

Changing of ancestor worship in the Confucian patrilineal descent group in Vietnam: The case of Ho Chi Minh city

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Abstract

Aim: This research aims to better understand the unique aspects of Vietnamese ancestor veneration. Ancestor worship in Vietnam is the subject of this study, which focuses on the largely unmentioned relationship with Confucianism, specifically the filial piety concept based on the patrilineal bloodline.

Methodology: Methods like interviews were used extensively in Ho Chi Minh City's fieldwork research, with a focus on a small neighborhood populated by people from the north, where more traditional values prevail.

Findings: Thus, for instance, the son preference was a clear expression of the Confucian ancestor worship based on Confucianism's patrilineal bloodline. In addition, this study aims to shed light on the evolution of ancestor worship by analyzing traditional characteristics and their connection to Vietnam's historical context, all against the backdrop of the many influential factors undergoing rapid change today.

Novelty/Implications: This research sets out to draw attention to a recent shift in the way Vietnamese celebrate their dead. Ancestral worship in Vietnam is a topic of current and future study, and the shift in emphasis away from the Confucian concept of patrilineal lineage is a key factor.

Key Words: Ancestor Worship, Vietnam, Ho Chi Minh City, Confucianism, Confucian Patrilineal Bloodline, Filial Piety, Confucian Characteristics, Change

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INTRODUCTION

Ancestor worship is central to Vietnamese culture and is widely practiced throughout the country. Ancestor worship has been described as "the main religion" (Bao 2012) and the "domestic religion" (Diguet 1906) of the Vietnamese people. To this day, the rituals and cultural components of ancestor worship are deeply ingrained in Vietnamese society and consciousness; for example, the famous saying of Vietnamese patriotic poet Nguyen Dinh Chieu "I am blind, but I remain practicing the traditional domestic religion (ancestor worship)/ the people having eyes, would be blamed for not practicing the ancestor worship" expressed resistance against French colonial occupation in Vietnam. A deeper understanding of Vietnam's religious practices and family structure can be gained through research into the country's practice of ancestor worship. Today, with Vietnam's rapid industrialization and urbanization as a backdrop and with fundamental and rapid changes in family structure as a current context, immigration research into how ancestor worship would change is also a remarkable theme.

The veneration of ancestors in Vietnam has a deep historical and cultural foundation in Totemism and other traditional religions like Buddhism and Confucianism. Particularly as a Confucian nation, Vietnam's ancestor worship is firmly based on the patrilineal lineage system of Confucianism. Despite this, previous studies suggest that Confucianism, Buddhism, and bilateral Southeast Asian kinship tradition all shape attitudes toward women's roles in society. Vietnamese Buddhism and ancestor worship place a premium on embracing and celebrating diversity, especially at the bilateral level. Iwai (2005), for instance, highlighted the diversity and complexity of the lineage kinship system in Vietnam, which is responsible for worshipping a common ancestor. For instance, it was confirmed that the bilateral kinship pattern (bacon) was widespread in the south in addition to the patrilineal descent

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group (dong ho). A separate study was conducted in the southern region of Vietnam. According to Nakanishi (1998), although ancestor worship in Vietnam is ostensibly based on the Confucian patrilineal lineage system, it is more commonly practiced on both sides of a family.

This is in line with the comparison to other Confucian nations like Korea and Japan. Regarding ancestor worship, Confucianism was said to have had a negligible effect in Vietnam. It's also a hallmark of the Confucian ancestor worship practiced in Vietnam. In fact, many academics have found disagreements over how to discuss this feature up until this point.

Yet Confucianism was introduced and used to mold Vietnamese culture for over two thousand years. In addition, the concept of filial piety based on patrilineal bloodline, considered the most typical fundamental value of Confucian philosophy, was rarely mentioned in preceding studies about ancestor worship in Vietnam, as will be shown in the following section.

To learn more about the customs associated with ancestor worship in Vietnam, this study analyzed precedent materials, gathered data from the Vietnam Institute of Population, Health, and Development, and conducted fieldwork in Ho Chi Minh City. The study focused on the relationship between Confucianism and ancestor worship, particularly filial piety based on the patrilineal bloodline. With this information, I hope to make headway in clarifying the change toward ancestor worship.

Regarding the organization of this paper, I hope to first analyze the most important influencing factors and distinguishing features of Vietnamese ancestor worship based on previous research in chapters 1 and 2. As it relates to Confucianism, the concept of filial piety will be the focal point of Chapter 3's fieldwork as it relates to the study of traditional ancestor worship, both in terms of its practical aspects and ideological underpinnings. Accordingly, in chapter 4, research is conducted into the change of modern ancestor worship in Vietnam.

Initially, in the first chapter, I'd like to examine the following influence factors on Vietnamese ancestor worship.

THE MAIN INFLUENCE FACTORS TO VIETNAMESE ANCESTOR WORSHIP

According to precedence researches, ancestor worship in Vietnam has been practiced since ancient times. As Prime Minister Pham Van Dong of Vietnam said, the ancestor worship is considered to express the traditional cultural values and typical aspect of the characteristics of Vietnamese people (Duong 2010). Recently, the research practiced largely in the 90's by Vietnam's Institute for religious studies showed the result that the ancestor worship has been practiced the most widely of all in Vietnam, in spite of their own religion (Vn 2003). And the importance of the ancestor worship is expressed through many idioms, such as "based on the support of the ancestor, we grow up/When we get successful, we have responsibility to practice the ancestor worship".

About the influence factors, generally, it has been established that the ancestor worship was formed based on the ancient longstanding trust of immortal soul after death, Totemism, agricultural culture, deep-rooted Buddhism, Confucianism etc. For example, the relationship with Totemism, according to Vietnamese legend, in Vietnam from the reigns of Hung kings (2879BC ~ 258BC), (Lac bird) (considered as mother of Hung king) and dragon (considered as father of Hung king) were considered as the totem of ancient Vietnamese people (Ba 2012; Think 2012). Through it, the ancient concepts of "ancestor", and "ancestor worship", of Vietnamese people were formed. Among that, especially Confucianism was emphasized. Confucianism was first introduced in Vietnam during millenary Chinese domination (Bac Thuoc period, 111 B.C ~ 938).

About it, at this time, Confucianism, considered as the symbol of policy of assimilation of Chinese to Vietnamese people, wasn't adopted actively (Tran 2000). But on the other hand, under the constant and vigorous policy of assimilation in Vietnam, Confucianism had been also spreading. And especially, after gaining independence in the tenth century, Confucianism was adopted actively because of some reasons such as reinforcing the solidarity of social structure of Vietnam, originally being loose structured (Tran 2000). As known, even in the early years after independence, the whole land of Vietnam couldn't be integrated firmly based on villages society units at that time being traditionally closed with high autonomy like small nations (Jamieson 1993). Like that, based on Confucianism, the solidarity of nation was strengthened to reinforce the power to fight off invasion force from the north for nation defense (Ngoc 2002; Tran 2000).

As a result, in about the sixth century, Vietnam society was transformed from original matriarchal structure (Huy 1998) into patriarchal structure. Especially, in family pattern, Confucian rules played fundamental role (Huy 1998). And Confucian ancestor worship, being the symbol of continuity of patriarchal family, was guaranteed by law as state religion and has been practiced officially and widely until now. And in modern time, about after 1975, there is also the activity of creating “new culture”, in which old customs, considered as feudal superstitious thing were eliminated. For example, activities of practicing the religious events of fortune-teller, geomancy were prohibited officially. Furthermore, some religious rituals in family such as funeral rite, were also restricted and prohibited (Takaoka 1999). But besides the people with extreme way of thinking of recognizing things as feudal superstitions and trying to abolish completely like that, there are a lot of people with thought of remaining and developing old traditional culture at that time. It could be observed for example in the rule enacted by the government in 23rd November, 1945 “Stricly prohibiting the abolishment of old traditional things such as pagoda, shrine, saving and keeping documents, concerned with religion, old culture”. And about ancestor worship, in fact, even in the activity of eliminating old culture, ancestor worship rituals were not considered as superstitious thing, and were not prohibited (Suenari 2009). Futhermore, for example, through the sayings such as “the freedom of religion must be protected”, “family is the basic unit of society” of Ho Chi Minh, the law issued in 12/3/2003 with the content that “we have to maintain and develop positive value of the traditional ancestor worship”, it could be seen that the ancestor worship has been maintained and developed.

And under the influences of above factors, the Confucian ancestor worship in Vietnam has the characteristics analysed as follow.

THE CHARACTERISTICS OF CONFUCIAN ANCESTOR WORSHIP IN VIETNAM

In 15th century, from the time Confucianism was accepted as state religion, based on manual of “family rites based on confucian standard of Vietnam”. The Confucian ancestor worship was performed by patrilineal descent group and had become deeply embedded in Vietnamese culture.

Based on Confucian standard, Confucian ancestor worship rites were limited within four generations. The burial prevailed. The practice of ancestor worship ritual, such as three-year mourning ritual, was ruled systematically. Among that, especially the patrilineal lineage concept was emphasized. Specifically, it is expressed through the concept of family continuity formally ritualized in ancestor worship based on patrilineal lineage. The ancestor worship rites have been practiced at household of their son, on death anniversaries, daily holidays. And like the other Confucian countries, the patrilineal descent group (dong ho), being in charge of practicing the patrilineal ancestor worship was established and had become the basic society unit (Shibuya 2000; Tai 1983). Based on it, because the Confucian patriarchy had become deep-rooted as a strong social norm, the predominance of men over women had become popular. To sustain the patriarchal continuity, the daughter-in-law has the most responsibility for giving birth to a son. Many idioms such as Most men write, (having even 10 daughters means having no child. Having just one son means having child), provide a well-known example.

Besides the Confucian characteristics mentioned above, on the other hand, it was also emphasized that compared with Korea, and China, in the Southeast Asian Vietnam, the bilateral characteristics of the ancestor worship were salient.

In 15th century, Confucianism was supported by dynasty in Vietnam. But in fact, the adoption of Confucianism was too late. In 17-18th century, Confucianism still was not popularized among common people (Shimao 2000; Yu 1990). In the 15th century, dong ho was established and developed to prevail. But when compared with Korea, dong ho had not developed to form a class of society like “yangban” (the patrilineal descent group in Korea) (Kazuo, Suzuki, and Suenari 2000; Ngoc 2002). As a result, in spite of the official support of dynasty, in fact, Confucian influence was considered to be restricted. Especially the bilateral factors were emphasized as follow (Shimao 2000; Yu 1990).

Specifically, the division of inside/outside based on patrilineal lineage becomes weak when tracing the male line back to common ancient ancestor (Nakanishi 1998). Especially the bilateral characteristic was expressed clearly in the role of Vietnamese women. For example, about the worshiped ancestor, not only patrilineal ancestor but also unmarried daughter, and divorced women are also worshiped in their own family (Suenari 2009). In the past feudal system, in spite of changing into patriarchy the inheritance right of women was still guaranteed basically by law (Huy 1998; Miyazawa 2000). For example, in Hong Duc code in Le dynasty (1428-1527), there was a rule that beside the inheritance of property for sustaining the ancestor worship of the patrilineal descent group of the oldest son, the properties were decided to be divided equally among sisters and brothers without distinction (Miyazawa 2000). As some idioms such as “no man, woman could” express, in the case of not having son, daughter could take over the right of practicing the ancestor worship rituals. Besides, under the big influence of deep-rooted Buddhism, traditional goddess-centered faith of “Dao Mau”, in Vietnamese culture, it has been pointed out that the Confucian restriction on women’s roles is loose (Van 2003).

Like this, according to the preference researches, when compared with the other Confucian countries, the bilateral factors were emphasized as the main characteristic feature of Vietnamese ancestor worship.

But in fact, as referred above, Confucianism has been the basis of cultural values and social norms, especially on the family side for over 2000 years in Vietnam. It could be said that Confucianism is the important keyword when making survey about the ancestor worship. And in the relationship with Confucianism, from many points of view, for example on the practical side, the division of man’s/woman’s role, the study about ancestor worship has been conducted. But among that, on the ideology side, the filial piety concept almost has not been mentioned before. But in fact, according to many researchers, the filial piety based on the patrilineal lineage, is considered as the most, crucial element of Confucianism, especially on the family side.

It was pointed out that the filial piety concept of Confucianism, rooted in the father-son relationship, is the most fundamental in the virtues of family (Gardner 2014). As Confucius wrote that “Filiality is the foundation of virtue and the root of civilization” (Makra 1961), in the list of morals traditional values, filial piety is considered as the highest virtue in the Confucian tradition (Nadeau 2014).

Particularly, how does the Confucian filial piety concept express? In Confucian thinking, about the essence of filial piety, obedience and honoring to parents, and taking care of aged parents are emphasized (Gardner 2014). Besides, the ancestors, after death, considered as “lived dead person” (Baba 1993), continually share in life and protect the living descendants. In this meaning, the filial piety extends to performing ancestor worship rituals such as death-day anniversaries every year (Nadeau 2014).

Among that, through the filial piety concept, especially ideology of eternal life based on the Confucian patrilineal bloodline is emphasized as the typical feature of Confucianism (Hsiang and Rosenlee 2009). Based on the Confucian patrilineal lineage, originated from the traditional “father-son bloodline” of China, the male descent is determined to succeed to family line. It means that he has the task to practice ancestor worship, and continue the eternal life of the family. Through it, the patrilineal descent group has continued eternally over generations through the male lineage (Hsiang and Rosenlee 2009; Minh 2001; Tomiko 2006). Based on it, there is the distinguishing son preference, and male predominance in Confucian thinking.

Like that, especially on the family side, filial piety is emphasized as the typical feature of Confucianism (Hsiang and Rosenlee 2009). And in order to gain a comprehensive understanding of the traditional ancestor worship, it is necessary to study about it. Furthermore, according to precedence researches about Vietnamese ancestor worship, in the family system, although the bilateral characteristics are emphasized, but the contradiction is also referred. For example, the high status of women in family was pointed out but it is also emphasized that the women have to knock herself out for her husband’s family. Like that, I put the focus point on the filial piety concept of Confucianism, almost not mentioned before to make survey about the Vietnamese ancestor worship. The major sources for this study are from 2013–2015. My fieldwork research was carried out discontinuously for about 8 months from 2013–2015 in Ho Chi Minh City, the biggest city in Vietnam. It was concentrated on the area X where a lot of people coming from the north and center area of Vietnam (considered as the origin of Vietnamese people, maintaining many old traditions until now), are living. The major methods used in research are participant observation, and interview, material analysis, beside case study, concerned materials in the churches, pagodas,

research institution such as institute for Population and Social Studies, institute for family and gender, etc used for data collection.

In chapter 3, in order to provide a comprehensive review of observation of the traditional nature of Vietnamese ancestor worship, through specific cases, on the practical side, I attempt to describe the ancestor worship rituals in details, and as referred above, especially examine ancestor worship on ideology side of the filial piety concept of Confucianism. And based on it, in chapter 4, this paper attempts to examine how the ancestor worship has changed in current context today in Vietnam.

ANALYSIS OF THE CHARACTERISTICS OF VIETNAMESE ANCESTOR WORSHIP

The Ancestor Worship Rituals in the Family

Generally, the worship rituals are performed in the ancestral altar in household or at the graveside of deceased ancestor outside. In my research, in spite of their own religions, in almost all households, the ancestral altars are established and the rituals are practiced as tradition basically (Figure 1 & 2).



Figure 1. Ancestral altar and Buddhist altar (Bao 2012)



Figure 2. Ancestral altar and Christian altar

In seasonal rituals, holiday rites, especially death anniversary day every year, the members of the patrilineal descent group gather and perform ritual. Among the preparation, making offerings of incense, or meal (rice, meat, fruit) at the altar or gravesite is most important. It is based on the belief that the deceased ancestors, would come back home and have meal with the family as usual. And for taking care of the life after death, burning paper money, paper clothes, for ancestors is still widely practiced.

Through analysis of some particular cases, from the practice side, it could be seen the ancestor worship has some main features as follows. In important rituals of family such as wedding, one year-old celebrating party of child, ancestor worship rituals played as the main one.

For example, about the wedding, According to some interviewees, in the wedding ritual celebration in the household of the groom and bride, the family of both sides had to make offerings such as wine, betel and areca (fruit being the symbol of wedding in Vietnam), to ancestral altar of both sides to report and ask permission for letting the girl to get married and go into the groom's house, for taking the girl into the house to become the wife/daughter-in-law in the family of the groom. And my research in Ho Chi Minh city, shows the traditional ritual for expressing the gratitude to the Gods (bee is a triple threat), and making tie between the groom and the bride to become a couple in a traditional wedding, which has been abbreviated and even not practiced.

Like that, the ancestor worship ritual has become the main one in a wedding. It is also observed in the cases of celebrating the party of one-year old child, New Year's ritual, in the family observed in my research.

In all of the rituals, the death anniversary ritual is considered as the most important in the patrilineal descent group. It could be observed through the case below in my research.

In this case of performing the death anniversary ritual of the dead father of husband, Mrs. A (65 years old) and her daughter-in-law were in charge of preparing the offerings (flowers, foods for death ancestors, food for the relatives, etc). They begin to cook from the day before and finish at about 11:00 am. The husband of Mrs.A laid the offerings on the ancestral altar. He lit the incense to invite the death ancestor to come home for having a meal with the family and the relatives (of the husband) came and offered incense and offerings (fruits) on the ancestral altar to pray to the dead ancestor. After that, they shared the offerings of food given to the dead father, had meal, and talked together. Finally, the offerings of fruits were shared with all the participants. It is thought that they could share the good luck, protection from their ancestors together. The practice of the ancestors worship ritual is expressed through some reference Figures 3, 4, 5 as follow.



Figure 3. Ancestor worship ritual in wedding



Figure 4. Ancestor worship ritual in celebrating rite of one-year old child



Figure 5. The food offering for ancestor

Through ritual, the role division between man and woman is not clearly marked. Among that, the role of woman (daughter-in-law) in preparing the offerings for deceased ancestors and food for relatives taking part in the ritual is considered the most important. Besides, the case in which a married daughter takes part and helps her mother with preparing the ritual in her own family, the case in which single dead girl is worshiped in her own house etc were also confirmed in my research. Like that, as referred in precedence researches, on the practice side, compared with the other Confucian countries, the Confucian patrilineal characteristics were not expressed clearly. Furthermore, there are also a lot of Buddhist factors confirmed in the ancestor worship rituals. For example, the funeral is almost performed in a Buddhist way, and the monk's role is big in rituals. Like that, through the practice side observed in my research, it can be said that the influence of Confucianism was expressed restrictedly. But when considering the cases in detail, for example, through the saying of Mrs. A I also help my brother's family in preparing our ancestor worship ritual with the simple things such as laying the flowers, fruits, but my brother's wife is mainly responsible for buying things, preparation of foods, to conduct the ritual, the difference in the role of daughter/daughter-in-law was seen. Compared to a daughter, the daughter-in-law has the main role of preparing the food, the offerings, for ancestor worship ritual in her husband's family. Basically, the ancestor worship is limited to celebrate in husband's patrilineal descent group, and the worshiped ancestors are limited to the patrilineal ancestors. Here, the Confucian patrilineal characteristics were marked basically. This feature is especially expressed on the ideological side, in relationship with the filial piety of Confucianism. It would be observed in the next part.

The Ancestor Worship on the Ideology Side of the Filial Piety Concept of Confucianism

As referred above, in Confucian thinking, the son plays an important role for sustaining of the eternal patrilineal lineage (expressing by practicing the ancestor worship ritual, being the successor of male lineage). Based on it, the pressure of bearing son is strong. It means that the son preference is most common and noticeable.

Concerned with it, in my research, about the role of daughter/son, in daily life, the difference is not readily apparent. But concerned with the ancestor worship, the role of a son is emphasized. Because of it, giving birth to a male child for the patrilineal descent group of husband's family is still a strong primary pressure for the daughter-in-law to fulfill.

For example, it was expressed through some sayings of the interviewees such as I like girl, but after wedding, she cannot worship us after death in her husband's house, if no one takes over the ancestor worship after I pass away, it is a serious impiety not forgiven in my family, That bride didn't know how to bear. She gave birth only to daughters. Poor them, for sure, the first child must be a son. The family has no son. So, family line is extinct.

Besides, the son's preference is confirmed through many cases in my research and also the citing of newspaper articles, and materials collected from concerned institutions. It is still considered as one of big reasons of the contradiction in the family nowadays. It could be seen through the domestic violence incidents nowadays. And people who strongly prefer sons, use a lot of methods to bear a son. Bearing a son by surrogacy was legalized in

2015, by drinking

herbal medicine, and even having a son with an illegal mistress, For example, it could be observed in the case of Mrs K in my fieldwork as follows.

Mrs. K is 45 years old. She and her husband and two daughters are living in Ho Chi Minh now. She and husband are working in the pharmaceutical fieldwork. According to her story, her husband is the eldest son in his patrilineal descent group. So she is so stressed under the strong pressure of giving birth to a son. Every year, in the time family members are gathering, she was even scolded by some words like “you didn’t know how to give birth”, “if you cannot give birth to the successor for dong ho”, you should get out, her husband also blamed her of not being able to give birth to a son. The relationship with husband’s family, husband was getting worse. She also tried many methods but failed in giving birth to a son.

After that, her husband had a son with a young woman illegally. And few years later, her husband and that woman had more, a daughter. She felt very desperate. But she always also kept the thought that because of her fault of not giving birth to a son, her family’s tragedy happened.

And with the strong pressure like that, the illegal custom of getting many wives (one legal wife and illegal wives) in Van Don, Hoai Duc (suburb of Ha Noi capital) also provides a known example. Many families there think that to fulfill the duty of giving birth to a son for husband’s patrilineal descent group, it is necessary to get many wives for sure. It is also considered as a “reasonable cause” to protect them when they are scolded, punished by law (Anninh Thuido 2014).

Concerned with it, according to investigations of research institutes such as Institute for population of Vietnam, it has been pointed out that the pressure of giving to a son the successor of the patrilineal descent group is considered as the main reason for the serious gender imbalance due to sex prejudice in Vietnam nowadays. According to recent statistic, in first 6 months of 2016, the imbalance of Sex Ratio at Birth (SRB), increasing compared to 2015 (128,5/100), is 113,4 boys over 100 girls (Anh and Thuy 2016). It has become a noticeable problem in Vietnam’s society today. Like that, son’s preference is still widespread and deep-rooted in Vietnam society. Among a lot of reasons, the Confucian ancestor worship, based on the patrilineal lineage has supported the son’s preference and patriarchal society in Vietnam until now. And the spirit of Confucian ancestor worship has been strong and has influenced the gender concept, family structure, and in order to better understand this characteristic emphasized in Vietnamese ancestor worship, this study attempts to observe the linkage with the process of adoption of Confucianism in Vietnam.

As referred above, in the Confucian vision, the filial piety concept, based on the patrilineal bloodline, is of central importance in many values. It is expressed through the Confucian ancestor worship, being the symbol of the solidarity and the eternal life through generations of the patrilineal descent group (Sun, 2013). Based on it, the male successor is considered to play an important role.

Concerned with it, in the background of having a lot of wars (about 1500 years) including many wars against the outside enemies in the history, in Vietnam’s culture and society, there is also the tradition of emphasizing the ancestor worship based on the bloodline. It is clearly expressed through the worship of Hung king (the ancestor of Vietnamese people), being the symbol of solidarity of Vietnam society. The concept of sharing the same bloodline has played the vital role to connect all Vietnamese as brothers in a big family with the common ancestor. And it contributed mainly to strengthen the national stability and solidarity needed in many wars for resistance to foreign conquest to protect the country.

And because of the same typical characteristic as analyzed above, especially the Confucian ancestor worship had been deeply adopted in Vietnam.

Like that, as analysed before, for example on the practice side, the patrilineal characteristic of the Confucian ancestor worship is not expressed clearly, but through the strength of son’s preference observed in my research, the ancestor worship in Vietnam could be considered as a typical Confucian patrilineal ancestor worship and is still deep-rooted in Vietnam society until now. It could be considered as a distinguished feature of traditional ancestor worship in Vietnam. But on the other hand, under the background of the progress of urbanization and industrialization, influential factors to the ancestor worship such as family structure, viewpoint of gender, have been changing, and there are also the changes of ancestor worship observed as referred in next chapter.

THE CHANGE OF VIETNAMESE ANCESTOR WORSHIP

In my research, as referred above, the traditional Confucian ancestor worship continues to give influence in Vietnam. But on the other hands, through my research, the changes were also observed.

For example, about the Confucian burial culture, until now, the deep-rooted Confucian burial has been practiced widely. But now, concerned with it, in Ho Chi Minh city, there are some problems such as the scarcity of grave, the serious pollution matter, the rising cost, Besides, the modern technology of cremation has been introduced. Because of it, the rate of cremation has been rising. For example, in Ha Noi, according to the plan of cemetery, the crematoriums will be established in all of the cemeteries, and the rate of cremation would be increased up to 50% in 2030 year (Xay Dung Bao 2015).

Besides, the development of concerned services such as the online service of supplying offerings, the service of supplying the place, tools for the ritual, are also thought to give influence on the way of conducting the ancestor worship, the role division between man and woman, the role of preparing foods and offerings of woman. Among that, especially, the change in the patrilineal lineage ideology of Confucianism is remarkable. As analysed above, emphasizing the concept of patrilineal lineage is the striking feature in the patrilineal ancestor worship in Vietnam. But in the background that the family structure is growing smaller, the concepts of gender equality, the gender consciousness of women about patrilineal concept,...have been changing, the Confucian patrilineal ancestor worship has also showed the changes. It could be seen through some cases in my research and materials collected.

For example, in one case observed in my research, the woman (about 40's years old) also worships her own mother on the same ancestral altar in her and husband's own house. Or in another case, the daughter-in-law (about 30's years old) after getting the permission from her husband' family, also sets up the ancestral altar for her dead mother in her husband's house.

Besides, for example, the famous film such as "Chuyen cua Pao" release in 2004, the program "It is right"? with the topic "Is it ok if after wedding, the woman worships her own parents in the household of husband's family"? of An Vien television program in the November 2013, also referred about the changes in the patrilineal lineage concept of the traditional ancestor worship through the idea of women protesting the pressure of giving birth to a male successor for her husband's "dong ho", asking for conducting the worship of her own parents. Like that, especially the women who suffer from the strong pressure have showed their protest to the old tradition and even asked for the right of expressing their emotion and worshipping their own ancestor.

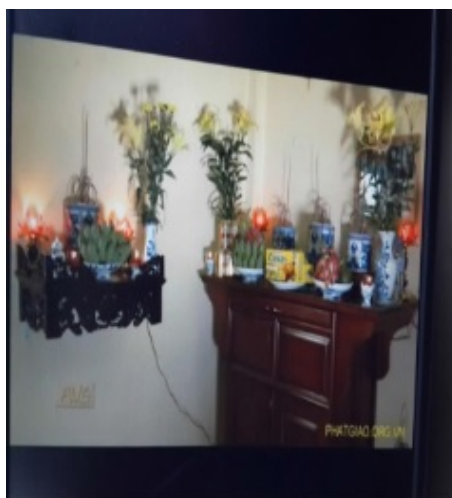


Figure 6. The ancestral altar worshipping the husband and wife's ancestors

Besides, the increase of individualism among youth, the increase of nuclear family are also considered to be able to give influence on the patrilineal lineage concept in the traditional ancestor worship. Similarly, concerned with it, with the support of Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) many solutions for the SRB imbalance, considered

as one of the most serious social problems in Vietnam, are practiced widely. For example, in the policy of gender equality issued in 29/11/2006, fetal sex determination is strictly prohibited to prevent increasing female feticide. Or the policy of economic support for the family having only girls is also being practiced at some places such as Taiping prefecture (Tung and Chau 2013).

Like that, although there are still the questions such as “How many generations of ancestors based on matrilineal line” of woman would be worshiped? concerned with the basic concept of the continuity of lineage but when the Confucian patrilineal ancestor worship has been giving influence continually Vietnam’s society and culture nowadays, it would be considered as the remarkable change.

Summarily, as this study attempted to analyse above, in the particular historical context of Vietnam, the traditional ancestor worship of Vietnamese people has characteristic of emphasizing “the filial piety” based on patrilineal bloodline concept of Confucianism. Based on it, although remaining, Southeast Asian bilateral elements, the Confucian patrilineal ancestor worship has been deep-rooted in Vietnamese society until now. But on the other hand, changes can be observed including the object of worship, the way of practicing the rites, the consideration about lineage concept. Among that the change concerned with the Confucian filial piety concept would be considered as basically noticeable.

DISCUSSION, CONCLUSION RECOMMENDATIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

There are two issues my study, in relationship with Confucianism, attempt to clarify are (1) what is the characteristic of the Confucian ancestor worship of Vietnamese people (it is also considered as the point of controversy in the study about the ancestor worship of Vietnam), (2) based on it, how is the ancestor worship changing in the current change context today. My study is developed based on earlier researches, such as Suenari’s studies about Vietnamese ancestor worship. In order to gain a comprehensive understanding of Confucian ancestor worship, I studied through cases about the ritual of the practice side. Among that, especially this study focused on Confucian filial piety concept based on the patrilineal bloodline, almost not mentioned in the precedence researches.

As a result of my research, for example on the practice aspect, through the strong relationship of woman with her own family even after wedding, the Confucian patrilineal factors were not expressed clearly. It was also pointed out in almost all precedence researches. Concerned with it, it was pointed that, comparing with other societies with strict patrilineal structure based on Confucianism’s patrilineal lineage system, in Vietnam the Confucian patrilineal elements do not play an important role. In family structure, bilateral structure of Southeast Asian society is basically predominant in Vietnam (Fauve-Chamoux and Ochiai 2009).

But, as analyzed above, when studying about the ancestor worship in relationship with Confucianism, the concept of lineage system has played a fundamental role. Like that, it is necessary to put focus point on fundamental filial piety concept of the ideological aspect of Confucianism. As a result, related to the background of emphasizing the concept of ancestor worship based on the blood lineage in the particular history of many wars in Vietnam, through the strength of son’s preference as observed in the research, it could be said that the Vietnamese ancestor worship was characterized based on typical Confucian patrilineal lineage of filial piety concept. Like that, Confucian ancestor worship has been deep-rooted and has influenced widely in Vietnam until now. For example, about the role of woman, although Vietnamese women are known to have high economic independence, in the society, but on family side, as the idiom “daughter belongs to the other family” (her husband’s family)/just daughter-in-law really belongs to family has been still said widely now, women are still undergoing the influence of patrilineal system based on Confucian patrilineal ancestor worship basically.

Based on pointing out the traditional characteristic of Vietnamese ancestor worship, through fieldwork in Ho Chi Minh city of Vietnam, case study, the study attempts to point out the noticeable change of the ancestor worship in Vietnam. As a result, in the background that the structure of family, gender conception, related to the ancestor worship, have been changing nowadays, the changes of ancestor worship were also expressed. For example, with the tendency of simplifying the rituals to adapt for the new lifestyle now, the role of outside expert people (the service company) is getting bigger, and the place, method, of the rituals are changing. It could be predicted that would bring influence on the structure, and the solidarity, of the patrilineal descent group, enhanced by worship of a common patrilineal ancestor. Among that, especially, the change concerned with the patrilineal lineage concept

based on Confucianism, is remarkable. And it would be considered as the important point when making research about the ancestor worship of Vietnam in the future. And through it, the familial organization pattern, the role of Confucianism, gender norm, in Vietnam are also observed.

Limitations and Future Research Direction

There are many limitations in this study. This study was conducted in a limited area and mainly based on a case study. It is hard to generalize the results to the wider society. In order to contribute to gain an entire understanding about the ancestor worship in Vietnam, it is necessary to make further researches on many aspects such as consciousness of religion, concerned policy, comparing with the ancestor worship in the other Confucian countries. Furthermore, when discussing about the change of Confucian ancestor worship, it needs to consider about the diversity, and the similar phonemes, happening in other Confucian social having the similar society structure based on Confucian norms. They would become my next subjects.

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