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## **THE LIVING OF RELIGIOUS AND BELIEF IN VIETNAMESE HISTORY**

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### **ABSTRACT:**

Vietnam is a country with many religions and beliefs. Vietnamese people have a long tradition of living and religious activities. The ethnic groups in the Vietnamese ethnic community have their own beliefs associated with their economic and spiritual life. Currently, Vietnam has about 95% of the population having beliefs and religions but their beliefs are not deep, one believes in many different types of beliefs or follows both religion and beliefs. In Vietnam, there are about 45,000 establishments with about 15,000 people specializing in religious activities, and there are nearly 8,000 festivals. Historically and in the present, all religions in Vietnam have the direction and motto of the practice of sticking with the nation, actively participating in patriotic emulation campaigns and movements on the scale, along with the government solving people's difficulties, and oriented development of religious resources have brought into play well, serving the cause of national construction. This research focuses on analyzing religious belief activities in history (from the Ly Dynasty to Tay Son Dynasty), from there giving comments and assessment of the position and son of religions in the process development of the nation.

## INTRODUCTION:

Religion, belief is a form of social consciousness (Tylor, 2000). According to the view of dialectical materialism and historical materialism, religion was created by a man right from the dawn of mankind.

The significant impact of religion on social life is due to two "nuclei": faith and sacredness (Tylor, 2000). These two factors focus on strength, penetrating deeply into the hearts of believers and significantly affecting people's lifestyles and behaviors, notably the role of social ethics-oriented religion. Therefore, religion has been and will continue to exist in human civilization and culture.

Vietnam is a multi-ethnic and multi-religious country. Religions in Vietnam have imported and endogenous religions. Religion is one of the factors contributing to enriching Vietnamese cultural identity and building the State government.

In terms of state-religion relations, starting from the historical period of Middle Vietnam, social science researchers have demonstrated the role of religion in protecting independence, autonomy, and construction. national culture; religious dignitaries and Confucian scholars actively participated in the "protection of the nation, the people of peace", "the country of the nation - the rule of the nation - the peace of the world"; many of them have become symbols of Vietnamese character, soul and mettle, such as Van Hanh (938 - 1025), Khuong Viet (933 - 1011), Tran Nhan Tong (1258 - 1308), etc. (of Buddhism); Nguyen Trai (1380 - 1442), Nguyen Binh Khiem (1491 - 1585), Pham Khiem Ich (1679 - 1740), Le Quy Don (1726 - 1784), etc. (of Confucianism). On the contrary, religion was also sponsored by the Vietnamese dynasties to develop such as the Ly - Tran dynasties with Buddhism, the Le Dynasty, and the Mac Dynasty with Confucianism. It can be said that religion, through two "delegates", namely Buddhism and Confucianism, has contributed to a mighty, autonomous, benevolent and benevolent Vietnam country.

Entering the modern historical period, religion continues to make significant contributions to the process of national liberation and national defense; Many religious believers have "taken off their robes and put on warfare", "living the gospel in the heart of the nation" - participating in the great unity bloc of the people, fighting with invading enemies to achieve independence such as today (Trung & Van, 2020; Phong & Van, 2020).

However, besides not small contributions, religion also has many potential risks to destabilizing society once religious beliefs are overly dominated. Currently, the issue of Islam, the issue of illegal evangelization, and cases related to religion are raising many doubts not only for the state management but for the whole society.

Determining the importance of religion in the political and social life, considering religion as an important "resource" of the process of building, protecting, and developing the country, from the point of view of "specific history. "Marxism-Leninism, from the first day of taking over the revolutionary government, our Party and State have paid attention to this issue with legal documents. By the second half of the twentieth century, especially since 1990, when Resolution

No. 24/NQ-TW dated October 16, 1990, of the Politburo, Session VI on "Strengthening religious work in the new situation" was issued and put into social life - the legal issue of religion is gradually stabilized and shown with consistency, in order to promote the strengths of religion and to deal with sensitive issues related to the issue of this subject.

### **AN OVERVIEW OF RELIGIOUS AND BELIEF ACTIVITIES IN VIETNAMESE HISTORY:**

There have been many different views on the origin and history of the concept of human rights (human rights), as well as the development of human rights in the historical practice of humanity. It is a popular view that human rights are rooted in Western history, culture, and law, especially from the conception of "natural rights" – an instrument against oppressive regimes, tyranny, which appeared with the British, French, and American revolutions. Many Asian countries, including Vietnam, have been shown to have traditions (culture, law, customs, etc.) that respect human rights and freedoms, including the right to freedom of belief, religion, as well as having contributed to human rights debates in modern times.

The use of modern international human rights norms, mainly formed after 1945, to assess historical religious freedom, is also a possible subject to discuss. However, the approach that uses international human rights standards as a framework has the advantage of avoiding the arbitrary lowering of standards, overemphasizing the particularities of the context that can harm people personal dignity when they may be perceived as lower as, more trivial than others.

When learning about freedom, human rights in history, we have problems with the different concepts of freedom and human rights in each era. The modern approach is said to emphasize the universality of human rights, so applies to all individuals regardless of geographic area, while the traditional approach assumes that human rights exist within each community, specifically copper (Duy, 2002). In another aspect, the exercise of the right to freedom of belief and religion always has a close relationship with other rights of freedom of thought, assembly, ownership, etc.

People also often question the role of religion in freedom in other parts of the world. Both Confucianism and Buddhism seem alienated from individualism and individualism – which is pervasive in the West (Giau, 1973; Hinh, 2007). Taoism is somewhat of a philosophy closer to the liberal and liberalism of the West.

In Buddhist teachings, the concept of freedom is often associated with the concepts "karma" (karma), "no-self" (anatman), liberation, freedom of choice. Liberation is a Buddhist goal, however, the path to liberation is not on the outside (Lang, 1974; Van, 2019 & 2020), but within the human being. Besides, compassion and bliss are specific teachings that are spread among intellectuals as well as common people.

In other words, religious freedom in Vietnamese history was directly related to the prosperity of Confucian dogma, even having said that (Giau, 1973 & 1983): "The more Confucians wanted their doctrine to take complete control human thought and expression of that thought, the fewer freedom people have".

Accordingly, from the nineteenth century, in the early stage (before 1862), the Nguyen kings had a relatively tough attitude towards Christianity (Christianity). This trend was reversed when the French entered Vietnam and had policies to support the spread of Christianity. Despite the ups and downs and different manifestations from time to time, the spirit of tolerance, tolerance, forgiveness, and compassion have been relatively prominent elements of Vietnam's cultural and religious history.

To assess history, besides other historical documents and documents on practicing religious rights, researchers, especially jurists, have prioritized based on legal documents and policies. From this perspective, it can be seen that the law of the feudal dynasties plays an important role in shaping the framework of belief and religious activities, expressing the state's attitude towards religious activities, religion. Major laws, such as Quoc Trieu HinhLuat (Le Dynasty), Hoang Viet Luat Le (Nguyen Dynasty), not only help us understand the era picture, the daily life nuances of people in the family and the commune (Van & Luong, 2019). Association also helps us to understand the philosophies and behavioral methods of the feudal states before the ancient social problems. However, the challenges due to the lack of legal documents and data are not small.

In addition to the state laws, regulations, covenants, village rules, and customary laws are also an important source of rules governing belief and religious activities in local communities and community's ethnic minorities. Along with the adjustment of many activities in the village, village (such as taxation, husband, soldiers, marriage, filial piety, patrol, aspiration, residence, etc.), most of the conventions are interested in the worship gods, worship annually (worship the village royal citadel, worship three religions, agricultural beliefs, etc.).

Although the chapter focuses on the policies and laws of the dynasties, it is evident that religious freedom was influenced by many historical and social factors, not merely by law. Accordingly, to study concretely, four phases will, in turn, be considered: 1) The period before the 11<sup>th</sup> century; 2) The Ly, Tran, and Ho dynasties; 3) The period of the Late Le Dynasty and Tay Son Dynasties; 4) The period of Nguyen and French colonialism.

## **RESEARCH RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS:**

### **The period before the eleventh century:**

Vietnam had to go through the Northern domination period for more than a thousand years, which lasted from 179 BC, when Trieu Da invaded ÂuLạc, until 938 when Ngo Quyen defeated the South Han army (Lien, 1697). During this period, in addition to the conflict between the Hanization and anti-Sinicization trends, Buddhism from India was introduced by sea (Lang, 1974), followed by Confucianism (Giau, 1973; Thu, 1997) and Taoism from China (Hinh, 2007; Van 2019 & 2020).

Author of *ĐạiViệtSửKýToànThu* (1697) assessed: "Vuong (Si Nhiep) is a gentle and humble person who loves and keeps the country of Vietnam to cope with the power of the Three Kingdoms, deserving to be called a sage ". Si Nhiep is a Chinese-Vietnamese, is considered to have talent and virtue that surpasses contemporary political leaders.

Imported from China into Vietnam, on the one hand, Taoism still worships Ngoc Hoang, Thai Thuong Lao Quan, on the other hand, there is a combination with folk beliefs, Taoism also worships many other gods and saints of Vietnamese people (Van 2019 & 2020).

In beliefs and customs, Vietnamese people respect their parents, ancestors, and worship angels, gods, and human beings. The Vietnamese have the custom of a bun, tattooing, tooth dyeing, and betel.

Inheriting the merits of the Ngo Dynasty (939-967) (Lien, 1697), Dinh Tien Hoang, after quenching the forces of sand, unifying the country, founded the Dai Co Viet country, built a unified government from the central to local, laid out apparatus with two departments and martial. The Dinh (968-980) "mostly relied not on Confucian teachings to build the government, but mainly on Buddhist intellectuals." Ngo Chan Luu assumed the position of High Priest, the head of Buddhism, and was conferred the title of Khuong Viet the great master (Great monk to help the country of Vietnam). Besides, there is a majestic title of Sung Chan, awarded to the head of Taoism, Taoist Dang HuyenQuang.

On the other hand, to maintain centralized power after a period of chaos, the law of this period is relatively harsh. As soon as he ascended the throne, the king began to use punishments such as removing the cauldron of oil, feeding the fierce tigers to the violators, making "everyone afraid of submission, no one dares to commit it" (Lien, 1697). Le Dai Hanh, after being crowned emperor, founded the Tien Le Dynasty (in 980), also continued to ask Khuong Viet the great master and monks to help him (Giau, 1973).

### **The Ly, Tran, and Ho dynasties:**

Influence in the Ly and Tran dynasties was dominated by Buddhism (Giau, 1973; Lang, 1974), the state religion in both periods. There have been many studies, comments on the history, as well as many ways to diverge the history of Vietnamese Buddhism, however, everyone agrees that Buddhism reached its peak in rule in the Ly and Tran dynasties.

Many monks, such as Khuong Viet and Van Hanh, contributed significantly to the formation of the Ly Dynasty (1010-1225) (Lien, 1697).

Under the Ly Dynasty appeared Thao Duong Zen lineage, called after the name of its founder. Thao Duong was originally a Chinese monk who went around evangelizing. When stopping at Chiem Thanh, he was accidentally taken to Thang Long by the army of King Ly Thanh Tong in 1069. After discovering his talent and virtue, King Thanh Tong took great care and invited him to join him in the main court. Sometime later, the king appointed him Quoc Su and the abbot at Khai Quoc pagoda.

The history of the Vietnamese election was opened in 1075, under the reign of King Ly Nhan Tong, with the Confucian examination of the three schools (through three exam rounds) to recruit the scientific intelligent (understand the scriptures and study widely). Le Van Thinh was the country's first Poinsettia, was invited to the palace to teach the king to learn, and later became a Thai monk. In 1076, the court built Quoc TuGiam, the first university in the country,

next to Van Mieu (Lien, 1697). Initially, the students at Quoc TuGiam were only princes, descendants of mandarins of the court, later recruited even good learners who were civilians.

As soon as he left the capital to Thang Long, inheriting the deity of To Lich as the Citadel of Dai La citadel, Ly Cong Uan was crowned To Lich as the national capital of Thang Long Thanh Hoang Dai Vuong. Later dynasties continued to worship this god (Lien, 1697).

The Ministry of Letters, which was promulgated by Ly Thai Tong in 1042, was lost, most likely due to the efforts of the Ming Dynasty, when colonizing our country in the fifteenth century, to destroy the indigenous culture. However, historical data shows that the reason why King Ly enacted this law was to reduce the severity and injustice in the previous criminal law, as well as to make the law clear, easy to search, and apply use. Influenced by the Buddhist spirit of compassion, the laws of the Ly period are considered to have many specialties, including the “respect for human rights”.

The early king of the Tran Dynasty is Thai Tong dynasty, who not only built and repaired temples but also went to the mat in the country to build Buddha statues in communal houses, where people stopped at the roadside (Giau, 1973 & 1983). This policy stems from the king’s belief that he was crowned with the help of Buddhism. In 1258, Tran Thai Tong passed the throne to the Crown Prince, forming an early ordination practice for the Prince Tran Dynasty, spending time studying and teaching Zen Buddhism, writing Buddhist books. Similarly, in 1293, the third king Tran Nhan Tong also passed the throne to the Crown Prince, ie Tran Anh Tong, and then ascended to the throne of the Emperor (Hinh, 2007; Van, 2020). The following year, His Majesty ordained the Buddha, and later on, he became the ancestor of the Zen lineage of Vietnam – Truc Lam Zen (Vuong& Tan, 1960). During the Tran Anh Tong dynasty, the king sent envoys to China to collect the Dai Tibet sutras for circulation among the folk. It can be seen that Buddhism has especially received the support and favor of Tran politics.

Also in the Tran dynasty, Confucianism was more important than before. Confucian institutions were decentralized and put into order. Education and Confucian examinations are held regularly. The conflict between Confucianism and Buddhism has hardly appeared. Although many Confucians criticized and tried to repel the influence of Buddhism. In the fourteenth century, Le Quat, a pupil of Chu Van An, wrote an inscription at ThieuPhuc pagoda (Bac Giang) to complain about the underperformance of Confucianism in society. This stele reflects very vividly the contemporary Buddhist life, as well as the helpless mood of a Confucian follower.

Besides the main religions, local folk beliefs continue to develop in diversity. In rural areas, in each village, a relatively independent administrative unit, there are pagodas to worship Buddha, a temple to worship gods, to worship national heroes, people with meritorious services to the village and water. The custom of ancestor worship is widely maintained in the population.

The Tran dynasty’s laws were often changed and unstable compared to the Ly. Some of the laws that were enacted during this period were the QuốcTriềuThốngChế (also known as the QuốcTriềuHànhLuật, in 1230) of the King Tran Thai Tong period, HànhLuậtThu(also known as the HànhThu, 1341) during Tran Du Tong period. The penalties in law are stricter than in the previous period (Van & Luong, 2019).

The Ho Dynasty was established in 1400 when Ho Quy Ly was crowned king. But after only 10 months, Ho Quy Ly gave the throne to Ho Han Thuong to hold the position of Crown Prince (Lien, 1697). Many reforms have been implemented by the Ho dynasty in the fields of economy and society (land limit, family restriction, tax amendments, market management, unification of measurement, etc.), culture (education, examinations), military, defense, politics, and bureaucracy. The Ho dynasty soon became interested in the law. In the first year of rule (1401), Ho Han Thuong had to fix the regime and criminal law of Dai Ngu. With the strict legal regime and social management methods, whether it is recorded that Han Thuong severely punished users of evil arts, but at the same time, he was also very interested in building temples, mausoleums, and worship ancestors (Giau 1973; Van, 2019 & 2020). However, the Ho Dynasty lasted for nearly 7 years, with the last year to focus against the Minh invaders from the North, leaving no significant influence on the society, as well as the religious and religious life of the country.

During the Ming dynasty, the Ming attempted to assimilate the Vietnamese nation by spreading Confucian books (such as the Five Sutras, Four Letters, etc.), promoting the growth of the Confucian class with Song Confucian ideas, besides. Mahayana Buddhism is also taught in our country by Chinese monks (Giau, 1973 & 1983).

### **The period of the Late Le and Tay Son dynasties:**

The Hau Le Dynasty was opened with the fact that Le Loi ascended to the throne after the successful Lam Son uprising, the Minh enemy was expelled in 1428. If the characters in the early stage (the Lê dynasty, 1482-1527) was the intense concentration of power on the central government, in a later stage (Le Trung Hung, 1533-1789), the Le emperors lost their real power, mainly in the name (Vuong& Tan, Vol 1, 1960).

In general, the Le dynasty used Confucianism as the official ideology to rule the country (Giau, 1973 & 1983). The Confucian teachings consistent with the totalitarian order were widely disseminated, the clerical class became more and more numerous. Confucian exams are continuously organized to select talented people. Buddhism and Taoism are much more restricted than in previous dynasties. It can be said that from this period, the religious freedom of dignitaries and Buddhists was significantly limited.

During the reign of Le Thanh Tong, QuốcTriềuHìnhLuật (HìnhLuật, or LuậtHồngĐức) was enacted. This is one of the most comprehensive and progressive laws of the Vietnamese feudal dynasties. The state regime of the message level - a kind of certificate for the monks, learned from China. Article 285 of the Law stipulates: "Monks and Taoists aged 50 and over must have a cleric level to become a monk. If they violate the law, they must leave the pagoda or shop. After 10 days of trial, if not subject to secularism, he will also be guilty as above". Next to that, "Anyone who arbitrarily builds a temple, a shop, casts a bell or a private statue will be satirized. The author said that when the Buddha went to collect money from people for private use, the process of making a nail would be disposed of, and that money had to be paid to the temple. If you raise money and have a certificate of authority, you will not be guilty"(Article 289). The government also strictly controls the monk, if a monk or priest comes to live in a pagoda, shop, or house, he must submit it to the commune authority, who cannot stay for more than three

months (Article 301). The law also prohibits superstitious professions such as numbering, witchcraft, and mediums (Article 337) (Vuong& Tan, Vol 1, 1960).

Ancestor worshipping beliefs and customs are institutionalized by law. The Imperial Court of Law introduced many strict regulations on incense (Articles 399 and 400), protecting the land of incense which is transferred from generation to generation, devoted to ancestor worship first. Accordingly, even poor descendants are not allowed to sell the land of incense (Article 400), nor can they be divided (Article 399).

From the Mac Dynasty (1527 - 1592), there were more communal houses in the villages, a place to worship Thanh Hoang, and community meetings, next to pagodas, temples, and temples. Unlike the earlier period, the villages mainly worshipped the Earth Gods.

Under Trinh Trang's reign, there were the first Western contacts with the Thang Long - Ke Cho government. There is a history that the Italian rabbi Giuliano Baldinotti was one of the first Western missionaries to evangelize in Dang Ngoai in 1626. However, according to some other documents, including the Vietnamese Kham Dinh Vietnamese history of Thong Going Section of the history of the Nguyen Dynasty, the first Westerner to come to our country to preach is Inikhu (Ignacio) (Duy, 2002; Ngoc, 2002). He traveled by sea to NinhCuong and Quan Anh villages of Nam Chan district and Tra Lu village in Giao Thuy district (now in Nam Dinh province) in 1533 during the reign of King Le Trang Tong. Also in 1533, the Dai Viet court issued a ban on preaching and Christianity. The clergy to Dang Ngoai also raised suspicions, including the possibility that they were spies for the Nguyen lords in Dang Trong.

Dang Trong, on the one hand, the Nguyen lords felt the need for spiritual elements for Vietnamese immigrants to the influence of Cham culture, on the other hand, could not use Confucianism because this doctrine directly contradicted the position their breakaway Nguyen. Mahayana Buddhism has been chosen as a solution that meets both the need to preserve the Vietnamese identity and not to reset the ruler's orthodoxy. The policy towards Christianity in Dang Trong has changed from time to time.

During the Trinh-Nguyen period (between the seventeenth century), both the Trinh surname (Dang Ngoai) and the Nguyen surname (Dang Trong) banned European clerics from entering their territory, although there was more lenient, partly because the clergy promises a connection with modern weapons sources. Trinh Lord banned Christianity by edict in 1664, then repeated the ban in 1669. Sometime later, due to apparent French involvement in a conspiracy against Siam in 1685, the ruler's Dai Viet increased suspicion and persecution against Christians. However, it seems that the government's prohibitions are not being effectively implemented in practice and have not prevented the spread of Christianity. Some members of Trinh's family and officials also became Christians.

The Tay Son Dynasty only lasted for a quarter of a century course (omen, prophecies, miracles) to gather the masses, justify political claims. For Christians, in 1779 Nguyen Nhac issued a decree recognizing religious freedom for people living on his territory, specifically targeting Christians (Vuong& tan, Vol 1, 1960). The reason is said to be the attempt to enlist the support of the European clergy. At a later stage, the Nguyen's side had the support of a number of



clergies, especially Ba Da Loc, who increased suspicions against Europeans. Not to mention that the preaching of many clergies tended to criticize the Tay Son rule as illegitimate.

Against that scene, in 1785, Nguyen Nhac issued an order to persecute Christianity, accompanied by the arguments: "I wish to annihilate from my country a spreading Atlantic religion. It is a sect that does not recognize both father and king; I don't know what kind of poison they give people to make them follow; that denomination does not respect our laws, does not respect our guardian, etc. For those reasons and what we know, I order the destruction of all their common houses, and will make a list of list exactly all those who participate in this religion, etc."

For Confucianism and Buddhism, the Tay Son house had considerable tolerance. Quang Trung was a king who used martial arts to build an industry, but he was generous, knowledgeable, and respected talents including the Confucians (Ngo ThiNham, Phan HuyIch, Nguyen Thiep, etc.) (Vuong& Tan, Vol 2, 1960). Realizing that many temples in the villages lacked knowledgeable and virtuous monks, the lack of respect for Buddha worship, the king came to the mat and took down small pagodas, instead of making big temples in each district, every district select educated monks to visit the temple. These are reasonable reforms, but the reign of Tay Son is short, so the influence in society is not much.

### **CONCLUSION:**

Freedom of belief and religion has gone through many ups and downs and changes in Vietnamese history. This historical understanding can bring values to the improvement of laws, policies, and practices of the right to freedom of belief and religion in Vietnam today, as well as bring awareness of the interdependence dimension between freedoms and the diversity of social and political contexts, from the case of Vietnam.

The analysis in this article shows that in different historical periods, perceptions, ways, and degrees of guaranteeing freedom of belief and religion are different in Vietnam. The main factors that govern the perception and guarantee of freedom of belief and religion in Vietnamese history include the ability to influence beliefs and religions on political power; influence of belief, religion in society, and beliefs (or beliefs, religion) of the elite.

Although freedom of belief and religion has their depressions, beliefs and religions have played an important role in the spiritual and spiritual life of Vietnamese people in history. Beliefs and religions have contributed to supporting, protecting, and alleviating suffering brought about by wars, natural disasters, and oppression, as well as contributing to creating spiritual strength for the nation. In addition, belief and religion are also important factors contributing to the creation of fine cultural traditions of the Vietnamese nation. In the history of our country, many kings and national leaders have recognized those values, and thus respected and protected the people's right to freedom of belief and religion, and promoted tolerance to respect education in Vietnamese society.

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