

The Recovery of Traditional Cultural Values in Rural Area in North Vietnam in the Đổi Mới Period

Đo Danh Huan (Corresponding author)

Institute of History, Vietnam Academy of Social Sciences

(PhD Candidate of Vietnam National University, Hanoi)

N^o 38 Hang Chuoi Street, Hanoi, Vietnam

E-mail: dohuan@gmail.com

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Abstract

Due to the lingering impacts of the Vietnam war and the difficulties that Vietnam has been confronting in the post-war period, traditional cultural values in rural areas in North Vietnam were neglected. Since Đổi mới (in 1986), the Communist Party of Vietnam and the Vietnamese government have drawn more concern and been thoroughly aware of the role of culture on Vietnam's developing path of the country. In addition, the remarkable growth of Vietnam's economy recently paves the way for Vietnamese residents to rebuild and renew their spiritual life as well as enjoy benefits created based on traditional cultural values. This research elucidates the resilience of conventional cultural values in rural areas in North Vietnam in the Đổi mới period, particularly emphasizing the following aspects: Inhabitants' contributions to build and rebuild temples and pagodas; reinstating conventional rituals and festivals; restoring family customs, and compiling village convention.

Keywords: Rural areas in North Vietnam, village, traditional culture, resilience, Đổi mới

1. Introduction

Shortly after the success of the August Revolution in 1945, Vietnam had confronted several struggles and battles, i.e. the First Indochina War (1945-1954), the Second Indochina War (1955-1975), the Cambodian-Vietnamese War (1978), and the Sino-Vietnamese War (1979). During these periods, Vietnamese people devoted and prioritized their biggest efforts for waging war, including assets and people. When the war ended, Vietnamese people faced plenty of challenges in most of the fields, comprised of economy and society which impeded Vietnam to improve Vietnamese material and cultural life. In this circumstance, the values of

traditional culture in rural areas which engaged in the existence of pagodas, temples, shrines, houses of worship, rituals and festivals, customs seem to be neglected or sometimes be considered as superstitious activities. In many villages, pagodas, văn chỉ 文址 (the place worshipping Confucius and local students who passed feudal exams), and houses of worship were demolished to retake wood, brick, and tile from these sites for building new schools and public works. Some studies assume that the impact of the protracted war and the difficulties which Vietnam had to face in the post-war period caused the decline and fadedness of traditional cultural values in rural areas in North Vietnam. Up until the breakthrough of Đổi mới, these values have been gradually recovering (Nguyen Quang Le (ed.), 2001; Le Hong Ly, 2005; Nguyen Thi Phuong Cham, 2009). Consequently, traditional cultural values in rural areas were faded, several historical and religious architectures were ruined and these buildings are only recalled in the memory of villagers. The Đổi mới was initiated in the 6th National Congress of the Communist Party of Vietnam (CPV) in 1986. Aiming at leading Vietnam to overcome difficulties and develop her economy and society, CPV and the Vietnam authority had promulgated new policies which placed more attention to cultivate and preserve national culture. This is a critical motivation and basement to draft and enact legal documents regarding restoring traditional cultural values in Vietnam's rural areas (Note 1). In those, it must be taken into consideration the Resolution of the 8th plenary session, the 5th party central committee concerning the formulation and development of Vietnamese culture imbued with national identity. The Resolution states: "(We have to) Inherit and promote the spiritual, ethical, aesthetic values as well as cultural and artistic heritage of the country. (We have to) Preserve and embellish historical, cultural, and scenic relics [...]. Cultural heritages are priceless assets connecting all ethnic groups and the core value of national identity [...]" (Thus, we are obligated to) reserve, inherit, promote traditional cultural values, revolutionary culture, including tangible and intangible culture" (Central Ideology and Culture Department, 1998).

In this study, traditional cultural values in rural areas in North Vietnam are performed via pagodas, temples, rituals and festivals, family customs, village conventions which were created during the developing history of Vietnamese villages and become an indivisible part of inhabitants' life.

The strategy of building a national culture of CPV and the Socialist Republic of Vietnam (SRV) provides opportunities for the dynamic recovery of traditional cultural values in rural areas on a variety of aspects such as temples and pagodas are built and restored; festivals are re-organized; family customs are re-created; the village conventions are compiled. All the above aspects belong to the scope of this study which will be clarified in later parts.

2. Literature Review

Studies on traditional culture of villages in North Vietnam have been published by prominent authors, such as Tran Quoc Vuong (2000), Nguyen Ta Nhi (2000), Tran Lam Bien (2000), Nguyen Van Tien (2004), Toan Anh (2005), and Phan Dai Doan (2004). These publications highlight critical values of Vietnamese culture, comprising the customs of weddings and funerals; festivals; family customs; architectural values of pagodas and temples; the worship

of village gods; the rituals relating to seasonal agricultural production. These above-mentioned studies, which were based on either descriptive, structural, or systematical approaching, sketch essential elements of Vietnamese villages, including the premises for formatting village culture, the role of traditional values towards village residents. Subsequently, this helps to perceive village-traditional values like a massive legacy, which reflects national identity.

Approaching traditional cultural values accompanying economic developments and reforms is a novel research tendency in Vietnam. This tendency emphasizes the roles of *Đổi mới* (Reform), which has been conducting in Vietnam since 1986, and the economic development as a dynamic momentum for re-creating villages' traditional culture. We would found this studying tendency in the works of John Kleinen (2007), Ngo Van Gia (2007), Nguyen Thi Phuong Cham (2009), Van Luong (2010), Quang (ed., 2011). All of these authors consent to the point that the reform and economic development causing the recreation of the traditional values of village culture, such as the build and rebuild of village halls and pagodas; the re-organization of village festivals, the re-installation of family customs, and the compilation of new village conventions.

3. Research Sources and Methodologies

Contributing eminently to the completion of this research is publications and works of literature related to the study of rural transformation; of festival and family customs; of village conventions in a few communes in North Vietnam; especially stelae, records restoring in pagodas, temples, and in families in rural areas which have been collected during my research.

In terms of methodologies, fieldwork plays a central position in my study. I devote a vast amount of time to do fieldwork in several relics, comprising pagodas, temples, houses of worship, commonplaces of the village community. Leaning on collected documents, two other methods, i.e. statistics and analysis, were wielded to conduct this research.

4. Research Results

4.1 Build and Re-build Pagodas, Temples, and the Residents' Contributions

The premises for embellishing, re-building, building houses of worship came from the demand of accelerating the spiritual life of rural inhabitants. Moreover, this reshapes the images of the finest and biggest pagoda and temple in the memory of villagers which they are always proud of. Subsequently, this activity is wholeheartedly supported by villagers. Through our surveys in the Northern Delta, we have found that building new places for religious and worship purposes is a current social phenomenon in rural areas in North Vietnam.

The study of John Kleinen on Tơ village, Hoài Đức district, Hanoi exposes that “In March 1992, the Aging Association of this village is appointed to the charge of restoring the village hall, this task is authorized by an executive committee that having regular meetings in the village hall. These meetings aim to restore the village hall to be the most important worship

place as it was in the past” (John Kleinen, 2007).

In La Phù village, Hoài Đức district, Hanoi, since Đổi mới (in 1986), in line with the surging of this village’s handicraft industry, the life standard of village residents has been improving, thus facilitating conditions for build Trung Hưng pagoda. Doing surveys in this village, we explored that all of Buddha statues, couplets, horizontal lacquered boards, bells, and drums are new worshipping objects. When the construction was completed, the villagers erected two stelae, engraving on two sides in Quốc ngữ (modern Vietnamese language), recording the names of people who donated to build the pagoda (before the August Revolution in 1945, Chinese characters were used to engrave on the stelae). The epitaphs show the information of 1923 people who donated to construct the pagoda with a total budget of 469.624.000 VND (Note 2).

Also in La Phù village, văn chỉ was rebuilt in 1995, the initial information appears on the stele recording the names and the donated amount of individuals and organizations for constructing the stele. It elucidates “Văn chỉ of the village was erected in the mid 20th century and was broken. Therefore, the People Committee of La Phù village, Hoài Đức district, Hà Tây province called for generous donations to restore văn chỉ” (Note 3). The epitaph shows that 301 people and one organization (it is the People Committee of La Phù village) donated 21.820.000 VND to re-build văn chỉ. Văn chỉ is the place for worshipping Confucius (Khổng Tử - 孔子) and people who passed feudal examinations under the monarchy, thus, when restoring the stele, they added the names of few residents who obtained prominent achievements in their academic life, for example, gaining bachelor, master, and doctoral degrees. These people could work and live in other locals, not only in La Phù village.

Phủ Giày in Vụ Bản district, Nam Định province is a spiritual place where attracts a massive number of people in the whole country to visit. This architecture is not restored or re-built, despite that, considering the demand of accelerating spiritual life, people from all provinces have donated a vast amount of money to maintain all activities taking place at this shrine. Because of that, when did research in Phủ Giày, we have found 30 to 40 new stelae attaching to the walls of Phủ Giày. Furthermore, due to a large number of people and their generous donations for Phủ Giày every year, the local authority decided to build a given building serving the task of collecting donations and recording names of donators. Analyzing selected stelae, we have discovered plenty of critical information, one of those is the diversity of hometowns where the donators and visitors come from, ranging from the North, the Central, the Highland, to the Southern parts of Vietnam as follows:

On the first stele records the information of individuals who lives in Tiên Hương hamlet, Kim Thái village, Vụ Bản district where Phủ Giày is situated, they are all 30 people, donated for Phủ Giày in 2006. Five of those are social organizations, namely the Cell of Local Communist Party, the Veteran Association, the Aging Association, the Women Association, and the Front Committee. The average amount of donations is 100.000 VND and the total amount is 3.500.000 VND.

On the second stele, the information of individuals’ hometowns who donated for Phủ Giày in

2006 appearing to be more various, donators come from both northern and southern provinces. In those, 39 people living in northern areas and abroad, such as Ninh Bình, Thái Bình, Thanh Hoá, Bắc Ninh, Bắc Giang, Quảng Ninh, Hải Phòng, Lào Cao, Hưng Yên, and overseas Vietnamese people in Canada, Britain, Australia, Germany donated 25.000.000 VND. Southern provinces have 11 people who live in Đắk Lắk, Vĩnh Long, Bến Tre, and Hồ Chí Minh city donated 13.500.000 VND. The average donation presenting from the epitaph is 500.000.000 VND and the highest amount is 3.500.000.000 VND.

The third stele was erected in 2006, recording names of 49 people who live in distinct districts in Hanoi, such as Cầu Giấy, Đông Anh, Thanh Xuân, Hoàn Kiếm, Đống Đa, Ba Đình, and Tây Hồ. They donated distinguishing amounts but the most common amount is 500.000 VND and the highest amount is 18.000.000 VND. The total amount of donations is 84.700.000 VND.

Phủ Giày is not a single example of this phenomenon, in other provinces in the Northern Delta, the same activities did occur. In Đồng Bụt hamlet, Ngọc Liệp village, Quốc Oai district, Hanoi, the village hall after a while using for schooling purpose, was detached to get constructing material for building public works. Up till 2004, when realizing the value of village hall, local people convened a meeting to decide that it is necessary to have and to re-build a village hall, not in the same place as the old one but on the yard of their Cooperative Association. Many local families and individuals living in other areas had participated in and donated to the building process. When finishing the village hall, local people erected six stelae, engraving names of individual donators and organizations who contributed to build this site. According to the statistics of the Constructing Department, the village hall was completed consuming a total budget of around 2 billion VND.

In Đồng Bụt village, besides constructing their new village hall, Đổng Linh temple was considered to restore in 2007 when Đồng Bụt inhabitants perceived this temple deteriorated year by year. Rebuilding the Đổng Linh temple is to adapt to the desire of local people that they would like to have a sacred place for their spiritual activities in each festival. After restoring the temple, Đồng Bụt residents erected 4 stelae to show gratitude to donators. In these four stelae is the information of 357 individuals and the total donations of 94.666.000 VND. In addition to donating money, many objects were received. For instance, Mr. Nguyễn Huy Chuyển, a resident of Đồng Bụt but working in another province, had contributed a set of the altar which is equivalent to 22.000.000 VND.



Figure 1. The Tur Văn Temple in Phụng Cách hamlet, Quốc Oai district, Hanoi

Source: Do Danh Huan

Exploring and studying stelae which erected in the Lê and Nguyễn dynasties, it is probably to find the information reflecting the daily life of local people, particularly, the information of individuals and families who donated money and assets, valued up to hundreds of copper coins or hundreds of hectares, to build village halls, pagodas, and temples in their villages. For instance, Duke Nguyễn Thái Đường whose hometown in Phù Minh village, Tiên Du district, Từ Sơn town built two village halls: Phù Minh village hall containing five rooms and Phù Viên village hall having three rooms. He also donated to Phù Đồng, Phù Minh, and Phù Viên villages 5 mu (畝, equivalent to 18.000 m² - ĐDH), 3 sao (巢, equivalent to 1080 m² - ĐDH), 24 buffaloes, 4 cows, 40 pigs [...]. Admiral Nguyễn Công Hiệp donated 10 mu (equivalent to 36.000 m² - ĐDH) and 3 sao (巢, equivalent to 720 m² - ĐDH) to build the village hall (Pham Thi Thuy Vinh, 2003).

The villagers of Tam Sơn hamlet, Từ Sơn district, Bắc Ninh province donated money to build the gate of the pagoda. On the stele, erected in 2000, engraved information of 14 donators living in Hanoi, Hồ Chí Minh City, and in Tương Giang hamlet, Từ Sơn district, Bắc Ninh province contributing 22.774.000 VND to build this construction. One document restoring at the pagoda reveals that 73 individuals donated money to sculpt Buddha statues. The donators living in many places, including Núi, Trước, Tây, Ô, Xanh hamlets, and the minority part coming from Hanoi (26 people), Hải Phòng, Bắc Giang, Lạng Sơn donated 13.590.000 VND.

According to Le Manh Nam's research, the recovery of traditional cultural values did occur in few villages in the outskirts of Hanoi, those are: "in Bát Tràng hamlet, Gia Lâm district, Hanoi, people had restored two village halls and two pagodas in the years of 1992, 1997, and 2001 with the budget of 790 million VND [...]. In Thanh Liệt hamlet, Thanh Trì district, Hanoi, three village halls and three pagodas were re-built in 2001 and 2002 respectively, consuming the amount of 3.060.000.000 VND" (Le Manh Nam, 2003).

Pagodas, temples, and village halls were restored and built to serving festival activities. Hence, go along with this building process, the festival activities are also rehabilitated.

4.2 Restoration of Festivals

In the long history of Vietnamese people, especially in the conventional cultural activities, the space of festivals is perceived as a common space for all villagers, therefore, the stage of festivals is always placed at pagodas or village halls. In rural northern Vietnam, festivals are organized by almost all locals. Nowadays, accompanying with the rising of Vietnam's economy and the improvement of Vietnamese life standard, many bygone festivals are rehabilitated responding to the desire of residents. "Since the 1980s, many locals, particularly in the Northern Delta, traditional festivals have been restored and developed rapidly. The inhabitants view this phenomenon as a period of festival blossoming." (Nguyen Quang Le (ed.), 2001).

The Hùng King Temple's Festival holding on the 10th day of the third lunar month is a national festival, despite that, this event was newly re-organized in the 1990s. At first, people restored vicinity villages' festivals of the Hùng King Temple, and outstanding activities are performed, such as "rước kiệu", Xoan singing, and Chinese chess (cờ tướng). These days, the Hùng King Temple's Festival becomes a national festival and has been thoughtfully preserved by the Vietnamese government and people.

The festival in Đa Hoà temple (Khoái Châu district, Hưng Yên province) occurring from the 10th to the 12th day of the second lunar month was re-organized in the early 1990s. The local government and people demonstrate their consensus of rehabilitating the activities of the temple, for instance, people living in Mỹ Sở and Bình Minh hamlets, Khoái Châu district were eager to prepare all customs, practicing rituals, and decorating praying places. In Đa Hoà temple where worshipping Chủ Đổng Tử and Tiên Dung, people prepared all needed objects for sacral activities, appointing concrete tasks to given groups.

The Đô Temple's Festival in Đình Bảng hamlet, Từ Sơn district, Bắc Ninh province where worships the Kings of the Lý dynasty is another example. Due to the improvement of material life, residents have given more concern and generously donated to restore historical relics. As reported in a study of Nguyen Thi Phuong Cham: "Going along with rebuilding Đô temple and many other local relics, the village festivals have been taken into account to be rehabilitated. On the 7th day of the first lunar month is the Cổ Pháp pagoda's festival; on the 15th day of the second lunar month is the village festival; on the 15th day of the third lunar month is the Đô temple's festival; on the 23rd day of the ninth lunar month is the Rồng temple's festival." (Nguyen Thi Phuong Cham, 2008). In the beginning, when the festivals were started to restore, festival items were inadequate. Local inhabitants had to supplement more in the following years.

The festival in Thiên Sư pagoda (Figure 2), Đổng Bụt hamlet, Quốc Oai district, Hanoi is held on the 10th day of the third lunar month, engaging to worship Monk Từ Đạo Hạnh. After several interrupted years, in the 1990s, this festival was restored. In the initial years of restoration, the festival occurred in Đổng Bụt but the ritual practicing team (đội tế lễ) was

hired from other hamlets. Two years later, the aging local people took charge of all rituals, however, the festival customs were rented. In the following years, residents bought more supplies and customs for the festival. Since then, the festival is organized every two years and the aging people instruct youngsters all activities related to this festival in order to preserve this event through generations.



Figure 2. The Festival in Thiên Sư pagoda, Đồng Bụt Hamlet

Source: Do Danh Huan

In the rural outskirts of Hanoi in current years, the festivals are resilient. Phan Huy Le assumed that: “It is a tendency to recover traditional festivals all over the country. In suburban Hanoi, there are more than 400 festival were rehabilitated.” (Phan Huy Le, 2007). Another opinion claimed that in almost all provinces of the Northern Delta and Midlands, the traditional cultural activities such as the Spring festival, the Harvest festival, the festival to tribute Vietnamese meritorious mandarins, are restored. Many traditional performances, for instance, Quan họ singing, Ví singing, Đốì singing of Thanh Hoá province, are also reinstated (Đo Thi Nguyệt Quang, 1995).

4.3 Reinstallation of Family Customs

Besides the restorations of pagodas, temples, village halls, and festivals, the family customs in rural areas in North Vietnam have been steadily reinstalled through plenty of activities, comprising the build of ancestral houses, the translation and compilation of genealogies, tracing the origins of families, and the establishment of the liaison officers. Once again, the growth of economic life creates a premise, thus motivating people to invest more in the worshipping activities of their ancestors.

Surveying in Hữu Bằng hamlet, Thạch Thất district, Hanoi, we have explored that all above activities are occurring dynamically in this local. Many families follow the social tendency to build their ancestral houses which were non-existent. In 2001, the Vũ family in Hữu Bằng

hamlet built a new ancestral house on the donated area of an old pond (600m²) which used to be possessed by a family member. The construction fees of 500 million VND were collected from all members of this family. In June 2005, the Nguyễn Duy family translated their genealogy from Chinese characters (Hán) to Quốc ngữ (modern Vietnamese). Other families in Hữu Bằng hamlet, such as the Nguyễn Văn family and Nguyễn Đình family not only duplicated and translated their genealogies but also drew their family trees and hang them at the ancestral house for youngsters leaning on their origins. When figured out their origin in Thanh Liêm, Hà Nam, the Phan Lạc family in Hữu Bằng hamlet compiled their genealogy and family regulations (tộc ước), namely Phan Lạc Family's Regulation. The study in Hữu Bằng hamlet (fulfilled by myself) results that 6 out of 8 families in this area built their new ancestral houses: including the Nguyễn Hữu family in 1997, the Vũ Hữu family in 2001 (Figure 3), the Nguyễn Đình family in 2002, the Nguyễn Duy family in 2002, the Nguyễn Văn family in 2002, and the Nguyễn Đình family in 2004. Two other families, the Phan Lạc and Nguyễn Chùa Giáp have their own old ancestral houses.



Figure 3. The ancestral house of Vũ Hữu Family in Hữu Bằng hamlet

Source: Do Danh Huan

In Thái Bình province, the families established their liaison officers to connect all branches in different regions responding to the desire of tracing back to their origin as well as to participate in family activities. Phạm Minh Đức calculated “134 branches of Phạm family living in 35 hamlets of Tiên Hải district have visited the Phạm Đình Sĩ ancestral house in Vân Trường hamlet to worship their ancestors.” (Phạm Minh Đức, 1999).

In Kiến Xương district, Thái Bình province, the Phạm family inaugurated a liaison officer with the participation of branches living in 40 hamlets and towns in the district. The study of Phạm Xuân Đào on the Phạm family in Thái Bình reported that, from 1997 to 1999, this family had organized three meetings with 1000 attendees, representing 427 branches residing in 91 out of 285 hamlets of Thái Bình province (Phạm Xuân Đào, 1999). The Ngô family

took the death anniversary of Ngô Quyền who defeated Southern Han soldiers in Bạch Đằng river in 938 to be a convening date.

In Nam Son hamlet, Từ Sơn district, Bắc Ninh province, after doing a survey, I have found that Ngô families have conducted many activities reflecting their desire of seeking their origin as well as appreciating the traditional values. In the 1990s, the Ngô Sách family had restored the family festival to tribute their ancestors and to praise members of the family who obtained academic accomplishments and achievements. In 2004, the ancestral house of the Ngô Sách family was rebuilt due to donating budget of family members with an average amount of 120.000 per person. In 2005, this family established a promotion fund to encourage the study of their children. In the Ngô Gia family, the ancestral house was rebuilt in 2003 and they compiled their family regulations in 2006 with 3 parts, 3 chapters, and 28 articles.

The research findings of Nguyen Thị Phuong Cham on Đình Bảng hamlet, Từ Sơn district, Bắc Ninh province states that the families residing in this province showing their gratitude towards their ancestors and origins by reinstating traditional values such as “in each family, the ancestral houses and shrines were restored or built. Accompanying with the new building and rebuilding, other events such as the ancestral death anniversaries, the compilation of genealogies, the contribution to family funds become regular activities of families.” (Nguyen Thị Phuong Cham, 2008).

4.4 Compilation of Village Conventions

Village conventions are an administrative apparatus in Vietnamese villages. Before the French colonial authority exercised the reform policies of the administration in Vietnam, each hamlet in rural northern Vietnam had its village convention. Until the mid 20th century, the French colonialists on the one hand escalated their colonial exploitation in Vietnam, on the other hand, strengthened their influence in rural areas by reforming administrative policies. From 1945 to the early 1980s the village conventions had no longer existed in Vietnam’s rural areas. However, since Đổi mới (in 1986), the village conventions were gradually rehabilitated and have been thriven in rural areas in North Vietnam. As Bui Xuan Đức studied: “Many villages in Northern Delta have compiled village conventions to be their legal foundation for administering and adjusting community activities. The initial places conducted above activities were Bắc Ninh, Hà Tây, and Thái Bình, and then spreading to other provinces.” (Bui Xuan Đức, 2003). Regarding the name of this document, each local uses distinct ways to label them such as village conventions (hương ước), cultural village conventions (quy ước làng văn hoá), rural conventions (quy ước nông thôn), and new lifestyle constructing conventions (quy ước xây dựng nếp sống mới).

As mentioned above, the reinstatement of village conventions is occurring in many places and created by both local governors and residents. The core members to compile village conventions include the head of the village, the head of the cell of the local communist party, representatives of the national front, aging people, and local scholars. In general, new village conventions are compiled following the structure of old conventions which concentrate on regulations of traditional customs, festivals, rural security, crop protection, weddings and

funerals, and rewards and punishments.

Bắc Ninh province is one of the locals where support vigorously the movement of village conventions' compilation. As reported, "From 1990 to 1993, 500 out of 3011 hamlets in Bắc Ninh province have completed new village conventions [...]. By 2001, there were 560/695 hamlets having village conventions (account for 80%)." (Nguyen Huy Tinh, 2003).

In 1991 at Trang Liệt hamlet, Từ Sơn district, Bắc Ninh province, a new village convention was completed, namely, Trang Liệt village convention which contains 6 chapters, in those, Chapter 1: General Regulations; Chapter 2: Rituals and Religions; Chapter 3: Cultural Lifestyle; Chapter 4: Family and Social Ethics; Chapter 5: Hamlet Security and Order; Chapter 6: Implementation, Rewards, and Disciplines.

Answering the desire of local people living in Tam Sơn hamlet, Từ Sơn district, Bắc Ninh province, a new village convention was compiled in 2005. This convention is an inherited and amended version of the conventions issuing in 1991 and 2000. It comprises 4 chapters and 61 articles, including Chapter 1: General Regulations; Chapter 2: Concrete Regulations; Chapter 3: Rewards and Punishments; Chapter 4: Terms of Enforcement (Note 4).

In 1995, a new regulation was completed in Đồng Bụt hamlet, Quốc Oai district, Hanoi, comprising 6 chapters and 35 articles, Chapter 1: General Regulations and Organizing Affairs; Chapter 2: Ethics and People's Intellectual Education; Chapter 3: Cultural Lifestyle; Chapter 4: Estate Management; Chapter 5: Security; Chapter 6: Regulation Enforcement. This regulation was circulated to every resident of Đồng Bụt hamlet.

In 1996, the regulation of La Cả hamlet, Hoài Đức district, Hanoi was compiled, named the Regulation of La Cả Cultural Village, and was approved by the local authority in 1998. This Regulation has 7 chapters and 36 articles, composing of Chapter 1: General Regulations; Chapter 2: Religions, Festivals, and Beliefs; Chapter 3: Family and Social Lifestyle; Chapter 4: Wedding, Funeral, and Longevity Celebration Affairs; Chapter 5: Social Rules and Village Security; Chapter 6: Public Works' and Crop Protection, Village Sanitation; Chapter 7: Amendments and Convention's Take Effect (Note 5).

In the traditional villages of Vietnam, village conventions had contributed significantly to maintain and strengthen village relationships. Since Đổi mới, village conventions are once again compiled. The resilience of village conventions, on the one hand, adapts to the demand of local people, on the other hand, it is in line with regulations of the SRV administration that allowing and encouraging the compilation of village conventions to enhance matters of social management in locals. "It is supposed that this period demonstrating a self-conscious phase of the movement of compiling new village conventions marking by a crucial event of the Resolution the 5th party central committee (Session VII, June 1993) which officially recognized and encouraged locals to compile new village conventions." (Nguyen Huy Tinh, 2003).

5. Some Remarks

Firstly, the CPV and SRV, particularly newly-promulgated policies after Đổi mới (1986) play

a vital role to facilitate the recovery of traditional cultural values. These policies have brought a transformation of the economic and cultural life of Vietnamese people; hence, these policies combined with legal documents made available for the wide existence and implementation of traditional cultural values in rural life. Thanks to the Resolution of the 8th plenary session, the 5th party central committee concerning the formulation and development of Vietnamese culture imbued with a national identity which triggered the path for the blossoming of traditional cultural values in modern society.

Secondly, in addition to the role of governors, the dynamic role of local people should be taken into account when researching the recovery of traditional cultural values. People are always the main force in creating, re-creating, and restoring historical and cultural values. All residents living in different regions generously contributed to the restoration of village halls, pagodas, temples in many aspects, including the finance, physical objects, labor force, and time. Moreover, they are also actively attending festivals and activities of the families in both roles - participants and performers.

Thirdly, there recovery of traditional cultural values contributes to preserving Vietnamese inherent beauty, thus continuing the path of national history as well as transmitting and educating Vietnamese traditions to people. “Standing on the social-cultural point of view, we are witnessing the reinstallation of traditions in Vietnam’s rural areas and the traditional mechanism creating by people centered in the restructuring of local cultures recently.” (John Kleinen, 2007).

Fourthly, the resilience of traditional cultural values such as village halls, pagodas, festivals, family customs enhance the community cohesion, satisfy and diversify the cultural, religious, and belief activities in rural areas in contemporary North Vietnam.

Fifthly, observing the activities of recovering traditional cultural values as mentioned above, the task of building and restoring village halls and pagodas, reinstating festivals, and reinstalling family customs are still maintaining in villages of North Vietnam, however, the compilation of village conventions took place energetically only in the 1990s, since then, this activity has not remained. This phenomenon requires other intense studies of scholars in the next years.

Finally, the resilience of national and regional festivals such as the Hùng King Temple’s Festival in Phú Thọ province, Hương Pagoda Festival, Yên Tử Pagoda Festival in Quảng Ninh province could be considered as a resource for national economic and tourism development as well as offering more jobs to people.

6. Conclusion

Traditional cultural values in rural areas in North Vietnam always possess a persistent vitality, becoming a “flow” that has been tested in the vicissitudes of national history. In a certain historical context, despite these values performed diversely and are affected distinctly dueto subjective and objective conditions, their role in social life has remained unchanged. The traditional cultural values are community heritages and created through generations, therefore we are obligated to preserve and make plans to wield these values effectively on the

developing path of the nation. In the current context, the traditional cultural values need to be aroused and promote to serve the task of national development.

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Notes

Note 1. Those legal documents are the *Regulation on the exercise of democracy in communes* issued together with the Decree No. 29-1998/ND-CP of May 11, 1998; The Directive No. 24/1998/CT/TTg of June 19, 1998, on the *Formulation and Observation of the conventions or rules of villages, hamlets or population groups*; The *Regulations to Award the Title “Cultural Family, Cultural Village, and Cultural Town”* issued together with the Decision No.01/2002/QĐ/BVHTT of January 2, 2002; The Joint Circular No.03/2000/TTLT/BTP-BVHTT-BTTUBTUMTTQVN on Guiding the compilation and implementation of rural conventions and rules of villages, hamlets and population clusters (See Truong Thin, 2005).

Note 2. The first stele contains the information of 452 people donating the amount of 65.533.000 VND, in those, five people donated objects, i.e. three jackfruit trees and 5000 bricks on the one side, on the other side is the information of 524 donators contributing 92.084.000 VND. On the second stele, one side shows a record of 486 individuals and the donated amount of 216.007.000 VND, the other side has the information of 488 individuals who donated 96.000.000 VND to rebuild the *văn chỉ*, in those, ten of them donated objects, including two altars, 26 pillars, and other objects.

Note 3. In 2008, the administrative boundary of Hà Tây province was enacted to Hà Nội, since then, the administrative name of Hà Tây province no longer exists.

Note 4. In 1996, the village of Ninh Hiệp hamlet, Gia Lâm district, Hanoi was compiled under the name Ninh Hiệp Village Convention, containing 8 chapters and 44 articles. Before widely disseminated, it was scrutinized and approved by the commune people’s council.

Note 5. In 1997, the people of Thổ Ngõa hamlet, Tân Hoà village, Quốc Oai district, Hanoi compiled the Convention of Thổ Ngõa Cultural Village. After the Introduction of the Thổ Ngõa’s history, the main body of convention is structured in 6 chapters, including Chapter 1: General Regulations; Chapter 2: Customs of Weddings, Funerals, Ancestral Death Anniversaries, Festivals, Longevity Celebration; Chapter 3: Family and Social Lifestyle; Chapter 4: Maintaining Village Disciplines; Chapter 5: Preservation of Production, Public Works, Environment, and Landscape; Chapter 6: Implements, Rewards, and Disciplines.

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