

The Special Features in Vietnamese Philosophical Thought

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Abstract

The article refers to the objective conditions and subjective factors of the formation and development of Vietnamese philosophical thoughts; analyzes the approaches and the scope of study; summarizes the basic characteristics of Vietnamese philosophical thought and the essential differences between Vietnamese philosophical thought and Chinese, Indian and Western philosophical thoughts; and indicates the acquisition, inheritance and the development of Vietnamese philosophical thought in comparison with such philosophical thoughts. Accordingly, the article analyzes the close relationship between Vietnamese philosophical thought and the Vietnamese national thought and points out the inseparable relations between the Vietnamese philosophical thought with Vietnamese literature and history; and the relationship between the philosophical thought of the Vietnamese people and the philosophy of Confucianism, Buddhism, and Taoism. The article also shows the need of promoting researches, summarizing the system of concepts, categories, and rules of Vietnamese philosophy, and the mission of modern Vietnamese philosophers in the development of the philosophy in Vietnam and their responsibility to contribute to the development of human philosophy in the contemporary world.

Keywords: Vietnam, Vietnamese, Vietnamese philosophical thought, Three Teachings (Confucianism, Buddhism, Taoism), Culture, Spirit, Orientalism, Westernization, world view and outlook on life in Vietnamese philosophy.

1. Introduction

Historical conditions of the formation and development of Vietnamese philosophical thought

As an important part of the superstructure, Vietnamese philosophy depends on the infrastructure which is the existence of Vietnamese society. During its history, Vietnam was an agricultural country (wet rice cultivation) with a long-standing system of villages and communes. The isolated existence of the village system made each small unit a kind of “oasis”, which was organized according to the simple, self-sufficient and closed lifestyle. That became an obstacle in the development of production and business and made commodity economy impossible to develop [11, 24-25]. Therefore, the method of production in Vietnam was characterized by the Asian method of production that was the long-term existence and maintenance of rural communes when people’s life was limited within the village; science and technology were not developed and bound because of chains, the superstition of the traditional rules. That limited the development of the mind and creative thought of Vietnamese people. The passivity, smugness, and unchangeableness have lasted for thousands of years because during the feudalism of Vietnam there has never been a social revolution; accordingly, there was no revolution in thought, reasoning, and culture. The slow and sluggish transformation in production and science has influenced the formation and development of Vietnamese philosophical thought.

However, as an independent state - nation with its own sovereignty, and a long-standing and well-developed culture, Vietnam also had its own ideology and reasoning of which the core was the philosophical thought [5, 225]. In Vietnam, the philosophical thought emerged when Vietnamese society was divided into different classes, forming a feudal state. Unlike Western feudalism and other Oriental feudalisms, in Vietnam, the feudal centralism has existed and played a dominant role, while the division into feudal realms survived only for a relatively short time and then relying on feudal centralism. This situation has definitely affected the formation and development of Vietnamese philosophical thought in the past and present.

As a small country located between the two great states of India and China, Vietnam was dominated by the Northern feudal groups over a thousand years. Therefore, the process of formation and development of Vietnamese philosophical thought was influenced by the two these developed philosophies. Along with the implementation of invasion plot in Vietnam, the Northern feudal groups spread political-social, philosophical and religious doctrines. Firstly, it was Confucianism, then Taoism and Buddhism (through Chinese). They were usually referred to as “the Three Teachings” or “the three common religions”. These three religions were brought into Vietnam and formed the basis of the idea for the Northern feudal groups to accelerate the implementation of socio-political policies as well as other socio-cultural policies to rule Vietnam according to the Northern form.

The invasion process lasted for 1,117 years (from 179 BC to 938 AC), when Ngo Quyen (897 - 944) defeated the Nam Han’s army on Bach Dang River (in Hai Phong City, about 40 km from Ha Long Bay, Vietnam) the independent era of Dai Viet began. After that, the invasion of the Minh’s army, the Mongolian army, etc. caused the Vietnamese society as well as its people be affected by Chinese philosophical thought. Although the conspiracy to assimilate Vietnamese people into Chinese people did not succeed; but the opinion that such philosophical thought did not have a profound effect on Vietnamese people was not correct. [5, 25].

The formation and development of Vietnamese philosophical thought associated with the process of fighting against foreign invaders for achieving the national sovereignty and building up the country at that time helped Vietnamese people have a theoretical development to understand their enemies and defeat them, and to find the way of national liberation, maintaining the independence, sovereignty and territory of their country.

In order to have such theoretical thinking, first of all, Vietnamese must inherit, uphold and improve the inherent thinking of their ancestors. Nevertheless, such asset was not much so they had to find other sources to supplement to that. On the one hand, Vietnamese people sought and gathered in the system of the ruler's thinking. On the other hand, from the reality of their country and people, Vietnamese must summarize, generalize and form their own system of views, in which the development of philosophical thought is one of the fundamental reason that helped them overcome all enemies and leave their county free from foreign domination.

2. Results

2.1. *Approaches and characteristics of Vietnamese philosophical thought*

An overview of the history of Vietnamese philosophical thought

Vietnam has a very special geo-cultural location: on the axis of intersection between the two great cultures in the East, that are the Chinese and Indian cultures. Therefore, defining the unique values of Vietnamese philosophical thought is a problem that have been debating by many scholars. In Vietnam, the process of the development of the specific literature, history, and philosophy has not been clearly defined yet. That has made it difficult for scholars to distinguish the views on philosophical thoughts from literature and history, as well as philosophical trends and philosophers from Western philosophical trends and philosophers.

In fact, it is impossible to find a philosophy or a field of philosophy in Vietnam in accordance with the model and definition of Western philosophy. However, if we consider the philosophy as “wisdom” and that it is a way of thinking in a macroscopic level in each historical period and a way of creating the particular character and spirit of each period, it is undeniable that in Vietnam, there has an own way of thinking, a unique logic, and unique characteristics of thinking that is the own Vietnamese philosophy [10]. That philosophy has been the foundation of the strength of theoretical thinking, helping the Vietnamese nation to survive and develop through all the challenges of history and firmly enter into the period of international integration without losing the national identity and culture of Vietnam.

The cultural and spiritual life of the Vietnamese people is the core, the foundation and the starting point for studying the changes of thought taken place in the Vietnamese history. We need to understand the basic principles that affect the spirit of the Vietnamese people, the laws of movement and development of the Vietnamese people's views in order to find out the identity, nuance, and spiritual values of their thought in the process of movement and development in Vietnam's history.

In the history of Vietnamese philosophy, the categories of Eastern and Western philosophies were used to create new values. Vietnamese philosophical thought was strongly influenced by Eastern and Western philosophies but was not identical to the Eastern and Western philosophical values. Even when such pure philosophical concepts of China, India or the West came to Vietnam, they were also selected, absorbed and “tinted with the style of thinking” of Vietnamese people [14, 106-107].

Therefore, the object of Vietnamese philosophy was all ideas that contained philosophical values in the cultural and spiritual life of the Vietnamese people, the philosophical principles, and the laws of movement, transformation, and development of philosophical thoughts during Vietnamese history.

The scope and method of study

The history of Vietnamese philosophical thought is about all written texts on paper, stone, and other materials as well as oral literature, folklore, historical and cultural events, archeological traces, etc. to search for philosophical ideas and values, from which restore the way, the characteristics and the content, the rules of formation and development of Vietnamese philosophical thought.

The history of Vietnamese philosophical thought is an interdisciplinary science, taking the method of studying philosophical history as the main method of studying. In addition, on the case-by-case basis, it is necessary to use methods of studying other specific sciences such as archeology, sociology, psychology, literature, history, etc., to clarify the relevant issues.

The divergence in the history of Vietnamese philosophical thought

The history of Vietnamese philosophical thought was closely related to the history of Vietnamese nation but it was not identical with the history of Vietnamese nation. Vietnamese thought was specific expressions of philosophical principles that implied profound philosophical thought. Its development was always associated with the transformation and development of the metaphysical principles but did not fully coincide with such transformation in terms of time. It was possible that the transformations of thought had signaled a change in the worldview and the outlook on life, but it would take time for the change of the new principle to actually take

place. Western thought spread to Vietnam from the second half of the nineteenth century, but they only really became a factor influencing the Vietnamese philosophical thought from the 30-40s of the 20th century. Therefore, the divergence in the history of Vietnamese philosophical thought was very complicated issue that must be based on the two following factors:

- The characteristics of the Vietnamese people's thought in each historical period.
- The change of worldview, outlook on life and thinking style of the Vietnamese through each historical period.

From the above bases, the history of Vietnamese philosophical thought could be divided as follows:

- The worldview, outlook on life and thinking style and characteristics of Vietnamese people in the pre-feudal period from the founding of the country to the end of the 10th century.
- Vietnamese philosophical thought during the feudal period from the eleventh century to the late nineteenth century.
- Vietnamese philosophical thought from the beginning of the twentieth century to 1954.
- Vietnamese philosophical thought from 1954 to present [9].

The characteristics of Vietnamese philosophical thought

The characteristics of Vietnamese philosophical thought depend on each stage of the formation and development of Vietnamese national history. In the early stages, from the formation of the nation to the end of the tenth century, Vietnamese philosophical thought was characterized by Southeast Asian thinking. In the period from the eleventh century to the end of the nineteenth century, Vietnamese philosophical thought was characterized by the thinking of East Asia with the combination of three religions: Confucianism, Buddhism, and Taoism, in combination with local (folk) ideas [15]. In Vietnamese feudal society, it depended on each dynasty that the Confucianism or Buddhism elements emerged, dominating the other thoughts, but in short, Vietnamese philosophical thought in that period was characterized by East Asian shades, in other words, was deeply influenced by Chinese culture.

From the beginning of the twentieth century to 1954, Western philosophical currents including Marxist-Leninist philosophy were imported in Vietnam. At the same time, there was a slight abolishment of the traditional thoughts of Confucianism, Buddhism, Taoism and folk ideas. Due to the tendency of socio-political development, the Vietnamese philosophical thought in that period had great development with the victory of dialectical materialism.

From 1954 to the present, besides the dialectical materialism, modern Western philosophies introduced along with the positive elements of traditional Vietnamese thought were gradually being analyzed and applied more and more effectively.

Unlike Western philosophy in which the materialistic and idealistic, dialectic and metaphysical schools competed fiercely against each other; Vietnamese philosophical thoughts were often fragmentary, lacking of materialistic and idealistic schools and their strict and fierce competitions. The mix between idealism and materialism in a Vietnamese thinker was quite clear.

The worldview of Vietnamese philosophy has its own characteristics. For Western philosophical worldview, the Western theorists were particularly interested in the problems of the relationship between thinking and being, between spirit and material, between object and subject and on cognitive ability as well as forms of outlook on life. For Vietnamese philosophical worldview, the Vietnamese academics respected and elevated socio-political issues, human's reasons for living and morals, and paid attention on building arguments for socio-political, moral and humanitarian issues. While Western philosophy was often associated with the achievements of science, especially the natural sciences; Indian philosophy was associated with religious and spiritual issues; Chinese philosophy was associated with political and ethical issues, *Vietnamese philosophy was associated with the struggle for national formation and defense, so the red thread throughout Vietnamese philosophical thought was patriotism.* [5, 21].

If Western philosophy often started from worldview, cosmology, and ontology to human's view, epistemology, and logic thereby creating a complete unified, and tight system, *the philosophy of Vietnam was often the opposite that was from human's view to worldview.* In Vietnam, the central issues of philosophy were human and human ethics; it must address and solve these two issues, then the philosophers would seek the way to explain other issues of the worldview.

When Western philosophy was more inclined toward materialism, atheism, and extrovert, *Vietnamese philosophy tended toward the idealism, inward direction.* Therefore, Western philosophy often took the outside world to explain the inner world. *On the contrary, Vietnamese philosophy often took the inside to explain the outside.* The inevitable consequence was that the dialectics of the Westerners had more conflict, *while that in Vietnamese philosophy were united; the movement and development in Western philosophy went up in a spiral shape, while in the Vietnamese philosophy during the feudal period, it followed the circular path.*

Vietnamese philosophy usually began from the existing propositions rather than from the development of

objective reality in order to generalize into other principles, rules, and disciplines as the basis for the argument. Each of the ideas and propositions inherited from the outside, in fact, were “Vietnamized” and had the nuance of Vietnamese thinking and wisdom.

The Northern feudal powers’ invasion and enslavement process for Vietnam, at the same time, has brought Three Teachings (Confucianism, Buddhism, and Taoism) in Vietnam. After expelling foreign invaders, regaining the sovereignty of the country, the feudal dynasties of Vietnam, in the process of building the country, consolidated their domination, and depending on the specific historical conditions, they applied Confucianism, Buddhism or Taoism and sometimes combined into “the three common religions”. Therefore, the structure of Vietnamese philosophical thought was a complex worldview.

Concepts and categories of Vietnamese philosophical thought, in a certain aspect, was the same kind as the concepts and categories of Chinese philosophy and Indian philosophy, and different from the concepts and categories of Western philosophy. However, due to the characteristics of philosophical thoughts of different nations were not the same, so it was impossible to compare Vietnam’s philosophy with that of other nations in a forced manner.

2.2. The philosophical thought of Vietnam, logic and history

Fundamental issues of Vietnamese philosophy

Unlike Western philosophy, the philosophical thought of Vietnam did not directly *discuss about the fundamental issues of philosophy; did not solve the relationship between thinking and existence.* In feudal society, *Vietnamese philosophical thought often discussed about political, social and ethical issues. The issues discussed were practical in connection with the rise and fall of community, country, and nation.* This was the biggest issue in all aspects of society, community and individual; the relationship between this community and the other community, between culture and politics at the dawn of Vietnamese history, and it is a red thread throughout the history of Vietnamese philosophical thought. The settlement of issues related to the danger, rise and fall of the country, nation was reflected in the philosophical thought of Vietnam, in accordance with each historical period which had created the identity and characteristics of Vietnamese philosophical thinking; it regulates the formation and development of philosophical thoughts about the community, nation, politics, society, and ethics. The standard value of all these thoughts was to protect the existence of community and nation and make Vietnamese nation stable and developed. Therefore, any thought, including extraneous thoughts, if it was beneficial for the existence of the nation, would be accepted, acknowledged, promoted and become the value which is passed from generation to generation.

In contrast to the ancient Greek philosophy, in which philosophers were already interested in nature as an object outside of humanity that needed to discover and they had attained profound philosophical perception such as “No man ever steps in the same river twice” of Heraclitus or “All things are number” of Pythagoras, etc., the Vietnamese people, with their own geographic characteristics, were aware of the fundamental problems of the community before the majestic nature and the fierce enemy: how to survive and grow? What to do to solve the problem of being in harmony with nature? The thought of “harmony” was initiated from that time and developed in accordance with each period of history, making a very unique and typical characteristic of Vietnamese philosophical thought.

The method of dichotomy and duality was a feature of Vietnamese philosophical thought. It contained contrast and opposite elements in a whole that is Southeast Asian specific thinking style of the Vietnamese people since the period of Chinese domination then later, had become an important factor in determining in the behavior and the way of living in harmony with and combining all opposite elements without eliminating each other on the principle of ensuring the being of the community, ensuring peace, stability and development of the community. That method was maintained in folk thinking and until today, the “harmony” thinking still works.

Thus, Vietnamese philosophical thinking in feudalism did not have any achievements in the development of new doctrines, nor have many new ideas in canonical interpretation or new theory that it stopped at the level of compliance, re-explanation, and summarization for easy to understand, acquire, and disseminate the canonical thoughts of Confucianism, Buddhism, and Taoism to suit the circumstances of Vietnam. The new element created of Vietnamese philosophical thought was the style of thinking and how to apply the theoretical knowledge gained from outside to solve the practical problems of Vietnam, especially political, social and ethical problems. Therefore, the political, social and ethical thought of Vietnam was quite developed and influenced by Confucian, Buddhist and Taoist thoughts.

By the end of the nineteenth century, when the French came to Vietnam and spread French culture in that country, the philosophy of Vietnam at that time had new features. The French, with a higher level of rational thinking, science and technology, influenced the intellectuals and transformed the society of Vietnam. Vietnamese intellectuals set up and must solve the problem of being or not being of the nation. Faced with that situation, Vietnamese philosophical thinking began to approach Western philosophy and culture on development. Representatives of that trend were Nguyen Truong To and Dang Huy Tru, etc. [9]. At that time, the application

of inherently theoretical achievements of Vietnam combined with the use of modern theoretical knowledge, especially the identification of the superiority of the power of theoretical thinking, weapons, science and technology of the French and Western people, Vietnam's reformers somewhat escaped the traditional way of imitating the Chinese people and feudal Confucians, and the trend of "Westernization" emerged quite clearly.

At the beginning of the twentieth century, Nguyen Ai Quoc – the leader of the Vietnamese revolution who combined the most advantaged revolutionary achievements with the needs of the nation, had successfully addressed the task of history entrusted: liberating the nation and building an independent, free and happy Democratic Republic of Vietnam to meet the desire and aspiration to live peacefully of the entire Vietnamese people; that had met the requirements of the time. That was the achievement of Vietnamese philosophical thinking in resolving practical problems of Vietnamese nation.

Political thought in Vietnamese philosophy

Patriotism, promoting the patriotism, national spirit and national sovereignty is a basic content of Vietnamese philosophical thought.

Around the 3rd century B.C, the Au Lac state of An Duong Vuong was born, replacing the Van Lang state of the Hung Kings. The Au Lac state continued to govern the population in the style of the Van Lang state but at a higher level. However, the existence of the Au Lac state lasted not long because of the invasion and incorporate into the territory of the Nam Viet state of Trieu Da (the King of the Nam Viet state, a small country in China). In *A Summary History of Vietnam* and *Complete Annals of Dai Viet*, Vietnamese feudal historians considered Trieu Da as the official king of Vietnam at that time and the territory of Vietnam as the whole Luang Quang area (China) now and the territory of Vietnam.

Around 179 B.C, the Nam Viet state was annexed and merged by the Han dynasty (China). Vietnam was considered as a district of the Han dynasty, subject to the administrative control of the Han dynasty. The domination of the North, whether it wanted or not, could not prevent the cultural exchange between Nam Viet and Chinese culture. Confucianism that was spread to Vietnam, on the one hand, was a tool to dominate the Vietnamese spirit, an on the other hand, as a weapon to build the national spirit, a sense of independence and self-control, patriotism, and political experience, and development of a feudal state, helping the Vietnamese people build up and keep their country.

The actual construction of the Van Xuan state model of Ly Bi King in the sixth century was typical of Vietnamese thinking in learning how to organize an independent and self-reliant state under the Han state model. Ly Bi Kinh named the country Van Xuan and his title Ly Nam De, and placed the capital in Tong Binh (Hanoi now), built up military, organized the centralized administration, etc. Ly Bi's thoughts expressed the spirit of national independence, affirmed the autonomy of Vietnam. The feudal dynasties of Vietnam after the Northern domination period continued to develop the way of building the country on the basis of absorbing the model of the Han state, perfecting such model in accordance with the historical conditions of Vietnam.

Thoughts about nation and national sovereignty

The poetry "Than" of Ly Thuong Kiet (1019 - 1105) appeared in the early stage of the resistance against the Song dynasty's invaders, was considered the first manifesto of the Vietnamese people. In which, Ly Thuong Kiet asserted that the existence of nation and national sovereign was inviolable. Therefore, if anybody intended to infringe upon the national sovereignty of Vietnam, they would be punished because the invaders had acted against the mandate of heaven, and contrary to human heart, and they would inevitably fail. The awareness of national sovereignty and ethnicity had been clearly stated.

Once again, in the Le dynasty, Nguyen Trai (1380 - 1442), in his "Binh ngo dai cao" (*Great proclamation upon the pacification of the Wu*), on behalf of Le Loi King, declared and reaffirmed that the spirit of national independence, the sense of national sovereignty of Vietnam was an invaluable asset that should be kept and passed on to descendants. The concept of nation in "Binh ngo dai cao" was been raised to a new level of generality and higher level in terms of theory. An independent and autonomous country must ensure the elements: a) Having a separate territory; b) Having its own customs and practices; c) Having a history of building its own country; d) Having abundant talents and patriots [6].

After the poetry "Than" of Ly Thuong Kiet, Nguyen Trai's "Binh ngo dai cao" had stated in a relatively full manner the assertive elements of the sovereignty of a nation. Nguyen Trai's concept of nation was generalized, showing high level of theoretical thinking on the nation and national spirit of Vietnam.

In 1945, President Ho Chi Minh read the "Proclamation of Independence" on the Ba Dinh Square, giving birth to the Democratic Republic of Vietnam – the first democratic stat in Southeast Asia. That is an immortal proclamation that integrated the most progressive thought value of humanity, reflecting the intellectual height of the national concept of Vietnam. The fundamental perception of the country, nation is the basic and solid theoretical foundation of Vietnamese political thought of which the core is profound philosophical thought.

Thought of being close to the people and sticking with the people

In the way of governing the country of the feudal dynasties of Vietnam, *the thought of being close to the people and sticking with the people, caring the people, leading the people* was specially paid attention and highly

appreciated as one of the highlights of the Vietnamese political path. Receiving Mencius' thought of being close to the people, Vietnamese political thinkers considered the people as the root of the country. The people's heart was the God's idea; if you were trusted and loved by the people, you would have throne, if you lost the people's heart, you would lose the God's idea. Therefore, the close relationship between the army and the people has always been focused by Vietnamese political thinkers in the past and in the present.

Political thought of benevolence and peace

The top of the thought of being close to the people was Nguyen Trai's political path of benevolence and peace for the people. He said "The benevolence is for the peace of the people". The benevolent governing way was manifested in thought for the people, wishing the people have a good, stable and peaceful life. In order to be able to make the people be full and satisfied, and believe, the issues of land, taxes, penalties must match with the heart of the people and be supported by the people wholeheartedly. Making the people be full, satisfied and believe was both the purpose and the criterion for evaluating the benevolent political path for the people of the Vietnamese leadership. Nguyen Trai's benevolent approach was not only reflected in the domestic activities "Making the farthest alleys no longer complain" but also expressed in the military and diplomatic policy "Make your enemy your friend" [6].

Thought of combining the governance by benevolence and rules of law

The thought of combining the governance by benevolence and rules of law was carried out by Le Thanh Tong King (1442 - 1497) with the direction of drafting the National Court's Law. This Code normalized the rules and regulations to manage and govern the country in a uniform legal manner. That was a grade progress in the philosophical and political thought of Vietnam.

The way of country governance under the feudal period was the way "rule of virtue for outside and rule of law for inside". That way itself was a combination of rule of virtue and rule of law, but depending on each dynasty, the rule of virtue or rule of law was stronger.

When the French came to rule Vietnam, *bourgeois democratic political thought emerged cleared in the bourgeois democratic political thought of the two patriots: Phan Chau Trinh (1872-1926) and Phan Boi Chau (1867-1940)*. With their efforts, the French and Japanese political doctrines were propagated into Vietnam and influenced the national political thought, in which the rule of law was promoted but still attached to rule of virtue.

Vietnamese national thought

Over the past two thousand years of building and defending the country with the strong platform of national thought, the Vietnamese people steadfastly maintained and developed their national thought with its own characteristics [2], namely:

- National independence and territorial integrity were the leading and supreme criteria of Vietnamese nationalism. That criterion emerged from the period of struggle against the Northern domination and had been strengthened and developed theoretically in later periods of history. By adopting the state management model of Han dynasty to build the feudal monarchy in Vietnam, the sense of territorial sovereignty and national independence with its lawful representative as the King was increasingly enhanced and consolidated by Confucian theory [3, 1132]. The dynasty which preserved and upholds the supreme criterion of national independence and territorial sovereignty, i.e. assuring the national interests in unity with the interests of the dynasty, would gain the people's heart and survive sustainably, and vice versa. This was the most fundamental feature of Vietnamese national thought.

The pride of natural culture was one of the most fundamental elements of Vietnamese nationalism and one of the great motives of the resistance wars to defend the national independence. Emperor Quang Trung declared one of the goals of the resistance war against 200 thousands soldiers of Qing troop was to protect the nation's own culture: "*Fight to lengthen the hair, fight to black the teeth*".

In the late twentieth century, the wave of economic globalization that led to the strong spread and penetration of powerful economies and cultures (USA, Japan) once again demanded the Vietnamese national thought identify and forecast the development of Vietnamese culture in the regional and global cultural flows as a leading task to build and protect the Vietnamese national cultural identity.

Issues of thinking and being, of the world's essence

The issues of thinking and being, of the world's essence were primarily posed and resolved in the philosophical thought of the nation, mainly in terms of Buddhism. From the time of the Northern domination, Buddhism in Vietnam spread the philosophy of nothing, impermanence, mind and thing. Vietnamese Buddhism at that time adhered to the general conception of Buddhism, assuming that the world was nothing, thing was nothing, and we were nothing, too. The world of things, phenomena that we daily observed was fake, always moving and constantly changing so it was impermanent. According to Buddhism, there were things due to there was mind, the mind determined things. The mind was the source of all dharmas. All beings were born by the mind. From the point of view of dialectical materialism, the Buddhist concept was subjectively idealism. However, Buddhism denied both thinking and being and considered the unique essence of the world was mind. The concept of mind in Buddhist concept was much broader than the concept of thinking, and consciousness in

the Western philosophy.

After the Tran dynasty, the status of Buddhism gradually declined, making room for Confucianism on the political scene. Although Buddhism still played an important role in the spiritual and religious life of the nation, but it did not have any significant development of the worldview and ontology.

Philosophical worldview and outlook on life of Vietnamese nation

Philosophical worldview of Vietnamese people was the mix of Confucianism, Buddhism, and Taoism and indigenous factors. The concept of a four-tiered world or four worlds of ancient Vietnamese people: the world of heaven, the world under water, the world under hell, and the earth was the dominant conception and the core of the Vietnamese worldview. Until Buddhism entered Vietnam, that worldview did not disappear but it tolerated the Buddhist concept of the world, the reincarnation from one life to the other in the worlds. The concepts of Confucianism and Taoism about the world had contribute to create a mixed, interdependent, and compatible worldview of Vietnamese people. Due to the specific conditions of the situation, Vietnam always had to prevent foreign invaders, so the Vietnamese did not pay much attention to the worldview issues but only focused on practical issues: what to do to survive and protect the country, so the mixed conception of the world always dominated the Vietnamese from the dawn of history until the end of the nineteenth century, when Vietnam began aware of the scientific, technical and cultural knowledge of the West.

Philosophical outlook on life of the Vietnamese people was strongly influenced by the fundamental issues of Vietnamese philosophy: Being or not being, of which, the benefits of community, lifestyle for the community, for the nation were enhanced as a constant value of the Vietnamese because the individual was a very small problem and dissolved into the community. From the innocent concept of the early community with village relationships, the attachment of family, etc. the Vietnamese outlook on life had been added by Confucianism and Buddhism, raising the theoretical level. Confucius outlook on life on the duty of each type of people in society with typical and fixed relationships such as father-son relationship, husband-wife relationship, king-servant relationship, brothers' relationship, friends' relationship, etc. had been received by the Vietnamese and they also enriched the notion of humanity in the society and community of the Vietnamese. Buddhist outlook on life that considered the life of suffering, gave the practice measures of taking mercifulness, compassion, patience, passion cessation, forgetting the self, etc. to be free from suffering was supported by Vietnamese people because those treatises were both sublime but also very close to the real life of the Vietnamese, sharing many suffering caused by wars, natural disasters, enemy sabotage, and poverty. At the same time, Buddhist outlook on life was also very close to the concept of human kindness, "the leaves protect tattered ones" of the Vietnamese. Thus, it had become a major factor in the Vietnamese outlook on life [13, 275].

At the beginning of the twentieth century, with the penetration of Western philosophy, including Marxist-Leninist philosophies, the personal issues, the relationship between individuals and society were interested in and dealt with depending on each doctrine but gradually brought personal liberation, the promotion of individual role in society. However, individuals were dependent on and for serving the community, the human existed in the relationship of family, relatives, and village. There was no individualism with the true meaning as in the Western philosophy.

Humanism in Vietnamese philosophical thought

Humanism was a philosophical aspect throughout the history of Vietnamese philosophy. Vietnamese humanism was associated with the concept of human life. From its inception, the Vietnamese had to cope with all risks of natural disasters, enemy sabotage, and poverty to survive. The dream of individual, of the community, of the nation was always a dream of a peaceful and happy society in which everyone was full, warm and happy. Peaceful thinking and dichotomous, dualistic thinking had shown the humanity characteristics of the Vietnamese. Therefore, there was no religious war, no harsh ethnic discrimination, and in the Vietnamese human moral values, the contrasting values stood side by side peacefully. People said "Blood is thicker than water", but they also said "Better a neighbor near than a brother far off", "Love your siblings as you love yourself", but they also said "Siblings in family must be responsible for themselves", etc.

Vietnamese humanism was first of all to promote the community's interests and national interests. Nguyen Trai developed the ideal of humanism of Vietnam to the top with the concept that politics must make "the farthest alleys no longer complain" and "rule of culture must lead to peace". The noble goal of Vietnamese humanism was a peaceful, full and happy life for all people.

National philosophical thoughts

In the history of Vietnamese philosophical thought, the natural national philosophical thoughts were not so many and influenced much of Yijing, Confucianism in Song dynasty (China). Nguyen Binh Khiem (1491 - 1585) was typical in this area. He believed that Heaven was the nature but not a God with personality. Everything was born by nature, and human was also a part of the natural world, and the development of natural world was in accordance with the God law, as in Yijing "Everything comes and goes, it is common sense", "Odd and even, full and empty, negative and positive, sometimes it dissipates, and it grows in other times, that is the

compensation of the Creator". The modest role of natural philosophical thoughts in the history of national philosophical thoughts was due to the underdeveloped science and technology in Vietnam. That was also the reason for the poor academy and philosophy of the nation. There, we found the phrase of Friedrich Engels "A nation can only stand on the height of the time when it has a developed theory" also correct when saying opposite. Recognizing this fact, we see the path ahead of Vietnamese philosophy is extremely thorny with difficulties and challenges of the time and history. Successive generations must be responsible for concluding, summarizing, and developing a system of concepts, categories, rules and principles of Vietnamese philosophy; overcoming the historical limitations that predecessors had no conditions to implement.

3. Conclusions

The philosophical thought of Vietnam in Vietnamese feudal society was characterized by the Southeast Asian thought with the mix of the three teachings: Confucianism, Buddhism, and Taoism combined with indigenous (folk) ideas; and influenced by Chinese and Indian cultures.

From the beginning of the twentieth century, due to the strong introduction of Western philosophical movements, so there was the development of leaps and bounds with the victory of dialectical materialism in the Vietnamese philosophical thought. Unlike Western philosophy, Vietnamese philosophical thought was often fragmentary and scattered, did not have materialistic and idealistic schools; had no struggle between the materialism and idealism; had no philosopher with theories and philosophical works clearly. The intersection between idealism and materialism in a thinker was quite clear; therefore, the philosophical thoughts were mixed with historical thought and literature which was difficult to distinguish.

The worldview of Vietnamese philosophy was characterized by the respect for and appreciation of socio-political, human and ethical issues; focusing on development of arguments for socio-political and moral issues, and humanitarian education. The red thread throughout Vietnamese philosophy was the love for the country and patriotism.

Vietnam philosophy often went from outlook on life to worldview, in the direction of idealism and inward direction; usually takes the inside to explain the outside. Vietnamese philosophy disregarded the issue of struggle but gave prominence to the consistency; the movement and development in the Vietnamese philosophy in the feudal period often followed a circle or circulation.

Vietnamese philosophy usually derived from existing postulates rather than from the development of objective reality to generalize into other principles, rules or categories as the basis for the argument. Each thought or postulate inherited from abroad, in fact, was Vietnamized and brought the nuance of thinking, wisdom and skill of Vietnam. Concept and category of Vietnamese philosophical thought, in a certain aspect, was the same kind as the concepts and categories of Chinese philosophy and Indian philosophy, and different from the concepts and categories of Western philosophy. Summing up, generalizing, and building the philosophy of Vietnam in the new age is the responsibility of theorists, directly involved in those who are doing philosophical work in Vietnam today.

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