



## THE EDUCATIONAL PHILOSOPHY OF DONG KINH NGHIA THUC MOVEMENT

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### **Abstract:**

Dong Kinh Nghia Thuc movement first appeared in Ha Noi in March 1907 and composed contemporarily patriotic personages, intellectuals who stood out ask French authority to establish, act and organize. Undertaking of this movement was giving West democratic, civilized ideology instead of classic Confucianism in order to convert national education and reform the country. Although Dong Kinh Nghia Thuc movement only existed in a short time, all its special patriotic activities, educational activities marked a brilliant success in the patriotic movement, in general, and in the education reformation, in particular. Educational philosophy of Dong Kinh Nghia Thuc movement does not only meet the demand of the history at that time, but also have worth for the present time. In this article, we will focus on analyzing and contributing to clarify the influences in the field of educational philosophy of the movement.

**Keywords:** Dong Kinh Nghia Thuc, ideology, philosophy, educational

### **1. Introduction**

The period of the late 19th century and early 20th century was the Vietnam historical period which had a tremendous upheaval. French colonial invaded and turned our country into a semi-colonial semi-feudal country. Before the necessary of history, the progressive Confucianists advocated to reform the country. Because intellectual capacities were low, civil rights were scorned and there was a shortage of national unity, the country was lost. With the aim of remedying this situation and making the country prosper as well as regaining national sovereignty, advanced intellectual Confucianists asserted that necessary task was improving intellectual capacities. One of the ways to improve intellectual capacities was having new education methods, accessing new knowledge and having new educational philosophy which were consistent with the practices of the country and the times. Studying educational philosophy of the Dong Kinh

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Nghia Thuc movement does not only show us the phase of development of education in the history, but also contribute to build education in the new era.

## 2. Content

When studying education in the world in Vietnam, in particular in each period of the history, education has a philosophy of its own. Educational philosophy can be expressed in many different forms such as a declaration or a short slogan. Through studying ideological education in Dong Kinh Nghia Thuc, author think educational philosophy of this movement is *"learning with the aim to change themselves and change the destiny of the nation."*

*With the concept that an illiterate nation is a weak nation, advanced intellectual confucianists uphold the learning spirit to change ourselves.* When witnessing the country invaded and colonized, through the experiences of the ancestors as well as national traditions, there are no other ways excepting standing up to fight against the enemies. They knew that if they had wanted the struggle to be won, they would have called up the patriotism of people. To uphold spirit of patriotism and solidarity must be rooted for education. Education must be consistent with the trend of the times and the history of Vietnamese at the time. The question was asked: how to propagate a new academic, a civilized lifestyle for the people, how to develop the wisdom of each individual in order to proceed the develop the wisdom of the nation. When knowledge of people was raised, they wouldn't be willing to live in the slavery so they would struggle together.

Learning to change oneself would create the power to expel the enemies. To make this, education needed to promote the creativity of people then constituted the pioneering team to bring their civilization culture resources were applied in the political machine. Open up people's knowledge to train the people who were knowledgeable about the natural sciences, social sciences, capture the behavior of nature and utilize in social life. This was a necessary condition for liberation of human and national liberation.

With the thought of learning to change themselves the advanced confucianists proposed work program of the school focusing on concentrating on fighting against corrupting feudal ideologies; reforming cultural and social ideologies. Learning to change oneself not only done on the theoretical research, but also many forms of learning such as vocational school, learning to be human.

With the motto of attaching learning to life, this was a completely new motto compared to the traditional learning which does not focusing on the practice. In the teaching, there was no point in solving big problems that are important for the consolidation and development of the state and the improvement of people's lives. It was also different from the method study of excessive stuffing of the French colonialists. It is an advanced method of teaching, no dogmas, not imposed, in order to promote the learner's intelligence. The learners were the main subjects, center of the educational process.

Opening up people's knowledge was the main purpose of Dong Kinh nghia thuc. Students in the Dong Kinh Nghia Thuc school firstly were trained to become true

patriots. The aim of this school was providing students with practical knowledge about life, associated learning with practice, directly taking part in reforming the society.

Therefore, Dong Kinh Nghia Thuc advocated the building of national education, which taught the whole people the necessary knowledge to change the thinking for oneself and the destiny of the nation. Because *"the national education was to clarify the reasonable correlation between the country and the people, the people to know clearly their position, duties and how to raise patriotic awareness and foster autonomous as well as independent talents. A country which hasn't had the national education has hundreds of families have been dulling haven't known both their country and politics"*.

The national education's aim has been to train people to make their obligations with their country and claim to be recognized their legitimate rights. A practical education's aim was to train people who have had good qualities because they would be able to create great value for society. Moreover, helping the underprivileged were a way to reduce the burden to society. On a point of view, learning didn't recognize or treat gender, age as well as social status as different hasn't ever been recognized before. There were many kinds of classes for many objects were opened: classes during the day, night classes and classes for adults and children's classes. The classes for everyone, regardless of the young girls and boys, including the Confucianists wanted to learn French, and that was for the first-time women have been gone to school.

In that spirit, patriotic education of Vietnam by scholars of radical Dong Kinh Nghia Thuc movement bring positive meaning, with new content and extremely abundant, along with an education way and organization was newer than ever before.

## **2. Learning with the goal was to change the life of the nation**

The advanced Confucianists in Dong Kinh Nghia Thuc movement suppose that people need to be educated national consciousness, imitated, followed their ancestors. Especially as the talents, patriots of Dong Kinh Nghia Thuc has been trained in point of view completely new compared with the views of the previous notoriety and Confucianists in the perception about the country and people of Vietnam, about the rescue of ethnic. They cut off their views that they supposed country's assets were the individual's assets they were the common property of all citizens, instead. Therefore, the country in the new era must be associated with the three elements that were; stable territory; had residents as well as sovereignty. Dong Kinh Nghia Thuc movement emphasized independent thinking and autonomy of our people in education.

In the "civilization" movement of the French in Vietnam, in general and the introduction of Western education in our country in particular, the advanced Confucianists noticed that the civilization movement was only an reason to enslave and exploit the colonies, but on the other hand, they also acknowledged the positive impact of "civilization" movement, science, and technology of the West to the colonial countries. Thus, the colonial part in this education was only the outer shell which was imposed by the colonialists on the colonies. While the humanity part, base cultural part, the real essence part in educational philosophy of French at that time which someone gained was

good. Because advanced Confucianists recognized the problem they proposed educational philosophy has been *"learning to change ourselves and learn to change the destiny of the nation"*. On this point of view, Dong Kinh Nghia Thuc movement appealed the people, especially the young adults studying technology, science, and engineering of the West countries, with the aim to help their country become civilized, self-improvement, powerful in the near future.

In education, the content of patriotism, national salvation was the red thread throughout all activities of Dong Kinh nghia thuc. No teaching materials, propaganda do not educate patriotism for students and the masses. *"We were made forefather to be radiant/Having patriotism was really Vietnamese"*.

Dong Kinh Nghia Thuc turned to learn useless knowledge into useful knowledge, with the aim of training citizens to understand about rights and obligations to their country. Therein, learning not only associated with the practical benefits of each individual, but also expanded the scope of benefits for the whole society.

### 3. Discussion

Dong Kinh Nghia Thuc movement of patriotic scholars on early twentieth century, only existed for a short time and then French colonialists immersed in a sea of blood, but the philosophy of education *"learning to change themselves and learn to change the destiny of the nation"* raised awareness of people to destiny of the nation in the new era. With these activities, Dong Kinh Nghia Thuc had the proud mark in the history of Vietnam by its results on the fields of culture, education, economy, social.

Educational philosophy of Dong Kinh Nghia Thuc movement went into the history of Vietnam as the first education reform in the national history, played an important role in liberating nation early twentieth century. Within the scope of the patriotic movement, the educational philosophy of Dong Kinh Nghia Thuc movement not only aroused patriotism tradition, but also contribute to innovative new contents, forms, methods in order to enhance the deeply traditional patriotism of the people.

Educational philosophy of Dong Kinh Nghia Thuc movement became a tool to revive the country and nation. The aim of educational philosophy at this period was to uphold the spirit of patriotism, make the country strong and self-reliance. For over a century, educators in the movement as Luong Van Can, Nguyen Quyen, Le Dai, Duong Ba Trac, Hoang Tang Bi, Vu Hoanh, Nguyen Huu Cau. Not only did the patriotic scholars light up the idea of Revival – Innovation - Tradition, but they also laid the foundation for building an independent and voluntary education concentrating on the learning the virtues of the nation and the world to educate and train modern Vietnamese people.

In the spirit of this educational philosophy, the advanced confucianists in this period think that a good educational content had to be built in harmony with the developing trend of the times. Educational content was to meet the requirements of history to play an important role in building the country. Educational philosophy of this period highlighted the relationship between the school, family and society. In teaching, learner was the center of the educational process. It contributed to awake the patriotism

of people at the time, initially attack the feudal ideology, pave the way for new ideas. If we wanted to change the fate of the country, made the nation strong, we would start changing the thinking of each citizen. Learners had to understand, first of all learning to improve the individual's intellectual and later learning to save the country, save the people, make nation civilized and advanced.

Educational philosophy of Dong Kinh Nghia Thuc movement did not aim to train people who wanted to be officials; the purpose of this movement was to exalt the individual's intellectual, promoting learners' positive quality. Therefore, their undertaking is improving intellectual, eliciting human and kindness values. Dong Kinh Nghia Thuc has surpassed its scope to become a movement to spread ideas, extensive knowledge. Arousing patriotism, national consciousness of the people through education and personality. Philosophy of education developed an education to implement the political objectives with the aim of liberating the people from the yoke invasion. In education, the education of patriotism, national spirit are lessons which have no small significance. With educational philosophy of Dong Kinh Nghia Thuc movement tied nation fortunes changing with fortunes ourselves. This is the progressive, comprehensive and insightful educational philosophy when connecting education with the human liberation and national liberation.

#### **4. Conclusion**

Even if this movement only existed in a relatively short period of time, the educational philosophy of Dong Kinh Nghia Thuc movement not only solved historical question, but also left some merits for modern society. With a new educational philosophy, through education to arouse patriotic of every citizen, Dong Kinh Nghia Thuc movement marked an important milestone in brilliant education history of Vietnam. On the educational philosophy of Dong Kinh Nghia Thuc movement can be summed up into the issues; Education must first make every individual intellect be raised in a comprehensive way. Then education must contribute to liberate the country from the invasion and build a prosperous country of Vietnam.

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