

THE ORIGINS OF BUDDHISM - CONFUCIANISM - TAOISM INTEGRATION ISSUE IN VIETNAM

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<https://doi.org/10.59009/ijllc.2025.0132>

Received Date: 25 June 2025 / Published Date: 17 July 2025

ABSTRACT

Buddhism, Confucianism, and Taoism come to be through the synthesis of all aspects of life to attain all-encompassing advantages, with the nation's and the fatherland's interests given priority. Initially, we emphasize the fundamental basis of patriotism and the sense of protecting the nation's territory and independence. However, before anything else, it is necessary to highlight that there are other factors that also impact the integration issue. Included the following: Possess deep-rooted moral traditions and innate thinking instincts, the inherent starting point of Vietnam is that it does not yet have its own philosophy, compatibility of imported culture with local culture, variations in social conditions over each period of time, ethnic psychology and social psychology factors, comprehending the origins of the community's strength.

Keywords: Buddhism, Confucianism, Taoism, Integration, Traditional Culture.

1. INTRODUCTION

Some people have varied perspectives about the origins of Taoism, Buddhism, and Confucianism integration in Vietnam. There is generally no consensus on this matter. For instance, some scholars, like Nguyễn Lang, Lê Mạnh Thát, and Nguyễn Công Lý, think that the issue originated in Giao Châu; on the other hand, most scholars, including Trần Nghĩa, Nguyễn Tài Đông, and Nguyễn Thị Mỹ Hạnh, believe that the Three Teachings are a traditional Chinese culture that was brought to Vietnam. However, after surveying our predecessors' research on this issue, we also have a alternative viewpoint as a supplement to elucidate and clarify this issue.

2. MATERIALS AND METHODS

Since the researching of integration of the Three Teachings has been a long-standing research topic with a significant amount of writing, therefore, the approach of synthesizing and analyzing research papers by recognized reputable researchers is necessary to have a thorough understanding of this matter in order to provide unbiased evaluations based on political philosophy, ideological history, and sociocultural theory. Undoubtedly, in order to approach the subject, multidisciplinary approaches, literary and historical approaches, as well as methodical approaches, must be used. Taking advantages of the adaptable application of a variety of techniques, the paper will generate stimulating debates before reaching significant and impartial findings.

Overview of research and some opinions on the issue of integrating the Three Teachings in Vietnam

Regarding the genesis of the issue surrounding the Three Teachings, a survey of research on the interrelationships of Buddhism, Confucianism, and Taoism has yielded the following principal viewpoints:

Scholars differ in their motivations and assessments of the foundations of the relationship between the Three Teachings. For instance, Trần Đình Hượu, Nguyễn Tài Đồng, and Nguyễn Thị Mỹ Hạnh thought it is *tolerance*, Nguyễn Huệ Chi trusted it is *an expression of the national spirit*, the idea of equality and compassion, Nguyễn Công Lý thinks it is *the spirit of open-mindedness*, etc. Indeed, It is challenging to pinpoint the specific ideological source that the Vietnamese people most adhere. Because prior to embracing imported ideologues (Buddhism, Confucianism, Taoism), Vietnamese people already had the **basic thinking inclination** and the **historic ethical roots**, which is the *spirit of dedication to humanity, sociability, solidarity, ideology of equality - democracy, compassion for fellow human beings*. These components are frequently referenced in folk songs, proverbs, myths, old stories, and ancient tales.

Furthermore, *Vietnam's inherent starting point* is the factor that can be considered to have the most impact on the absorption of imported cultural sources as well as the phenomenon and concept of the Three Teachings integration. Thích Mãn Giác (1967) acknowledges in the article “*The influence of Buddhism in the past on Vietnamese culture*” that “*No one can deny that the Vietnamese people do not have a philosophy with a particular colours*” (p.20). It can be said that we Vietnamese have not created a unique philosophy of its own magnitude, but have only absorbed and adapted the world's great philosophies such as China and India. There is justification for this, so an intellectual researcher from Vietnam previously stated “The challenge facing the Vietnamese people at that time is that they should have a development mindset, as that is the only way we can find the path to national liberation. In order to develop such ways of thinking, Vietnamese people must first preserve and advance the innate ways of thinking of their ancestors. But that capital is not much. They must locate additional sources to supplement. That is the outside ruler's vast cognitive system.” (Nguyễn, Tài Thư (editor), 2019, pp.84-85). Numerous researchers also affirmed that the traditional thinking values left by our ancestors are the identity of our nation, of the brave and adaptable Vietnamese people under all circumstances. According to Nguyễn Huệ Chi, “Vietnamese people built Vietnamese ideology with the core of traditional ideology, the bravery of the Vietnamese people before history, and the rich reality of Vietnamese life. Therefore, it was not the idealistic view of the universe of Buddhism that our ancestors mindlessly accepted during the Lý - Trần period, but the traditional way of looking at the universe, left by our ancestors, that mainly contributed to creating the system. Popular cosmology of the Vietnamese people during the Lý - Trần period.” (Nguyễn, Huệ Chi, 2013, p.882). Speaking clearly, he affirmed the national spirit in a way that was receptive and purified in an innocent and spontaneous way, not rigid and dominant as a policy.

From there, considering the factor of compatibility between *imported culture and local culture* is paramount. Therefore, it is necessary to look broadly and observe more closely as just mentioned above to the history of the introduction of the Three Teachings of Confucianism, Buddhism, and Taoism during the Northern colonial period in particular, the phenomenon of religions in the process of introduction and cultural exchange self-adjust and change to suit local culture and beliefs. Stated differently, it refers to the process of *localization*, which involved rationalizing and bringing the philosophical systems of Buddhism and Confucianism to Vietnam. The coexistence with many characteristics such as competition, companionship and at the highest level, *the combination of ideologies*, has gradually led to the Three Teachings integration. This is a rule of cultural exchange in the spirit of acculturation and learning in

accordance with the basis of Vietnamese cultural traditions. From this point on, Vietnam is a location that combines the ideologies and cultural currents of the East and the West to create a nation that is diverse in terms of religion, belief, and culture.

Trần Trọng Dương (2021) in his article *“Discussions about beliefs and Three Teachings in Đại Việt culture”* also confirmed that “Đại Việt culture has been multireligious and multibelief for thousands of years. Conversely, *the history of Đại Việt is more accurately described as the history of multireligious politics, with a multifaith and multicultural populace whose indigenous culture serves as the cornerstone and whose various religious beliefs and traditions, like Taoism, Buddhism, and Confucianism, are like petals on a flower that bloom in every direction*”. Among them, it could be said that Confucianism used to hold a mainstream political position, because it is a type of doctrine that is both political and religious. Ultimately, Confucianism only existed within the confines of the three realms - the domain of desire, the realm of form, and the realm of formlessness, because the ultimate policy only aims at “cultivating oneself, maintaining a family, governing the country, and peaceful people”. Trần Trọng Dương also affirmed that our country's native culture and beliefs during the Northern domination period were influenced by Tang and Song culture in general, and that the “Three Teachings of pure action” or “Three Teachings of the same origin” in particular helped achieve achievements brilliant in many aspects. Nevertheless, since this influence was still deeply ingrained in a nation that was part of the original Southeast Asian agrarian culture, these religions had to adapt flexibly to fit the Vietnamese host culture. Therefore, Buddhism and Confucianism gradually integrated with the national cultural tradition and between them also combined, harmonized, and coexisted according to the concept of the same origin, forming the ideology of “Three Teachings of the same origin”.

Besides *the socioeconomic conditions that vary with time*, it is equally important to contribute to shaping the nation's ideology of the times. For instance, in the early centuries AD, in the face of the assimilationist mentality of the Han Dynasty government, our people still maintained their stance for the nation's independence movement. This spirit was detrimental to the government's ruling apparatus Han in Giao Châu. Even leading to the corruption of Han court power in our country began to take place in an inevitable and difficult to reverse manner, an inability of the Han government. (Lê, Mạnh Thát, 2008, p. 144).

In the early centuries AD, the relationship between Buddhism and Confucianism was of great interest and they became each other's counterweight. Regarding this relationship, Nguyễn Tài Thư and his colleagues (2019), said: “The two concepts of life, Confucianism and Buddhism, increasingly dominate the soul and lifestyle of Vietnamese people, but cannot completely dominate people's lives. They are just two lines that exist side by side with tradition. Those two streams have an interaction, but at this time they have not yet led to a confluence. Confluence only occurs in the later stage” (p.121). However, Lê Mạnh Thát stated in the *Study of Mâu Tử* that the Chinese-Vietnamese residents of Giao Chau at the time, including Governor Chu Phù and Mâu Tử, adopted and practiced the teachings and laws of the barbarian world and followed Buddhism. Thus, it was “turning away from the Five Classics” and following another religion, it was “abandoning the teachings of Nghiêu Thuấn Châu Confucius, and learning the science of barbarians”, it was “throwing away the teachings of the previous saints, abandoning the laws of the Han family...” (Lê, Mạnh Thát, 2008, p.222). This emphasizes how powerful our culture and civilization were at the time, and how steadily our country had developed in all areas. Vietnam's wet rice cultivation was one of the most notable examples of this, with several accomplishments during that time, exceptional in terms of intensive farming's science and technique.

Therefore, we see that this period did not only stop at the level of interaction between Confucianism and Buddhism, but even the academic community in Giao Châu at this time began to show signs of a sense of Confucianism and Buddhism integration. Because after Mã Viện's attack in 43, there was a strong alarm about the wave of invasion of Chinese culture that contained heavy subjugation. But, it is evident that: "In fact, the categories of benevolence, filial piety, loyalty, chastity, etc. The relationships between king and subject, husband and wife, father and son, ideal social settings... had been Vietnameseized and Buddhistized. The same category, the same relationship, but the standard content understood according to the mind and perspective of Buddhists and Vietnamese people, to bring new elements beyond the standard content understood according to the mind and perspective of China, specifically Confucius and Mencius" (Lê, Mạnh Thát, 2008, p.198).

Suchlike, the contemporary relationship between Buddhism, Confucianism, and even Taoism did not have a clear fusion as it happened later, mostly centered on antagonism: In the first few centuries AD, Giao Chi was still in China's internal phase and there were five disputes between Confucianism with Buddhism and Taoism (Nguyễn, Tài Đông (editor), 2016, p.27; Trần, Nghĩa, 2010). We can clearly see the deep roots of the opposition between Confucianism and Buddhism, currently exists on two scales. That is between one side Confucianism was introduced into Giao Chi with the intention of unifying the territory and assimilating ideology and politics, and the other side is Buddhism knowing how to adapt flexibly and blend with the sense of national sovereignty, the sense of independence and freedom, preserving national identity is something to clearly position: "Giao Chi's living and social environment as well as the psychology and aspirations of Giao Chi people have forced anyone of foreign origin to change their thinking and lifestyle if they want to integrate into the local community and represent themselves for indigenous thought" (Nguyễn, Tài Đông (editor), 2016, p.40). Because the necessity in Giao Chi's life resulted from distinct requirements, both Confucianism and Buddhism at the time had an incentive to preserve it. Additionally, for this reason, Buddhism has permeated Vietnamese culture, thought, and behavior for many centuries.

Based on *how the social environment changes over time*, we can observe that: "The development process of Vietnamese thought follows a unique rule - the rule that always "neutralizes" all ideological monopoly by how to create a rich, balanced spiritual life" (Lê, Sơn, 2012). Therefore, the two Lý - Trần Dynasties followed the Confucian model of recruiting cadres to become rulers, but they must be Confucianists who understood both Buddhist and Taoist schools. More specifically, Lý Thánh Tông built a Temple of Literature to worship Zhōu Gōng (周公) and Kǒng Zǐ (孔子), painted 72 saints and organized talent examinations according to the Chinese election model. From the requirements of the ideological policy of promoting national spirit and identity, Chinese culture under the Lý - Trần Dynasties could not dominate indigenous culture. So it can be clearly seen that since the Lý Dynasty, Confucianism was gradually promoted, the feudal state had favor for Confucianism but still in the condition of reconciling Confucianism with Buddhism and Taoism (Trần, Đình Hựu, 2021, p.81). The historical record indicates that in the Lý and Trần Dynasties, Buddhism and Taoism were popular and developed. As a result, people who passed the test at that time were familiar with both of these schools. Despite the fact that all religions were respected, superstitious and virtuous equally. Therefore, candidates would have failed the exam if they had not learned a great deal.

After driving out the Ming invaders, the early Lê government - led by Lê Thái Tổ, promoted the adoption of Confucianism as the official state religion during the early Lê Dynasty, giving little consideration to the influences of Buddhist and Taoist culture. This demonstrates how the idea that the Three Teachings were not distinct from one another and

maintain their balance are no longer regarded seriously. Not only was there no official policy endorsing Buddhism or Taoism, but on the contrary, efforts were made to impede their growth. During the Trịnh-Nguyễn period, when society was in turmoil, at war, in crisis, and degraded in every way. Intellectuals were awakened, they strove to return to the traditional ideals of their predecessors. Nguyễn Tài Thư (1999) thus stated: "In the end of the Lý Dynasty, and particularly during the end of the Trần Dynasty, Buddhism was attacked. During the Lê Dynasty the court advocated the monopoly of Confucianism, and Buddhism fell to secondary status. However, at the end of the 18th century, a comprehensive crisis struck the Lê - Trịnh society, which prompted the nation's most prominent intellectuals to deliberately reinstate the phenomenon of "Three Teachings of the same origin". They consider it a step toward reviving society. Such personalities include Lê Quý Đôn, Ngô Thì Sĩ, Ngô Thì Nhậm, Phan Huy Ích, Trịnh Huệ, and others." (p.4). During this period, Zen masters Hương Hải, Chân Nguyên, and Toàn Nhật were also thinkers who supported the spirit of Three Teachings integration and the concept of the Three Teachings of the same origin.

The relationship between the Three Teachings progresses in accordance with each era, so the way society and the era change over time plays a significant role in the issue of the fusion of ideological sources, including the Three Teachings of the same origin. As Nguyễn Đăng Thục rightly commented: "... from material to spiritual, from reality to ideal is a whole process of moving towards flexibility of existential life that must adapt to circumstances, not a reasonable concept of knowledge... And it is because of that anti-intellectual attitude that they naturally and openly absorb and digest all the teachings that have been introduced to their land, Taoism, Confucianism, Buddhism, Catholicism, Ancestor religion, Lords religion, all live together intimately and mutually support each other in the soul of the Vietnamese people easily, rarely in conflict" (Nguyễn Đăng Thục, 1964, p.264). Foreign religions that were brought to Vietnam, usually Buddhism and Confucianism, *coexist peacefully and work together to enhance Vietnamese culture*. This is a point that almost researchers of the Three Teachings largely agree.

We sincerely feel that the root of the problem of integrating Buddhism and Confucianism in Vietnam must be based on the foundation of *patriotic tradition* and the spirit of *preserving the territory* and *preserving independence*. Consequently, it makes perfect sense for someone to state: "Although Vietnamese Confucian scholars learn to read Chinese books for exams, Vietnamese literature in Chinese is from beginning to end patriotic literature, of Vietnamese servants, proud of the tradition of preserving independence." (Phan, Ngọc, 2002, p.51). Therefore, this idea of fusion also manifested itself most deeply in the consciousness of all classes, from ordinary people to intellectuals such as Zen monks, Taoists, and Confucians, most clearly in the fusion of the ideology of the Three Teachings. It expresses the aspiration of the country to create a more affluent and picturesque hamlet and to protect the nation's land and sovereignty in a sustainable manner. We can plainly observe that since ancient times, thinkers had used the Three Teachings' nature to suggest ways to address contemporary threats. Even more obvious is the application of this Three Teachings integration widely in all fields of culture, politics, ideology, education, etc. This idea of integration - skillful improvisation is clearly shown through the reflection of Taoism and Confucianism ideas is the immortals, Taoists, and Confucian scholars in Khương Tăng Hội's Lục Độ Tập Sutra. Therefore, *the influence of the Three Teachings' ideology has universalized the philosophy of life for the people in ancient times - Pre-Đại Việt, not just any religion, including Buddhism*. Of course, Buddhism still gained more popularity taking advantages of similarities in many moral points. The basic ideas of these religions are love of people and animals, filial piety and affection, nourishment and health.

In terms of national psychology and social psychology, it should be clear that first of all, the national psychology of Buddhism and Confucianism has many challenges and difficulties. As one researcher put it: "It might be argued that various foreign religions and beliefs faced extremely difficult decisions and obstacles from the moment they were introduced. Buddhism appears to have overcome that problem over time, but Confucianism remains extremely unstable while having a dominant regime full of "bayonet" backing behind it." (Nguyễn, Huệ Chi, 2013, p.881). Next is the *social psychology* of ancient Vietnamese people when farming and working, they had to face harsh natural conditions, such as weather, seeds, soil, manure, water, etc. to harmonize everything. All these factors are always a concern in each person's consciousness. Evidently, "from here, dialectical thinking with *yin and yang philosophy* and a *balanced lifestyle* that favors harmony among Vietnamese people gradually formed. That harmony is expressed spiritually as integration for peaceful coexistence between different beliefs and religions within the same territory. That is also the socio-psychological basis for religious integration during this period" (Nguyễn Thị Mỹ Hạnh, 2021).

This illustrates that there were two ways in which Chinese culture was introduced in Vietnam: *One way* is to follow the spread of influence through the exchange and contact between the cultures of large and small countries. It is this trend of harmony that created the absorption and integration of foreign cultures of India and Han into the indigenous culture had been formed and *the other way* is by force and imposition.

The first route, the cultural characteristics of our time are the inevitable rules of exchange and learning. Vietnam is situated between two major global cultural cradles China and India. As a result, the sea route is naturally a useful conduit for global trade, and when paired with relatively stable political circumstances, ideologies have been spread. Certainly, Vietnam exchanges and receives according to the laws of acculturation and selection to develop national culture and national literature. Just like that, *first Buddhism was transmitted from India and then Confucianism and Buddhism were transmitted from the North - China*. It can be clearly seen that this is the period of cultural development, specifically literature, taking *folk literature as the foundation* to select the best and quintessence of foreign culture and literature. From here, it can be seen that the majority of researchers of the Three Teachings and the concept of Three Teachings integration have the same point of view: Valuing the traditional indigenous cultural foundation, long-standing traditional ideology, and the bravery of the Vietnamese people.

The second route, which focuses on the underlying reasons of invasion process and the colonial policy, also had some influence. The presence of Chinese literature, classics, and historical books written in Chinese characters is the most noticeable representation. During the time of Northern dominance, Taoism and Confucianism were also introduced. It is worth mentioning that Confucianism was introduced under the oppressive intentions of the rulers, so it was not accepted by the masses like Taoism and later Zen Buddhism. In terms of the intellectual component, those who were not Buddhists at the time either studied the Chinese characters used in Han culture before joining the official path or became Buddhists and continued to study Buddhism and Confucianism. Individuals who did not practice Buddhism gained a deep understanding of Confucianism before discovering Buddhism and Taoism.

In fact, the understanding and exploration of the elements of the *Three Teachings among medieval intellectuals was a common thing*. It is a political characteristic that Đại Việt used to advocate that Buddhism, Confucianism, Taoism, which were the fundamental intellectual bases of the literate class in the medieval period. More striking is that: "*This attitude of non-discrimination against religion is different from the attitude of the Northern Dynasties that caused conflicts between Buddhism and Taoism and suppressed Buddhism. Therefore, Đại*

Việt civilization has the Three Teachings civilization with the predominance of Confucianism or Sakyas in each historical period” (Nguyễn Duy Hinh, 2013, p.265). Clearly, the respect and appreciation of the common good of wet rice areas along with the nation's tolerant and open culture has led to civilized behavior in all things in general and an egalitarian view of religion. *National interests are the core value* when accepting foreign religions.

However, it's important to stress how important it is to recognize *the source of community strength*. Vietnamese myths and legends reflected an early way of thinking among the ancient Vietnamese people, who realized through communal activities that what truly matters was one's attachment and cohesion with one another. Examples of this kind of thinking include the stories of Âu Cơ, the hundred-knot bamboo tree, Phù Đổng Thiên Vương, and others. Vietnamese culture is combined with various components of indigenous culture, including language, literature, festivals, beliefs, customs, and the creative arts. Therefore “regarding religion, it is unified into a spiritual and ideological force regardless of religion or belief to ensure the unity of the entire people” (Nguyễn Duy Hinh, 2013, p.266). The expression of *community strength for many generations has shown signs of religious cohesion*, so the priority of harmonizing religions was a clear manifestation of the Lý - Trần period, in which Zen Buddhism was a key factor religion to promote all harmonious relationships with Confucianism and Taoism. According to Nguyễn Đăng Thục's view: “... in Vietnam at that time, Zen masters were satisfied with Zen learning as the basis for unifying different teachings, paving the way for the Three Teachings examinations to be used as the basis for the National School through the Lý Dynasty and the Trần Dynasty (1010-1400)” (Nguyễn Đăng Thục, 1997, p. 326) or Three Teachings researcher Hồ Bá Thâm quoted Nguyễn Đăng Thục's words: “And he saw in the origin of Vietnamese consciousness has a strong and resilient national spirit with the spirit of religion (more accurately, belief) and the spiritual art that synthesizes the nation's later Three Teachings” (Hồ Bá Thâm, 2012, p.124). According to Hồ Bá Thâm's own assessment: “The harmony of the Three Teachings is not merely about unity, but also their mutual integration and enrichment -each one interpenetrating the others, elevating one another to a higher level. This synthesis deeply embodies the spirit of national identity, with patriotism as the central ideological foundation” (Hồ Bá Thâm, 2012, p.126). So that, by the time of Lý - Trần, Zen Buddhism not only talked about the mind is Buddha, Buddha in the mind, the unity of all things, but Buddha's teachings also included the contents of filial piety, courtesy, loyalty and grateful. Looking more broadly, Sakyamuni's teachings on loyalty, forgiveness and filial piety, they are no different from those of Saint Confucius and Lao Tzu. Moreover, the spiritual teachings of Zen Buddhism in general and of Trúc Lâm Buddhism in particular have added vitality and depth in recognizing and strengthening the spirit of protecting the country and protecting the people; spirit of protecting the nation and cultural identity.

Nguyễn Thị Hiền also made a similar observation in the article “*Understanding the phenomenon of “Three Teachings of the same origin” in Vietnam during the Lý - Trần Dynasties*” (Nguyễn Thị Hiền, 2021). This further demonstrated that the spirit of patriotism and love for the people is the core cause of the fusion of the Three Religions, so all steps of preparation and orientation need to be unified in all material, spiritual, and ideological aspects: “Request to consolidate and build an independent Đại Việt nation, unified and powerful in terms of economy, politics, military and culture to *consolidate and unify the strength of the entire nation to fight against the invasions* of the Song army in the Lý Dynasty and the Mongol-Yuan invaders in the Trần requires *unifying material and spiritual strength, unifying ideology, forming a fusion between exogenous cultural elements and local cultural elements and a fusion between exogenous cultural elements* have been localized together. National consciousness, patriotism, solidarity, national community cohesion, along with philosophical, religious,

ethical, and socio-political elements of Buddhism, Confucianism, and Taoism have become typical spiritual factors affecting the spiritual and social life of this period in general, and political ideology in particular” (Nguyễn, Thị Hiền, 2021). Nevertheless, *the Three Teachings intergration* is a form of social consciousness formed as an indispensable component in people's emotions and actions. During the Lý and Trần Dynasties, the issue of the Three Teachings was widely recognized by the government. Therefore, Vietnamese Buddhist literature from this century so also adhered to the law of development. Early works of Buddhism literature were essentially reflections of the ideas that combined elements of Taoism, Buddhism, and Confucianism. So that, the fusion of the Three Teachings is an expression of *the unity of spiritual power* from ideology to practice. It's also one of the clearest indications that immense unity is being gathered. From this sense of intergration and this spirit of solidarity and concentration strengths created a sense of peaceful existence on the basis of tolerance between different religious beliefs is another feature. The performing behavior without religious discrimination is a cultural behavior that skillfully respects all religions, always prioritizing and hold national interests in very high regards. The government of the kings and their dynasties was the first place where Confucianism and Buddhism were skillfully applied to serve the court and the country.

From the results of researchers of the Three Teachings and the fusion of the Three Teachings, it shows that *there are many different opinions about the reason or origin of the Three Teachings intergration and the concept of the Three Teachings being of the same origin*. When considering the relationship between Buddhism and Confucianism, as Nguyễn Lang put it, based on the *foundation of Buddhism and culture*, we see that with the spirit of equality, openness, non-discrimination and non-intransigence, promoting Buddha's virtue of compassion Buddhism has emphasized the contribution of Buddhism in all aspects including moderate religious ideology (Nguyễn, Lang, 2012, p.150); Đinh Gia Khánh based on the *political basis* that Buddhism and Taoism have parts that are not practically useful to the government, so we cannot ignore the great ability of Confucianism in consolidating its dominant position (Đinh, Gia Khánh, 1997, p.80); Nguyễn Đăng Thục commented in the direction of spiritual opinion that the Three Teachings are three life attitudes that fully realize the whole person: Volition, emotions and rational are also integrity, compassion, excellence, for that happiness is the common goal of humanity, so it is necessary to find harmony between the Soul (Buddhism), Society (Confucianism) and Nature (Lao - Trang, Taoism) (Nguyễn, Đăng Thục, 1964, p.288-289); Trần Đình Hượu, in addition to the political - ethical, philosophical - religious factors, believed that Confucianism was a cultural expression that governed the development of the Three Teachings - a form of East Asian religion but focused strongly on *political requirements* and determined that “the conflict between Confucianism, Taoism and Buddhism and between Confucianism and Buddhism and Taoism ultimately led to *intergration* to adapt to the authoritarian state and to the consciousness of the agriculture, village. Theoretically, that situation led to the ideology of Three Teachings are of the same origin, Three Teachings are united. Finally, there was the formation of Zen Buddhism in Buddhism, Physics and Psychology in Confucianism” (Trần, Đình Hượu, 2021, p.80); Nguyễn Công Lý (2022) also relies on *indigenous cultural elements*, characterized by the national psychological imprint of flexibility, generosity, adaptation to nature, leading to the absorption and transformation of imported ideas which formed the phenomenon of the Three Teachings intergration and the concept of the Three Teachings being of the same origin (p.219-259), etc.

However, generally speaking, we see that the origin or source of the Three Teachings intergration and the concept of the Three Teachings being of the same origin is the synthesis of all elements of life to bring about *total benefit*, the benefit of the nation and the people that

highly values the fatherland. As stated by Nguyen Hue in the article “A historical view of Vietnamese Buddhism in the life of the nation”: “We all know that life is always a combination of social relationships, so there is no phenomenon, whether simple or complex, that can exist independently or in isolation” (Many authors, 2005, p.227). From this common purpose, it leads to specific decisions and plans for each era when the country faces the ongoing social context and also relies on the strength of the entire people to have wise and reasonable solutions and beneficial for people and the country.

3. CONCLUSION

The basic reason why people seek to combine ideologies is to build great solidarity in a mutually beneficial living environment. All actions and thoughts follow the principles of tolerance, solidarity and fusion, unity of thought for peaceful coexistence. Therefore, the intergration of Buddhist, Confucian, and Taoist ideas is no exception to this trend. This is a popular way of thinking since ancient times. Eastern philosophy has emphasized the universal essential element of both humans and the world: All things are one, nature and people are one, knowledge and practice is one, essence and practice as the one, mind and matter fusion. It is like the foundation of the source of fusion of ideologies, including the intergration of the Three Teachings.

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