

CONFUCIANISM IDEOLOGY IN EDUCATIONAL POLICIES OF THE MAC DYNASTY DURING RULING THĂNG LONG (1527-1592)

Nguyen Thi Ngoc Thao^{1,2}

¹Yuelu Academy, Hunan University, Changsha, China.

²DaLat University, Viet Nam.

Abstract: The Mac dynasty began to rule the whole of Đại Việt around the end of the 15th century – at the beginning of the 16th century, when things began to fall apart as a severe economic crisis came around, severely affected the by-then dynasty of the Le, which was at that time, seriously degenerated: the mandarin class is alienated, life of most peasants became increasingly painful, thus justified the formation of the Mac dynasty. In just a short amount of time, they have managed to re-build the government apparatus, from central to local. Over 65 years ruling in Thang Long, the Mac dynasty have left their marks on all crucial fields including political, economics and culture, especially the strong attention was paid to the improvements of the education system. That was credited for the massive number of scholars serving for both the Mac dynasty and its later representatives. Based on inheriting data from previous researchers, the following paper describes in-depth about the Mac dynasty's education system (1527 – 1592) and the remarkable feat it has brought.

Keywords: Mac dynasty, education.

I. INTRODUCTION

The Mac dynasty lasted a total of 242 years (1527 – 1769) in Đại Việt history, under the rule of 12 emperors spreading across three different stages marked by moving of the capital: 65 years of Thang Long city (1527 – 1592), 91 years of Cao Bang city (1593 – 1683) and the last 86 years without capital city (in this period the Mac dynasty lost its hegemony) (1683- 1769). This paper focuses on the first 65 years of the Mac dynasty when its hegemony is recognized as the “official” one (most well-developed, politician-wise).

Although the Mac dynasty carried out a coup in peace, the young government apparatus faced numerous difficulties and challenges. The urgent need at that time was to build and strengthen the government, where the Confucian bureaucracy played a pivotal role. One of the jobs needed to create the officials for the royal court was to organize feudalist doctoral examinations. The organization of this examination was not outside the purpose of building a Confucian intellectual class that loyal to the Mac dynasty and assist it in surviving and developing. Also, early kings of the Mac dynasty aimed to scramble for influence over the Confucian scholars who were still hesitant about the dynasty replacement and enlisted to attract even the Confucian scholars loyal to the Le Dynasty.

Over 65 years of reign in Thang Long, the Mac dynasties organized 22 feudal examinations, passing 484 doctorates, including 11 valedictorians. These numbers showed a particular interest in the education of the Mac dynasty. In the history of the feudal education of Vietnam, the Mac dynasty ranked second, only less than the Le dynasty about the number of feudal exams and the passing rate. Based on the education, the Mac dynasty achieved a solid foundation for itself, maintaining its hegemony in a very complex social context, entice the intellectual class which is sharply divided, scramble for influence with feudal forces Le - Trinh – Nguyen. The education under the Mac dynasty has contributed significantly to contemporary national culture.

II. CONFUCIANISM IDEOLOGY IN MAC DYNASTY'S EDUCATIONAL POLICIES

The Mac dynasty was born in the context of the country, has just experienced a crisis with many uprising lasting nearly 20 years. The prolonged war has devastated the country, causing misery of the people, spreading fear and confusion throughout the society. In particular, the feudal mandarins were also very dispersed and bewildered before the dynasty replacement. The Mac dynasty faced many obstacles both internally (dealing with the situation in the country) and externally (diplomatic relations with the Ming Dynasty).

The first urgent task of the Mac dynasty was to build and consolidate the central and local government apparatus quickly. Fearing that the newly established government was not recognized as orthodox and lack of loyalty from the feudal mandarins, the Mac dynasty decided to preserve many things from the Le dynasty included the model of institutions and government hierarchy. It was documented in *Dai Viet su ky toan thu* (loosely translated as "Vietnam's history encyclopedia"): "*Dang Dung was afraid of people's memorial of the old king which could bring the instability to the dynasty, so he had to preserve many things from Le dynasty, would not dare to change.*"¹

In building and consolidating the feudal government, the Mac dynasty thoroughly applied the old principles inherited from the Le dynasty and to enforce the policy of enlisting Confucian scholars - the large and influential class in feudal society. The Mac Dynasty paid attention to training its bureaucracy through feudal examinations. It was the second most important domestic policy after the policy of consolidating and strengthening the military forces of the Mac dynasty.

1. Promote Confucianism and Confucian education

Right from the time Confucianism was introduced to Vietnam, it was education and science that played a significant role in conveying Confucian content. The main objective of Confucian education was to perform the Confucian ideal, to train people who know how to "*Cultivate one's moral integrity, unify one's family, rule a country and level the world.*" Those were the people who would work in politics, join the government apparatus to manage the feudal society according to the doctrine of Confucius – Mencius. In parallel with that goal, the training of "to be good in literature and have beautiful handwriting" has become the primary goal of teaching and learning and the criteria for evaluating talents and selecting talents.

Worship of Confucian founders and opening Confucian schools have always been indispensable and closely linked. *Dai Viet su ky toan thu* (*Dai Viet The Complete Book*) wrote: "*In 1070: build the Van Mieu (the Temple of Literature) in August, build statues of Confucius, Zhou Gong, along with four Confucius's students, draw seventy-two sages and delegate the prince to study within the place*". In 1076, Ly Nhan Tong established *Quoc Tu Giam* (Imperial College) as a place to study Confucianism for feudal mandarins and sent Confucian officials to look after and teach Confucianism. It is a milestone marking the honor of Confucianism and Confucian education of the feudal state of Dai Viet.

The worship rituals of Confucius and sages were mainly imitated in China. However, the Temple of Literature - Quoc Tu Giam in Vietnam was built in the capital of Thang Long and had a much smaller scale than the Temple of Literature of China. In addition to worshipping Confucius and Chinese sages, the Vietnamese also worship Chu Van An - a prominent teacher, a famous Confucianist in the Tran dynasty. He held the position of *Quoc Tu Giam* chief deputy headmaster and compiled The Four Books Treatise (四书说约, lasted ten volumes) summarizing The Four Books (四书) of Confucianism.

The Mac dynasty still follows the socio-political model of the predecessor - Le dynasty in all aspects such as ideology and state institutions. Therefore, education of the Mac dynasty was focused on creating a large and robust contingent of intellectuals counterbalanced the Le dynasty. That policy was affirmed in the content of the scholar epitaph in 1529: "*Using literature to train scholars, build schools to expand education, grant study rules to cheer enthusiasm. Humanities are cultivated, examinations are renewed. All the rules on examinations and honors according to rank, compared to the past, are much clearer and more complete*"².

Following that policy, the Mac dynasty considered *Quoc Tu Giam* as the most extensive educational center of the country. The *Van Mieu - Quoc Tu Giam* was initially just a place for the princes to study and was later extended to the children of

¹ *Dai Viet Su ky toan thu* - Volume 3 (2004), Social Science Publishing House, Hanoi, p.114.

² Dinh Khac Thuan (1996), *Literature in the Mac*, Social Science Publishing House, Hanoi, p.33

noble families. In the Mac dynasty, to select talented people, the feudal court allowed localities to choose the best students to enter the *Quoc Tu Giam*, regardless of whether the children of the mandarins or civilians.

During the reign in Thang Long, the Mac dynasty repeatedly conducted maintenance operations on *Van Mieu - Quoc Tu Giam*: "In 1536, the Mac dynasty ordered Mac Dinh Khoa for a repair of *Quoc Tu Giam*". Under the hands of the Mac dynasty, *Quoc Tu Giam* has reconstructed many new areas added, such as Sung Chinh shrine, Thai Hoc house, Minh Luan house and corridors, and shelters for students. To show the interest in education and Confucianism promotion, the kings of the Mac dynasty went to the *Van Mieu* and paid a visit to the Thai Hoc house to encourage Confucian scholars: "In the spring of 1537, 8th year of the emperor Mac Dai Chinh, the king visits the Thai Hoc house"³.

2. Educational programs & examinations

2.1. Educational programs

From the Le So Dynasty, Confucianism became the state religion, and even though the Mac dynasty did not retain its monopoly position as before, it was still the dominant ideology of the monarchy. Through Confucian ideology, the Mac dynasty trained a team of feudal mandarins who effectively served the government. Therefore, the books used in teaching in this period were mostly Chinese books.

In *Jian wen xiao lu* (见闻小录), Le Quy Don wrote: "During the reign years of Hong Duc, give out annual free books including all the essential ones: *The Four Books* (四书), *The Five Classics* (五经), *Wen xian tong kao* (文献通考), *Wen xuan* (文选) and *Gang mu* (纲目)..."⁴. The Four Books (四书) and the Five Classics (五经) are the must-have classics on Confucianism learning. Four Books, namely: the Great Learning 大学, the Doctrine of the Mean 中庸, the Analects of Confucius 论语, and Mencius 孟子. The Five Classics of Confucianism, namely: the Book of Songs 诗经, the Book of History 尚书, the Classic of Rites 礼记, the Book of Changes 易经, and the Spring and Autumn Annals 春秋. *Wen xian tong kao* (文献通考) consists of a massive 348 volumes, written by Ma Tuan Lin of the Yuan dynasty. *Wen xuan* (文选), also called *Zhao ming wen xuan* (昭明文选), is a 602-book collection, and an enormous effort made possible by Xiao Tong. *Gang mu* (纲目), also goes by the name of *Tong lan gang mu* (通蓝纲目), is another massive set of 592 books written by Chu Xi of the Song dynasty in China.

A few notable books used in teaching during the Mac dynasty: *Tian zi wen* (天字文), *Xiao jing* (孝经), *Ming xin bao lan* (明心宝蓝), *Ming dao jia xun* (明道家训), *San zi jing* (三字经). The content of these elementary books is primarily oriented for learners about piety and righteousness, how to follow good examples to study and cultivate character and morality.

In addition to the number of books compiled by Chinese people, there are many books and learning materials compiled by Vietnamese scholars such as *Trang nguyen thi* consists of 278 poetry lines, telling the story of study hard to become a valedictorian to stimulate the studious spirit of young students. *You xue wu yan shi* (幼学五言诗) mentioned about the excitement of studying, the dream of students to become valedictorian and the obligations of parents in raising their children into successful human beings.

Besides, there are also set of notable books and materials worth mentioning: *Yi qian zi* (一千字) includes 1,000 words in six-eight-word format, each Chinese character comes with a Vietnamese word synonymous; *San qian zi* (三千字) consists of 3,000 words, letters and meanings consecutively arranged in pairs of two words, the last word of the upper paragraph rhymes with the last word of the lower paragraph; *Wu qian zi* (五千字) consist of 5000 words, words and meanings combined according to the six-eight-word format but arranged in sections; *Chu xue wen xin* (初学问心) consists of 270 sentences, 4 words per sentence and is divided into three parts: summarizing Chinese history, summarizing Vietnamese history, advising students to study hard and teach how to treat people. Those books are very meaningful and valuable in teaching culture and morality for the young. The main content is to guide students to be filial, politeness, righteousness, and follow good examples to study and cultivate moral character. When the students reach a certain level, they will learn

³ *Dai Viet Su ky toan thu* - Volume 3 (2004), Social Science Publishing House, Hanoi, p.124.

⁴ Le Quy Don full set (1977), – *Kien van tieu luc*, volume 2, Social Science Publishing House, Hanoi, pp 95-96.

the Confucian sutras, which help students understand the meaning of Confucianism to reach their ultimate potential, ultimately bringing their wise knowledge to serve the king, serve the country.

2.2. Examinations

Under the Mac dynasty, the examination program was managed and regulated by the government. All significant operations (national exams, for example) are being carried out by a separate government unit (Libu 礼部). The examination questions were usually given by famous scholars, sometimes by the king himself. The content of the exam still took Confucian ideas as the core.

Kinh Nghia dissects and gives an explanation of the Four Books, word-by-word, with the primary purpose being testing the learner's fluency in understanding Confucianism.

Van sach is the essential subject of every examination. It is mostly a debate-centered essay, presenting one's ideas about given issues. The contents are usually historical events recorded in history books or a hot socio-political issue that the feudal government, as well as the whole country, is interested in at different times. The method of taking *Van sach* is not restrictive, but candidates must show their knowledge and opinions through proposing strategies and solutions to the given issues.

For example, during the reign of king Mac Phuc Nguyen, the exam of *Van sach* in 1547 had up to 14 questions about the essentials of the royal rule. After copying the questions, a student named Duong Phuc Tu answered 14 questions in turn. In general, his method of writing is not too restrictive; sentences do not rhyme and are written as prose. The essential thing is that Duong Phuc Tu has shown profound knowledge, excellent reasoning, and the way to interpret the problem smoothly. The excellent essay brought Duong Phuc Tu to the highest point that all students dreamed of - valedictorian. With the extensive knowledge and an edgy writing style, he deserves to be a great writer, not only representing the education of the Mac Dynasty but also representing the Confucian education in Vietnamese history. Mac Phuc Nguyen king remarked: " *Practical answer, what a great writer. When a great Confucianist was born, everything went smoothly*"⁵.

According to author Nguyen Huu Tam, the writing characters used in the examination of the Mac dynasty is still ordinary Chinese characters, but the Nom (literally translated as "Southern characters" or "quoc am"), which was also emphasized by the Mac dynasty, following the achievements of the previous dynasties. In 1565, under the reign of king Mac Mau Hop, a candidate named Nguyen Hien Tich passed the exam by his exam written in Nom characters. Researcher Tran Le Sang judged that it was the only event that occurred in the history of ancient examinations in Vietnam⁶. There is no clear evidence of the Nom characters being introduced in the formal education system by the Mac dynasty. However, the acceptance and passing of the exam written by Nom characters showed that the Mac kings paid attention to the Nom characters. It was a regular expression in the education of the Mac dynasty in compare with previous dynasties, including the Le So Dynasty⁷.

It can be said that the educational program of the Mac dynasty has inherited and continued to consolidate education with Confucian content since the Le So dynasty, which is an education focusing on practical learning. At that time, the Mac dynasty had no new and exclusive ideas beyond the framework of contemporary education, so they had to inherit the old education system and use it effectively. That was the right choice and suitable for the circumstances of the country at that time. Throughout history, there were newly established governments eagerly abolish and change the traditional education system. That has created confusion, inadequacies in society, and other unsatisfactory results. The reason is that education is associated with social life as a cultural institution; it has its laws of advocacy and does not depend on political institutions as well as governmental institutions. The progression of the Mac dynasty was the widespread use of both Han and Nom characters in examinations, but the educational system and examination system remained the same, showing brilliant management. Because innovating perspectives and reforming educational content are more comfortable to implement than rebuild the whole educational system.⁸

⁵ Dinh Khac Thuan (2009), *Education and Academy of Confucian scholars in the Le dynasty in Vietnam through Han Nom*, Social Science Publishing House, Hanoi, pp 432-433.

⁶ Tran Le Sang (1985), *Phung Khac Khoan life and poetry*, Hanoi Publishing House, p. 30

⁷ Nguyen Huu Tam (1991), "The education situation in the Mac dynasty", *Journal of Historical Research*, No. 6, p. 30.

⁸ Institute of History (1996) *Mac dynasty (1527-1592)*, Social Science Publishing House, Hanoi, p.388.

3. Appointing pre-dynasty scholars in parallel with the talent training

When the Mac dynasty ascended the throne, the Le dynasty's bureaucracy had a sharp division; some fled to the mountainous area, some hide their names to live in seclusion, others sought to oppose the Mac dynasty in order to restore Le dynasty. Reusing the Le dynasty's mandarins to supplement the fledgling government apparatus was a practical and effective solution of the Mac dynasty.

In 1527, just gained the reign, Mac Dang Dung recruited the Le dynasty officials (pre-dynasty) and appointed them on holding essential positions. He asked his men to seek the descendants of the pre-dynasty officials for an appointment. At the same time, he "conferred all pre-dynasty righteous officials, such as Vu Due, Dam Dam Huy." Although the majority of these people were still skeptical, opposed, or eluded, there were many officials, including high-level mandarins who cooperated and were respected by the Mac dynasty. Only one year after taking the throne, in February 1528, Mac Dang Dung ordained those who had served the Le Dynasty or passed under the Le Dynasty: "*All 56 people were promoted by different grades*".⁹

The method of the Mac dynasty was different from the previous and subsequent dynasties. The use of bureaucrats, those who were trained and passed under the previous dynasty, as well as the requisition of their descendants to join the new government, showed the wisdom and flexibility of the Mac dynasty. Not only that, the Mac dynasty even respected those who had once returned to the enemy, which showed that the Mac dynasty's policy of using people was very open, tolerant, without prejudice. On the epitaphs list, feudal doctors, erected in 1536, inscribed: "*Opening the examination to pick up talents, is the rule of kingship; using the sage without prejudice is traditional... How to use the sage without prejudice, has it not seen?*"¹⁰. The policy of the Mac dynasty was praised by the later generation, in the book *Vũ trung tỳ bút*, author Pham Dinh Ho wrote: "*The virtue of the Minh Duc period(the reign period of Mac Thai To) and Dai Chinh period(the reign period of Mac Thai Tong) of the Mac dynasty is still in the hearts of many people. Therefore, the fortune has shifted to the Lê Dynasty, but the loyalty to the Mac Dynasty has not ended ...*"¹¹

When the Mac dynasty was first established, the aristocracy of the Mac dynasty had no role in the feudal apparatus. Mac Dang Dung had to rely on his "close" friends and the mandarins of the previous Le So Dynasty. The Mac family had a low-class background, so at the beginning of the Mac dynasty: "*the Mac dynasty had no support among the loyal servants of the Mac family*"¹² while descendants, old mandarins of the previous Le dynasty tried to against them. Therefore, in parallel with the appointing of the pre-dynasty intellectuals, the Mac dynasty urgently organized an educational program to train a new contingent of Confucian intellectuals to serve their dynasty.

The Mac dynasty also implemented a remuneration policy for talented people, especially those who passed the feudalist doctoral exams. The king's reward for new doctors was enormous, included the ceremony of honor, honor listing, prize money, and the ceremony of worshipping the ancestors. On the epitaphs list feudal doctors in 1529, inscribed: "*On the 24th, the king was in Kinh Thien Palace His Majesty gave the order to read aloud through speakers the names of those who passed (the exams). The Ministry of Personnel obeyed, giving the stamped decree, the Ministry of Rites brought the list of successful candidates hanging in front of the Thai Hoc House. On the same day, the king rewarded the prize money. On the 27th, the king rewarded more clothes than usual. On the 28th, The king celebrated the party at the Ministry of Rites. On March 7, the king sent home with honor and granted money according to the grade. The virtue was enormous.*"¹³

In order to encourage scholars and promote the examination, the Mac dynasty also followed the Le dynasty to set up doctoral steles in Van Mieu. The content of the epitaph honoring those who passed the examination organized by the Mac dynasty showed the critical spirit of this dynasty: "*This stele was made not only to show the Confucianist encouragement of the King but also to cultivate the education, to encourage people ... and to help students ... appreciate, be excited ... and together make the country peaceful and prosperous*".¹⁴

⁹ Le Quy Don (2007), *Dai Viet history*, Culture and Information Publishing House, pp 329-330.

¹⁰ Dinh Khac Thuan (1996), *Literature in the Mac*, Social Science Publishing House, p.46.

¹¹ Pham Dinh Ho (1972), *Vũ Trung, ed.*, Literature Publishing House, Hanoi

¹² Institute of History (1996), *Mac dynasty (1527-1592)*, Social Science Publishing House, Hanoi, p.37.

¹³ Dinh Khac Thuan (1996), *Literature in the Mac*, Social Science Publishing House, Hanoi, pp.32-33.

¹⁴ Dinh Khac Thuan (1996), *Literature in the Mac*, Social Science Publishing House, Hanoi, p. 34.

Engraved the name to the memorial stele in Van Mieu is the noblest grace that feudal dynasties bestowed on its graduates. The Mac dynasty not only erected steles, honoring its feudalist doctor but also erected steles engraved with the names of pre-dynasty feudalist doctorates. In 1536, Mac Dang Doanh ordered Minister Nguyễn Trí Thái of the Ministry of Rites to prepare stele to record the situation of examinations and recruitment of talents in 1518 under the reign of Le Chieu Tong. The name of those people passed the examination in that year were engraved into that stele, which was located at Van Mieu. This stele remains until now, keeping the affirmation of Nguyen Tri Thai: *"Our divine dynasty, ... ruled by successive generations of emperors ordered to check the steles inscribed name of feudalist doctors in the Le dynasty. Which exam had stone steles but be broken then erecting a new stele instead, which was worth noting, but there was no stele, then erected a new stele. The mandarins were selected to prepare inscriptions on stone steles. That means appreciating the things that are worth being respected, doing all the things that the previous dynasty has not done. The meaning of this work is enormous"*.¹⁵

The Mac dynasty has inherited the tradition of stele making during the Le dynasty. Unfortunately, due to the constant war, the erection of the stele was not conducted frequently. In 1582, (郡公) Tran Thi Tham conducted a proposal about continuing the tradition of making steles and record the names of those who passed the feudal exam into *golden book (Que luc)*: *"Dear your majesty, please issue an order to resume the construction of the memorial stele, and engrave the names of those who have the highest honor of passing the yearly examination. Also, please ordered to check all previous examinations. Which exam had stone steles but be broken then erecting a new stele instead, which was worth noting, but there was no stele, then erected a new stele. This is a remarkable achievement, that has to be retained, everlasting with time, and also serve as an invaluable relic to those who are of the future generations to witness and gaze upon."*¹⁶ According to *Đại Việt Thông sử*, Tran Thi Tham's proposal was not accepted because *"Mau Hop (the king) said that the country was in a period with a lot of work to do, so it was not accepted."*¹⁷ The construction of doctoral stele could not be done because nowadays, in Van Mieu, there are only three steles erected by the Mac dynasty. As for the inscription in the *golden book (Que Luc)*, it must have been carried out by the Mac king so today we can know exactly the name of 484 Doctorates who passed in 22 examinations organized by the Mac dynasty, all written in the *golden book (Que Tich)*.

Besides ordinary gifts and traditional rewards that each feudal doctor received, they were also assigned their own *"phẩm trật"* (loosely translated as Mandarin ranks/grades): *"Đệ nhất giáp Đệ nhất danh, hàm chánh lục phẩm, 8 tu; Đệ nhị danh, hàm tòng lục phẩm, 7 tu; Đệ tam danh, hàm chánh thất phẩm, 6 tu; Đệ nhị giáp, hàm tòng thất phẩm, 5 tu; Đệ tam giáp, hàm chánh bát phẩm, 4 tu. For those who got through Hàn Lâm Viện, they are granted an additional one grade higher"*¹⁸. From here, they are appointed into their appropriate position(s) in the government system; each holds a different responsibility. They used their talents to serve the king, serve the country as the motto *"on the top of serving the king, to the below helping the peasants"*. They also bring fame and glory to their family, which was reflected in section #37 of the *Hồng Đức Thiệu Chính*: *"If the son passes the feudal examination, his father would also be deserved to be gifted an honorable mandarin rank, so they would become role models for people to follow."*¹⁹

The graces for successful scholars and their families show interest and policies to encourage Confucianism of the Mac dynasty and, at the same time, promote education and encourage learning. Thanks to that policy, the examination tradition created from the previous dynasties continues, promoted, and formed the villages with academic culture and academic families. In this regard, Mac education has inherited and fostered the traditional fondness for the learning of the nation.

Enormous rewards for successful scholars and their families have clearly shown that the Mac dynasty put a robust emphasis on encouraging Confucianism study as well as their promotion of education. Thanks to that policy, the examination tradition created from the previous dynasties could be inherited and promoted. That tradition formed many academic villages and academic families. In this regard, the education of the Mac dynasty has inherited and fostered the studious tradition of the country.

¹⁵ Dinh Khac Thuan (1996), *Literature in the Mac*, Social Science Publishing House, pp.46-47.

¹⁶ Dinh Khac Thuan (1996), *Literature in the Mac*, Social Science Publishing House, Hanoi, p. 426.

¹⁷ Le Quy Don (2007), *Đại Việt history*, Culture and Information Publishing House, p.426.

¹⁸ Phan Huy Chu (1961), *Lich trieu hien chuong loai chi* (歷朝憲章類誌), Volume 1, History Publishing House, Hanoi, p.11.

¹⁹ Nguyen Ngoc Nhuan(editor) (2006), *Mot so van ban dien che va phap luat Viet Nam (tu TK XV-XVIII)*, Social Science Publishing House, Hanoi, p.454.

In summary, the Mac dynasty had practical policies to encourage education and promote the examination. That policy helped develop the education of the Mac dynasty, contributing to the training of a powerful intellectual force that helped this dynasty construct and develop the country.

III. CONCLUSION

After 65 years of reign in the capital city of Thang Long, despite continually fighting against the opposing forces and then retreating to Cao Bang, the Mac Dynasty has achieved many achievements especially the policy of educational development such as appreciating the Le dynasty intellectuals coupled with the talented training for the Mac dynasty.

Although initially facing many difficulties, by the time Mac Dang Doanh ascended the throne, the education of the Mac dynasty had significant changes. While continuing to train the descendants of the family to serve the country, the Mac dynasties recognized and determined: people are the root of the country, the strength of the country depends on its people. With that point of view, the kings of the Mac dynasty defined the educational goal: to raise the people's intellectual level, to raise the level of knowledge and awareness of the people for the country to be strong and sustainable. The policy in education and examinations of the Mac Dynasty created a lively learning atmosphere throughout the country. Right from the first feudal examination of the Mac dynasty in 1529, there were more than 4,000 scholars attended. The epitaph of this examination said: "In 1529, the Emperor was crowned three years. That is the beginning of civilization. The big examination was celebrated, and there were more than 4000 students attended"²⁰. The Mac dynasty held a total of 22 examinations, the number of doctoral candidates was 484, including 11 valedictorians. With the number of examinations and the number of doctoral graduates mentioned above, it can be seen that the Mac Dynasty is not inferior to any feudal dynasties of Vietnam in organize examinations and train talented people. The famous feudal intellectuals in Vietnamese history such as Nguyen Binh Khiem, Phung Khac Hoan, Giap Hai, Nguyen Du ... have appeared and participated in the feudal government apparatus, contributing effectively to the development of Mac dynasty.

Besides, there were many scholars served under the Mac dynasty, whose their name is still glorious in the Vietnamese history: Nguyen Binh Khiem with his poetry collection *Bach Van quoc ngu*, written in Nôm characters; Bui Vinh, the author of *Cung trung bao huan*; and Nguyen Du, who wrote the famous *Truyen ky man luc*.

In conclusion, we would like to borrow the comment of the historian Phan Huy Chu which summarized the interest in exam education and its essential effect in constructing and strengthening the Mac dynasty: " The Mac dynasty has always continued their tradition of organizing a national examination each three years, even though they were busy in the war, they still did not give up their examinations, so many talented people helped them defend the country against the Le Dynasty, which lasted more than 60 years. That is also the effect of that examination. "²¹

REFERENCES

- [1] *Dai Viet Su ky toan thu* - Volume 3 (2004), Social Science Publishing House, Hanoi.
- [2] Phan Huy Chu (1961), *Lich trieu hien chuong loai chi* (歷朝憲章類誌), Volume 1, History Publishing House, Hanoi.
- [3] Institute of History (1996), *Mac dynasty (1527-1592)*, Social Science Publishing House, Hanoi.
- [4] Vu Phuong De (2011), *Cong du tiep ky*, Literature Publishing House, Hanoi.
- [5] Le Quy Don (2007), *Dai Viet history*, Culture and Information Publishing House.
- [6] Le Quy Don full set (1977), – *Kien van tieu luc*, volume 2, Social Science Publishing House, Hanoi.
- [7] Pham Dinh Ho (1972), *Vũ Trung, ed.*, Literature Publishing House, Hanoi.
- [8] Association of Science and History of Vietnam (2000), *Mac Dang Dung and the Mac dynasty*, Hai Phong Historical Society.

²⁰ Do Van Ninh (200), *The stele at the Temple of Literature in Hanoi*, Culture and Information Publisher, Hanoi, p.185

²¹ Phan Huy Chu (1961), *Lich trieu hien chuong loai chi* (歷朝憲章類誌), Volume 1, History Publishing House, Hanoi, p.26.

- [9] Nguyen The Long (1995), *Confucianism in Vietnam*, Education Publishing House.
- [10] Phan Dang Nhat (2014), *Mac dynasty- three historical periods*, Dan Tri Publishing House.
- [11] Nguyen Ngoc Nhuan(editor) (2006), *Mot so van ban dien che va phap luat Viet Nam (tu TK XV-XVIII)*, Social Science Publishing House, Hanoi.
- [12] Do Van Ninh (200), *The stele at the Temple of Literature in Hanoi*, Culture and Information Publisher, Hanoi.
- [13] Tran Le Sang (1985), *Phung Khac Khoan life and poetry*, Hanoi Publishing House.
- [14] Nguyen Huu Tam (1991), "The education situation in the Mac dynasty", *Journal of Historical Research*, No. 6.
- [15] Ngo Duc Tho (editor) (1993), *Vietnamese scholars (1075-1919)*, Literature Publishing House, Hanoi.
- [16] Nguyen Quang Thang (1993), *Faculty of Education and Training of Vietnam*, Publishing House of Culture and Information.
- [17] Dinh Khac Thuan (1996), *Literature in the Mac*, Social Science Publishing House, Hanoi.
- [18] Dinh Khac Thuan (2009), *Education and Academy of Confucian scholars in the Le dynasty in Vietnam through Han Nom*, Social Science Publishing House, Hanoi.
- [19] Website: www.mactoc.com; www.mactrieu.vn.com; www.hoaphuongdo.vn