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Vietnamese cultural characteristics: A regional comparative analysis

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Abstract

This article discusses the issue of national culture and regional culture of a very ethnically rich and culturally diverse country like Vietnam. Following the presentation on the concepts of national culture, regional culture, and the role of culture in society and community, the author presents and compares the extremely different cultural identities of

different constrictive regions of Vietnam from the North to the South, things that seem nothing new to Vietnamese people, but are very interesting to the foreigners who have never lived or are currently living and learning about the local culture and people here.

Keywords: Culture of the Nation, Regional Characteristics, Vietnam

1. Concept of culture

Culture is a series of material and conscious values created by humans along with the long glorious history of the indigenous people. Traditional culture is a broad concept, related to all service professions in the world. social life of every person. Therefore, when mentioning traditional culture, we refer to many perspectives such as language, speech, ideology, and religion of an indigenous people. In addition, traditional culture is also expressed through national historical relics and landscapes that deeply mark the indigenous people. Thus, it is completely understandable that in the most general way, traditional culture is the values created by a council of people with the initial goal of delivering goods for the needs and rights. own benefit. Culture includes values that have been formed and maintained over a very long period of time, inherited from one generation to the next.

From the concept of what culture is, it can be understood that Vietnamese culture is Vietnam's own culture, which includes all material and spiritual values created in the process of working and living on the surface. Vietnam's long national history. According to President Ho Chi Minh: "For the sake of survival as well as the purpose of life, humans created and invented language, writing, ethics, law, science, religion, literature, art, daily living tools of clothing, food, shelter and methods of use. All of those creations and inventions are culture."

Culture is a category associated with the history of formation and development of humanity. As the crystallization of the best values in the relationship between people, nature, society, lifestyle, social ethics, art and culture. The spiritual foundation represents the height and depth of a nation's level of development, and is a subject that strongly promotes the comprehensive development of human civilization and society in the historical process. Culture includes material culture and spiritual culture, both created by humans, but these are different types of culture. For example, material culture is used to refer to human creativity expressed through objects, utensils, and tools made by humans. Spiritual culture includes ideas, spiritual values, and theories that people create in the process of living.

2. Characteristics of culture

Culture is systematic: Similar to history, culture is also summarized in a series of events, connected throughout history associated with the development process of the nation and nation.

Culture carries the value of an entire nation: Any aspect of culture brings a certain value. It may be immediate or it may be long-term. However, in general, culture brings good meaning, and in many cases even becomes a standard measure of people and society.

Culture is deeply human: Culture was formed very early, so its human nature is also very profound in accordance with its category.

Culture is historical: Culture is formed over the long history of humanity, reflecting the creative process of people over a long period of time, even associated with the long history of a nation.

3. The role of culture

Culture contributes to social stability, because it is something that has existed for a long time and is deeply embedded in every person's awareness, so all human behavior must be governed by a custom and moral framework. of the nation. Culture has contributed to improving relationships in society, bringing a better quality of life to people both materially and spiritually. Culture is divided into tangible culture and intangible culture, bringing spiritual and material benefits to people, thereby creating traditional beauties bearing the mark of the nation. Culture is one of the documents that demonstrate the glorious and powerful history of the nation. Because culture is developed in a long process of formation, containing many ups and downs of an entire country, through those cultural features, the next generation can feel the cultural traditions of our ancestors. again. Culture performs the function of communication and expression and is a bridge connecting people with people, connecting previous generations with the next generation. Culture also has an educational function, helping the next generation understand the nation's history, ensuring conservation and development. Culture contributes to promoting the country's economic development. Because culture represents the unique beauty of a country, it is one of the factors that attract international tourists to visit and explore that country's culture.

4. Example of Vietnamese culture

Vietnamese culture is very rich and diverse. It is characterized by each region divided according to the S-shaped strip of the Fatherland. Here are some examples of Vietnamese culture by region:

Wet rice culture:

Wet rice civilization is an ancient civilization that appeared about 10,000 years ago in Southeast Asia and Southern China. For thousands of years, rice has been attached to the people and villages of Vietnam. And at the same time, it has also become the name for a civilization - wet rice civilization. For example, in folk literature, folk songs and proverbs about wet rice are indispensable. "Eat to be sure, wear clothes to be durable"; "Even if the sky hits you, you will avoid eating" or "Buffalo, I told you to come out to the field and plow with me".

Northwest culture:

Nowadays, every time we hear the proper noun Northwest, as a natural reflex, all of us think of a cultural region with flowers as simple as the thousands of years of life of mountain people. It is not simple at all when talking about the culture of a large region, with dozens of ethnic groups that are both single and unified with diverse and colorful religious beliefs and festivals such as:

- Hoa ban festival: held on the 5th day of the second lunar month every year.
- Long Tong Festival: held every year from the first days of January, lasting until the beginning of the second

lunar month.

- Muong Ban An Bridge Festival: held annually at the end of January and beginning of February of the lunar calendar.
- Rain praying festival: held every year at the beginning of the rainy season around the end of October and early November of the lunar calendar.

The culture of ethnic groups in the Northwest region is very diverse and rich.

- Housing: of the Thai, Lao, Muong, Khomú, Xinhmun, Khang, and Cong ethnic groups are all stilt houses. With the Hmong people, Dao lives in a ground floor house with a low roof and reports.
- Regarding costumes: This is the most diverse and unique feature of the ethnic cultural identity expressed through the material culture elements of women's and men's costumes.
- About cuisine: Not only is it diverse and beautiful in natural scenery, but the culture of the Northwest also has many unique characteristics that cannot be found anywhere else. Known as the paradise of countless unique and attractive delicious dishes, that's why those who have set foot in this land cannot bear to leave.
- Regarding folk art: it is expressed very richly and vividly through a variety of forms such as folk musical instruments, folk dance, including famous musical instruments such as gongs, Muong gongs, flutes, leaf trumpets, and lip harps. of the Hmong people and flutes, flutes, drums, and brass instruments. Folk dances of the Northwest ethnic groups are also very diverse: Thai people have Xoe, bamboo dancing, hat dancing seasons, Hmong people are famous for Khen seasons.

Northeast culture:

- Cuisine: Contributes to creating unique dishes of this region such as: Khau hump, bamboo-tube rice, grilled fish, five-color sticky rice, tram sticky rice, toc mo cake, thang co, roasted duck, roasted pig, wild spinach, chili bamboo shoots, and culinary dishes made from corn (wine, cakes, noodles).
- Customs and practices: The custom of worshiping the land god, the rice god, the custom of worshiping ancestors, the custom of worshiping national heroes who have contributed to the country, publicizing villages, establishing hamlets, etc. Almost every ward and commune in the city. The streets also have historical figures, temples, and shrines. The most worshiped historical figures are royal concubine Ly Duong Tu Minh, Saint Tran Hung Dao, historical figures Doi Can, Luong Ngoc Quyen.
- Religion: There are 5 religions: Buddhism, Protestantism, Catholicism, Cao Dai and Islam.
- Culture and history: Tam Dao town has famous cultural and historical relics such as Tay Thien pagoda and Tay Thien temple (also known as Mau Temple) worshiping National Mother Tay Thien Lang Thi Tieu.
- Festival: Ba Be Lake Spring Festival (Bac Kan Province); Spring festival of the H'mong and Dao ethnic groups, after the Lunar New Year and lasting from 3 to 7 days; Butt slapping festival of the Mong people: the 5th day of the Lunar New Year; Long Tong festival of Tay and Nung. Gau Tao festival of Mong people is a spring mountain festival; Fire dancing festival of Pa

Then people after celebrating Tet Tra Co communal house festival in Quang Ninh.

Culture of the Northern Delta:

In Northern villages, the image of an ancient banyan tree symbolizes the permanence of time, witnessing the changes of people, of heaven and earth. Banyan trees are often planted at the beginning of the village, at the end of the village, in the middle of the village or next to relics: communal houses, temples, pagodas in the village. Northern villages have many unique architectural styles such as: tile bridges, brick bridges, and stone bridges before entering the village. However, the most impressive image is the village gate. Every festival, the villagers organize a procession of gilded palanquins to the sound of drums, gongs, and resounding music, depicting the history and merits of the City Emperor. The pagoda is a place where villagers worship, cultivate themselves, cultivate virtue, and leave virtue to their children and grandchildren. Venerable Thich Tien Dat, abbot of Cu Da Pagoda, outside Hanoi, said: "Buddhism has been introduced to Vietnam for a long time, so wherever there are people and villages, there are pagodas and communal houses, temple and it became an indispensable cultural institution of the Northern Delta.

Culture of the Central region:

The Central region is often mentioned with a simple but meaningful analogy because of the differences in natural conditions, terrain, climate, and people. "The sagging pole", "the old farmer's back with difficulty", "the intestines of the Central region", the image of a narrow strip of land, waist tight to the end, full of suffering due to "sun and rain", poor resources. resources and economic development potential. The people of the Central region always have their own beauty, containing extremely unique cultural features.

- Central cuisine: The characteristics of Central dishes are mostly spicy and salty, with moderate sweetness. Hue cuisine: with dishes that are typical of the ancient capital such as: Mussel rice, Hue beef noodle soup, banh loc, banh beo, ramen, banh hoi, banh dup... Quang Nam cuisine: rich in unique and famous flavors Featured with dishes such as: Mi Quang, banh xeo, pork rice paper, banh dap, cao lau, banh to... The culture of the Central region has its own unique features, rich in identity and nuances of Vietnamese people. Endure pain and suffering, the spirit of solidarity to fight natural disasters, love and care for each other, to overcome all difficulties and hardships.
- Festival: Ngu Cau Festival: commemorates the village's Thanh Hoang Truong Quy Cong; Lam Kinh festival: aims to commemorate Le Loi and the famous generals of the Le dynasty who defeated the invading Ming army; Via Ba festival: to commemorate the gratitude of Mrs. Do Thi Tan.

Central Highlands culture:

The Central Highlands gong cultural space is the most characteristic, covering 5 Central Highlands provinces: Kon Tum, Gia Lai, Dak Lak, Dak Nong, Lam Dong and gathering many ethnic minorities. Covering everything in the spiritual life of the Central Highlands people is probably the traditional festival, expressing their concepts about humans and the universe, which are more or less rudimentary and simple, but they believe in very much.

Some typical festivals include:

- Water wharf worship ceremony - also known as drinking water drops at the end of the old year or the beginning of the new year;
- New rice feast - closing the rice warehouse on the occasion of harvest;
- Wedding ceremonies for young people, ceremonies to celebrate the lives of the elderly, grave-exposing ceremonies for the deceased, ceremonies to give thanks to parents...

Culture of the Southern region:

- The Southern region has 12 religions recognized as legal entities: Buddhism, Catholicism, Protestantism, Islam, Cao Dai, Hoa Hao, Minh Master, Pure Land laypeople, Tu An Hieu Nghia, Buu Son Ky Huong, Five Branches of the Path of Wisdom, Baha'i. Some typical festivals include:
- Ba Thien Hau Pagoda Festival (Binh Duong): From January 13 - 15.
- Ba Den Mountain Festival (Tay Ninh): From January 18 - 19.
- Ba Chua Xu Festival (An Giang): From 23 - 27 of the 4th lunar month.
- Typical art and culture in the South When talking about the art of traditional Southern folk singing, we will immediately think of popular art forms such as: amateur music, cai luong, tuong, ly ... And a rich treasure of ancient folk music.

The Southern region is also a main rice granary and a famous fruit granary with all kinds of tropical fruits. From rambutan, star apple, mangosteen, durian to jackfruit, banana, mango, guava, longan, orange, tangerine... Each locality has its own, diverse and rich type of produce preserved. With the advantage of interlaced rivers and canals, the vast flooded sea is an ideal habitat for snakes, crocodiles, turtles, tortoises, shrimp, fish, crabs, crabs... and all kinds of birds. more. The South has many delicious dishes and many strange products that have long entered the treasure trove of folk literature.

The South has both a rich historical and cultural history and is also a land rich in youth because the ethnic groups here are working hard to build. From the geographical and cultural position of the South, it is helping to become the center of the cultural acculturation process, partly giving the region unique features and a new appearance compared to other cultural regions in Vietnam. The Southern cultural value system is the national cultural tradition and the core values that form the region's unique cultural style. The openness of a new land creates the dynamism, sensitivity, daring to think, and daring to do of the Southern people. Openness is the basis for successfully receiving and adapting many high cultural values and now modern civilization.

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