

SUMMARY OF NEW CONCLUSIONS OF THE DISSERTATION

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Dissertation title: Water culture of Muong people in Hoa Binh province

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New conclusions of the dissertation

1. On the basis of theories of ecological anthropology and ethnographic literature on Muong people in Vietnam, this study presents the concept of water culture as a structure of three components:

1) Indigenous worldview relating to water: their perspective on soul, spirit, animism and Khu (Water Snake) King,... Generally, it is a worldview in which, people refer to all entities as subjects with soul and capability of communicating with human beings. Behavior of human reflects their respect to all entities in the nature.

2) Indigenous knowledge relating to water: System of knowledge on utility and protection of water resource in farming (different kinds of irrigation methods such as *mương, phai, hạnh, tặng*) and daily uses (*mó nước*) and in aquatic exploitation.

3) Cultural behavior patterns between humans with water: the worship of Khu King, *mó nước* (water source), *xuống đồng* (new paddy season) celebration, Rice field edges fixing ceremony, irrigation canal fixing ceremony, rain rituals, fish-catching festival and the way Muong people use water in traditional ceremonies and rituals.

The study also interpret the relation of these three components on the ground of a perspective that indigenous worldview of a people will regulate their knowledge and behavior in the relation with nature.

2. Through a fieldwork study at Tan Vinh commune, Luong Son rural district, Hoa Binh province, the author has assessed the transformation of water culture of Muong people and identified factors affecting those changes: After the August Revolution in 1945, Hoa Binh province as well as the entire society of Vietnam changed significantly in all politic, economic and social aspects. Those changes strongly affected ecological culture of Muong people living in Hoa Binh province. Changes in ideology led to changes in water-related cultural patterns and indigenous knowledge. Muong people has not used *mó nước* anymore, instead, they use water pumped wells. They are no longer worshipping Khu King or manage fish catching according to different sections of a stream or traditional irrigation (due to deforestation).

3. The outcomes of this study could be adopted in the current context of protecting ecological environment in Hoa Binh as well as in other locals where many minority groups reside in. The theoretical point derived from the findouts of this research affirms that the reverence for nature of many ethnic groups in history, the balance and harmony of the relation between human and nature are constructive values in protecting water resource. There are probably conflicts in ideology/worldview or difficulties in the protection of traditional water culture yet if central government has good policy based on the principle of cultural tolerance, positive essence of Muong water culture would be well promoted today's.

Supervisor

Doctoral Candidate