

Vietnamese Culture after 35 Years of Renovation

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Received on 19 July 2022. Revised on 1 August 2022. Accepted on 8 August 2022.

Abstract: After 35 years of *Đổi mới* (renovation), thanks to overcoming the limitations in previous periods, the Vietnamese culture has established new cultural patterns, actually integrating relatively deeply into mankind's culture according to the standards of the world community, and achieving some activities on a par with powerful developed countries. The most significant positive point of Vietnamese culture today is that of integration, the aspiration for development, and "healthy nationalism" (Quách Tương Uy, 2010). However, it is inevitably still stifled by low-valued, non-valued, and even counter-valued phenomena, as well as trends that hinder development, such as moral degradation, alienation of the people, deviant social values, declining trust, too many shortcomings in education and healthcare, and so on (Nhân dân Online, 2018). In the spirit of the resolution of the 13th National Congress of the Communist Party of Vietnam (CPV), this situation needs to be properly dealt with for the healthy development of Vietnamese culture in the future.

Keywords: Vietnamese culture, values, *Đổi mới*.

Subject classification: Cultural philosophy

1. Introduction

Compared with the past, Vietnamese culture today in all aspects and forms of expression, has changed both positively and negatively. On the positive side, changes have reached the *level of a transformation of revolutionary significance*. But on the negative side, changes fall into a state called *degradation, crisis, and depravation*. That is, Vietnamese culture reflects the vibrant reality of today's Vietnamese society, one filled with contradictions of development.

The milestone marking the change for Vietnamese culture to have moved in the direction of achieving a new quality and new appearance compared to the past, was when

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Vietnam joined the *World Decade for Cultural Development* (1987-1996) initiated by UNESCO. Going beyond the rigid methodological framework of culture in place before *Đổi mới*, culture today is no longer seen as a passive product of economic life and infrastructure, but rather it has really become an internal factor, regulating human behaviour, even the appearance of development, both in the management and administration of macro policies and in the scope of the daily activity of each person.

2. Positive changes of Vietnamese culture after 35 years of *Đổi mới*

2.1. The view that culture is the spiritual foundation of social life, the goal and the driving force of development, and the policy of building an advanced Vietnamese culture imbued with national identity is recorded in important party and state documents from the late 1990s. Although on the surface, sometimes still criticised as a cliché and insubstantial, the reality is different. By its own interpretation of culture, the perception has changed, creating the foundation for an upswing in culture, stimulating the revival of most of the traditional values that were neglected or even discriminated against, influencing Vietnamese culture to reinstate its traditional/standard characteristics, connecting with the past and then, thanks to integration, it can catch up increasingly more strongly with world culture.

2.2. The perspective of cultural renovation gives people and social organisations the ability to intervene and solve social problems stem from cultural causes, which has not been considered before. The regulatory function of culture (regulation, self-regulation) is also sometimes performed quietly and without fanfare. Through its unique use of “soft power”, culture has increasingly deepened the national awareness, clarified the nation’s history, and affirmed the sacred value of national independence and sovereignty. On the basis of “healthy nationalism”, it has really altered the extreme views of some subjects, bringing together concepts that were previously disconnected.

Not only in the external experiences of cultural activities, but also at a deeper level, in the contents of the humanistic qualities of development, with its human, community and national dimensions, Vietnamese culture has also developed steps that were difficult to achieve in the past.

2.3. After more than 35 years, traditional culture is now respected and fundamentally restored (traditional culture in Vietnam has a long history of thousands of years, much longer than the history of many other countries; i.e., it has a more sustainable and more influential foundation than many people can imagine). The new perspective on culture has stimulated the revival of most of the traditional values that were previously neglected or even discriminated against. This has returned Vietnamese culture to its norms and connecting it with the past. Cultural values and identities, including those of certain localities and ethnic groups, e.g. the Champa or Funan cultures, have been studied in greater depth and stirred objective humanistic meanings of the existence of the Vietnamese

community of ethnic groups in the independent and unified country. The civilised achievements of mankind present in Vietnam, such as during the French period, or the achievements of the Nguyễn Dynasty, etc., are evaluated with greater rationality, and are inherited factors of Vietnamese culture. The perception of society, especially that of the agencies responsible for economic growth coupled with cultural development, attainment of social progress and justice, is realised and implemented on a more practical and effective level.

The tradition of being studious, thrifty, honest, benevolent, respecting the rules and regulations of the country, etc., has been observed and promoted, and is honoured and actively implemented by people from all walks of life.

Family education is basically good and the role of the family still plays the most important role in society. In the system of social institutions, the family remains one that embodies many of the best qualities, strong enough to sustain social stability and development.

The desire for development, the will to be useful to society, the enthusiasm to build an affluent and strong country, are strongly expressed by residents from many social classes, from those with high-level responsibilities to ordinary working people.

2.4. Tangible and intangible cultural values are identified and evaluated according to international standards. Many tangible and intangible cultural heritages, natural heritages and inscriptions on UNESCO's Memory of the World Register are recognised by the international community¹ (UNESCO, 2022). Cultural life is establishing new patterns all the time. In many forms of cultural activities, Vietnam's cultural value system is not falling behind but rather is narrowing the gap with other countries. Cultural exchange and acculturation are especially extensive. Most cultural activities are modernised. For example, those relating to public power, market forces, behaviour, integration, and so on, are closer to those of the region and the world. Concerning many cultural activities such as showbiz, event organisation and conferences, fashion, travel and tourism, cuisine, information technology and social media, Vietnam is not too far behind other more experienced cultures.

Even with some specific cultural activities, Vietnam has proved to be classy and has made a positive impression on the international stage, on a par with developed economies. The 2017 APEC Summit in Đà Nẵng, the 2019 North Korea-United States Summit (also known as the Hanoi Summit), and Vietnam's participation in United Nations peacekeeping forces, are examples of such cultural phenomena.

2.5. Regarding cultures including political, public power, foreign affairs (diplomacy), public security, military, education etc., Vietnam's cultural value system also has many

¹ Up to now, Vietnam has five cultural heritages, two natural heritages and one mixed heritage (unique in Southeast Asia, among the 35 mixed heritages of the world); 14 intangible cultural heritages representing mankind's culture; and 6 inscriptions on UNESCO Memory of the World Register.

bright spots, approaching international standards, although these areas are still heavily criticised both internally and externally.

Although science and education are still stifled by many limitations and shortcomings, relatively clear developments have been made in the direction of integration. The Vietnamese people are still considered active and intelligent. Vietnamese students taking part in international competitions in basic sciences and information technology, continuously achieve very high rankings. In addition, Vietnam is also one of the few countries where approximately two-thirds of the population use the internet, social media, smartphones, and so on, which are very strong technology platforms for cultural development.

2.6. Thus, in terms of culture, by shedding many formulaic and rigid conceptions, awakening traditional values and identities, absorbing reasonable external factors, after more than 35 years of *Đổi mới* and integration, Vietnam has shaken off many limitations of the old approach and quickly merged into the cultural norms and human civilization. In addition to the recognition of many tangible and intangible cultural values, a number of Vietnamese people have been officially honoured as “World Cultural Celebrity” by UNESCO². The standards of world cultural activities have been applied widely in Vietnam. The situation of “unlike anyone else” has gradually decreased. Vietnamese culture has become increasingly well known and appreciated throughout the world. The position of Vietnam, its culture, and people has changed considerably from that of the past.

And the cultural life of the vast majority of residents has changed for the better, including those in remote areas. From a poor, underdeveloped country, since *Đổi mới*, Vietnam’s GDP has reached medium levels, with an economy worth USD 362.64 billion as of July 2021, ranking Vietnam 40th in the world, a GDP per capita of USD 3.694 and foreign exchange reserves in 2021 reaching USD 109.4 billion, the highest ever. The economy is currently growing quite a fast pace and the country is still forecast to be a “tiger”. Vietnam is one of the few countries to make clear and continuous progress in the Human Development Index (HDI) since the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) released the HDI in 1990. The trend of this index being higher than the economic one has been maintained over the past 20 years and is still ongoing. In 2020, for the first time, Vietnam was ranked among the top 52 countries in the HDI: 0.700-0.800 - HDR 2020. Average life expectancy is also quite high, certainly no lower than those countries with a high HDI ranking and it continues to increase. Over the past three decades, about 50 million people have been helped in overcoming hunger and the eradication of poverty has been at the forefront. Vietnam reached the finishing line 10 years earlier in its commitment to the United Nations in attaining the Millennium Development Goals (MDG), which was highly welcomed by the international community (World Bank, 2022).

² These include Nguyễn Trãi (1980), Hồ Chí Minh (1990), Nguyễn Du (2015), Chu Văn An (2019), Nguyễn Đình Chiểu (2021) and Hồ Xuân Hương (2021).

Of course, regarding poor people in remote areas and those displaced due to job losses during the four COVID-19 waves in 2021, these are indicators reflecting the inadequacy of the management culture and cultural life in general. This unavoidable fact has simply made the overall picture of the cultural situation much clearer, and it has not changed the general trend of cultural life.

In fact, culture has permeated the country's development mode - from a rigid, bookish, subjective, dogmatic mode, to a new, more flexible, more realistic, more dynamic one - liberating the endogenous resources, utilising external forces, absorbing the strength and quintessence of foreign cultures and civilisations, closer to international trends and standards. Assessing Vietnamese culture since *Đổi mới*, the official document of the 13th National Party Congress affirmed: "The awareness of culture, society and people is becoming increasingly comprehensive and profound. The fields, types and products of cultural development are increasingly diversified, meeting new and multi-faceted needs of social life. Many traditional cultural values and cultural heritages are inherited, preserved, and promoted. Culture in politics and economy is initially valued and promoted with positive effects. International cultural exchange, cooperation and integration activities experience an upswing. Comprehensive human development of Vietnam is gradually becoming the centre of the socio-economic development strategy. Due attention is paid to criticism of the struggle against and repelling bad, evil and backward issues, and opposing wrong views and behaviours harmful to culture and people's way of life" (Communist Party of Vietnam, 2021).

3. Limitations and inadequacies hindering development of Vietnamese culture after more than 35 years of *Đổi mới*

The Vietnam of today is a society that contains many innate contradictions. The country integrates deeply, develops relatively quickly and has a vibrancy, even during the previous financial crisis and the recent COVID-19 pandemic. The economic society has many bright spots which are recognised by many international organisations and the world community. With undeniable progress, Vietnam's international reputation is increasingly expanding. But on the other hand, Vietnamese society also has a dark and ominous view of values which are disregarded or not sufficiently appreciated.

While the HDI is high, people still alienate and there is an erosion of moral values. The economy has grown, along with the middle class, but the gap between rich and poor has grown more acute; the poverty rate in remote areas remains high, and poverty becoming a reality for some. Education and health indicators have improved, but the quality of education is still poor; interaction between people in the healthcare sector is still hampered by too many problems, and patients are sometimes targets of exploitation rather than targets of service. While traditions are restored and the quintessence of world culture is absorbed, deviant and false values are almost considered normal. While the happiness

index has improved, the number of people satisfied with their lives has not increased. While cultures such as tourism, festivals, entertainment, etc., have developed, less cultural and non-cultural behaviours are still quite common. Vietnam develops dynamically, but institutions and mechanisms still have the potential to corrupt people and degrade the culture. Belief is thought to have reduced.

Assessing the limitations of the current culture, documents of the 13th National Congress the CPV clearly state: “Due attention has not been given to culture corresponding to economics and politics, and culture has not really become an endogenous resource and motivation for the country’s sustainable development. The role of culture in building people’s lives has not been properly defined, and there is a tendency to attach importance to the mere function of entertainment. There is a shortage of major cultural, literary, and artistic works that vividly reflect the scale of the renovation process and have positive effects on people. The cultural and social environment continues to be polluted by social evils, corruption, and negativities. The gap in cultural enjoyment between regions is still wide and cultural life in ethnic minority populated, remote and isolated areas still face many difficulties. The work of leadership, and the direction and management of culture still has many shortcomings, confusion, and delays in institutionalising the party’s views and policies on culture. Investment in culture is inadequate, ineffective, and is still spread too thin. There is no effective solution to prevent and reverse serious degradation in some aspects of culture, morality, and lifestyle, causing social annoyance. The mass communication system still faces many limitations. Some press agencies have shown signs of moving away from the guiding principles to engage in commercialisation. Social network management is still inadequate. The quality and quantity of cultural staff has not yet met the demand for cultural development in the present day. The introduction and promotion of Vietnamese culture abroad is not as strong as hoped for. There are still many limitations to receiving the quintessence of mankind’s culture” (Communist Party of Vietnam, 2021). These statements are clear, detailed, and direct; hence, there is no need for further analysis.

3.1. Social crime is a typical sign of human alienation and moral degradation. Before 2020, crimes occurred almost daily and it is worth mentioning that the level of crimes is becoming increasingly serious. During the four COVID-19 waves, criminal offences decreased, but some other types of crimes have shocked society. This situation is clearly shown in the reports issued by the Ministry of Public Security, the Central Steering Committee on Anti-Corruption, and the Judiciary Committee of the National Assembly, or in press reports on security and social order. An increase in drug addiction and drug trafficking is also reported. Although Vietnam has some of the most stringent drug laws, drug-related crimes are still increasing. Since 2019, the National Assembly has had to speak out about the risk of Vietnam becoming an international drug transit. Drug crimes directly destroy society’s efforts in human development.

According to the minister of Public Security in a National Assembly Q&A session on 4 June 2019, the seriousness of drug crime is that when it increases, other types of crimes

also escalate; and for every kilogram of cocaine entering Vietnam, ten families have their family members in prison (Government News, 2019).

In the author's opinion, what most clearly shows the degree of human alienation and moral degradation are cases where high-ranking party and state officials violate the law. A few years ago, when major crimes were prosecuted, most people could not help but be surprised to learn that felons included public security and army generals, as well as very high-ranking cadres of the party and state, such as members of the Party Central Committee and of the Politburo, etc. Previously, it was difficult for anyone to conceive that officials holding such status and social responsibility could be criminals who manipulated social order and were ready to cause harm to the country, etc.³ (Minh Ngọc, 2022).

3.2. Education and health were previously envisioned as areas where people could not be corrupted, but now the situation has reached "crisis" point. In the educational sphere, many problems that are difficult to solve appear in management, administration, and school activities. These include the curricula and textbooks, the autonomy of educational institutions, scandals that take place at some universities, examination cheating, degree trading, school violence, degradation of a teacher's morals, paedophilia, and sexual harassment in schools that have continuously occurred. The Ministry of Education and Training did not have time to solve one case before another arose. For many years, education has always been a hot spot on the agenda of the National Assembly and the government. The situation of buying and selling degrees, plagiarism in international publications, irresponsibility in compiling first grade school textbooks, etc., were the pressing issues facing education in 2020. The problems the following year in 2021 centred on "true learning, true exams, true talents" and the quality online learning. In 2022, the challenge for education is tuition fees - a shock rise in tuition fees has forced the Ministry of Education and Training to offer tuition waivers for the 2022-2023 school year for junior high school students. It seems the education crisis still has no solution.

Regarding the health sector, in recent years it is considered great progress has been made at both professional and organisational levels according to new policies. However, new scandals appeared with the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020 and 2021⁴ (Diệp Trương, 2022). The problem for the Vietnamese health sector is that it has not yet been able to

³ Over the past ten years, more than 2,700 party organisations and nearly 168,000 party members were disciplined, including more than 7,390 party members engaged in corruption more than 170 officials under the central management, including 33 members of the CPV Central Committee and former members of the CPV Central Committee, more than 50 public security and army generals were disciplined. From 2021 to July 2022, 50 cadres under the central management were disciplined, including eight members of the CPV Central Committee and former members of the CPV Central Committee, and 20 generals.

⁴ The Việt Á case: more than 60 people have been prosecuted and detained who are leaders and officials of the Ministry of Science and Technology, the Ministry of Health, the CDCs, and hospitals in many localities, including the Chairman of Hanoi People's Committee and the Minister of Health.

solve the deterioration in the doctor-patient relationship. Patients are still the target persons “to be managed” rather than those who “need to be served”. The self-interested and self-seeking attitude in medical activities has led to complicated consequences for the operation of the health sector. Mechanisms and policies have legal loopholes, many of which are difficult to close. The “innate” humanity of healthcare is still being violated (T.G (Vietnam+), 2022).

3.3. In the community value paradigm, the phenomenon of value deviation has been warned about for many years. But recently, it has become more and more acute. At present, the correlation between nominal and true values, of labour and wealth, of status and talent, of money and humanity, of ostentatiousness and humility, of indifference and altruism, etc., are not always significant, even skewed.

In the public consciousness, the position of some values has been (inadvertently) misaligned, both in daily life and in the mass media. Many honourable titles are far from reality. Many illusory titles are still “passionately desired”. Wealth is revered, but labour, even that which creates wealth, is overlooked and underappreciated. Status, even if unworthy, is respected, but talent associated with status is not really honoured, and even some forms of ability are discriminated against. Although Vietnam is considered as a nation that respects gratitude, indifference is very common, and altruism and tolerance are becoming rarer, especially in public offices. There have been too many cases where the thought of money breaks down the value of humanity. Because of money, family members, friends and colleagues are willing to bad mouth and stab one another in the back. Human compassion is mainly seen only in times of trouble. Humility is seldom glorified, but rather it is often very easily suppressed while the habit of showing off is constantly visible everywhere. In other words, in the current paradigm of values, vanity is still fostered because nominal values are often perceived by the mechanism and unwittingly by society as more important than true values. Unethical greed continues to exist, because there are still many cases where labour and wealth are not in a cause-and-effect relationship. Crony capitalism in Vietnam is not a fabrication and many businesses are more interested in “wheeling and dealing” than in business and production. The greed for titles, and title-related benefits and positions are still thriving because many talented people continue to be unworthy of their status. In Vietnam, status is almost always respected, while promotion and application of talent often face many difficulties. Statements made by responsible people are like “those of someone falling from the sky” are repeated every year. Almost everywhere the power of money is seen to be superior to humanity; there are still many values without the “mechanism” to make them a reality if not guaranteed by money. Showiness often overwhelms modesty and is sometimes aided by the mass media. To have knowledge is still considered inferior to having an academic degree; students taking exams in some places are treated by the education sector as if they are thieves even before the exams take place. Indifference is still common both on the street and in the workplace. Fakeness and falsehood are still ubiquitous, still ignored, still considered normal, when not prosecuted before the law.

The problem is that self-interest and pragmatism through the stimulation of the negative side of the market society have made many people mistakenly believe that “money” and “mandarin fortune” are the ‘golden’ values of life, and that fame, justice, and prestige can be bought. Falsehood has prevailed in many areas of social life, and even in many cases it has openly overwhelmed the traits of kindness and honesty. Once the community value paradigm is skewed, of course, some values will be removed from their true places in the system while virtual values, non-values, worthless values, and even anti-values will replace or become top dog. If “labour”, “honesty” and “truthfulness” are accidentally replaced by “money” and “mandarin fortune”, the value orientation will inevitably be ineffective and misleading, or end up losing direction.

3.4. It is hard to deny that lies have been all pervasive in social life for a long time and now they are considered commonplace, discouraging honesty and kindness. Everything fake has become the ‘name of the game’. Fake can apply to degrees, titles, knowledge, international (scientific) publications, products, medicines, age, statistics, auctions, investments, elections, and even hypocrisy. The trait of being fake is almost ubiquitous and no longer shameful. It is a pity that society passively accepts these fake areas by ignoring them and pretending to be unaware.

In the case of many construction works, projects, etc., the purpose stated in the actual document may well be false, because it is just a means to an end, a tool for extraction and corruption. People always think about circumventing the law in whatever they do. There will be no incentive to act if the work is done with integrity and with no benefits that can be manipulated. Every national plan proposed for people’s livelihood is at risk of collapse if corruption or self-seeking purposes cannot be realised. From 2016 up to now, this trend has seen some reduction due to fierce anti-corruption work, especially in the context where wrongdoings in a number of ministries and large enterprises were exposed. People have grounds to believe that there will no longer be a forbidden zone in dealing with corruption unlike previously, and sooner or later criminals will have to pay the price.

However, it is still hard to deny that corruption in public property is not an “implicit motive” of many powerful officials. It is difficult to imagine what the real motivation of implementing socio-economic projects would be if there is no corruption.

Human alienation is only one of the causes of this situation. Institutions that don’t have human resources mechanisms in place and an overall productive working environment for their staff are one of the major causes.

The problem is, of course, the deterioration of human qualities. However, in a deeper analysis, the issue is that economic institutions and social mechanisms have long created a situation where most jobs are not paid commensurately, especially in the state sector. Almost everywhere, in all forms of labour, if people do real work, take real responsibility, and enjoy real remuneration, they will definitely be disadvantaged or not be rewarded for their efforts. This mechanism belongs to extractive institutions. For decades, society found its own way - which is the worst way - by lying. In turn, falsehood seeks to defend itself in

flawed institutions, legal loopholes, rigid regulations or self-interest in policies, etc., to defend what is wrong and bad in society.

3.5. Another social phenomenon that can be a consequence of all the above problems is that of trust. People's confidence in the party, in the regime, in the country's future, has been gradually fading away; the press and public opinion have long raised the alarm. Warnings of the direct danger threatening the survival of the party and the regime has been raised by the general secretary himself and the resolution of the 4th plenum of the Party Central Committee, 12th tenure. Firstly, scientists often find that the cause of the crisis in trust and confidence lies in the institutional operation, in the public power apparatus, in the contingent of public officials, and in the legal system. That is of course reasonable. But from a cultural point of view, the basic cause for trust to gradually fade and disappear in the spiritual life of Vietnamese society is, in the author's opinion, that the right has been disrespected and even trampled upon over a long period of time. While mostly by accident, the truth is that the institutional framework has provided support, the law has created loopholes, the public power apparatus is often bureaucratic, the policies are not thorough, many public officials are greedy and self-interested in dealing with what is right - so the right has been despised, sometimes trampled on, causing a breakdown of trust. In some cases, the right is treated as something meaningless. Just very recently, when dealing with some very pressing cases, the responsible persons still announced to the public that "what happened complies with correct procedures". The right in such cases is completely disregarded. It is difficult for a sound basis of trust and confidence in any form to continue to exist.

In terms of values, it is necessary to say that the orientation of value in practice always faces two sides that rarely coincide. While ideal and expected values, that are warmly promoted and intentionally honoured to guide human thought and behaviour often achieve little, the implicit values of social life itself on the other hand silently show their power. The intense instinctive flow of social life, if not governed by enough robust and strict legal institutions through creating a water tight system of operations, will wriggle through every gap to satisfy people's legitimate and unjustified needs. The bad, the evil, the unreasonable, etc., in such cases sometimes spiral out of control. The current situation of Vietnam's cultural value paradigm is somewhat in such a situation.

It is very good that with clear results showing a rare resolute attitude after several years of implementing the fight against corruption and against degradation of social ethics, there has been a positive change in the social atmosphere, partially restoring the people's confidence and trust. The success of the fight against corruption, together with other socio-economic achievements, gives rise to hope that, with a relatively strong developing nation like Vietnam, the thorny and difficult issues in terms of the aforementioned values, no matter how serious, cannot hinder the normal social development.

Even if viewed from another angle, the treatment of social evils also provides an opportunity for Vietnamese society to thoroughly resolve its inherent conflicts and reach higher and better values. Speaking at the Politburo's National Conference held on 30 June 2022 to review ten years of the anti-corruption and anti-negativity campaign, General

Secretary Nguyễn Phú Trọng said that corruption is an inherent defect of power which threatens the government's survival. He stated that "there needs to be strict prevention and punishment mechanisms to stamp out corruption, to ensure that people do not dare and do not need to become corrupt" (Nguyễn Phú Trọng, 2022).

4. Conclusion

Talking about culture is actually talking about people. Culture is the spiritual foundation of society; that is, in the longitudinal or cross-sectional perspectives of chronology, culture makes a people and people are the products of culture. But when it is considered a goal and a driving force of development, culture is viewed in the short-term or in a synchronous perspective of chronology, i.e., culture is a creative product of people. To address and overcome the limitations and inadequacies of culture, the starting point must always be the people with their behaviours, activities, and plans.

Writers and artists who create works of art and literature and who are responsible for pioneering, awakening, and opening the way for society to imagine the future, must first and foremost honestly reflect socio-cultural life, and should not find a reason to turn their backs on human destinies. These include workers who lost their jobs due to COVID-19; soldiers, doctors, benefactors sacrificing themselves for the community, fighting against invisible and visible enemies; those who intentionally or unfortunately violate the law because of corruption and degeneration; those who dare to die for the common good; military generals who dare to sacrifice personal interests, ditching their rigid and dogmatic thinking; soldiers who live quietly in border areas and on islands to protect the country; etc. Literature and art works should focus more on such figures and issues.

The resolution of the 9th plenum of Party Central Committee, 11th tenure affirmed that cultural considerations must be placed on an equal footing with economic, political, and social ones. That means, for managers, entrepreneurs, or socio-economic development programmes and projects, cultural goals must be planned right from the beginning aligned to economic goals. Socio-economic development programmes and projects are not only economically profitable but also protect culture. They should not corrupt people or be geared towards being culturally profitable.

At present, the human culture of "a section of cadres and party members", as recorded in the resolution of the 4th plenum of the Party Central Committee, 13th tenure, still has problems. "A section of cadres and party members, including leaders and managers, are not fully aware of the nature and importance of party building and rectification, showing a poor sense of responsibility and failing to be exemplary persons. Their ideals are fading, their will is slackening. As a result they fall into individualism, their words do not go hand in hand with their actions. They violate the party discipline and the law" (Communist Party of Vietnam, 2021). That is the root cause that damages the health of social relations, such as

the relationship between the people themselves, between doctors and patients, between teachers and students, between the police and the people, between the people and public authorities, between superiors and subordinates, and between artists and the public.

In the cause of cultural development, human culture is always the vital goal. If people's culture is dull or extreme, then society is deceitful or insecure. If human culture deviates or distorts people, then society is misguided and chaotic. If human culture is healthy and honest, then the right is respected, society develops normally, people have no worries about unhappiness, rich people enjoy the benefits of wealth, successful people enjoy the happiness of success, the poor and ordinary working people enjoy pleasures of their simple lives and of being honest people.

Looking back over the thousands of years of the development of Vietnamese society, it can be seen that the regulatory ability of Vietnamese culture from a very early age proved courageous and with enough strength to resist negative domestic and external impacts, counter-attacking and overcoming bad and evil incidents. Among the Bách Việt people south of the Yangtze River, only Vietnam was not assimilated by the Han civilisation, though it had to undergo more than 1,000 years of northern domination. Without exception, Vietnam has won all the resistance wars in the country's defence of the Fatherland against foreign invaders such as the Qin, Han, Song, Yuan, Ming, Qing, France, and America. While the whole of Asia had no tradition of sea exploration, the Vietnamese people managed to conquer the East Sea (also known as the South China Sea), taking command of the Paracel and Spratley islands. Situated in the position of intersection of civilisations, Vietnam has always been a land where people can settle down, establish businesses and where many religions, ways of life, and many forms of civilisation can converge. The Đông Sơn civilisation, the Sa Huỳnh culture, and the Đại Việt civilisation from the Đinh and Lê Dynasties up to the 20th century, in relation to contemporary external civilisations and cultures, are not inferior in terms of development level.

With such a long tradition of culture, today's generation of Vietnamese certainly do not lack the qualities of intelligence and creativity, courage and bravery, studiousness and industriousness, tolerance and benevolence, etc., necessary for national construction and defence. There is a basis to believe that, after 35 years of renovation, Vietnamese culture and people already have adequate and sufficient conditions, and the potential and strength to realise the national development goals mapped out by the 13th National Congress of the CPV.

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