

Comparative Perspectives on the Depiction of Women in Ancient Viet Nam and Korea's Society: Focusing on the Analysis of Viet Nam's *The Trial at the Dragon King's Palace* (in *Truyen Ki Man Luc*) and Korea's *The Tale of Lady Suro* (in *Samguk Yusa*)

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ABSTRACT

This paper is written by the writer's understanding and analysis of Vietnamese and Korean social history in an effort to explore folklore and spiritual factors, specifically via an attempt to illuminate the similarity and differentiation of each factor. In this light, the paper offers an initial glimpse into the patterns through which Korean and Vietnamese people realized and deciphered natural phenomena in ancient times via Viet Nam's *The Trial at the Dragon King Place* (in *Truyen Ki Man Luc*) and Korea's *The Tale of Lady Suro* (in *Samguk Yusa*). Most importantly, by examining the peculiar aspects of the two stories, the author also manages to imply an observation of the existence and role of women in Korea and Viet Nam's society in the past.

Key words: Korea's societal features, Vietnam's ancient society features, Women in Korean and Vietnam's folklore tales, The story of Suro Lady, The trial at the dragon kind palace

INTRODUCTION

Research initiatives

Starting in the early 1990s, after Viet Nam commenced to open her door to the world, her constant improvement in economic and citizen living standards attracted international attention, especially from neighboring countries seeking favorable economic investments and cultural exchanges. Having attained modernity and economic advancement earlier, Korea particularly found Viet Nam to be a potential partner for large-scale investment, which leads to a deeper requirement of cultural exchanges for mutual substantial development and advancement. In this light, to explore the vestige of East Asian traditions in Viet Nam, classic writings by Vietnamese seem to be a promising source that offers a basic understanding of Vietnamese and Korean cultures in the current flows of deepening cultural and economic exchanges.

For thousand years, Chinese culture played a significant role in influencing her surrounding states. The predominant influence of China vastly contributed to the formation of a China-centered worldview upon the surrounding domains, widely known as Korea and Japan, including Viet Nam. The traces of which Chinese culture has engraved in these countries are not difficult to explore through various analyses of

lifestyles and thoughts, together with many other cultural aspects. Moreover, while fascinated by the glaring success of the economic development of Japan, Korea, and China, scholars tend to emphasize the cultural similarities of those three countries as typical members of the Sino-World; thus, these countries are more likely to neglect Viet Nam due to her backwardness of economic achievements. One of the reasons is that, at present, Viet Nam has been nominated a Southeast Asian member state; however, in the past, her original territory was believed to occupy a large part of mainland China. Apart from numeral factors that included Viet Nam in the Sino-world, her initial domain ensures that Viet Nam is historically relevant as the significant part of East Asian history in general. Given the given cultural and historical contexts, which include concrete needs from both countries, the writer attempts to illuminate the differences and similarities while reading *The story of lady Suro* in *Samgukyusa* by monk Iryeon and *The trial at the dragon king's palace* (*Chuyen doi tung o Long Cung*) in *Truyen ki man luc* by Nguyen Du. Normally, whenever scholars conduct research on folklore stories in East Asian countries, including Viet Nam, *Jiandeng Xinhua* by Qu You for China, *Otogi Boko* by Asai Ryo for Japan, *Gumo Shinhwa* by Kim Si Seup for Korea, and *Truyen Ki Man Luc* for Viet Nam, are four typically selected research sources. The major research

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indicators related to these four compilations are identified by cultural and historical aspects, upon which China's *Jiandeng Xinhua* is considered thematic material for the development of the latter three¹. However, in this paper, the author does not attempt to explore Vietnamese and Korean folklore stories based on those sources. Instead of choosing any folklore tales from Korea's *Gumo Shinhwa*, the writer decides to pick the story *Suro buin* (*The Tale of Lady Suro*) from the monk Iryeon's book *Samgukyusa* (*Memorabilia of the Three Kingdoms*) to make a comparison with (*the trial at the Dragon King's Palace*) from Nguyen Du's *Truyen Ki Man Luc* (*Casual Records of Transmitted Strange Tales*). By selecting archetypal folklore constituents in both tales to elaborate on how traditional Korean and Vietnamese society were depicted, the author strives to present his own understanding and interpretation of two countries' societal features, including the images and roles of women in the given social environment.

Literature review

Comparative studies on Viet Nam and Korea's women constitute an important branch of history, as they particularly present historical linkages between the history of social development in these two countries. In retrospect, the domain of the Korean Peninsula and Viet Nam Baiyue (Bach Viet) experienced a path resembling the fate of the subordinate state of Han China. For China, after the collapse of Gojoseon, the Korean Peninsula was split into four commanderies under direct control by the China Han dynasty. Similarly, Vietnam fell into a colony era in two centuries A.D. Not to mention that before officially annexed into the China Empire, the Korean Peninsula and Vietnam were ruled by two kings of Chinese origin.^a Subsequently, Korea became assimilated with China's dominant thought-Confucianism as early as Viet Nam, evidently from the start of the Unified Silla (668-935) period, even though its earlier introduction to the Korean peninsula was argued to be found during the reign of Goguryeo's 17th king Sosurim (2, p.15). Viet Nam, on the other hand, is argued to be the cradle of Confucianism, yet her local people failed to enhance it and handed it over to Chinese Han people according to Kim Dinh's assumptions (3, pp.15-19). It is not a pure coincidence that women in Korea

^aAs for Vietnam, Zhao Tuo (Trieu Da) was a general moving Southward to occupy the territory of Baiyue (Bach Viet) people under the command of China Qin Dynasty Quin Shi Huang. As for Korean peninsula, Wiman was also a military leader of China Kingdom of Yan. After the establishment of China Han dynasty, he left his home country to settle down in Gojoseon. Later, Wiman managed to usurp power from Gojoseon king.

and Viet Nam became underprivileged in both countries' traditional societies since, in the social structure, which is formulated by Confucian thoughts, women were placed 'second rank' behind men's dominance and even taught to perform as a subordinate entity to their own son.

Research on the atmosphere and social background of Viet Nam and Korea, in which women were depicted, is not rare for scholars conducting comparative studies. For instance, Yang Soo Bae conducted a comparative study on *Truyen Kieu* by Nguyen Du and Korea's *Chunhyang-jeon* in her PhD dissertation. In the study, Yang Bae Soo partially mentioned that Chunhyang "went through all the hardship as evil as she was in hell" (4, pp.74-75) to generalize how women in traditional Korea's society had to struggle to attain the real love they longed for. This interpretation provided a cross line with the fate of women in traditional Viet Nam society drawn upon the suffering life of Thuy Kieu in Nguyen Du's *Truyen Kieu*. As such, both of these works played important roles in reflecting social reality and problems. However, from the author's point of view, Yang Bae Soo did not investigate the roles of women depicted in the two related works but rather analyzed the focal points of artistic constructions such as societal features, narrative methods, and the functions of each character in the flow of her story. Similarly, Mai, Thi My Trinh conducted research on the portraits of Korean women through the media of Korean proverbs⁵. This research offers an affluent source for understanding a variety of images of women in traditional Korean society, which helps to approach the world of thought by Korean people in the past. However, the scope of My Trinh's study is relatively too large to fully illustrate the roles of Korean women within their living circles. My Trinh concluded that women in the Korea Three Kingdom period experienced the syncretism of Buddhism and Confucianism, as women relatively enjoy more rights to become involved in sociopolitical activities than women in later historical periods (5, pp.19-20). Thus, by conducting comparative analysis of *The Tale of Lady Suro* and *the trial at the Dragon King's Palace*, the author tries to reexamine the above statement.

Research methods

This paper is written upon the comprehension of the significance of literature and its relevance as a reflective mirror for one specific societal and cultural environment under certain circumstances. Literature-work is proven to be an indicative device for transforming and conveying what is being regulated by the

social norm at the time of its creation. Due to its explicit interconnectedness with contemporary social phenomena, literature is eligible as a research source for various social studies, such as history and philosophy (6, p.7). Similarly, in his research paper, La and Duy Tan managed to identify the characteristics of North Korea's sociopolitical environment through which the image of young leader Kim Jong Un and his political orientations were depicted (7, pp.1192-1202). Two folklore stories selected as research objects in this paper were originally spread around ancient Viet Nam and Korea in oral form before being collected and edited into written form, as mentioned above. Additionally, according to Phan, Thi Thu Hien, folk tales, either under the theme of myth (story performing as an explanation for the origin of the universe, the birth of human kind, or the formation of societal structure based on the perception of people in primitive periods) or the theme of legend (story functioning as an explication for the emergence of a great man and the outburst of a milestone incident), are similarly expressing cultural and societal foundation and the environment, including the primitive characteristics of one nation and its people's ego at the time of its birth (8, p.5). Hence, in this paper, first, the author explores the discrepancy and similitude of social features between Korea and Viet Nam in ancient times. Second, by comparing and contrasting those features, the writer attempts to seek cultural and historical linkages between the two countries to illustrate how women are perceived and treated as indispensable counterparts in each society.

COMPARATIVE INTERPRETATIONS

An overview of *The Tales of Lady Suro* and *the trial of the dragon king's palace*

The Tale of Lady Suro is a short story compiled in book two of *Samguk Yusa* (*Memorabilia of the Three Kingdoms*). The *Samguk yusa* was thought to be compiled and finished in the 1280s by the Buddhist monk Iryon (1206-1289). It consists of various folklore tales, including nation foundation myths of Korean ancient kingdoms such as Gojoseon, Goguryeo, Baekje, and Silla. Nevertheless, these two works were both published within the rule of the unified Koryeo period when Confucian studies had already stood firmly as an influential state ideology. The *Samguk yusa* was written later than the *Samguk Sagi* (*History of the Three Kingdoms*) by Kim Pu Sik (1075- 1151), which is considered the state history of ancient Korea. The book of state history was compiled by a Confucian scholar. As a book of state history compiled by a

Confucian scholar, *Samguk Sagi* did not contain any folklore tales. *Samguk Yusa*, on the other hand, did the opposite. Iryon collected myths and legends into the book during his travel around the peninsula. As a monk who performed religious and spiritual rites, Iryon seemed to be more receptive to superstitious factors given by all kinds of ordinary people with whom he happened to interact. Although this aspect substantially affected *Samguk Yusa's* incredibility in terms of historical verification, his book is still a valuable source of historical reference that helps us understand the development of Korean people and their societal features within the peninsula (9, p.13-15). Although not much different from other folklore tales, *The Tale of Lady Suro* in *Samguk Yusa* was constructed with mythical factors; its main characters mentioned in the tale are true historical ones, while the story happened in the early 8th century.

Truyen Ki Man Luc (*Casual Records of Transmitted Strange Tales*), titled by his writer, Nguyen Du, is a collection of folklore tales in Viet Nam that were published in the mid-16th century during his retreat from constant social unrest. *Truyen Ki Man Luc* includes 20 short myths and folklore tales written in Chinese classics, covering tales collected from several periods, such as Viet Nam's Ly (1009-1225), Tran (1226-1400), Ho (1400-1407), and Le Dynasty (1428-1527). *The trial at the Dragon King's Palace* in *Truyen Ki Man Luc* occurred during the reign of the Tran Minh Tong period in the early first half of the 14th century.

The tale of Lady Suro: In the time of King Seongdeok of the Unified Silla kingdom, Lord Sunjeong was appointed as a new officer to govern Kangneung Province. On his way to the new office with his wife, both met a mysterious old fellow who appeared from nowhere to offer Lady Suro-Sunjeong's wife the beautiful flower she wanted to have from a high and dangerous cliff. Later, the trip, the lady was suddenly kidnapped by a dragon popping up from the sea surface. Lord Sunjeong was completely desperate, knowing no means to take his beloved back until another old fellow came and gave him advice. With the help of people in the district, the dragon was scared off, and she decided to let Lady Suro free. After her trip to the sea palace, she returned as an incomparable beauty with supernatural vibery and power (10, p.124-126).

The trial at the dragon king's palace: In the King Minh Tong period of the Tran Dynasty, there was a viceroy, named Trinh, who resided in Hong Chau Province (today known as Hai Duong Province). His wife, the vicereine, was called Lady Duong Thi Nhan. One day, the couple traveled to their hometown. On the way, they stopped resting at the port where one temple of

dragon was located. Out of nowhere, two ladies bringing a guild box to the vicereine appeared and said to the vicereine: "My master ordered me to present this to you as a gift of his feelings. He hopes that you will be pleased to be with him in the sea soon" (11, p. 73). Frightened by the message in the red silk ribbon, which was literally a proposal in a written poem, Trinh tried his best to keep his wife distant from rivers, seas, streams, and wherever associated with water. After half a year of enjoying complete safety, the couple became neglected of the threat; they drank by the river. That day, the vicereine was removed. Trinh fell deep into his grief, he resigned from his post, and started to wander around. One day, he met a Taoist master who was sympathetic to his story and decided to help him out. With the help of the master's magic and other spiritual realities, Trinh finally reached the palace of dragon king, where he sought a trial against the dragon governor who illegally took his wife from him. The vicereine was sent back to his husband, while justice was executed upon the misbehaved dragon governor, which cost him his head (11, pp.73-83).

Notably, the tales of *Lady Suro* and *The Trial at dragon king's palace* differ in length in terms of the number of words counted. As such, *The Tale of Lady Suro* is concise, while *the trial at the dragon king's palace* is longer as its story is fully developed in which the story is given; after hitting the peak of the story, the problem is solved. For that, all the answers are open to the readers. For *The tale of Lady Suro*, fewer details are given regarding what happened to Lady Suro during her stay at the dragon's palace, except for her brief reminiscence about wonderful stuff. Despite the visible differences, the two stories share the same framework and constructive materials, which will be discussed in later parts of this paper.

Women's existence as a means of social compromise

From the above summaries, it is noted that there are several constructive materials of both that share significant similarities. Despite the differences in the time of compilation, including the vast geographical distance between Viet Nam and the Korean Peninsula, the cultural correlations are actually not unique considering what has been mentioned about Chinese cultural influences. These two tales include one of the most universal concepts about women's existence in East Asia, which was inadvertently depicted in various related works. It is the idea that "beautiful woman is always the source of problems and maltreated".

Early Vietnamese and Korean works in the literature seem to emphasize this concept by predicting and depicting bad lucks brought about by beautiful women. This interpretation can be found as the mainstream of sexual differentiation and discrimination in the literature, which is mostly relevant to the unchallenged position of masculinity over femininity in Viet Nam and Korea's traditional society. In a masculine dominating society, the power of women's beauty was denigrated and equated with bad lucks and infidelity, by which the society managed to control and oppress the true power of women. This sexual inequality in Vietnamese or Korean classic literature became so universal that women were illustrated as a sign of bad lucks, as the spirit of an unrest deceased woman, and as a human form of mischievous monsters.

In such a male-centered traditional society, love between a man and a woman, including efforts to win back the beloved, is not simply a sense of mutual devotion between a man and a woman in love. In the author's opinion, these efforts should imply the struggle to gain the voice for women while enforcing their status of existence. In these two tales, male protagonists are given the chance to practice their masculine power to bring up salvation to their women. For example, throughout the story flow, Lord Sunjeong and Viceroy Trinh showed their constant attempt to save their loved one and managed to do so until the end of the story. In *The Tale of Lady Suro*, Lord Sunjeong did not encounter much obstruction to finding the answer to the salvation of his wife. The answer came quite simply as an unknown old man appeared and taught him how to force the dragon to release Lady Suro. Indeed, *The Tale of Lady Suro* is too short to deliberate in which ways Lord Sunjeong managed to gather people from the whole region to empower the song-chanting rite. As a lord and a member of the ruling class of his society, it should not be too difficult for him to summon people in his region to come and join him. However, summoning the entire people of the region must not be an easy task to accomplish unless he was respected and loved by his people. Additionally, it was possible that Lady Suro was truly an outstanding woman who was revered by the people of her times; otherwise, why would a loss of an arrogant and disliked lady be a wide-scale matter to the ordinary localities?

In the same context, as narrated in *The Tale of Lady Suro*, after returning from the sea, she appeared to obtain supernatural features, by which it can be assumed that she became more highly regarded by the localities. Therefore, perhaps the chanting voice of the localities, which helped to threaten the dragon, was

not only a means of saving her but also functioned as an auspicious spell that helped to empower her inner power and social status. Moreover, the tragedy that happened to the vicereine in *The Trial at the dragon king's palace* was slightly different but more intense. She was kept in secret at the dragon governor palace for several years, where she had to serve as a legitimate spouse against her will. The trial at *the dragon king's palace* represents an aspect of liberalism that emancipates women from being enslaved by the cruel concept of fidelity in Viet Nam's traditional society. In the tale, though the vicereine had a baby with the dragon governor, she was accepted and welcomed by her husband without any hesitance or hatred. On the other hand, in *The tale of Lady Suro*, Lord Sunjeong raised the question of what happened to her during her sojourn in the sea. Lady Suro did not mind her husband's doubts. Instead, she did not lose confidence, and her outstanding appearance after the incident apparently further boosted her integrity. While the vicereine in *Truyen ki man luc* was described as a high-class but secular woman, Lady Suro was illustrated as slightly more than an ordinary high-class woman; she was upgraded to an image of Shaman according to the description at the end of the story. In this respect, it is noted that in Korea and Viet Nam's traditional society, women of the lower class could be victimized by the struggle for power within their society, and women of higher classes were not excluded from the fate of their social status. From both stories, it can be surmised that, no matter which position a woman belonged to, when there were power conflicts and struggles between men in a masculine society, women were prone to becoming the target of competition and the tool for social compromise.

Women as a means for justice requests in an unjust society

The Tale of Lady Suro and *the trial at the dragon king's palace* did indicate conflicts and injustices hidden in Korean and Vietnamese traditional society. Folklore tales were constructed by a hybrid world of human and supernatural existence where human beings and supernatural deities coexisted, interacted, and struggled for their own benefit.

The supernatural world, in ancient times, played a key role in helping explain numerous natural phenomena; at the same time, it existed as an unchallengeable force for human beings in the secular world. Generally, folklore tales and myths describe human beings as weak parties in comparison with their supernatural counterparts. Nonetheless, those tales never fail

to provide human beings with a means of overcoming, conquering, or even taking revenge upon the supernatural. The fact that human beings, described as victims of supernatural powers, also revealed that injustice happened in a society where several factions coexisted to compete. In this environment, the human had no power, while the supernatural obtained unimaginable capacities to influence human beings' fates.

In *The Tale of Lady Suro* and *The Trial at dragon king's palace*, Lord Sunjeong and Viceroy Trinh were introduced as ruling class members of human beings; however, even within their human beings' world, they did not hold the power to secure whatever they owned. This is because there should always be people who rank higher than these two men in society. These people certainly held more powerful means to impose their will upon the less privileged. Lord Sunjeong and Viceroy Trinh plunged into desperation when facing the scenario that their loved one was dragging away. Viceroy Trinh left his position to become a wanderer; losing his mind and hope of life, he knew who illegally took his wife from him, but he was too powerless to find any method to gain his wife back. It was not until he accidentally met a Taoist master who later addressed himself as a person from heaven that Viceroy Trinh became determined to seek justice for his family.

The two stories illustrate human beings' attempts to seek balance and equality with supernatural entities. The sea creatures in *The Tales of Lady Suro* seemed to be scared off by the local people's song. The song here can be seen as a compelling shaman song that helps human beings maintain balance and equality with supernatural existence. In *the trial at the dragon king's palace*, due to its length, which offers more space for deliberating content, Viceroy Trinh was advised to collect evidence against the dragon governor's acts before addressing his problem to the dragon king to ask for the trial. During that process, Viceroy Trinh also received support from several members of the supernatural world, in addition to the Taoist master he met from the beginning. After investigating Viceroy Trinh's case, the dragon king ultimately executed justice in Viceroy Trinh's favor and imposed strict punishment on the dragon governor, who was found guilty of misconduct and abuse of power. The dragon king rebuked the governor for not using his power properly. Instead of serving human beings' life as his main task, the dragon governor utilized his power to impose threats and suffering upon human beings (¹¹, p.80). In this light, it can be inferred that

the trial at the dragon king's palace is a full-fledged portrait of human beings' society. As was said to happen in the early 14th century of the Tran Dynasty, *a trial at the dragon king's palace* should imply the act of power abuse by officials in provinces and areas located far from the capital where the king was the only hope for ordinary people to seek justice. Moreover, in the story, one can observe that the process of seeking justice was not an easy task, not only the fact that Trinh is also a member of the ruling class in the regime.

By analyzing the tale of the lady Suro and *the trial at the dragon king's palace*, it can be seen that the ancient society depicted in folklore tales in Korea and Viet Nam, where human beings and supernatural forces coexisted, was constructed by means of negotiation between the secular world and the spiritual world. David R. McCann defined this process as "negotiating authority". As such, in *The Tales of Lady Suro*, negotiation was carried out when Lady Suro was offered the unreachable flower by a mysterious old man. The beautiful flower was seen by the ocean. According to the description in the tale, the flower was not present in the hands of human beings. Indeed, it can also be theorized that the flower belonged to the sea creatures. When Lady Suro strongly longed for it, the old fellow, from nowhere, appeared to offer her the flower and sang one song with the following verse:

"By the deep-red rocks

Letting the cow go,

If you will not be shy of me

May I pluck the flowers and have you taken them?" (9, p.19)

In the short story of Lady Suro, the old fellow appeared twice. The second old man, who gave Lord Sunjong advice, appeared to be a wise old man whose acts and saying seemed to be more human than the first mysterious one. Therefore, the first old man can be the sea creature himself in human shape disguise or a servant of the dragon governor who was sent to convey the message to the lady: "If you will not be shy of me, may I pluck the flowers and have you take them?" (9, p.19). The first old man implicitly revealed his origin, as the phrase "by the deep-red rocks" should be the implication of where he came from. Thus, obviously, he came from the same place as the splendid flower seen in the story context.

Likewise, in *the trial at the dragon king's palace*, two ladies appeared from nowhere, approaching the Vicereine with a proposal poem. Similarly, the sea creatures in both tales attempted to offer beautiful and precious goods to the ladies. Both of them did not understand the threat and accidentally accepted the

offerings, which brought them to an unexpected engagement with the negotiation with the supernatural creatures. As such, they were kidnapped by sea/water creatures against their will. This scenario also revealed that women in ancient times, as well as in the given context of folklore tales, were not fully endowed with proper rights to either choose or defend their wants.

Women in world history, especially in the literature, are appreciated for their beauty and charm. In East Asia, specifically in East Asian early literature, it seems that women are considered blessed if their beauty is more human-like, while a prominently beautiful face could become a curse that usually attracted the possession of bad lucks, evil spirits, and the obsession of supernatural creatures upon their beauty. Likewise, Vietnamese people in the past preferred motherly beautiful women to jealousy-instigated beautiful women and believed that overly beautiful women can bring bad lucks to their loved ones, including their families. Upset with that belief, a family that had daughters had the practice of tittleing their daughter an ugly name to avoid bad lucks and deceived bad spirits seeking her beauty.

In these two stories, there are negotiations of authority between the secular world and the supernatural world. The song of local people is the tool of negotiation in searching for balanced power with the sea creature:

"Sea spirit, sea spirit, let Lady Suro go,

How great is the crime, to take another's wife?

If you refuse to give her back,

We will go into the water to catch you, and cook you, and eat you" (9, p.19)

In this song, the local people expressed their determination, created a sense of communal solidarity, and threatened the negotiation with the supernatural force.

"We" in Korean is an interesting term. The "we", as seen in the translation by Mc. The cann can be spoken by a single person in the Korean language while also conveying the feeling of strong communal bonds. Considering this "we" in *The story of Lady Suro*, it is possible to conclude that although supernatural power overwhelms human beings' ability, by consolidating, solidarity, and communal connectivity, human beings can reach equilibrium with their counterparts in terms of authority in the world they share. In *the trial at the dragon king's palace*, the negotiation of authority is, otherwise, projected with more sophisticated details. The negotiation of authority for balanced power between human beings and supernatural creatures is decided by the laws of dragon

kings. *In contrast to the story of Lady Suro*, in *The Trial at the dragon king's palace*, laws of the supernatural world seem to dominate and rule human beings' world. Why did Viceroy Trinh not seek justice by the laws of the human king? In the story, there was no hope from any bits of help from other human beings, which implied that no sign of communal solidarity was created during the crisis of Trinh's family.

CONCLUSION

Two stories were built based on folklore materials with affluent ancient superstitious and spiritual factors. The existence of beautiful women in Korea and Viet Nam's folktale was believed to attract bad lucks, which caused misery; as in both stories, their outstanding appearance was illustrated as the main reason for their being kidnapped to the ocean. The misconduct of dragons in these two stories indicated the abuse of power by the dominating factions in ancient society where humans and the supernatural once co-existed. However, even in that society, the voice and effort of people accompanied by the support of righteous factions could eventually lead to final justice in the absurd situation, which in broader terms placed the significance of human effort and the dream of conquering nature in ancient times. Therefore, in the writer's opinion, women's depiction does not simply imply the image of the unprivileged in society but rather plays a major role as a compromise intermediary. According to the results of this paper, it can be concluded that the roles of women pictured in Vietnam and Korean folklore tales are not necessarily underrated. Finally, when comparing the social status of Korean women in the Three Kingdom Period, when the harmonious combination of Buddhism and Confucianism within society was still prevalent, women enjoyed the right to participate in authority negotiation. Even though they seemed to be less privileged than men in the same society, they were compensated with even greater respect in the case of Lady Suro. Similarly, the compensation for Viceroy Trinh's wife after her incident was a breakthrough case against the strict idea of social ethos for women in a society of Confucianism such as Viet Nam in the 14th century.

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

None.

CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

The authors declare no conflicts of interest upon the publication of the research.

AUTHORS' CONTRIBUTIONS

The Authors declare exact each individual responsibility and contribution to the research as explained in the hereafter text:

+ La, Duy Tan is the main author as he raised the idea for this research, built the structure, and allocated tasks for each co-author; thus, he performs as the key communicator for all the co-authors during the process of writing. He is also responsible for making the cohesion and coherence of all contents throughout the paper while being fully in charge of part 2 – 2.2 and 2.3 for this paper.

+ Phung, Thi Thanh Xuan contributes to the writing of part 1- Introduction, part 3- Conclusion, and reviews the language use throughout the whole text.

+ Nguyen, Trung Hiep is the main author for part 2- 2.1, and helps to search for appropriate references for this paper.

+ Le, Thi Ngoc Cam reviews the language use, the structure and contents conveyed in the whole text, and particularly, helps to check on citations.

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