



DOI: 10.54631/VS.2022.64-111099

THE INFLUENCE OF TAOISM ON THE FOLK BELIEFS OF THE VIETNAMESE

Vu Hong Van¹

Abstract. The traditional culture of Vietnam, in addition to typical indigenous folk beliefs, also includes three systems of ideas imported from outside Buddhism, Taoism, and Confucianism. In those three ideological systems, Buddhism and Confucianism are very easy to evaluate and comment on, because the two religions have been “used” by the feudal Vietnamese dynasties and respect is the “national religion”; such as Buddhism under the Ly Dynasty and Tran Dynasty; Confucianism under the Le Dynasty and Nguyen Dynasty. Particularly for Taoism, its influence was mainly on the folk, living with the common class in society. To consider correctly, few documents can be as authentic as Confucianism and Buddhism, when the activities of these two religions were well documented. However, the influence of Taoism on Vietnamese culture is undeniable. Based on researching ancient documents, and actual surveys in the provinces and cities of Vietnam, this research focuses on studying the influence of Taoism on the folk beliefs of Vietnamese in 3 beliefs: (1) Belief in worshipping the ancestors; (2) Belief in worshipping the Mother Goddess; (3) Belief in worshipping the village’ Tutelary god.

Keywords: Taoism and Taoist, Vietnam culture, folk beliefs and religion, Belief in worshipping the ancestor, Belief in worshipping the Mother Goddess, Belief in worshipping the village’ Tutelary god.

For citation: Vu Hong Van (2022). The Influence of Taoism on the Folk Beliefs of the Vietnamese. *Russian Journal of Vietnamese Studies*, 6 (4): 51–60.

Received: September 28, 2022

Received in revised form: December 1, 2022

Accepted: December 5, 2022

Introduction

Taoism was introduced in Vietnam very early, around the second century [Trần Văn Giàu 1973; Nguyễn Duy Hình 2003, 2007; Vu Hong Van 2020]. It was once introduced into Vietnam as an independent religion under the Ly and Tran dynasties [Trần Văn Giàu 1973; Nguyễn Khắc Thuần 2004; Vũ Hồng Vân 2017]. But, also from that time, the phenomenon of fusion of Taoism with Buddhism and Confucianism took place [Nguyễn Duy Hình 2003]. By the Le dynasty, Daoism quickly combined with Buddhism, and most of the contemplatives turned to Buddhism, Taoism, and the Buddhist scriptures were lost [Nguyễn Khắc Thuần 2004]. By the Nguyen dynasty, when Confucianism became the dominant ideology in society, highly valued by the Nguyen Dynasty and honored as the “state religion” [Nguyễn Tài Thu 1997; Nguyễn Khắc Thuần 2004], Taoism was almost wholly lost in the religious life of the Vietnamese, the noun Taoism is not mentioned much anymore.

¹ Vu Hong Van, Ph.D. (History), Dean of the Faculty of Political Theory, University of Transport and Communications, Hanoi. ORCID: 0000-0003-3867-1865. E-mail: vanvh_ph@utc.edu.vn

The spiritual life of Vietnamese is heavily influenced by Eastern ideologies, especially religious ideas [Trần Văn Giàu 1973, 1983; Nguyễn Tài Thu 1997; Trần Ngọc Thêm 2000; Nguyễn Khắc Thuần 2004; Vũ Hồng Vân 2017]. Along with Confucianism and Buddhism, Taoism profoundly influences the spiritual, traditional, and cultural life of the Vietnam nation, especially in the life of the working population [Trần Văn Giàu 1973, 1983]. As a religion stemming from the peasant uprising [Ho Fusan 1995; Lịch sử... 1999], it already had in mind the idea of protesting against the ruling class, so, just like in China, when entering Vietnam, the people used it as a weapon against the ruling class as well as before the invasion of the Northern colonialists [Nguyễn Duy Hinh 2003; Nguyễn Khắc Thuần 2004]. During the anti-French resistance war, many revolts actively used witchcraft as spiritual weapons to deal with the enemy who had the predominance of guns [Phan Ngọc 2002].

When propagated in Vietnam, Taoism immediately found similar beliefs available for a long time [Nguyễn Duy Hinh 2003, 2007]. The ancient Vietnamese people's cult of magic, spells, etc., has become fertile Vietnamese and Chinese philosophy, as well as the content, purpose, and style of literary culture. By 1939, Duong Quang Ham's "Vietnamese Literature" (Ministry of Education's textbook) also presented more details on literary styles and practices in the style of Tang poetry [Duong Quang Ham 1939: 63-66].

Unlike Buddhism and Confucianism, the study of Taoism in Vietnam is very complicated and difficult to study [Chuan 2006]. In fact, a lot of researchers have attributed all Vietnamese folk beliefs [an important part of Vietnam's culture] to Taoism, and vice versa the people who "*sính* [overly concerned] "*lên đồng*" (a form of soul-calling for the dead to enter the body), spells do not understand what Taoism is [Nguyễn Khắc Thuần 2004]. This has created many difficulties in identifying and studying Taoism in Vietnam as well as the values of Vietnamese culture through the relationship with Taoism.

In Vietnam, for many years, the Taoism collection and research and its relationship with Vietnamese culture have not been as complete, comprehensive, and profound as Buddhism and Confucianism. There have been a few studies but appear too many different views and different and sometimes conflicting opinions. It can be mentioned the basic contents such as: has not been distinguished between Taoist and Taoism; do not understand the basic content and schools of Taoism. In particular, there are no studies that comprehensively survey the influence of Taoism on Vietnamese belief through field surveys in provinces and cities in Vietnam. In addition, there are many unanswered issues, many contents cannot reach unanimous conclusions.

The cultural history of the Vietnamese people is tied to the nation's process of building and defending the country. As the economy grows, countries around the world come closer together, and the national culture becomes more and more the center of attention. Documents of the Communist Party of Vietnam and policies of the Vietnamese state have repeatedly affirmed the role and importance of the goal of "building an advanced culture imbued with national identity". Therefore, the study of the topic: "The Influence of Taoism on the Folk Beliefs of the Vietnamese", I think that is necessary and important, to understand more about phenomena, social concepts, etc., and from there, to understand the origin and specificity of Vietnamese culture, and the traditional cultural values that the predecessors have worked hard to build. This research contributes a part to the identification of positive factors, and good traditional values of the nation in the cause of "building a new, advanced Vietnam culture imbued with identity nation".

Literature Review

In Vietnam, Taoism is a difficult religion to the studying. Taoism is difficult to study for many reasons but focuses on the following three main reasons:

1) Lack of official historical documents: The Taoism record is very little in Vietnam's feudal dynasties. As mentioned above, Taoism has never been used by the feudal dynasties of Vietnam. The best position of Taoism was under the Ly Dynasty. However, soon after that appeared the phenomenon of the three religions of the same religion (Buddhism, Taoism, and Confucianism). The recording of Taoism of this period is mainly through historical books. Vietnam began to record history from the Tran Dynasty and continued in later feudal dynasties. The first history of Vietnam known so far is the book *Dai Viet Su Ky* (Dai Viet History) by Le Van Huu in King Tran Nhan Tong, the year of Nham Than (1272); *An Nam Chi* book written by Le Tac in China (1333). Next was the book *Dai Viet Su Ky Toan Thu* (Complete Dai Viet History), printed woodblocks in the 18th Ching Hoa year (1697); *Dai Viet Thong Su* of Le Quy Don (1759); *Viet Su Tieu An* of Ngo Sy Lien (1775); or *Quoc Su Quan - Dai Nam Thuc Luc Chinh Bien* (1909), etc. Those books recorded some Taoism activities, but mainly anecdotes, and stories related to Taoism with little record of religious activities of Taoism.

2) The sutras of Taoism are also very few. Currently, a number of Taoist scriptures, mainly written in the Han Nom script, are stored at the Han-Nom Research Institute. Due to many objective and subjective factors, these scriptures have not been fully translated. Wang Kha 92000], when consulting about Taoism scriptures in Vietnam, he made the comment: “The Taoism in North Vietnam also left a number of Taoism tales, etc. During the Nguyen Dynasty, the temple Ngoc Son engraved a lot of Taoism scriptures such as *La To Toan Thu*, *Linh Bao* five scriptures, *Ngoc Hoang* scriptures, etc. The ancient Taoism books still kept at the Han Nom Research Institute include *Thai Thuong To Linh Dong Nguyen Dai Huu Dieu Kinh*, *Thuong Thanh Hoang Dinh Chan Kinh*, *Thai Thuong Cam Ung Bien*, *Am Chac Van Chu*, *Viet Nhan Giai Chu*, *Tham Am Chan Kinh*, *Thai Duong Chan Kinh*, *Tao Vuong Kinh*, *Nguyen Duong Quan Bi*, *Tien Phuc Quan Bi*, *Vo Tu Bi*, etc. [Trường Đại học Sư phạm 2000]. According to the comments of Wang Kha: “The above-mentioned books are mostly not found in the Ming Dynasty treasure book in China (also called Orthodox Taoism scriptures), so these are the materials for studying the history of Vietnamese Taoism is very valuable” [Ibid.: 381].

3) Survey about Taoism in Vietnam faces many difficulties. Although it is a religion, in Vietnam, this religion does not have a church, congregation, dogma, or precepts [Nguyễn Duy Hình 2007]. This religious practice is concentrated mainly in the rural villages of Vietnam [Trần Văn Giàu 1973; Nguyễn Duy Hình 2007], and in folk activities [Nguyễn Duy Hình 2007]. A reality survey shows that very few people admit they are Taoism followers (accounting for 190/3500 respondents).

In general, most of these studies have talked about Taoism, and the Taoism propaganda process in Vietnam, but still lack consistency such as the first Taoist organization, characters, sects, students' active religion, etc. Particularly “the influence of Taoism on the folk belief of Vietnamese” is mentioned very little, and only mentioned the influence of Taoism in specific areas of culture. Realizing the importance of Taoism to Vietnamese culture, needing to find more roots that create the tradition of Vietnamese culture, and at the same time, want to introduce Vietnam's cultural values to the world, I choose the subject “The Influence of Taoism on the Folk Beliefs of the Vietnamese” is the research topic for this article.

Research Methods

First, studying Taoism writings in Chinese history books, Chinese authors, and foreign scholars studying Taoism. Specifically, they can be mentioned in books such as the book “Tung Thu Tam Bach De” (1999) by the Shanghai Publishing House; the book “Great Chinese Taoism dictionary” (1995) by Ho Fusan (China) (1995); the book “Tao-Tsang T’i-Yao [Synopsis of the Taoism Canon]” (1991) by Jen, Chi-Yü and Chung, Chao Peng; the book Seven Steps to the Tao: Sima Chengzhen’s Zuowanglun” (1971) of Kohn, Livia, etc.

Second, researching ancient documents about Taoism in Vietnam, specifically the famous historical books in Vietnam such as the book *Dai Viet Su Ky*; *An Nam Chi*, *Dai Viet Su Ky Toan Thu*, *Dai Viet Thong Su*, *Viet Su Tieu An*, or *Quoc Su Quan - Dai Nam Thuc Luc Chinh Bien*, etc. However, as mentioned above, the books mainly write about anecdotes, and Taoism stories but do not record much about religious activities, religious organizations, etc. so the search for orthodox historical records about Taoism is very difficult.

Third, study the stories and legends about Taoism handed down by folk. It can be affirmed that this is the place where Taoism shows the most abundantly. Many Taoism stories are passed down in folk through tales, religious stories, and religious figures. With the people’s imagination interwoven with Taoism stories, Taoism has a lasting vitality in the spiritual life of the Vietnamese people [Phan Ngọc 2002; Nguyễn Duy Hình 2007; Vu Hong Van 2019, 2020b, 2020c]. It should be added that Taoism’s religious activities are almost identical to the belief in the demons and deities of the Vietnamese people, so Taoism easily integrates into the spiritual life of the Vietnamese people [Nguyễn Duy Hình 2007].

Fourth, study religious activities related to Taoism. At present, in many families and villages in Vietnam, there are still religious activities related to Taoism. Through field surveys in 10 provinces and cities of Vietnam, the author found that many Taoism religious activities are taking place, which is reflected in activities such as worshipping apples, earth gods, talent gods; divination activities, spells; priests in funerals, Vietnamese people’s death anniversaries; feng shui; funeral rituals, etc.

Fifth, study the historical Taoism worship facilities and the existing Taoism worshipping facilities. The actual survey shows that, although the Taoism worshipping facilities no longer retain the original religious functions, religious activities are still carried out. Many typical Taoism figures are still worshiped in these religious institutions. Due to the time and budget conditions, the author only surveyed 05 existing Taoism religious institutions (mainly in the North of Vietnam): Ngoc Son Temple, Quan Thanh Temple, Bich Cau Temple, Dong Thien Temple, and Linh Tien Temple.

Research Results

The influence of Taoism on the Belief in worshipping the ancestor (Tín ngưỡng thờ cúng tổ tiên)

If Confucianism lays the theoretical foundation of morality, social order, and discipline for Vietnamese ancestor worship; Buddhism affects the preservation and development of ancestor worship in Vietnam, first of all, the concept of death, reincarnation, and karma; Taoism contributes to strengthening belief in the existence and supernatural power of the souls of the dead through several worshipping rituals such as: summoning spirits, incantations, funerals, graves and so on. burning votive paper [Nguyễn Duy Hình 2003; Vũ Hồng Vận 2017].

One of the rituals of ancestor worship that we can see as the manifestation of Taoism is the “*Trai tiểu bạt độ*” ceremony (the exoneration ceremony for the deceased). One of the significant ceremonies of Taoism is the “*lễ sám hối gọi trai*”. In the “*Trai*” ceremonies there are “*Trai bần*” and

“*Than*” – applying coal to the face and soaking in the mud to repent of one’s sins; “*Trai bùa vàng*” – that is, a repentance ceremony for the dead, etc. Its origin is like that, but the ceremony of “*Trai tiểu bát độ*” in the belief in ancestor worship of Vietnamese people, is to promote goodwill and goodwill, punish evil. However, this ceremony is not held regularly, it is only used when there are “graves and caves” in the family, there are many calamities that family members believe are related to deceased ancestors [Vũ Hồng Vân 2017, Vu Hong Van 2020b]. When there are bad points in the family, they think it is related to the deceased ancestors, they often resort to the “*Trai tiểu bát độ*” (but not all of these ceremonies, but only some rituals). Perhaps, the “*Trai tiểu bát độ*” ceremony according to the main Taoist rite has a slightly different implementation. Here, I would like to describe a ritual in that ceremony: The “*Khai ngục trị đàn*” ritual, to show that people not only know how to use the rituals of other religions but also change them to suit their tastes. Although, it is the main ceremony of Taoism.

The expression of Taoism in ancestor worship is also reflected in the concept of birth and death. According to folk beliefs, the dead after the soul leaves the body, must go through ten great hells due to the rule of the kings in the underworld, called the ten-faced palace. The Vietnamese took the punishment of the soul after death to promote good and eliminate evil. The promotion of good and the punishment of evil were done through the kings of the underworld. As for Taoism, this governance is exercised by the “*Phong Đô Bắc Âm Đại Đế*” with 88 mandarins devil.

Those in the family who die are held at funerals very carefully. Depending on the family’s affluence, the funeral organization is large or small, but anyway, the organization is carried out with the utmost standards. Beliefs about death say that “tử tuất quy thổ, cốt nhục tề u, hạ âm vi giả thổ, kỳ phí phát dương u thượng vi chiêu minh”. That means, when you die, your body will be buried in the ground, your bones and bones will dissolve in the ground, and your soul will fly up high, shining brightly. Along with the above meaning of life and death, Confucianism also has the word filial piety with the concept of “death as birth, death as existence”. Being filial to your parents when they die is like being filial to your parents while they are still alive [Trần Văn Giàu 1973, 1983; Nguyễn Duy Hình 1997].

One of the manifestations of Taoism in ancestor worship is the belief in funerals. The belief in mourning comes from the Taoist concept that each person lives attached to a star in the sky when that star goes out, that person dies. Looking after the birth and death of the world is “*Nam Tào*” and “*Bắc Đẩu*”. The “*Nam Tào*” star manages birth, the “*Bắc Đẩu*” star manages death. Therefore, when talking about death, folk often have the phrase “*xóa sổ Nam Tào*”. Or the phrase “*bút chú tử trách Nam Tào sớm định*”. This sentence means that “*Nam Tào*” used the death note to write down the date and time of death of a person (father, mother) so early. The Taoism concept also says that death is about the fairy realm, so in the “*Bức trướng*” in funeral services often see the words “*Bồng lai tiên cảnh*”.

Faith is trust, admiration is respect, “ancestor worship means a belief in that it causes sacred belief in the souls of ancestors as guardians. Bless and protect children and grandchildren during the months of doing business and living” [Nguyễn Duy Hình 2003: 191]. The burial according to the burial items found in the ancient tombs, the burning of votive papers in the past, and the burning of money in the underworld today manifests the belief in ancestors who are still “living” like in the world; still have an effect on their descendants. The Vietnamese have a saying that “*Sống về mồ về mà không ai sống về cả bát cơm*” (this sentence means that the merit of ancestors is very important).

In the belief of ancestor worship, the grave is an inseparable sacred expression. When the year ends, children and grandchildren eagerly go to dig graves, build graves, and burn incense to invite

their ancestors to come back to celebrate Tet. What is not good in the family is that people immediately think of the grave, grave, and the descendants have to make sacrifices to the land that governs the place where the grave is located.

Ancestor worship is to express one's gratitude to those who gave birth, but behind that gratitude is a philosophy of Vietnamese people's outlook on life. The Vietnamese believe that the appearance and existence of humans are partly due to ancestors. Therefore, living people must be grateful to those who gave birth to them. It is that gratitude that helps children and grandchildren connect, stick together, and know how to live for each other, and for everyone around. This is the basis for community harmony and creates a bond of solidarity for an entire nation.

Unlike Taoism, there is a whole system of elves that govern all areas of life. In the minds of Vietnamese people, the belief in the existence of ancestral spirits has also shown the deification of ancestral spirits. help children in life.

Making the above point, I do not intend to completely refute the influence of religion on the lives of Vietnamese people. But in fact, for Vietnamese people, regardless of any religion, one of the indispensable things in every family is the ancestral altar. On the full moon day, the first day of each month, on the anniversary of the death anniversary, children and grandchildren must burn incense to pray to their ancestors to bless their children's health, everything is favorable.

Using and transforming rituals of many religions into religious activities is also a way that Vietnamese people use to protect the true values of their nation - a nation whose patriotism is always the subject that all put on top. The Vietnamese have affirmed an unchanging truth of all times: The development of each family creates the existence and development of an entire nation. In other words, ancestor worship with its sacred meanings has created an endogenous foundation for an entire nation.

The influence of Taoism on the Belief in worshipping the Mother Goddess (Tín ngưỡng Thờ Mẫu)

The belief in worshipping the Mother Goddess is a pure Vietnamese folk belief, popular, with a long history, adapting to the changes in Vietnamese society. Belief in worshipping the Mother Goddess is the belief, admiration, honor, and worship of goddesses associated with natural phenomena, the universe is believed by people to have the power to create, protect and protect the lives of people such as heaven, earth, rivers, forests, mountains, etc. worshipping empresses, queens, and princesses who, when living well, have meritorious services to the people and the country, when they die their epiphanies, they help people, help nation, and things prosper. Through formation and development, the Belief in worshipping the Mother Goddess in Vietnam has developed to form the beliefs of the Three Realism: "*Thiên Phủ*" (Heaven Realism), "*Nhạc Phủ*" (Forest Realism), "*Thoải Phủ*" (Water Realism); Four Realism: In addition to the three above, there is also "*Địa Phủ*" (Earth Realism).

The belief in worshipping the Mother Goddess holds a special place in the spiritual activities of Vietnamese people. It is a spiritual need of a part of the people that have existed throughout history and even today. "*Mẫu*" is an image, a symbol, and a living crystallization of the spiritual and cultural life of Vietnamese people [Trần Ngọc Thêm 2000; Nguyễn Khắc Thuần 2004; Vu Hong Van 2020a; Vu Hong Van 2022], but also poses many problems for many scientists and researchers interested in many different directions in society. Mother worship is also a phenomenon of rich and attractive folklore activities that attract people. People who come to "*Mẫu*" also have empathy for cultural values. culture and contribute to strengthening the sense of community of the Vietnamese nation.

At the beginning of the process of importing foreign cultures, especially Confucianism, the women who were considered to have that mysterious power were separated from each other, without any connection or entanglement. In other words, Vietnamese Models have not yet formed a genealogy and government system like secular life. When Taoism entered Vietnam, especially a fairy pedigree was promoted, immediately meeting the need to institutionalize the “heavenly court” of the “Mẫu”. The belief in worshipping the Mother Goddess was quickly absorbed to form a paradise’s very own family. It can be said: “The belief in worshipping the Mother Goddess is where Taoism manifests its greatest influence” [Phan Ngọc 2002: 332]. But, the belief in worshipping the Mother Goddess still cannot be a religion. Because, in fact, the Vietnamese mother worship system is still fragmented, lacking a cardinal and a church. One can only consider the Vietnamese mother-worshipping custom as a folk belief.

The manifestation of Taoism in the belief in the Mother Goddess is first shown in the phenomenon of “*hầu đồng*” (*lên đồng*). The phenomenon of going to “*hầu đồng*” is associated with the custom of worshipping Mother Goddesses. “*Đồng* according to Chinese characters refers to boys under 10 years old (children) who are still innocent and innocent in praying to the gods to bring down the pen of the Taoism fairy. Through prayer, the elves enter the baby, giving out signals by scribbling words in the sand, on rice, or saying some cryptic words. The Taoists who are good, deduce those words and letters into the will of the gods and the will of the saints” [Ibid.: 126]. That phenomenon is similar to going to “*lên đồng*” (“enter the field”). The problem of “*lên đồng*” is common in many parts of the world. It is believed that after death people still have a soul, and that soul continues to exist and can communicate with living people through mediums. “The soul is no longer a body, just a shadow. That shadow borrows the body of a bronze person like a chair (rack), a horse so that it manifests itself” [Ibid.: 333].

Thus, “going to the field” is understood both as representing the voice of the gods and as expressing the mind of the dead. “Religious researchers consider this to be a form of Shamanism, found in many parts of the ancient world, a kind of tribal god cult. At that time, the divine bias was not as diverse and complex as it was later, the society at that time was simply people and gods from the reality of their lives. Humans need to increase their strength to control wild beasts, only borrowing the power of the gods. People dream, aspire to become gods, want to know what gods know” [Phan Đăng Duy 2002: 159].

The reality of Vietnam’s history, under feudal dynasties [especially from the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries onwards], the society was in turmoil, killing each other, foreign invaders, etc. [Trần Quốc Vượng, Hà Văn Tấn 1960] makes the lives of people, especially farmers, increasingly poor. Then what faith to let the poor people follow? Confucian feudal rites have bound women to extremely harsh standards [Van 2020; Van et al 2020], and Buddhism has not been able to improve the actual situation [Nguyễn Tài Thu 1997; Vu Hong Van, Nguyen Trong Long 2020]. Therefore, the Vietnamese people only know how to arouse the sacred belief that has existed for many generations which is “mother god”. However, it is not enough to just burn incense and pray like all other offerings.

From the experience of life, the subconscious about beliefs and origins has motivated people to want to transform into a god, to have the power of “mother god”, to help them solve the pressing problems of real life. Therefore, the form of “entering the field” from the tribal times was recreated when praying to the Mother. This is also the form of praying for the “*giáng bút*” of fairy Taoism to form a composite deformation. Thus, it is not because of the belief in Mother Goddesses’ worship that witchcraft is born, but because people re-create witchcraft for the sake of the divine Mother’s salvation.

***The influence of Taoism on the Belief in worshipping the Village's Tutelary god (Tín ngưỡng thờ
Thành Hoàng Làng)***

In the minds of many Vietnamese people, talking about the village' Tutelary god is referring to the god who protects the village, few people think that there is a Tutelary god for the whole country. The Vietnamese village' Tutelary god is a god who was worshiped by the people before, then was awarded the title of King by the king with the title of "*Thành Hoàng*".

In the concept of Vietnamese countryside people, the village citadel holds an important position in the village. The village' Tutelary god can bless and help the villagers in difficult times. Experiencing the ups and downs of the country and of the village, generations of villagers continued to increase. But, the village' Tutelary god is still there, becoming an undeniable proof of the village through the ups and downs [Nguyễn Duy Hình 2003; Vũ Hồng Vận 2017].

Like other folk beliefs, the Belief in worshipping the village' Tutelary god cannot avoid the influence of foreign religions and beliefs in religious activities. The influence of Taoism on the Belief in worshipping the village' Tutelary god is reflected in the story about the village's Tutelary god. As follows:

First, is the view of the characters appearing in the fairy tales. In the concept of Taoism, extraordinary people are those who have magic, can jump in the clouds, but can still fly without wings; someone rides a cloud dragon to heaven; there are people hovering over the mountains; some people just breathe the air; there are people who hide their bodies, hide and appear, so no one knows [Ho Fusan 1995; Vu Hong Van, Nguyen Trong Long 2019]. Or fairies with bright faces like pearls, elegant looks, smiling like streams, etc [Chi-Yü, Chao-Peng 1991]. This is a very characteristic feature of Taoism. The extraordinary characters in Taoism often have extraordinary backgrounds. If you are a fairy, you have to go through a very difficult process of training and testing; If they are the first reincarnated as a human, they are usually the fairies who make mistakes, are sent down to earth, and also have to suffer a lot of bitterness and humiliation, and then return to the fairy world. "Good people are turned into fairies, fairies are mocked and become human" [Nguyễn Duy Hình 1997; Vũ Hồng Vận 2017]. Some typical figures of Taoism can be mentioned such as Ly Thiet Quai, Chung Ly Quyen, Ha Tien Co, La Dong Tan, Truong Qua Lao, Han Tuong Tu, and Cao Quoc Cuu [eight immortals].

Almost in the village' Tutelary god legends, the characters are always given many powers before being crowned the village' Tutelary god. They can do many things that mortals cannot do, such as call the wind, call rain, go out into the holy world, enter the spirit; use magic spells to help people in an area. After that, he was worshiped by the villagers and proposed to the feudal state to be the village' Tutelary god.

Second, in determining space and time. There are many similarities between the legends of the village' Tutelary god and Taoism. In Dao Hoang Canh's Chan Cao, the activities of humans, angels, and demons are divided into three different spaces: the top is a fairy, the middle is a human, and the bottom is a demon: "It's like the things in heaven and earth cannot be limited that can be determined. According to the mind that thinks, in the realm of gloom, there are three interrelated parts. Above are fairies, in the middle are humans, and below are demons. Good people are turned into fairies, wronged fairies become humans, nefarious people are turned into ghosts, and good-natured demons become human again. Demons imitate people, people imitate fairies, rotate back and forth, and so on. That is the small difference between heaven and earth" [Lagerwey 1987a]. In some of the village' Tutelary gods, in addition to the real times mentioned [such as the day, month, and year of birth of the Citadel], the image of a fuzzy space has also been mentioned. In that space and

time, it is difficult to define specifically. Sometimes it only takes a wind to rise, the sky and earth are cloudy, and time can move for decades; even those gods can go from time to time in a “blink of an eye”, etc.

In many legends of the village' Tutelary god, many characters are from the Hung Kings' period but can still transcend space and time to be able to reunite. This is really a new creation, creating a thrill for the legends of the village' Tutelary god.

Conclusion

Beliefs are people's beliefs and admiration of mystical, supernatural forces. People believe that these forces influence and govern human life and destiny and form a social nest according to that sacred belief. Although there are some elements borrowed from foreign religions, the value of beliefs cannot be denied. That is shown:

First, ancestor worship belief represents a cultural lifestyle, not the belief of a religion. Because, it has no doctrine, church, synagogue, or priest. It also does not bring about the end of death to heaven, or hell, but only to the satisfaction or rebuke of the ancestors. It creates conditions to maintain sacred spaces, and traditional cultural environments and has excellent educational significance when children remember their ancestors.

Second, the belief in Mother Goddess worship clearly shows the consciousness of the Vietnamese people. A nation that always longs for peace, a simple life, living in the home of a family with a mother's love [Mẫu], mothers who have both non-worldly powers but are very ordinary. Especially the immense love for their children, their non-worldly strength for one purpose is to protect their children and the sacred values of the nation.

Third, the Vietnamese Village's Tutelary god belief is the creation of Vietnamese farmers, experienced through many generations. However, Vietnamese society entered a period of industrialization and modernization, and Village's Tutelary god belief does not keep the original. But, the values it brings to the spiritual life of the villagers cannot be denied.

References

- Ho Fusan (ed.) (1995). *Great Chinese Taoism dictionary*. Beijing: Social Science.
- Chi-Yu Jen, Chao-Peng Chung (eds.) (1991). *Tao-tsang t'i-yao [Synopsis of the Taoist Canon]*. Peking: Chung-kuo she-hui k'o-hsueh ch'u-pan she.
- Lagerwey J. (1987). *Taoist ritual in Chinese society and history*. New York: Macmillan.
- Lịch sử văn hóa Trung Quốc [*History of Chinese culture*] (Thuan, T. N., Dat, D. D., and Chi, D. P., Trans). (1999). Hà Nội: Nxb. Văn hóa thông tin.
- Nguyễn Duy Hình (1997). Tín ngưỡng Thành hoàng làng của người Việt Nam [*Belief in worshipping the village' Tutelary god of Vietnamese*]. Hà Nội: Nxb. Văn hóa Thông tin.
- Nguyễn Duy Hình (2003). Người Việt Nam với Đạo giáo [*Vietnamese people with Taoism*]. Hà Nội: Nxb. Khoa học Xã hội.
- Nguyễn Duy Hình (2007). *Vietnamese spirituality* [Sinh hoạt tinh thần của người Việt Nam]. Hà Nội: Nxb. Từ điển Bách khoa.
- Nguyễn Khắc Thuần (2004). Đại cương lịch sử văn hóa Việt Nam [*Outline of Vietnamese cultural history*]. Hà Nội: Nxb. Giáo dục
- Nguyễn Tài Thu (1997). Ảnh hưởng của hệ tư tưởng và tôn giáo với người Việt Nam ngày nay [*The influence of ideologies and religions on Vietnamese people today*]. Hà Nội: Nxb. Chính trị Quốc gia.

Nguyễn Trọng Chuẩn chủ biên (2006). *Lịch sử tư tưởng triết học Việt Nam [History of philosophical thought of Vietnam]*. Hanoi: Nxb. Khoa học Xã hội.

Phan Đăng Duy (2002). *Văn hóa tinh thần [Spiritual culture]*. Hà Nội: Nxb. Văn hóa Thông tin.

Phan Ngọc (2002). *Nhận diện văn hóa Việt Nam [Vietnam cultural identity]*. Hà Nội: Nxb. Văn học.

Trần Ngọc Thêm (2000). *Cơ sở văn hóa Việt Nam [Cultural basis of Vietnam]*. Hà Nội: Nxb. Giáo dục.

Trần Văn Giàu (1983). *Triết học và tư tưởng [Philosophy and ideology]*. Nxb. Tp. Hồ Chí Minh.

Trường Đại học Sư phạm (2000). *Taoist and Culture [Đạo gia và văn hóa]*. Hà Nội: Nxb. Văn hóa Thông tin.

Vu Hong Van (2019). Beliefs worship the village's Tutelary god in the beliefs life of Vietnamese people. *Humanities and Social Sciences* 7 (5), 156 -164. <https://doi.org/10.11648/j.hss.20190705.12>

Vu Hong Van (2020a). Origin of worshipping the Mother Goddess in Vietnam. *Asian Research Journal of Arts and Social Sciences* 10 (2), 10-29. <https://doi.org/10.9734/arjass/2020/v10i230142>

Vu Hong Van. (2020b). From the belief of the immortality of the soul, the blessing or the harassing of the soul towards people to the worship of the souls of Vietnamese people. *Asian Social Science* 16 (3), 1-11. <https://doi.org/10.5539/ass.v16n3p1>

Vu Hong Van. (2020c). Redefining the position of Daoism (Taoism) in Vietnamese history from the 2nd century to the 9th century. *Research Journal of Arts and Social Sciences* 10 (3), 54-60. <https://doi.org/10.9734/arjass/2020/v10i330151>

Vu Hong Van (2022). Education Patriotism from Education of Traditional Cultural Values. *Synesis*, 14 (2): 119-134. URL: <https://seer.ucp.br/seer/index.php/synesis/article/view/2196>

Vu Hong Van, Nguyen Trong Long (2019). Identify the values of ancestor worship belief in the spiritual life of Vietnamese people. *International Journal of Philosophy*, 7 (4): 60-66. <https://doi.org/10.11648/j.ijp.20190704.14>

Vũ Hồng Vân (2017). *Đạo Giáo và những biểu hiện trong tín ngưỡng dân gian của người Việt Nam [Taoism and expressions in Vietnamese folk beliefs]*. Hà Nội: Nxb. Chính trị Quốc gia Sự thật.

Vũ Hồng Vân (2019). *Tín ngưỡng thờ Mẫu trong đời sống tinh thần của người Việt Nam [The worship belief of the Mother Goddess in the spiritual life of Vietnamese people]*. Hà Nội: Nxb. Công an Nhân dân.