

## Building The Vietnamese Culture Imbued With Advancement And National Identity In The Spirit Of The 13<sup>th</sup> Party Congress

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### *Abstract:*

During the national construction and development process, the Communist Party of Vietnam and the State of Vietnam have always been deeply aware of the position, role, and power of culture. Contemporary Vietnamese culture is an advanced culture imbued with national identity, reflecting the harmonious development between tradition and modernity with the acculturation of world cultures. The Resolution of the 13th National Congress of the Communist Party of Vietnam stated that comprehensive human development and building an advanced Vietnamese culture imbued with a strong sense of national identity will become an endogenous strength and driving force for national development and defense. Therefore, building an advanced Vietnamese culture imbued with national identity in the spirit of the 13th Party Congress is one of the crucial requirements, creating a driving force for the sustainable development of Vietnamese culture and Vietnamese people in the new era.

Keywords: the power of culture; harmonious development; cultural exchange and acculturation; endogenous strength; the 13th National Congress of the Communist Party of Vietnam

### RESEARCH FINDINGS

### **1. Theoretical issues on building an advanced Vietnamese culture imbued with national identity**

Culture plays a particularly important role in human development and human society. Culture is the spiritual foundation of society, orienting the sustainable development of society. Culture permeates all spheres of social life and all human behavior and regulates human behavior. In the thought of Marx and Engels, the concept of "culture" is not only the relationship with human nature but also the nature of each individual's social work and the first historical behavior. Culture is a concept that reflects the totality, expression, and promotion of human natural abilities in all forms of human activity and is the general reflection of value systems created by human beings in their practical - historical - social process. Engels wrote: "Every step forward on the cultural path is a step towards freedom"<sup>1</sup>. Talking about culture means mentioning human beings and promoting the essential capabilities of human beings in order to perfect them and society.

In the ancient West, the term "cultural" was found in the work of Mark Tullius Cicero (106-43 BC), who was a Roman philosopher, orator, statesman, and political theorist. It is written that "Philosophiae est anima coluerunt". It can be roughly translated that philosophy is the seeding of the soul, and it needs training and cultivation like the way a farmer cultivates the land. Thus, in the conception of the ancient West, culture is the education that enriches people's spirit and intellect.

The definition of author Edward Burnett Tylor (1832-1917) in the book *Primitive Culture* is considered the first classic definition of culture: "Culture or Civilization is a complex whole that includes knowledge, beliefs, arts, morals, laws, customs and all abilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society.

The book *Viet Nam Van Hoa Su Cuong* (Vietnamese Culture History) of Dao Duy Anh, published by Quan Hai Tung Thu in 1938 is one of the earliest studies on Vietnamese culture.

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<sup>1</sup> Marx and Engels: *Full set*, Truth National Political Publishing House, H.2002, vol. 20, p.164

Dao Duy Anh has researched and systematically presented both the Vietnamese material and spiritual culture from ancient to modern times. Even the way of clarifying "Culture is living habits" in this book also shows that his view of the culture concept is dynamic, flexible, and non-binding. Following the previous generations, the Communist Party of Vietnam issued *De cuong van hoa Viet Nam* (The Outline on Vietnamese Culture) in February 1943. This is the first cultural program of the Communist Party of Vietnam, laying the theoretical foundation for building a cultural resistance and nation-building culture during the anti-French colonialist war and paving the way for the development of the Vietnamese culture for nearly 80 years. Cultural identity is the most basic, unique, and characteristic feature to identify a culture and to distinguish it from another.

In his letter to the 2<sup>nd</sup> Cultural Conference (taken from July 16 to 20, 1948), President Ho Chi Minh stated that the task of culture was not only to promote the spirit of the resistance and nation-building forces but also clearly show the world Vietnamese great achievements in the resistance war. Our culturalists must have worthy works not only to celebrate the achievement of the present resistance war but also to pass on this glorious history to the next generations.<sup>2</sup>

The National Cultural Conference took place in November 2021 with the meaning of arousing Vietnamese aspirations. The conference aimed to evaluate the implementation of the Party's guidelines, policies, resolutions, directives, and conclusions on cultural and artistic work over the past time; the results of building Vietnamese culture and people after 35 years of implementing the National Renovation. The National Cultural Conference is the continuation of Uncle Ho's thought, attaching great importance to the good cultural traditions of his ancestors, and requires us to know how to preserve the precious cultural capital of the nation and restore the positive elements in the national cultural treasure.

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<sup>2</sup> *Ho Chi Minh: Full set*, National Political Publishing House of Vietnam, Ha Noi, 1995, vol. 5, p.464

National cultural identity is formed by many factors. From the perspective of social existence, it is created by different natural geographical conditions, climate, historical struggle to defend the Fatherland, or racial origin creating psychological characteristics. On the other hand, national cultural identity can be formed due to economic activities, population characteristics, etc. Cultural identities of ethnic groups are special and unique features reflecting ethnic communities' life. They are a specific, vivid, rich, and diverse expression of national cultural identities including material cultural identity, intangible cultural identity, and national cultural identity.

In the Vietnamese dictionary, "identity" means the color, the individual properties forming the main characteristics of the national identity. In the research of the scientific community, the phrases "National cultural identity" and "National identity of culture" are used as synonymous concepts. National cultural identities are essences, cores, and the special and separate nuances which have been firmly formed in the social existence and social consciousness of the nation. Therefore, it can be understood that national cultural identity is the most quintessential, succinct, and sustainable material and spiritual value. It shows national characteristics, bravery in mind, lifestyle, thinking, and national aspiration. It is the original nuances, and distinctive qualities of each nation that makes this nation unmistakable with another.

Culture is the spiritual foundation of society, endogenous strength molds the quality and character of Vietnamese people throughout the nation-building and defense history. This foundation helped Vietnamese people overcome many difficulties and challenges, defeat all invaders, and maintain their national cultural identity and independence, sovereignty, and territorial integrity. Vietnam's national cultural identity is the sustainable values, the quintessence of the 54-ethnic-group community, cultivated through thousands of years of struggle history to build and defend the country. In particular, the core spiritual value system is cultivated for future generations which is reflected in the Document of the Fifth Conference of the Eighth Central Committee (1998). That is passionate patriotism, self-strengthening, the spirit of solidarity, public consciousness uniting individuals, families,

villages, the Fatherland, kindness, tolerance, respect for love, morality, industriousness, creativity in work, and sophistication in behavior. The national cultural identity is still bold in the form of unique ethnic expression. The protection of national identity must be associated with expanding international exchanges, selectively absorbing the great and progressive aspects of other ethnic groups' cultures. Preserving national identity must accompany combating obsolescence in old customs, practices, and habits<sup>3</sup>.

National cultural identity is the total of the most quintessential, special material and spiritual values, reflecting the nature, character, and qualities of each nation, being the basic sign to distinguish its culture from another. Those values are latent in the mind and in the personality. They are expressed in all aspects of life, in all human activities and relationships, and in the national cultural heritage. The national cultural identity can be considered a dynamic historical category because it always takes place in the process of birth, movement, transformation, and development. The process of forming a national cultural identity is not only by internal cultivation but also by the assimilation of cultural values from other nations. In history, no culture has ever been completely indigenous. Cultures borrow and complement each other.

These are absorbed and transformed on the basis of the conformity between what is inherent in the practical life of a nation and its social, and geographical, population from generation to generation, thereby forming the national cultural identity.

President Ho Chi Minh once affirmed that outdated habits and traditions are also great enemies. They implicitly obstructed the progressive revolution<sup>4</sup>. The obsolete elements of "three subordination, four virtues" in the ancient feudal ideology also need to be removed. Over the years, the leadership of the Party, management, and administration of the State have promoted the synergy of the political system,

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<sup>3</sup> Communist Party of Vietnam: *Documents of the Fifth Conference of the Eighth Central Committee*, National Political Publishing House, Hanoi, 1998, p. 55-56.

<sup>4</sup> Ho Chi Minh: *Full set*, National Political Publishing House of Vietnam, Ha Noi, 1995, vol. 5, p.464.

consolidated and developed the advanced Vietnamese culture imbued with national identity, and associated the task of building culture with the task of building and developing the country.

The resolution of the Ninth Central Committee (term XI) stated that in the construction and development of culture, Vietnamese people meet the requirements of sustainable development of the country, contributing to fostering patriotism, national pride, ethics, lifestyle, and personality of Vietnamese people in the new era. The platform on National Construction in the period of transition to socialism in 1991 identified that one of the six characteristics of socialism that Vietnamese people built is having an advanced culture imbued with advancement and national identity, carrying out the socialist revolution in the ideology and culture field, making the Marxist-Leninist worldview and Ho Chi Minh's thought to hold a leading position and role in the spiritual society, inheriting and promoting the good cultural traditions of the nations, and absorbing the cultural quintessence of mankind. The Fifth Conference of the Central Committee of the Party (term VIII) in July 1998 proposed a thematic resolution on building an advanced culture imbued with national identity".

The Platform for National Construction in the Transitional Period to Socialism (supplemented and developed in 2011) defines that the orientation for cultural development is building an advanced Vietnamese culture imbued with advancement and national identity, developing it comprehensively, uniting in diversity, deeply imbued with the spirit of humanity, democracy, and progress; making culture closely linked and permeated into the entire social life to become a solid spiritual foundation, important endogenous strength of development; inheriting and promoting the great cultural traditions of the Vietnamese ethnic community; absorbing the cultural quintessence of humanity; and building a democratic, fair, civilized society for the sake of genuine

interests and human dignity with increasing levels of knowledge, morality, physical strength, and aesthetics<sup>5</sup>.

National culture is the precious and sacred capital of a nation. So, what is the national cultural identity? These are patriotism, a sense of independence, solidarity, the spirit of optimism, humanity, the spirit of diligence, creativity, resilience, the spirit of tolerance, and selective reception of cultural interference.

Experiencing changes in history, after thousands of years of struggle for existence and development, these precious values are being inherited, preserved, promoted, and developed in new historical conditions. However, preserving does not mean locking them away door, it's necessary to receive great cultural values from the outside, adding to the culture of the nation. Besides, it needs to inherit and promote the positive values of the national cultural tradition.

## **2. Building Vietnamese culture in the spirit of the 13th Party Congress**

The document submitted to the 12th Party Congress emphasized that the task of permeating culture in all fields, activities, and social relations becomes an important endogenous force for sustainable development. Building a healthy cultural environment, creating conditions for building Vietnamese people who have beautiful personalities, moralities, and souls; intelligence, capacity, and creative skills; physically healthy raise social responsibility, civic duty, sense of respect and abiding of the laws, aims at promoting the Vietnamese role in the national construction and defense process.

The critical task and breakthrough strategy in the 13th National Party Congress is to arouse the spirit and will, and determination to develop a prosperous and happy country; to promote Vietnamese cultural values and human strength in the national construction and defense process. The resolution of the 13th National Party Congress emphasized building, developing, and creating the most favorable environment and

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<sup>5</sup> The Platform for National Construction in the Transitional Period to Socialism (supplemented and developed in 2011)

social conditions to arouse patriotism, national pride, belief, and aspiration to develop a prosperous and happy country; talents, intelligence, and qualifications of Vietnamese people are the most important goal and driving force for national development”<sup>6</sup>. It can be seen that the Resolution of the 13th Party Congress has pointed out a comprehensive human and cultural development strategy. These are the core elements to build the cultural value and standards system of Vietnamese people in the new era. Cultural development is to preserve the roots of the country in the development of international integration.

The Resolution of the 13th National Party Congress also clearly stated that it's necessary to continue to completely master and handle the major relations between economic growth and cultural development, progress and equity society implementation, and environmental protection”<sup>7</sup>. The cultural institutional system has been gradually strengthened. Many traditional cultural values of the nation and of different regions are inherited. Many cultural heritages are preserved and renovated. Socializing cultural activities is expanding. State management of culture has been strengthened. Cultural exchanges and international cooperation have flourished. The cultural life of the people is improved.

In the Document of the 13th Party Congress, Vietnamese cultural values and human strength are considered important endogenous resources contributing to the national synergy. “It is essential to develop comprehensively and synchronously all fields of culture, the cultural environment, and the diverse, civilized and healthy cultural life while absorbing the cultural quintessence of humanity so that culture is really the spiritual foundation, internal resources and

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<sup>6</sup> Communist Party of Vietnam: Document of the 13th National Party Congress, Truth National Political Publishing House, Hanoi, 2021, vol. II, p. 330.

<sup>7</sup> Communist Party of Vietnam, *Resolution of the 13th National Party Congress*, Hanoi, February 24, 2021.



breakthrough motivation for socio-economic development and international integration".<sup>8</sup>

Building an advanced Vietnamese culture imbued with national identity; effectively and strictly managing social development, ensuring social and human security; proactively and effectively adapting to climate change and reducing natural disasters, preventing and fighting epidemics, and protecting people's health; sustainably managing, exploiting and using natural resources, focusing on environmental protection, ensuring sustainable development. The movement "All people unite to build cultural life" has aroused many human values in the community. International exchange and cultural cooperation have many new nuances. Therefore, over the years, the cultural and spiritual life of the people has been gradually improved. These "initially formed new values about people with the qualities of social responsibility, civic consciousness, democracy, initiative, creativity, and aspiration".

However, the negative side of the market mechanism and international integration revealed certain limitations of culture and affected significantly the traditional culture of the nation. Compared with other fields, the development investment and achievements in culture are incommensurate and unconcentrated. That has made the spiritual and cultural life in many places poor and monotonous. The cultural enjoyment gap between mountainous, remote, and urban areas as well as between social classes has been gradually shortened.

The cultural environment still has depraved and alien manners that are contrary to Vietnamese customs and traditions. Social evils and some types of crimes tend to increase. The conservation and promotion of cultural heritage values have not been effective. The development of the mass information system lacks scientific planning, wastes resources, and the management cannot keep up with its development. Some media agencies show signs of commercialization, away

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<sup>8</sup> Communist Party of Vietnam: *Documents of the 13th National Party Congress*, Truth National Political Publishing House, Hanoi, 2021, vol. I, p. 47.

from the principles and purposes<sup>9</sup>. Notably, the system of cultural institutions, material, and technical foundations for cultural activities are insufficient and weak, even degraded, desynchronization, and low in efficiency in some localities.

The 11th National Party Congress showed that cultural development has not been commensurate with economic growth. Management has been lax in the fields of culture, literature and arts, press and publication. Cultural environment suffers harm by miscellaneous and unsound factors which are unfamiliar with habits and customs. Social evils, crime and the penetration of harmful products and services which degrade people's morality are worrying problems. These are potential risks of eroding the nation's traditional cultural and ethical values, causing social disorder and security, and hindering the country's sustainable development. In order to build an advanced Vietnamese culture imbued with national identity, culture must be closely linked and permeated into the entire social life, becoming a solid spiritual foundation, an important internal strength of the promoting industrialization and modernization process.

The 12th Central Committee's 4th Plenary Session showed that strengthening the construction and rectification of the Party and preventing and repelling the deterioration of political ideology, morality, lifestyle, and internal "self-evolution" and "self-transformation" manifestations have promoted the formation of party culture and political culture with the basic content of honoring and protecting the purity, strength, the virtues of thrift, integrity, justice, impartiality, and the vanguard and exemplary role cadres, party members and the whole political system. A series of movements such as: "All people unite to build a cultural life", "National target program on building new rural areas in the period of 2016 - 2020", "All people unite to build new rural areas, civilized cities", Building new civilized families, office culture, corporate culture, entrepreneurial culture has contributed to a great change in human development and prevention of negative

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<sup>9</sup> Communist Party of Vietnam: Documents of the 13th National Party Congress, Truth National Political Publishing House, Hanoi, 2021, vol. I, p. 125.

manifestations, degradation of social morality and created a healthy and positive social environment.

The 11th Party Central Committee's report on the documents of the 12th National Party Congress assessed that new human values with the qualities of social responsibility, civic consciousness, democracy, proactive, creative, and aspiration were initially formed. The institutional system and cultural institutions have been gradually strengthened. The cultural life of the people has been improved. "However, compared with the achievements in the fields of politics, economy, national defense, security, and foreign affairs, the achievements in culture are incommensurate. The scale is not large enough to effectively affect the building of healthy people and cultural environments. Morals and lifestyles are worrisomely degraded. Cultural and spiritual life in many places is still poor and monotonous. The cultural enjoyment gap between mountainous, remote, and urban areas as well as between social classes has been gradually shortened. The cultural environment still has depraved and alien manners that are contrary to Vietnamese customs and traditions. Social evils and some types of crimes tend to increase." <sup>10</sup>

The limitations in realizing the goal of building Vietnamese culture and people are a topical issue before the 13th National Congress. One of the main reasons for the limitations in building Vietnamese culture is that the policies and implementation of the management agency system in the state management system are not suitable for real life and cultural nature, and do not correspond to the political determination of the Party. The political report at the 12th Congress identified the causes of the limitations and weaknesses. They caused mainly many Party committees and authorities that have not properly understood its importance and have not paid enough attention to this field. Leadership and direction are not very drastic. The concretization and institutionalization of the Party's resolutions are slow and inconsistent. The state management of culture has been slowly

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<sup>10</sup> Communist Party of Vietnam: Documents of the 12th National Party Congress, Office of the Party Central Committee, Hanoi, 2016, p. 124 -125.

reformed, sometimes overlooked or even relaxed. Investment in culture has not been commensurate and unconcentrated.<sup>11</sup>

The Resolution of the 13th Party Congress clearly states: in the field of culture and society, there have not been many breakthroughs, and the efficiency is not high. The life of a part of the people is still difficult". From this assessment of the Party, looking directly at reality, we see that there are still many issues related to culture and cultural life that need to be taken seriously by the Party committees, party organizations, and authorities at all levels and fields seriously analyze with the spirit of looking directly at the truth to see clearly the limitations and shortcomings. Mapping out solutions to effectively implement the Resolution of the 13th Party Congress in the next five years and the following years. It is a rather serious degradation of social morality among a part of the people, especially the young. That is indifference, insensitivity, lack of care, sharing with the community, and lack of responsibility to society. It is also the thought of being afraid of labor, enjoying enjoyment, demanding, following a materialistic lifestyle, and appreciating the value of money. It is also the use of culture for superstitious activities, taking advantage of values in religious and belief activities to oppose the Party, State, and socialism. The limitations and shortcomings mentioned above in the work of leadership, direction, and organization of implementation, performing the task of cultural development, and promoting the good values of the national culture are very necessary for the Party committees, organizations, and authorities at all levels, departments and fields to pay attention, research and consider in the implementation the Resolution of the 13th Party Congress.

### **3. Solutions to build an advanced Vietnamese culture imbued with national identity**

To build an advanced Vietnamese culture imbued with national identity so that culture can truly become an internal force, a

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<sup>11</sup> *Political Report of the 11th Party Central Committee at the 12th National Party Congress*", p.6, Portal of the Ministry of Information and Communications.  
<http://www.mic.gov.vn/Pages/TinTuc/117150/Cong-bo-van-kien-dai-hoi-XII-cua-dang.html>,

driving force for national development and defense, the following solutions should be implemented:

Firstly, develop cultural standards. In order to build and develop culture, it is not only necessary to properly and thoroughly care for and nurture resources but also to pay attention to cultural standards, specifically an advanced culture imbued with national identity must aim to build those values of truth, goodness, and beauty. All the recent limitations and weaknesses in culture are related to the standard system that has not taken root in life.

Secondly, it is necessary to continue to study, clarify, and understand more deeply the guideline of "building an advanced culture imbued with national identity", becoming "the spiritual foundation of society, the goal and driving force for the country's sustainable development". On the close relationship between building culture and building people, it is necessary to develop culture for the perfection of human personality and build people for cultural development. On the basis of the general guideline of the Party, it is essential to continue to research and clarify the content of cultural development, the operating mechanism of the relationship between culture and people and other fields in society, and methods of application, and solutions in practice the tasks of cultural and human development.

Thirdly, formulate and implement a comprehensive cultural development strategy in the new period to meet the development requirements of the country, in accordance with the specific conditions of the new period, especially the strong development of the internet and social media networks. Research and identify the Vietnamese cultural and human value system as the basis and support for the building of cultural standards in politics, economy, and residential communities. Promulgate policy of comprehensive development of cultural pillars, such as building a new cultural life, promoting creative, literary, and artistic activities, building a positive cultural environment; developing cultural industry, preserving and promoting traditional cultural values, developing physical training, mass sports, and sports competition.

Fourthly, perfect cultural institutions, build cultural institutions from central to grassroots levels and effectively

strengthen inter-sectoral coordination relationships. Continue to build and perfect the legal system and cultural policies. Strengthen and effectively use resources and means for cultural activities, building cultural infrastructure, especially emphasizing socialization resources. Promote international cultural exchanges and cooperation, introduce unique national cultural values to the world, contribute to propagandizing and promoting the Vietnamese image, create favorable conditions for the people to absorb the world cultural quintessence, and enrich the national culture.

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