

60-YEAR ANNIVERSARY OF THE VIETNAM ACADEMY OF SOCIAL SCIENCES

60 years ago, in December 2, 1953, at Tân Trào, a historical place in

Việt Bắc military base, “the Department of History, Geography and Literature Studies” directly under the Central Committee of Vietnam Labor’s Party including 14 people was established and historian Trần Huy Liệu was selected as the head of department. This is the predecessor to the Vietnam Academy of Social Sciences.

1. A History in Brief

After 60 years, the academy has gone by many names: Department of History, Geography and Literature Studies, Institute of Social Sciences, Vietnam Social Sciences Committee, National Center of Social Sciences and Humanities, Vietnam Academy of Social Sciences), to satisfy the bulding, protecting and developing progress of the country, the academy was named the Vietnam Academy of Social Sciences since 2/22/2013, it demonstrates the purposes, potential, and intellectual power of the country’s premier research institute of macro, strategic, and comprehensive system of social sciences and humanities. This name is the great

encouragement for Vietnamese social sciences.

To study basic researches and Research and Development pertaining to social sciences; provides high - quality post-graduate education on social sciences; and consultancy for policies, after 60 years, the Vietnam Academy of Social Sciences has great development, notabe achievements in sciences, and huge contribution to national liberation and unite the country, to innovate and build socialism, to develop and protect Socialist Republic of Vietnam.

From 1953 to 1986, it is the period that the academy focused on researching issues related to the independence of the country, the national liberation, and the trend of socialism in socialized and socializing countries. Beside that, the academy also carried out many researches on Vietnamese history and culture, social sciences... that clarified the importance of social sciences in life, especially in socio-economic during difficult and crisis periods.

These achievements during this period has proofed for the ability of Vietnamese scientists based on the quintessence of

culture and sciences of innovative science at that moment. They also played a great role of encouraging the party and people during our Resistance to French colonists and protect the independent of Vietnam; contributed to the success of wars against French colonialists and American Empire, united the country towards socialism direction.

From 1986 to present, the academy has developed various, in-dept, and complete kind of scientific activities thank to the outcomes of previous period and adopt the achievement of international science, especially developed countries that the academy was not able to access in the past. The academy actively innovates the research activities and aims at essential and urgent issues of socio-economy, national defence, culture, and human...

In reality, the academy directly and indirectly stirred up the theoretical innovation and actual method to develop the country towards socialism direction, provided the scientific bases upon which to draft the Programme of Country's Building, developing strategies of socio-economy for the party during this phase.

Relations between the academy and various agencies and ministries at the provincial and municipal levels, as well as international scientific organizations have continually improved. By now, the academy has worked with numerous scientific organizations from over 50 countries to exchange knowledge. Along with the growth of Vietnam Academy of Social Sciences, this trend keeps going strongly.

The organizational structure is now comprised of 35 units including 30 specialized research centers, they are categorized in institutes such as scientific humanities, social sciences, international research, and regional scientific institutes. Beside that, the structure is also comprised of 6 specialized units, they are the Graduate Academy of Social Sciences, the Vietnam Museum of Ethnology, *Vietnam Social Sciences Review*, Social Sciences Publishing House, Encyclopedia Publishing House, and Center for Information Technology Application, and 6 VASS's President assistant units. The number of academy's staff is now 1.912, among them 1.688 are researchers (88%) with 16 professors, 125 associate professors, 204 PhDs, 509 master's degree holders.

Beside Social Sciences Publishing House, Encyclopedia Publishing House, the Graduate Academy of Social Sciences is the parent organization of 33 scientific journals, all of which have been granted operating licenses by the Ministry of Information and Communications. Among those 33, 12 are made available in English in addition to their native Vietnamese. It is the largest and most comprehensive system of social sciences magazines in Vietnam, and received many praises from international scholars.

Along with the specialized research activities, to train a talented, high quality pool of human resources for the fields of social sciences and humanities is one of

the academy's purposes. The academy, for many years, is famous for training master's and PhD degree. The Graduate Academy of Social Sciences offers 64 programs, 33 areas of study for master's degree and 31 for PhD. The total number of master's and PhD degree holders was 3.284, 1.240 of which are PhDs.

2. Notable Achievements of the Vietnam Academy of Social Sciences

In terms of scientific research, after 60 years, the number of researches are gathered and released domestically and internationally in scientific journals appearing in over 7 thousand publications.

These publications was received great evaluation from the party and society. In addition, 20 of the academy's projects were awarded the Hồ Chí Minh Prize and 24 projects were awarded the State Prize. Other projects were not received the prize but they are especially useful for basic knowledge, world view, methodology, instructions and directions for socio-economy activities, solving actual issues, contributing for the betterment of the country, enhancing intellectual standards and diversifying mental life of people.

2.1. Since the late 80s, social sciences is the main drive to transform the country from the administration - budget subsidies into market-economy, market is considered as the center of the economy to build-up socialism, from only adapting international standards to completely international integration positively and actively; from being

afraid of globalization to accept it as a big opportunity and challenges and admitted that international integration is *an open, new, dynamic, positive, and effective way to develop the country...*

This transformation is happened for none of other reason but the social sciences.

It can be proofed by the overcome of obstacles and complexities during transforming period. In reality, Vietnamese social sciences and humanities was chosen its right way is to focus on culture and intellectual standards of the people specifically which is very difficult and not easy to recognize.

From this standpoint, many social activists commented that social sciences and humanities is now recognized its value, and it will play an important role in our country's biggest breakthrough of transformation.

Starting with the changes in "innovative thinking" and following by the formation of thoughts, viewpoints, theories with theoretical instructions, methodology at the level which is able to reform the society. Intellectual standards of the people and culture are truly opening positively, to confirm the real values, and base on that to form new resources of promoting innovative process. All of the old ideas and obstacles in economic and mental activities, and management of society are re - evaluated and improved intentionally. Social sciences and humanities with innovative spirit has promoted the dynamic, positive,

effective, and human - centered development for the society.

Theories of socialism, the way to socialism, the party, and the changes in political system... are re-evaluated based on our commitment to Marxism, Leninism, and the Hồ Chí Minh's thought.

Economic theories are also analysed in more suitable, updating and modern framework. Ideas on exploitation, self-owners, market-economy, capitalism... are better recognized and bases to form scientific arguments for innovating macro - management, ruling the economy to match with the market.

Methodology of human and culture in terms of society development is totally changed. The dynamic and positive role of human are assessed accurately and step-by-step to form a new level of society development. The role of economic knowledge, sciences, and education in developing socio-economy are aware to meet the challenges of globalization and adapt to international standards.

The new concept from international scholars are adapted enough to understand this basic idea. From now, most of latest viewpoints are studied in Vietnam. Many famous works of international prestige authors are translated and published in Vietnamese in a timely fashion; especially some of the Vietnamese versions are published as soon as the original ones came out. Many of them were misunderstood in the past but now are re-assessed.

Information and knowledge are delivered in modern and latest methods

that allow us to access more easily than in the past. The distance is no longer barrier for researching and creating sciences. Any new ideal on social sciences and humanities is shared at the Vietnam Academy of Social Sciences easily and immediately.

These achievements which are the purposes, mission, and duties of the Vietnam Academy of Social Sciences and Vietnamese social scientists had a big impact on people and society in Vietnam that reduce foggy and help the country to develop in many years, to reach the starting point of average income and be the foundation for future developments.

2.2. Together with domestic social scientists, the Academy created its new appearance with new spirits. Notably, these spirits are mentioned in documents of the Party Conference and the Central Committee of Vietnam Communist Party that means the outcome of researches are adapted, filtered perfectly, wisely, and responsibly and to lead to the changes in traditional opinions in culture and intellectual standards of the people.

Meanwhile, the Marx's thought is still the fundamentals and having firm values of Marxism but today, in Vietnamese social sciences and humanities is no longer to criticize or misunderstand other theories.

Meanwhile, the Hồ Chí Minh's thought is the pilot, directions for social sciences and humanities activities in Vietnam, we are also ready to study, apply, and adopt "suitable thought" from other theories of great persons in the world.

Meanwhile, physicalism is main arguments, basic methodology for research, application, and actual activity of today social sciences and humanities in Vietnam, researchers and scholars basically are ready to discuss other theories, adopt, and study suitable viewpoints and ideas from others.

Meanwhile, dialectic is basic methodology of mental and theoretical activities in basic researches and Research and Development of today social sciences and humanities, there is no phenomenon of separating, hating, and misunderstanding other thoughts and ideas. Opinions, viewpoints, beliefs on metaphysicalism, eclecticism and dualism... are now perceived as their original values and meanings.

Meanwhile, accepting and respecting the physicalism explanation on about society: the infrastructure to decide base and superstructure physical life will decide mental life... In today Vietnamese society, opinions respect the role of perception, wills, values, tradition... are understood and evaluated fairly and suitably. Culture is *“the foundation of society, the purposes and fuels of society development.”* The party considered human is the center of development, *“All for people, for the happiness and diverse, freedom, and comprehensive developments of human”*^(*).

Meanwhile, we criticized the multi-parties viewpoints in political system,

other diversities of culture, academy, ethnics, religious, mental... are respected and fairly treated in our society. Today these differences in culture, academy, ethnics, religious, and mental are treated much more flexible and suitable than in the past. Other negative and pessimistic viewpoints and thoughts are adjusted into more positive and optimistic ones to match with the movement of life and society.

Meanwhile, we are consistent to the ultimate goal of independence and socialism in developing and protecting the country, Central economy still played a vital role, other economic categories are treated fairly and given all the conditions to develop, especially private business is basic drive of development. Social sciences and humanities is not only to make the society to admit the importance of market economy but also to consider it as *“the best way for country’s developments”*. Market economy oriented socialist, completing the socialist of law, promoting the democracy and become main foundations of Vietnam’s development during the industrialization, modernization, and adopt to international standards of the country.

The way to develop our country was born from the new ideas, concepts of social sciences which are innovating thinking, re-perception of theoretical and actual problems in innovation, and reforming practical activities. Today, Vietnamese way of country’s development is considered as more suitable, practical, flexible, standard, and

^(*) Communist Party of Vietnam (1998). Document for 8th National Congress of 5th Central Committee of Vietnam Labor’s Party, National Political Publishing House, Hanoi, p.55, 56.

bravery in comparison with worldwide trend... than in the past.

2.3. However, Vietnamese social sciences and humanities, in general, and the Vietnam Academy of Social Sciences specifically has its own limits and weaknesses. They are weakness in in-dept researches, quality of training, receiving information, and advising policies. The academy currently have not had a lot of scientific works which meet the standards of the Asian and global level. Also, there are not many articles published in famous social sciences magazines in the world. In addition, there is also a few of stellar scientists. The training progress of post-graduate has not met the high demand of sciences, the distance from other science in the world has not been shortened. Scientific information from outside are not consistent, unsystematic, and not good enough in some fields.

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Into the 21st century, social sciences with its humanity is essential for any strategy, plan, project and policies of country's development. Without social sciences and humanities, socio-economy would not be able to make assessment, critics, and arguments for many dimensions of life and human. Underestimation of social sciences and humanities could lead to the failure, impractical and possibility of of socio-economy policies. Moreover, social sciences today with its quality and

quantity studies are essential for formulation of strategies, plans, projects and policies of country's development.

To be determine in basic scientific, dynamic and practical in further research, modern and updating in tools and methods of developing sciences in comparison with region and worldwide in order to serve best for the development of socio-economy, building, developing and protecting the country is the hope of staff, officials, and people in the Vietnam Academy of Social Sciences.

60 years is not too long period in comparison with other famous academies and institutes in the world but it is long enough to confirm the premier research institute position in Vietnam. To look back the 60 years period, the Academy is proud, expecting, and believe that with the foundation of thousand years of culture, national identities, and with notable achievements which we devoted to the researching career of Vietnam during the war time as well as the developing period, we are firmly believe that we are growing strongly to make the bigger and better contributions to the socialist and the protection of Vietnam, to satisfy the ultimate goals are "to make people wealthy, to make country strong, democratic, just and civilized" □

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