



The basis for forming the view on human in Le Quy Don's thought

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Abstract

The human issue in Le Quy Don's thought can be understood through the views on humans, society and the relationship between them in his works. Le Quy Don (1726–1784) was a prominent scholar, culturalist, and politician of the Le-Trinh dynasty. He was famous for his profound thoughts and great contributions to Vietnamese culture. His thoughts were deeply influenced by Confucianism, but also incorporated Western philosophical and scientific values. On the other hand, the human issue in Le Quy Don's thought is also formed from the foundations of socio-economic conditions, cultural and ideological premises and the qualities of Le Quy Don himself.

Keywords: Human, thoughts of Le Quy Don

Introduction

In the history of feudal Vietnam, Le Quy Don was the most outstanding scholar, known as “the great scholar of feudal Vietnam”. He made great contributions to the nation's cultural treasure, glorifying the country's culture. Until now, many scientific fields in our country have still had to inherit his great achievements to promote and develop. He is a scholar with profound and diverse knowledge. All of the highest knowledge of 18th century Vietnam is included in the works of Le Quy Don. Le Quy Don's ideology is quite rich, in which his views on human beings contain many profound values. Le Quy Don's view on human beings was formed from many different bases and conditions, including both subjective and objective conditions

Research Results and Discussion

1. Socio-economic conditions are one of the bases that form the human issue in Le Quy Don's thought

Economically, the commodity and monetary economy gradually became dominant; the developed transportation system created favorable conditions for commercial activities; domestic transactions formed a dense, large network; handicrafts increased in number of industries, separated from agricultural activities, becoming an independent field. - Some new crafts appeared and became popular in the 17th and 18th centuries such as: mining, woodblock printing, making white sugar. Many traditional crafts such as pottery, silk weaving, paper making, bronze casting, etc. continue to develop. Famous craft villages during this period: Tho Ha pottery village (Bac Giang), Bat Trang (Hanoi), La Khe weaving village (Hanoi), Yen Thai paper village (Hanoi), Nho Lam iron forging village (Nghe An), sugar villages in Quang Nam. The development of contemporary craft villages helps people in craft villages to both produce handicrafts and farm. Some craftsmen left their villages and went to the city, established guilds, and both produced and sold goods. Merchant ships from Portugal, the Netherlands, France, and England came to Vietnam to trade busily. Renovated urban areas in cities and suburbs created a new urban class. However, due to the prolonged political division and separatism, people fell into misery; crop failure, famine, displacement, and fallow land occurred everywhere.

The historical context of Vietnam in the 17th-18th centuries was characterized by the existence of the Trinh-Nguyen conflict period, and the birth, development, and collapse of the Tay Son dynasty. The issue of promoting human inner strength in the history of the Vietnamese nation in the 17th-18th centuries needs to be placed in the contemporary historical context to grasp the requirements and strategies and ideas to solve those requirements as Le Quy Don once mentioned: When you put your mind into that era, put yourself in that situation, you often feel moved and sympathetic with sadness before the events of the past. Vietnamese society in the 17th and 18th centuries was always in a state of constant political turmoil and change with constant wars, riots, and coups. That was the period following the transition from the period of the Northern and Southern Dynasties to the division of Đàng Trong and Đàng Ngoài, which began with a war of nearly half a century (1627-1672); the Tay Son uprising that broke out in 1771 gradually became a great national movement, arousing the internal resources of the people, especially the spirit of patriotism.

The society of this period was characterized by the decline of Confucianism, the expansion of Buddhism, Taoism and the emergence of a new religion, Christianity. In the 17th century, along with the spread of Christianity, the National Language script was created but was only used mainly within the scope of missionary activities and was not widely popularized. From within Vietnam in the 17th-18th centuries, the issue of promoting human inner strength was raised: Firstly, the issue of determining the purpose of promoting human internal strength to meet the requirements of the economic - political - social situation; secondly, seeking and proposing suitable ideas in promoting human internal strength; thirdly, thinking, choosing and testing ways to organize political - social life to promote human internal strength, especially in the political and military fields.

It can be seen that Le Quy Don lived in a period when society was undergoing many changes, along with the flourishing of economic activities that were increasingly undergoing profound changes with complex issues. Besides favorable conditions for socio-economic development, there were also instability in many aspects. It was the deep-rooted economic and social causes that gave rise to wars over

territorial disputes between the North and the South. This created the impetus for the Tay Son dynasty to end the Trinh-Nguyen civil war between the two feudal groups: Trinh in the North and Nguyen in the South, overthrowing these two groups and the Later Le dynasty, ending the discrimination between Dang Trong and Dang Ngoai (the North and the South) that lasted for two centuries. However, the changes of the times at the end of the 18th century caused Le Quy Don to have profound changes in his thinking, especially in his perception of human issues, the movement of society and the impact of humans on the changes of the times.

2. Cultural and ideological premise

Ideological and religious life during this period had significant changes. To save the situation and sanctify its authority, Confucianism was strongly protected and promoted by the Le Dynasty and the Trinh and Nguyen feudal groups. This ideology had become the orthodox doctrine and the disciplined foundation for social life. Following the spread of the bureaucracy and education system, Confucianism spread to the villages. Therefore, feudal relations increasingly dominated social life, hindering the development of national culture and human intelligence. The Confucian educational and examination system was maintained. Examinations continued to be held to select the talented. However, in general, the imperial examinations were no longer organized as systematically as before. Cheating in exams was quite common. Therefore, most of the Confucian scholars of this period degenerated and changed, contributing little to the country's cultural career like in previous periods. The Nôm story genre was highly developed in the 18th century. This type of literature only uses traditional poetic forms to compose (six-eight poetry, seven-seven-six-eight poetry). The authors of Nôm stories were mostly common intellectuals, close to the working people. They used simple, rustic verses to reenact folk tales (a few of which are Chinese ones). Usually, the authors of Nôm stories do not write for the purpose of leaving their names, so there were many anonymous Nôm stories. In general, the ruling class discriminated against this type of literature. There was a period of time they banned it. Folk literature developed strongly in all genres, with a fierce anti-feudal spirit and reflecting the aspirations of the people. Proverbs, folk songs, jokes, satires, etc. made up a large proportion of the folk literature of this period. The target of attack was the king, the mandarins and the bad habits of society.

Thinkers in the 17th-18th century mostly emphasized the role of humans at both the individual and national-ethnic and social community levels; were interested in promoting human inner strength and contained valuable viewpoints affirming human rights and liberating humans.

At the individual level, thinkers hold the view that humans were born equal, endowed with an inherent nature, and possess abundant inner strength. According to Zen master Chan Nguyen: Each sentient being had a lotus flower. Flowers were the nature. The heaven and earth were equal. Ngo Thi Nham approached not general people, abstract people but specific people with a good nature. According to him, inherent nature was the basic and core nature of every person; Heaven bestowed upon humans a loyal and constant heart. 17th-18th century thinkers also believed that human nature was influenced by social circumstances (the impact

of living conditions, desire for fame and fortune, struggle for power.) causing people to go astray, falling into a sea of suffering, making human inner strength buried and unable to rise up to contribute to the development of individuals, nations and humanity justifiably. However, most thinkers had an optimistic view of positive change, coming from enlightenment within each person. According to Le Quy Don: Destiny was created by man, not destiny created man.

At the national-ethnic or social community level, the most important human inner strength was the one that originated within the People. The will of the people was the will of heaven, was a motto that had been thoroughly implemented throughout almost all feudal dynasties in Vietnam. Le Quy Don emphasized: The root of the country was the people, the king's destiny was also the people. The powerful ministers caused chaos inside and the hostile countries caused trouble outside. This was not so worrying. Only when the people's hearts waver was it very scary; To build a country, create prestige, expand territory, and conquer distant places, it must first win the hearts of the people. Ngo Thi Nham affirmed: Heaven's principles were in the hearts of man; the Son of Heaven listened and watched over the people. Once the people's hearts were aroused, the Son of Heaven's will could be achieved.

It can be seen that the People had a special importance, Vietnamese thinkers of the 17th and 18th centuries considered the will of the people as the will of heaven, the people's heart as the basis for the existence and development of peace and prosperity; the promotion of human internal strength must be further promoted to create a solid foundation for Vietnamese society against the invasion plots of external forces and to achieve territorial unification and build a stable social order in Vietnam.

17th-18th century thinkers presented many ways for people to cultivate themselves, helping them to separate themselves from negative external influences, develop their inner strength, and bring forth good things with diverse methods such as practice, meditation, or moral cultivation. Zen master Huong Hai believed that it was necessary to make the human mind clear: as long as the mind was open, bright, clear, and at ease, like the moon in the water, flowers in the mirror; though it was nothing, it can still be seen, like a mirror that reflects all things without any intention, it reflects but did not linger on any scene. The most important way to train and develop human inner strength was through education and self-education.

17th-18th century thinkers asserted that humanity must be honed by education. Each person must know himself, must try to improve himself every day to become a perfect person. Education helps people expand their knowledge, delve into the inner nature to understand things; perceive the reason and nature of things, not just stop at the external form and appearance; spread good values into people's hearts.

17th-18th century thinkers proposed educational views that were oriented towards practical learning in accordance with the historical context of that time. In which, Ngo Thi Nham advocated that we must skillfully nurture scholars, then used scholars to nurture scholars without needing the state to nurture them, those who were good at teaching people must rely on others to teach others, not just rely on themselves to teach others; properly implemented the teaching, nurturing, promoting, and using policies according to the motto: Teach with technique, nurture with a system, promote with

method, use with order; use measures to set examples of people with good virtues to serve as models and remove arrogant people to deter.

Nurturing people and relaxing the people was the force to repel all hostile forces and foreign invaders of Vietnam - this was the policy of accumulating and awakening the internal human resources that most feudal dynasties in Vietnam summarized and applied. Le Quy Don considered the issue of nurturing people's strength as one of three important matters that could not be ignored. The army was tired, money was exhausted, the people were miserable while government had no good plan for the future, then it could only accept failure. Ngo Thi Nham also agreed and emphasized that nurturing the people was the key to politics: The key political method of all time was to study and rectify the state of deprivation and the reality of deprivation.

Using the talented and rolling out the red carpet to invite the talented to help the king govern the country was a thousand-year-old strategy of the Vietnamese people. Thinkers of the 17th and 18th centuries were well aware of the importance of this strategy. Using talents at the important position is promoting the role of talented people like bright stars in the sky, when the sky creates darkness, the gentleman must show his talents; proposing strategies to attract talents such as allowing people to submit petitions to report on matters, promoting regardless of rank, not accusing people of careless words.

In general, there were many changes that greatly impacted Vietnamese culture and people during this period. However, the human issue was always central to the thinking of researchers. They always wanted to promote people in relation to nature and society, arousing the great potential in each individual to contribute to the development of the country. Besides, the view that the country took the people as its root was a consistent view in contemporary thought. These things greatly influenced Le Quy Don's thoughts and viewpoints, giving him a comprehensive and sharp view of current events, people and their contributions to the country's development as well as the position and role of people in society.

3. Le Quy Don's qualities are an important basis for forming the human issue in his thoughts.

The 19th century historian Phan Huy Chu made a general and complete comment about the scholar Le Quy Don: He had a different personality, more intelligence than others but still maintained a gentle nature, and studied tirelessly. Although he passed the exam with honor, his hand still did not leave the book. He wrote many books in his life. Discussing the classics and history was profound and broad while talking about the anecdotes was complete and clear. His forte was superior and famous in the world.

Le Quy Don was famous for being a child prodigy with an extraordinary memory. People commented that he was unusually intelligent and could never forget a book he had read once. There was an anecdote that the village chief's book recording the names of rice payers unfortunately caught fire and burned to ashes. The student Don had once skimmed through it, so he recited it fluently from memory. Smart people were good at responding. The text of the poem Snake that has been passed down to this day shows that the author must have been a poetic prodigy. At the age of 14, he had read most of the Confucian classics. At the age of 18, he passed the Huong Exam (Provincial Exam) with the highest

score. Then he passed the Hội Exam and the Đình Exam (Metropolitan Exam and Royal Court Exam)

It can be said that, when he passed the exams to become an official, when he was a Thi Thu at the Academy, a Toan Tu Quoc Su or a Huu Thi Lang of the Ministry of Finance, when he was an ambassador to China., in whatever position, Le Quy Don always fulfilled his responsibilities as an intellectual with a spirit of self-respect and national pride; an honest official, caring for the people, close to the people. Besides, he was also an example of learning, diligence, and hard work to observe and acquire knowledge. In the book *Van Dai Loai Ngu*, he cited 557 different books.

Le Quy Don's own thing is that he was very afraid of not paying attention to the content but just copying old sentences. He hated the standard exams with the aim of becoming a perfect mandarin without any uniqueness or personality. In the work *Van dai loai ngu*, he criticized contemporary Confucian scholars for only knowing how to cram abstract classics and proposed changing the teaching method so that students would know all six arts, including both literature (i.e. books) and military.

In particular, the way of learning and absorbing was to find the nature of the problem, as he said, one must know how to grasp the main thing. He strongly opposed rote learning, which meant one must have a reasoning mind and not rely on books. He highly valued learning by practicing: Reading a book a yard was not equal to practicing an inch. He himself was an example of learning by reading books and practicing by writing books.

It can be seen that Le Quy Don's qualities are one of the important factors for him to have profound perceptions of current events, analysis and evaluation of people along with the movement and development of people in nature and society. Independence and freedom from contemporary thinking created a unique mark for Le Quy Don's thoughts on human issues.

Conclusion

It can be seen that there are many factors affecting the formation of human issues in Le Quy Don's thoughts, due to socio-economic conditions, ideological premises, and his own qualities and ethics. In Le Quy Don's thought, human is not only an independent individual but also an important part of society. He promoted moral cultivation, intelligence and the ability to learn, and emphasized the role of each individual in building a fair and harmonious society. Le Quy Don also valued the relationship between humans and nature, between individuals and communities, in which human values and comprehensive human development were considered the ultimate goal.

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