



CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

It is necessary to use the definition of adaptation at the beginning of this study to frame this research. Adaptation is *the changes in an organism's structure, function, or behavior that increase its ability to live in a particular environment*. Thus, in the process of adaptation, environment plays a deciding role in the process. An adaptation would occur only when there is change in environment. For this reason the adaptation of Annam-nikai in Bangkok, as argued in this thesis is the result of the change of its temple's community. Throughout its historical development, it can be seen that the community of Annam-nikai temples instigated a great deal in the process of change and adjustment of Annam-nikai. The relation between community and religion as studied at the beginning of chapter III shows that community plays a role as the direct environment of religion. The changes in community directly influence its religion. This is because community plays the deciding role in the existence and development of religion. Religion can be created by an individual or a group of people. But religion can not exist only by an individual or a small group of people. It needs a community of people who share the same belief in that religion. Therefore, when the temple's community changes, the environment changes; Annam-nikai, as a religious organization of the community, changes accordingly to conform to the changing environment. The process of adaptation begins. This change in the community of Annam-nikai's temples can be seen in the replacement of the Vietnamese community with the Chinese and Thai community and the special attention of Thai Royal Court.

This process of replacement is a gradual process. Due to sharing the same origin of Lam Te and Tao Dong Zen sects and similarities in culture, the practice of Vietnamese temples was not so foreign to the Chinese in Bangkok during the early Rattanakosin period. Therefore, besides the main support from

the Vietnamese community, Annam-nikai temples received attention from the Chinese as well.

During the third period of its development, upon receiving special interest from King Rama IV and Rama V, its community of supporters included the Chinese Buddhists and the Thai Royal Court marking diversity in the temple's community. This is the transitional stage of the replacement's process. The replacement stage occurred from post WWII to the end of the Vietnam War. Due to political and cultural factors, the Vietnamese community in Bangkok had gradually assimilated and integrated into Thai society. This period saw many changes in the world politics as well as in Thai politics resulting in unfavorable policies towards communism, especially the Vietnamese. These unfavorable policies impacted the process of assimilation and integration of the Vietnamese in Bangkok, including both Old and New Vietnamese, leading to the absence of the Vietnamese community from Annam-nikai temples and the arrival of their replacements, the Chinese community. The temple's community was dominated by the Chinese. In addition to political reasons, cultural factors could be used to explain a deep integration of the Vietnamese into Thai society. The Vietnamese in Bangkok, due to political reasons had to assimilate and integrate into Thai society; but with many similarities between their cultures, they did not encounter too many obstacles to accepting Thai culture. Thus, integration was deep. That is why even though the Vietnam War ended more than 30 years ago, but the Vietnamese in Bangkok still did not come back to the Vietnamese temples, leaving the temples under a long period of Chinese community domination.

Besides the change of the temple's community, the Royal support must be mentioned as the legitimizing Annam-nikai in Thailand. The special support of the Royal Court, materially and spiritually, is very important for influencing the existence of Annam-nikai in Thailand. Without Royal support, Annam-nikai could not be legally recognized as part of Thai Buddhism.

In line with the gradual change of the temple's community, the process of adaptation of Annam-nikai was also a measured process. As presented in chapter IV, the process of adaptation of Annam-nikai occurred in its structure, behavior, and function.

In terms of structure, due to the Annam-nikai's legal registration in Thai Buddhism, the hierarchical system of Thai Buddhist temples has been applied to Annam-nikai temples since the reign of King Rama V. Besides, the gradual replacement of the temple's community resulted in the gradual change of monk's origin within the Order.

Due to a long period of adaptation and the loss of contact with Vietnam, it should come as no surprise that Vietnamese is no longer the main language of the temples except when chanting Sutras and naming monks and temples. But due to the new community's requirement, Annam-nikai preserved some old practices that are not popular in Vietnam, namely the Công Đức ceremony, and adopted some Thai ceremonies such as Thot Krathin.

In regards to the temple's function, having Chinese and Thai origin, Annam-nikai monks are more involved in the daily life of the temple's followers; for example, they will perform a house-warming or shop-opening ceremony for the temple's followers.

Coming back to the changing condition of the temple's community, the study argued that although the process of change was a gradual process, the political factors from post WWII to the end of the Vietnam War was the deciding factor leading to the replacement of the Chinese in the temple's community. Thus, it could be understood that the political situation was the key factor of the assimilation of the Vietnamese in Bangkok leading to the adaptation of Annam-nikai. Nowadays, in the atmosphere of integration and globalization – especially after the Renovation policy of the Vietnamese government in 1986 – Vietnam has a better reputation and the Thai negative sentiments towards Vietnamese people have been greatly improved; the Vietnamese community in Bangkok has begun to gather and more openly

express their Vietnamese identity. Presently, the Association of the Vietnamese Overseas in Bangkok has been established since 2005. This association organizes monthly meetings to exchange information regarding Vietnam as well as information between its members. Though this association has been limited, so far, to only around twenty members who mainly came to Bangkok after the Vietnam War, all the members of this association expressed their interest in Annam-nikai temples. They are enthusiastic about studying Annam-nikai. Some occasionally visit Annam-nikai temples. This will hopefully lead to the coming back of the Vietnamese to Annam-nikai temples and encourage a new process of adaptation.