 1st lunar

month of 1128, "over twenty thousand Chenla people came to Ba Dau seaport looting" [4, pp.200, 220, 222, 226, 227, 248 and 259].

In addition to the invasion and pillage in the border areas, Champa people also went on the rampage in the coastal areas of Dai Viet. For example, in the 4th lunar month of 1043, "Champa wind-wave enemies (called so as they were taking advantage of the winds and the sea to come to loot other places/countries) arrived to do pillaging in our coastal areas" [4, p.186]; in the 3rd lunar month of 1166, the envoy of Champa Kingdom who came to Dai Viet's regions named O and Ly region "did looting with his troops in the coastal areas of Dai Viet, before leaving for home" [4, p.245]; and, in the 1st lunar month of 1137, Pha To Lang, a military leader of Chenla Kingdom, commanded his troops to go pillaging in Nghe An [4, p.229], etc.

Remarkably, the acts of invasion and rampaging were often undertaken by the Champa and Chenla mandarins and troops, and sometimes even tolerated or implicitly encouraged by the state of Champa. They were all part of a strategy to weaken Dai Viet and gradually get out of the latter's influence.

Thirdly, Dai Viet state and people kept fighting against the above-mentioned acts of invasions and rampage.

To safeguard the territorial integrity and national sovereignty, and ensure the safety for the people's life and property, under the Ly dynasty the state and people of Dai Viet resolutely struggled against the infringements and pillage by Champa and Chenla. Ly kings on many occasions personally commanded troops or assigned military officers to lead troops to attack the Kingdom of Champa. In the 12th lunar month of 1020, King Ly Thai To "assigned *Khai Thiên Vương* (Prince Khai Thien, who had the real name of Ly Phat Ma,

and late became a king himself) and Dao Thac Phu to command troops to fight Champa forces in Bo Chinh camp (north of Quang Binh province). After defeating the forces, Dai Viet troops moved straight to Long Ty mountain (Quang Trach district, Quang Binh province), beheading Bo Linh, a military leader of Champa, at the battle” [4, p.166]. In the 1st lunar month of 1044, the king personally commanded troops to attack the Kingdom of Champa, killing Champa king Sa Dau and about 30,000 Champa troops, arresting over 5,000 people, and seized many domesticated elephants [4, pp.188-189]. In the 7th lunar month of the same year, the king commanded troops to attack Phat The citadel, arresting all Sa Dau’s wives and concubines [4, p.189]. In 1069, King Ly Thanh Tong himself took the army to attack Champa, arresting its king Rudravarman III and 50,000 Champa people [4, p.197]. The Ly king also ordered *Thái úy* (太尉- the first-ranking military mandarin) Ly Thuong Kiet in the 8th lunar month of 1075 and the 2nd lunar month of 1104 [4, pp.201, 207] and *Thái úy* To Hien Thanh in the 7th lunar month of 1167 [4, p.245] to command the armies to attack Champa. Ly kings many times promulgated edicts ordering local mandarins of places suffering from Champa and Chenla forces’ pillage, to use the local soldiers and people or coordinate with the royal court’s troops to fight the “invading and rampaging enemies”.

4. Conclusion

As revealed by the experiences gained from studying the diplomatic ties under the Ly dynasty between Dai Viet and the neighbouring countries, the national

construction and all-sided development should be pursued without sacrificing the nation’s fundamental interests, independence or territorial integrity. The kings of the Ly dynasty (and other feudal dynasties afterwards) always deemed that those things were extremely sacred and to be protected firmly and resolutely.

One of the major factors that helped Dai Viet gain a lot of achievements in all aspects of the national construction and development under the Ly dynasty is that a people-based front was built firmly and the power of national solidarity was highly promoted. Consequently, the various policies and measures promulgated by the kings and the feudal states won the people’s hearts. To meet the people’s thinking and desire, based on which the people-based front could be firmly constructed, the kings many times granted general amnesties, not only when they came to the throne but also when the country encountered calamities such as epidemics, bad harvests, floods, droughts, famines and wars. Leniency was given to those who committed offences due to specific reasons. Prison terms for criminals could be shortened or they could be released. Meanwhile, those who made corrupt use of the authority or the privilege from the king to victimise people or misappropriate property of the state or people were definitely punished without mercy. Furthermore, all the acts of invading and rampaging made by penetrators from the neighbouring countries were properly and resolutely dealt with.

Notes

² The Work of Mencius: A collection of anecdotes and conversations written by Mencius, or Mengzi

(孟子). See more details in [9, pp.754, 1027, 1037-1038].

³ According to *History of the Song* (宋史), this event was recorded in the 2nd lunar month of 1175 (the first year of Chun Xi).

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