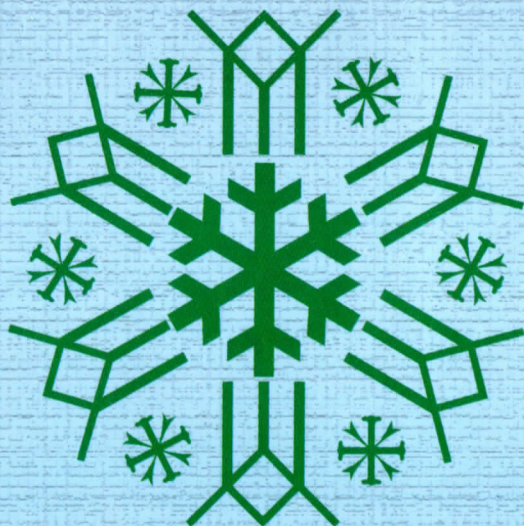


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LÊ THI

THE ROLE OF THE FAMILY IN THE FORMATION OF VIETNAMESE PERSONALITY



THẾ GIỚI



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**The Role of the family
in the formation
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FOREWORD

Since ancient time, the family has always played an important role in the formation and development of humans' personality, being the environment for nurturing children and the cosy nest for family life. When born and brought up in a family imbued with humanity, especially affection and sympathy, the child can grow into a good and useful citizen. If not, adverse impacts may be expected. The problems of family are within the focus of attention of many organisations and individuals, including politicians, social activists, and scientists.

Professor Lê Thi, former Director of the Centre for Family and Women Studies, has, together with her colleagues, devoted much time and energy to the research on the formation and development of the personality of the Vietnamese. And the results gained are presented in this book.

We have the honour to introduce to readers this publication which is hoped to be a contribution to the carrying out of the Human Strategy laid down by the Vietnam Communist Party Seventh Congress, and the objective of promoting the role of the family, which is set forth in the National Plan of Action for the Advancement of Vietnamese Women towards the Year 2000.

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INTRODUCTION

Mankind are preparing to welcome the 21st century with great hopes and concerns.

The last decades of the 20th century have witnessed the significant achievements of the techno-scientific revolution, particularly in informatics. They testify to the wonderful ability of humans in conquering Nature and transforming society. At the same time, they have contributed to improve people's material and intellectual life: the health care services have been upgraded, the death rate reduced and life expectancy increased. Human rights, especially with regard to equality between sexes and children's rights, are becoming more ensured.

However, it is the human who is also able to commit stupid barbarous or evil deeds and is subject to the consequences thereof. Ethnic and religious conflicts as well as rivalries for power, land and natural resources have led to protracted local wars, racial discrimination and bloody slaughters. Meanwhile, millions of refugees are suffering poverty and distress. The uncontrolled exploitation of natural resources is causing environmental pollution and degradation. The rapid population growth has resulted in an increasing unemployment rate and lack of daily necessities. People's demands for health care, education and culture, especially in developing countries, are met unduly. Social evils such as drug addiction and prostitution going hand in hand with HIV/AIDS are threatening millions of lives in all the continents. These circumstances constitute greater concerns of humans of conscience. The world's progressive forces are

uniting in an attempt to find solutions to the arising problems. The United Nations and national governments have jointly held many conferences to map out measures to prevent the rampant disasters for the sake of peace, equality and development all the world over. Mention should be made of the World Conferences on the Environment (in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil), on Population (in Cairo, Egypt), on Human Rights (in Vienna, Austria) on Social Development (in Copenhagen, Denmark) or the Fourth World Conference on Women (in Beijing, China) and so forth. These events should be regarded as the first efforts of the world community in this cause, which marks the progressive tendency of development taking shape under the pressure of mass movements.

World-wide, more attention is now being paid to the imbalance between economic and social development, the increasing poverty in many countries and the growing gap between the rich and the poor. Therefore, many international Conferences have stressed the necessity to consider the relation between economic growth and progressive, sustainable social development.

In this connection, sustainable social development cannot be separated from the development of humans or from the family as an unit in the nurturing and training of manpower, including the building of human personality. In his speech at the seminar "The Vietnamese Family in the Cause of National Renovation and the Problem of Building the Vietnamese Man" (April 1995), (former) Vice-Premier Nguyễn Khánh stated: "The problem of family, though sometimes it may be neglected, constitutes a concern of everybody. It is now an issue which is discussed in our country and world-wide much more extensively than ten years ago. The fact that the United Nations has declared 1994 the International Year of the Family is extremely significant".

Social problems, including the family, were in the center of the agenda of the Copenhagen Summit. All heads of State who were present at the Conference talked about the family. The Western family is thought to be

a good model for Eastern countries. However, it has exposed many problems (for example, homeless children of divorced parents and other family troubles). Meanwhile, Eastern countries, especially developing ones have much experience in family organization. The significance of the family for every individual and for the whole society is being asserted, occupying an important position in state policies. The motto of the International Year of the Family (1994) is: "Family resources and responsibilities in a changing world". This means that changes in the world should bring about progress and increase the welfare of individuals and families; guarantee of basic human rights, particularly, the rights of women and children should be stressed. The year was a call on national governments and social organizations to help families to fulfil their responsibilities towards their members as the nuclei for progressive development of a community and a nation.

In Vietnam, the sound standpoint on the family is presented in the "Programme for Building the Country towards Socialism" adopted by the Party Seventh Congress (July 1991) as follows:

"The family is the cell of society, the cradle which is very dear to all individuals for the whole of their life. It is an important environment for educating them in the way of life and shaping their personality. State policies should focus on the building of well-off, harmonious, and progressive families. It is necessary to raise people's awareness of the family and their responsibility towards it".

In his paper "Approaches to values in the study of the family and family education"⁽¹⁾, Professor Phạm Minh Hạc, former Vice-Minister of Education and Vocational Training, pointed out that many researchers of UNESCO underlined the "Value of the Family" in mankind's spiritual treasure. This value is universal as the family in all continents

1. Presented at Seminar "The Family in the Renovation of the Country" held by the Centre for Family and Women Studies (April 1995).

and at all times has common characteristics, including altruism, humanity, and humaneness. According to him "in the Programme of research on human beings, the family is really a way out, bringing knowledge to the broad masses".

Proceeding from these arguments the study of the family's role in the formation and development of the Vietnamese personality is an urgent and necessary task in the present international and national context. In fulfilling this task, theoretical fundamentals should be combined with sound approaches to the family issue; observation of and investigation into the actual state of the Vietnamese family should be linked to the brief review of its historical developments and should be placed in the frame of Vietnamese society. It should be noted that the State research Project KX-07-09 "The family's role in the formation and development of personality of the Vietnamese" has been well-carried out after three years of unfolding by a group of enthusiastic researchers. Its abundant multi-sided results are summed up in this book, which is expected to be beneficial to broad readerships.

I sincerely thank all my colleagues who have contributed to this book, especially those who are in charge of the related sub-projects such as Nguyễn Thị Khoa, Lê Ngọc Văn, Võ Tấn Quang, Phạm Nguyệt Lăng, Lê Ngọc Lan, Dương Tự Đam, Phạm Khắc Chương, Nguyễn Tài Thư, Lê Hồng Hà, Bùi Thị Kim Quỳnh and others.

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Hanoi, 30th August 1997

Prof. LÊ THỊ.

CHAPTER I

HUMANS AND THE PROBLEM OF SOCIALIZATION; ROLE OF THE FAMILY AND THE FORMATION OF PERSONALITY

I. HUMANS AND THE PROBLEM OF SOCIALIZATION

A human is a social creature, the unity of biological and social aspects. A human is a social living entity with nature being social. Therefore, importance should be attached both to the social and biological aspects of human beings, first and foremost, the relationships between them and the natural environment. The family exerts great influence on both of these aspects also. Socialization of, or social influence on humans has a decisive significance as through this process, men as living creatures can become *social* humans, that is to say, *normal* humans. As reported by scientists, some children were found totally separated from human society from their birth. So, they grew up like animals; they could not stand upright; could not speak humans' language nor think. On the contrary, many children, well-socialized have become people with creative mind. In fact, socialization is the process of formation of personality. The child born weak and incapable of doing many things, through gradual contact with other people, becomes self-conscious and capable of grasping the mode of action in a given society and culture.

1. Socialization first takes place in the family, a small social environment, from where stems the child's personality. It continues in a larger social environments such as school, a group of friends, organizations, the

State, and society. Having access to more and more abundant social information, humans have the opportunity to develop and perfect their personality.

The family environment includes the nuclear family (parents and children) and the extended one (grand-parents, relatives, etc.). So, society exerts on humans *comprehensive impacts through different social institutions* (the family is only one of them, even though it is very important) and humans' living conditions in a specific natural environment and society. The significance of these impacts change according to the various phases of a human's life: childhood, adulthood, old age. However those who have normal lives are subject to the life-long impact of the family.

2. Socialization is not the one-way impact of society on passive individuals. In fact, this is a *two-way process* and there is no contradiction between humans' socialization and their free will. The socialization of individuals is linked to individualization, although they are not the same. These two processes have many interesting moments. The more humans participate in diversified social activities and get access to different abundant sources of information, the more their socialization takes place. But this does not mean that the results will be similar individuals as "cast with the same mould". Humans differ in their perception of nature and society, in their ways of acquiring information and knowledge. Therefore, socialization and individualization are simultaneous processes which, however, produce different individuals with different personalities, abilities, ways of thinking, psychologies and sentiments, and accordingly different modes of conduct towards the family and society. The significance and importance of socialization is demonstrated in its effect allowing individuals to learn basic things of social life, and allowing society to re-create itself culturally and biologically, ensuring the continuity from generation to generation. Socialization is a process through which mankind's *culture is passed down from generation to generation* (firstly, within the family environment). This is a process of communication and learning, which enables individuals to develop their social nature and ability to

participate in social life. Without this relation, individuals and society would not be able to exist. Still, it continues all through the life of each individual with features characterising each phase. The identification of socialization with education of children will restrict the scope of this concept.

II. PERSONALITY AND ITS FORMATION

1. The concept of personality

According to the *Encyclopaedia* (Ed.-in-chief Nguyễn Hữu Trác) *personality* is the psychological appearance of an individual, which bears his / her historical and social nature; this includes the system of attitudes, characters, acts of the individual in the relations between him / her and the outside world as well as towards himself / herself. According to the *Dictionary of Psychology* by Doctor Nguyễn Khắc Viện, *personality* is a combination of all the factors that form a human as an individual with distinct identity, marked individuality, particular characteristics of the body (constitution), abilities, aptitude, style, will, morality and social role.

Hére, we understand "**Personality**" in an *all-round* manner. *This term includes ability and morality, physical and mental capacity, the spiritual, psychological, sentimental state of each individual, (comprising his / her consciousness, sentiments, acts, manner, temperament, way of life). This is the dialectical unity of the individual and social aspects in each specific person, his / her behaviour towards natural and social realities.* Through personal activities, with the guidance and education of previous generations and through different relations in the family, group community, a human forms and develops his personality.

2. Conditions for formation of personality

- Mechanical, physiological, hereditary;
- Social;

- Spirituality of the individual.

These 3 conditions allow us to explain the difference of personalities. The biological, physical condition influences the behaviour and actions of the individual. But the personality's value resides chiefly in the social aspect (moral value, conduct, social qualities). In the Project "*Role of the family in the formation and development of personality*" we concentrate the study on the *social aspect* of personality.

Personality of each individual is manifested *outside*, reflecting at the same time the *inside* nature. This is the *behaviour* of the individual in his / her social contact and the corresponding judgements and actions. This may seen in 5 circumstances:

- The individual in economic activities (labour, production, business);
- The individual in the family (with parents, children, spouses);
- The individual as a citizen (with the State);
- The individual in society (contacting different social strata);
- The individual towards himself / herself.

The last circumstance is also important, since self-assessment (right or wrong attitudes and deeds, etc.) or self-assertion demonstrates the peculiar personality of the individual. The core of personality is consciousness. New-borns have not yet got full personality, since they are not involved in social activities and self-assertion. Sufferers of mental diseases do not have personality either.

The process of formation of personality is evident through the formation and change of an individual's behaviour in playing different social roles and considering the raised problems from different angles:

- Age-brackets: children, adolescents, youths, adults, old people.
- *Gender*: men and women with similar and different features; when they get married, bring up and educate their children, etc.



THE CHILD'S FIRST PERCEPTION OF THE MOTHER'S BREAST,

- In the family: in the roles of the husband, the wife, parents, children, grand-parents, uncles, etc.

- In society: in the role of citizens, members of a specific community (village, ethnic group, organization, party, etc.).

- Occupation: workers, peasants, traders, intellectuals, etc.

Humans' behaviour and way of playing their roles are formed step by step through education, transmission of experiences by different social institutions; among them, the family has a very important position.

3. The formation and development of personality are influenced by the following factors

- *Inborn-hereditary factors*; they affect the embryo when it is formed. Therefore, scientists talk about the education of children when they are foetuses.

- *Circumstances and environment*: natural circumstances and social environment to which human beings adapt themselves.

- *The influence of education* (by the family, school, society) determined by the needs of the family and society; special influence comes from family culture;

- *Activities of each individual*: work, production, creation, social relations, conduct towards oneself.

Therefore, the formation of personality is impacted by the subjective and objective factors. The motive force for *development of personality* resides in the rise and solutions thereto; of contradictions in daily life, the demands of society and ways of solving human beings' problems. Those who have sound solutions to contradictions will make progress, meeting the demands of society and advancing forward. So the process of development of personality is not the same for all individuals.

Furthermore, this process includes different stages, sometimes slow, sometimes fast. The child's personality is formed mainly during the first

years after birth (1 to 6 years old) where the family plays a very important role. *The family's environment creates the base for the child's personality*; if this environment is unstable, it will exert bad influence on this process.

Personality has a social character. So, it changes accordingly society's viewpoints on and demands for individuals change. Each historical period has its special *standards of personality*, creating its own real models of personality.

The formation and development of human personality is a process extending from birth to adulthood, including 2 principal stages

The stage of formation of the child's personality: They get to know how to live and behave in society; to take the initiative in their own activities.

The stage of consolidation and perfection of personality in adulthood (cases of deformation and deterioration of personality are also recorded).

III. THE FAMILY AND ITS ROLE IN THE FORMATION AND DEVELOPMENT OF PERSONALITY

1. *The concept of family*

As remarked by the United Nations, "*the family is an institution of a universal character*"⁽¹⁾

This institution has different forms, fulfilling its functions in different ways. The perception of its role varies from civilization to civilization. Therefore, a unique conception of family does not exist and there is no definition which would be applied world-wide.

Different cultures propose different ways of life. Hence, *various forms and structures of family*. In developed countries, especially the USA and European nations, people get married and give the first birth relatively

1. Document *Evolution of the Family's Structure* published by the United Nations, in 1994, the International Year of the Family.

late, and a number of couples prefer having no children. In several regions, the populations and families are getting older. Changes in the size and composition of the family are also noted together with those in the form of co-habitation of spouses. Many couples are unmarried; the number of re-organized families (after divorce or widowhood) and the divorce rate are increasing. One third of the families are incomplete, often comprising only the mother and her children who live in extremely difficult living circumstances.

On the other hand, new positive factors have appeared: women's broader participation in social production ensures their economic independence and gender equality in the family. The progress in biological technology and health care helps women take the initiative in reproduction, and increase life-expectancy. The rights of the child are highlighted and protected. Young people rapidly become aware of the rights to personal freedom and independence.

The diversity of the family in a changing world is stressed by the United Nations. The conception of life, as well as the form of organization of the family, its role and functions, are based on the economic and cultural characteristics of each country and the level of development of each society. However, the United Nations reaffirm that the family is *a natural and essential factor of society, an economic unit*⁽¹⁾. The family is considered as mankind's spiritual value that needs to be preserved and promoted.

For the Vietnamese, family has since old times been a very important social institution, a basic economic and social unit and, at the same time, a particular psycho-sentimental group. It is a positive factor pushing up the development of society and the perfection of individuals through the fulfilment of its important functions.

1. Document *Human Rights and the Family*; published by the United Nations in 1994, the International Year of the Family.

Proceeding from the actual state of marriage and family life in Vietnam, we can propose the definitions of relevant concepts as follows:

Marriage is the relation between a man and a woman (mainly sexual intercourse) recognized by society under different forms: the legal ratification by authorities; the approval by the family, relatives, friends through ceremonies in conformity with local customs and practices or religious rites. The marital relation is the basis for family life to be organized.

Family is a concept used to indicate a social group formed on the basis of a *marital relation* and the resulted consanguinity, whose members live together (parents, children, grand-parents, relatives on the father's and mother's sides). The family may also include those brought up within itself, although they have no consanguineous relations with the other members. All the members of the family are bound together by responsibilities and rights (economic, cultural, sentimental); between them there are legal ties recognized and protected by the State (clearly stipulated in the Law on Marriage and Family). At the same time, the Family also has clear regulations on the right to, and prohibitions against sexual intercourse among its members.

The concept of Family should be distinguished from that of *household* (see the *annexe*). Considering the family as an institution, we should understand the purpose of its existence and the ways it fulfils its functions. The family institution appeared and developed firstly due to the necessity to regulate sexual relations (intercourse relations of men and women) in society⁽¹⁾.

1. The arbitrary sexual intercourse relations of group marriage were replaced by those of the members of the same bloodline. The punaluan family forbade sexual intercourse relations between consanguineous brothers and sisters, and later, it developed into the family of a wife and a husband. So together with the development of mankind's civilization, the sexual intercourse relations in the group called "the Family" more and more narrowed under the pressure from the principle "natural selection". Later, those relations were fixed and closely guarded by social morality, customs and laws. (See "The Origin of the Family, Private Ownership and the State", by F. Engels).



"SUMMER CONCERT"
Photo by Đình An

Society recognizes and ratifies the coexistence of the couple under the form of marriage, and defines their responsibilities (towards spouses, their children and society).

A social institution, the family has close relations with society through its fulfilment of its functions, and there are reciprocal influences between the family and other social institutions (school, the state, mass organizations, cultural, political, religious organizations, etc.). On the other side, we should note that *the family is a particular socio-psychological and sentimental group*. It is maintained and consolidated by its inherent relations, the cohesion of its members, which stem from consanguinity, sentimental relations and responsibilities. The family is a small collective where the members are linked with each other by permanent life-long ties. They care for each other and sacrifice themselves to each other. These family relations can hardly be ruined even when they are separated from each other, or they have to experience historical changes and vicissitudes. The last 30 years of war and revolution in Vietnam have witnessed the solidity of familial relations. At present, many people return to their native villages to meet their relatives in the hope of getting information on their parents and siblings who are reported missing in war (for example, the move to find graves of those who were killed by war). Many of them are overseas Vietnamese.

Considering the family as an institution, one underlines the relations and interaction between the family and society and between the functions of the family itself. While considering the family as a special socio-psychological group, one pays attention to the *relatively independent* nature of the family, the unifying force, and attraction of family members, which are aimed at meeting their personal needs.

2. Functions of the family in the socialization and formation of personality

a) The *functions of the family* constitute its contribution to the existence of the social system. The family exists because it has as its mission the task

of fulfilling special functions naturally and socially assigned to it but no other social institutions. Those functions exist in unity and interplay to create human beings and to socialize them. Hence family education should be viewed from the comprehensive approaches to other functions. The first function of the family is *reproduction of human beings* to ensure future generations. From the historical materialist view point, society exists and develops on the basis of 2 important factors: reproduction of material wealth and reproduction of human beings themselves. The latter is aimed to meet the needs of society and of family members as children bring joy and happiness to married couples. Moreover the raising of children is a form of non-profit investment in the future.

- Linked with this function is the *economic function* of the family which should work to ensure livelihood for its members. In accordance with the level of development of society, the family may be a basic economic unit, independent, taking the initiative in its own activities (like the present Vietnamese family), or it is engaged in economic activities, not constituting an independent unit. But in any circumstances, the family must ensure that the material and spiritual needs of its members are satisfied. This way the family contributes to the reproduction of material and intellectual properties for society. At the same time, the family becomes a *consumer unit*, developing more and more diversified demands that are stimuli to boosting society's production.

Bring up and educating children is a very important function of the family. Society (school, mass organizations, etc.) helps the family but cannot replace it. The formation of the bases of children's personality is influenced by family education. The consolidation and perfection of personality in adulthood and at old age are also impacted by the family's life and culture.

- The function of ensuring *psychological equilibrium* and meeting the *sentimental needs* of family members is becoming more and more important in modern society. This is to consolidate the solidity of the family as well as the relations between husband and wife, parents and children.

The family must satisfy the sentimental needs between husband and wife, (including the harmony in sexual relations), between parents and children. In modern society, the solidity of the family not only depends on the ties of responsibility between husband and wife, parents and children, etc. This solidity is more affected by the sentimental relations in the family: the love of spouses (sentimental, psychological, sexual harmony), the affection of parents towards their children and vice-versa; the assurance of happiness, freedom, democracy for each individual in cohabitation.

The family is where the most profound sentiments are expressed. The internal life of the family has an increasing significance. Meanwhile the sentimental and educational functions of the family are becoming very important.

- Another function of the family is the *health care and protection* provided for its members, especially children, old or sick people. Even when medical services are well-developed, this function of the family will surely remain necessary for its members since the problem is not confined to medical treatment but it also includes the timely guaranty of psychological, and sentimental consolation and care.

In brief, the family has the responsibility to organize and manage the material and spiritual life for all of its members, thus satisfying their daily demands (food, housing, education, entertainment, health care and care for their psychological and emotional state). The family is the best supporting system that ensures security for the development of children, the restoration of health and psychological equilibrium of laborers after working hours, the care for old people who find in it a great source of consolation to avoid loneliness.

The functions of the family are based on two main factors: the needs of society, and the characteristics of the family's organization itself. These factors are subject to change over time. Currently, two tendencies are being observed:

- Shift from the multi-functional family to the mono-functional one (specialized): the family, at first, was the unique social relation (Marx-Engels); it was the community for life and work, being the framework of existence, and the world of each individual. Gradually, with the development of labour division and social relations, *the familial relations were separated from social relations*. The family became relatively independent, although influenced by Society, when its functions were specialized.

In many countries (mainly in the developed world) the family is step by step transformed from an independent unit of production into a *consumer unit* (the organization of production and business is essentially the responsibility of the State, private and social organizations). Many functions of the family are partly passed on to other social institutions, for instance the functions of child education, care for sick people, protection of family members, etc. At present, significant *changes* are taking place in several family's functions.

- The *reproductive function* as a natural process is becoming a *conscious* social process. In the past, the reproductive function of the family was not separated from the satisfaction of sexual desire of the married couple. Nowadays, with the birth control means, one can separate the reproductive function from the need for sexual intercourse.

- In the past, the *education* of children by the family was identified with that by Society. At present, through schools and other social and mass organizations, society helps the family and complements its educational activities. There is combined *social and familial education*.

b) The family's function of socialization and the related factors.

The objectives of socialization by the family as well as the formation and development of human personality are based on the demands of society and the system of values that changes according to different historical periods. The family affects the formation of children's sentiments, psychology, behaviour, cultural acts, working experiences (through words and actions). However, the child's conceptions of life and world are formed

later, in the process of coming into contact with the school environment and social community, although the family continues to play an important role therein. The *content, mode* and mechanism of operation of socialization by the family are linked to the *historical conditions* of each family, the role of its members and the co-ordination between the family and other social institutions. All the members of the family: parents, grand-parents, brothers, sisters (and relatives) exert influence on the formation of children's personality and its perfection in their adulthood. In the past, we sometimes highlighted only the role of the mother in child education, thinking little of the father; Or sometimes, we underlined only the role of grand-parents but made light of the influence of the child's siblings. In fact each family member has his/her own particular influence (the extent of influence depends on the circumstances of each family). In this multilateral interaction, the formation of child personality and the perfection of adult personality are also subject to the joint influence by the family members. At the same time, attention should be paid to the two-way effect of educators and the educated. Children may follow adults' advice or reject it when they think it is wrong. In the past, children were forced to obey absolutely their parents. This extreme requirement led to latent protest or negative reaction by many children.

The influence of adults on children, or of old people on youths, and vice-versa should be taken for proper consideration. Nowadays, to bring into play creativeness, initiative independence and enthusiasm of children, parents should pay attention to children's opinions, not imposing arbitrarily their will on them. Scientists remind us of the inverse influence of children on their parents which has an information and education significance in many aspects. Particularly in the modern times, the socialization of children takes place at a very quick tempo and to a greater extent than their parents and grand-parents.

So, *what factors* of the family life influence its function of socialization, and formation of human personality?

First, there is the *orientating* values of morality, aesthetics, life style, ideals in life, mode of life, family's life style. Here, we can see the common influence of the contemporary society on families and the particularities of each family.

Knowledge of the family members, first of all, of the parents - supporters of the family. Their experience in labour and in life, is much linked with their occupations, cultural standard, which gives the socialization environment of each family special characteristics. *The material and spiritual living conditions* in each family may also facilitate or impede the process of children's socialization. For instance, the access of the family members to the mass-media: newspapers, radio, TV, etc., or their study and entertainment facilities. *The psychological and sentimental state* of the family members, especially, in the relation between the parents and the children, exerts also significant influence on the formation and development of children's personality; for instance, the atmosphere of harmony and union, or the atmosphere of suspicion and contradiction in the family.

We should stress the role of the *culture* of the nation and of the time in making direct impacts on the family culture, an important factor in the formation and development of human personality. This influence has both common and specific features in various families. At last, there is the influence of *other social institutions* (school, mass organizations, the State, the community, etc.) which helps the family in the socialization of its members. The extent of influence whether it is in harmony or opposition, depends on the concrete circumstances of each family. This influence also varies by stages of growth (childhood, adulthood, old age). In brief, the family plays a very important role in the socialization and individualization of humans, from birth to death. This role exposes different characteristics in various kinds of family and in different age brackets. Here, the combined effect of *many factors* and the *interplay of many functions* are clearly seen. The educational function is directly connected with the function of meeting the sentimental, psychological needs of each individual. At the same time, it is influenced by the performance of the function of nurturing and caring

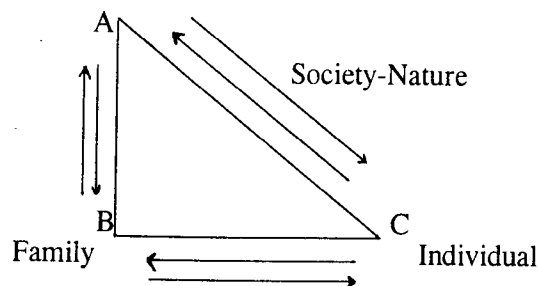
for the family members in their material and spiritual life. The skilful regulation and harmonious combination of the above factors and functions is the key to the successful educational process of the family. In different cases, this role may be played by the father, or the mother, the grand-father or the grand-mother. However, the two principal figures are the father and the mother: their consensus on the content and method of education is very important for their children. People often say: the father represents authority, the mother tenderness; siblings competition, but the whole family is unity. The family helps children grow up in all respects: physical, intellectual, sentimental. The child will have a high sense of independence when he has physical strength, intellectual abilities and sentimental equilibrium. For children, *security* is very important, both in the material and the spiritual regards. Three factors ensure security for the child: affection of the parents and the family, the acceptance of the child as a welcomed member in the family; the stability of the family environment. A child is happy when he/she is loved. The relations between the family members, between the parents and the children express their deep affection, mutual care, and sacrifices.

IV. SOME APPROACHES TO THE PROBLEM

1. The study on the role of the family in the formation of personality should have a compound and systematic approach

A social institution or a basic cell of society the family and its activities should be studied in the two-way relations and mutual effect between *the family* and *society* in general, the family and other social institutions in particular, as *part of a whole*, with a meticulous structure. The socialization of human beings, the formation and development of their personality take place in the relation between *nature and society*, and the mutual effect between the *individual and the family-society*. The relation between 3 factors: society - nature, family and individual, may be presented in a right triangle, which expresses the two-way influence of these three factors, the

family being at the right angle. This underlines the family's position as a *bridge spanning the individual and society*.



The family and the individual are directly influenced by society - nature (A), by other social institutions (school, mass organizations, state agencies, etc.) $A \rightarrow B$; $A \rightarrow C$; the individual (C) experiences the indirect influence of society through the family $A \rightarrow B \rightarrow C$; the family (B) is also subject to the indirect influence of society through the Individual: $A \rightarrow C \rightarrow B$. On the contrary, the family and the individual directly influence society-nature, $B \rightarrow A$; $C \rightarrow A$; At the same time, the family and the individual exert indirect influences on society-nature through intermediaries, $B \rightarrow C \rightarrow A$; $C \rightarrow B \rightarrow A$. So society \rightarrow the family \rightarrow the individual are in the same system, a whole unit, with relations of interdependence and mutual effect. Meanwhile, the family and the individual are in a relatively *independent existence*, creating special features in the operation of each factor in specific cases. For instance, with the development of the market mechanism in Vietnam at present, the influence of society on families differs in each case (although there are a number of common features); each family adapts itself to the new developments in a particular way; and the influence on child education is different in each family, etc.

The systematic approach is also noted in the analysis of the family's function of socialization, considered in the *relations of mutual effect* with other functions (reproduction, bring up, etc.) in the whole activity of the family. At the same time, we pay attention to the influence of other social institutions on the formation and development of human personality which

is affected not only by the family. Nevertheless, the family is a bridge spanning the individual and society, a basic "intermediary" between them especially in the period of formation of the child's personality.

2. The compound and systematic approach is linked with concrete viewpoints on historical developments

We should consider the individual and the family in the process of development of the country, in specific stages and economic, cultural, social fields. This is required to understand the role and influence of the family in the building of human personality, in the past and at present. Attention should be paid to particular characteristics of economic development and mode of production in each region and each country; characteristics of the contemporary civilization (agricultural civilization, industrial civilization, post-industrial civilization, etc.); characteristics of Eastern and Western cultures; characteristics of indigenous cultures and different cultural currents coming from abroad. So, we should consider the compound effect of the natural and social environment on human beings and families, and its educational function in each historical period.

The development viewpoint requires the analysis of the family's role *following the vertical line*, considering changes of the family through different historical periods of the Vietnamese nation. Its influence then varies following the law of movement with *inheritance and renovation*. The objectives of the family in the formation of its members' personality change in the course of historical development. But this does not mean a break between tradition and modernity, but a selective inheritance. The personality of Vietnamese is characterized by its peculiar features, *moral and spiritual values* that need to be preserved and promoted.

At the same time, we should consider the problem *in space*, following the horizontal line: the relation between the family and contemporary society and its institutions. We sum up the effects of those factors on the family, the individual, in *concrete historical conditions*.

We should consider the present Vietnamese family and the Vietnamese in the context of *great socio-economic changes* of the 1990s. Vietnam is moving from the model of State socialism to a market-orientated multi-sectoral economy, with many forms of ownership, which develops in the socialist direction. These changes deeply affect the development of individuals' personality and the role of the family.

3. We should assess soundly the *decisive influence of economic conditions* on changes of the family and its activity, at the same time, pay due attention to the *relatively independent* mobility of the family.

The historical materialist viewpoint underlines the decisive role of economic factors, and economic development on the renovation of society, the family, human beings and their personality. It is a correct viewpoint. But for the internal life of each family and the process of socialization of human beings, we cannot simply take economic factors to explain all events occurring in the family life, the sentimental, spiritual, ideological changes of each family member. For the family is a special sentimental psychological group where consanguinity, affection and responsibility constitute a strong uniting force. At the same time, each individual's behaviour and reaction to social events are formed in a complicated way through his/her *Ego*; and the family environment has a great influence, especially when the individual is still adolescent.

The concrete historical viewpoint requires us to consider the objects of study - the family and human beings - in the *relation between* generality and *particularity*, the universal and the particular. The Vietnamese family and the whole Vietnamese people have common features. At the same time, each walk of life has their own particular characteristics. Therefore, the modes of life and education of children differ by families, depending on whether they are of intelligentsia, workers, peasants or businesspersons. It is necessary to carry out comparative study on concrete families and their role in the formation and development of their members' personality.

Here, it is important to inherit the results of the previous researches, as the education of children is always considered as a very important function of the family. This has been researched by many Vietnamese and foreign scholars, pedagogues, psychologists (see reference materials).

However, due attention should be paid to the renovation of the existing viewpoints and approaches with regard to this problem. With changes of the world in the 21st century, the renovation of the Vietnamese society and family will have to experience many pressures and great impacts. The demands posed by society for each individual will be different, as are the requirements posed by each individual for the family and society. Human beings are striving to reach a higher sense of independence and to boost their personality, etc.

Therefore, we face also the task to predict the future development of the Vietnamese family and the Vietnamese as well as the problems to be solved in the coming time, although it is not yet possible to find complete solutions thereto.

CHAPTER II

THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE VIETNAMESE FAMILY AND ITS FUNCTION OF EDUCATING HUMANS THROUGHOUT THE HISTORY OF THE NATION (BEFORE RENOVATION)

I. WE SHOULD STUDY THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE VIETNAMESE FAMILY IN HISTORY TO UNDERSTAND THE PRESENT VIETNAMESE FAMILY AND ITS ROLE IN THE SOCIALIZATION OF HUMANS

To identify the Vietnamese family in the past and at present is a *task* for researchers on the family and an important *content* of their study. This is to help us understand the position and role of the family in the formation and development of the personality of Vietnamese through different generations up to now.

Basing ourselves on the *development viewpoint*, we should link the development of the Vietnamese family with that of the Vietnamese nation and society in history. The immanent demands of Vietnamese society and Vietnamese themselves at each historical period are valued scientifically as foundations for understanding and analysing correctly the Vietnamese family

1. The development of the Vietnamese family through different historical periods

Each country and each nation experiences a particular development process which is not similar to that of any other country and nation.

Changes of the family, which is the cell or the basic unit of society cannot be separated from those of the nation and the country. Like all other societies, Vietnamese society is subject to the influence exerted by the events or economic and cultural renovations which take place in the world and by the contemporary civilization. We should stress that *the level of civilization* of each period affects profoundly the life, the structure, the functions and the inherent relations of the family, creating *common features* in the process of its changes. To talk about civilization is to refer to the *general characteristics* of the level of economic, political, cultural and social development, and the relations between human beings in each period of history. Here we should attach attention to the influences on the immanent relations of the family.

In the *agricultural civilization*, the family is the "pillar" of society (Manage the family then govern the country and pacify the world). In the self-sufficient agricultural economy, the family is an independent production unit. In this society, marriages are imposed by parents, sometimes by relatives, or the whole lineage. The *individual's interests must submit to those of the family* and of the lineage. The role of the son is highlighted. Attention is paid to the cult of ancestors. The eldest son has many rights and powers. Women are in a dependent, low position. Productive labour and household maintenance activities, especially for women, are intermingled, lacking distinction. Children must work prematurely, unable to go to school or to play, thus deprived of childhood. The bringing up and education of children as well as the care for sick and old people are totally left in the family's charge. Due to lack of mass media, children are basically put under the educational monopoly of the family. The extended family with the practice of polygamy and great difficulties in getting divorced is a common phenomenon. The size of the family is often large, although the death rate among new-borns is very high, and life expectancy is low. The industrial civilization comes into being with the development of machine-using industries and the establishment of many factories, enterprises, large towns and cities which attract a great number of rural people. Labour-hiring develops,

involving many women. The family does not remain an independent production unit. It now includes hired labourers, wage-earners, owners of enterprises or businesspersons, etc. Women participate in production in agglomerate centers far from their children and family. Family maintenance becomes a heavy burden for women: they are unpaid for that work. Meanwhile, women who stay at home to ensure family maintenance are considered unemployed, who do not bring economic profit to the family. *Marriages* increasingly result from partners' own choice, free from imposition by their parents or relatives. More attention is paid to the individual's interest and happiness. And the recognition and protection of the individual's right to freedom by the State is guaranteed. Many functions of the family are partly shared by other social institutions (care for children, sick and old people; development of services to help families, etc.). Society also intervenes more profoundly in a number of family affairs (for instance, to encourage or limit child-birth; to facilitate or impede abortion, divorce, co-habitation without marriage, etc.). The two-generation structure of *family* is common; life expectancy increases, and the care for old people or helpless people becomes a burning problem in many countries. The family size is smaller: each family has only one or two children, consanguineous relations weaken, thus affecting the bringing up children. At the same time, the rate of divorce goes up; a number of men and women get remarried many times, placing their children in complicated relations with different fathers and mothers. This is unfavourable for the bringing up of children and their psychological development. We note also the increasing number of children abandoned by their parents, and of families where only the mother brings up her children with numerous difficulties. The duration of children's dependence on their parents is extended; from birth to adulthood, they are supported by their parents in all of their needs, even till they finish university, at the age of 24 or 25. The length of the cohabitation of married couples also expands since life expectancy increases, and couples rarely live together with their grown-up children.

At present, with the achievements of the world-wide scientific and technological revolution, we are entering the era of *post-industrial civilization*, or informatic civilization characterized by high development of intellectual standard. Intellectual labour is replacing manual labour, bringing about wonderful achievements in all fields. In many countries, the sector of production of material wealth accounts only for 40 percent of the national economy, while 60 percent or more are contributed by the sector of social services. Hence, the burden of household maintenance is alleviated; humans especially women, are being partly freed from strenuous low-productivity jobs, thus having more time for rest, study, recreation, etc. The present Vietnamese family is simultaneously influenced by the above three civilizations, with intertwining results and also contradictions (to be analysed in the following Chapter). Meanwhile, it is impacted by *Oriental culture* (different from Occidental one) and regional cultures of South East Asia with many ancient world-class religions such as Buddhism, Catholicism, Islam, etc. Obviously besides its particular characteristics, the Vietnamese family has undergone a development process which has *features common* to those in other countries. Although the family is a stable institution, its history does not necessarily change at the same pace and in the same pattern as that of society, but progress of the family cannot be separated from the advance of mankind.

2. Position of the Vietnamese family in history and at present

Vietnam is an agricultural country in the Orient, where great significance is always attached to the family. Vietnamese society based on *rice growing civilization*, essentially adheres to a *sedentary mode of life*, considering the family as its basic unit. Therefore, the psychology of Vietnamese is closely linked with the family, which in its turn, is not separated from the family clan and the village. The tight linkage of three factors: family-village-country is a special feature manifested during the whole process of development of the Vietnamese nation. The identification of the traditional and modern Vietnamese family, with its function of

nurturing and training humans, results from the analysis of the life of Vietnamese society and the Vietnamese family itself, in the relations between its members, and between it, the village and the State. For, the conception, the form of organization, the role and functions of the family are **all** based on the economic, political, cultural characteristics of Vietnam, **on** the level of development of our society (mode of organizing production, political and social regime, etc.) in each historical period and on the demands of families themselves, under the impact of their economic and cultural environment. Considering the role of the *economic factors* in family life, we see the long-standing existence in Vietnam of a system of land periodically divided in villages, and the autarkic agricultural economy based on wet-paddy growing. Currently, our country is moving progressively to a commodity economy with the development of industry, commerce, and a market mechanism. However in general, the agricultural economy still exists under the form of household economy, small-scale production, with backward farming techniques and the under-developed exchange of goods in many communes, especially in mountainous and remote regions. Concerning the way of *organizing society* such administrative divisions as villages, communes, districts, etc., have experienced many changes in their size after their merging or separating. But the physiognomy of the old village organized according to the pattern of a rural commune is still noticed. Each village has a number of clans, each clan includes many families. Therefore, co-villagers are often in kinship. In recent years, a movement has developed to organize gatherings of the members of the same clan; to pay homage to one's native villages, to find one's relatives, to promote the fame of prestigious clans which have produced many famous intellectuals or governmental officials, etc. There have been profound changes in the *political regime* of Vietnam, which shifted from the feudal and colonialist regime to the people's democratic and socialist one. However, many customs, habits, and traditions have been preserved to date in rural areas with only slight modifications. In

recent years, various folk festivals have been restored, pagodas and communal houses being used for villagers' gatherings. As regards the influence of *different cultures and religions*, we can note the coexistence and mixture of great religions such as Buddhism, Confucianism, Taoism, Catholicism, Islam, and local popular beliefs as well as the coexistence and blend of our traditional culture and Eastern, Western, Marxist cultures. The family is a small society. The social factors exert influence on family life to various extents during the different periods of the nation's history and families have different reactions to this influence. Since man's personality has a social character, it changes together with the viewpoints and requirements of society. Therefore, we should study the developments of the Vietnamese family through important historical periods, its effects on the building of human personality, changes and development of the relevant contents and methods and so on. Some researchers maintain that from tradition to modernity, the *Vietnamese family has developed and changed*, but not dissolved as the old political regime. Five periods of development of the Vietnamese family can be taken for consideration:

- The traditional family (before the French aggression);
- The family during the time of French rule;
- The family in the people's democratic revolution against French and American aggressors;
- The family in the period of socialist reform;
- The present family in the period of renovation.

This division is only relative; It does not claim to be unique for there may be other ways of division. For instance, during the time of the French colonialist rule, there were periods of patriotic anti-French movements; or during the period of the socialist reform in North Vietnam, the struggle against American aggressors continued in the whole country. Our

division is based on the social factors influencing the characteristics of the Vietnamese family and human personality in each historical period.

3. The particularly important role of family culture in the socialization of humans

Socialization is a process of *handing down culture* from generation to generation. The behavioural relations inside the Family, and between the family and society are continuously shaped up through different generations, under various written and unwritten forms: family rites, family traditions, family rules, etc. The family traditions of the majority of families in a nation form the basis of *family culture*, part of the common culture of the nation. So, the study of the formation and development of the personality of Vietnamese cannot be separated from the study of the influence of different cultures that have survived and now exist in Vietnam. The study of the role of the Vietnamese family in human socialization cannot be separated from the study of the *contents* of family culture, its influence on the education of children, the stabilization and perfection of adults' personality. Following are the main cultures in the history of the Vietnamese nation, that still produce influence on present life of the Vietnamese:

- The traditional indigenous culture of Vietnam;
- Confucianism, Buddhism, Taoism (Oriental cultures; Islam has only small influence, mainly on the Cham);
- Western cultures and Catholicism, (combined with Protestantism, Caodaism...);
- The culture of socialist Marxism and Hồ Chí Minh thought.

The various extents of the influence of these cultures on the Vietnamese family (contents and methods of family education). Family culture should be seriously studied. Here, religions are considered as forms of culture exerting great influence on the masses. We can say that humans of personality are humans of culture. There are traditional Vietnamese culture

and Vietnamese humanism. So, we should conduct thorough researches on the different manifestations of this culture, especially on the culture of the traditional Vietnamese family to understand its effects on the present family's function of socializing humans.

II. THE TRADITIONAL FAMILY AND THE CHARACTERISTICS OF ITS EDUCATION

1. Characteristics of traditional society and the traditional family's education

Vietnamese traditional society is particularly characterized by the long-standing existence of the *Asian mode of production*, not passing through the slave-owning stage; its feudal regime was not typical; the rural social organization was stable; the elements of autonomy in the activities of villages existed together with the feudal hierarchy and the autocracy of feudal kings and lords. The Vietnamese people have, since ancient times, lived on agriculture: rice, animal husbandry, together with handicrafts and forestry (division of labour between agriculture and handicraft has not yet made). The system of public land, periodically divided and allotted to villagers, lasted for many centuries, although the system of private land ownership gradually took shape and developed (public land had existed in rural areas until the 1952 - 1953 land reform). The *social structure* was formed with *peasants* accounting for the absolute majority of the population, and a small percentage of *landowners, intellectuals, artisans, traders*; the machinery of functionaries included mandarins, officials, notables, helping the State administer the country.

Situated in South - East Asia, a tropical zone with monsoons, and thanks to its long coast, Vietnam has many advantages. But it also often faces natural calamities (storms, floods, droughts). Rice growing requires irrigation to ensure arability of the rice-fields. Therefore, the Vietnamese must find a suitable way of organizing their society in order to easily unite different clans and villages in the building of irrigation projects and preventing against natural calamities and wild beasts. The Vietnamese

household has since long proved to be the most suitable form of production organization for the rice-growing economy. It is also appropriate to the system of periodical allotment of land to villagers. Although there were big families of many generations, the nuclear family has been common throughout the country⁽¹⁾.

In the traditional family, patriarchy was predominant though relatives and co-villagers also exerted influence on family members. The family was strongly affected by the Confucianist ideology. At the same time, the village community's ideology persisted. In the traditional society, intelligentsia was made up of *Confucian scholars*, who were engaged in educating younger generations (but only children of well-off families could afford education). However, the system of ethical rules, governing the relations between different family members, and between the latter and their relatives, the members of their clan, has been transmitted from generation to generation orally or in other unwritten forms, which was part of family education: to respect the superior, to be self-denial in relationships with the inferior; to submit one's individual interest to those of the family and the clan; to show gratitude towards one's parents, considering filial piety as the first obligation; to respect one's grand-parents and pay attention to the cult of ancestors.

The tradition of respecting men and despising women and the recognition of polygamy have pushed women to the lowest position in society. At that time, the ideal model was the family where the members lived in harmony, preserving the hierarchy established among superiors and inferiors, respecting the ethical rules; this was also a big family with many children and grand-children (people believed that many children would bring about much wealth).

Three typical kinds of family existed in the traditional society: peasant families, Confucian scholars' families, and honourable families (families

1. See the Annex: On the Early Formation of Vietnamese Households in history.

of mandarins, officials, rich people). Peasant families, particularly *middle-peasant ones*, paid attention to enabling their children to acquire the experience of doing agricultural work and business. They provided necessary guidance for their children, teaching them how to grow rice and raise animals and also how to behave towards their parents, family members, relatives and co-villagers. The education was conducted orally and through the examples set by the parents themselves. Meanwhile, *Confucian scholar families* educated their children through books of teachings by sages and scholars, and through the history and traditions of the family clan. The honourable families often used versified family teachings to educate their children, combining sentiments with literary works.

In the above circumstances, the main institution of education for children was the family which played a decisive role therein. Family education was of great significance. A number of small classes were organized in houses and directed by Confucian scholars, who taught Chinese characters and ethics to children. Still, only boys were allowed to attend those classes.

In general, only children from Confucian scholar families and rich families could afford schooling in the hope of becoming mandarins and officials. Few pupils came from peasant families and they could attend classes only some years. In fact, the great majority of children received education from their own parents, at home, through the family's life, and their activities as help for their families (children early began to participate in work on rice-fields and for household maintenance). Hence, their physical and personality development was linked with the family's education, and their relations with their friends in the village. The relations between friends, neighbours and co-villagers were also important, as an old Vietnamese saying goes "*Near the ink, you will be blackened; near the light, you will be shone*". This underlines the important impact of the social environment.

Humans of that time received education from their parents, grand-parents, relatives, and co-villagers to become persons for the *community*, the

family, the clan, the village and the State, not individuals with independent personality. So, a characteristic can be noted in the formation of personality of the traditional Vietnamese (its influence is still seen now): the *individual*, the individual interest and the individuality were not highlighted like in Western societies; on the contrary, *the interest of the family* (and the clan) was put in the first place, being always in the focus of attention of society. Hence, the unit of social partnership was not the individual, but the family. To bring up children into good humans of personality was an ideal for all parents. In the traditional Vietnamese society, humans of personality were those who well implemented their specific functions (parent, child, grandparent, etc.) towards their family, the village and the State. The personality of *intellectuals* was also expressed through their industriousness in learning the teachings of sages and scholars, in passing successfully court examinations, bringing honour to the family and native land. They tried, at least, to become teachers in the village. The personality of mandarins and officials was expressed in their benefiting the State and the nation. The personality of ordinary workers meant their good labour which ensured livelihood for the family and contribution to the village. The personality of *women* was interpreted as requirement for them to learn and train themselves to become good wives and devoted daughters-in-law. They should be in charge of the affairs of the husband's family; give birth, bring up and educate children, helping them grow up into good persons; sacrifice themselves to the interests of the husband and children; protect the concord and union of the family.

During the centuries of national construction the Vietnamese people had continuously to conquer nature to develop the economy, culture and ideology. The process went alongside numerous wars against foreign aggressions to defend national independence. The Vietnamese people once had to experience the domination of the foreign Northerners which lasted for 10 centuries. But they did not surrender to the aggressors, protecting the nation from assimilation. And finally they defeated the aggressors to wrest back national independence. Patriotism and the indomitable spirit of

the Vietnamese in the struggle against foreign invasions are their outstanding ideological values. Those courageous, frank, impartial and self-less people who sacrificed themselves for the common interests of the State and the village are consecrated with great honours by the whole nation. Many temples were built to worship them as saints. This is the way the people pay homage to their great services.

2. Influence of indigenous culture and Confucianism on Vietnamese family culture

The study of history is needed to clarify the role of the Vietnamese traditional family and family culture. This is closely related to the assessment of the *influences from different cultures* which have been preserved to date on the Vietnamese territory. Here, the point is the sound evaluation of the ideological values of the indigenous culture of Vietnam, and the influence of Confucianism on Vietnamese family culture. Two different ways of evaluating may be proposed as follows:

1) Confucianism was the ideology dominating the Vietnamese traditional society, which is still capable of exerting great influence even now. The principles of Confucian ethics served as the base for Vietnamese family culture and governed the relations between family members, and between the latter and society. For instance, the patriarchal system required the absolute ruling power of the head of family, the dependence and unconditional submission of the wife and children to the husband and the father respectively. All the family members must make *the family's interests predominant* and must abide by a clear *hierarchic order*. The sons, especially the eldest son, were highly valued and allowed to claim to many privileges, whereas the women were despised. While the husband could have 5 or 7 wives and concubines, the wife must stay absolutely faithful to her husband, and she would be severely punished in case of adultery. Morality required widows to remain alone all through their life to worship the dead and bring up children (those widows could be conferred by the King the honour of "virtuously exemplary women". For children, piety

was their primary obligation; they had also to absolutely submit to superior mandarins and stay absolutely loyal to the King. Filial piety and loyalty to the State and the King were the most important duties of noble men ("quân tử"). The Confucian ethics was perpetuated by the feudal class (kings, mandarins, etc.) for many centuries in Vietnam. It penetrated into the mode of life, behaviour, way of thinking and traditions of the Vietnamese, being influential even now. Many people hold that the good qualities of Vietnamese such as humanity, righteousness, reason, courage, honesty, filial piety, loyalty to the nation are based on the principles of Confucian morality.

2) The second standpoint is linked to the claim that before the infiltration of Confucianism, Vietnam had already had its *indigenous culture* with outstanding features. Therefore, despite its great influence, Confucianism, (particularly when it became the national doctrine at the beginning of the 18th century) had been *refracted and localized* in many regards. Unlike intellectuals, mandarins, and state officials, peasants were not impacted by Confucianism so strongly.

The indigenous culture of Vietnam had many features characteristic of South - East Asian culture (rice growing, system of public land, structure of villages that were almost autonomous, not entirely depending on the central administration, i.e. the royal Court). It brought about primitive democracy, when temples and pagodas were made places for villagers' meeting to discuss the village's affairs, as well as a common religion - the cult of ancestors. The family had for long been considered the basic unit of society, an important factor in the relations "Family-Village - State". Community spirit, national reconciliation, the unity of different religions, tolerance combined with dauntless, open-mindedness and absorption, the harmony of relations of man with the universe, are the characteristics of this culture⁽¹⁾.

1. See Phan Ngọc: *Vietnamese Culture and Approaches to It*. Social Sciences Publishing House.



A HAPPY WAR-INVALID COUPLE,
Photo by Kim Hùng
Vietnam News Agency

Proceeding from the characteristics of Vietnamese indigenous culture, a number of researchers point out to the following characteristics of *Vietnamese family culture*: community spirit and the family interests are highlighted; attention is paid to different family members, but the great respect is reserved for the father and mother (as a folk song goes: "*The contributions by the father are as high as the Thai mountain; the devotion of the mother is as immense as the source of a river, children should respect their father and revere their mother*", etc.). So, it cannot be said that women are despised.

In the family, affection and responsibility between husband and wife, parents and children, between the family members, other relatives, and co-villagers are highly appreciated. The family has a deep respect for older people and affection towards children; in their turn, the older members do their utmost to ensure happiness and a better life for the children, "*happy is the family where the children surpass their father*", nourish confidence in them ("*When the bamboo is old, sprouts will appear*"). Here, the family members tend to look forwards to the future, which is totally different from Confucianism which always turns toward the past. The different ways of assessing the influence of Confucianism on the Vietnamese family result in different opinions on *women's position* in the family and society. Some people hold that women are virtually equal to men as required by Vietnamese culture, to the needs of daily life and production (rice-growing requires division of labour: the husband ploughs the fields; the wife transplants rice, seedlings, etc.), the conditions of a country often facing protracted wars (the husband is on the front far from home while the wife takes charge of all family affairs, and thus has real power over the children, as a saying goes: "*The order given by the husband is not so important as that by the wife*"). The happiness and strength of the family stem from the concord and union of the spouses "*A couple living in concord can dry up even the Eastern sea*". Others say that Vietnamese women are in fact, in a position of dependence; they suffer inequality in the family and in society. Men have the power of household head, deciding on all important family

affairs, and so violence against women still exists. This is a problem requiring further discussion. We cannot yet draw any conclusions, but can note its great significance for the analysis of the traditional Vietnamese family culture as well as its influence on the formation of the personality of the Vietnamese and the values that need to be preserved. The centuries - long development of Vietnamese society shows that, despite many limitations, the Vietnamese, with their personality formed in the traditional family have well-fulfilled their historical tasks: ensuring production, bringing up children; enlarging the national territory and preserving its independence. The Vietnamese family in the past successfully educated its children, meeting the requirements of the then society.

We are of the view that with its imposition during a long time, Chinese culture exerted great influence on Vietnamese culture and the Vietnamese traditional personality, particularly through Confucianism. But many Confucian conceptions were Vietnamized and their contents changed accordingly. Therefore one cannot say that Vietnamese and Chinese cultures are the same; that the Vietnamese personality is the expression of Confucian morality or the Vietnamese family is built following the Confucian principles, etc. In fact, the national identity of Vietnamese culture, of the Vietnamese family and the Vietnamese is recognized by every-one. This identity had taken shape from the *indigenous culture* of Vietnam long time ago, before the introduction of Confucianism. In its turn, this culture came into being together with the creation of the country; it was consolidated in the course of history to be stabilized gradually. It was conditioned by the geography and the rice-growing economy of Vietnam and the activities of Vietnamese in the struggle to conquer nature, and to defend and enlarge the national territory. The moral values shaped by this culture include community spirit, the autonomy of villages, traditional patriotism exposed in the struggle against foreign aggressions; the unity and mutual aid of the members of the same clan and village; the peaceful coexistence of different religions; the relations between humans based on Humanity - Justice - Loyalty. These values persist throughout

our history in spite of the influence of Confucianism whose influence was exerted mostly on the feudal class and intellectuals.

III. THE VIETNAMESE FAMILY DURING THE FRENCH DOMINATION (1858-1945). CHARACTERISTICS OF FAMILY EDUCATION AND THE PERSONALITY OF VIETNAMESE

1. Vietnamese society under French domination

With their about 80- year rule, the French colonialists pursued a policy to plunder colonies and carry out political repression. The Vietnamese people suffered countless hardships and sorrows, ruthlessly exploited and oppressed by the French colonialists. Having completed their invasion of Vietnam (which lasted from 1858 to 1884), the French colonialists imposed their rule, and through it, Western culture on the country. This action resembles that by the Chinese feudals before: both cultures were introduced into Vietnam in a forcible way. However, unlike Chinese feudalism, French capitalism brought about changes in Vietnam's economic, political, and cultural fields. In order to exploit to the utmost the abundant natural resources of Vietnam, French capitalists had developed a number of *industrial branches*, built factories, enterprises, and mines, set up plantations of rubber, coffee, tea, rice etc. developed means of communication and transport (roads, ports), boosted commerce, including import and export and so forth. Hence, the Vietnamese autarkic economy could shift toward a market economy (although only at the initial stage) and an open-door policy (although in transactions mainly with France). At the same time, a number of big cities were formed (Hanoi, Saigon, Hải Phòng and others). The above changes in the nature and structure of the Vietnamese economy (besides agriculture, began to develop industry and commerce on a small scale, and there was lack of many important branches, however. This led to the shaping of a new social structure different from traditional society made up of peasants, intellectuals, functionaries, traders and state officials. In other words, the working class came into being, (in 1930, there were 220,000 workers) together with the *national bourgeoisie*

(in small number), the urban *petty bourgeoisie* (civil servants, teachers, journalists, free-lancers, small traders, etc.) and intelligentsia who replaced the old educational system with the French one. In rural areas peasants still made up the majority of the population, in addition to a small number of landowners. The newly-born classes brought about new interests, needs, aspirations, life-styles, and ways of thinking.

Important changes were recorded in the cultural field. Noteworthy was the rise of the Quốc Ngữ (Vietnamese romanized alphabet, to which great contribution was made by Rev. Alexandre de Rhodes) in replacement for old Chinese characters. *Schools* were opened, teaching pupils in Quốc Ngữ and in French, from primary and secondary to university levels. The old system of examinations was abolished together with the introduction of a new one. *French culture* was widely diffused. Such ideals as equality, freedom, democracy and law-ruled State step by step infiltrated into the Vietnamese intelligentsia. Literature and arts were imbued with the philosophical ideas of great French names, which were wide-spread among young urbaners and accompanied with human viewpoints on the rights and happiness of individuals, professions and citizenship... The establishment of the Pasteur, Radium, Oceanography Institutes, the Geographical Services, the Far-Eastern School and others facilitated the dissemination of techno-scientific knowledge (the old system of education focused only on the experience of ancient times, thus limiting the creativeness of pupils). In the time of dominance of Western culture, Vietnamese intellectuals and youths had the opportunity to get access to modern science and technology, acquiring new information and knowledge from other nations. Typical was the case of Nguyễn Ái Quốc, leader of the Vietnamese Revolution. The ideas of freedom, equality, humanity with which he had acquainted through French newspapers and books disseminated in Vietnam urged him to go to France (a new world with a new civilization) and search for a way of national salvation.

The above economic, political, social, cultural changes in general, led to all-round changes in many important aspects of Vietnamese traditional society. However changes occurred mainly in urban areas, among young people, intellectuals, members of well-off families, while the life of majority of the poor rural people *sank into darkness and poverty*. The traditional society strived to preserve itself but in fact, it began to confront with gradual disintegration. Still, all the changes affected, step by step but strongly, the personality of Vietnamese and the family's role in its formation during this period.

2. Changes in the mode of living and the life-style of the Vietnamese family; their influence on family culture and the personality of Vietnamese

While the majority of rural families maintained the traditional mode of living, new social classes and strata (working class, bourgeoisie, petty bourgeoisie, West-centered intellectuals, urbaners etc.) had introduced into their families many new elements concerning the conception of marriage, the relations between different members of the family, the methods of child education, etc. In the circumstances, the traditional family with its both positive and negative characteristics had to strive to overcome difficulties to ensure family life and to seek to adapt itself to the new developments. There was then interference between our traditional culture and newly introduced Western culture. Some cases of "copying" Western models seemed ridiculous and alien to the Vietnamese identity. However, many progressive elements from this new culture were selectively absorbed and assimilated by Vietnamese. Western-born ideas such as freedom, individual interests, rights and responsibilities of citizens, freedom in love and marriage gradually penetrated the minds of young educated people.

In *marriage* one began to pay attention to love. Many marriages, especially among young people who had occupations, were the result of love and free consent of both partners, though approved by their parents. After marriage, most newly-weds live separately from their parents. In the

family, although the husband still had the greatest power, the wife had more freedom than before; the relations between husband and wife (and parents and children) were more democratized. Particularly in urban areas, many women went to work as teachers, nurses, pharmacists, workers, employees. They began to gain economic independence from and equality with their husbands.

In the *education of children*, the family was provided with assistance by school, particularly in imparting to children knowledge. The number of children going to school further increased from primary and secondary schools to colleges and universities (teaching was done in Quốc ngữ and French). A number of rich families sent their children to study abroad. Urban well-off families allowed their daughters to attend the first to the third grades; a few of them went on with the education at universities (for teachers training or medicine). Though not yet wide-spread, this was a *very new phenomenon* in the Vietnamese family. It was hoped that, when educated, children could be employed by the Government.

In family education, a focus was made on formation of children's *morality and personality* in conformity with the traditional ethical standards: filial piety, sacrifice for the family's interests, gratitude to one's grand-parents, worship of ancestors, observance of familial hierarchy. Patriotism, indomitability and national pride were considered valued traditions to be preserved and promoted by families from generation to generation. At the same time, the interference of tradition and modernity in many cases led to contradictions between themselves and between different generations.

System of information: at the time newspapers and books (although not numerous as today) had many effects on young people, intellectuals and urbaners, helping them acquire more new information. Hence, family education was assisted by society. Meanwhile, it had to share power and could no longer keep its monopoly intact like in traditional society. Changes in the *mode of living* and dressing particularly in urban areas, also impacted the population. Men's clothing shifted from Vietnamese style to Western

fashions; women replaced "tứ thân" with "áo dài". Festival and other entertainments were tinted with Western colour. Movie houses, theatres, dancing halls were built and Western songs and music were diffused, etc. So, what are the outstanding features of the personality of the then Vietnamese?

Vietnamese have since long been imbued with fervent patriotism. When the French colonialists invaded the country and imposed their rule on the population, different social strata were continuously raised to fight them: there were patriotic movements such as Cần Vương ("Rescue the King") Duy Tân (Reformists) and the revolutionary movement launched and led by the Communist Party (since the 1920s). The Vietnamese people's political consciousness gradually grew from patriotism to the awareness of the necessity to struggle for democracy, to link closely national independence with socialism. This spirit finally stimulated a broad movement of the masses, which was transformed into a nation-wide insurrection. Its fruit was the August 1945 Revolution and the birth of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam. The *Declaration of Independence* read by President Hồ Chí Minh on September 2, 1945 was crystallization of the personality of Vietnamese which developed in the course of history. Its apex is manifested in the motto: "We would rather die than live in slavery", which in its turn, shows our determination for national independence and freedom.

Patriotism was the most important characteristic of Vietnamese personality in this period. It was evidenced from the iron-will and indomitability of countless revolutionaries, members of the Communist Party, in their heroic struggle against foreign aggressors, despite hardships and barbarous tortures they had to suffer in their prison. At the same time, the contact of the Vietnamese with Western culture facilitated them accumulating advanced scientific, technical knowledge and cultural patriotic values of other nations. This helped them make new progress. Vietnamese also began to learn how to conduct a market economy with a new mechanism.

A section of Vietnamese intelligentsia getting in contact with foreign cultures have changed their way of thinking, absorbing new theories, ideologies and research methods. They have assimilated the good and new element of other cultures and, in combination with our traditional values, built a new national literature based on a new system of script simple and easy to understand (*quốc ngữ*). Many outstanding researchers (on history, education, culture) writers, poets, painters, artists, etc. have appeared, producing significant works that are still admired by today's readerships.

Previously, in the contact with Chinese culture, Vietnam, being a backward agricultural country with a feudal regime, had mainly assimilated Confucianist humanities and ethics (including code of conduct). In the time of French rule, via the culture of France a developed capitalist country with large-scale industrialized production and bourgeois democratic regime, Vietnamese could acquire much scientific and technical knowledge in different fields (not confined only to social sciences and humanities).

IV. THE VIETNAMESE FAMILY IN THE 30 - YEAR STRUGGLE FOR NATIONAL LIBERATION (1945-1975) AND THE MOULDING OF THE PERSONALITY OF REVOLUTIONARY FIGHTERS AND SOLDIERS OF THE PEOPLE'S ARMY

1. Impact of war and revolution on Vietnamese and the Vietnamese family

War is always the most severe action, bringing about many vicissitudes in society and every family. It puts to the most severe test the personality of humans.

The August 1945 Revolution and the resulted establishment of the People's Democratic State in Vietnam marked a crucial turning point in the development of Vietnamese society. These events might have paved the way for our nation to begin a new phase of national building. But the French colonialists, not resigning themselves to being deprived of their privileges and interests in Vietnam, schemed to return and impose again

their rule on this country. Hence, the Vietnamese people had to be engaged in a resistance war that lasted nearly ten years (1945-1954). And after the liberation of the Northern part of the country, they had had to go on with a 20-year long armed struggle (1955-1975) before the country was reunited. Few nations have to suffer continuously 30 years of war in order to regain national independence like Vietnam. War is synonymous with terrible destruction of economic and cultural bases; loss of labour forces due to numerous deaths of children and adults, especially young men. Vietnam's cities and villages had to endure barbarous bombings carried out by those who wished to bring this country back to the "Stone age"; the campaigns to spray toxic chemicals over Vietnam's territory not only destroyed the environmental balance, but also left serious aftermaths: even now many cases of deformed new-borns by those who have lived on the contaminated regions are still recorded. This war has been a severe test for the personality of the Vietnamese. It forced them to reveal their nature in extremely abnormal circumstances and to make clear differences between just and unjust causes. This test also demonstrated *the success of the majority of Vietnamese families* in the moulding of the personality of revolutionary fighters and soldiers of the People's Army, ready to make all sacrifices for the cause of national liberation. Vietnamese families could stimulate patriotism and courage among all of their members. We should note that the cunning aggressors schemed brutal wars. Thus, the anti-French resistance war of the Vietnamese people was transformed by the aggressors into the civil war between "*communists*" (based in forests) and the marionette "*nationalists*" backed by the French (in cities and towns). The anti-American resistance war of the Vietnamese people was transformed by the US imperialists and their lackeys into the ideological struggle between 2 regimes: the "republic regime" in the South and the "communist regime" in the North, with the partition of the country. This crafty trick of the enemies transformed the struggle against foreign aggressors into an ideological conflict and thus created misunderstanding among a number of people, distrust and denial of the legitimate character of this struggle for

national liberation. This occurred in a number of families, leading to dissidence, break, sentimental damages.

War is a severe test for families. It causes deaths and destructions, leading to family division and influencing negatively the family atmosphere, especially care for children. Separation was a common feature of the Vietnamese family during the 30-year resistance war against foreign invasions, which brought tragedies to many people, and causing enmity and conflicts between family members, including those in their way of life and ideology. A great number of young people, volunteered to leave their families to join the People's Army, young volunteers detachments, the people's labour teams to serve the fighting front. They were ready to sacrifice their personal interests and happiness for the cause of national salvation.

Meanwhile, their wives and mothers had to work for them and take care of all family and community affairs. In fact, women, old people and even children were, at the time, in charge of production and management of villages, ensuring the maintenance of the normal life. The family remained a basic economic and social unit, particularly in rural areas, all through the war. In a self-sufficient economy, families had to *feed themselves* especially during the first years of the Resistance war against French colonialists, when Vietnam was totally isolated from the World and thus lacked any foreign assistance, and provide food for the Army. Also, they had to contribute manpower and material property to the Resistance. Women had to go on with their function as mothers (giving births, nursing children and training them) and as daughters (care for old parents and grand-parents). In their turn, mothers, old grand-parents also cared for the life of war invalids and even looked after the resting-places of fallen soldiers. The normal life of society in war based itself on the most reliable support system: the family. However, the situation when married couples *lived continuously in separation*, even for 10 or 20 years, did cause damage to their sentimental life. Furthermore, the burden of household chores was too heavy for women, who encountered many difficulties in the education

of children without their fathers (in many families both the father and the mother were far from home, or both were killed by the war).

Several million of Vietnamese were killed by the war. This caused great losses and sorrows for Vietnamese families. Furthermore, the numerous war invalids, wounded and sick soldiers are burdens for their families and society, both in material and spiritual life.

Experiencing the long and hard war, the relations between the family members turned out to be special relations of a particular sentimental and psychological group, whose members were tied by unbreakable affection and consanguinity. Obviously, Vietnamese, even forced by war to live far from home, always think of their family.

The affection of the family always constituted a great source of consolation and encouragement for combatants to strive to fulfil their tasks, being ready to sacrifice themselves for the country. They were aware that they struggled for their family and native land in the hope of ensuring lasting peace and happiness for them. Those who stayed home, always nourished the images of their dear husband, father, children, brothers or sisters. They made the greatest efforts to work to contribute to the common struggle, because they hoped that the resistance would end in success very soon and they would reunite with their dear relatives and friends. Those who had committed errors and went a wrong way, were pardoned by their family when they felt remorseful for their wrong doings.

2. The education of children and the moulding of personality of Vietnamese through the national liberation war

The education of children and the formation of human personality through the 30 years of war constituted a test for families. In the war, the affectionation among family members increased to become a constant source of encouragement for them to work hard and fulfil their daily tasks. On the other side, the war created difficulties for stimulating children to go to school to raise their educational and intellectual standard. The absence of the father or the mother brought about limitations on the formation of

children's personality. The outstanding features in the personality of Vietnamese during this period were *ardent* patriotism, indomitability, iron-will and determination to defend national independence. Those qualities were manifested clearly in revolutionary fighters, cadres of the resistance, soldiers of the People's Army, members of young volunteers detachments, etc. across the country in different field, at different levels and ages. Patriotism urged everybody to act as a combatant fighting for national liberation and reunification for the building of an independent, democratic and peaceful Vietnam. Patriotism was manifested in some ways. It was high sense of responsibility, one's readiness to sacrifice, even one's life, for the just cause of the nation, perseverance in enduring all hardships, the spirit of justice, disinterestedness, affection and compassion towards one's compatriots, etc. During the war, there were countless examples of heroic soldiers, combatants, cadres of the resistance, courageous young people and children and women capable of fulfilling 3 tasks: production, care for family affairs, and supply for the front and fighting when necessary. During the resistance war, the personality of Vietnamese was tested, tempered and trained up in a most severe way: in life and fight. Other aspects of social life such as development of economy, science, education, culture in the conditions of war should be taken for consideration to understand more deeply the personality of Vietnamese in this period.

In the *economic field*, the development was *still limited*. This was an autarkic economy based on a agricultural production; commodity production was confined only in number of cities and towns; industrial branches were not much developed. Although after 1954, the North entertained economic relations with the socialist countries, and the South with the USA, France, etc; Vietnam's foreign trade at that time was on a very small scale. In the *cultural field*, before 1954, there was a mixture of many cultural components. The people's patriotic and democratic culture in free zones in the North and liberated areas in the South was combined with the traditional culture. The rise during the war of a strong contingent of writers, poets, and artists with excellent works set glorious landmarks for patriotic culture. After 1954, the South experienced the infiltration of American

culture while French culture continued to exert strong influence on the intelligentsia. The North was under the impact of Marxist culture, socialist culture and the cultures of the Soviet Union and East European countries. Many young people in the North were trained in the socialist countries, while their Southern counterparts came to study in the USA, France, etc. They were influenced by foreign cultures and ways of life. At the same time their knowledge and qualification was obviously improved. It should be noted that in the South, the knowledges of management, business and commodity economy was more promoted than in the North. Regarding *education*, the development of anti-illiterary classes, primary, secondary schools and universities, that began during the anti-French Resistance war was considerably stepped up after 1954. Then, despite American bombings and the hardships caused by the war, the children who were evacuated from cities to the countryside continued their schooling. Various kinds of schools and universities were maintained, with a contingent of teachers devoted to the education of the young generation. The personality of Vietnamese forged in the struggle for national liberation was expressed in the most condensable way through *President Hồ Chí Minh*, the most representative of the Vietnamese nation, who is extolled by the World and admired even by the enemies. He was characterized by an eminent morality, intelligence, patriotism, love and compassion for his compatriots, adherence to unity and solidarity with all progressive peoples, justice and disinterest, and a very simple way of life. He gained the affection and confidence of everybody, winning the heart of different social strata. Furthermore, he could arise in the Vietnamese people an extraordinary strength, encouraging them to struggle under the leadership of the Party, to achieve the total liberation of the country. The history of Vietnam is full of the names of leaders who played important roles in difficult periods of the country. However, President Hồ Chí Minh with his personality is a brilliant representative of the 20th century Vietnamese man, who spared no effort to struggle for the right of his nation to live in independence and freedom. And here, one can note the profound influence exerted by family education on the formation of his personality.

V. THE VIETNAMESE FAMILY AND VIETNAMESE PERSONALITY IN THE PERIOD OF BUILDING SOCIALISM (OLD FORM) (1955-1986)

1. *Changes in Vietnamese society during the socialist revolution*

The socialist revolution actually began in the North from 1955 after its total liberation. At the time, Vietnam had to continue with the struggle for liberation of the South and national reunification.

The strategic tasks of the socialist revolution in the North were set out by the communist Party. And the cause of socialist reform and building was carried out in the North for 20 years (1955-1974) in order to serve the Resistance war against the US imperialists, to defend the North and to liberate the South. After the great victory of the Vietnamese people in the Spring of 1975, South Vietnam was liberated and the whole nation reunified. The cause of socialist reform and building was unfolded in the entire country. However, after some years, Vietnam faced great difficulties and obstacles. The country fell into a serious socio-economic crisis. Therefore, the 6th Plenum of the 4th Party Central Committee was devoted to the discussion on the situation to find a way out of the crisis. At the 6th Congress of the Party (1986), a relatively all-round *Renovation line* was adopted for the socialist construction in Vietnam. Prior the 6th Party Congress, between 1955 and 1986, the building of socialism in the North, then in the whole country, was carried out following the pattern of old socialism. It was characterized by an economy planned and highly concentrated (from central to grassroots levels), based on the regime of command and of public ownership of the principal means of production (under the form of State-run and collective enterprises). It rejected private ownership, in a socialist model that had strong impacts, both positive and negative, on the personality, the family and its education of the Vietnamese. Remarkable changes have taken place in the economy. With a relatively all round assistance from socialist countries, especially the Soviet Union and from some Western countries (for instance, Sweden) a series of big

State enterprises in many branches were established (industry, commerce, Communication and transport, etc.). They imported a lot of new equipment, employing a great number of laborers. In the course of socialist reform, many private enterprises became joint ventures. In agriculture and forestry, many large State farms were also formed to attract many local peasants who became in the wake of this State workers. New State agencies, ministries and branches were set up, together with a system of scientific research Institutes. We can say that never before had the number of civil servants and State employees increased so fast.

However, the State management mechanism was based on State subsidies and bureaucracy and State-owned enterprises enjoyed the subsidy from "input" (capital, means of production, wages for workers, etc.) to "output" (distribution and consumption of their products). Therefore, the managers of those enterprises as well as their employees did not pay much attention to business accounting and to calculating losses and profits. They worked following the plans decided by the State, and received wages fixed by the State for each grade and rank. The principle "work according to one's ability and enjoy according to one's labour" was dimmed by egalitarianism, which is unable to stimulate initiative and productivity. In *agriculture*, collectivization was completed in provinces of the Northern and Central parts of the country, while in Southern provinces, cooperatives were formed and developed from hamlet to commune level. Land, oxen, buffaloes and other production instruments became collective properties. Peasants were turned into *members of cooperatives* and distributed in different production teams. They worked according to the plans decided by the management Board of the cooperative; went to rice fields following the signal of gongs, and worked like industrial workers. The characteristics of agricultural production were somewhat neglected. The income of each cooperative member was calculated according to work points marked in the note-book of the production team leader and summed up at the end of each crop. Each family was able to borrow before that time a certain amount of rice from the cooperative. Here, the distribution of products

also had an egalitarian character; much attention was attached to the implementation of State policies, but not much to productivity and individual contribution to the cooperative.

Generally speaking, in the economic management, the Revolution in production relationship (transforming production individual and private relationships into State and collective ones) was considered at that time the key measure to develop, while not much attention was paid to the norms of economic growth and improvement of the people's living conditions. In the *medical, educational, cultural fields*, much progress was recorded thanks to large *State subsidies* for public welfare (part of the subsidies came from cooperatives funds).

In *education*, the system of schools, colleges and universities was expanded. The number of pupils and teachers increased rapidly at different levels. Many new specialized universities were established. The number of young people going to study in socialist countries increased year by year, including those who pursued university and post-university degrees. The foreign languages, especially Russian, taught at school helped the Vietnamese to make acquaintance with socialist culture (books, newspapers, reviews, cultural, philosophical and technico-scientific works, of the Soviet Union and East European countries). The knowledge of our intellectuals was improved. The State subsidies made it possible for the *system of creches and infant schools* to expand in urban and rural areas, contributing to the care for and education of pre-school children. In this period, the *role of school* was put in the first place. Many families entrusted totally the education of their children to schools and the State, from their childhood to the years of university and post-university study.

In the field of *health care*, a system of medical stations in communes and wards was enlarged together with district, provincial and central hospitals. The provision of medicines and treatment was the monopoly of the State. There were no private physicians, except for a small number of traditional medicine practitioners. However, the contingent of Western-educated medical workers increased rapidly.

The free medical check up and treatment provided by different health care establishments helped to lessen the burden of the people's expenses on health care. In the *cultural field*, as poor families could not afford radio and television sets, a system of public loudspeakers was developed in communes and wards, which proved to be effective in expeditiously disseminating necessary information, particularly State policies. Besides, many itinerant film projection teams and performing art troupes travelled in different localities (communes, State-owned farms, etc.) to offer free-of-charge services or with small charges. This helped populations to get access to the cultural and artistic achievements of the country and of the world alike (mainly of socialist countries). Libraries and clubs formed in many localities (at provincial, district and commune levels) provided free-of-charge service for young people and those keen to accumulate knowledge. Incomes of families in this period were low; only few could purchase for themselves books and newspapers, so the majority of population used public libraries.

At that time, the influence on our cultural life came mainly from socialist culture and Marxist culture. Especially in North Vietnam, the cultures of the Soviet Union and East European countries were popular. Meanwhile, the influence of old cultures still remained, although weakened. In the ideological field, the interests of the working class and the collective were highlighted. Individualism and individual interests were combated. So, the role and interests of the family were not in adequate attention.

In the *social field*, the role of mass organizations was underlined: the Youth Union, the Women's Union, the General Confederation of Labour (Trade Union), the Fatherland Front and so forth. Each stratum of the population had their own organization, subsidized by the State. Together with Party organizations in different localities, those mass organizations directed the activities of workers, civil servants, cooperative members.

The *social structure* at the time was made up of the working class, the collective peasantry, members of different kinds of cooperatives, intellectuals, a small number of petty traders and individual entrepreneurs.

2. The role and educational function of the family in the period of building socialism (old form)

In a management mechanism as pointed out above, the State machinery was very cumbersome, doing at the same time both functions: management and business operation (including in health care and cultural branches). In rural areas there was the powerful system of cooperatives. Political organizations were highlighted, unlike administrative agencies (People's Committees, and People's Councils). The political activities and spiritual life as well as the career of each individual took place following a special model, outside the influence of the family. The *family was almost replaced* by other social institutions with regard to educational function. Furthermore many other functions of the family were also neglected, producing negative impacts on the Vietnamese poor and self-sufficient economy. When the socialist reform was basically completed in agriculture, handicraft, private capitalist industry and commerce, family members in the working age became mostly State employees, civil servants, or cooperative members. The family, having been an independent unit of production, stopped performing its *economic function* (for cooperative members, the family's economy remained but played only a minor role). The family became a unit providing labour forces for society. Wages and incomes of family members depended on the distribution by the State and cooperatives. In the bureaucratic subsidy-based system, it was common that the operation of State enterprises and cooperatives was not effective (still there were cases of embezzlement of public property by a number of leading cadres). Therefore, the incomes of the working people were low; their families and children lived in poverty.

In urban areas, a number of State employees (even criticized by society) strived to find additional sources of income from sidelines. In rural areas, families relied mainly on the incomes they earned from the "5% of land" left for their own utilization by cooperatives and from animal husbandry. The family's strength, initiatives and capital were poured into this plot of land. Therefore, there were cases of families who earned from this kind

of land up to 80% of their total income. In fact, caring for the material and spiritual life of family members was the responsibility of each family. The cooperative and the State were in charge of common problems and general state of affairs. In other words, at that time nobody took care of the family's life as much as the family itself. Fathers and mothers had to sweat their guts out, sometimes secretly, to feed themselves and their children and to save some money in case of need, when the State and cooperative were unable to help them, given the small public welfare fund. The system of creches, kindergartens and infant schools, free of charge, greatly assisted mothers with small children. Schools and mass organizations, particularly those of the youth and teenagers made significant contributions to the socialization of children and young people. Many families entrusted totally society and school with the task of educating their children. The long-time concentration of children in nursing centres far from home was wrongly considered as a good means for the formation of the socialist personality. In fact, one emphasizes nowadays the necessity to create the environment of small families in orphanages to ensure the good formation of children's personality. Obviously, there must be coordination between the education by the family and that by the community, especially in the sentimental regard. Even the system of hospitals and medical stations can never fully replace the family in health care for children, old and sick people and invalids. The subsidy system created the psychology of passiveness, which counted upon the distribution by the State and cooperatives, following the principles of egalitarianism even in the enjoyment of cultural products. All affairs were dependent on the State, the cooperative and the community, including problems concerning marriages, funerals and family internal relations. The collective spirit was underlined, while the interests of the individual and the family were not spoken about. Meanwhile, many wrong doings of a number of leading cadres who abused power and public funds were concealed. Family education of children was to help them become State employees who could live on wages and subsidies from the State for the whole of their life.

But the socio-economic crisis put more pressure on family life. The family itself was driven into a situation when it had an urgent need to find a way to save itself. Once again, the family demonstrated its particular viability and role that can be undertaken by no other social institutions. Society can never replace the family or lower its role. The formation of personality of the Vietnamese at that time was *strongly influenced by society* through school and teenagers' organizations, (in one's childhood) as well as State agencies and enterprises, Party and mass organizations (in one's adulthood). The family had the role of a coordinator with society in the formation of new, socialist citizens. The education about the duties of children towards their parents, grand-parents, brothers, sisters and relatives, and their corresponding ethics was based on the specific conception of each family. Many good models of socialist personality came into being: persons who were wholly *devoted to the common interests of society*, having a high sense of socialist community and selflessness in work and life. These models were more followed during the Resistance war against American aggressors, exposing brilliant combatants civil servants and Party members who sacrificed their lives for the country, striving to achieve national liberation and reconstruction. For some time, this was the common thinking: the more we develop socialism (old form), the more persons with lofty ideals and perfect personality of collectivism will appear. However, reality did not justify this wish. As the means of production were regarded as public property, labourers became wage-earners with no real power. Meanwhile a number of decadent State cadres abused their power and made use of the weaknesses of the bureaucratic management mechanism, seeking profit for themselves through State and collective funds and public property. Those people wanted to enrich themselves by exploiting others. Facing the difficulties caused by the socio-economic crisis, ordinary people had to answer: should they struggle for the interests of the collective or of their own? Where is the boundary between collective interests they should respect and individual interests they should gain and defend? They had to ponder over the answers when living side by side with those plundering public funds. However many people, conscious and revolutionary-spirited, strived to get out of the crisis. Noteworthy was the fact that the Communist



OFFERING INCENSE-STICKS IN MEMORY OF FALLEN SOLDIERS,
Photo by Vietnam News Agency

Party as leader of the Vietnamese nation soon came to realize that the main cause of crisis was the bureaucratic subsidy-based system of management linked with the old pattern of socialism, which annulled all motive forces for social development, especially for economic growth. This worsened the people's living conditions; an ordinary worker tied down by this rigid mechanism could not bring into full play his ability and initiative to increase productivity and improve his incomes. In this situation, many people "overstepped" the State and collective regulations; others exploited the weak points of the mechanism to their own benefit. The *Renovation line* worked out by the Vietnamese Party and State is the way for the nation to get out of the crisis and to forge ahead. This line not only helps to improve the people's living conditions but also liberates their spirit and mind, creating conditions for the formation of Vietnamese personality in accordance with the demand of national development in the new era.

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To comprehend the changes of the Vietnamese family over the history of the existence of the nation, and its role in the formation of human personality is an important task that needs to be undertaken by more thorough researches in the future.

Here the initial brief review of the history of the Vietnamese family seems necessary, as *the past and the present* are in close relations. The role of the family in the socialization and the formation of personality of the Vietnamese is currently in a process of "*inheritance and renovation*"; this means that the family continues with the fine traditions of the nation, absorbing simultaneously the values of mankind's civilization.

CHAPTER III

THE VIETNAMESE FAMILY AND THE FORMATION OF PERSONALITY IN THE CURRENT PROCESS OF NATIONAL RENOVATION

I. ACTUAL STATE OF THE VIETNAMESE FAMILY AND THE IMPLEMENTATION OF ITS FUNCTIONS IN THE PERIOD OF NATIONAL RENOVATION (1986-1995)

1. The renovation strategy of Vietnam's Communist Party and State and its impact on the family

To overcome the slow-down in the national socio-economic development, the Communist Party and State of Vietnam have carried out an all-round renovation strategy which has basic contents as follows:

In the economy: to move from the bureaucratic subsidy-based management mechanism with highly concentrated planning to the market mechanism with different economic components and various forms of ownership, in the socialist direction. In agriculture, land is allotted to farmer households on a contractual basis for a long-term use. In commerce, price liberalization is being applied to all kinds of goods. The State encourages enterprises and attaches attention to the investment in technical and technological renovation, pushing up the industrialization and modernization of the country.

In the political field: to develop democracy in economic, political, cultural and social activities, and to build the law-ruled State.

In the social field: to reduce subsidies to ensure free service in medical care, education and culture; to encourage the development of private services.

In foreign affairs: to implement the open-door policy; to expand international relations; to encourage foreigners to invest directly in Vietnam; to increase the economic, cultural, scientific and technical cooperation between Vietnam and other countries.

The new developments exert strong influence on the life of the Vietnamese family, creating for it both favourable and unfavourable conditions. The family has a heavier task of providing jobs to earn incomes and to meet the material and cultural needs of its members. More than ever, the Vietnamese family demonstrates miraculous viability, striving to overcome difficulties and to develop in the new circumstances. The *household economy* is the most popular form of economic development in Vietnam at present: 11 million households in rural areas, and dozens of thousands of households in urban areas are doing business in the form of family enterprises or shops. This is directly related to the dynamism and economic potential of each family. In the move to eradicate hunger and alleviate poverty, and to make a fortune by means of the household economy, families receive the assistance from the State. But they must basically solve by themselves the problems of capital, labour force, technique and application of new business methods to their production.

The family is fulfilling its *economic function* with its significance as an independent production unit; it is in charge of production management, product consumption, cost accounting, calculation of losses and profits. Thus, the household economy has currently a very important position, making a great contribution to the economic growth of the country. It serves the people and with small-sized enterprises operating in various economic branches and forms of organization. Given the low level of economic development, the *reproductive function* of the Vietnamese family is linked with the urgent need to have the birth rate decreased. The number

of children to have is not only the affair of each family; it is also a great concern of society which strives to facilitate the application of contraceptive methods for the aforesaid purpose. However, the corresponding perception and practise of each family is the most important. Family members should grasp their responsibility in lowering the population growth rate. State subsidies for public welfare have been reduced, so the care for sick, old people and invalids has become a heavy task of families which have to bear great expenses on this. Nowadays, the care for war invalids right in their families, and the bringing up of orphans in small groups in families are considered a good practice both in the sentimental and material regards, which is better than grouping them at various centres. This testifies to the greater role and responsibility of the family in the solution of social issues. On the other hand, the development of democracy in the country and the people's access to the world civilization have brought about changes in the relations between family members: gender equality, especial equality between husband and wife in the family, as well as the rights of the child are now protected by the State; individual interests and freedoms are within the focus of attention of society; the husband cannot "oppress" his wife, and parents their children. The need for happiness of each individual in the family is legitimate and urgent; therefore, the family should pay great attention to ensuring the psychological and sentimental equilibrium for its members, to caring for the life, needs and aspirations of each member, so as to consolidate its strength.

It is obvious that the modern Vietnamese family is performing heavier and more complicated functions than in the past. We should stress that the State's new policies have created conditions for families to get out of the impasse, i.e. the passivity in counting upon subsidies of the State and the cooperative, and the low level of enjoying welfare. Families are striving to make progress, taking the initiative in bringing into play their potential including capital, creativeness and ability to do business, so as to develop the economy and improve their living conditions. Thanks to the Renovation

policy of the Party and State, the physiognomy of many cities, and communes has considerably changed. The labour and money contributed by families determined to build a more civilized life are of great significance for the success of the Renovation cause. In the time of the subsidy system, the role of the family was diminished. Nowadays, we are more aware that according to the development level of society, the extent of division of responsibility and coordination between the family and other social institutions may change with regard to production management to nurture, care, including health care, and social insurance for humans. However, this division of responsibility between the family and society will last for a long time. Experience shows that the reproduction of human beings (i.e. the perpetuation of the race), the education of children, the passing down of culture, the assurance of psychological and sentimental equilibrium as well as happiness for each individual, are all the functions of the family which can be replaced by no other social institutions, although great achievements have been recorded in science and technology.

2. Actual state of marriage and family life in Vietnam

a. Marriage: Despite the influence from some foreign ways of living and thinking, marriage is still regarded important by the Vietnamese with the recognition by the State, the approval by the spouses' parents and traditional ethnics. Few couples cohabit without marriage, which is not yet approved by society. If this happens, it is only because the couple are driven into such circumstances. In general, this mode of life is not favored by the Vietnamese. As released by the General Statistical Office, in 1993 the percentage of marriage was 5.9% of every 1,000 inhabitants (in urban areas: 5.56%; in rural areas: 6.12%). Among the population aged 12 and upward, the percentage of marriage was 56.50% in rural areas, and 52.10% in urban areas (See table 1).

Table 1
Marital status by sex and locality of the population aged 12 and above
in 1993 (ratio %)

	Married	Divorced	Separated	Widowed	Never married	Total
Men	57.99	0.33	0.33	2.00	39.34	100%
women	53.71	2.38	1.24	9.95	33.72	100%
Rural areas	56.50	0.68	0.84	0.29	35.60	100%
Urban areas	52.10	1.64	0.72	5.97	30.08	100%

Source: Survey of the Living Standard of Vietnamese, 1992-1993; published in September, 1994 by the General Statistical Office.

Regarding freedom of marriage, in general, young people nowadays have the right to decide on their marriage, consulting their parents and obtaining the latter's approval. This demonstrates the conciliation or mutual concession between the old and young generations, between tradition and modernity. According to Vietnamese custom, a marriage should be testified by the parents who usually take up the main expenses on the wedding ceremonies. If the parents do not agree with the marriage, it is very difficult to be organized, and may be regarded as legal but not conformable to common rule.

In recent years, due to the restoration of a number of old practices, wedding ceremonies have become more complicated and costly, and the family's role in marriage highlighted. Regarding *the age of first marriage*: in 1989 in the whole country, on average men get married at 24.5 years old, and women at 23.2 years old. However, cases of child marriages (women at 15 or 16 years old; men at 17 or 18 years old) were still reported mainly from rural and mountainous areas. Up to now, the Vietnamese family has been in a rather stable state although the percentage of divorce tends to be increasing, particularly in urban areas. According to the General

Statistical Office, in 1992 among 1000 inhabitants the percentage of divorce was 0.3% (compared to 0.28% in 1989); in urban areas, the percentage of divorce was 0.38%, and in rural areas: 0.23%.

According to the data supplied by the Hanoi People's Court, between 1987 when the Law on Marriage and Family came into force, and late 1994, there were in Hanoi 23,788 law-suits related to divorce, and they were differently grounded. But the main cause (accounting for 30% of the total suits) was that wives were ill-treated by their husbands. In Từ Liêm district alone (Hanoi city) between 1988 and 1994, 63% of the total of divorces were the initiatives of wives. Another important cause was adultery, acquisition of concubines and serious family conflict. Forty percent of the couples asking for divorce were in the groups ranging from 18 to 30 years old; most of them having already one or two children.

Like in the world, in Vietnam it is often *the woman and her children* who endure the heavy consequences of a divorce. In general, the woman has to bring up children alone, or with very little help from her ex-husband.

b. Family structure and division of household

Currently, there are in Vietnam two essential forms of family organization: the *nuclear family* of two generations and the *extended family* of several generations (often, three generations). We can note the *incomplete family* as well. However, the majority of Vietnamese families are currently *complete* with both parents and their children living under the same roof.

Generally speaking, in the whole country, nuclear families make up the majority. Their ratio is increasing, accounting for 65% - 75% of the total number of households, (depending on specific localities) and extended families only 25% - 35%. The survey conducted in 1995 of the 200 households of Hanoi's Ngô Thị Nhâm inner precinct shows that nuclear families account for 66%; 3-generation families 33%; 1-generation families (who have not yet children) 1%; there is no 4-generation family. In Hanoi's Yên Phụ precinct, 2-generation families account for 65%; 3-generation families 29%; 1-generation families 4% and 4-generation families 2%.

The *development tempo of households* is exceeding the population growth pace. In 1989 there were 12,958,041 households across the country; In 1992, the figure was 13,749,000; among them more than 11 million households lived in rural areas (See table 2)

Table 2

Population and households growth rate (1979 - 1989)

	1979	1989	Growth rate (%)	Annual percentage of development
1. Number of population	50,463,918	62,656,941	24.2	2.3
2. Number of households	9,665,866	12,958,041	34.1	3.1
3. Households average size	5.2	4.8		

Source: Data on Vietnamese Women 1985-1994 (page 14)

The division of large families and the formation of nuclear ones after children's marriage has been a common phenomenon in the history of Vietnam. Old parents rarely live alone. Having many children, they often choose to live with the eldest or the youngest child. Or they live alone but near to their children's, so that the latter can come to see and care for them. Families with many couples sharing a common long house are seen in mountainous areas, especially in the Central Highlands inhabited by ethnic minorities. Usually, newly-weds live together with their parents from 6 months to 1 or 2 years, to prepare material conditions and learn experience in production and family organization. Then, they split to form new households. However in recent years, especially in rural areas, many new couples have chosen to form their households immediately after marriage in order to be allotted land for production and housing because the State's (former) land policy not stabilizing the right of peasant families to long-term use of land requested land division according to the number of

family members. In urban areas, the formation of a new household is linked with the couple's request for provision of accommodation. The fast increase of nuclear families arises great concern among some people about the old parents not living with their children and thereby lacking the latter's care. However, the development of 2-generation families has been a natural tendency so far. Modern newly-married couples want to live on their own to decide themselves everything.

Heads of household: The majority of heads of household are men. According to the General Statistical Office, in 1989 women-household heads accounted for 31.9% of the total and in 1994 the figure was 27%. (See table 3)

Table 3

Heads of household classified by sex, 1989 - 1994 (%)

Area	1 st April 1989		1 st April 1994	
	Women	Men	Women	Men
1. Nation-wide	31.9	68.1	27.0	73.0
2. Urban area	48.2	51.8	42.4	56.6
3. Rural area	27.9	72.1	23.3	76.7

Source: Data on Vietnamese Women 1983 - 1994 (page 118).

Distinction should be made between female household heads living together with their husbands and those who are widows, divorcees, unmarried mothers, or married women whose husbands are far from home for a long time or living in separation. Among them widows account for the highest percentage. (See table 4). In the crowded delta regions the families where the husbands work far from home also occupy a relatively high ration. For instance, the 1992 survey of Trục Đại commune, Hải Hậu district, Nam Hà province, shows that the families with women-heads whose husbands were far from home accounted for 15.64% of the total.

Table 4
Classification of heads of household by sex and marital status, 1993

Marital status	Nation-wide		Urban area		Rural area	
	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men
Unmarried	5.9	0.7	5.7	0.7	6.0	0.7
Married	42.2	95.6	57.4	94.2	34.9	95.8
Widowed	40.9	3.0	27.5	3.4	47.4	2.9
Divorced	5.3	0.3	5.9	1.3	5.1	0.1
Separated	5.7	0.4	3.6	0.4	6.7	0.4
	100	100	100	100	100	100

Source: Data on Vietnamese Women, 1985-1994, (p 125).

c) *About the current tendency toward increase of family members.* To give birth to perpetuate the lineage has, since ancient time been an important obligation of Vietnamese married couples. This also manifests their filial piety towards their parents and other relatives. Nowadays, this conception is weakening in its significance. But having children constitutes a great joy and happiness, which ensures stronger ties binding the husband and the wife. Therefore, unlike Western societies, very few couples in Vietnam choose not to have children, except in case of diseases. On the contrary, sterility is one of causes of divorce which may helps the husband or the wife get remarried to have children. Generally speaking, the proposal for divorce to have a concubine often comes from the husband.

Despite the campaign of family planning which has been carried out dozens of year, the reduction of children in a family has been not considerable. The birth rate in 1989 was 3.01% and in 1994, 2.58%⁽¹⁾. The death rate among new-borns and small children is decreasing; hence the population growth rate was 2.19% (in 1990) and 2.26% (in 1992)⁽²⁾.

1. *Data on Vietnamese Women 1985 - 1994*; p.16.

2. *Statistical Data on Labour and Social Issues*. Statistical Publishing House, 1993; p.23.

Vietnam is currently listed among the countries with a *young population*. The number under 14-year children is large, accounting for 44% of the total population (in 1989) or for 37.6% (in 1993). In the year 2000, Vietnam's population is expected to reach 80 *million people*. Such positive factors as achievements in health care for children and old people, and in medicine help to reduce the death rate among infants and increase the people's life expectancy.

Due to the above tendency of population growth, the *family size* has not yet been reduced, in spite of division of big families and formation of new nuclear families. The average family size in 1992 was 4.82 people in urban areas, and 4.81 people in rural areas.

d. *Living conditions*: The life of families has been improved over recent years, affording more investment in the building and repair of houses, the purchase of domestic appliances (radios, television sets, bicycles motor-cycles, clothes, etc.) and in health care for children. However, generally speaking, the living standard of the Vietnamese people is still low. How can we measure the current living standard of Vietnamese families?

A survey conducted in 1993 by the General Statistical Office of 91,723 households in the whole country shows the following results: 51.71% of household heads assessed that their families had a higher living standard in comparison with 1990. But if we take the minimum amount of calories per person per day (2000 calories) for measurement, we will see that more than half of the Vietnamese population live under the line of poverty: 26% in urban areas and 57% in rural areas (for reference, in Thailand, the figures are 4% and 20% respectively)⁽¹⁾.

Given the nation-wide average monthly income of VND 100,000 per head, we see that rich households account for 4.1%, those above the average, 17.19%; average 35.48%; below the average, 22.27%; and poor households, 20%.⁽²⁾

1. *Nhân Dân* Newspaper, August 10th, 1994 and February 10th, 1995.

2. *Nhân Dân* Newspaper, August 10th, 1994

According to the Committee for drafting the socio-economic strategy towards the year 2000, the average (per capita GDP in Vietnam is currently US \$ 200; one of the lowest average incomes in the world⁽¹⁾.

Since the years 1990 - 1993, the gap in the living standards of different households has increased. A number of households have become rich at a fast pace. More than 10% of the total number of households have incomes higher than their daily expenses. The number of rich households was brought from 10.8% in 1989 to 12.2% in 1990, while that of poor households increased from 9.4% in 1989 to 15.89% in 1990. The gap between rich and poor households is more noticeable in rural areas⁽²⁾.

The difference in incomes is increasing both in urban and rural areas, the coastal and delta regions. A survey conducted in March 1995 shows that in Yên Phụ ward (Hanoi), 29.3% of the households had a monthly income of VND 100,000; 33.3% have an average monthly income of VND 200,000 - 300,000 and 11.5% earn more than VND 500,000 monthly. In the Ngô Thì Nhậm ward (Hanoi), 40% of the households had a monthly income of VND 100,000 - 200,000; 30% have a monthly income by VND 200,000 - 300,000 and 1% earn more than VND 500,000 monthly. According to the assessment of the households themselves, 5% were well-off; 87% earned enough to live on; 8% suffer privations.

Families are still encountering many difficulties, especially in housing.

According to the 1992 data provided by the General Statistical Office there were 13,165,000 houses for 13,749,000 households. That means 584,000 households officially have no accommodation. In fact, the last number may be bigger, given the numerous contingent of rural people coming to cities to look for jobs and having no permanent residence there.

1. *Draft Socio-Economic Strategy of Vietnam towards the Year 2000*. Published in 1990, p. 23.

2. *Nhân Dân* Newspaper, August 10th, 1994 and February, 10th, 1995.

Forty five percent of houses had no electricity. About 28% of the households had clean water for daily use; only 15% had proper hygienic facilities.⁽¹⁾

Houses in big cities are crowded and short of hygienic facilities. There are 3-generation families sharing each a 15m² room. In rural areas, houses with no bathrooms, latrines, and clean water are a common phenomenon. Hence, many digestible diseases develop among children for example, diarrhoea (medical examinations reveal that 94% of children in North Vietnam have ascarises.). Skin diseases are also popular.

Standard of enjoyment by families of medical care, education and culture.

Thanks to the achievements recorded in the previous years, the percentage of literacy in Vietnam is relatively high. In 1993, 86.6% of the population were literate. However, the growing percentage of illiterates resulted from the increased number of children and adults who do not go to school or are drop-outs is alarming. In 1989, among the population aged 10 and above, the percentage of literate women was 83.8%; that of men 92.4%. In 1993, the percentage of literate women decreased to 82.3%, that of men to 91.4%⁽²⁾ (See table 5). The percentage of children in school-age who go to school decreased yearly by 0.8% especially from the junior secondary school. About 2.2 million children aged 6 to 14, did not go to school or became drop-outs. In mountain areas, the percentage of illiterates is high. For instance, in Hà Giang province, only 22.1% children go to school; in Lào Cai, 23% and in Kontum 25%⁽³⁾. The more children grow up the less they have opportunity to go to school (particularly girls and children in rural areas).

1. *Actual State of Women and Children*. Published in 1994 by UNICEF; p. 93.

2. *Investigation into the Living Standard of Vietnamese, 1992-1993*. Statistical Publishing House, 1994.

3. *Actual State of Women and Children*. Published in 1994 by UNICEF; p. 125.

Table 5: Percentage of literates among population aged 10 and above by urban and rural areas (%)

	1989		1992-1993	
	Women	Men	Women	Men
Nation-wide	83.8	92.5	82.3	91.4
Urban area	91.5	96.8	90.7	96.3
Rural area	81.7	91.1	80.0	90.1

Source: Investigation into the Living Standard of Vietnamese, 1992-1993.

Since the State subsidy system was abolished, the gap between rich and poor families has been widening in terms of enjoyment of health care and culture in parallel with family living conditions.

Many families in cities and communes of the plain regions have now modern audiovisual facilities (radio, television sets, video players, etc.) and domestic appliances such as washing machines, fridges, air-conditioners, motorcycles and others).

For instance, in Ngô Thì Nhậm ward (Hanoi) 35% of the families have video players; 95% have television sets; 65% have fridges; 23% have washing machines; 3% have air-conditioners, 68% have motorcycles; 70% have radio sets, 16% have gas cookers, and 1 family has a car.

But poor households in mountain and remote areas have a very low living standard, and a low norm of enjoyment of cultural products.

A survey carried out in 1993 shows that in Hoà Phú, a mountain commune of Hoà Vang district, Quảng Nam- Đà Nẵng province, 47% of the women never listen to the radio, 83.9% never read newspapers and books, and 34.7% never watch television.

Regarding water and hygiene, 61.8% of the households do not have wells, 83.3% do not have latrines; and nearly 100% do not have bathrooms.

The 1993 data collected from the whole country show that 25.2% of women never listen to the radio, 36.5% listen to the radio from time to time; 35.7% never read newspapers or books, 36.5% read from time to time (See table 6).

The reason is that many families, especially in rural areas do not have means to access information (See table 7).

Table 6: Time reserved by couples at child-bearing age for reading, listening to radio and watching television.

	Wife	Husband
1. Listening to radio (%)		
Never	25.2	15.5
From time to time	36.5	32.5
Everyday	38.0	52.0
2. Watching television (%)		
Never	19.8	3.9
From time to time	37.9	35.6
Every day	42.1	50.3
3. Reading (%)		
Never	35.7	39.0
From time to time	36.5	41.9
Every day	9.6	18.9

Source: Data on Vietnamese Women. 1994; p. 85.

Table 7: Percentage of rural and urban households having means of access to information

Media	Nation-wide	Urban area	Rural area
1. Tape recorder	11.81	6.25	13.20
2. Television set	21.52	50.93	15.41
3. Radio set	25.62	43.85	21.07
4. Gramophone	0.35	0.52	0.31
5. Video	3.27	13.65	6.08

Source: *Data on Vietnamese Women*, 1985-1994, p. 131.

On the other side, the many folk festivals are attracting masses of people, especially women.

In *health care*, due to the reduction of state subsidies, hospitals, medical stations and maternity clinics have deteriorated. The developing private medical services is facilitating the people's health care, but they are costly.

Poor families and low-income earners particularly in rural areas cannot afford such kind of services.

In many cases, they have to treat themselves with traditional medicinal herbs or with superstitious means (prayers to Gods and other supernatural forces, going to pagodas, etc.).

According to an investigation into the living standard of Vietnamese in 1993, on average annual expenses on health care of each family were VND 381,780 in rural areas, and VND 522,890 in urban areas⁽¹⁾; 19.47% of the surveyed came to private health care establishments; 65.28% remedied themselves; and only 15% went to State-owned medical establishments.⁽²⁾

Apparently, much progress has been recorded in this field but Vietnam is still listed in the category of the developing countries which have low living standard.

(1) and (2). *Investigation on the Living Standard of Vietnamese*; pp. 113 and 85.

While the socio-economic renovation pushing up the national industrialisation and modernization requires from Vietnamese more and more comprehensive knowledge to acquire the achievements of the world technological revolution, many children especially in rural areas, have to leave school early to meet the immediate demands of daily life.

This is an alarming phenomenon which requires a solution on State scale. High-income families can ensure for themselves social services, including education and health care whereas poor families, particularly in rural mountain and remote areas, need great help from the State and the community, including the provision of free services of all kinds for them and their children. Thereby, the gap between rich and poor families can be narrowed and we can put an end to the sufferings of many innocent children. It is pleasant to note the growth of the charitable movement in recent years with the enthusiastic involvement of many people and organizations. It is a timely assistance to poor families and children in difficulty.

Transition from the traditional family to the modern one.

Having embarked on the way to industrialization, the Vietnamese family especially in rural areas still bears the features of an *agricultural civilization*.

The State policy on long-term allotment of land to peasant households makes the family go on with attachment to their rice-fields, gardens, family clan, and village, etc.

Therefore, individuals are still subject to the influence of the family and line of descent. Rural families still wish to have many children, to ensure more labour force and support for the elderly.

Extended families still account for a considerable percentage (20%-40%).

In the countryside, land is allotted according to the number of household members. But due to lack of jobs, many young people especially men leave their villages for cities, transferring their land portion to their relatives.

In cities, they have no official residence registration, accommodation and no permanent jobs. They engage mostly in service or work as petty

traders, pedicab drivers, waiters, waitresses, and family servants. This results in a complicated situation with regard to social management, order and security.

Furthermore, this exerts a bad influence on the building of stable families education for children as the wife has more burdens of family affairs, staying without the husband.

The rise of industrial and post industrial civilizations is exerting an impact on the Vietnamese family, mainly in urban areas (among intellectuals, civil servants, young people, ect.), with respect to their work-style, mode of thinking and living. The modern family is characterized by mobility, renovation and creativity. First and foremost, mobility in occupations: modern men do not hold to only traditional professions or jobs in which they have been trained; they are ready to shift from occupation to another when necessary. They have demand for learning new trades, re-training, and foreign languages to get access to modern sciences and technologies (for example, informatics) in order to meet the requirements of the current labour market. Social mobility is linked with occupations while changes in the population structure follow occupations. A modern human does not link career to traditional profession of his family, not counting much on the glory and prestige of his ancestors and parents but on his own abilities and capacities.

In general, the new family *tends to have one or two children* as modern parents want to concentrate on their career and ensure a decent life for themselves and their children.

However, the transition of the traditional family is not only linked with the process of urbanization and industrialization. It is also subject to other cultural and religious factors. The traditional family has been impregnated with the indigenous culture; the community spirit and Confucian ideology. The stability of this institution is ensured thanks to the "longitudinal" relations based on duties and responsibilities between generations (grandparents → parents → children or grandchildren). These relations are regulated by filial piety,

conjugal loyalty, mutual respect and many other obligations and feelings closely associated with one another.

These features have become values of the traditional family. However, many present Vietnamese families are also regulated by "horizontal" relations, i.e. between husband and wife, which is step by step gaining an advantage over the "longitudinal" ones. This is understandable because happiness of the family is becoming more and more dependent on the relations between spouses and their attitudes towards individual freedom and happiness. They are ready to make divorce a means for settling their insurmountable disaccord for the sake of a new life, although this means causes sufferings for their children and especially for the woman. Currently, marriage and family life in Vietnam are threatened with a number of unstability-causing factors. Therefore, it is necessary to regulate both the "longitudinal" (necessary and full of humanity) and the "horizontal" relations (a decisive factor for family's happiness) in harmony with a view to guaranting stability and durability of contemporary families.

In brief, the identification of the present Vietnamese family with its material and spiritual life changes, disadvantages and advantages poses very important questions, which may help us understand the formation of human personality in the new period and the socialization function of the family.

3. Impact of the market mechanism and open-door policy on families, especially on the education of children

It should be noted that the present family is liberated from many chains to boost its economy through different trades. But in a number of families, the economic function absorbs too much labour of the whole family; even of children and the elderly. This adversely impacts on their psychology and sentiments, particularly the care and education for children. In a number of families, the education is fully entrusted by the parents to schools; the children are left free to grow up in society. The parents only provide for them good food, luxurious clothing, money for schooling and

entertainment. In rural areas many children have no opportunities to ensure their good schooling. They become backward pupils or drop-outs.

High schooling fees are one of the causes for children to abandon school prematurely. In a number of families, the unacceptable conduct of the parents as the negative manifestation of the market economy has a direct effect on their children. Family discord and conflict often make children fall into discontent and despair. When the family does not ensure for children good conditions for growth (both material and mental) they may be absorbed by other harmful surroundings, deprived of their cosy nets.

Both reproduction and education are fundamental functions of the family.

This is also the responsibility of the parents before society, apart from being their sources of happiness. The commodity economy with its market mechanism and the expanded international relations have brought into Vietnam the Western way of life with its positive and negative effects. Many families, although well-off, do not have happiness due to numerous cracks in internal relations. The power of money and pursuit for a materialistic life have resulted in ill-mannered children and supportless old people.

Divorce and adultery tend to be on a rise mainly in cities, so as conflicts between family members or relatives. Violence against women and children is an increasing occurrence, not to mention other crimes (smuggling, murder, sexploitation).

Besides, unemployment in rural areas pushes a great number of children and young people to cities. In fact, poverty and the gap between the rich and the poor are leading to increasing social evils. This constitutes an acute problem which concerns the State, the family and the whole society. Facing these circumstances, some researchers argue that the Vietnamese family is trapped in a crisis, or on the way to deterioration.

Here stands a question: how do we assess the impact of the market mechanism on families? There may be two approaches: the stress can be made on either the positive or the negative effects of the market economy.

The first approach highlights the role of the commodity economy in taking our country out of a protracted socio-economic crisis. Families can now take the initiative in bringing into play their economic potentialities and creativity for production and other activities. The second approach recognizes the positive effect of the market economy in enabling families to enrich themselves. But it underlines the negative side: degradation of morality, pursuit for money, making individual interests predominant in family and social relations.

In fact, we should not attribute everything negative to the market economy which has existed in many countries for several centuries now and nobody has blamed it for the deterioration of the family. As for Vietnam, the development of the market-orientated economy is a necessary factor. When rejecting this reality, we may come to a conclusion that the absence of such an economy may help the family get rid of the negative manifestations. But this is unjustifiable. Rather we should re-assess the operating mechanism in the implementation of State policies related to the family in order to identify the issues to be dealt with. We are of the view that there is *imbalance in the family's fulfilment of its different functions and its unsound perception of the moral values and standards in the period of transition*.

It is naturally that the economic function continues to play an important role in ensuring livelihood for the family members, facilitating the performance of other functions. It should occupy the central place in the State's policies on family. However each family should balance its various functions proceeding from specific circumstances in order to ensure sustainable and harmonious development of all the members.

In the past years, the State has not yet dealt in a proper way with the problem of families in difficulty, failing mobilize the community in assistance to them. Meanwhile a number of families have enriched themselves by unlawful means (smuggling, embezzlement of public property, etc.) Those law-breakers have not been punished in time, which raises discontent of those who are honest and righteous. Obviously, the negative

phenomena in modern families cannot be regarded as an outcome of the market-oriented economy. We should have a more thorough look at other factors, first and foremost, the family itself and the related state policies.

Still, we cannot make conclusion about the current family crisis, grounding our arguments on only some deviations in family life. Certainly, radical changes take place when the traditional family is in a transition to a new model. More objectively speaking, the independence and the spirit of taking initiative of our family are being restored and promoted; there is no denying that the family is making considerable contributions to the renovation of the country.

II. FUNCTION OF THE VIETNAMESE FAMILY IN THE PRESENT SOCIALIZATION AND BUILDING OF PERSONALITY OF THE VIETNAMESE

1. The family and the problem of socialization of children and building of human personality

The family is the basic educational institution, the first training centre where the child is prepared for life so that he can fully develop his potentialities and properly play his role in society when having grown up adult. It is widely recognized that this kind of preparation begins from the child's birth. The period from birth to 6 years old is crucial for the formation of the child's intelligence, personality and social conduct. It is in the family where the child's knowledge develops, including the sense of self-respect. The training in the first years may create both favourable and unfavourable conditions for the child in his later life. However the Vietnamese family is currently in the process of change. Therefore the socialization of children is not simply the transmission of the nation's cultural values and code of conduct. The relations between the younger and older generations are subject to continuous change, thereby becoming more fragile for the life of each individual is shaped following the changing cultural values and standards. The family is the first unit in charge of children's socialization, transmitting cultural and social values from gen-

eration to generation. Through this process, the nation's values are preserved and they exert their influence on other fields of life. And this process itself takes place in the course of continuous renovation. The *force produced by the renovated* family contributes to facilitate changes in society, through the review of knowledge and the management mechanism of the existing institutions. Therefore, the family becomes a principal motive force for development and evolution of society, remaining the basic unit in educating its members how to respect the fundamental human rights, the right of individuals to freedom in the modern social community. In traditional society, the family had almost an absolute role in the education of children especially from 2 to 6 years old. Nowadays, there are creches, kindergartens, infant classes, schools and mass organizations. But the family still occupies an important position in this cause. Parents are the decisive factors in creating conditions for children to accumulate knowledge. In general, this depends on the economic potential of the parents, their cultural standard, their absorption of modern civilization, as well as on their general conception of the present spectrum of moral and spiritual values. Here, family culture seems to be crucial in the formation of children's personality.

2. Socialization as a function of the present family; the building of new family culture and the determination of a new spectrum of moral values

The family is world-wide regarded as a cultural value. This is to stress the great significance of family culture for the development of each nation and of the whole human society. Despite the different characteristics associated with different countries and regions, family culture everywhere has such common features as humanity, humanism and humaneness. Still, family culture has not only national traits but also the features of world religious cultures (Buddhism, Christianity, Islam, etc.).

Many foreign cultures have infiltrated Vietnam. But the Vietnamese family culture is based on the *indigenous culture* characterized by *Vietnamese*

humanism whose contents include humanity, justice and compassion, etc. The primary criteria of the Vietnamese family are *concord*, *affection* and *responsibility*, (including mutual care between its members). The Vietnamese make great sacrifices for their children and grand-children until their last breath, which is considered by themselves as happiness. The formation and development of personality of the Vietnamese is a process of cultural transmission between different generations. It can be said that persons with personality are those who are cultured. Vietnamese traditional culture has produced Vietnamese humanism. Vietnamese society is experiencing great changes. Family culture is also moving from the traditional pattern to a modern one. And in the shift from tradition to modernity, it is difficult to avoid all difficulties and failures brought about by conservative ideas and "immoderate" actions. Here one may note perplexity and differences, even contradictions, in assessing moral principles and conducts, the contents and methods of education of children and others. The traditional family attached importance to its interests more than individual interests, requiring filial piety and absolute obedience of children towards their parents and the veneration of ancestors. It turned to the past to try to preserve the cultural heritage. However, the *modern family* tends to look forward to the *new*, something in continuous change, making love the basis of conjugal unity. It stresses individual interests and happiness, highlighting the aspirations and the independence of individuals, equality and democracy in conjugal relations, and the necessity to take children's opinion into consideration. The challenges the Vietnamese family is now facing is whether to advance forward or to come back to the old days.

However, life continues its course. Amid unexpected ups and downs, the family is at loss as to how to define for themselves *the most reasonable spectrum of values*. In this cause the assimilation of modern cultural values is not in contradiction to the preservation and development of our traditional values which are imbued with profound humanity. Those who are ungrateful, very selfish, and maltreat their congeners, first of all their relatives, are never pardoned by society. Those people certainly do not



"LET ME HELP YOU, GRANDMA!"
Photo by Vietnam News Agency

respect the community's interests, and do not have compassion and sympathy for other individuals. Therefore, the formation of a new family culture cannot be disconnected with traditional culture or the values of modern culture such as respect for human rights, individual interests, equality and democracy in interpersonal relationships. On the contrary, it requires the sound and harmonious combination of these two sources. This should be made the guidance for families in building a scale of values for the modern Vietnamese. Vietnamese have traditionally engaged in agriculture. They have little knowledge of commerce and business. They are very diligent and hardworking; but their scientific and technical level is low. They are very courageous and indomitable in the struggle against foreign aggressors. They cherish justice and humanity. They are benevolent, charitable, ready to help their compatriots. However they do not much respect individuality, democracy and equality in the relations between different family members, men and women, and different generations. The *scales of values* are changing to meet the requirements of the cause of national renovation. Humanity, justice, bravery, indomitability in the struggle against social injustice and oppression and in conquering nature are ethical values that need to be preserved and promoted. The mutual help in the family, family clan, and village should be developed into sympathy and solidarity between compatriots and congeners. At the same time, the Vietnamese should enrich their scale of values with new elements such as the ability to absorb mankind's knowledge, advances in science, technology, business and social management. This presumes the independent and creative thinking of individuals who should take the initiative in study and in work, when considering many problems and searching for solutions thereto. Here, individual responsibility should be particularly stressed together with respect for the legitimate interests of the community and individuals' *observance of social rules and laws, and respect for the right to human freedom and equality*.

In the development of our human resources, we should not either only highlight the individual and think little of the role of the community or

underline the community's interests to the detriment of those of individuals. A harmonious combination is required between the individual's creativeness and the community's sustainable unity.

It is a common conception that for Western culture, the individual is the center whereas for its Eastern counterpart, the community. The culture of the modern Vietnamese family does not follow the Western path, nor holds to the Eastern path in a conservative manner. It rather bases itself on *the Vietnamese indigenous culture imbued with Vietnamese humanism* while absorbing the values of other national cultures across the world.

In the building of family culture we should preserve the elements which contribute to develop the family into a cell of a civilized and wealthy society.

Any traditional or modern factor, which matches with human rights and individual happiness and facilitates the building of "cosy nests", and collective solidarity, is worthy of study and utilization.

3. Education by the family in the renovation of family members' relations

First and foremost, we should look straight at reality when the relations of family members are undergoing a process of renovation. This includes the highlighted democracy, equality and respect for the individual in the relationships between various generations.

Nowadays the right of women to equality and other rights of the child are recognized by the State, protected by law, and supported by society. The law on marriage and family and other laws concerning human rights should be strictly observed. Barbarous acts committed by husbands against their wives, or by parents against their children are condemned and the violators are punished severely.

In many families, especially concerning young couples in urban areas, many changes have taken place in their relations, mode of thinking and living, division of labour, and solution of family affairs. They are

connected partly with the economic independence of the wife (who is also an income-earner) and partly with the increasing knowledge and cultural standard of the couple themselves together with the promotion of democracy in society, many husbands now have a better understanding of their wives' difficulties in child-bearing, and child bringing up.

They respect the opinion of their wives in family planning and are ready to share with them the burden of housework. Highly appreciated are those husbands who care for the progress of their wives in career and raising their cultural standard, as well as in their social activities and the way they spend leisure time.

However, the above progress goes side by side with negative phenomena, especially inequality between husband and wife. In rural areas, up to the 70% of husbands are household heads who decide on all important affairs of the family: production, property management, expenditure, the children's education and career orientation. Regarding labour division, women are mainly in charge of child-care and household maintenance. This labour division is based on traditional women's natural reproductive function.

However, it does not take into consideration the responsibility of women in production and incomes earning for the family, which is sometimes as heavy as that of men. Furthermore, this division is linked with the conception of the status and authority of men and women as a popular saying goes: "*Outside the family are men; inside, women*". In other words, this gender-based division of labour is included in the content of education for their children.

The son is always in a privileged position, enjoying more advantages than the daughter. In modern society, when gender equality and human rights are ensured by the State and society, the out-dated education should be modified, first and foremost family environment.

From the angle of socialization, *equality between husband and wife; between father and mother* has a great significance for children, helping them to form sound conceptions of human rights and respect therefor.

The exemplary conduct and actions of the parents in daily life are the first very practical and effective lessons which have a decisive impact on the formation of the child's personality. Nowadays, the relative independence of women, particularly in the economic field is increasing in the course of their participation in production, social affairs and thanks to their improved cultural standard. Hence, *equality, between husband and wife constitutes a unique feature of the new-family culture*, influencing the relations between parents and children. This is a primary factor which makes the basis for the respect of *freedom and personality of children*, creating conditions for the solving the contradictions between different generations. This seems more important in this time when the child's maturity comes earlier and they are surrounded by the modern mass-media.

The family is a unit of close ties. But its structure is varied because its members differ from one another in age, gender, profession, hobby, character, educational and cultural standard and way of life, etc. The Vietnamese family has traditionally been extended (at least, 2 generations) therefore contradictions between generations are inevitable. This situation seems to be graver in Vietnam at this period of economic transition and all-round Renovation.

In the old-type family, patriarchy was a great power in unconditionally subjecting children to their parents. This "parental dictatorship" cannot exist in the present society imbued with democracy and equality. On the contrary, there should be discussion, exchange of views and mutual respect in considering family affairs. However, we should also admit that in a number of families, the contradictions between generations are so profound that sometimes they require a lot of energy to be resolved (due to the conservatism of the elderly and the immorality of children).

The concord of parents and children is the decisive factor for successful socialization and formation of human personality in the family. The driving force for the settlement of possible contradictions between generations stems from the profound sympathy and tolerance of blood relatives living under the same roof for many years. This is a crucial problem of socialization of the family in the new period of national modernization.

Here stands a question: should we stimulate the development of 3-generation families?

Nowadays, many young couples prefer to form their own household right after marriage. They do not like to live together with their old parents for they want to be independent in any family affair. However, reality shows that in many families, the old parents are able to help their family, sharing with their children experience in many domains of life. Especially, they can take care of their grand-children. At the same time, old people can find great joy in contacting small children. However, given the difficulties in urban housing, the 3-generation family would encounter with numerous hardships. Therefore, there should be good material conditions for the existence of such a kind of family: the elderly may live in a wide house together with their relatives, or not far from the latter; there should be spaces for both collective and individual life.

In the formation and development of human personality, the harmonious combination of education by parents and care by grand-parents is very beneficial to children.

III. CHARACTERISTICS, OBJECTIVES, CONTENTS AND METHODS OF FAMILY EDUCATION

1. *Characteristics of family education*

a) First and foremost, family education is characterized by *its diversity and profundity*. These features are demonstrated in the interaction between individuals (family members) and collective influence on individuals (through the family's way of life, culture, etc.) We find here *teachers diversified* in age, gender, qualification, who offer *diverse* knowledge and experience for children (in production, business, conduct, social relations, organization of familial life, etc.) with *diversified methods* (verbal, examples, sentiments, theoretical and practical approaches).

Family education is multi-channelled: all the members are in a complicated interaction. The behaviour of children also influences their parents' personality. Thus they also participate in *socializing* the latter. Children

quickly grasp new knowledge and new development tendencies through their broad contact with friends, the mass media, etc. Here, parents should be not only teachers but also students of their children as well.

Family education has *specific concrete* approaches to each child, in the circumstances of a specific family. It is flexible at the same time in adapting itself to changes of family life and society. However, it has a *common character* for the whole family collective.

Different ways of life in the families with different backgrounds.

Intellectual parents pay much attention to the study of their children, trying to help them attain a higher cultural standard, get good qualifications, and continue their professions. Those families usually provide their children with proper conditions for acquiring knowledge, learning foreign languages, and informatics, and spending their leisure time adequately.

In general the life of intellectuals' family is stable and disciplinary, based on the strictness of the father and the meticulousness of the mother. The family's impact on children is often exerted through the family code of conduct in combination with explanation, persuasion, criticism and deterrence when necessary.

Workers' families are close to productive life. They pay attention to training their children into high-skilled labourers who can perpetuate the traditional professions of their families with experience handed over by their parents. The way of life of this type of family is often easy-going; the parents, shift workers, are often absent away from home, even at night. Their children have to take care of themselves. Still the parents have difficulties in helping their children improve their educational and cultural standard.

Peasant families linked with agricultural production are economically independent households.

In the present circumstances, the parents of those families concentrate on earning livelihood, attaching little attention to their children. They are

concerned mostly with transmitting to the children their experience in agricultural production (rice-growing, animal husbandry, household maintenance, etc.) Their children are orientated towards an economically developed life, not to raising their educational standard. They are thoroughly educated in the proper manner of treatment towards the relatives and co-villagers, as well as in the responsibilities before the family and the village with regard to community activities (celebration of ancestors' death anniversaries, New Year's Day, village festivals, etc.).

In general, the spirit of community attachment is highlighted.

However, there is no denying that different family members benefit from family education to various extents, depending on their personality, strong and weak points and other factors. As a result, children of the same family may have different career orientations (cultural workers, scientists, businessmen, and so on).

The family's *psychological environment* is an extremely important factor for the development of the child's individuality, ability, mentality, and his/her integration into the community.

Here, there is diversity in the reaction of individuals to family education, in the combination of the influences of the family, society and friends, in the development of individuals' mentality and psychology.

Each individual has a specific "destiny" and particular prospects. Family education contributes to bring about the diversity of personality in a progressive fashion.

For some time in the past, we had committed an erroneous action when we were attempting to "collectivize" the life of families according a unique model in every aspect (work, leisure time, spending, cultural activities, etc.) Fortunately, we have put an end to this trend. The present family education does not aim at forming citizens of the same type, depriving them of their initiative and creative thinking.

The strong points of family education are as follows: it conveys to the "learner" *social experiences* (in business and conduct) *multi-sided knowledge* combined with various aspects of life; it has a pragmatic character (the results are tested in daily life), and focused more on the outcome.

b) *Family education in the perfection and consolidation of human personality.*

Family education has a long-lasting and comprehensive impact on all family members through their life, not confined only to children.

It lays the foundation for the formation of children's personality; pushes up its development in their youth; preserves and consolidates it in their adulthood and at their old age.

The family is a particular psychological and sentimental group whose members are linked with one other for the whole life. Therefore, its psychological atmosphere, as well as material and spiritual conditions have a great significance for the preservation and perfection of its members' personality.

The two "pillars" of the family are the husband and the wife (i.e. the parents with regard to their children). When they live in mutual confidence, the other members can open their heart, sharing with the former their thoughts and feelings. Every person will surely inform his family first of his successes in work and life for common sharing. He will do the same when something unfortunate happens to him. In its turn, the family always shares with its members their happiness and suffering, and take care of them both materially and mentally.

After a hard-working day, the father or the mother in particular, the income-earners, looks for a cosy family atmosphere with material care for him/her to recover from exhaustion, and with consolation and encouragement to raise their spirit. The love between husband and wife or between parents and children helps them to restore the sentimental and psychological equilibrium necessary for a normal life) allowing them to continue their work with a new strength. Therefore, adult members should be aware of

their role as "pillars" in family life, and the necessity to *continuously perfect their personality*, to overcome their weak points and bad habits for the sake of the happiness of their family, especially their children.

A number of family adult members are not conscious of their role as "family pillars". They lead a loose life, being gamblers, alcoholics, drug addicts or even criminals.

There may be several causes. Firstly, the family's environment is unfavorable for them: there is lack of confidence, care, encouragement in family; they have nobody to turn to for consolation, advice or stimulation when they happen in need. Secondly, they themselves are irresponsible for the life of their whole family, being totally ignorant of the bad effects of their actions on their families.

Apparently, family education has a decisive role in the perfection of adult members' personality.

For the elderly members, the family is very important in taking care of them, in spiritual, sentimental and material aspects. Certainly, health care establishments for the elderly can provide them with medical check-up and treatment and daily meals. However, these facilities cannot replace the role of relatives, who are bound to one another by profound affection, filial piety, gratitude and mutual care. Living with them, the elderly members can gain peace of mind and avoid the feeling of being abandoned or of loneliness. They see in their children and grand-children parts of their body and soul, or their contributions to society's man-power.

In many countries, the elderly live far from their families, in sanatoriums reserved for senior citizens. They are rarely visited by the relatives.

Arnold Toynbee, an English scholar, remarked that sanatoriums for the elderly, even well-equipped with health care facilities and other conveniences is a psychologically disguised prison for old people⁽¹⁾.

1. *Choose Life - A Dialogue between A. Toynbee and D. Ikeda.* Oxford University Press, 1989; p. 102.

Therefore, the Government of Singapore has the policy to fund families in building houses for old members to live near their relatives, so that the latter can easily come to visit and take care of them; furthermore, there are separate living spaces for each generation.

Reaching a certain age, the elderly tend to become like "children" who badly need not only material provision but also psychological and sentimental care. Contact with children is a great joy for old people. Still, *the family elder members always try their best to preserve their personality, not making troubles* for their descendants. Even when torn by serious diseases, they strive to endure sufferings; facing death, they make efforts to keep themselves calm with the thought that they have fulfilled their duties before the family and society.

In brief, family education is a work to be done continuously and systematically by all family members who play each a specific but necessary part.

c) *Role of family members in the building of human personality*

At one time in the past, we highlighted the role of the mother in the education of children, thus thinking little of the father's role. However, our ancestors used to acknowledge the significance of the father and the mother in this process. The absence of the father in families where the mother has to bring up children alone, has a bad impact on this kind of education. The conception that the father should be strict whereas the mother should be mild is not plausible. In this process both the parents have to combine reason and sentiment, although each of them may have specific approaches.

The father represents the intellectual, the will and the discipline of the family. He is an example for his children, especially, the sons to follow. Therefore, the father should participate in bringing up his children since their childhood, treating them with care and confidence. In reality, many fathers have succeeded in combining traditional with

modern methods of education, producing good citizens for society. Even when far from home, he is always present in the mother's and the children's affection and thought.

However, there are also irresponsible fathers who totally entrust the bringing up of their children to the wives and school.

They only care for their career and concerned with their own promotion.

Step by step they "distant" themselves from their children, unable to understand them. And eventually, they may be deprived of their children's affection and sympathy.

Nowadays, when women are participating extensively in social life, *we should get over the conception that child-rearing is women's talk.*

In fact, this requires the contribution of *both the husband and the wife*, who should share all the responsibilities, rights and interests.

Through the care for children, they will always earn the latter's affection, confidence and attachment. Furthermore, too severe or too loose education would not be successful as well.

It is known that *the mother* plays a very important role in the education of children. The sentimental relations between the mother and the children are the basis for the latter's relations with the family and society.

Being close to her children, the mother can discover and redress in time their wrong doings. She is more advantageous than her husband in educating children about the way of life and morality. Tender and subtle, she can ensure the bosom of family for her children even when they have already grown up.

But in the modern time, the mother is able to fulfil well her duty, if she has necessary knowledge of psychology and pedagogy.

In educating children, it is necessary to bring into play the *combined strength of the whole family*. All the adults should form a teaching staff who have common objectives and methods of education.

The strong and weak points of each of them in child education should be well-realized.

Grand-parents, either living together with their children or near them can have a great influence on the education of grand-children (and even their "grown up" parents).

The elderly have accumulated much experience in life, although some aspects may be regarded as "backward" or "conservative". In general, this experience is very useful for the young people who know how to inherit it and apply to their life the positive elements. It is more important if the grand-parents have a high cultural standard and are retired senior workers.

Still, grand-parents sometimes can play the role of disinterested *conciliating mediators* for conflicts between spouses, especially, young couples or newly-weds. They also give advice on the contents and methods of parental education for children and help to deal with contradictions or misunderstandings between them and their parents. For children, grand-parents' advice and recommendations in many cases are very weighty. In particular, well-educated grand-parents are able to help their grand-children in study.

Family siblings also have a significance in the formation and development of children's personality. The atmosphere of unity, sympathy, attachment, mutual affection, mutual assistance or even competition between brothers and sisters contributes much to developing themselves in a progressive direction. Elder siblings should set examples for the younger to follow and to rectify their actions by themselves when necessary.

2. Objectives and contents of family education

Given the current social developments, what problems and requirements is family education facing now?

Our cause of national industrialization and modernization based on the "đổi mới" policy goes hand in hand with the necessity to build a progressive culture imbued with national identity, and a civilized society. This requires families to provide society with far-sighted, sensitive and devoted politicians, talented, strong-willed entrepreneurs and managers; creative scientists capable of absorbing new scientific and technological advances and realizing the realities of the country; popular and high-skilled workers and peasants; gifted cultural workers and artists. Those people should be well-qualified, well-bred and should have culturally abundant life. They should be honest, capable of protecting the interests of their own and of the collective while complying with law and discipline, sympathetic and affectionate towards their compatriots and congeners. They should respect morality, justice and truth, being physically and mentally healthy and capable of fulfilling the assigned duties.

a) In the families of peasants and workers, family education is aimed to provide a trade or profession for children (not necessarily agriculture or traditional handicrafts) to earn stable incomes (this is also the parents' conception of "the successful career" of their children). Families of intellectuals and civil servants often direct their children towards raising their educational standard (knowledge of foreign languages, informatics, high-income or socially-prestigious jobs). However, all families feel they have a great responsibility in helping their grown-up children to form new cosy nets for themselves so that the latter can live the life of honest and responsible men.

A survey of the *orientations of child education* conducted among 200 households of Ngô Thì Nhậm and Yên Phụ wards (Hanoi)⁽¹⁾ shows that (See Table 8) the *moral* value (filial piety) was the most highly-appraised by the families with various trades (93.9% of the surveyed).

1. The survey carried out by the Family Department, Centre for Family and Women Studies, in March 1995; and specialized reports. Documents of Project KX - 07-09.

Here we see that, the parents are deeply concerned about impact of the market-orientated economy and the manifestations of moral deterioration among young people, and other amoral and law-breaking actions in society.

Table 8

Survey of family education (FE) for children conducted among 200 households of Ngô Thị Nhậm and Yên Phụ wards, Hanoi, March 1995; (%)
Regarding FE orientation

Profession Indexes	Civil servants, workers	Traders	Free employees	Housewives (or house husbands)	General percentage
Relatively high cultural standard	83.6	80	44.4	66.7	78.2
Specialized profession	78.4	80	66.7	56.4	73.6
Filial piety	93.3	100	100	92.3	93.9
High income	20.9	66.7	22.2	25.6	25.4
Relatively high social status	28.4	33.3	22.2	25.5	27.6

The second much valued index is "cultural standard" (78.2%) with the highest figure recorded in the families of workers and civil servants.

It is followed by the index "specialized profession" (73.6%). We should note that those who are not directly involved in any production trade most desire that their children have a specialized profession (traders: 80%); after them come the families of workers and civil servants (78.4%).

Two indexes valued the least are "high income" and "relatively high status" (about 25% of the interviewed).

To the question "which is most important in family education", 94.9% of the surveyed answered: "morality"; 51%: "imparting knowledge" and 28.6%: "career orientation".

Eighty seven percent of the civil servants, workers and employees wish that their children have a high educational level; 51.3% wish that their children have occupations matching with their ability (See Table 9 and 10)

Table 9:
Regarding FE contents

Profession Indexes	Civil servants, workers	Traders	Free employees	Housewives and house- husbands	General percentage
Education about morality	95.5	93.3	88.9	94.9	94.9
Knowledge teaching	56.4	53.3	33.3	35.9	51
Profession training	29.3	53.3	11.1	20.5	28.6

Table 10

Survey of parents' concern about child education, conducted among workers' and peasants' families in Hà Tây province.

Indexes	Workers' families (%)	Peasants' families (%)
Senior secondary and tertiary education	87	51.5
Occupation in accordance with children's ability	51.3	39.6
Occupation for further promotion	48.7	38.3
Worry about possible depravity	66.1	48.8
Worry about Children's possible unemployment	40.3	46.6

Source: Survey by Võ Tấn Quang (Ph.D) in 1993. Documents of Project KX- 07 - 09.

Obviously, for urban families, child education is directed toward "forming citizens with *morality*, who are capable of conducting business on the basis of a certain educational standard.

A small survey carried out among 48 households of workers and civil servants of Đống Đa district (Hanoi) in 1993 shows that 100% say they wish their children to become good pupils, 89.1% wish their children go to college and university. Besides, 82.9% wish their children to be moral, 57.6% wish their children to get employment.

It is obvious that in the relative homogeneous family environment of civil servants and cadres, educational and cultural standards are the values to which humans should direct themselves.

Naturally, they entail the opportunities to find stable jobs for the sake of an independent life. In comparison with that in rural areas, the urban family pays more attention to these standards.

The lack of jobs in rural areas is reflected in the percentage of rural families worrying about employment for their children (46.6% against 40.3% in the city).

Meanwhile, the living environment in cities is more complicated than in rural areas. Therefore the percentage of workers' families worrying about the possibility of their children's depravity is higher than that of peasant families⁽¹⁾ (See Table 10).

The analysis of the data collected through the surveys proves that in the context of a market orientated economy, families are more concerned about job creation and education for their children to ensure for them high-income and stable jobs. The Renovation in the economic thinking promotes the people's independence and will to live on their own.

1. Survey by Võ Tấn Quang. Documents of Project KX - 07 - 09.

Hence, they recognize the necessity to absorb at a quick pace scientific and technical knowledge to become highly qualified to meet the requirements of socio-economic development.

Noteworthy is the fact that wrongdoings and immoral actions in society make the majority of families grasp the necessity to grow their children into not only talented but also virtuous citizens.

This conception is the continuation of our nation's traditional ethics in modern time.

b) Through the surveys, we also try to understand the conceptions of different social strata, especially young people, of the *values of marriage and family*, their criteria in the selection of spouses, as well perception of family happiness.

An important indicator for these is the qualities of the spouse as defined by the interviewees.

In the feudal society, marriage was based on the principle of "similarity of family background" of the bride and the bridegroom.

During the anti-American and anti-French resistance wars there was tendency to make spiritual values preponderant over economic aspects. Nowadays, when material values are highlighted (wealth is considered as success) what are the criteria of young people in selecting their spouses?

To the question: "In your opinion, what are the criteria for selecting a wife nowadays?", the answers given during the survey of the two wards of Hanoi are presented as follows:

Table 11
Criteria for a wife

Criteria	Confirmation (%)	
	Men	Women
High cultural standard	54.1	46.7
Beauty	37.5	45.0
Laboriousness	79.1	91.7
Stable job	95.8	75.0
Good health	91.7	85.0
Faithfulness	91.7	70.0
Subtlety	29.1	38.3
Wealth	12.5	25.0

Regarding the criteria for a husband, the survey gives the following results:

Table 12
Criteria for a husband

Criteria	Confirmation (%)	
	Men	Women
High cultural standard	70	64.1
Handsomeness	10	21.1
Ability to earn money	75	64.1
Stable job	95	84.4
Housing	70	67.2
Good health	80	85.9
Loyalty	70	60.9
Age compatibility	20	28.1
Delicacy	20	23.4

It should be noted that "good appearance" is not a weighty criterion for both wives and husbands, on contrary to that of an economic character (stable job). The research on the conception of *family happiness* is also important as the latter contributes to the shaping of family education for children. Still, through this we can also assess the quality of the Vietnamese family (See Table 13)

Table 13
Family happiness as conceived by the surveyed

Criteria	Confirmation (%)
1. Well-provided for	69
2. Proper accommodation	53
3. Obedient children	83
4. Conjugal concord	92
5. Relatively high cultural standard of spouses	41
6. Good comforts	42
7. Good health of all family members	42
8. Submissive wife	49
9. Children doing well at school	61
10. Independence and freedom of family members in private affairs	40
11. Mutual care and affection	77
12. Both spouses having jobs	71
13. Husband earning high income	19
14. Relatively high social status of children	30

This survey contributes to the investigation into the "*values' ladder*" in the family internal relations and to the *prioritized criteria* of family education. We can note that the surveyed people still highlight the traditional values, (family concord, mutual understanding and affection of the spouses as the basis for family happiness). As a Vietnamese saying goes: "*A harmonious couple can even drain the Eastern sea*". Thus, the concerning indicators occupy the first place in this survey.

The second position is for the group of indicators concerning *children*. As mentioned earlier, children constitute the factor for uniting the spouses, being sources of their happiness or suffering. Families having well-bred children are certainly happy unlike those having depraved children.

"High social status of children" is not considered as an important indicator (only 30%). This means that the parents wish their children to be good students and later to become good men imbued with filial piety, which is more valued. The group of *economic indicators* occupy the 3rd place. In general, the people are more concerned about how to ensure that their families have an average living standard in present society. If we compare them with the criteria for selecting spouses, there seems to be some contradictions, husband's ability to earn money is stressed. Possibly, the economic factor is *necessary but not enough* for family happiness. (only 19% consider the husband's high income a necessary factor for family happiness). A conclusion can be made that family happiness is guaranteed by conjugal concord, mutual affection, understanding and care between family members, and well-educated children.

Through the surveys, we can see that there is a *combination of traditional and modern values* in many Vietnamese families of this modern time. The analysis of the data is significant because they are based on diverse answers of different kinds of families. Here we would like to take *young families* for comparison. During the survey (1993) carried out under the project "*Young families and the building of human personality*" ⁽¹⁾ of the Research Institute for Youth, in Hanoi city, 86.8% of young married couples of intellectuals; 79.1% of young couples of workers, and 67.8% of young couples of peasants very highly appreciate the following values: mutual love, respect, and faithfulness in the relations between husband and

1. Report on the studies by Dương Tự Đam. Research Institute for Youth. Documents of Project KX - 07 - 09.

wife, parents and children, are considered as guarantee for happiness as well as *conditions* for the development of personality of family members.

Many young couples highlight the factors "having jobs, *stable occupations; ensured economic conditions*", as premises for the building of a happy family. "Low incomes, unstable occupations or unemployment" are factors much unfavorable for the fulfilment of families' functions, for the harmony of conjugal relation and the education of their children; 90% of the families of young intellectuals say that stable economic conditions constitute a fundamental factor for family stability; 85% of young worker families attach attention to the factor "basic occupation"; 73% of young families in rural areas pay attention to the household economy as guarantee for family development.

Young families also focus on the education of their children. As a Vietnamese saying goes: "*Children should be educated since infancy*". This is a tradition to be inherited by young couples who should at the same time have knowledge of modern pedagogy and of different fields. Well-educated healthy children are an ideal for young families.

According to the survey carried out by the Research Institute for Youth, the following values are stressed by young families as guarantee for family happiness:

- Harmony inside the family: 92% of the interviewees;
- Good children doing well in school: 56.8%;
- Healthy and well-mannered children: 35%;
- Steady economic conditions, stable occupations of the husband and the wife: 32.9%;
- Good care for the old parents: 43%.

The order of prioritized values in the above table fundamentally coincide with that of the surveys carried out in the two wards of Hanoi city. We think that this demonstrates not only the people's conception of

life values but rather the tendency to make them standard to be reached in family building and education of children.

In brief, for Vietnamese families, conjugal constancy, solid family relations, filial piety, affection and sacrifices are those traditional values which should be highlighted nowadays together with modern concepts such as concern for individual interests, needs, and aspirations (including spiritual life), individual freedom, equality between husband and wife; between parents and children. In other words, our traditional *moral criteria* subjected to some changes have been and are being promoted.

And the building of children's personality is directed towards these moral values.

However, we should note that many families are at a loss what should be included in the content of child-education and how to educate various age-brackets.

The family should take into proper consideration moral education as well as transmission of the elder generations' experience to children.

But many parents feel difficulty in imparting modern knowledge to their children as they do not have a suitable educational standard, especially with regard to education in sex, gender, marriage, and reproductive health for the teenagers reaching puberty. In other words, families still lack an education that would be *suitable for child physical and psychological development*.

c) The formation of personality in Catholic and Buddhist families.

The Catholic church perceived as a common family of Catholics, (a community family) attaches great attention to the education of children and the family's spirituality. It instructs Catholics how to follow God's 10 commandments; the worship of God is predominant; avoiding from wrong-doings in the name of God; devoting the whole Sunday to serving God; Catholics must abstain from murder, dishonesty, greediness, lust, and the desire for other people's wife (or husband), as well as properties.

The two primary requirements are veneration for God and love for human beings.

The Church considers Catholic families as its foundation or the temple to God. The "fervent adherence to the religion and a "beautiful life" is a principle for the existence of a Catholic family. The Church has three programmes of family education:

- Education for infancy and adolescence: teaching the religious dogmas and formation of faith therein; teaching compassion and inclination toward the good; respect for parents and worship of God; the spirit of the faithful and individuality; the sense of religious belief and voluntary adherence; science-technology combined with religious belief; compliance with the laws of the Church and the disciplines of the social community; the formation of the psychology and the way of life of the national community; the sense of entering social life in a manner suitable for each age-bracket; education in the spirit of Catholicism; and linking the responsibility toward the family with that before the Church.

- Education for *young beginners* of an independent life: teaching love and responsibility therefor; identifying possible challenges and even crises for newly-weds, natural biological developments of the couple and the harmony between them in creating happiness; roles of the husband (the father) and of the wife (the mother) in the family.

- Programme for *building family happiness*: teaching the way of life to ensure family happiness; the Law on Marriage and Family, and its implementation; child-psychology and child-education; guidance for small and grown-up children; education about the responsibility for family and social life.

In brief, the Catholic Church has rather all-round programmes of education for the family, suitable for the demands of different ages. The Church also organizes different associations of youths, teenagers, infants or young mothers, etc. and festive days for them. These measures attract

a great number of people, especially the youth. Therefore, children of Catholic families are generally obedient.

On the contrary, Buddhism does not regard the family as a basic unit for education of humans; it requires *individuals* to perfect themselves in virtue and do others good. Buddhists believe in Karma (close to the conception of fate) which determines the life of an individual; Buddhist monks often make these conceptions part of their lectures for children, adolescents and adults to stimulate them to do benevolent actions instead of malevolent ones, to "keep their soul pure", to be altruistic, compassionate, tolerate, beneficial to compatriots; to hold to equality and fraternity.

Having a "dirty soul", a Buddhist follower can see that the world is impure and inhabited by evils'.

On the contrary, the world will appear to be governed by peace, security, equality, fraternity and happiness.

Thus, the Buddha's world is designed for "pure souls" which are found in those who always attempt to perfect themselves and incline towards the Good, the Beautiful and the Authentic.

Currently, "Buddhist family" is a model being promoted by the adherents. This is an organization of teenagers and youths educated in the spirit of Buddhism and trained to become genuine Buddhists for the sake of the prosperity of followers, of the religion itself and of our nation. This is to contribute to the building of faith in the spirit of Buddhist dogmas. This model is based on the education in Compassion, Wisdom and Courage. Its rules are made measures for the ability of each member. The forerunner of this organization was the Youth Association for Moral Education founded in 1938 by Mr. Lê Đình Thám.

Apparently, Buddhism orientates teenagers and young people towards the morality and dogmas of Buddhism, not highlighting the role of the family as an unit of education.



LEARNING CRAFT FROM THE GRAND-FATHER

Photo by Trần Sơn

Vietnam News Agency

The above analysis concerning the two largest religions in Vietnam helps us to understand why they are attractive to a great number of young people.

Experiences can be drawn from it for the educational activities of our mass organizations (the Youth Union, Women's Union, and so on).

d) While researching on the fundamental orientations of families for the education of their children in different values, we should examine the manifestations of human personality at present, especially with regard to the young people already married, who are now influential parents.

In fact, there has appeared a type of people *different from the previous model* of heroic combatants in Resistance war. Modern humans desire to *make a fortune* or to have high incomes to ensure the life of themselves and their family. Among them, many have been cadres of the Revolution and the Resistance; a number of them are Communist Party members. They reject the old way of doing business, striving to find new lawful means of making a fortune. Their aspiration to a happier life and avoiding poverty is legitimate. They want to have more modern comforts for their families. A number of those people *have become rich*. This tendency is observed in various social strata throughout the country. This new model of personality, is accompanied with the old values changing and the new qualities taking shape. The new man *takes the initiative* in economic activities, not surrendering to challenges and failures. They *study the market*, learn experience from others, create or *seize opportunities*, do not hold to old stereotypes. They are ready for *competition* in a bold manner and ready to cope with *new challenges*.

The present young generation attach great significance to a *high education* and *professional standards*, as well as the capability of conducting transaction. They wish to go abroad for study. A number of them want to have power and high social status to facilitate their business.

In the past, when engaged in the protection of national independence and freedom, we elevated the model of revolutionary fighter wholly devoted to the nation's cause.

Nowadays, our task is to build Vietnam into a prosperous and powerful country with a just and civilized society. So, we need another type of persons who strive to do business to make a fortune with legal means. Their activities, conscious or unconscious give an impetus to the development of our society. And they should be welcomed as conforming to the progressive trend of the time. Their ancestors sacrificed themselves for national independence. Nowadays, they are searching for ways to make the nation prosperous.

Indeed, different generations have different tasks to be fulfilled.

However, in the context of a market-orientated economy, negative phenomena tend to increase in a certain section of the population (cheats, depravity, corruption, pursuit for money without attention to the family members or relatives, friends, etc.). A number of people, exploiting the loopholes of laws and the weakness of the State machinery have enriched themselves illegally.

We would like to note some changes of family education stimulated by the Renovation process. Formerly, parents directed their children towards their profession and career in order to perpetuate the family status. Nowadays, it may happen that children do not follow their parents in career orientation (for instance, the father is a scientist, but his children like to become businessmen). There are even cases where the child makes decisions totally contrary to his parents' expectations.

In general, the human personality is beginning to go through changes. As the new conception of personality has not yet completely been formed, there are differences and even contradictions in the approaches to various problems, which has an impact on the value orientation of family education. It is, therefore naturally that some people are optimistic, others may be pessimistic, or hesitating with regard to the raised issues.

The Confucian and popular conceptions of personality have become powerless in guiding our modern society. The current stage of national

Renovation requires the period of new theoretical standpoints and approaches to analyse and interpret realities, to provide sound orientation for the Vietnamese people in the building of human personality, for the sake of a more developed society. The new theory should contain the elements plausibly inherited from the past and absorbed from other nations.

3. *Methods of child education in the present family*

The methods of child education are also changing now, impacted by the changed social and educational environment. In the traditional family, education was centered around the formation of community spirit in children who had to *submit* to the authority of their parents, and grandparents, and to the interests of the family. Therefore, children mainly had to do what was said by the elders. Otherwise, they could be punished. Therefore, stability of the family was ensured but the education was apparently conservative.

Meanwhile, the modern education is orientated towards *individuals*. The child's interests, needs and aspirations are taken by the parents into consideration. But a number of families spoiling their children who are educated in the tendency towards material enjoyment, with little care for their parents and other people.

The modern education is inclined to the analysis of the reasons of the actions of *children*, *allowing them to distinguish between the right and the wrong*, and to regulate themselves on their own without strict control from their parents or grand-parents. It brings into full play children's initiative and creativity.

It is regrettable that there are families that do not follow this educational pattern. They put their children into a passive state, making them totally obedient to their parents thus preventing them from creative thinking.

In the context of national Renovation, *creative thinking* (the ability to take initiative) is a necessary quality for Vietnamese. Therefore, the

approaches to child education should be modified. Family should work out a sound conception of this problem and create an impetus to children's creative thinking.

Currently, many changes have recorded in the family (for instance, the earlier maturity of young people, their ability to earn incomes independently; their own mode of life, etc). The new elements reduce the family's influence on its socialization function. Schools, friends, movies, television, etc. are powerful factors in the socialization of the youth. New knowledge and information acquired by children may be not accessible to their parents, who should modify their education to deal with the obstacles between generations.

Usually, education may be either too severe (or harsh) or loose (leading to indulgence). So many Vietnamese pedagogues advocate the necessity to combine traditional and modern educational methods, (power combined with affection; authority with tolerance, etc.).

The right power is manifested in the system of power and tolerance. The problem is however, how to combine them so as to ensure balance and suitability for each age bracket. This is in fact, a task which should be present in every day life. Tolerance must be manifested not only in the relation between superiors and inferiors, (parents and children) but it must be mutual. The United Nations has decided to make 1995 the "Year of Tolerance" in dealing with social relations, in each country and world-wide. According to the survey of educational methods, which was carried out in the two wards of Hanoi, 87% of the interviewed families say that they prefer explanation and persuasion, 5% recognize command and coercion, only 35% apply reward and punishment. Most of the families give assignments to children and remind them of their duties; 83% remind the children of their tasks (study, care for younger siblings, and other houseworks). However, reward and punishment are not yet taken as proper measures for education. (See table 14)

Table 14
Survey of child education in the family
(carried out in two wards of Hanoi)
(%)

Contents	Ngô Thị Nhậm Ward		Yên Phụ Ward		Total	
	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
1. Reserving time for child education	80	20	79	21	79.5	19.5
2. Creating material conditions	66	34	79.8	20.2	72.5	27.5
3. Explaining lessons for children	80	20	63	37	71.5	28.5
4. Giving assignments and reminding children of their duties	86	14	79.9	1.9	83	17
5. Moral education	97	3	92.9	7.1	95	5
6. Cultural education	49	51	52.5	47.5	59.75	49.25
7. Professional training	17	83	40.4	59.6	28.7	71.3
8. Explanation and persuasion as educational methods	86	14	88	12	87	13
9. Command and coercion	1	99	9	91	5	95
10. Reward and punishment	37	63	33	67	35	65
11. Coordination with school	75	25	66	34	70.5	29.5

Generally speaking, the families widely apply positive educational methods (explanation, persuasion, setting examples, etc.).

However, a number of families still educate their children with "whiplashes and curses". The survey ⁽¹⁾ carried out among 569 workers, peasants and handicrafts men, of the application of the negative educational methods shows the following results:

	Regularly	Sometimes
Peasants' families	10.7%	74.82%
Workers' families	14.38%	68.63%
Handicrafts men's family	2.42%	45.45%

4) Negative impact on family education

a) Discord between the father and the mother (very bad impact on the child's growth). It may, firstly,

- create fear for children, which results in a number of diseases;
- cause children to feel at a loss when they should decide whom to follow. This may lead to the child's bad habits and wrong-doings;
- cause children to lose enthusiasm in study, or to feel suffering and disappointment;
- create wrong sentiments in children (partiality, either in favor of the father or the mother).

Secondly, negative impacts stem from lack of unity in child education and deviation from sound educational methods:

- + *Excessive indulgence of children in their own interests*; depraving children of their independent and create thinking, making them weak-willed.

1. Carried out by Phạm Nguyệt Lăng. Cf. "An Outlined Research on the Vietnamese Family". Centre for Family and Women Studies. 1993, p. 284.

- Excessive strictness in treatment toward children, this causes children's reaction and contradiction between generations.

- *Giving free rein* to children in everything. The parents do not care for training them and redressing their wrong actions.

Noteworthy are the discords between spouses (both in psychological and physiological aspects); their differences in the viewpoints and orientation with respect to life values, professions and education for children. Those discords are unfavorable "internal" factors in child education.

Thirdly, negative impacts come from decadent cultural products. Through the mass media, children today have the opportunity to acquire diversified knowledge and to be quickly socialized. However, at the same time, decadent books, movies and video tapes illegally imported into the country stimulate social evils (robbery, rape, violence, etc.). They are widely circulated by those who run after profit, poisoning both children and adults. Many families care only for earning money, not for their children's cultural standard, leaving the latter out of their control.

b) Causes of shortcomings in family education

Firstly, many parents have very limited knowledge, especially that of pedagogy. Many are irresponsible for their children's life; they feed them but bring them up unduly; they do not control and redress in time their children's wrong-doings.

Secondly, there are objective causes. Families still have many difficulties in earning their livelihood, sometimes spending too little time on care for their children.

The negative manifestations of the educational environment influence families and children, even destroying or reducing the results already achieved. The decreased educational quality in schools (now the situation begins to be rectified) has impacted the coordination between school and the family in educating children. The increasing number of school drop-outs makes heavier the task of family education.

Surveys show that the main problems which family education for children is facing are the economic life, cultural and educational standard of the parents and the time they spend on child education. The survey carried out by the Research Institute for Youth in Hanoi, Vinh Phú, and Bắc Thái⁽¹⁾ proves that the majority of young families do not invest duly in the education of their children. Up to 46.82% of the interviewed mothers having children of 3 to 5 years old say that they face many difficulties in educating their children.

Regarding the causes of this situation, 67.36% mention objective factors (time shortage, bad social influences) only 32.64% mention subjective factors; 82% of the mothers say they have too little time for educating their children; 48% say that due to economic difficulties, they cannot meet a number of legitimate demands of their children; 40% attribute the causes to the bad impact of negative social phenomena; and 32% attribute to the loose coordination of the school and the family.

In Hanoi, more than one third of young mothers reserve two hours a day for child education; more than one fourth reserve one hour a day; one fifth reserve three hours a day; and nearly one fifth reserve four hours a day; workers and employees in different service sectors and administrative offices spend the least time on child education⁽²⁾. The survey carried out in two wards of Hanoi shows that 80% of the married couples reserve time for the education of their children, but they do not specify the amount.

In rural areas, many women are farm-workers who take care of the households in the absence of their husbands (earning a livelihood far from home). Hence they have only little time to talk with their children, chiefly before going to bed. Only on rainy or cold days when they stay away from farm-work, can they spend more time with their children.

1. Cf. *Identification of the Present Vietnamese Family*. Center for Family and Women Studies. 1993, p. 171.

2. Cf. *Identification of the Present Vietnamese Family*. op. cit. p. 181.

The care for and education of small children are almost entrusted to grand-parents or elder children⁽¹⁾.

The economic function takes families much time to meet their material needs. In Hanoi 63.1% of young mothers are engaged in sidelines apart from their permanent jobs⁽²⁾. Rural women strive to develop animal husbandry, gardening or handicraft to earn extra incomes. Low-incomes families cannot meet the cultural and spiritual needs of their children. In many places, small children lack even ordinary school stationery. Many urban families try their hard to earn money for their children's schooling. It may happen that two families share one copy of the review *Infants*. In rural areas few families can afford magazines, books and toys for their children.

Many mothers are aware of their responsibility in the education of their children, especially infants. But they must work to earn their living, to ensure minimum material needs of the family, thus failing to satisfy their children's cultural and intellectual needs. Meanwhile, a number of urban families spend a large amount of money on acquiring expensive toys or hiring tutors who teach various subjects at home. Therefore, though small, children are sensitive to the gap between the rich and the poor, which is unfavourable for their education.

In general, family budget for child education is small. The analysis of the expenditure structure of workers' family in 1991 shows that 70% of the family's incomes were spent on food; 2.7% on clothing; 13% on health care, education, marriage; 14.2% on other purposes.

The expenditure structure of a peasant family is as follows (in 1992): 61% were spent on food, 10.52% on clothing; 16.8% on housing; 3.8%

1. and 2. Cf. *Identification of the Present Vietnamese Family*. op. cit. p. 181.

on culture and education; 4% on health care; and 3.9% on other purposes⁽¹⁾.

Recently, the State subsidies for education, culture and health care have been reduced. Therefore, the burden of expenses on these activities of the family is becoming heavier⁽²⁾. For school children, families have to pay school fees, expenses on books and other stationery, and to contribute to various funds raised by schools. Many families are either facing difficulties or are unable to afford those extra expenses. This is also a cause of the increasing number of school drop-outs and illiterate children.

The number of primary school children continues to go up, but the percentage of those going to school compared to the total population tends to be going down. In recent years, the percentage of children going to school has decreased by 0.8% every year. According to the 1993 report on education, about 2.2 million children aged 6 to 14 do not go to school, or leave school prematurely after entering first grade classes. The percentage of pupils who finished primary and junior secondary school in the 1986-1987 school year was 92%. The figure in 1989-1990 school year was 72%⁽³⁾.

Certainly, the causes leading children to dropping out of school are various. The survey carried out in Yên Phụ ward (Hanoi) shows that the percentage of school drop-outs amounts to 7.8%; of them 83.3% point out to the economic

difficulties of the family, 50% have bad academic records, and 33.3% say that their families do not want them to further study.

A survey carried out in Hải Trung commune, Hải Hậu district, Nam Hà province reveals the following causes of school dropping-out.

- * Families need labour force: 43.75% (girl), 14.28% (boy);
- * Lack of money: 37.5% (girl), 37.4% (boy).
- * Lack of motivation 31.25% (girl); 14.28 (boy)
- * Bad academic records: 12.50 (girl): 28.5% (boy)⁽¹⁾

Educational ability of parents:

The educational and cultural standards of many parents, especially mothers, are not high enough to facilitate education of children. In 1989, the percentage of illiteracy through out Vietnam was 17.7% (women) and 8.6% (men). Among the women aged 20-44 (who have great responsibility in child education), the percentage of those who had not finished primary school was 42%-55% (women) and 38.4%-41.8% (men). Low-income families cannot afford cultural products (books, newspapers, films, etc). Furthermore, they have little time for acquiring modern knowledge of child education. In 1993, 25.2% of women and 15.5% of men who were in child-bearing age never listened to the radio; 19.8% (women) and 3.9% (men) never watched TV; 53.7% (women) and 39% (men) never read a newspaper.⁽²⁾ This is an important factor which limits the effectiveness of family education.

At the same time, families are at a loss in child education: 38% of the surveyed had not unified educational methods; 22% blamed themselves for

1. At the first-aid wards of hospitals, the price of a room ranges from VND 40,000 to VND 110,000; the average price is VND 60,000. Besides, patients have to pay for medical examination and treatment in hospital from VND 30,000 to VND 100,000 or more (Newspaper *Hà Nội Mới*; April 23, 1995). In an interview, Ms. I. from Yên Phụ ward of Hanoi reveals that she has to pay monthly VND 300,000 for extra-class of her son, a 10th former, VND 180,000 for her grand-child in kindergarten. Meanwhile, her salary and that of her husband is VND 480,000. So, other expenses come from her small "tea stall."

2. Analysis of the Situation of Women and Children. UNICEF, 1995, p. 125

3 Statistics on Labour and Social Affairs. 1992, pp. 99 and 101.

1. Cf. *Identification of the Present Vietnamese Family*. Op. cit., p. 196.

2. Data on Vietnamese Women. 1985-1995; p. 85.

their low cultural standard and failure to set examples for their children; 16% said the parents could not realize their children's ability and hobbies⁽¹⁾.

Lack of the parents' unity in child education exerts bad impacts on both the children and the family's environment: 49.83% of the surveyed young families pointed out that the frequent quarrels in their families were mainly due to this cause⁽²⁾.

In a number of other families, each family member has a different way of educating children; sometimes they oppose each other. Therefore, the child does not know whom to follow.

Among the subjective causes, we should note the tendency to *rely completely on school* in child education. In many peasants' and workers' families, the study of their children is almost the matter of school and children themselves. The parents only provide money and stationery, unable to help their children in study.

The increase of negative phenomena in society put a pressure on the family's educational function.

Up to 97.62% of the young mothers in Hanoi say that the main cause leading their children to depravity is the influence of decadent cultural products and other evils; 29.70% worry about the lack of responsibility of school⁽³⁾.

Social evils (robbery, prostitution, drug-addiction) are penetrating family life, pushing a number of children and adolescents to the wrong way. However we should stress that, people must prevent social vices from penetration into their families and the family must take the initiative in eliminating the rise of such phenomena in its life.

1., 2. and 3. Survey by the Research Institute for Youth. Cf. *Identification of the Present Vietnamese Family*. Op. cit. p. 182.

Surveys of *street children* at the average age of 14 have been conducted. They show that 30% of the street children have parents leading a loose, immoral life (engaged in gambling, drug-addiction);

- * 21% come from the families earning their livelihood with illegal means;
- * 20% are excessively indulgent;
- * 39% have divorced parents.

In Hanoi, among the 110 street law-breaking children taken for survey, 58% have parents being alcoholics; 15% have parents with criminal records; 7% have brothers or sisters in jail⁽¹⁾.

In Hồ chí Minh City, the surveys of street children show that 23% have either divorced or separate parents; 39% have the father or the mother, or both, who have died; 6% do not know who are their parents; 36% have step-fathers or step-mothers⁽²⁾.

Regarding causes of children abandoning their homes:

- 55% say that their families have been broken; nobody cares for them; they suffer from discord in the family; they are beaten or abandoned;
- 14% want to earn money on the street;
- 12% have been induced by other people;
- 10% are orphans who must earn their living by themselves;
- 9% have other reasons.

Regarding the occupation of street children:

1. Cf. Nguyễn Thị Khoa. *Family Education and the Problem of Value Orientation*.
2. Analysis of the Situation of Vietnamese Women and Children. UNICEF. pp. 138: 143.

- 33% pick garbages; 26% are beggars; 13% are petty pedlars; 9% are pickpockets⁽¹⁾.

Regarding their cultural standard: 58% know to read and write, 3% go to school; 82% are drop-outs; 15% illiterate⁽²⁾.

According to the report of the Committee for AIDS Prevention, about 7% of the prostitutes in Hanoi are under 18 years old; in Ho Chi Minh city, the figure is 16%⁽³⁾.

The collapse or poverty of families drives children into "street life". Many of them are victims of brothels and criminal gangs. Juvenile delinquency among street children is facilitated by both social evils and lack of family care and education, and the shortcomings and weaknesses of those who are engaged in this work. When facing an unfavorable family environment, children tend to manifest their reaction by abandoning their homes to join street life. In other words, when the family fails to be a safe-guard for the child's security both materially and mentally, he will seek for "shelter" in society.

We are witnessing deviations from the established standards in children's personality. One of the main causes of this situation stems from the family itself.

Reality has confirmed the important role of the family and its function of socialisation in the formation and development of human personality, especially with regard to young people.

While a great number of ordinary families, despite difficulties, strive to well fully their responsibility in the education of children to develop them into good citizens for the future, there are families failing to perform this function. Here, there should be assistance of the State in ensuring a favorable macro-social environment for achieving the set targets.

1. Analysis of the Situation of Vietnamese Women and Children. UNICEF, pp. 138; 143.

2. UNICEF; op.cit. p. 138.

3. UNICEF; op.cit. p. 143

CHAPTER IV

COOPERATION BETWEEN FAMILY, SCHOOL, AND OTHER SOCIAL INSTITUTIONS. ASSISTANCE OF THE STATE IN FAMILY EDUCATION AND HUMAN TRAINING

The development of Vietnam's manpower resources in this period of Renovation requires us *to improve the quality of workers and to discover and train talented people*. That means that modern Vietnamese should have personality suitable for the new changing society. There should be a laborer with a high cultural and professional standard, broad knowledge, creativeness, boldness in thinking and action, a good health and necessary moral qualities such as altruism, compassion for humankind, concern about the interests of the community while struggling for individual interests.

To form such a type of humans, the cooperation and mutual assistance between the family, school and society are essential factors.

In the process of socialization and individualization, children should have the opportunity to develop physically, intellectually and psychologically so that they can become citizens qualified enough for the tasks assigned to them by society.

Physical development gives children strength to bring into play their creativity, ability and labour, in particular their reproductive capacity. Children should develop into normal adults.

Intellectual development enables children to investigate into present, past and future; to be independent in life (not only to adapt themselves

to nature and society but also to improve the latter) for the sake of individual and community development. Intellectual capability, in a comprehensive sense, means not only educational and cultural level, but also knowledge of morality, the individual's responsibility before the family and society, including appropriate world outlooks and conceptions of life.

The equilibrium in *sentimental and psychological development* enables children to integrate into the family and the community, to find happiness in their close relations with other family members and with society in general.

These three aspects should be developed in a close interaction so that the child can become totally independent when deciding on his attitudes and behaviour in a concrete situation within a community frame.

The family is the first social institution capable of ensuring the development of the child, especially at his age from 1 to 6. Gradually, other institutions (school, mass organisation, working place, etc.) also take part in this process to an increasing extent, though the significance of the family cannot be denied. Therefore, there should be cooperation and coordination of various educational environments to guarantee the highest effect in formation of children's personality.

I. COOPERATION BETWEEN FAMILY AND SCHOOL IN SOCIALISATION OF INDIVIDUALS AND INDIVIDUALIZATION

1. This problem was raised long ago but the effect achieved is not high, which qualitatively affects the formation and development of the young generation's personality

The family and school are two institutions performing the same function of socialization of the individual. In the process of child education, they expose their characteristics which should complement each other.

As mentioned above, the strong point of family education is its *emotional* character and bloodline ties, which has a great converting capacity. Still, family education has a clearly-demonstrated particularity based on family life characterized by naturalness, openness and long-standingness. Therefore,

family education is effective, convenient, flexible and practical. It is based on the unity of interests of the "teacher" and the "student", stimulating the latter to take the initiative in learning.

At the same time, family education needs to be complemented by the strong points of school education. School is a specialized educational institution.

It has a *highly social character* demonstrated through the whole process of education; the *knowledge and skills* offered by school, especially the *way of thinking*, are systematic and open to expansion; school has a system of scientific methods and means capable of being modernized and laying foundation for the child's *maturity*, career and success in life. Only good cooperation between these institutions can bring into full play their strong points. However, at present, school tends to attach attention to the *provision of knowledge*, while making light of the education about ethics, especially the code of conduct in the relations between the child and the family, and his friends. School education focuses on the *general* (students in general), not concerned about the peculiarity (except for bad students).

Many students hit by difficulties in life and study are outside the focus of attention of their teachers. Generally speaking, school education emphasizes rationality and one-way transmission of knowledge, making light of the sentimental-psychological aspect and the necessity to promote students' initiative. Teachers care mostly for lectures and supervision of classes. They do not talk much with their students outside classes. For parents, they do not consider their coordination with school as a necessary factor. They attend PTA meetings only to get information about their child's progress, not to contribute any ideas to the school life. It seems that the provision of knowledge for children is totally entrusted to school whereas moral education relies mostly on the family.

Thus, *knowledge teaching and moral education* seem to be separated, which is unfavourable for the formation of the child's personality. The assessment of students' progress by school is mainly based on gradation

through academic records; school does not take into consideration other forms of encouragement to students' efforts. Then parents also assess their children through the gradation made by school, failing to rectify in time their incorrect behaviour. The surveys mentioned earlier show the necessity to establish close cooperation between the family and school in this domain.

At present, there are many different kinds of contributions stipulated by school. They may be necessary, but not all parents share the same practice. Many people say that due to the abundance of extra classes, teachers' pay should be increased to ensure quality of teaching. (See Table 15)

Table 15
Families' concern about educational policies

Contents	%
- Reduction of contributions by families to school	41.5
- Training teachers and improvement to their qualification quality	16
- Assistance to poor students	19.2
- Return to system of State-subsidized education	13.8
- More schools and classes for gifted students	21.3
- Strengthened relations between family and school	25.5
- Comprehensive education by school: ethical, intellectual, physical, aesthetic	29.8

It is necessary to have a suitable mode of *cooperation between these two institutions* to achieve *unity in standpoints*, approaches and actions for the sake of combined efforts. Contradictions, separation and mutual neutralization must be prevented. At the same time, such a unity should stimulate diversity and particularity in realization of the set tasks.

2. Content of cooperation between family and school

It may include the following aspects:

- Unity of views on the *purpose* of education; guarantee of harmonious development of individuals, to meet the requirements of social development;

- Unity of views on the *content* of educational activities, including the bringing up and education of children in the family, and their teaching and learning in school. For example, the imparting of knowledge should be in a unity with education about morality, labour, career, aesthetics, health care, environment, population and sex, etc. Here, family education is more advantageous in moral education, profession and behaviour orientation for children, with the help of teaching staffs, however.

- Unity in the pedagogical methods (the ways of imparting and receiving knowledge), education and self-teaching; combination of explanation, persuasion and promotion of children's creativeness and initiative (this seems to be difficult for the family and school which are on the way of renovation; hence, their coordination is essential).

Such a kind of cooperation will surely produce combined effect on educating children.

3. Mode of cooperation

The cooperation between family and school may be realized under the following forms:

- Visits by teachers to students' families; PTA meetings; consultation between the school principal, teachers and students' parents (separately or in group).

- Consultation between Parents' Association members.

- Maintenance of the "Liaison Book" between the family and school.

- Direct and indirect participation of the Parents' Association and students' parents in extra-curricula activities for students; recommendation for the curricular and teaching methods; through care for the school's material facilities, material and moral encouragement to teachers and students, etc.

- PTA recommends how families should organize educational activities for their children. The mode of cooperation may vary according to targets to be achieved.

Generally speaking the family should take the initiative and be active in this cooperation. School must fulfil well its tasks of coordination and orientation, but cannot consider family education as a continuity of its operation.

We must also underline the role of *the child*. Today *the child* should be the subject of perception, not the passive object of education. His central role in this process should be promoted, being one leg of the tripod "School - Family - Children" in a comprehensive education.

The child should be self-conscious in the communication between the family and school⁽¹⁾.

II. RELATIONS BETWEEN THE FAMILY AND OTHER SOCIAL ORGANISATIONS IN THE FORMATION OF HUMAN PERSONALITY

1. In the past, the education of children was entrusted by the family to school and mass organisations (Young Pioneers' Association, Youth Union and others)

Many people in kindergartens, infant classes, schools, the Pioneers' Association, Youth Unions, Trade Union, Party Cells and so on took part in the building of the child's personality from his childhood to adult.

Nowadays, social education has proved to be of less importance. Such organisations as the Pioneers' Association or Youth Union have turned out to be less attractive to children due to their weaknesses in the content and mode of their operation. Still, the space for children's development is very limited; so are the facilities. In cities there are few places of entertainment

for them and other young people (playing grounds, clubs). Therefore, children only spend their spare time on television, video tapes, computer games. Other children transform streets into stadiums for football or badminton, obstructing traffic. Certainly, children need time for entertainment necessary for their psychological and physical development. However, these activities should be placed under the guidance of mass organizations so that they can become beneficial to children themselves.

It is necessary to speed up the operation of sporting clubs, classes of music, dance, song and painting, etc. (free of charge, or the fees are not high, to attract more children and young people of different age-brackets). Children's participation in social activities helps them develop personality in a comprehensive manner (in intellectual, moral, physical, aesthetic aspects).

Their attachment to mass organisations enables them to form the sense of discipline, collective spirit, and adequate integration into the community.

2. The combination of children's study and play should be harmonious (which cannot be ensured only by the family alone !) as necessary step in the formation of the child's personality

Unlike adults, children prefer spending their leisure time in an exciting manner. But this sometimes leads to conflict with those who want to have a peaceful rest after hard-working days. Therefore, parents should understand the peculiarities of childhood and have an adequate "sympathetic" approach to this question, which seems to be very difficult to resolve, given the current living conditions of Vietnamese.

To develop the family environment into an educational environment is not a simple task. It requires from parents' due perception of the problem, energy, time and close cooperation between various institutions. Apart from the National Committee for Child Care and Protection with its branches from center to grass-roots level, many social organisations have been established to assist families in childcare and education. Particularly,

1. Cf. Võ Tấn Quang (PhD). *The Family and School*. Documents of Project KX - 07 - 09.

the NT-Foundation set up by Dr. Nguyễn Khắc Viện is engaged in providing families with knowledge of child care and medical treatment. President Hồ Chí Minh said: "For a 100-year cause, we should form human resources now". We should try our hardest to bring into full play the strong points of family education in this process. This is to be linked with the operation of other social institutions, and assistance of the State.

III. SUPPORT OF THE STATE FOR THE FAMILY'S SOCIALIZATION FUNCTION. SOME PROPOSALS CONCERNING STATE POLICIES ON THE FAMILY

The objectives and orientations of values of family education essentially coincide with the demands posed by the time, and with the lines and policies of the Party and State. Such an education should produce healthy, talented and morally exemplary citizens to fulfil their duties before the nation.

However to achieve those targets, we *need time and conditions*. The above analysis has exposed the difficulties which present families are facing as follows:

- * Inadequate educational and cultural standards of many parents.
- * Inadequate economic conditions for children's schooling and further education.

- Families are still at a loss in defining *the contents and methods of education*, in dealing with the "study-cum-play" relations for children, in providing for them comprehensive knowledge. It seems that the progress of children's study is not yet identified with the success of family education.

The family and society are in interdependence. If society needs the family as a cell for its existence, the family looks for society's assistance in order to fulfil well its functions, especially the function of socialization.

The survey carried out in the two wards of Hanoi (in 1995) exposes the families' desire to receive the policy assistance of the State with regard to education, culture and improvement to living conditions (See Tables 16, 17, 18).

Table 16: Families' concerns about State policies on improvement to their living standard

Contents	%
- Job generation, especially for young people	69.5
- Long-term loans for production development	41.5
- More radical anti-corruption campaign	41.5
- Aids for policy-beneficiaries	17

Table 17: Families' concern about health care

Contents	%
- Reduction of hospital fees	31.8
- Increased dissemination of knowledge of health care	51.5
- Convenient and suitable health care insurance	35
- Strengthened community and primary health care; partly subsidy (or charitable aid) for poor people	43.9
- Effective management of health care services and drugs circulated on market.	45.5
	37.9

Table 18: Families' concern about culture

Contents	%
- Due management of cultural products	40.5
- Promotion of traditional culture	19.1
- Increased wholesome cultural services	33.7
- More entertainment spots specifically intended for children	47.2
- Reduction of advertisements and no violent films on TV	48.3

1. Policies of the Party and State relating to families, especially child care and education

In 1960, the *Law on Marriage and Family* was promulgated. In 1986, it was amended, underlining the right of the child to be brought up, and to study. Other Laws (Criminal and Civil Codes and others) also contain Articles devoted to children and the family.

In November 1979, the Ordinance on Child Care, Education, and Protection was promulgated. The *UN Convention on the Rights of the Child* was ratified by the Vietnamese State which made a strong commitment to put it into practice.

The *Policy on Population and Family Planning* made known in 1963, has been perfected. The *Renovation policy* gradually allows to boost socio-economic development, especially the rise of the household and private economy, enabling families to take initiative in productions and business.

The State has already worked out a policy of subsidy to help families of martyrs and of those who have rendered services to the country, and families in difficulties.

Many campaigns have been launched; for example,

"Building the 5-good-point family", "Exemplary family", or "The family of new culture"; "The whole nation take care of, and educate children"; "For the future of our children" and many others. They have contributed to promote the positive factors in family education.

The Vietnam Women's Union also launched two nation-wide campaigns: "Women's mutual assistance in the household economy" and "Good care for children to reduce the number of malnourished children and school drop-outs".

The State has established a system of agencies in charge of issues relating to families, such as the Institute for Protection of Mothers and Children, the State Committee for Population and Family Planning and the



ON WAY TO SCHOOL
Photo by Phạm Quyền
Vietnam News Agency

recently set up State Committee for Child Care and Protection (in replacement of the Committee for Infants and Young Pioneers), a committee of ministerial level, with branches coming down to districts and communes.

The implementation of the related policies and the activities of those social organizations have contributed to the building of families of new culture, favouring the nurture and education of children.

However, an important shortcoming is *lack of an all-round strategy on the family* which would be based on the role and functions of the family in different fields. We have, in fact, promulgated only ad-hoc policies on separate aspects.

As these instruments are still incoherent, there cannot be an harmonious development of the family in various domains.

Economic, cultural and social factors have not yet produced a combined and favorable interactive effect. On the contrary, in some cases, they "obstruct" each other, limiting the progress of families. We would like here to illustrate some of our remarks. In the economic field, for example, there is the slowness in the promulgation of proper *economic policies* to help the rise of the household economy. Families have to solve themselves all the arising problems.

Poor families, especially in mountain remote areas, lack conditions and opportunities to enter the market mechanism. Therefore, they face many difficulties and suffer from great hardships and privations. The potentialities of the household economy are yet to be brought into full play to deal with those problems with the assistance of the State.

Social policies are aimed to improve public welfare and security (health care, culture, education). However, the abolition of the subsidy mechanism in this domain affects, first and foremost, women and children, including the education of children, the health care services and cultural enjoyment of the population.

In the *educational and cultural* fields, many campaigns have already been launched for the building of families. But they are aimed at promoting the role of the family as an unit in mobilizing labour force and material resources for national defence and construction. Meanwhile, little attention has been paid to the development of the strong points of the family *as an unit which should ensure humans' life and happiness*, cultivate sentimental relations and morality, preserve the nation's cultural values, bring up and educate future generations.

In the period of Renovation, new demands for material and sentimental life, morality, and the way of living are taking shape. Hence, education should be directed to the formation of proper conceptions of love, marriage and the family; to the dissemination of scientific knowledge relating to family life; to the building of progressive practices and customs in the relations between family members; to the guidance for child care and education; and to the pre-marriage education for young people. These directions should be observed in a systematic and large-scaled *education of citizens*, with the help of the mass-media, so that every family member can take part in this process.

The State should set up and instruct a broad and all-round educational programme on family life which needs the participation of different branches and mass organizations.

The activities of a number of agencies and mass organizations (Women's Union, Youth Union, etc.) in recent years, though worthy of mention, have been dispersed and have brought about limited effects. (For instance, the dissemination by the Vietnam Women's Union of the booklet *Facts for Life* was confined to the Union itself; the Family Planning Programme, during a long period, concentrated only on women, and thus the results achieved are not as expected, etc.).

This situation is due to objective factors (particularly, the low level of economic development of the country). However, an important cause is the inadequate assessment of the *role and position of the family as a basic*

unit directly in charge of the material and spiritual life of humans from their birth to their death.

2. Some proposals on State policies to help families in fulfilling their educational function

2.1. A system of such policies should be built on the following bases

As the education by the family is closely linked (and in interaction) with other functions, it is necessary to map out a *system of general policies* on family.

a. The State should have a *long-term all-round strategy on family* to be linked to the strategy on human forces and the strategy on socio-economic development of the country until the year 2000 and beyond.

Our viewpoint is to consider policies on family not only from the angle of socio-cultural problems. It is rather important to insert the policy on family into *yearly or 5-year programmes of socio-economic development* on a basis of a strategic character.

The combination of the economic and social factors should be manifested right in drafting development programmes and projects by the State. It is necessary to take into account their *influence* on family life, on the fulfilment of the family's functions, and on possible changes there in order to have orientation for in-time adjustment.

This means that economic indexes should be worked out together with *forecasts of social problems* (including those of the family and formation of human resources) so that adequate measures can be taken when necessary.

Generally speaking, all the socio-economic policies of the State are related to the life of each individual and each family as an unit of economy consumption, society and education. Families have to implement State policies and may be subject to both the good or bad influences therefrom.

b. Such policies should be systematic and coherent. We should avoid taking separate or incoherent steps of a charitable character (although they may be necessary somewhere). This system of economic, educational, cultural and health care policies for families should be placed in an

interaction of various relations to facilitate families' efficient fulfilment of their functions.

It is important that those policies should be synchronized to avoid contradictions which may lead to difficulties in their implementation.

c. While promoting the *development of all families*, these policies should focus on the *assistance to poor or ill-fated families*, creating for them conditions and opportunities to integrate into the market mechanism to overcome hardships. On this basis, the gap between the rich and the poor can be step by step narrowed towards progress, justice, prosperity, and happiness of all families.

It is obvious that, in the present context of renovation, the "starting points" of families are very different. A number of disadvantaged families cannot yet adapt themselves to the new market-orientated mechanism, sometimes due to some unfavorable factors in the development of the country. Therefore, it is rational and conformable to ethics that the community and the State have policies and measures to accord *special assistance* to them to ensure a relative justice and equity between different sections of population and to create a leverage for regulating the interests of various walks of life. All this aims to guarantee a harmonious development of society.

d. These policies should be considered as those for a *unified collective* (a fundamental social unit) not for a specific category of family members. For instance, policy-makers should realize that the whole family of a war invalid take care of him. And very often, the heaviest burden is borne by the wife. Therefore, when drafting policies, they must take into their consideration these circumstances.

2.2. Proceeding from the aforesaid points, we should have a family strategy which includes

- * *General policies* for all families;
- * *Special policies* for particular kinds of families (families of war invalids, martyrs, single mothers, old people, orphans, etc).

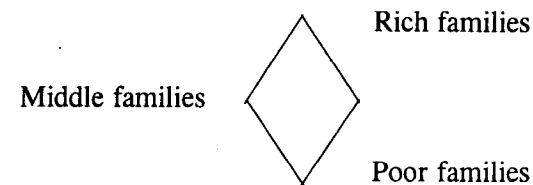
*Policies which are able to promote the *functions of the family*; to help organize a better family life, to strengthen family attachment (such as the policy to reunite family members living in separation; to create for them conditions to live under the same roof, and to help each other in life and in bringing up and educating children).

The *common aims* of those policies, (and other socio-economic development programmes) are to *increase families' welfare*, to ensure for them favourable conditions and opportunities in production and business, and to raise gradually their living standard. Those policies should help families to reproduce healthy, intelligent generations having good morality and personality, with better lives.

Economically, the State policies should help all families achieve economic development, increase continuously their incomes, develop production and business, and make a fortune with their creativity and legal means.

At the same time, special attention should be paid to according assistance to poor families to overcome *poverty* as fast as possible.

The best model for national development is shuttle-shaped: the two extremities represent rich and poor families while the middle is the majority of families with an average living standard.



In the *social aspect*, the State policies should reduce the contributions by families to expenses on health care, education, culture; to develop high-quality *public welfare* (with cheap or free services depending on the enjoyers); to increase the people's enjoyment of health care, education and culture, especially with regard to women, children, and the population of

mountain and remote areas; to give assistance to the birth and nurture of small babies in families (this cannot be considered the affair of only women and their families). State subsidies are needed for household maintenance activities.

2.3. Following are some concrete proposals on policies to facilitate the family's good fulfilment of the function of socialization of humans.

a. The policy to *eradicate hunger and alleviate poverty* should help poor families get loans to develop production. The support for families to escape from poverty at a quick pace and increase incomes is a primary condition for stabilization of family life, and facilitating the nurture and education of children in a proper manner.

Job creation, especially for young people is also a problem. The youth should be stimulated to improve their educational and professional standard to reduce unemployment. Families should be assisted in stabilizing their economy and preventing social vices.

b. Policies contributing to *improve the living conditions of families*.

Development programmes should be linked with the country's population growth in order to improve the people's living condition. Accommodation, wells, hygienic facilities, means of communication and transport, etc. should be upgraded in pair with population growth through the State investment and the population's contributions. There should be yearly and 5-years plans.

The State *policy on housing* should ensure the minimum area for each family. Particularly in urban areas, attention should be paid to building residential areas accompanied with playing grounds and spaces for children. Efforts should be made to ensure clean water and electricity for families. Attention should be paid to the hygienic conditions of the living environment.

In rural areas, families should be granted non-interest or low-interest loans for building hygienic facilities (wells, bathrooms, latrines).

In *health care*, special attention should be paid to helping families in nurturing small babies; pregnant women or women in labour, and in caring for the sick and the elderly. It is necessary to have a broader policy of health insurance for the whole population, not for only civil servants and state employees. Families should be encouraged to buy medical insurance cards. The network of medical stations at grassroots level (communes, districts) should be strengthened, and their quality improved. Conditions should be created for medical workers to fulfil their tasks effectively in accordance with the conscience of a physician.

Poor families should enjoy medical services *free of charge*, including medical check-up and treatment with simple procedures of hospitalization in order to put an end to the treatment "based on money".

Special hospitals may be set up for the poor where the State will bear all the costs.

State *services* to help families should be broadened. At the same time, private services should be encouraged and their quality should be placed under state control.

c. *Educational policies*

The Law on universalized primary education for children should be seriously implemented, especially in rural areas. Children should be stimulated to go to school; the fact that many children leave school prematurely should be ended. For this purpose, the State should increase investment in the realization of universalized education.

The numerous kinds of contribution by families should be reduced, especially irrational contributions which are not stipulated in the related State documents.

The State should *partly subsidize* educational activities; introduce broadly a system of scholarships for poor students and excellent students at junior and senior general schools, especially in rural and mountain areas.

Textbooks should be of high quality, and provided for students at low prices. Children of mountain areas and poor children should receive textbooks free of charge. Activities of speculation on textbooks for illegal profit should be checked.

The State should invest in the development of *kindergartens and infant classes* with due attention to rural areas; ensure proper salaries for the teaching staff; accord capital and technical aids to private kindergartens and infant classes.

Guidance should be given to the production of stationery and toys for children: beautiful designs, rational prices, effective application to educating children in the perception of the Good and the Beautiful.

- The State should have policies to encourage and help individuals to open private schools, classes, vocational training centres, (Informatics, foreign languages) to meet the diversified demands of families. At the same time, a regime of inspection to ensure the quality of teaching as well as tuition fees should be set up with regard to these *private establishments*.

- In State educational policies, due attention should be paid to *programmes of education for adults*.

For adults, especially women, the *eradication of illiteracy* is very important, but there are particular difficulties. Adults as breadwinners of the family have very little time. Still they feel very reluctant to go to anti-illiteracy classes. However, parents can only well educate their children if they themselves know to read and write, or they themselves are enthusiastic in raising their cultural standard. The State should assist them in this work morally and financially.

- In educational programmes for adults as well as children, *all-round knowledge* should be provided (suitable for each age group).



WATER TRANSPORTATION (THAI ETHNIC GROUP IN THANH HOÁ)

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Apart from literature, mathematics, physics or chemistry, such subjects should be included in the programs as ethics, civics, law, physio-psychology of all age groups, and health care.

Family education should be integrated into the curricula of different schools, colleges and universities, even political schools, army training centres and mass organisations. It is necessary to ensure a close cooperation between family education and that of school and mass organisations.

The Ministry of Education should work out a suitable mechanism for realizing the active *cooperation between school and the family* in child education, focussing on knowledge and formation of human beings.

d. *Cultural policies to educate and train children, to build well-off, harmonious, progressive, and happy families*

Different *means of mass-media* (books, newspapers, radio, television) should be intensively involved in formation of human personality. Culture, literature and arts may help educational activities to form human beings, meeting their demands for spiritual needs and psychological equilibrium.

However, the mass media must abstain from the diffusion of products of violence, war, sex, and crimes. The mass-media play an important role in the struggle against social evils. But there should be cautiousness to avoid the possibility of propagating social evils themselves.

The circulation of a number of black cultural products is a threat to children and young people. The Ministry of Culture-Information, together with public security and juridical organs should strictly control this kind of products and punish severely their importers and circulators.

At the same time, the State should have policies to give financial assistance to cultural works which have a high value in cultivating morality and humanity; to encourage writers and artists to fulfil their mission. Society's spiritual environment should be *purified* to create a *wholesome environment* for the education of children and adults.

The Ministry of Culture and Information plays a crucial role in raising the peoples cultural standard and their extent of cultural products. It should develop popular own forms and a *network of libraries* , and "public bookshelves" from central to grassroots levels (communes, districts, schools) with the investment of the State, and contribution of the population.

These measures will help those who are poor but thirsty for knowledge raise their cultural standard.

Social opinion and activities of *mass organisations* should be directed, through the mass media, toward the programmes of disseminating knowledge of the family (for example the building of progressive, well-off, happy families; bringing up and educating healthy and good children, etc). Good deeds and good people in charitable campaigns and examples of good families should be introduced and disseminated widely.

Mass organisations (Youth Union, Women's Union, Association of the Elderly, Trade Union, etc.) should organise *clubs of families* or family consultancy centers with a focus on child education.

On the solution to difficult problems in family life, especially with regard to young couples.

- The *Law on Marriage and Family* should be communicated to all social strata. It is necessary to have programmes of pre-marriage education for the youth. It may be that young couples should go through a test on their knowledge of this Law before marriage registration.

The *coordination of the State, society and the family* is essential for the implementation of the above policies. These three forces, when acting in coordination, will be able to check the social evils that are threatening all families.

The support of the community (village, hamlet, ward, collective) is very important in helping families overcome difficulties, solve their internal contradictions and create equilibrium between the old and young generations.

In brief, policies on families should be all-round, including economic, cultural, and social aspects. The family is a miniature society. It will still play an decisive part in the formation of manpower to ensure the successful renovation of the country and guarantee a bright future for the nation.

CONCLUSION

Vietnam is on the way of Renovation. Over the last years, considerable progress has been made in the economic and social fields.

The Vietnamese family has proved its miraculous viability in the new circumstances, being a decisive factor for the successful national development. Its role is being assessed duly, especially with regard to its function of shaping and building human personality, in conformity with the current requirements of society.

The research presented above is only an outline of the characteristics of the Vietnamese personality which was traced through different historical periods. Its changes are linked with those of the family and society at each historical stage. This research allows to have an initial identification of the present Vietnamese family experiencing the process of all-round socio-economic renovation in the following aspects: its material and spiritual life conditions; the implementation of its functions; especially, forming and training young generations and the problems to be solved; its efforts and sound conception of child care and education; its difficulties in the context of a market mechanism; changes in the relations between family members; embarrassment and perplexity in defining a new "ladder" of values in family culture. Lots of questions have been posed for researchers to ponder over.

Through various surveys, we should note that many parents are aware of the significance and responsibility of the family in the education of the young generation. Parents now attach more attention to their children's

behaviour and morality; they try to create favourable conditions for their children to learn and to spend leisure time.

However, in this cause, parents face many difficulties due to lack of necessary knowledge and good educational methods.

Education and guidance for children to prepare themselves for independent life are considered important criteria in the assessment of the happiness, honour and pride of a family. Many families make the education of children preponderant over all other functions.

We find through the results of our surveys that the most highly appreciated value is family harmony; then come the good conduct and good academic records of children; this criterion is followed by the good care for old parents, and then, by the family's stable economy.

Regarding orientations for child education, the most highly appreciated value is morality (filial piety); then comes a high educational standard. In fact, deviations from the ethical standard and immoral actions occurring in society lead families to the understanding of the necessity to train humans into talented men of high moral standard. This is the continuation of our nation's traditional ethics in family education.

For the present Vietnamese family, the following moral standards should be highlighted in the building of family culture and child education: faithfulness of the spouses; solidity of familial relations; filial piety towards parents and grand-parents; the spirit of sacrifice and affection for children; patriotism and community attachment.

Besides, new standards have taken shape: attention to individual interests, needs and aspirations; guarantee of equality in relations between husband and wife; parents and children; the formation of humans who are enterprising and bold in thinking and action, and who, grasping modern knowledge of science and technology, do business well.

Apparently, the traditional moral standards of the Vietnamese have adopted new values, while the old values are being preserved and promoted.

The special feature of the present Vietnamese family is that it does not highlight individual interests to the detriment of the community's. At the same time, it does not let the community's interests "block" individuals'.

The present Vietnam family and the Vietnamese bear in the strong impact of an agricultural civilization, whereas the country is embarking on the way to intensified national industrialization and modernization. Possibly, we can define the ladder of values of Vietnamese personality and the orientation for family education of children as follows:

Regarding *society*, we should bring into play the ardent patriotism and indomitability of our people in the defence of national independence and the building of a strong, prosperous, equitable and happy country; develop our patriotism and affection for compatriots to have sympathy toward world peoples, with the spirit of international solidarity and humanism.

Regarding *the family*, we should preserve faithfulness, and harmony in the relations between husband and wife; ensure democracy and equality, mutual affection and care in the relations between spouses and between parents and children; develop filial piety towards parents and grand-parents; the spirit of sacrifice for children; mutual help and protection among siblings, relatives and co-villagers, etc.

Regarding *each individual*, we should develop the spirit of independence, creativity and resourcefulness in learning, considering and solving the problems posed by life; (this should be based on a relatively high educational and professional standards). We should form the person who can grasp advanced scientific and technological knowledge and achievements; who is dynamic and sensitive to the new with practical thinking and adaptability to constant changes of a post-industrial civilisation.

The new human should respect individuals and legitimate individual interests; the rights to freedom and democracy; the equality of all individuals, men and women, and all ethnic groups; laws of the State and the community. He should have a high sense of responsibility in line with the respect for the interests of the community, the collective; he should pay

attention to the interests of society and be ready to sacrifice his individual interests for the formers; he should be honest and frank, should respect and protect truth, justice, and morality; he should practice thrift in material and mental forces, energy, time, intelligence, etc.) in production and consumption. Some values of the above ladder have been reached; some are to be achieved.

They are necessary for Vietnamese to meet the needs of the country's development in the 21st century.

However, while the socio-economic renovation has created for families many favourable conditions in the nurture of children and in the improvement to their material and spiritual living standards, a number of families have failed in the education of their children. In fact, many parents feel at a loss how and about what to educate their children in the context of a market-orientated economy and open-door policy, when Vietnam is integrating into the world and when there are new and old elements inter-linked. The personality of Vietnamese is experiencing changes. Since new conceptions of personality have not yet taken a definite shape, there are different ways of considering and assessing the raised problems. Hence, embarrassment, perplexity, contradictions of opinions among family members are inevitable.

The difficult material and spiritual living conditions (unemployment, poverty, low-income, etc.) are also the important causes of ineffective fulfilment by the family of its educational function.

The World is returning to family values which have for sometime been lessened in society's development. It is urgent to help our families to have conditions for well-fulfilling their functions, including socialization and building human beings.

President Hồ Chí Minh said: "Society can be good only with good families. The nucleus of society is the family".

The sustainability of familial relations, the happiness and prosperity of family members are closely related to social development and the future of the Vietnamese nation. Together with the efforts of families themselves, the close cooperation between the family and school, the assistance from other social institutions, especially the system of State policies are the decisive factors for the family to fulfil its functions.

To build families living in prosperity, equality, progress and happiness is also the target of building Vietnam into a strong and prosperous country, with a just and civilized society.

What is the present tendency of development of the Vietnamese family?

For the majority of the present Vietnamese, marriage, family and children remain very important problems. The population in general highly appreciate the role of the family and the value of a sustainable family life based on conjugal harmony and well-bred children.

Therefore, for the future Vietnamese family, sustainable factors will continue to be based on the combination of the married couple linked with the reproductive function and the function of socialization and individualization of individuals. We should realize that guarantee of the family's material and spiritual life, the care for sick or old people, the preservation of the psychological and sentimental equilibrium for family members are the functions that cannot be replaced by other social institutions.

The dynamic factors may include change in the family structure (the number of nuclear two-generation families will increase; and the family size will be reduced due to the decline in birth rate).

The economic function of the family as an independent economic unit may diminish, in parallel with the increasing number of wage-earners from big and middle-size enterprises which tend to develop alongside with national industrialization and modernization. The performance of a number of other functions of the family will be assisted better by other social institutions (education, culture, health care).

Generally, the moral standards of the Vietnamese family have changed and will continue to change following the demands of socio-economic development.

Particularly, the function of human socialization will be subject to more influences from social changes. The new century poses new physical, intellectual, moral and spiritual demands for a man. Therefore, the ladder of values presented above should be regarded as an outline which should be further perfected in accordance with the rising requirements.

Despite the different opinions on family sustainability, it is necessary to reaffirm that, in the 21st century, *the Vietnamese family will remain the cell of society*, playing a crucial role in maintaining the social structure.

It can be predicted that, given the geographical, historical and cultural peculiarities of the country, the future Vietnamese family will not follow the pattern of the USA and European countries.

On the contrary, it will preserve its particular traits.

To study changing factors is a very difficult task but interesting. Different approaches may lead to different assessments and solutions for the same problem.

It is, however, necessary to consider the influence of the past cultures and the new civilizations penetrated into Vietnam on the development of the Vietnamese personality.

When recognizing the family as a spiritual value of mankind, scientists should define the cultural values that serve as basis for family culture. Researching on the role of the Vietnamese family in the formation and development of human personality, we can comprehend the great significance of this problem, in both theoretical and practical aspects. Such a research would contribute to Party's *Strategy of Human Resources* toward the year 2000, and the 21st century. It can help policy makers to have scientific bases for laying down programmes and projects on building and

training the Vietnamese fit for the development of the country in different periods.

Family education has the function of socialization of individuals in many aspects (including the system of social criteria and values, cultural values, social experiences; practice of social roles; good preparation for integration into the community for earning one's livelihood, career and progress).

Therefore, *the family's capacity in socialization* should be brought into full play, especially with regard to individualization and formation of talented and virtuous individuals. This is the advantages of family education, which constitutes our great concern and scientific interest. We hope to be further assisted by other scientists and readers to go on with the research in the years to come.

ANNEX

1. *Family forms in history*

According to L. Morgan, whose standpoint was shared by F. Engels, the family is a dynamic factor; it is never embedded in a fixed state; it moves from a lower to a higher form, like society developing from a lower to a higher stage.

In the course of history, from the primitive communist to the capitalist society, the family has acquired successively the following main forms:

- Family of the same bloodline in the regime of group marriage.
 - Punaluan family or family of "close friends" (a number of brothers from the same mother got married together to a number of wives who were not their sisters or vice-versa).
 - Couple family - a form of couple marriage; this form existed either for a short time or for a long time under the regime of group marriage.
- Step by step, it replaced totally the family of the same bloodline which had existed under the regime of group marriage.
- "One-husband - one-wife" family, developing from the couple family when humans' society moved from the primitive barbarous to the civilized era.

This form of family itself has passed through many changes (such as the patriarchal family under the rule of the father in the feudal regime; then, the one-husband - one-wife family with the existence of adultery and prostitution in the capitalist regime).

Besides, there were various forms of family in different ethnic groups (such as the polygamous or polyandrous family, etc.).

2. Various definitions of family in present time

- According to Levy Strauss, the family is a social group determined by three most visible characteristics:

- a- It stems from a marriage;
- b- It includes the wife, the husband, and children *born of the marital relation*, although there may be relatives, adopted children, servants, or friends present in the family.
- c- Family members are bound to one another by legal ties, duties and rights having an economic, religious or other characters; by fixed relations concerning the sexual rights and prohibitions among family members; by a changeable compound of sentiments, psychology; such as love, compassion, respect, fear, etc.

This definition does not encompass all cases, for instance unmarried couples living together or with their children; or divorced and widowed mothers and fathers living with their children and so on.

- *Definition of the United Nations:*

The family is a groups of blood relatives living together and having a common budget.

At present, the most common family form is the marital family or nuclear family comprising the father, the mother, and their children living together in one house. The marital family is founded by a marriage; it would be disbanded together with the abolition of the marriage (divorce).

3. Differences between the concepts "family" and "household"

We should distinguish two concepts: "family" and "household".

The household is a group of people living together in one house; they may have a common budget. It may include the blood-relatives, or friends of its members. In a number of cases, the household is made up of one individual, or of 2-3 persons or of old people living together. In the past, there were collective households composed of a number of single people

living far from their families (employees of an enterprise; pupils or students living together in the same place).

However, nowadays, a household is usually a family.

The general census of population carried out in Vietnam in 1989 introduced the concept of "*family household*", which includes people of marital relations, or blood relations, or support relations, and which has a common budget. Each familial household has a household register containing the number of the household members, name of the household head; the relations between the latter and the former.

This is a legal document facilitating the administration by local authorities.

4. Family size demonstrated through households in Vietnamese history

According to historical documents, the Vietnamese family has always been of a small size. Usually, grow-up and married, children tend to form their new households while old parents often choose to live with the eldest or the youngest child.

For instance, under the Chinese domination, there were in Giao Chỉ district 92,440 households with 746,237 mouths (on average, 8.07 mouths per household); in Cửu Chân district, 35,740 households with 166,013 mouths (on average, 4.64 mouths per household); in Nhật Nam district, 15,460 households with 69,485 mouths (on average 4.49 mouths per household).

At the beginning of the 15th century, Vietnam had 120,412 households with 500,264 mouths (on average, 4.12 mouths per household).

5. The characteristics of the Vietnamese family before the August 1945 Revolution.

Generally speaking, the Vietnamese family was at the time a patriarchal with Confucian influence. However, it could preserve many traditional, cultural values of the nation. The dominant family relations were not deeply patriarchal as in China; instead, there were harmonious relations between

spouses, and between parents and children, in which the wife (mother) played an important part.

This characteristic is expressed in the Quốc triều hình luật (State Penal Code, promulgated in 1471) which stipulated the equal rights of daughters and sons to family property; the right of daughters to be inheritors of their parents when the latters had no sons; The right of the wife to ask for a divorce in cases allowed by laws.

6. The family is an object of study of several scientific branches

The important role the family constitutes an object for study in many scientific branches.

- *Psychology* studies the process of formation and perfection of the individual's personality in the family;

- *Demography* is interested in the role of the family and its structure in population reproduction; it deals with the attitude of individuals measured by the constants of marriage and the percentage of durable marriages; and the attitude of couples towards child-birth and family size.

- *Ethnology* stresses the changing diversity of different family forms in various cultures;

- *Ethnography* studies the characteristics of the family's way of living and activities in different ethnic groups;

- *Economics* focuses on the family as an economic and consumption unity;

- *History* studies the past forms of the family;

- *Law* deals with the existence of law-based relations in the family;

- *Sociology* approaches to the family as a social institution and a particular psychological social group.'

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