

## BUILDING THE VIETNAMESE STATE APPARATUS – THE VIEW OF KING LE THANH TONG (1441 - 1497)

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### *Abstract*

*Le Thanh Tong (1442-1497), is one the kings with the longest time of reigning and taking power in Viet Nam history. He is not only an emperor, a prominent cultural person, a great poet, but also an outstanding politician of the Vietnamese nation in history. Le Thanh Tong's ideology about the state has made important contributions in bringing the country out of crisis and developing to the height of the centralized feudal regime in the feudal regime of Vietnam. It can be said that Le Thanh Tong's thought of the state stands out with profound views: the view of state power; viewpoints on administrative reform and complete construction of the state apparatus; views on military and diplomacy in the political guidelines and views on training and talent use in the state apparatus. That ideology up to now is still the practical and useful historical lessons in building the current socialist law-governed state of Vietnam.*

**Keywords:** *Le Thanh Tong, philosophy ideology, the state, Viet Nam.*

### INTRODUCTION

In the flow of Vietnamese ideological history, the XIV -XV centuries were one of the special periods, namely: The transition from the Tran Dynasty to the Ho Dynasty; The invasion of the Minh reign and the arduous Lam Son uprising that went through hardships, won glorious victory; The establishment of the Le dynasty with the mission and requirement of consolidating, building and developing the central feudal state to be centralized, unified and strong in all fields of economy, politics, culture and society, promoting the strength of great national unity to combat the aggression of the enemy and protecting national independence. It was in this historical condition that many great thinkers, prominently Le Thanh Tong, stood out.

Under his decisive rule, Dai Viet entered a period of economic, cultural, social, educational and military prosperity during the second half of the 15th century. According to Wikipedia's open encyclopedia, Le Thanh Tong also significantly expanded Dai Viet territory after many wars with surrounding countries such as Chiem Thanh, Ai Lao and Bon Man. Le Thanh Tong's internal and external affairs achievements had made Dai Viet a major power in Southeast Asia, as well as brought the Vietnamese monarchy to its peak, the prosperity that before and after this period, no King could ever make this happen. During nearly 40 years of rule, Le Thanh Tong had created for his era a stable socio-economy, confirming a new development step in the history of the Vietnamese nation.

Le Thanh Tong's ideology is a harmonious combination of Eastern cultural achievements with traditional Vietnamese culture. This article addresses Le Thanh Tong's great contributions to the state in the basic content: the viewpoint on state power; viewpoint on administrative reform and complete construction of the state apparatus; viewpoint on military in the political direction and viewpoint on training and talent use in the state apparatus.

### LE THANH TONG'S VIEWPOINT ON STATE POWER

In Le Thanh Tong's viewpoint, the state power in a centralized central political regime is that the supreme power belongs to the king, all his authority is absolute. He considers that: "The authority is not a little of basing on anyone's hands" (Hoang Van Lau (translated 1998), p.445). Le Thanh Tong's viewpoint of state power is also reflected in his affirmation of the king's position, role and authority in society. Le Thanh Tong believes that in the organizational structure and operation of the socio-political apparatus, the king must hold all power in his hand from the legislative, judicial to the executive, not accepting to share power with any whoever, whether it is a great mandarin or a member of the royal family. *Regarding legislation*, Le Thanh Tong considers the king to be the only one with the power to set the law, all the will of the king is expressed in the law and becomes orders, people are forced to obey the imperial edict. Le Thanh Tong writes that: "While the rule of law still exists, those who cause rebellion against the law would never be forgiven" (Hoang Van Lau (translated 1998), p.444). *Regarding execution*, Le Thanh Tong also thinks that the King is the only one who runs the authoritarian state apparatus, the king has the right to appoint promotions, abolish positions such as Chancellor, Grandmaster and the right to reward, transfer, stipulate powers, responsibilities and perks to the officials in the country. *Regarding judicial*, Le Thanh Tong says that the king is the person with the highest judicial authority, the king's decision is always considered the final decision, no one could ever change judgments made by the king. In addition, the king is the only person with a great amnesty or special amnesty for the offenders. Le Thanh Tong affirms that: "I need to keep the power of my judgments, no way to change once it is made" (Phan Huy Chu, 1962, episode 2, p.33).

The state power in the state thought of Le Thanh Tong is also reflected in the view that all Jiangshan, the people of the country belongs to the king and the king is the leader of the nature and the people, "all land under the sky are the king's, all people on the earth are people of the king" (Cao Lien, 2000, p.29). To ensure the supreme and absolute ownership of the land, the society and the people of the king, Le Thanh Tong affirms: "there is no way that I ever abandon my own land, even a mile of mountain or river" (Hoang Van Lau (translated 1998), p.462).

It is the greatest wealth, the main means of production of the feudal state, and the king uses it to bind his people and seize political power. As the supreme owner of land and people, according to Le Thanh Tong, the king also decides the use and control of the land, and the people's taxes. He writes: "I order the governors of districts, roads, towns, communes to research, examine the public land and lagoons in each district and commune; sources of fish, fruits, salt and spices and other private canal to the sea, gold, silver, lead tin and money" (Hoang Van Lau (translated 1998), p.298).

The viewpoint on the state power in Le Thanh Tong's state ideology are vividly expressed in the organization of the state apparatus, in which all activities of the state must submit to and execute the king's order and the state apparatus must be the tools to protect the king's position, power and interests. Le Thanh Tong alleges that: "To quell rebels are the "manner" of an emperor" (Le Duc Tiet, 1997, p.155).

In order to ensure the absolute authority of the king, Le Thanh Tong always upholds the "loyalty", considering the loyalty of the mandarins and his people to the king as the top standard. It can be said that in Le Thanh Tong's state ideology, "loyalty" in the relationship between the king and mandarins is the core of strengthening the king's power, the basic moral

quality to value the talent and virtue of the faithful subjects. Le Thanh Tong writes: "All those who are subjects need to respect the ordinary regulations, always supporting your king, inheriting the success and fame of the ancients and being free from any mistakes. Whoever dares to lead the old statutes to rebel an official, to change a position, is the criminal who rebels the country, he must be hanged and drag in public for shame without mercy; and his family members should be sent to exile to show the guilt of those who are disloyal " (Hoang Van Lau (translated 1998), p.454 ).

In addition, in the viewpoint of state power, according to Le Thanh Tong, the king not only rules the entire people in his territory, but also governs the gods and holy spirits of the nation. Only the king has the right to ordain meritorious officials, a good genie or a tutelary god, and only the king has the right to establish a temple for the gods or disqualify and destroy the temple for a vicious god. This is written by Le Thanh Tong: "Those who arbitrarily build pagodas, temples, cast bells and statues will be demoted two ranks" (Nguyen Quang Thang, 1998, p.161). In his ideology of state power, Le Thanh Tong promotes the autocratic monarchy and says that in the authoritarian monarchy, the monarch has absolute supremacy, because he is influenced by Confucian view of "Heavenly destiny"; in addition, he also uses the view on the people's will to explain and protect that position, the supreme power of the king. He said that the reason that the king is the one with supreme power is that the king is respected, venerated, worshiped and entrusted by the people, and the king is the one who converges the ability, the quality and the capacity and virtues to protect the people on behalf of the sun, so the king must be trusted and respected by the people. Le Thanh Tong writes: "I am trusted by the people to accede the throne" (Hoang Van Lau (translated 1998), p.400).

In order to make people respect the king's absolute authority, Le Thanh Tong made a point of punishing even humorous words that show offensiveness to the king: "Humors who say words that offence or disrespect the king are considered as criminal or sent to exile" (Nguyen Quang Thang , 1998, p.129).

Thus, with the viewpoint on state power, Le Thanh Tong actually becomes the head of state, having absolute authority in the execution of state power. This is an expression of the establishment and strengthening of political power in the hands of the king.

### **LE THANH TONG'S VIEWPOINT ON ADMINISTRATIVE REFORM AND COMPLETE CONSTRUCTION OF THE STATE APPARATUS**

Le Thanh Tong's idea of state is not only expressed quite closely and deeply in the power of the state, but also expressed consistently and consistently in the view of administrative reform and perfecting his state apparatus. According to Le Thanh Tong, if he wants to seize the royal power, he has to first seize the state power and to maintain that power, he has to carry out administrative reforms and build a complete system of the sovereign monarchy systematically and closely under the king's control as a tool to rule the society. Therefore, in order to maintain the order of social relations and consolidate power, Le Thanh Tong's viewpoint of building an authoritarian monarchy with high concentration of power in the hands of the king and the central court, restricting the political participation of the royal aristocracy, the court's authority and the tendency to "abdicate" the authority of the local officials stems from the urgency and indispensability of history. Le Thanh Tong affirms that: "The land and border of the present day is very different from the past, it is impossible not to embrace the power and execute the unchangeable judgments" (Hoang Van Lau (translated 1998), p.453). It is essentially a view of

administrative reform, reorganization of a hierarchical, organized system of the monarchist state system to reduce cumbersome bodies and strengthen the system of mutual supervision between the administrative, military, judicial system. Le Thanh Tong writes: "In the previous mandarins system, the mandarins put most importance on the high positions. In today's regime, mandarins regularly take low-wage salaries. The number of mandarins set out are fewer compared to before, but the spending for salary is still the same as the past, making the big and small mandarins all tied together; creating unfair respect and restrain each other. Authority is not taken advantage of, so the country is difficult to overthrow" (Hoang Van Lau (translated 1998), p.454).

In order to reform, build the organizational structure of the state apparatus and manage it unanimously that the political power belongs to the king, Le Thanh Tong advocates to rebuild the state administrative structure from the centrals to localities to meet the requirements of independence, autonomy and national construction and protection, as well as consolidate, strengthen inspection and supervision of all activities of the state apparatus, ensuring a society and an ordered, discipline and stability institution of the feudal class. Le Thanh Tong proceeds to divide the whole country into "13 dao thua tuyen" (13 sectors) (Hoang Van Lau (translated 1998), p.411), he places in each sector three agencies called "ty" (departments), in which: "Do ty" (Military department) is in charge of the military; "Thua ty" (Administration department) is in charge of administrative, financial and judicial works; and "Hien ty" (Supervision department) is responsible for controlling everything to report to the court. These "ty" are assigned very specific functions and duties. The head of the "Do ty" are Commander and deputy Commander. The head of the "Thua ty" are the Director and Deputy Director. The head of "Hien ty" are Chief Supervisor and Deputy Chief supervisor. Towns and route units are changed: "Change route into prefecture, town into county, Grand Coordinate into Prefect, Head of Prefecture into Co-prefect, "Van" into "Tri huyen", "Tuan sat" into "Huyen thua", and "Xa quan" into "Xa truong" (Hoang Van Lau) translated 1998), p.411). Under the "ty" is the prefectures, leading by the Head of Prefecture and Co-prefect "Tri huyen" and "huyen thua" govern each district. There are Heads of county in each county (headed by the tribal chief). Particularly in the "trung do" prefecture, it is governed by "phu doan", helping with "thieu doan" and "thi trung". Heading big communes, there are 5 chiefs, with smaller communes, there are 4 chiefs, smallest communes with 3 chiefs. Through this organizational structure, Le Thanh Tong reduces the number of intermediaries to streamline the local apparatus, and controls his power over regions across the country. Le Thanh Tong writes: "There are mandarins in all level from sectors, departments, prefectures, districts.

In administration, Le Thanh Tong advocates the establishment of "sau bo" (six ministries): "Establishing the six ministries which are "Lai, Bo, Le, Binh, Hinh, Cong" (The Ministry of Organization and Personnel, The Ministry of Protocol, The Ministry of Military Affairs, The Ministry of Justice, The Ministry of Civil Affairs, The Ministry of Public Works, respectively)" (Hoang Van Lau (translated 1998) p.455). And six courts (sau tu), which are Court of Judicial Review, Court of Imperial Sacrifices, Court of Imperial Entertainments, Court of the Imperial Stud, Court of State Ceremonial, Court of Imperial Seals. All are administrative units under the king's final determination and authority. Some offices and bureaus are no longer available. At the top of each ministry is the ministers heading with two "ta huu thi lang" (third-ranking mandarins) as one deputy and one personal assistant and the officials Lang trung, Vien ngoai

lang supporting. And six courts (sau tu): Court of Judicial Review, Court of Imperial Sacrifices, Court of Imperial Entertainments, Court of the Imperial Stud, Court of State Ceremonial, Court in order to limit the manipulation of local officials and local tyrants, Le Thanh Tong advocates strict inspection and supervision. He writes: "We need to hurriedly go and review at the mountains and the coast in the county, where the terrains can be built dams to make fields, where there are wolves harming, village tyrant manipulation, arrogant customs, miserable people... these must carefully be reported" (Ngo Si Lien and Le Dynasty historians, 1985, volume 2, p.458).

In the organizational structure of the state apparatus, Le Thanh Tong not only emphasizes the coherence in the organizational structure, but also pays attention to the clear division among agencies in the executing of power. The division of the above agencies is to unify the performance of the function of the state apparatus, not making counterbalance to control and restrain each other through the following systems: The six agencies: The department of science is the six-volume inspection agency, which is responsible for making or observing wrongdoings and other irregularities in each department. Each agency is led by a "Do cap su trung" and "Cap su trung", sixth-ranking trat Chanh. Each ministry is inspected by one agency. Together with six ministries, there are six agencies coming along. Which are: "Lai khoa", "Ho khoa", "Hinh khoa", "Cong khoa", "Le khoa", "Binh khoa" Le Thanh Tong writes: "If the Ministry of Organization and Personnel appoints improperly talented, "Lai khoa" is allowed to refute. "Le khoa" is allowed to report wrong doings made by the Ministry of Protocol. "Hinh khoa" supervises the The Ministry of Justice. "Cong khoa" ensures the working of The Ministry of Public Works to always be on time. "Ho khoa" controls the Ministry of Civil Affairs in collecting and spending of public assets and money. "Binh khoa" inspects the working of The Ministry of Military Affairs" (Ngo Si Lien, 1998, volume 2, p. 454).

"Ngu su dai" system: The "Ngu su dai" is specialized agencies that monitor the officials' competence, performance and ethics, and qualities (mainly the moral qualities) of the mandarins. The objects of supervision of the "Ngu su dai" are the officials. The leaders of the "Ngu su dai" are the Imperial adviser (from the second-rank mandarins or higher), the Deputy Imperial adviser (the third-rank mandarin), the third deputy Imperial adviser (the fifth-rank mandarin), are usually held by people with a PhD degree. There are 2 levels of agencies of "Ngu su dai": "Ngu su dai" in central and "Ngu su dai" in localities. "Ngu su dai" in the Imperial Court is responsible for supervising, interrogating, accusing the officials of both the official and the bureaucracy, mainly government officials, discussing current affairs and judging sentences. "Ngu su dai" supervises the sense of responsibility, morality, and quality of the officials. The mission of "Ngu su dai" radio is pointed out by the king in the Decree to rule officials that: "Ngu su dai" oversees to fault the officials and clarify the aggregates of the people" (Ngo Si Lien, 1998, volume 2, p.454). The officials in "Hien ty", along with 13 abusive supervisors, are the ones who monitor and oversee the bureaucratic operations of the departments, prefectures and districts. Le Thanh Tong writes: "If the 3 department, beside governing the public, discover that the officials are embezzled, or have a complaint about unjust lawsuits, and all the private matters happened in the prefectures, districts, counties, the departments of each sectors are in charge of making judgment for execution" (Hoang Van Lau (translation 1998), p.506).

At the same time, Le Thanh Tong also emphasizes the position and role of law in social

management. The reasons Le Thanh Tong advocates promoting social organization and management by law are: First, in order to concentrate the power of the state in the king's hand, simplify administrative and servicing agencies, there must be a law as a tool to adjust social relations, quickly and widely deploy on the whole society scale, in order to enhance Imperial Seals. the discipline of the country, to facilitate the development of all aspects of the country; Second, the state is a special organization of the feudal political power, but that power is only exercised, implemented and enforced on the basis of strict enforcement of laws and regulations as a means to exercise the power of the state and the kings; Third, the law in the early Le dynasty was not strictly enforced, people were wrongly committed: "The jailers are not fair, only focus on strict punishment, those who bribed were spared" (Hoang Van Lau (translated 1998), p.370). With these reasons, Le Thanh Tong especially emphasizes the viewpoint of organization and social management by law, which not only expresses the will of the feudal state and is compulsory for the whole nation. but also a tool to adjust social relations, social management, ensure social order and the interests of the ruling class as a means of transmitting Le Thanh Tong's political thinking into social life. Le Thanh Tong writes: "Even Duong Ngu could not rule a country without rewards and punishments" (Hoang Van Lau (translated 1998), p.430).

Stemming from the requirements of building a complete set of dictionaries to stabilize the social order in favor of the ruling class, protecting and defending the tyranny of the XIV- XV Dai Viet feudal class, Le Thanh Tong redefines and builds the complete law which is the Hong Duc Code. In fact, The Hong Duc Code is not entirely created by Le Thanh Tong, nor is it built specifically during the years of Hong Duc (1470 - 1497), but the result of the exalting development period in the feudal regime of Vietnam, during the early Le dynasty. Le Thanh Tong's merit is to re-define the laws of previous kings to complete this set of law dictionaries. Basically, this law is a criminal law, as the name implies - Le dynasty Figure law, but in fact it is a law that combines many branches of law (criminal, administrative, civil, procedural, marriage, family...) and reflected in all fields, from economics, culture, education... The An Nam Directory records that: "Hong Duc Law... contains some criminal provisions and a nearly complete civil law" (E.Gaspardone, "Bibliographie annamite", BEFEO, XXXIV, pp.37-38). The essential purpose of this code is to uphold social order, protect the nation and kingship. However, in the viewpoint of the king of law, it is also exudes a sense of humanity here.

Structurally, the Hong Duc Code consists of 722 articles, divided into 16 chapters that specify the crimes, penalties, trials, litigation, social relationships... showing both class consciousness and nationality and humanity. It can be said that in terms of structure, the law has escaped the way of creating chapters of the Northern feudal style, Le Thanh Tong has arranged chapters to adjust social relations that are nearly similar or related to each other into a chapter, like the third volume consists of six chapters, which covers marriage, property and inheritance. The Hong Duc Code, is basically the Criminal Code, its terms are accompanied by criminal sanctions. However the content of the rules is very wide. In addition to the criminal rules that we understand today, there are also norms of administrative law, procedural law, civil law, military law and international law.

Le Thanh Tong's ideology of the organization of the state apparatus is a coherent, complete system, demonstrating the dominant power of the central government to localities throughout

the country and absolute centralized authoritarian power. The villages became the grassroots administrative units, closely dependent on the central government, the autonomy of "the king rules bow to the village customs" is greatly reduced. This is the viewpoint of the establishment and peak development of Le Thanh Tong's autocratic regime.

### LE THANH TONG'S VIEWPOINT ON MILITARY

The military viewpoint of Le Thanh Tong is the inheritance of the tradition of fighting and defending the national sovereignty of Vietnam, acquiring the quintessence of the military ideas of ancient China, associated with historical requirements of Dai Viet society in the XIV - XV centuries. In order to protect the integrity of Dai Viet national territory from the domination and oppression of foreign invaders, Le Thanh Tong advocated sharp organization and military activities, which are reflected in the issues of "national founding" with "*national defense*", "*building a united, concentrated army*," "*training soldiers, strictly disciplined*," "*appoint reliable and capable officials in the lowlands to rule out important areas*".

First of all, in the viewpoint of organizing and managing the military, Le Thanh Tong made the point of "*national defense*" with "*national defense*", because economy is foundation for defense consolidation; strong national defense to keep the country safe, protect public affairs, economic development and social revival. On that basis, Le Thanh Tong conveys through policies, in many fields. In particular, the focus is on the economic development policy "setting up plantations", "ngu binh u nong" (sending soldiers in agriculture, giving soldiers for labor, producing locally for a specified period of time), taking care of strengthening, developing transport and irrigation works. These policies clearly show the economic cohesion with the national defense, the close relationship between "farmers" and "soldiers", building and developing army forces and ensuring manpower for agricultural production to accumulate food for the military. Le Thanh Tong writes that: "To rebel, first of all, we must use army and enough food keeps our army strong (Hoang Van Lau (translated 1998), p.441).

Le Thanh Tong chose the plantation as the military base at the same time as the agricultural production base. This is how the economy and national defense are combined. In peacetime, economy is the main activity of plantations; When there is wartime, military activity is top priority. The farmers in peacetime will be soldiers in the battle in wartime. Le Thanh Tong writes that: "Opening plantations is to make full use of the potential of agriculture, to open up sources of reserve for the state" (Hoang Van Lau (translated 1998), p.484). In this way, Le Thanh Tong increased the income of the country, and at the same time created a system of border protection into a solid ranch to protect the national sovereignty and security.

In order to ensure that the standing forces fight without affecting the production forces, to limit costs for defense, Le Thanh Tong points out the viewpoint "ngu binh u nong", this is reflected in the military obligation for all men and soldier regime divided on production. The way of dividing the session in his military ideology is very unique, on the full moon day of the month, the foreign soldiers move to the posts to watch and guard and practice; the soldiers working in the halls, the institutes, the bureaus and the laborers working in the army till the harvesting season (May, June and September, October in lunar calendar) are divided into two, half staying to guard, half going back home to harvest, rotately. Le Thanh Tong writes that: "Deviding the military by making soldiers go to the posts to watch and practice; the soldiers working in the

halls, institutes, bureaus and soldiers working in the army till the harvesting season (May, June and September, October in lunar calendar) are divided into two, half staying to guard, one half returning home to harvest, rotately" (Nguyen Huy Thuc, 2014, episode 2, p.52).

In viewpoint of the military policy, Lê Thánh Tông also *builds a united, focused army*. He brings out the view of comprehensive military reform with the aim of making the army united, compact, elite, having a strong permanent army, a large reserve force for necessary case and create cohesion armies together. Le Thanh Tong writes: "Thua ty and the commander keep the locality, the chief of Do ty is to guard in important places; Prefectures, districts and counties are to keep a close relationship with the people; security, bureaucracy, officials are to fight the enemy; they are all related to each other, all tied with each other" (Hoang Van Lau (translated 1998), p.453).

In particular, Le Thanh Tong specially cares for *building a clear and strict selection policy of soldiers and officers*. More than any kings else, Le Thanh Tong attaches great importance to the selection of military officers. Since he is aware that in history, the role of the generals is highly appreciated, *The military tactics of Ton Tu* wrote: the Generals are the assistant of the king. A good assistant makes a prosperous nation, and vice versa, a bad assistant makes a weak nation. Folløe that spirit, Le Thanh Tong writes: "The position of General Commander could be selected in a local area, and should not be delegated to a bad person. The "khoa" officials should recruit the officers by the yamen, whoever takes good charge, quality, characteristic, talent, integrity and diligence should be appointed" (Phan Huy Chu, 1961, Episode 2, p.502).

Besides, Le Thanh Tong also shows his viewpoint on the regulations and laws to recruit additional men into the army. He is well aware that the desire to build a strong and brave army has to start from creating an abundant reserve resource, recruiting the healthiest soldiers, which is a decisive factor in the victory of defending the country. Le Thanh Tong expresses his opinion by enacting laws that prohibit or severely punish the hidden crimes, dropping out soldiers and the deserters. Le Thanh Tong writes: "Who bribes or makes complaints to avoid serving in the military be punished severely. Those who takes bribes are also guilty" (Nguyen Quang Thang, 1998, p.111).

The content of views on organizational construction and military development is also expressed by Le Thanh Tong through *regular training of soldiers and strict disciplines*. Being born and raised in relatively peaceful conditions, but Le Thanh Tong never neglects in training soldiers. He pays great attention to building and training regular and disciplined army disciplines. As: "Even with talented generals, army without discipline will not win. Normal general with disciplined army will not lose." The idea of training soldiers and implementing strict discipline is expressed by Le Thanh Tong with the following basic contents: *First*, discipline in training, Le Thanh Tong writes: "With generals who do not diligently train soldiers, force soldiers to work for trainers, or take money by skimming money. Light case is judged as crime in jail, send to exile. Serious cases will be sent to exile" (Nguyen Quang Thang, 1998, p.147).

*Second*, discipline in combat and public service; This is considered the nucleus of the military. Discipline in battle is the strength of an army, the decisive factor to the victory or defeat of the battle. Violators of this discipline are subject to very high penalties. Le Thanh Tong writes that: "Soldiers who advance and retreat without permission will be slashed" (Nguyen Quang Thang, 1998, p.143); "Going to fight the enemy, whoever lie to avoid serving the army will be slashed" (Nguyen Quang Thang - translation 1998, p.147).



*Third*, discipline in keeping secrets and preserving weapons, protecting troops' supplies. *Old* military manual said: "He who understands our troops and enemy's will get victory". This also means that if our military secret is revealed to the opponent, we will be defeated and vice versa. Le Thanh Tong always educate his army with the ideology that generals have to always be alert, never sell himself to the enemy for money or profit, never reveal military secrets just for showing off or being aggressive. Le Thanh Tong writes: "Those who reveal military secrets when fighting the enemy, causing their soldiers to lose heart will all be slashed" (Nguyen Quang Thang, 1998, p.143).

Consequently, stemming from the circumstances and reality of the country that it always has to deal with the annexing risks of foreign and internal forces, and at the same time derstanding the importance of military forces in royal protection and construction, Le Thanh Tong pays special attention to the construction and development of the army in every aspect with the desire to have a loyal and united army to be able to defend the territorial integrity and independence, he wrote: "The army is united into one and never be faded" (Mai Xuan Hai, 2003, p.516). With a consistent and thorough ideology about building army forces, Le Thanh Tong has created a unified centralized army with strict organizational structure and strict discipline. Le Thanh Tong has accomplished his purpose: "All armies are as strong as steel" (Mai Xuan Hai, 2003, p.194).

#### **LE THANH TONG'S VIEWPOINT ON TRAINING AND USING TALENTS IN THE STATE APPARATUS**

Any state that wants to operate effectively needs to build a pool of talented people to maintain the power of the ruling class. Therefore, Le Thanh Tong pays special attention to building the mandarins as the executing subjects of the king in the operation of the state apparatus. After taking the throne, Le Thanh Tong makes an important point of using talents with the slogan: "Appointing righteous talented people, leaving the bad is a big matter of politics" (Mai Xuan Hai, 2003, p.441). According to the monarch, the ruler of the world cannot help but rely on the superiors and talented people, because building a country requires many talents to set a strong regime, ruling the people requires a moral foundation to be durable. Le Thanh Tong says that: "Relying on the mandarins to govern, just as he Sun in the sky, the Moon shines, the clouds are bright, there is warm air and the atmosphere is positive enough to help, and then all work could be accomplished, stablizing people's living" (Nguyen Quang Thang - translation 1998, p.500). Therefore, the king had to "open his heart to receive", to listen to the comments of the mandarins and to appreciate the talents. In order to appreciate the talents, contributing to maintaining the stability and development of the country, Le Thanh Tong personally searches for talented people, makes close relationship to the talented people to help the king to rule the country. Le Thanh Tong writes: "The king comes to look for righteous talent Scaring him for one and a while (Mai Xuan Hai, 2003, p.498).

Le Thanh Tong encourages recommending talented candidates; Those who recommend genuinely talented candidates will be rewarded, and vice versa will be punished. Le Thanh Tong writes as: "Whoever takes pertional relationship to recruit low-ranking people and keep in office, leaving the public with bad opinions, low people's welfare, will be put into trial by "Lai khoa" (Hoang Van Lau (translated 1998), p.496); "Those who have the duty to recommend but do not appoint the right good people will be demoted or punished, depending on the severity. Committing guilty for personal relationship or bribery, the offense will be exacerbated by twice"

(Nguyen Quang Thang, 1998, p.111). Therefore, in 1467, Nguyen Nhu Do, the court minister of "bo Lai, recommended bad people, both of them were punished. The nomination of the person must be conducted openly, transparently and discussed between the court. The court selects people to be mandarins, or takes the people who are qualified, or appoints people with merits, all open to public for discussing. Le Thanh Tong writes: "Choosing kind, tolerant, wise and fair people" to replace a number of officials who are not talented enough - those who make "verdicts with many unjust judgments, making the court receiving many complaints" (Hoang Văn Lau (translated 1998), p.432).

According to Le Thanh Tong, the promotion of talented people must be with impartiality and fairness. Not only reminding but also criticizing the "tran phu" not fulfill the task of finding talents for the country: "You are the military mandarins working as "tran phu" Meaning of "tran phu" those you brutal could ever understand?" Even as Tang Van Trong was also criticized by Confucius as "stealing the position", you are just the roadblocks of the talented ones, starting the bad" (Hoang Van Lau (translation 1998), p.397. In order to have subjects and talented persons, Le Thanh Tong also advocates checking and probation of officials. Persons with unofficial positions, after a probationary period, if supervised not committing errors, shall be promoted to official positions. Le Thanh Tong writes: "Civil and military mandarins in imperial city, whoever is newly appointed, will be announced to the king by "Lai bo" to receive a medical examination certificate, a hat, a belt, a third of the salary... after three years, he will be promoted to the actual position if making no mistakes and proving to be deserved. Those who do not deserve the rank, take them back to the old rank" (Hoang Van Lau (translated 1998), p.456).

Besides, he also regularly examines the officials, in order to purify the officials and select talented and authentic people to supervise the bureaucracy closely, following the principles:

"They are all related to each other, bound together," so that "there are no talentless people and the responsibility has a place to attribute, making the high and low officials to be tied together, high and low positions to constrain together. Authority is not taken advantage of, so the country is difficult to overthrow Forming the action of keeping morality, and law give up the crimes of disrespectful to humanity and justice, punish criminals..." (Hoang Van Lau (translated 1998), p.454).

The organization and strict control of the selection of village managers mentioned above, according to Le Thanh Tong, will avoid creating a link between the local officials and the local people and thus prevent the abuse of interest, kinship system, factions to hold titles in the administrative apparatus to manipulate villages. Le Thanh Tong writes: "The head of prefectures, districts and counties when considering the Chief of the commune position, should take only one to be the Chief of commune if there are siblings, the brothers and sisters, nephew. It is forbidden for both of them to work together in order to eliminate the bad effect of factions" (Hoang Van Lau (translated 1998), p.503). From there, helping the court detect the negative of mandarins to promptly handle; at the same time deter the officials, so that they are afraid of the law, strive to be a talented and virtuous mandarin.

In the view of talent training, Le Thanh Tong also pays special attention to examining the course to purify the officials, which is essentially a thought to evaluate and review the performance of officials in periods and courses, creating the basis for the implementation of the regime of

fluctuation, conversion as well as bonus, punishment or dismissal. Le Thanh Tong writes: "The judging of the course already exists, in order to distinguish between good and bad people, making the admonishment. Now "Lai ho" and mandarins in all departments should follow the rules to encourage people. If he dares to neglect like that before, the "khoa" department in charge of inspection will report and judge as in the law"(Hoang Van Lau (translated 1998), p.478). The content of the review is whether the mandarins love the people and are trusted by the people or not; assess practical capacity, completing the assigned work. Le Thanh Tong writes: "Heads of the yamens, when examining officials in the scope of management, they must carefully consider the achievements in the work that the officers made. If he really cares for and is loved by the people, then he deserves of the position. If looting, harassing, causing bad, then he is deserves to be dismissed" (Hoang Van Lau (translated 1998), p.447).

In addition to recruiting and supervising talented people, Le Thanh Tong especially emphasizes the important point of using talents, using talents in accordance with their talents and virtues, reflected in the following contents: First, the viewpoint of using talents who differ in ideology: At that time, Confucianism was the orthodox doctrine, dominated throughout the royal court and the kingdom, including in the king's thought. Zhuangyuan Luong The Vinh, however, is only fascinated with Buddhism, finds Buddhism with teachings that satisfy his intellect and soul. He liked to be humorous, hated the constraints that made people artificial, rigid of Confucian rituals. Yet the king still took him to a very high position, all the diplomatic documents with China at that time were drafted by one of his hands.

*Second*, the art of using the old mandarins: That is the case of Nguyen Truc, who lived in Boi Khe commune, Thanh Oai district, Ha Tay province, became Zhuangyuan in Nham Tuat course, the third Dai Bao reign (1442) of King Le Thai Ton, and was an official of the professor of Academy of Academic Affairs, and "Quoc Tu Giam Te tuu". When he went to meet the Minh envoy, he joined the "Hoi ung" Examination and he came in first place. People called him "the Zhuangyuan of two countries" He served as an official over two kings, Thai Tong and Nhan Tong. In the reign of Thanh Tong, he continued to be respected, kept the position of commander in chief, Tri tam Quan. Even he repeatedly reported illness for retirement, the king treasured the talented and did not accept. In the fourth year of Hong Duc reign (1473), he was promoted to the Academy of Academic Affairs, Quoc Tu Giam Te Tuu, and passed way in the office. King Le Thanh Tong mourned, posthumously award him "Thai bao", gave money to organize a funeral, and set up a temple, then sent officials to visit.

*Third*, using the persons what once make mistakes: That is that case of Nguyen Dinh My. His name is Trieu Phu, pen-name Nghia Son, lives in Van Long village, Bac Giang province, working as He works as "Hinh tao dai phu" then promoted to intermediate Ngu Su mandarins, and then to Transport Commissioner. In the ninth year of Thai Hoa's reign, he held the position of "Hoang mon" Vice minister keeper on the street, and went to China to congrat a new King of Minh reign accessing the throne. In the fifth year of Hong Duc reign in 1474, he again went to the Ming envoy to report border invasion by the Champa. However, Nguyen Dinh My was told to be a jack sprat and flattering person. Once, he was degraded by the king from the Chief army to become Vice chief of army. Other times, the king lured officials in the court saying: "There were two minor things that Nguyen Dinh My had done...before Dinh My has been tried, but now he is working as a third-ranked officer and is believed by the imperial court The jack sprat Dinh My

shall be subordinated to the fourth-ranked to show that the court block the vilifying and malefactors ...". However, the king still respected. Dinh My shall know how to repent, correct mistakes, diligently work hard.

Fourth, viewpoint on using straightforward person: Le Thanh Tong often encourages the officials to boldly point out his shortcomings, and he praises Le Canh Huy, the chief of Ministry of Justice: "He repeatedly held the key position of the court, remarkable merits, was wholeheartedly prevented to speak out, pointed out the error of the King" (Hoang Van Lau (translated 1998), p.401); he also used to order the vice minister of Justice, Nguyen Mau: "If we have any faults, please frankly point out, be as tough as Dong Tuyen and not like To Uy, always conceal" (Hoang Van Lau (translated 1998), p.402); "Imperial reports must not be ambiguous" (Hoang Van Lau (translated 1998), p.457). "To work honestly, work hard, be diligent, and serve the king" (Mai Xuan Hai, 2003, p.271). Under that spirit, he advocates: "Justice department officer is an important position, it is a must to choose the person with forte in it. The officials of the Justice Ministry, regardless of whether they are scholar or bureaucrat, if the talent and knowledge are superficial, not knowledgeable about the criminal law, the officials will be dismissed" (Hoang Van Lau (translated 1998), p. 481); "Choose mandarins with doctorates, military and civil official for yamen, leader of the bodyguards, should be the ones who won the examinations of the guilds following the official procedures, work well, strong, not afraid of noble persons, no making mistakes" (Hoang Van Lau (translated 1998), p.515).

## CONCLUSION

Stemming from objective needs, along with subjective factors that are your talent and virtue, Le Thanh Tong soon built up a sharp state ideology and solved the Dai Viet social and historical task set in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, contributing to the construction of a powerful monarchy state in many areas that previous dynasties could not implement, bringing Dai Viet into an era of extreme development and considered the golden age of Vietnamese feudalism. Although there are certain limitations, due to historical conditions and class positions, but with very rich and unique content, Le Thanh Tong's ideology of state is still meaningful and is a useful historical lesson for the requirements and tasks of building a socialist state in Vietnam today. With his talent and virtue, Le Thanh Tong was praised by Ho Chi Minh - Hero of national liberation; the outstanding Vietnamese cultural celebrity: "The gentle king mentions Le Thanh Tong, who expands the realms, is wise, gentle" (Ho Chi Minh, 2000, episode 3, p.225).

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