

Patriotism: The Philosophical Foundation of the Vietnamese People and its Manifestations in the Rural Villages

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Abstract

In Vietnam, patriotism is the highest value in the nation's spiritual value system. Patriotic feelings were formed from the very beginning of the founding of the country and continue to grow strongly to this day. It soon became the reason for life, the ideal, and the belief in the spiritual life of the Vietnamese people.

The purpose of this paper is to provide a comprehensive and in-depth view of patriotism as a specific philosophy of the Vietnamese nation. To that end, the paper focuses on analyzing what patriotism is and its expressions. It discusses the basic tenets of Vietnamese patriotism: the spirit of independence, self-reliance, the sense of national self-reliance, solidarity in national construction and defense and a humanistic spirit.

The paper thus highlights the peculiarities of the patriotic philosophy of the Vietnamese nation and how it manifests in the rural villages.

Keywords: history, patriotism, rural village, the philosophical foundation, Vietnamese.

Introduction

The principle of dialectical materialism shows that there is neither a thought movement, nor a philosophical doctrine that can be formed, developed and separated from the socio-historical conditions of a people. Vietnam is a classic example of how these manifest. In fact, Vietnamese patriotism does not appear by chance. It is not a purely speculative product either. Its formation and development are conditioned and are deeply reflected in the social history of Vietnam through the ages.

Vietnamese patriotism has accompanied the nation's history and has become its distinctive philosophy of life because it arose from two prominent features of the Vietnamese history. First, Vietnam has a very early history of nation-building and a long-standing civilization. It was the Red River civilization associated with the formation of the primitive states Kingdom of *Văn Lang*: 2879–258 BC and the Kingdom of *Âu Lạc*: 257–207 BC in *Đại Việt Sử Ký Toàn Thư* (originally compiled by *Ngô Sĩ Liên*¹ in 1479) (Ngo, 1697; Baldanza, 2016; Hoang, 2020; Theobald, 2018; Le, 2011; Tran, 2011). Over a long period of existence,

¹ *Ngô Sĩ Liên* (1400-1497): a royal historian of the Later *Lê* dynasty, editor of *Đại Việt Sử Ký Toàn Thư*, and a participant in the *Lam Sơn* uprising.

the *Văn Lang* Kingdom has affirmed its characteristics, such as a stable territory, a brilliantly developed culture (the most specific object is the Dong Son Drum), significantly more material strength (expressed in the number of bronze arrows, and the fortification of Co Loa citadel), customs and habits, language, writing, beliefs, religion and technical tools. Production techniques along with rich spiritual and cultural activities have been formed very early, through the cultures of Phung Nguyen: 2000–1500 BC (Nguyen, 1980) and Dong Dau: 1500–1100 BC (Kim, 2015), and Go Mun, Son Vi, Hoa Binh, & Dong Son - from the 7th century BC to the 2nd century AD. They are represented by “tools, jewelry, bronze drums, bronze arrows, and [the] citadels, among others. Modern Vietnam is very proud” (Tran, 2011: 57). Because the kingdom of Van Lang carried these characteristics, patriotism of each person soon blossomed and was engraved in their minds.

Second, overall, the history of Vietnam is a long series of uprisings and wars against colonialism and aggression. The first was the domination of the northern powers that lasted for more than a thousand years. During this period of Chinese domination (Table 1), the millennium of the Vietnamese nation's continuous rebellion determined to regain its independence. Vietnamese history still clearly records the uprisings against the foreign invaders of the Vietnamese people, such as the Hai Ba Trung revolt in 40 AD (O'Harrow, 1979; Marr, 1976), Ba Trieu uprising in 248 (Selden, 1985; Shackford, 1992). In 544, Ly Bi's (Ly Bon) rebellion won and established the country of *Vạn Xuân* 萬春 (Holmgren, 1980; Theobald, 2018), and the *Mai Thúc Loan* uprising in 713-722 was against the Tang dynasty invaders (Taylor, 1983). In 938, *Ngô Quyền* annihilated the Southern Han dynasty on the battle of *Bạch Đằng* River (Taylor, 1976).

Table 1: The Chinese domination period (111 BC – 938 AD)

Source: Ngo(1697); Tran(2011); Theobald(2018)

Date	Dynasty/Country name	Fighting/Events
111 BC-40 AD	Chinese domination I (HAN DYNASTY)	
40-43	Rebellion of the two Trưng Sisters 徵 (Hai Bà Trưng 征婆徵) Trưng Trắc 徵側 and Trưng Nhị 徵貳, empire of Lĩnh Nam 嶺南	
43-544	Chinese domination II (Han, WU, JIN, and SOUTHERN DYNASTIES)	248: Ba Trieu's uprising
544-602	Early or Former Lý dynasty 前李, empire of Vạn Xuân 萬春	544: Ly Bi's (Ly Bon) revolt
602-938	Chinese domination III (TANG DYNASTY)	713-722: <i>Mai Thúc Loan's</i> uprising 938: <i>Ngô Quyền</i> annihilated the Southern Han dynasty

After the victory battle of *Bạch Đằng* river, Vietnam opened a new era, the independent feudal period (939-1945) after a thousand years of northern domination. However, the Chinese feudal dynasties had not given up their ambition to invade Vietnam and the Vietnamese people had to continue fighting to protect their independence. Responding to the enemy's invasion, the Vietnamese people twice won the Northern Song Dynasty in 981 and 1076 (Womack, 2010: 194). under the *Lý* dynasty (1010-1225). During this period, for the first time in the history of Vietnam, there was a declaration of independence, the poem *Nam Quốc Sơn Hà* (南國山河) says it all.

The Southern emperor rules the Southern land.
Our destiny is written in Heaven's Book.
How dare you bandits trespass on our soil?
You shall meet your undoing at our hands!
(Translation by *Huyền Sanh Thông*, 1996) (Đàm)

Nam quốc sơn hà Nam đế cư
Tiết nhiên phân định tại thiên thư
Như hà nghịch lỗ lai xâm phạm?
Nhữ đẳng hành khan thủ bại hư!
(Ngo, 1697: 110)

The poem has great historical value, leaving a deep impression in the hearts of Vietnamese people about patriotism and national pride. It is believed to have been created in 981 during the 1st Northern Song Dynasty Battle but the author is unknown. However, according to *Đại Việt Sử Ký Toàn Thư*, general *Lý Thường Kiệt*² was the author of this poem, and was composed in 1076 (Ngo, 1697). Today, we can see that the poem is engraved in a 1500 years old temple in *Yên Phong* district, *Bắc Ninh*, Vietnam (Fig. 1).

Next, the Vietnamese, under the *Trần* dynasty (1226-1400) faced three resistance wars against the Mongols and won in 1258, 1285, and 1287–1288 (Baldanza, 2016). Later, the resistance wars against the Ming Dynasty in 1418–1427 (Anderson, 2020), and Qing Dynasty in 1788–1789 (Theobald, 2018; Nguyen, 2021c; Elman, 2005) erupted.

In the modern period (1945-present), the history of Vietnam turned to a new page when the nation had to confront France in 1945-1954 (Asselin, 2018; Goscha, 2012; Shipway, 2007) and the Anti-US Resistance War for National Salvation in 1954–1975 (Guan, 2000; Nguyen, 2020). In 1979, Vietnam had to resist the counter attack of sixty thousand Chinese troops on the Vietnam-China border (Chen, 1983; Grossheim, 2022; Ngô, 2021), and before that, against the attack of the Chinese Cambodian minions (Khmer Rouge) on the Vietnamese Southwest border from 1978-1989 (Grossheim, 2022; Sakhujia, 2022). On all these fronts, the Vietnamese people won great victories. In fact, history shows that the nation has endured losses, pains, and sacrifices at the highest level humans can bear (Tran, 2011: 182). Nevertheless, from those unprecedented arduous challenges, the Vietnamese have also upheld the most beautiful human qualities and values. That is revolutionary heroism, strong patriotism and perseverance. These two characteristics determine the formation and development of Vietnamese patriotism. Patriotism appeared early and was reinforced and fostered by countless uprisings against foreign invaders. It is an extremely sharp spiritual weapon to do miracles for the nation in any difficult situation. Without that, Vietnam would have long been erased from the world map, and the Vietnamese people would have soon assimilated.

However, resisting foreign invasions is not a characteristic of the Vietnamese nation alone. Indeed, it is a common feature of many countries worldwide. Nevertheless, the peculiarity here is that the Vietnamese people must always fight against many times stronger forces for a long and continuous period. Therefore, in terms of the time duration and the frequency of occurrence, the number of resistance wars and uprisings in Vietnam is larger than that of many countries worldwide, and it has to face many times stronger enemies. For that reason, patriotism has become a reason for life, an undying belief, and a unique philosophy of each Vietnamese person.

In this context, this research poses the following questions

1. What is patriotism?
2. What are the basic contents of patriotism?
3. What are the expressions of Vietnamese patriotism over the historical periods?

² *Lý Thường Kiệt* (1019 – 1105): one of the two greatest generals of the Lý Dynasty, the commander-in-chief of the 2nd war against the Northern Song (1076).



Fig. 1: the poem *Nam Quốc Sơn Hà*
Source: Bích Lan – Lưu Ly(2021)

Literature review and the theoretical ideas

The term "patriotism" has been used since the sixteenth century, but it is rather vague because philosophers did not name it. Much of the literature found is more about nationalism than patriotism. It was in the 1980s, that the term "patriotism" arose which became of interest to many thinkers. The philosophical debate on patriotism-related issues is still hot, showing no signs of abating (Primoratz, 2009). It proves that patriotism has become an attractive topic in the context that each country and nation must strive to rise to assert itself; establish standards of political ethics to create a philosophy of their nation. Researchers have expressed interest in the issue of patriotism in terms of the concept of patriotism, principles and standards. However, there is no difference between patriotism as a specific philosophy of the Vietnamese nation and the other patriotic philosophies of humankind if it is not about the expression of patriotism in the historical periods of the Vietnamese nation. In Vietnam, patriotism has always been enriched with new contents through different historical periods. Therefore, it always carries the breath of the times; thus, its expression is diverse and rich.

The Concept of Patriotism

Patriotism is a form of social consciousness. Thus, in the end, it is just a reflection of social existence in the historical period it was formed. Therefore, each community, space, and historical time has different views on patriotism. First, it must be mentioned that the definition in the dictionary refers to "love of one's country" (Primoratz, 2009). Another view is that patriotism is an awareness of our moral obligation to the political community (Dalberg-Acton, 1972: 163). From that core content, the definition of patriotism is expanded to the relationship between the individual and the country. Finally, patriotism is an emotion, a natural psychological state of people such as love for the homeland; loyalty to the Fatherland; pride in the past and the present of the Fatherland; the will to protect the interests of the Fatherland, and the willingness to sacrifice for that benefit. That understanding of patriotism is similar to Stephen Nathanson's definition of patriotism. Stephen Nathanson said that patriotism includes a special affection for one's own country, a sense of personal identification with the country, a special concern for the country's well-being, and willingness to sacrifice to promote the country's good (Nathanson, 1993: 34-35).

One's love for one's country is expressed in two ways:

- (1) Attitude towards the country, which is pride in the country's achievements and shame about the bad things of the country;
- (2) Special concern for the country, willing to strive, sacrifice to protect the country (Primoratz, 2009).

The concept of patriotism has been studied and clarified from different aspects. From a psychological perspective, patriotism is considered a higher-order emotion. Patriotic feelings appear in the process of forming and developing the national community. As a level of awareness that comes from the need for survival and development of the ethnic community, once formed, patriotism is not only a goal but becomes also an important part, a driving force for actions of all individuals and the whole community. It sharply contrasts the view that patriotism is merely an affection for one's own country (Kedourie, 1985: 73-74). The understanding of patriotism is more extreme when Zimmermann (quoted in Nathanson, 1993: 3) argues that "the love for one's country [...] is in many cases no more than the love of an ass for its stall." Developing patriotic sentiment is the basis for forming patriotic thoughts and patriotism.

From a philosophical perspective and the perspective of human philosophy, patriotic thought is a part of social consciousness, the spiritual aspect of real social life, regulated by social existence but still has relative independence concerning social existence. Lenin emphasized that "patriotism is one of the deepest feelings that have been consolidated for hundreds and thousands of years of the existence of isolated countries" (Lenin, 1980: 397). When considering patriotic thought as a product of historical movements and developments,

and at the same time as a reflection of a nation's history, Ho Chi Minh affirmed that "Our (Vietnamese) people have a passionate patriotism. It is one of our precious traditions. From the past to the present, every time the Fatherland was invaded, that spirit became vibrant; it formed an extremely powerful and huge wave, it swept through all dangers and difficulties, and it engulfed everything [about] traitors and enemies. In our history, there is a great resistance war that proves the patriotism of our people" (Ho, 2000a: 171).

In Vietnam, patriotism is a moral and political principle and, at the same time, a social standard expressed in love, loyalty, pride, and gratitude to the motherland. Maurizio Viroli once explained gratitude to the Fatherland convincingly. He wrote, "... We have a moral obligation towards our country because we are indebted to it. We owe our country our life, our education, our language, and, in the most fortunate cases, our liberty. If we want to be moral, we must return what we have received, at least in part, by serving the common good" (Viroli, 1997: 9).

Gratitude is always expressed by each individual being able to survive and develop intact when receiving the community's help that the individual cannot get when separated from the community (MacIntyre, 1984: 10-11). The Vietnamese people, patriotic, express gratitude to the Fatherland with the determination to protect the independence and freedom of the Fatherland and the integrity and unity of the territory. Because compatriots are those who have "a special status, a priority over those who stand outside the special relationship constituted by the political enterprise" (Dagger, 1985: 446), it is necessary to protect the people against threats from the harshness of Nature and the invasion of foreign powers. Patriotism of the Vietnamese people originates from the sense of compatriots, which was strongly developed in nation-building and defending the country. Patriotism or love of compatriots has a sacred meaning. It is the opposite of Goodin's point of view. He said, "it turns out that 'our fellow countrymen' are not so very special after all" (Goodin, 1988: 679); they are simply the beneficiaries of our concern for the community.

Research methodology

This research aims to evaluate the role of patriotism in forming the fundamental Vietnamese philosophy and the manifestation of this philosophy in myths, legends, heroes, culture, rituals and indeed everyday life in the rural villages. The study is based on qualitative comparative analysis and a survey of literature, including theoretical and experimental works on the topic of patriotism in Vietnam and its function in the war, spiritual-cultural life from the *Hồng Bàng* dynasty to the present. The following steps were taken to gather data.

Survey of Literature: The research started with a comprehensive survey of existing literature on the topic of patriotism and its manifestation in the history, legends, culture, rituals, and religion of the Vietnamese, as well as its manifestation in everyday life in the contemporary rural villages. The survey covered various sources, including journal articles, books (mainly on *Đại Việt Sử Ký Toàn Thư* (Ngo, 1697), *Việt Nam Sử lược* (Tran, 2011), conference papers, and online resources.

Conceptual framework: A conceptual framework was created based on the literature review to direct the study and specify the major factors and hypotheses. This framework combines ideas from history, culture, the military, religion, and anthropology to explain how patriotism and its manifestations in rural village life are related.

Data analysis: Utilizing content analysis, comparative analysis, the information gathered from the literature review was examined. The analysis sought to present a thorough and in-depth view of patriotism as a distinctive philosophy of the Vietnamese people in traditional and modern history. It underlines the unique characteristics of the Vietnamese people's patriotic philosophy.

Overall, in order to provide a thorough and nuanced understanding of the role of patriotism in forming the fundamental Vietnamese philosophy and its manifestation in history and contemporary context of Vietnam, this research methodology combines qualitative methods of literature survey, case studies and data analysis.

Findings

Expression of Patriotism

Patriotic thoughts have appeared very early in history. However, when it comes to the expression of patriotic thought, it refers to people's attitudes and behavior toward the country. "When the safety of one's country wholly depends on the decision to be taken, no attention should be paid either to justice or injustice, to kindness or cruelty, or to its being praiseworthy or ignominious" (Machiavelli, 1998 515). In such situations, the interests of the state must come first. For the first time, MacIntyre referred to "for what benefits to my nation I am bound to feel gratitude," as good things to do for the country and avoid crimes for the country (MacIntyre, 1984: 16). During the 4900 years of building and defending the country of the Vietnamese people, it is also 4900 years, Vietnamese patriotism existed and developed. In experiencing a very long process, Vietnamese patriotism is expressed in various activities.

Right from the early days of building the country, patriotism soon nourished the soul of each Vietnamese people through folklore and myths (Ngan, 2020). Greece and India are famous for their rich and unique mythical stories praising the gods. Contrary to that, Vietnam's myths praise patriotism, love for the race, and love for the compatriots and the people. That is very clearly shown in the popular folklore stories about the *Hồng Bàng* period, and has been transmitted orally by the Vietnamese for hundreds of generations.

Table 2: The myths and legends in the Hung king's period

Source: Ngo(1697); Taylor(1983); Tran(2011)

Date	Period	Myths/Legends
2879–258 BC	<i>Hồng Bàng</i> dynasty 鴻龐, Kingdom of <i>Văn Lang</i> (Hung Kings period).	The Hung Kings identified two legendary characters as their ancestors: <i>Lạc Long Quân</i> , also known as the " <i>Lạc Dragon Lord</i> ," a prince of the sea, and <i>Âu Cơ</i> , a princess of the highlands. <i>Âu Cơ</i> gave birth to a bag with 100 eggs and from there hatched 100 sons. Then fifty children followed <i>Âu Cơ</i> to mountain, fifty children followed <i>Lạc Long Quân</i> down to the sea. Then, the Vietnamese see both of them as the ancestors of their race.
		18 Hung Kings ruled over 2,621 years (2879–258 BC), that means a King lived an average of more than 145 years which is extraordinary.
		In the third King Hung's reign, Saint <i>Gióng</i> , a three-year-old boy who transformed suddenly into a giant by consuming copious amounts of rice, vanished into the sky after driving out the invaders (the Shang dynasty).
		The Great King of Mount <i>Tản Viên</i> , also known as the Mountain Spirit (<i>Sơn Tinh</i>).
		The Water Spirit (<i>Thủy Tinh</i>) represents the monsoon rainy season, a sudden rise in sea level, or invaders from the sea.
		<i>Chử Đồng Tử, Nhất Dạ Trạch</i>

Looking closely, every detail of the story is the most popular, the best, the noblest features of Vietnamese patriotism. Religious culture is also imbued with nationalism in Vietnam (Nguyen, 2018; Ngo, 2019). Deity and worship of gods (national heroes) is a unique feature of the Vietnamese culture and beliefs. Vietnamese people always keep the tradition of worshipping heroes who have made merit for the people and the country. It is the remembrance of merit, worship and respect for the ancestors that have become weapons and spiritual strength against the domination of the foreign forces.

Patriotism must be associated with hatred for the enemy. In *Hịch tướng sĩ* [The Exhortation to the Military Generals], Lord Tran Hung Dao (*Trần Quốc Tuấn*³) wrote,

"I often forget to eat at mealtimes, pat my pillow in the middle of the night, my intestines hurt like crazy, and my eyes are filled with tears; only angry cannot discharge meat, skinning, eating liver, drinking the blood of enemies; even if a hundred of my

³ *Trần Quốc Tuấn* (1228 – 1300): an outstanding military man, the commander-in-chief of *Đại Việt*'s army who defeated the Yuan Dynasty invader in 1285, 1288

bodies are dried in the grass, and a thousand of them wrapped in horse skins, I will still do it"

(Nguyen, 2012: 82).

Along with hatred and resentment, the Vietnamese must always fight against the conspiracy of assimilation; preserve their identity, language, customs, and traditions. Not accepting to be assimilated, several Vietnamese customs and habits are still preserved so that the Vietnamese and Chinese can be distinguished. For example, the custom of dyeing teeth black, tattooing and casting bronze drums (typical for the Vietnamese material culture). Under the rule of thousands of years of Chinese feudal dynasties, it was compulsory to learn Chinese, but Vietnamese people always have a sense of preserving their language, knowing how to create *Chữ Nôm*, Nom script, as their national language (Trần, 2019; Phan, 2013). In addition, the people of *Đại Việt* were alert enough to selectively and creatively receive foreign cultures imported from outside.

The Zen lineages of Zen Vinītaruci (Indian) and Zen 無言通 (Chinese) were imported into Vietnam by the Chinese people, who gave birth to pure Vietnamese Zen lines with the Vietnamese identity. It was the line of Zen *Thảo Đường* (草堂) which was practiced by kings and mandarins of the Lý Dynasty (1009–1225), the Trúc Lam Buddhist Zen lineage (Dinh, 2017) founded by King *Trần Nhân Tông* (1258–1308) (Viet Nam National Commission for UNESCO, 2021). Opening a period of long prosperous development of Buddhism in Vietnam, people meditate to learn about the Four Noble Truths in order to free themselves (Nguyen et al., 2022). Although under the domination of the Chinese dynasties, the Vietnamese people must select the cultural values imported from the outside. In *Việt Nam Sử Lược*, historian Trần Trọng Kim⁴ commented that “Vietnamese people from north to south follow one custom, speak one language, and keep the same memory, what a homogeneity of a nation from beginning to end” (Tran, 2011: 18-19). What is not suitable will be rejected, and what is appropriate will be approved and reformed. It is the result of the struggle for passionate patriotism and national pride in a long-standing culture of the Vietnamese nation.

Vietnamese patriotism is expressed in the will to be resolute, clinging to the ground, clinging to the village, and is deeply rooted in the place of its birth. Vietnamese villages consist of many families living together based on the basic relationship of blood relation. Everyone in the village shares the same culture, beliefs and love, so they have a strong sense of ownership with the village, even when they die, they also want to be buried in the village they were born in. The Vietnamese did not let themselves be driven away by the waves of Chinese migration and the invasion policies of France and the United States. After a thousand years of colonization by the Chinese dynasties and over a hundred years of invasions by the Western empires, Vietnam is still the Vietnamese people. Many historians have affirmed that the Vietnamese can lose the country, not the village, and by keeping the village, they regained the country; because the village is the place that contains the spirit and mettle of Vietnam.

Each village usually has a village gate, a communal house, its own rules (village custom or rules), banyan trees, wells, and bamboo ramparts, such as *Uớc Lễ* village (a 500 years old village in Hanoi, Vietnam). The village gate is built quite solidly, it is both a place of demarcation and used to cover and protect the people in the village when there is any attack from the outside (Fig. 2). The village communal house is the place to worship the people who gave birth to the village, the



⁴ *Trần Trọng Kim* (1883 – 1953) a Vietnamese historian, scholar, educator, literature and religion researcher, who served as prime minister of the Imperial government of Vietnam in 1945.

national heroes - the god who protects the village; at the same time, it is also a place for community activities and festivals associated with historical events of the village and the nation (Fig. 3). On the communal house are carved sacred symbols of the nation such as bronze drums and mythical birds (*chim hạc*), both expressing the desire to be happy and full, and at the same time expressing national pride. Each village is ruled by a separate law called the village convention. The village's custom is so solemnly implemented that Vietnamese folk have a saying "the king's magic must lose to the village's law".

Fig. 2: *Ước Lễ* village gate

Source: Nguyen(2021b)



Fig. 3: *Ước Lễ* village's communal house

Source: Vinpearl(2023)

In addition, there are many different clans in a village and they all have "family or clan shrines" used to worship ancestors and discuss important matters in the clan (Phan). Every year, the men in a family have to go to their church on the first day of the lunar new year to burn incense and worship their ancestors. In each family, they have their own altar to worship their parents every day. This is the traditional religion of the Vietnamese people, which they believe that respect and gratitude to ancestors helps the family to prosper and the family line to develop. The family members must unite and help each other like the fairy tale "Bundle of Chopsticks" (Vuong et al., 2018: 6). This story has been handed down to this day and is included in the textbooks for grade 2 students.

Therefore, the author argues that the solidarity in each Vietnamese family through home education, pride in being a member of the family is the core of Vietnamese patriotism. Each person has a sense of sacred connection, respect and pride for the village (where he/she was born) and is willing to sacrifice himself to protect the village. They have created a glue that binds the members of the village, making the village an impregnable fortress against all attacks and wars. These factors have created a glue that binds the members of the village, turning the village into an impregnable fortress against all attacks and wars. In short, the village is a place to preserve and promote the patriotic cultural tradition of the Vietnamese nation, as well as a place to fight the enemy.

Through historical periods, Vietnam's patriotic thought has been enriched with new values in line with the realities and new characteristics of the times. In the Hung Kings period, patriotic thought appeared as a rustic epic through the myths and legends (Table 2). During the domination period, patriotic thought was expressed through the spirit of revolt against the domination and assimilation of the enemy. During the independent feudal period, patriotic thought became a theoretical knowledge system, including the views on: "people," "country," "national independence," and "national sovereignty,"... along with the will of the nation to be independent and strong. In entering the modern era, patriotism developed strongly, combined with proletarian internationalism, creating a great strength for Vietnam to fight and win in two resistance wars against the French and American imperialists. It has reflected the maturity of the Vietnamese patriotic thought through the eras. The main ideology is patriotism, anti-invasion, and protection of national independence; nothing is more precious than independence, freedom, integrity, and territorial unity. In Vietnam, patriotic thought has evolved into patriotism and has become a specific philosophy of the Vietnamese nation. Vietnamese patriotism is no longer a mere theory but has become a philosophy of action. It is the unity of three elements: emotion, will, and action. Patriotic sentiments and thoughts are the greatest feelings and thoughts of the Vietnamese nation. Here, the essence of Vietnam manifests itself most clearly, fully, and centrally, more than anywhere else. If we use the word *đạo* (dao-道)

with its original meaning "way," which is the direction, then true patriotism is the Vietnamese dao (Do, 2022).

Solidarity in National Construction and Defense

Patriotism originates from the simplest and closest human emotions, such as one's love for the family, love for the loved ones, love for the fruits of labor, and love for the place where one was born and raised. Simple emotions initially became the solidarity attached to the village and homeland and were raised to patriotism (McLeod, 1992; Tran, 2011). Therefore, the spirit of solidarity has become a great content of Vietnamese patriotism.

National Unification

In Vietnam, there was a very early appearance of the nation-state based on social and class divisions due to the requirements of construction and management of irrigation works, dykes, and the requirements of fighting foreign invaders to protect the country (Wonsetler, 2016; Soucy, 2000). The process of formation and the development of the Vietnamese nation is closely related to the process of national unification that has profoundly impacted the development of national consciousness, created community cohesion, and united to join hands to build and protect the country. Over thousands of years, the tradition of solidarity and patriotism has become the life of every Vietnamese, attaching the destiny of everyone to the destiny of the nation and promoting the development of the community. It is for that reason that the Vietnamese are so much in love with their homeland (Nguyen, 2021a).

Solidarity has become a precious tradition in the Vietnamese nation. It is the source of strength that helps the Vietnamese overcome the harshness of Nature, overcome the immediate difficulties, and become proud and heroic in the face of the invading enemy. In recognition of the role of solidarity in the country's development, Vietnamese feudal dynasties soon built a great national unity block, promulgating progressive policies to strengthen the people's hearts and promote the spirit of solidarity among the people and between the people and the court. Typical for that spirit of solidarity is the *Lý-Trần* Kings and Mandarins who took the people as the center, implementing the policies: "beloved to the people," "reliance on the people's strength," "the people are the root (of the dynasty)," "obey the orders of heaven, follow the will of the mass of people," and "consider the people as the decisive force in defense of the country". Lord Tran Hung Dao always affirmed that uniting the people's hearts is the most solid fortress; strengthening the people's strength and enlisting the people's consensus is the "deep-rooted succession" pre-requisite to defeating any enemies for preserving independence.

It is a view containing many positive and progressive factors that have contributed to great achievements in the cause of nation-building and defense of the Vietnamese people. There are few places where the country is at war, and the people are still hungry; the king is willing to stand shoulder to shoulder with the people and the country to overcome the difficulties. When the enemy was far away, the people were well off, and the country was peaceful, the king dressed in brown robes lived and retreated to the pagoda's door, fasting and reciting Buddha's name like the Kings of the *Lý-Trần* dynasties. Those policies create a favorable political climate for the cause of nation-building and defense, thereby expressing the spirit of loving the people like the children of the kings. With their open policies, the *Lý-Trần* courts consolidated the nation, united the people, and gathered many human and material resources for the common cause, especially when the country was in danger.

When the country was at war, the Vietnamese people promoted the spirit of solidarity more than ever. The strength of great solidarity has become the strength of the nation, the strength of Vietnamese patriotism. The most significant event in uniting against foreign invaders that history books often mention was the *Binh Than* Conference (1282), the *Diên Hồng* Conference (1285) with the chants of "determined to fight" showing million people's determination as one to defeat the enemy, even the strongest enemy. Thanks to that, it made three illustrious feats, defeating the most ferocious and powerful Yuan (Mongol) invaders in 1258, 1285, and 1288 (Anderson, 2015; Nguyen, 2021c; Vu, 2017). *Đông A's* spirit of

immortality is forever thanks to the spirit of solidarity and will to unify the country, maintaining the territory of the *Đại Việt* Kingdom.

In modern times, the tradition of national unity continues to be promoted, associated with the new historical conditions of the country. Typical of the spirit of solidarity during this period is Ho Chi Minh's declaration, "Vietnam is one, the Vietnamese people are one. Rivers may be shallow; mountains can wear. Nevertheless, that truth never changes." That statement proved that solidarity and unity are the strength of the Vietnamese people that no other force can divide. Solidarity is no longer a tradition, a habit, or a spontaneous activity as before, but it has become a self-disciplined, organized, and targeted activity. During the resistance wars against the French and American aggressions, Vietnam established the United National Front to widely gather the patriotic masses to fight the enemy, regardless of men, women, old people, or young people, and regardless of religion, party, or ethnicity. Ho Chi Minh wrote in the Call for National Resistance, "Whoever has a gun uses a gun. Those who have a sword use the sword, and those who do not have a sword use a pickaxe, a spade, or a club. Everyone must try to fight against the French colonialists to save the country," showing solidarity and determination "it is better to sacrifice everything than to lose the country".

Experiencing many different names corresponding to each different historical period of the nation, the name Vietnam National Front still maintains its function as the common house of the great national unity block, which is an organization representing the people, voicing the voices, wills, and the aspirations of the people. Today, "the great unity of the whole people has become the strategic line of the Vietnamese revolution; It is both a driving force and a great resource in the cause of national construction and defense". Thus, national unity is not only a decisive factor in the victory of the cause of national salvation but also in the success of the socio-economic development of the Vietnamese nation. As Ho Chi Minh affirmed: "Unity, solidarity, solidarity. Success, success, great success!" (Ho, 2000b: 586)

The Humanitarian Spirit

Humanity is the basic category of the Confucius-Mencius philosophical system. After being introduced to Vietnam, Confucianism became the moral standard of the Vietnamese society during the feudal period (Vo Van, 2023; Nguyen, 2022). Influenced by Confucianism, humanity has become an important content of the Vietnamese patriotism. However, the thought of humanity in the patriotic tradition of the Vietnamese people has surpassed the doctrine of Confucius-Mencius to make a big difference. The Confucian ideology of humanity is associated with serving the ruling class according to a strict caste order. The basis for affirming this is that the benevolence of Confucianism revolves around the person training himself/herself according to the five values of benevolence (仁), righteousness (义), propriety (礼), wisdom (智), and fidelity (信) to "take care of the family, rule the country, and conquer the world." (Pham and Bui, 2021) Contrary to that view, Vietnam's humanistic ideology is associated with patriotism and love for the people.

The overarching philosophy of Vietnam is "the core of humanity and peace of mind" (Institute of History, 1976: 63). For the Vietnamese, being humane must first be done for the people's well-being. The highest purpose of humanity is to secure the people. Therefore, if you want to practice humanity, you must resolutely destroy the invaders and bring peaceful life to the people. To practice humanity means to eliminate violence; that is, to fight bravely to destroy the invaders. Wu also believes that humanity means equality and justice among the people in the society (Wu, 2021). A benevolent person must fight "in harmony with the will of heaven and with the heart of man." In this regard, the author agrees with living a good life and a good way (Pham and Bui, 2021).

Thanks to the power of benevolence, the Vietnamese use "great justice to overcome cruelty" and "compassion to replace tyranny." Thus, Pippin observed that humanity is an exaltation of human power (Pippin, 2021). The motto of taking fewer enemies and fighting against the strong with weakness has helped the Vietnamese persevere, fight, and defeat all the invading enemies. It has also proved that Vietnam's humanistic ideology is imbued with the patriotic content.

A loving country, and people are determined to eliminate violence. People must raise the righteous banner to prove that the nation's war is a just war to protect national independence and that the enemy's aggression is unjust. Therefore, the idea of benevolence also includes denouncing the enemy's crimes. In *Bình Ngô Đại Cáo*⁵ (Great proclamation upon the pacification of the Wu - 平吳大誥)," *Nguyễn Trãi*⁶ wrote:

“Roasting the people on a ferocious fire
Bury the baby in the pit of disaster.
Lie to the sky and deceive the people with hundreds of thousands of plans
Causing war to bring resentment for decades” (Institute of History, 1976: 73)

Exposing the enemy's crimes is not to continue to create enmity between nations but to realize that there is only one way to save the people and the country by taking up arms to drive away the invaders and overthrow their domination. Therefore, in history, all the Vietnamese uprisings and resistance wars were both a national defense war and liberation. This expresses the aspiration that "nothing is more precious than independence and freedom." The power of humanity is the power of patriotism, love of the people, and aspiration for independence and freedom.

The Vietnamese people have used humanity to resolve conflicts and enmities between nations. In order to limit the damage and loss for both sides participating in the war, the Vietnamese people have brought the idea of humanity and sincerity to convince the enemy to repent. It is also the Vietnamese military art, knowing how to strike people's hearts when recalling nostalgia for their homeland, missing their wives and children, leaving them confused and flustered, and losing their fighting spirit. That is to say, to defeat the enemy, one must first disrupt the enemy's conspiracy and disintegrate the enemy most effectively by smashing their fighting spirit, making them lose their will. Thanks to that, the Vietnamese people could avoid unnecessary casualties. Here, the thought of humanity is associated with patriotism because practicing humanity means that whatever is beneficial to the country and the people, all efforts are made.

The humane thought of the Vietnamese nation not only stops at patriotism and love for the people but also knows how to treat the enemy with humanity when they have surrendered. It clearly shows the tolerance and humanity of the Vietnamese people. When winning, the enemy has surrendered; the policy is not to kill but also to open the way to live, creating conditions for them to withdraw to the country safely and not lose face. Again, we have found parallels in the biblical point of view. Benevolence means kindness, forgiveness, and love (Spalding et al., 2019). The view of tolerance and benevolence is further clarified through Hien's statement that benevolence means loving, helping, and forgiving those who make mistakes and those who betray the nation but recognize their mistakes (Hien, 2021: 39).

Thus, that spirit of humanity has contributed to maintaining peace among the nations, showing love for peace, and making the people happy and the country peaceful. Therefore, it has become an important content of patriotism, a profound philosophy of life, and the unique military art of the Vietnamese people.

Conclusions

In Vietnam, patriotism is a sacred value, a potential and permanent power in the nation's heart. It has been an inexhaustible resource throughout Vietnam's history and is a typical feature of the Vietnamese personality. A nation with a very early and long history of national formation (near five thousand years). Throughout the struggle to build and defend for the country, the Vietnamese united to resist the harshness of Nature to survive. It has created community

⁵ *Bình Ngô Đại Cáo*: was drafted by *Nguyễn Trãi* in 1428 to declare victory in the resistance war with the Ming Dynasty, affirming the independence of *Đại Việt*. This is considered the second Declaration of Independence of Vietnam, after *Nam Quốc Sơn Hà*.

⁶ *Nguyễn Trãi* (1380-1442): a politician, writer, who the second most important person in the establishment of the Later *Lê* dynasty (1428-1788).

cohesion, national consciousness, and a sense of sovereignty in the country since the ancient times.

On the other hand, the Vietnamese people had to continuously fight against foreign invaders and keep their borders. That process has made Vietnamese people always proud of the country's exploits in the past, and they are always ready to sacrifice themselves to protect those achievements. It has trained and forged a strong patriotic spirit with an aspiration for independence and freedom and the will to preserve the integrity and unification of the country. Although patriotic sentiments and ideas exist in all the ethnic groups in the world, depending on each specific country, that ideology is formed eventually, dark or light, and nowhere near the same. Vietnamese patriotic sentiments and ideas have arisen and have developed in specific conditions, bearing the unique identity of Vietnam.

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