

On Religious Issue

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ABSTRACT: From the idea of Hồ Chí Minh: “Vietnamese people do not have religion as in European way of thinking” the author carried out analysis on Far Eastern religions in general, and on Vietnamese religions in particular. He emphasizes that because religions have positive and negative aspects, the point is how to exploit positive contributions and to restrict negative, antiquated ones.

1. During about two centuries, but especially in this century, with the increasing tendency and the affirmation of civilizations outside Europe, with progressive methods of approach in which Marxism-Leninism has added a notable contribution, with the present theory of cultural relativism, the tendency to universalize culture, *special* concepts of European culture in social sciences and humanities are coming to an end. This fact has been remarked by K. Marx in some of his works, especially in the famous work *Pre-capitalist Modes of production*.¹ Hồ Chí Minh was one of the first men to be aware of this important issue in his *Report on Tonkin, Annam, Cochinchina (1924)*² which had surprised many Eastern and Western scholars.

Especially on the religious issue, K. Marx had found that in the East, with the Asiatic mode of production, the supreme right to property was in the hands of "a unique person", partly the real Eastern despotic king, partly the imaginary person of the tribute, a kind of God³ often called the Son of Heaven or *devaraja*, who governed both the soul and the body, the living and the dead within the limit of his territory. Thus K. Marx had seen that religions here were different from the West with a Creator. Hồ Chí Minh had seen this fact since 1923, when he received Josip Mandenstam the poet: “Vietnamese people do not have religion as in European way of thinking.”⁴ Recently, Phạm Văn Đồng had a similar remark⁵.

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2. In fact, the term *religion* translated into *tôn giáo* in Vietnamese became a common term for designating different religions when a community was aware of two different forms of religion in opposition to each other or a religion belonging to a relatively foreign civilization. The Latin term *religio*, used firstly by Cicero (106-43) started from the verb *ligere, religere* meaning "to collect, to re-collect". This conception was formed in the situation of countries with their somewhat similar religious forms, pantheons in the world known by Cicero. It reflected a requirement of the ethnic community of the time to expand the visible world to the invisible one with gods, semi-gods, and divinities of the community.

After the appearance of Christianity, with the emergence of a religion for the Roman Empire, and the requirement of wiping out ancient religions, Tertullian (155-220), then Lactance (260-325), Christian scholars under the influence of Christianity were inclined toward *ligare, religare* meaning "to bind, to rebind (believers with God)." In the beginning, in ancient French (1080), *religion* had no meaning but a monastery.⁶ Y. Lambert stressed that this word meant behavior of believers or people living in a monastery⁷ to express their faith in rites and cults. In 1117, again from this dictionary, *religion* meant all behavior of ritual character in close relationship with a sacred conception toward the force deciding of the link, and the relation of the soul toward God. Thus the word *religion* only means Christianity, because any religious form different from Christianity was considered as a heresy, or a superstition. It was exactly like Talleyrand said, religion at that time was the State. With the arrival of the 16th century, came the birth and development of Protestantism, which separated from Catholicism, the term *religion* began to be used in the scientific and religious field to mean two religions adoring God. With the expansion of capitalism outside Europe, the term *religion* was used to mean other religious forms in the world. In the 17th, the term *religion* began to appear in Japan then came to China, and Vietnam in the 19th century.

3. One should say that in China, from the *Etymological Dictionary*, in the 13th century *tôn giáo* was used to refer to Buddhism. "Buddhism called teachings by Buddha "giáo" (doctrine) and the words of his adepts "tôn(g)" (principles). *Tông* was a branch of "giáo", and the combination of these two words made "tôn giáo"⁸. In India as in China there did not exist a term for calling religion in general. The term *sanatama dharma* means a religion without the founder, a synthesis of eternal norms of the existence⁹. This Hindu term was given by Islamic invaders to the peoples of the Indus valley. Islamic conquerors at that time did not consider temples and deep

dogmas of India as "a religion" like the doctrine of Allah. Up to the 13th century, the English used the term Hinduism for the whole body of faiths and practices of religious character of the majority of population in India.

In Viet Nam, the term *Đạo* of Chinese origin is not quite synonymous with "religion" for it may have a non religious character. *Đạo* means the way, the doctrine, the principle of life, the moral rule, morality, often of purely philosophical character with a religious nuance or uniquely of secular essence. To address a specific religion one should add the name of this religion like *Đạo Nho* (Confucianism), *Đạo Kitô* (Christianity), *Đạo Tổ tiên* (ancestors worship) or one must add the word *thờ* such as *Đạo thờ Thành Hoàng* (the cult of Tutelary gods), *Đạo thờ ông bà* (the cult of ancestors), *Đạo thờ Vua Hùng* (the cult of Hung Kings) etc. When Christianity came to Viet Nam, the word *đạo* was used to call the part following Christianity in opposition to the part called *luong*¹⁰ or good citizens. To refer to a religion sometimes we find the addition of a word like *giáo* (doctrine) after the name of the religion such as *Kitô giáo* (Christianity). *Nho giáo* (Confucianism)... *Giáo* means only "to teach", the teaching of saints and divinities, parents or teachers. The purely Vietnamese term *thờ* was expressed in *Nôm* by or, consisting of *d* - the phonetic part and *lễ* or *sự*, the part for expressing the meaning. *Lễ* means respect (here it has the connotation of incurring a blame when one does something wrong) toward a supernatural being or a respectful behavior toward a superior (parents, teachers), toward a person becoming an example to be followed. The word *thờ* often goes with *cúng* (to offer sacrifices). *Thờ cúng* is a behavior of religious character. *Thờ* and *thờ cúng* cannot be equivalent to *religion* in designating a concrete religion.

From what has been explained, we see that the term religion was used to designate different forms of ancient, modern religions in the West and the East, it appeared only when there existed two different beliefs at least equal, or not greatly inferior to each other in the eyes of the mass or of the intellectuals, but these beliefs could not be reconciled. They could not exist when the State was identified to the religion or when principles and actions had been merged into the customs and habits of a community. No doubt the term started from the content of a Christian concept. This was a reality in the research process on religions because researches of religions with scientific methods began in Europe. It was not strange therefore if many Western researchers tried to avoid this conception when approaching other religious forms in the world, but they are still hampered by the idea of "a bind". They only replaced the term God, Creator by other terms such as *the sacred*, *the ultimate reality*, *the absolute truth*...¹¹ no doubt understood in a larger manner.

Very few Western researchers have a clear-cut understanding of Far Eastern religions in general, and of Vietnamese religions in particular. It is therefore not strange when recently many Western researchers considered that the religion in Viet Nam is Buddhism, a Chinese religion, or animism(!)¹², an "inferior" religion not yet being a monotheist one. Only L. Cadière found out this fact when he wrote in 1913: "Far Eastern peoples, especially Vietnamese, have a deeply religious mentality. The term religion includes many degrees, many nuances..." He wrote: "(If one follows a Christian interpretation) one must say that Vietnamese have no religion, the concept of a Supreme Being was alien to them.

They live without God. But if we conceive that religions consist in the faith and practices influencing the behavior according to what is right in human life, the Vietnamese have this quality in a high degree."⁽¹³⁾

Vietnamese have a pantheist mentality different from Europeans with their monotheist mentality. This is also the mentality of the Japanese, Chinese, of people cultivating wet rice in the monsoon region of the wet tropical zone, without the husbandry of herds of cattle. In Viet Nam, even among people following a monotheist religion, their religious mentality remains pantheistic polytheist¹⁴. The fact that Catholicism recently allowed Vietnamese Catholics to practice the cult of ancestor worship and the majority of Vietnamese under different forms still follows this cult is one example. We do not speak of a number of village divinities that have made great contributions to the people like Nguyễn Công Trứ, who exploited the region of Kim Sơn, Tiền Hải and there remains a small number that still believe in divination, and go to pagodas or Taoist temples.

4. Religions belong to a quite special category of ideology, they often persisted through time and space, not necessarily bound to a definite mode of production though governing strata made use of them to strengthen the regime. They have been a social element of communal character and followed by the whole community.

Religions have been present since the beginning of humanity, about 100 000 years ago with the birth of clans. They have changed, have adapted, have transformed together with time and are present even today together with mankind, with a great majority of mankind believers¹⁵. F. Engels wrote: "Religions were born in the very primitive period. These religious concepts were therefore common to a group of the population, of the same blood, then they were differentiated and developed in a special manner among nations."¹⁶

Looking at human history since its organization into societies, one can find five periods of the appearance of religions, not homogenous in different areas, whose different forms and shades answered the requirements of the development of mankind.

1) The birth of clannish societies brought about the birth of religions reflecting simple relations of first community members, totemism with different forms of witchcraft and funeral rites.

2) The birth of agricultural production brought out socio-political communities (territorial communities) beside communities based on blood which gave rise to ethnical religions, the cult of ancestors (according to blood), agricultural rites.

3) The birth of empires including many countries, nations, ethnical groups led to religions of a real or global character.

4) The birth and development of industrial societies gave rise to the conscience of freedom of religion, of the variety and equality of religions in a nation, a social community and put an end to the monopoly of a religion in a country.

5) When universalization becomes the reality of contemporary society, it brings about the division of major religions, the appearance of many "floating" religious phenomena, and the religious awareness will wear a form different from what we have experienced. It will be the period when mankind will be delivered from (organized) religions to return to "the religious" (*le religieux*) as the title of a book said.¹⁷

The aspect of a religion differs in different places, regions, countries.

Religions which appeared since the beginning or in a class society, or even which are asserting themselves before our eyes are bound to the spiritual needs of human life, thus the reason that man creates religions. A great number have died out because they could not adapt, some still survive on account of their dynamic character and their adaptation to the need of the population.

Each religious form has its own life. Some religious elements never become a religion. Some religions in their historical process had changed their form, or remained in a number of places then developed, either by becoming an element of a later religion or by coexisting with other religions without mixing with them. The number of dead religions is greater than the number of existing ones.

I would like to present some examples in Vietnam. Totemism has become an element of other religions or has changed to become a symbol of a national religion or of the leader of a religion, though it is interpreted in a quite popular manner or is still firm among a number of ethnic groups such as the Khmú, the Giê Triêng. Primitive witchcraft still is preserved like amulets, casting a spell, etc it has penetrated either into Taoism, or even is wearing a scientific appearance under modern witchcraft¹⁸ (persons having strange abilities: telepathists, persons able to see things very far from them, can call souls of the dead in the Western manner). Brahmanism, Confucianism, Christianity, Islam, Taoism, religions worshipping the dead. They still survive, and will survive through time and space. That is why some authors say that there can exist a Buddhism, a Taoism or many Buddhisms, many Taoisms. Some of them are still major religions among a number of ethnic groups, though they have been in contact with more strictly organized religions like the cult of ancestors in Black Africa, Latin America, or the Far East with simple organizational forms. Some religions are dimly expressed in their birthplace but were adopted by other peoples mainly in a peaceful way. This was the case of Buddhism. Some religions can expand throughout the whole world such as Christianity, Islam, Buddhism. Others can only influence within a region such as Taoism, Confucianism.

Entering the present universalization period, when religions are in a peaceful competitive contact or integration, there has appeared religions with a mixed contents such as Cao Đài, Hòa Hảo, Ba'hai'i or sects which are growing everywhere like mushrooms in Autumn.

5. In a religious community, everybody participate irrespective of social class, profession, age, sex, even ethnical group, language, culture. Relations bear a communal character, but each individual, each group, though worshipping the same object, reading the same book, following the same religious institutions, interprets them in a different manner, according to the social position, the intellectual and cultural background. But the most striking difference, in the last analysis originates from the difference of social communities (from the ethnical group in the nation). *But the national religion (or the traditional religion) remains the religion bearing the deep mentality of the national community.* An exogenous religion to survive in any national community, on account of the depth of the national culture, has to undergo an acculturation with different degrees to become either a sect¹⁹ or to transform in the common tendency of integration into local religions. The case of Buddhism and Shinto before the Meiji period in Japan, of Buddhism and the cult of

ancestors in South Vietnam, the fusion of the three doctrines (Buddhism, Confucianism, Taoism) with local religions in China, Vietnam, Korea, and Japan are examples. The case of Brahmanism and Islam which penetrated and survived in a matriarchal society of the ancient Champa Kingdom and among present day Chams as well as the case of Vietnamese Christians who are glad when they may offer a cult to their ancestors are concrete examples.

The world has witnessed differences expressed in Christianity and Islam when these religions penetrated into nations in Asia.

We therefore have to recognize a reality: a national religion no matter in what form it is expressed is dearest to mankind. As long as a nation survive and has its role in history the national form of religion will survive, as Hồ Chí Minh said: "In Vietnam, the cult of ancestors is quite a social phenomenon. Members in the family carry out yearly rites of commemoration."²⁰ The cult of ancestors here is not understood within the frame of blood relationships has penetrated deeply into customs and habits, in the life cycle of men, of the community, from the household to the village and the country. F. Engels, and other scholars before and after him, when discussing religion, greatly appreciated the role of national religions. He wrote: "Gods created in this manner in each special nation are national gods and their power do not exceed the limits of the national area they protect. All these gods only lived in the representation as long as the nation which created them survives and would disappear with the death of this nation."²¹

Starting from the cultural viewpoint, the universal tendency in the safeguard and development of the national culture, in which religions are a component, the return to national religions is easy to be understood. In our country, a country with the pantheistic tendency, and with many religions, it is quite natural that there exists a tendency toward a system of national religions: the cult of the sky and the earth, the cult of Hùng Kings, of persons who greatly contributed to the building and safeguard of the country, having made great contributions to villages, to professions, to lineages, and families. Hồ Chí Minh had recognized this fact when he highly appreciated the merits of the Hùng Kings²² as well as the cult of ancestors in a large meaning, including both the community of blood relationship and that of the territory, Phạm Văn Đồng stressed more clearly: "As regards the cult everybody pays a cult to grandparents every lineage pays a cult to ancestors, the village offers a cult to Tutelary Gods, to heroes having safeguarded the fatherland, to patrons of professions, to great men of culture. Seen from the cultural viewpoint, this is a

characteristic worthy of the respect of the Vietnamese, because it commemorates persons having greatly contributed to the present life in every village and family."²³ Even in the present state, in our country, the system of national religions must deeply penetrate into other religions if they do not want to become strange objects.²⁴

6. A problem, however, remains. If we have accepted that religions were born in the infancy of human society, almost all scientists on religions are unanimous on the point that faith or belief is the kernel of a religion, the element to unite the religious community, the essence of a religion is however the content and behavior leading to that religious faith or belief. If a differentiation proves necessary, this is the differentiation between religions and witchcrafts or separate religious phenomena not having the necessary conditions to become a religion: omens, prayers for having a heir... We cannot accept "religious" phenomena of anti-cultural character of pseudo-religious phenomena like Vãng Chử doctrine or the coming of the king, among the Hmông.²⁵

The religious organization though playing a very important role often is but a means to preserve and develop a religious community consisting of a clan, a nation or even the world. Any religion has an organizational character either simple or complex, either loose or strict, according to sects or included in the administrative power... An equal attitude toward religious is a principle to be respected. The criterion for appraising a religion be it monotheist or pantheist, in any organizational form is the love for the fatherland, *for the Fatherland is the community including all other communities, even religious ones*. The fatherland is the place in which a religion was born and it is closely bound to any religion. That is why the slogan "Happiness in life and faithfulness to the religion", "Religious doctrine, nation, socialism" or "Living in the nation according to the Testament" are just. The encouragement for any religion to focus on the nation is followed by any country. In our country it is all the more necessary on account of historical aftermaths and enemy's designs aiming at linking the problem of human rights to freedom of religion with a view to oppose the nation.

A problem worthy of attention is developing mutual respect between religions in the tendency of preserving harmony while opposing unification in religious activities of Vietnamese. Owing to this tradition Viet Nam is different from Europe, having avoided religious wars in feudal times, a Vietnamese looks on divinities of other religions like their own divinities, because all of them want to do Good, and

divinities of other religions are worshipped in the same pantheon. That is why Vietnamese can easily participate in activities of other religions though they assert that they are believers of a major religion. The policy on religions of the Party is gradually being completed to continue this tradition which in a few past decades has endured frustrations especially in the temporarily occupied area in the two recent resistances. This is the tradition of union and respect toward religions on the basis of a union to build a "rich people, strong country, equal and civilized society."

One should not think that only those religions which have been recognized as juridical persons are religions. The determination of the State is to carry out the policy on religion. In China there are many religions whose number is about a hundred, but the State manages but five religions. The Vietnamese policy of religions had been mapped out by President Hồ Chí Minh only one day after the Proclamation of Independence (3 September 1945). The spirit of this policy has been followed consistently and has been conformed to the change of situations. In 1990 *The Politburo issued the Decision No 24* and recently (on 2 July 1998) issued the *Decree on Religious Activities in the new Situation* to respond to the renovation of the country. The Government recently issued *Decision No. 26/1999/ND-CP* on 19 March 1999 on religious activities.

7. One should unify the object of religion in its right meaning, adapted to the West and the East, to the ancient and the present time, in keeping with Marxism-Leninism and the thought of Hồ Chí Minh. Could it be that the object of religions in their most common features is the *supernatural, invisible world of sacred character and illusory interactions between man and this world to interpret problems of this world in social relations and relations between man and the world beyond in different geographical conditions of different religious, social communities.*

Like other cultural elements, religions have positive and negative aspects. The point is how to exploit positive contributions, to restrict negative, antiquated ones. Religions were born out of a real requirement of mankind, at any time, for man has always tried to explore something beyond the terrestrial world. This is a necessity and one of the reasons explaining the superiority of man over all other creatures. R. Garandy justly said: "Man is different from animals in the fact that he knows how to bury his fellow-men." Science while approaching the invisible world and bringing to humanity fresh knowledge at the same time shows that there exist so many things still Unknown. A genius like Albert Einstein found in religion an incentive, an

encouragement to sacrifice for science. He said: "The feeling of scientists bears the form of a pleasant astonishment before the harmony of natural laws, which reveals a so high degree of intelligence that compared with it, all human creative thinking and action is but a quite insignificant reflection. This feeling has been the major feature leading the lives and work, of scientists and it gives them the courage to achieve success in liberating themselves from egoistic desires. No doubt, this feeling has been near to those creators of religions, it has shone through all times."²⁶

It is true that if science only approaches a truth, and adopts a relative truth, then religions lead man to the aspiration of solving an absolute truth, though illusory. To protect man before nature, religions want to have the effect of appeasing the sufferings of humanity and of each man in a society enduring many inequalities, sufferings, to exhale "perfume" (the word by Marx) to every person, every different fate, to give a bit hope though faltering so that any person might live "in peace" in the human ocean of sufferings.

Religion encourages man to do good, to avoid the evil, to participate in the equilibrium of every man's state of mind. This opinion was found in the thought of Hồ Chí Minh when he said that any religion has a good essence. This was also the idea of the theologian B. Boenhoeffer: "I want to speak of God not in His restrictions but in the essence, not in His weakness but in His force, not in the death and sins, but in the life and beauty of man."²⁷

This approach conforms to the present secularization tendency of religions in their effort to realize mutual collaboration between men and the State to undertake charitable works like helping orphaned children, isolated, poor, invalid persons, persons enduring natural calamities, illnesses. Religions oppose prostitution, drugs, build schools, medical bases, leper colonies, psychiatric hospitals, etc. even participate in national liberation movements against social inequalities, against wars for the safeguarding of peace, against maneuvers of making use of religions.

These acts agree with the nationalization tendency to safeguard the national identity in a legitimate manner without falling into extremist nationalism. It opposes the tendency of superpowers to realize "the national assimilation as a result of genocide."²⁸ A genuine patriotism proves necessary to safeguard and encourage the integration of religions into the nation. It is also the way to encourage religions in the common country to find the common language, despite divergences in dogmas, the way for helping religions to serve the national interest while preserving their own

religious faith. It is also a way for preventing extremist religious actions as well as the ambition of applying a world-wide religion to humanity.

I would like to end this article by recalling a familiar saying by Hồ Chí Minh - a genuine Marxist-Leninist: "The teaching of Confucius has a strong point; i.e., self-improvement of personal virtue. Jesus' Bible has a strong point; i.e., noble altruism. Marxism has a strong point; i.e., a dialectical working method. Sun Yixian's doctrine has a strong point; i.e., their policies are suited to conditions in our country. Does Confucianism, Jesus, Marx and Sun Yat-sen share common points? Yes. They all pursued a way to bring happiness to human beings and benefit to society. If they were still alive today, and if they were grouped together, I believe they would live in harmony, like close friends. I try to become their little pupil."²⁹

The creators of Marxism-Leninism also recognized that the content of their doctrine was an inheritance of historical essences, which have been developed to serve the struggle for building a society adapted to the necessary progress of humanity. The preceding passage of Hồ Chí Minh might be compared with the famous definition of Lenin in 1918: "Socialism is the soviet power + the order of Prussian railway + the technique and organization of American trusts + American national education and etc."³⁰

For religions of today, beside the vigilance to oppose forces making use of them against the State, and anti-cultural behaviors, we have to exploit positive elements in religions in their diversity to unite believers of different religions and realize the slogan of Hồ Chí Minh: "Umon, union, great union" so as to build the country in the context of the present world full of animation.

(paper has been printed on *Vietnam Social Sciences*, No. 2, 2001)

Reference:

1. K. Marx, F. Engels. *Complete Works* (Vietnamese translation), National Political Publishing House, Ha Noi, 1995. K. Marx, F. Engels, V.I. Lenin. *On Precapitalist Societies*, Social Sciences Publishing House, Ha Noi, 1995.
2. Hồ Chí Minh. *Complete Works*. Tome 1, 2nd edition 1995, p. 465. He had not yet read the manuscript by Marx, but had brought out an exact idea when saying: In any case, nothing prevents us adding "a historical basis" to Marxism by supplementing documents that in his time Marx could not have. Marx had built his doctrine on a definite philosophy of history. But which history? History of Europe. But what is Europe? It is not the whole humanity. Revise Marxism regarding its basis. Consolidate it by Eastern ethnology. "Hồ Chí Minh may be considered as a critic of Eurocentrism which only at the second half of the 20th century scientific circles systematically recognized" (*D. Amm, L'eurocentrisme. Critique d' une idéologie*).

3. K. Marx. *Complete Works*, p, 16.
4. Hồ Chí Minh. *Complete Works*, Tome I, *Ibid.*, p. 479.
5. Phạm Văn Đồng. *Culture and Renovation* (in Vietnamese), National Political Publishing House, 1994, p. 75.
6. Petit Robert. I. Paris 1967.
7. Y. Lambert. *La définition de la religion et l'identité religieuse*, in F. Milton (ed). *Religiosité, Religions et identités religieuses, Recherches sur la Philosophie et le Langage*, No. 19, 1998, pp. 283-305.
8. *Etymological Dictionary* (in Chinese), Tome II. *Thuong Vu an thu quan*, Beijing, 1980.
9. I. Kapmi. *L' hindouisme* in J. Grilltti. Delumeau (ed) *Lefait religielde*, Fayard, Paris.
10. “*Luong*” means “*luong thiện*” (honest) designated persons following the doctrine of our country (according to Nguyễn Đình Chiểu), in opposition to Catholics. In publications by the Institute of Religious Studies, “*luong*” has been replaced by non-Catholics or non-Christians, including also those who are Buddhists or practicing ancestor worship.
11. I. O'Brien, M. Palmer. *Atlas des Religions du Monde*, Paris 1994; *Le grand Atlas des Religions*, Paris, 1993; P. Blanquart. “L'etat des Religions dans le Monde”, Clevenot (ed). *World Christian Encyclopedia ...* Paris, 1987.
12. L. Cadière. *Croyances et pratiques religieuses chez les Vietnamiens*, Tome III, 1957, EFEO., p. 225.
13. Đặng Nghiêm Vạn. “Speaking of Religions in our Country” (in Vietnamese) in *Theoretical Issues and Religious Practice in Vietnam*, Social Sciences Publishing House, Hanoi, 1998, pp. 9-63.
14. From statistics in 1988, 1/6 of the population declared they were agnostics or atheists (among them only 1/5 declared they were atheists) - cited from *International Bulletin of Missionary Research*.
15. K. Marx, F. Engels. *Complete Work*, Tome 16, National Political Publishing House, Ha Noi, 1995, p. 443.
16. Tocarev. *Primitive Forms of Religions and their Development* (in Vietnamese), National Political Publishing House, Ha Noi, 1994.
17. A. Malraux stated that the key problem at the end of this century will be religion will be expressed in a form that is different from our knowledge, as what Christianity had done with ancient religions. Yet it will not be the problem of the Supreme Being (*Sortie des Religions, Retour du Religieux*, Paris, 1993, p. 15).
18. Witchcrafts are different from religions because they believe that some persons enjoy a mystic, supernatural force influencing on other persons, even on a community. Semi-scientific phenomena can be considered as modern witchcraft.
19. Tocarev gave out many examples on religious phenomena and sects of Christianity in Armenia, Bulgaria, of Islam in Saudi Arabia which can be called national religions and cases in which the religious boundary coincides with the national boundary like the case of Khorvats following Catholicism, Serbians following Orthodox, Armenians following Christianity, Iranians following Sikhism, Algonquians, Turks following Sunnite sects, etc. *Ibid.*, p. 21.
20. Hồ Chí Minh. *Ibid.*, Tome 1, p. 379.
21. K. Marx, F. Engels., *Ibid.*, p. 445.
22. The State has recognized the commemoration of Hùng Kings in the fifth and the tenth year of any decade as a national festival.
23. Phạm Văn Đồng. *Ibid.*, p. 75.
24. One should notice that in Far East societies it is very difficult to separate the concept of commemoration from that of cult. In Viet Nam, therefore, man is willing to offer a cult to natural, human divinities and there exists a tradition of divining persons having great merits if in their lives there existed acts which had become myths. Therefore it is very difficult to differentiate the cult of Nguyễn Trung Trực, Nguyễn An Ninh, Võ Thị Sáu and recently the cult of ten girls who died during the resistant war at Đồng Lộc three-way crossroads. On the first

death anniversary of Nguyễn Thị Định, people in Vĩnh Phúc province offered a cult to her in the temple of both Trưng Sisters and many people died in the war are honored at communal houses. Is it a religious or a non-religious behavior?

25. The appellation *Vàng Chử* is taken from the expression *Miao wang chu shí* meaning "the king of the Miao came back to the world". It is a superstitious movement holding that when the king comes, the life of the Miao will change, therefore they kill domestic animals, do not produce. See Sin Woo Choong. *Millenarism, Christian Movements and the change of Ethnic groups among the Miao in South-west China*. In Stevan Harrell. *Cultural Conflicts in the Ethnical borders of China*, Washington University Publishing House, Seattle.
26. Albert Einstein. *Commentje vois le Monde*, Champs-flammarion, Paris, p. 10.
27. D. Boenhoffer. *Resistance et Soumission* (Lettres de prison) Geneve, 1923. pp. 122-123.
28. J. M. Azias. *L' Anthropologie contemporame*, PUF, Paris, 1976. p. 136.
29. Trần Dân Tiên. *Anecdotes on the life of President Ho*. Chinese text by Trương Niệm Thức, Tam Liên, Shanghai, 1940.
30. V. I. Lenin. *Complete Works*, Hanoi, 1978, p. 684.