

ISSUES ON POWER CONTROL OF EARLY LE DYNASTY FROM THE POINT OF VIEW OF RESPONSIBILITIES AND OPERATIONS OF SUPERVISOR GROUP

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Abstract. Under Early Le Dynasty, the supervisor group includes the Censorate, The Six Offices of Scrutiny and The Constitutional Agency. Through the characteristic features of their position as “word keeping” mandarins, they have had a significant contribution to the king’s maintenance of discipline and upholding of the court’s laws, therefore increasing the central government’s control and supervision over the mandarin group. This article focuses on the position, the tasks and the activities of the supervisor group in the Early Le Dynasty. The research of the model of power supervision through a supervisor group will evoke valuable experiences and lessons that need to be drawn from the present practice.

Keywords: Early Le Dynasty, the supervisor group, the Censorate, the Six Offices of Scrutiny, the Constitutional Agency.

1. Introduction

The issue of power control was raised in the process of building the dynastic bureaucracy of the absolute monarchy. In order to ensure the implementation of this issue as effectively and consistently, the Court of Le Dynasty completed it by establishing a supervisor group (言官) in charge of inspecting and supervising mandarins at all levels. This group was established from the central to the local levels including the Censorate (御史台), The Six Offices of Scrutiny (六科) and The Constitutional Agency (宪司). Through the characteristic features of their position as “word keeping” mandarins (to advise and dissuade the king; to expose the wrong doings of other mandarins), the Early Le Dynasty’s supervisor group has had a significant contribution to the king’s maintenance of discipline and upholding of the court’s laws, therefore increasing the central government’s control and supervision over the mandarin group.

In China, the supervisory issue has been long ago mentioned in the researches on the history of bureaucratic institutions. Since ancient times, the bureaucratic society who were in the position to advice, dissuade and accuse, (in short, the counsellors) have been established. By the time of the Ming Dynasty, the supervisor regime has been perfected.

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The research studies done by Li De Fu (1982) [1], Cai Ming Lun (2007) [2], Hu Zhang Chun (2013) [3], Xie Gui An (2019) [4] etc. have had a thorough investigation into the formation as well as the changes of the operating mechanism and the relationship of the mandarins with the central and local governments. In Vietnam, this is a new problem that has not been approached by many scholars. The research studies of specialists like Thai Hoang, Bui Quy Lo (1995) [5], Pham Duc Anh (2006) [6] and Ngo Duc Lap (2012) [7] have an overview of the mandarin inspection, supervision system of feudalism in general and the Le Dynasty in particular but did not approach on supervision. Some articles published by Phan Ngoc Huyen in the last 10 years such as “The Censorate of the Early Le Dynasty” (2010) [8], “The Fate of supervisors in the Early Le Dynasty: Perspectives from the relationship of the king and the counsellors” (2016) [9] and “Research on the organization and operation mechanism of the Six Offices of Scrutiny in the Early Le Dynasty” (2017) [10] also have accessed each part of the supervision system.

The present article is grounded on the inheritance and development of the more or less relevant published researches, and focuses especially on the position, the tasks and the activities of the supervisor group in the Le Dynasty including the mandarins’ working in the Censorate, The Six Offices of Scrutiny and The Constitutional Agency with the approach from the perspective of power control in the mandarin state. The research of the article will bring meaningful reflection into the inspection, supervision and control of power in nowadays Vietnam.

2. Content

2.1. What are the constituents of the supervisor group?

The term “supervision” refers to the main function of the specialized mandarins for “word keeping” (to advise, to dissuade, to accuse, etc.).

In other words, the connotation of the word “supervisors” refers to the mandarins who have the right to recommend state affairs, dissuade the emperor, or accuse law-breaking acts of other mandarins. In terms of the constituents of a supervisor group, the majority of Chinese researchers believe that the supervisor was either composed of the Supervising Secretary and the Thirteen Investigating Censor; or more broadly defined by the Supervising Secretary and the Censorate. Cai Ming Lun (2007) in his Ph.D. dissertation specialized the study in the supervisor group of the Ming Dynasty pointed out that the supervisor group was constituted by the Censorate and Counsellor, including the Supervising Secretary, acting on The Six Offices of Scrutiny and Censors of Tribunal, acting on The Censorate [2; 11]. This point of view, of course, can be considerate as being reasonable because the regime of the Three military, judicial and fiscal agencies during Ming Dynasty have included the Provincial Administration Commission, Provincial Surveillance Commission and The Regional Military Commission. The Provincial Surveillance Commission held the position of judicial management and imprisonment. Meanwhile, the regime of the Three agencies in the Early Le Dynasty included The Regional Military Commission, Provincial Administration Commission and Constitutional Agency. One of the positions of the

Constitutional Agency in the Le Dynasty was to accuse the wrongdoings of mandarins in its circuit.

In the book titled *The ordered annotated imperial text completely reflects the history of Viet* is noted: “Mandarins in the Censorate take the responsibility of accusing the mandarins with unauthorized acts in the imperial city and the outside circuits: Mandarins in the Constitutional Agency take the responsibility of reporting honest words, impeaching illegal acts and questioning lawsuits in their own circuit. Therefore, we should call these mandarins by their characteristic feature of “speech position” mandarins” [11; 554]. According to this understanding, in addition to the supervisor mandarins acting in the Censorate and The Six Offices of Scrutiny at the central level, the mandarins acting in the Constitutional Agency in different circuits, can also be considered as the supervisor mandarins in the localities. Thus, considering the specific situation under Early Le Dynasty, the supervisor group was constituted by three divisions of the Censors of Tribunal, Supervising Secretary and the Constitutional Envoy, and the corresponding agencies were The Censorate, The Six Offices of Scrutiny and Constitutional Agency.

The Supervisor group is also known by other (equivalent) terms such as “Remonstrant” (台諫官), “Guardians of the customs and laws” (风宪官) or “System of Supervising Secretaries and Censors” (科道官). Supervisor group, in addition to the role of dissuading and admonishing the emperor in the state affairs, was also considered the “eyes and ears” of the king in order to help the central Dynasty to control the issues of the law conformity, morality and corruption of the mandarins at all levels.

2.2. What are the responsibilities of the supervisor group?

Regarding the general responsibilities of the supervisors, people often associate them with the words “accuse”, “impeach”, “admonish”. According to Sino-Vietnamese Dictionary, the word “accuse” (劾) was used to indicate illegal behaviors and the word “impeach” (弹劾) was used to expose a crime (of another person). If a mandarin made a mistake and confessed it, that was called self-impeach (自劾). The word “admonish” (谏) was used with the meaning to prevent and recommend others to correct their mistakes.

With such specific responsibilities, the Le Dynasty's supervisor group had many functions and common tasks, operated under the mechanism of decentralization or joined the review of the community.

The most important common function of all three of these divisions which must first be mentioned in this article is the impeachment of hundreds of mandarins. The supervisors of the Censorate, The Six Offices of Scrutiny and the Constitutional Agency, depending on their positions and tasks assigned, always had to follow closely the state affairs to understand the situation, see the gains and losses, the right and wrong doings of the mandarins. The following principle was the unified principle from the Early Le Dynasty to Le Trung Hung Dynasty later: The Censor is a “spy” position of the Dynasty to correct the discipline and maintain the strict demeanor. The Censor is allowed to report if the Chancellor are at fault, the generals have made a mistake, the mandarins have illegal acted and the state affair is shortcoming. Judicial Commissioner of Investigating Censor is incharge of discussions, judgement, records or reviews.

Investigating Censor is in charge of the impeachment. If the state affair is found wrong and the mandarins have made mistakes, the impeachment must be implemented. Interior Section is responsible for the impeachment. If Ministry of Justice does not judge fairly, Censors also must place objections. If the local Constitutional envoy from the Constitutional Agency finds that the mandarins of the municipalities and districts do illegalities in their county, they must promptly report and impeach them.

In addition to the impeachment, all three divisions were allowed to participate in the discussions and review the performance of the mandarins. On that basis, a list was made to recommend the promotion, transfer or dismissal of unqualified mandarins. In the 9th year of reign of Hong Duc (1478), the Emperor dismissed the mandarins and included three things, which emphasized that: each department head ought to select the mandarin to be dismissed fairly and judiciously without private affection so that people could sincerely believe. If the selection was not true, the Six Offices of Scrutiny, the Censorate and Constitutional Agency needed to review and report for punishment [12; 472]. By the 12th year of reign of Hong Duc (1481), the Emperor once again reiterated this position of the mandarins in the Six Offices of Scrutiny, the Censorate and Constitutional Agency: “The mandarins race against each other to make a profit because among responsible mandarins, some people are not good at speaking, some people are stupid and have no talent, others criticize too much and they were slurred. Mandarins are corrupted and the people make complaints therefore this bad thing must be eliminated. From now on, the mandarins of the system of Supervising Secretaries and Censors must be selected fairly, who should be released, who should be changed, need to be reported for execution to eliminate previous bad things” [12; 484-485].

In addition, the hearing of the bad situation of bureaucracy and harassment in localities also requires a joint effort of the whole supervisor group. In the 2nd reign of Canh Thong (1499), the Emperor issued a decree to the guards and workers of the agencies and departments that says that: When there were commencement and construction works such as building the Imperial Household Department, Store of arms, temples and pagodas, if the mandarins incharge of the guards, departments and agencies urge the officers, beat people, claim money, cause vices such selling or swapping, The Six Offices of Scrutiny, the Censorate, Constitutional Agency and Drafter of the Brocade Guards will investigate and punish [13; 20-21].

On the other hand, the examination of the criminal case is also a common thing that all mandarins in the Censorate, The Six Offices of Scrutiny and Constitutional Agency can participate in the examination to ensure that the law is strictly enforced. At the beginning of King Le Hien Tong Dynasty, the emperor also issued a decree to thoroughly grasp the followings: “From now on, the Ministry of Justice, the *Chamberlain for law enforcement* and the mandarins will judge the internal and external cases. Whenever any doubts or dilemmas are found, they must be handed according to the deadline. If anyone dares to delay the deadline, at the end of each year, the mandarin incharge, together with the Ministry of Justice, Judicial Commissioner of Investigating Censor, and Constitutional Agency must examine the case and report it to punish them according to the law. If tolerance acts are implemented due to private affection, when another person reports, they will be punished” [13; 10-11].

Of course, besides the general responsibilities according to the coordination mechanism and the community as mentioned above, each division of the supervisor group has its own responsibility depending on the rank and characteristics of its work.

In the supervisor divisions, the Censors besides the responsibility of advising the Emperor on the rule of governing the country as the Nguyen historians wrote: “*Help the king correct mistakes, wrongs, eliminate evil, praise good, etc.*” [11; 461], they also retained the supreme right to supervise all activities of mandarins from central to local levels. The Censors were considered to be the Emperor's spy, helping the Dynasty to correct discipline and maintain the dignity. Mandarinate regulation decree dated September 26th, 1471 of the Hong Duc Dynasty clearly stated that the responsibility of the counsellor is to “rectify all the mistakes of the mandarins, to clarify all the hidden matters of the people” [14; 367].

Categorized records of the institutions of successive dynasties (历朝宪章类志) has written more specifically about the power of the Censorate as follows: “Impeach mandarins, talk about the current state affairs. The mandarins who do illegally and defective current state affairs are considered or presented, and in discussions of the achievements of the government offices... and questioning lawsuits about bullying the nobles and abusing the managers” [15; 585].

Meanwhile, the main task of the mandarins of The Six Offices of Scrutiny is to supervise the Six Ministries. In the Mandarinate regulation decree of the 2nd year of reign of Hong Duc (1471), Le Thanh Tong clearly stated this task as follows: “Import and export is the responsibility of the The Ministry of Revenue, Spending is related to The Office of Scrutiny for Revenue. The Ministry of Personnel recruits and recommends talents, The Office of Scrutiny for Personnel has the right to reject. The Ministry of Rites rectifies the erroneous rituals, The Office of Scrutiny for Rites impeaches errors. The Office of Scrutiny for Justice examines the right or wrong judgment of Ministry of Justice, The Office of Scrutiny for Works checks if the Ministry of Works is diligent or lazy” [14; 367].

As a central supervision agency, directly assisting the king, The Six Offices of Scrutiny was in charge of impeaching and pointing out the illegal behavior of the mandarins of Six Ministries. The decree issued in the 11th year of reign of Hong Duc (1480) emphasized: “Examination has become a custom to distinguish between bad and good people and show admonition. Now the Ministry of Personnel and the mandarins of inner and outer government offices should follow the custom. If it dares to ignore the customer, the section will be in charge of examining and reporting for punishment in accordance with the law” [12; 480]

In addition to the main task of supervising the Six Ministries, official regulations in the Hong Duc Dynasty also stipulates: “The Six Offices of Scrutiny to examine the hundreds of agencies”. The evidence is that in the 9th year of reign of Hong Duc (1478), King Le Thanh Tong decreed the mandarins of the The Six Offices of Scrutiny to look up from the 2nd year of reign of Quang Thuan (1461) up to now, the mandarin who committed corruption and were demoted and the generals who stealthily collected the money of soldiers from 10 guan or more, were forced to quit their jobs.

This shows that The Six Offices of Scrutiny is also allowed by the king to offer criticisms and impeach all other organs and mandarins in the state apparatus. The award of this additional position helps to increase the status and responsibility of the mandarins of that office.

The local Constitutional Envoy and the Vice Constitutional Envoy of the Constitutional Agency in thirteen Circuits got specialized in keeping the presentation of right and wrong words, investigating and impeaching illegal acts, investigating and questioning the litigations, reviewing the merits of the mandarins and marching in their own county.

In the 4th year of reign of Hong Duc (1473), the specialized duties of the Constitutional Agency were recorded: Constitutional Envoy, Vice Constitutional Envoy take the responsibilities to report, question, examine, sue, compare, review, judge and march. Up to the seventeenth century later, the responsibilities of the mandarins of the Constitutional Agency was repeated like in the Hong Duc Dynasty: if there were unusual events in the country such floods and droughts, all ought to be reported; it was necessary to report and impeach the illegal and perverse civil agencies, Defense Command Governor, *The Regency* who do not prohibit malefactors; march in the county, inquired the people on sufferance; investigate the cases of bullying and the detention of nobles, etc. This shows that the two basic responsibilities of the Constitutional Agency were to investigate hidden matters, injustice of the people and to inspect and supervise mandarins of the local yamen.

Thus, the Constitutional Envoys, along with the Censor and the mandarins in the Censorate, have formed a supervisor group at both the central and local level, to contribute to the harassment of bad habits and protect the integrity in the mandarin.

2.3. How does supervisor group exercise their control of power?

During the development of the Early Le Dynasty, the majority of the supervisors made an effort to properly fulfill their assigned duties in clarifying the mistakes of the mandarins against abuse and corruption of power.

With the function of the supreme supervision agency, the Censorate always tried to fulfill the responsibility to supervise, monitor and impeach the shortcomings and wrongdoings of the civil and military mandarin system from the central to local level. This has been recorded by the Le Dynasty's written history through many following specific events:

In December of the 1st year of reign of Thieu Binh (1434), the Counsellor Phan Thien Tuoc, submitted a memorial to impeach the *Commander* Le Thu for crimes: "There is a state funeral, but he get married, build a large house, and send family members to leave the country to stealthily trade with foreigners" [12; 323-324].

In the 4th year of reign of Thieu Binh (1437), the Counsellor Dinh Canh An impeached the crimes of the Palace Bureau of *the Commander in chief* Ha The, Pham Noi, and Le Lung, who did not strictly govern the court ritual. Each of them was fined 80 strokes of beating with the heavy stick.

In the 6th year of reign of Thai Hoa (1448), the Counsellor Dong Hanh Phat accused Director Bui Thi Hanh for being mischievous and have despised the law:

“Hanh is a mischievous jack sprat in the Thai To Dynasty, daring to say the words “Thuan Thien” which was deposed. During the Thai Tong Dynasty, he relied on black magic, secretly ordered to kill gibbons for blood, to cover up the catastrophe of heaven. When Your Majesty was in mourning, suddenly having a natural disaster, Thi Hanh made up excuses for yin and yang conflict, and lied that it arises from state funeral, so he asked to shorten the day to mourning to eliminate the catastrophe of heaven. Considering his actions, it was a deception. I am afraid that the next generation of people told me to use the yin and yang as Assistant Administrator, fortune tellers to be Pacification commissioner, starting from your majesty, it has ever had before”. The king immediately ordered the dismissal of the title of Thi Hanh” [12; 373].

The above events show that the Censorate plays an important role in detecting and promptly pointing out the wrongdoings of the mandarins, helping the king to rectify the discipline in the Dynasty.

Mandarins who crave for power, refuse to retire to go the hometown but being lazy are also impeached by the mandarins in the Censorate, for example, the case of Doan Cung and Hoang Nghi. The history of the Le Dynasty wrote: “Counsellors Luu Thuc Khiem and Nguyen Cu Dao impeached Doan Cung and Hoang Nghi who hold the position of high-ranking mandarin they are lazy and not good, could not help anything, aged over 70, dim eyes, deaf ears, still greedy and shameless, should be arrested. Then Doan Cung and Hoang Nghi asked for the resignation” [12; 370].

In fact, the responsibility of detecting and exposing the wrongdoings and abuse of power of civil and military mandarins undertaken by the Censorate does not exclude any exceptions or “forbidden areas”, even with the top of the bureaucracy system as Chancellor Le Sat was an example. During his time in charge of the Chancellor, Le Sat killed Luu Nhan Chu to emerge from power, disqualified Trinh Kha, dismissed Bui U Dai but no one dares to say, then the counsellors Dinh Canh An, Nguyen Vinh Tich bravely impeached Le Sat for his autocratic habit and attempt to kill the loyalists. In the end, Le Sat was punished to commit suicide at his own house [11; 340].

After Le Sat was deposed, a series of close mandarins considered Le Sat's factions such as Duy Dang Dac, Le Van Linh, Le Linh, Le Thu, Le E, Le Hieu, and Le Bang were also punished, only the counsellor Bui Cam Ho, who had bravely exposed the crime of Le Sat, was allowed to restore his old position.

In addition to fight against acts of abuse, factionalism, the counsellor of the Early Le Dynasty also had the responsibility to point out the corruption and harassment acts of the mandarin group. This position was encouraged by the kings of the Early Le Dynasty. King Le Thanh Tong once allowed the counsellors to consider: “Those who have previously committed corruption without any traces but everyone knows and those who does not act embezzlement must be listed and submitted to the Counsellor to consider and advise” [12; 484]. This policy was applied up to the time of King Le Hien Tong and continued to be emphasized: Mandarins who were corrupt, are lazy and deceptive with real evidence should be reported to the ministry for consideration and punishment in accordance with the law. Mandarins who do not report dishonestly acts or determine wrong punishment should be reported and impeached by the mandarins of sections and agencies. Thanks to such drastic policy of the Dynasty, many illegal acts or

cases related to embezzlement and corruption have been handled. For example, Vice Censor-in-chief Pham Du impeached Le Quat and Nguyen Nguyen Thong for “refusing to comply with the law, sending soldiers to do his private work in the military festival this year for earning illegal money, he should be investigated and punished for admonishing others” [12; 383].

Only in 1467, the king approved to arrest and dismiss orders for a series of mandarins committing the above crimes. The king ordered the arrest of the Investigating Censor Quan Cong Thiem for being accused of tolerating the bribe; the dismissal of the Guardian Vice General Le Han Dinh for his embezzlement and incompetence; the assignment of the Minister of Justice Do Tong Nam to the Judicial Agency for punishment for bribery; and the dismissal of Minister Nguyen Vinh Tich for bribery and wrong report [12; 415, 420, 423] etc.

For the mandarins of The Six Offices of Scrutiny, controlling power over the Six Ministries were faced with the main task. The Chief Supervising Secretary and Supervising Secretary, although the hierarchy was not high (seven and eight grades), held the important power and had the right to monitor and impeach the illegal behavior of the Minister and Vice Minister (honors of junior the second rank and junior of the third rank).

In fact, the specific jobs in order to perform the role of supervising and impeaching the mandarins violating the law and discipline of the Six Administrative Sections have been recorded by the Le Dynasty politicians through many events. For example, in March of the 8th year of reign of Quang Thuan (1467), Supervising Secretary of The Office of Scrutiny for Works, Luong The Vinh, submitted a memorial to expose the crime of the Guardian, General Bui Huan, for getting married with a daughter of his friend when being in mourning for his wife, this behavior betrayed spousal affection, disregarded code of behavior and disordered human morality [12; 418].

In April of that year, Chief Supervising Secretary Trinh Thiet Truong impeached a mandarin of the Ministry of Justice, Do Tong Nam, for bribery and the mandarin of the Ministry of Personnel, Nguyen Nhu Do, for recommending the wrong person. They were supposed to be assigned to the Judicial Agency for punishment in accordance with the law. Also in 1467, Chief Supervising Secretary of The Office of Scrutiny for Personnel, Nghien Nhan Tho, was sent to Kha Lac area, Yen Bang town to investigate the fact that the Commander in Chief of Yen Bang area, Le Hoi, could not anticipate the fight with enemy and caused a big loss in the army of General Khuat Da. Both of these men were questioned, arrested and taken to the imperial city [12; 420-727].

Particularly, the Constitutional envoy and Assistant Constitutional envoy in circuits were concurrently managing both the local judiciary and impeachment, so their responsibility was quite heavy. The presence and operation of the mandarins in the Constitutional Agency created a balance in the power between the Regional Military Agency, the Provincial Administration Agency and the Constitutional Agency in the same circuit. That was a great step forward of the Early Le Dynasty when it has replaced the individual monopoly mechanism with the mechanism of dividing power into three different divisions. The Constitutional envoys such as Nguyen To, Nguyen Tu Chi (appointed in 1486), Duong Truc Nguyen (appointed in 1492), Nguyen Ba Tuan

(appointed in 1508), Nguyen Mau (appointed in 1513) etc. has performed their local responsibilities quite well. Not only investigating people and impeaching bad habits, but also the mandarins of the Constitutional Agency proposed many positive recommendations, contributing to the stability of the local security and order. For example, in the 17th year of reign of Hong Duc (1486), the Constitutional envoy of Thanh Hoa area, Nguyen To, reported: “District mandarins who do not care and urge to build dykes and dams will not be promoted” [11; 504].

In addition to the above-mentioned active and proper supervisors, there were also many Censors, Supervising Secretaries or Constitutional Envoys who also violated the law and bent the law of the land themselves. We cannot, of course, due to the minority that make the “one rotten apple spoils the barrel” deny all the contributions made by the supervisor group to the political career of the Early Le Dynasty for 100 years of existence (1428 - 1527).

3. Conclusions

With the responsibility of “keeping the words” for the right reasons, justice and truth, the Early Le Dynasty’s supervisor group including mandarins working in the Censorate, The Six Offices of Scrutiny and Constitutional Agency created a reliable shock troops of the Dynasty in its fight against illegal acts, manifestations of bureaucracy, harassment, and corruption of mandarins.

Although the hierarchy and rank of the officials in this contingent were different, they shared the same mission to preserve the Dynasty's discipline and attitude and make sure the ranks of mandarins do their right job as prescribed.

Of course, each agency with its own position and specific job had specific functions. The Censorate was the supreme supervisory body of the Dynasty, held the highest responsibility in dissuading the king, impeaching the wrongdoings of civil and military mandarins, inspecting and supervising the works in yamen to maintain principles and law of the land. The Six Offices of Scrutiny was first established under the Early Le Dynasty as the result of the process of simulating the Ming Dynasty’s mandarinat. The Six Offices of Scrutiny had a permanent task of supervising the affairs of the Six Ministries, ensuring that the power of the Minister in the Six Administrative Sections so as not to hold the monopoly. The Constitutional Agency held the local judiciary and judgment duties but also had the duty to impeach the bad habits of the mandarins in the circuit. The relationship between these divisions is in the same time the mutual relationship, the review cooperation and the cross-supervision and restraint relationship according to the rules by Le Thanh Tong in the 2nd year of reign of Hong Duc (1471): “Let lower and upper mandarins, bind together and restrain each other. Authority is not abused. The law of the land is difficult to be changed. Keeping the rules becomes a habit, there is no criminal offense, etc” [13; 333].

The establishment of a supervision system including the mandarins of the Censorate, The Six Offices of Scrutiny and Constitutional Agency under the Early Le Dynasty formed a mechanism to inspect and supervise through both “vertical ranks” and “horizontal ranks”, that implies, both control according to the system of mandarins at all levels and control according to the operation field of mandarins. This is an important

factor that created a tight legal corridor helping limit the abuse of power of the usurpers or the corrupt mandarins.

During the existence of the Early Le Dynasty, the supervisor group with their responsibilities made a great contribution to the completion of the bureaucratic monarchy state model in the direction of centralization at the upper level (the king) and decentralization at the lower level (between agencies and mandarins), contributing to the prevention and elimination of bad habits in the mandarin state. Most of the supervisors have fulfilled their assigned duties and responsibilities as the Vice Censor-in-chief, Pham Du, told the King Le Nhan Tong: “We hold the position of the supervisor, we could not abstain from the powerful people and keep silent, as taught by Your Majesty” [12; 380]. However, in reality, there is no shortage of mandarins who have not fulfilled their duties, even step back and surrender to violence. In particular, at the end of the Early Le Dynasty, with the collapse of the state affairs associated with the reign period of kings such as Tuc Tong, Uy Muc, and Tuong Duc, the “voice” of the supervisor group was increasingly faded and gradually lost its active role as the power control agencies of the state.

Although the implementation and application of the power control mechanism under the Early Le Dynasty in the end did not achieve lasting effect, the fact that the successes and failures of history also left many valuable experiences. With the policy of “Perfecting and strictly implementing the mechanism of controlling power, preventing abuse of power and violation of discipline” [16; 47] of the Party and State today, the research of the model of power supervision in the Early Le Dynasty through a supervisor group will evoke valuable experiences and lessons that need to be drawn from the present practice.

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