

VALUE OF CONFUCIAN THOUGHT IN BUILDING UP THE VIETNAMESE ENTREPRENEUR FORCE ACCORDING TO CURRENT INTERNATIONAL INTEGRATION REQUIREMENT

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On 31 October 2004, our State officially chose 31 October as Vietnamese entrepreneur's day. This great mark is the acknowledgement of the Party, State and the whole society to the tremendous contributions of the Vietnamese entrepreneurs to the economic development of our country. That is the respect as well as the great responsibility for them - the "assault soldiers in peacetime". Thus, in the background of global economic integration today, our hope for the Vietnamese entrepreneurs is very high with the desire that they have sufficient mental power, talent and virtue to make Vietnam turn into a "dragon", "tiger" in the near future.

However, the Vietnamese entrepreneur force today is still in lack of the particular characters, features which help them become more successful on international market. Not few entrepreneurs in our country are tending to follow and model on the Western values mechanically without realizing that they are losing their great strong point unintentionally. Eastern culture in general and Vietnamese culture in particular is the

factor making the feature for us which the Vietnamese entrepreneurs should inherit and promote. Eastern culture in which the most outstanding is Confucianism according to us, if acquired, improved appropriately, will help the entrepreneurs to build their particular image which is modern, advanced, traditional, and special.

Like other theory, Confucianism is not full and absolutely clear sighted. Having a separate look on each moral standard, one can find the good, bad, right and inconsistent. Within the scope of this, only the positive values of Confucianism which can be applied to building up enterprise, entrepreneur culture today are mentioned. Below, we would like to provide some proposals for building up the Vietnamese entrepreneur force according to the international globalization requirements basing on the values of Confucianism thought:

1. Increasing study on Confucianism and its influence on building and developing the Vietnamese entrepreneur force

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Generally speaking, the study of Confucianism in Vietnam has had a long experience and considerable achievements. Nevertheless, the studies on the Confucian thought in association with business activities, especially the connection with entrepreneur culture and building of entrepreneur force, are mostly of a very small number. Thus, this must be promoted than ever and oriented to deep study, that is, in the orientation of applied study in order to acquire, make better use of the strong points and look for the way to overcome the limited aspects.

Beside that, the studies should indicate which value of Confucianism is appropriate to the era as well as the cultural tradition of the Vietnamese, which, moreover, can become the virtues of Vietnamese entrepreneurs such as *human, uprightness, politeness, wisdom, loyalty, large heart, profoundness, wide knowledge, sense of honor, wealth despise, prestige respect, human love appreciation, deliberate behavior; nation respect, knowledge of the Eastern dialectics, and so on.*

The studies should also point out that it is not enough if the modern entrepreneurs only learn the traditional morality model of Confucianism and they must build the new morality standard suitable with the changes of market economy on that basis.

2. Promoting study on the experience of the Asian countries in applying the Confucian thought to develop the entrepreneur force in the present globalization tendency

As far as we have been informed, the countries and territories in the “Confucian cultural belt” such as Japan,

South Korea, Taiwan, Hong Kong, Singapore, especially China and the Chinese communities over the world have achieved great successes on the market, even the “economic miracles”. They share the same factor in their success: they know how to apply the values of Confucian culture creatively in the forms of “Neo Confucian scholar”, “Neo Confucianism”. A specific example which could be mentioned is “Japanese Trading Ethics” – the faith of Japanese city dwellers initiated and developed by Ishida Baigan. It has formed the cultural features which are both modern and strong in Eastern character, Confucianism in personality, psychology and business activities of the Japanese entrepreneurs. Another example is Matsushita – a representative for the special business way in Japanese style, the post war business psychology of Japan with strong Eastern character.

They are the great lessons of experience not only to the Eastern countries but also many other countries in the world, including the Western ones.

Study on the experience of the precedent countries means indication of what virtues of Confucianism are learned, acquired and cultivated. What is the organization form of such learning? With the economic, social conditions of Vietnam today, training should it be organized basically with separate schools, classes like those in Japan, South Korea, China, etc. or mixed with the training programs of the cultivating courses on major, special knowledge of the entrepreneurs or agencies, enterprises?

3. Our Party and State should have more specific guidelines, policies on restoring and developing the cultural values of the East in general and the positive ones of Confucianism in particular in building and developing the Vietnamese entrepreneur force today

In practice, with the orientation of “building the advanced and strong-national-character culture”, our State has had a lot of programs for preserving and developing the traditional cultural values with remarkable expenses. However, according to us, no program is considerably related to business culture. The program related to Confucianism is not really strong and deep; there are few number of programs for Confucianism with business and entrepreneurs.

The universities, colleges in the field of economics, and especially business management are the group of branches having the great and essential relation to building the Vietnamese entrepreneurs. However, the training programs mostly focus on the modern virtues of entrepreneurs, Western features but they have little stress on the factors of national tradition, especially the virtues related to the positive values of Confucianism.

For example, in an ambitious project called “Institute of Potential Leaders” (IPL) founded and deployed by entrepreneurs and intellectuals in coordination with PACE Entrepreneur Head which was announced on 24 July 2009, no points for distinction of Vietnamese entrepreneurs and features of Confucian culture of Vietnamese are found in the virtues of a entrepreneur targeted in that project.

For the success and contribution to pushing up the economic development of our country to the movement of building business, entrepreneurs culture basing on the values of Confucianism in our country, it is thought that the Party and State should have more specifically supporting guidelines, policies in the related fields, for example, in the fields of scientific study, education and training, information and communications, and so on.

For the scientific study activities, the policy for encouraging the studies on Confucianism in association with the business activities, with the virtue of the Vietnamese in the modern society in general and Vietnamese entrepreneurs in particular in the globalization is required. These policies can be applied in various forms such as investment for human resources, expenditure, etc. for the studies.

For the information and communication activities, our Party and State are required to encourage the programs, activities with the contents asserting, praising, popularizing, and spreading the positive values of Confucianism appropriate to the people in the new era. Especially, the activities for praising the examples of the entrepreneurs who know how to inherit and promote the positive values of Confucianism and have great success in business should be encouraged; simultaneously, the organization of programs, forums, etc. should be also encouraged for them to share their precious experience to everybody, especially the young ones.

For the education and training activities, our Party and State should have

guidelines, policies as well as tactics to orient the education and training programs to the traditional cultural values including Confucianism from the first learning levels. With that, every future Vietnamese citizen can be imbued with the traditional culture since early days of personality formation. As for the entrepreneur training program in the universities specializing in economics and business administration, the contents for training, educating, propagandizing the good virtues containing the features of Eastern culture, especially Confucianism should be provided.

However, to promote the values of Confucianism in our country in general and entrepreneurs in particular, it must be put in the dialectical relation with the acquisition of and promotion to the Eastern culture, Asian culture in general, particular care should be paid to its consistency to the cultural values of Buddhism and Taoism (3 theories of three same source religions). Hence, during the process of building the Vietnamese entrepreneur force basing on the values of Confucianism, our Party and State should pay due care for the promotion to the Eastern cultural values in general.

4. Vietnamese entrepreneurs must know how to promote the traditional cultural value, including the virtues that Vietnamese Confucianism have cultivated for thousand years and turned it into the typical strong point of the modern Vietnamese entrepreneurs

The activeness of the entrepreneurs in acquiring, learning and promoting the values of Confucianism is the most important factor, and that can be said the decisive one in building up the Vietnamese entrepreneur force today basing on Confucian values. This, first of

all, must be the self work of the entrepreneurs; the State and society can not do it for them but they play a supporting role.

First of all, each entrepreneur must find, filter and acquire the positive values of Confucianism. Beside that, the enterprises are required to organize the courses for training, cultivating, developing the traditional cultural values including Confucianism to their own entrepreneur forces.

However, Vietnamese entrepreneurs today should not only improve themselves to obtain the intellectual of the scholars but also the wit, flexibility of a merchant. If one is so deeply attached to the society with the traditional concept of Confucianism and interested in spreading benevolence and righteousness, morality all the day without knowledge about the operating rule of market mechanism, how can one become successful on the fierce market? Market economy is the economy of competitiveness. Thus, the entrepreneurs must form the fair and effective competitive awareness for themselves.

Moreover, Vietnamese entrepreneurs must also know how to develop the business activities in order to popularize and promote the traditional cultural values such as developing services to restore the values of Confucianism such as developing the tour services related to festivals, activities (such as penmanship and painting), the Confucian architectural works, putting the images with Confucian culture in designing models, patterns of the products, goods, export services and home consumption, and so on. When the entrepreneurs can run business in this way, they will be known and supported by domestic and overseas consumers.

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Marriage

Like the Việt people, a marriage in the Mường community must follow different rites: selecting the gobetween (*chon ma*), sending words (*khao tieng*), paying a visit (*mo mieng*), conducting a betrothal ceremony (*ti nom/ ti nom banh*), admitting the groom, bringing the bride home (*ti chau/ ti du*), paying the first post-wedding visit to the bride's family (*ti moong*).

Selecting the go-between (*chon mo*): a go-between must be a virtuous person with many children and grandchildren, and be clever with speech and communication. In the past, in Mường Bi, an unsuccessful go-between would be punished by the *quan lang*.

In the betrothal ceremony, according to Mường customs, the offerings include a fish cut into four parts and wrapped in

phrynium leaves, four square sticky rice cakes without stuffing, five areca nuts and ten betel leaves. *Ti nom* consists of two steps: *nom go* and *nom ca*. In the first step, the go-between, together with two young boys and the groom's younger sister, bring to the bride's family a two chicken, two parcels of fish, several dozens of *beng* cakes, and some packets of cooked sticky rice as offering for the bride's ancestors. Then, the two families will discuss the *nom ca*.

The first wedding ceremony (*nom ca*) is held formerly, after three years, whenever the preparatory work is finished. The groom's family must bring to the bride's family some offerings, including rice, pigs, liquor (20 bottles), sticky rice areca nuts, betel leaves, sugarcane and other things. Traditionally, the groom goes to the

bride's house in the early morning. A bride arrives at her husband's house in the evening. The go-between, on behalf of the groom's family, hands over offerings and presents liquor. Then, the bride's family invites them to take liquor from a bamboo straw (*rao cay*) and feast. The groom's representatives are also served *chao mang* liquor before going home. The groom and his two groomsmen stay at the bride's house for several days to receive guests. The following three years are the trial period for both the groom and the bride. Normally, during this period, the couple must take part in all affairs of the two families.

There is the official wedding ceremony: After three trial years, if everything goes smooth, the groom's family dispatches the go-between to bring chicken, fish, liquor, areca nuts and betel leaves to the bride's house for the official wedding ceremony. The go-between is accompanied by the groom's siblings. If accepting the request, the bride's family accepts wedding presents from the groom's family. In the past, these gifts included a male buffalo, several baskets of rice, two pigs, 5-6 baskets of cooked sticky rice, a bunch of areca nuts, over 100 betel leaves, and 20 tubes of rice liquor. The bride's family must also prepare a dowry. About 2-3 days before the procession to bring the bride to her husband's house, the groom's relatives gather and contribute rice, chicken, liquor, firewood and cloth to him. It takes several days for the groom's family to finish preparatory work.

Right before the bride's welcoming day, the go-between leads a delegation carrying wedding presents to the bride's

house. The delegates include the groom's siblings, cousins, uncles, aunts, and other relatives. However, the total must be on even number. By custom, they must set off in the early morning. Formerly, they brought gongs for performances at the bride's house.

After the banquet and liquor drinking contest to congratulate the couple, at the selected lucky hour, the go-between, as the representative of the groom's family, asks to bring the bride home. The bride must pray to her family ancestors as well as her grandparents and parents before going out. On the way to her husband's house, she must wear a conical hat, holding a small knife to protect her soul. She is not allowed to turn her head back. Her dowry, such as blankets, pillows, mosquito-netting, and other materials, is carried by some members of her family. Arriving at the staircases of the husband's house, a younger sister of the husband will help the bride wash her feet. Then the bride must step over a bunch of firewood to go upstairs. After entering the house, she must prostrate herself in front of the god of the kitchen, and then pray to her husband's ancestors and superiors. A thread-binding rite (*com quel*) is carried out for the couple in the central compartment of the house. After this ritual, a feast is served to congratulate the couple. Several days after the bride welcoming ceremony, the couple and the bridesmaids pay the first visit to the bride's family. In the past, after the *ti moong*, the couple had to experience a trial period (*bu ma ruong*) before starting their conjugal life.

(to be continued)