

“THE TRADITIONAL CONCEPT OF POWER OF THE HIGH RULER IN VIETNAM
AND THE CHRISTIAN TEACHING (XVI-XIX c.).”

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1. The primary religious-mythological beliefs about power characteristic of the traditional societies of the East on the whole meet the characteristics of the “world universality” – the cult of the charismatic ruler who possesses magical powers. Because of those powers he is able to perform sacral functions, such as “to change” the society through “teaching”, to have a world building influence on the Cosmos and to set up communication with the higher powers.
2. The basis of the Vietnamese culture is closely connected with the Chinese cultural tradition. The Chinese beliefs about power spread in Vietnam. However, it does not mean that the Vietnamese concept of power was totally identical to the Chinese model.
3. The essence of the Vietnamese “power ideology” is the ruler cult, which stands in the center of the whole ideological system of the traditional society. The original religious tradition of the country concentrated around the ruler cult, rather than the cults of the divine personages, and combined three elements: the cult of the Heavens, of the emperor ancestors, and the sacrifices at the altar – se (the cult of the land fertility). This way the main feature of the imperial power ideology, that is the aspiration to the total “monopoly”, and to the sacral forms of the embodiment of the in-life and after death power, is brought forth.
4. The Vietnamese ruler is the person chosen by the Heavens, whose main characteristic is “the love for all living things”, which has no relation to the Confucian ethics.
5. The latest research showed that the term “three teachings” (*tam giao*), their alternation and influence was never a defining factor in the ideological life of the Vietnamese society. The term “Three teachings” was formulated in Vietnam within the frames of

the unified power ideology concept. The power was a ritualistic political union, personified by the figure of the emperor.

6. The meeting between the Christian teaching of the West with the East happened long before the beginning of the colonization epoch. The preaching of the Christian ideas which had begun in the countries of Asia in the XVI century exposed the civilization and cultural differences, as well as differences in mentality of the Western and Eastern countries, the contrast between them. In particular, in the countries of the Confucian world including Vietnam.
7. The religious dualistic Christian worldview, based on the God's revelation and the world created by God (in China and in Vietnam the idea of the eternal nature of things, the world consists of 10 thousand things), the elevation of the man's individuality through the teachings about the theology of the soul in Christianity, the understanding of meaning of life for a Christian in its connection with God, and etc. The archaic religion of China, even at the time of Confucius, had already lost all transcendental meaning and transformed into pure cosmology. The idea of the one God, the Creator of the world was not present in the Confucian world.
8. Practically all world history from the XVI century to the XIX century witnessed two civilizations and cultures, the West and the East, co-existing together. The missionaries created a huge world of Western culture and of religion, Christianity, in a yet much bigger world of Asia, from India to Japan and China, including the countries of Southeast Asia.