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FORMATION BASES AND CULTURAL VALUES OF VIETNAMESE WATER PUPPETRY

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1. The necessity of the Dissertation

Red River delta is a vast land area located downstream of the Red River, surrounded by dikes and sea with fertile land. Featuring a country rich in “water” resource, agriculture is the main occupation and production relations associates community members living under the village has formed the village cultures which is diverse in traditional festivals - is the basis for our forefathers created the folk art forms, but the most unique is water puppetry, an distinguished intangible cultural heritage currently only available in Vietnam.

The word "games" is folk performance; Water Puppetry has become traditional art with bold shades of Vietnamese soul, lively reflecting the authentic culture of farmers’ lives in Red River delta, showing the interaction between people and nature.

Over the centuries of formation and development, traditional Water Puppetry has been up and down experiencing, once being flourished, then quiet and in the risk of falling into oblivion (many show games and water puppet had for many reasons far gone).

So far, no scientific work has been found in deep research of culture in the Water Puppet with cultural premise of origin, formation and cultural value of this art, from which orientation for conservation and management as well development and bringing to education on tradition and aesthetics in school, introducing Vietnam culture with the world and promoting tourism. Thus, subject “Formation Bases and Cultural Values of the Vietnamese Water Puppetry” will handle the above issues.

2. Research Purpose

The Dissertation targets to clarify the formation and cultural values of the Vietnamese Water Puppetry, and make orientation and recommendation for conservation and development of the art in the culture accordingly.
3. Research Task

- Selectively systematizing and developing in certain extent the concept of Puppetry and Water Puppetry and theoretical issues about cultural values as a basis for reaching the researched objective.

- Making overview on research status of Water Puppetry and briefing the art in Vietnam cultural process, also analyzing its formation bases and cultural values.

- Making evaluation and mentioning achievements, limitation, reasons and recommendations on conservation and development of Water Puppetry for the time being.

4. Research Objective

Water Puppetry and elements forming the art, socio-natural biological environment of the Red River delta.

5. Scope of Research

- **Content:** Researching effect of social and natural environments of the Red River delta and the formation and development of Water Puppetry. Researching art features, performance organizational method of Water Puppetry to understand its formation bases and cultural values. Water Puppetry research is in relation with other types of play, dance and circus (importing to Vietnam) and Cheo belonged to Vietnam culture in two facets of content and form with a view to briefly compare and analyze and find particular characteristics of Water Puppetry under cultural perspective.

- **Space:** Focusing on survey of Water Puppetry in the area of the Red River delta and deeply researching 05 traditional Water Puppetry groups and 02 professional Water Puppetry units.

- **Time:** Researching Water Puppetry in the cultural development in Dai Viet feudatory stage in order to summarize on origin, formation
and development of Vietnamese Water Puppetry in historical processes. About formation bases and cultural values of Water Puppetry, the research focuses on the art from the end of XVI century up to present.

6. Method of Research

The Dissertation follows the Party’s policies and views as well as state documentation on establishment, development and inheriting of Vietnamese culture.

Water Puppetry is not only a type of literature and art but also a cultural phenomenon, so from the approaching methodology toward geo-culture, culture region, the Dissertation uses interdisciplinary methods in Culture, Art and History.

The Dissertation stress on data collection during field survey, sampling, reference described and analysis – synthesis methods are applied for understanding and analyzing the subject.

7. Dissertation Contribution

7.1. On theory

Interpreting the formation and development of Water Puppetry in historical processes rooted from Vietnamese culture basis; analyzing and systematizing cultural values of Vietnamese Water Puppetry, thereby providing reference information for next studies on the art.

7.2. On practice

By status evaluated in the Dissertation together with views, orientations, solutions and recommendations on conservation and development of Water Puppetry, helping artists, managers and art organizations have right selection on the art developing policies appropriate to the actual practice of the country.

8. Dissertation Structure

Beside the Preamble (7 pages), Conclusion (6 pages), Reference (10 pages) and Appendices (25 pages), the main content consists of 4 Chapters as follows:
Chapter 1. Overview on Vietnamese Water Puppetry

Chapter 2. Formation bases of Vietnamese Water Puppetry

Chapter 3. Cultural values of Vietnamese Water Puppetry

Chapter 4. Conservation and Development of Vietnamese Water Puppetry

Chapter 1

OVERVIEW ON VIETNAMESE WATER PUPPETRY

1.1. Relevant Definitions

1.1.1. Cultural value

*Cultural value* is the overarching ideology which is a common strong belief to people about what is right or wrong, good or evil, pretty and bad, meaningful or meaningless, desirable and undesirable.

Speaking to the cultural values of Water Puppetry means to state on system of traditional cultural values of Vietnamese Water Puppetry.

1.1.2. Puppetry

So far, there is not a formal academic concept of *Puppetry*. Based on puppet characteristics, imaging techniques and assembly, stage and performing arts, researchers To Sanh and Nguyen Huy Hong a concept of puppetry has been given.

1.1.3. Water Puppetry

About the concept for *Water Puppetry*, there are two typical concepts of researchers To Sanh and Nguyen Huy Hong with affirmation that *Puppetry* and *Water Puppetry* is a traditional stage, acting and making droll.

1.2. Overview on research status

1.2.1. General research on Puppetry

Considering under historical and art views, there has been some researching works in Vietnam and abroad: *Puppetry (1964)* of A.Phedotop translated by To Ky Hoang; *For the Puppetry Art Background of Socialist Republic of Vietnam* is the work integrating

1.2.2. **Exclusive researches on Water Puppetry**

1.2.2.1. Local research

Research on Vietnamese Water Puppetry, there are monographs such as: *Water Puppetry Art* (1976) of To Sanh, *Water Puppetry Art of Thai Binh Province* (1987) and *Vietnamese Water Puppetry* (1996) of Nguyen Huy Hong, *Water Puppetry* (2009) of Hoang Chuong… Besides, many articles are published on journals of authors like Pham Duc Duong, Tran Quoc Vuong, Tran Van Khe, Nguyen Huy Hong, Hoang Kim Dung, Nguyen Duong Con, Yen Giang, Ngo Quynh, Vu Tu Quynh, Nguyen Hoang Minh Van, Le Huong Giang. In the approach from folk culture, spiritual culture to art and stage… exclusive research on Water Puppetry also shows in collection of research works under master dissertation on culture, art and tourism, i.e.: Pham Trong Toan (1997), *Study on Traditional Water Puppetry of Nguyen Village*, Nguyen Van Dinh (2007), *Water Puppetry Art of Dong Village*; Le Huong Gian (2008), *Water Puppetry Art of Hanoi*, Nguyen Hoang Minh Van (2011), *Water Puppetry Activities in the Red River Delta – Status and Solutions*; Tran Thi Minh (2012), *Exploiting Cultural Values*
of Water Puppetry Art in Northern Plains for Tourism Development; Le Quynh Trang (2013), Promoting Role of Dance in Vietnamese Water Puppetry, Master Dissertation on Art and Doctoral Dissertation on Culture: Vu Tu Quynh (2012), Restoration of Water Puppetry in Northern Vietnam since the Doi Moi (Renovation) up to Present.

1.2.2.2. Research abroad

The Dissertation put 5 subjects of foreign authors researching on Water Puppetry under cultural view.

There has not been any scientific monographs researching cultural premise for formation and development of Water Puppetry and experiencing cultural values of this art.

1.3. Overview on Water Puppetry in Vietnamese Cultural History

Everyone all knows that Water Puppetry is one of the puppets that show unique nature of Vietnam; born in villages of the Red River delta and being in people’s lives for at least over 10 centuries.

Based on stele of Sung Thien Dien Linh, the author agrees with researcher To Sanh about the material released in 1976, i.e. Vietnamese Water Puppetry was born long long ago and greatly developed in Ly dynasty (XI century).

In this time, Sung Thien Dieu Linh stele made in 1121 written on Puppetry performance for Kinh’s entertainment shown that Vietnamese Water Puppetry has been highly developed and achieved a great art level.

In Tran dynasty (beginning of XVIII century), though the Court still absorbed two folk trends of Dai Viet and foreign cultures (Chiem Thanh and Chinese), Water Puppetry remained extensively developing, not only in local activities, festivals and serving royal place but also in international exchanges for welcoming foreign diplomats.

In two centuries of XV and XVI – Le dynasty, as literature was honored and though Water Puppetry was not brought to royal place, it
was recognized its role and position in festivals in villages. Literature in this time had effected to the words of Water Puppetry. It absorbed from Cheo and Tuong arts to enrich its performance.

The country in recessed Le dynasty and then Tay Son time had faced to many historical ups and downs, Water Puppetry still prevailed in village festivals and impacted on Confucians. They used Water Puppetry as literature image and weapon to protest the Court.

Nguyen dynasty concentrated on developing Tuong as Royal art, so Water Puppetry still hidden in the villages in the form of self-consciousness and, voluntary. With orderly organization has certainly shaped according to the group assembly; promoting nature of "esoteric" to keep craft; puppetry groups continued to promote exchanges and competed many unique puppet plays with exquisite technique... and has been preserved and transmitted to the present.

French colonialists invaded our country in the latter half of the nineteenth century until the early twentieth century; the Nguyen dynasty became a puppet. Water Puppetry fell into bleak period, and was regardless like fun. However, Water Puppetry still persisted inside Vietnamese society and an ideology of the contemporary patriotic intellectuals...

The August Revolution was successful, freeing our nation from the Japanese fascists and we continued the second fighting against the French. The enemy devastated our nation's cultural heritage, artists were killed, and artifacts destroyed that made the traditional Water Puppetry in the period 1946 - 1954 actually fell into the risk of oblivion. Until 1954, the North was absolutely liberated, and Water Puppetry has really been in a new turning point to flourishing today.

In March 1956, Vietnamese professional Puppetry was formally established and recognized as traditional staged art. Especially, the word “esoteric” becomes popular. It was constantly evolving in the
hard time of the resistance against Americans (1965 – 1975). In 1984, Water Puppetry was beyond the territory of Vietnam and reached the world and well known as today. Since the time of Doi Moi (Renovation) in 1986 up to present, Water Puppetry continues its values on Vietnamese tradition and cultural nature to the world.

**Summary**

The motion process of Vietnamese traditional Water Puppetry is the development from the traditional folk games to folk performance - the syncretism art encompasses visual art, sound art, performance art, manners and customs including the esoteric traditional crafts, associates with folk beliefs, agricultural festivals, seasonal nature in narrow scale or within family to become a kind of theatrical traditional art with high combination and spreading to the time being.

Whatever the period, whether the cultural development with the ups and downs of the nation's history, with the different impacts of the political regime in each period, the Water Puppetry has never been conscious of acculturation in the historical process of Vietnamese culture. Therefore, Water Puppet - a Vietnamese folk genre has been continuing its existence of "village cultural structure" and never interrupted or modified.

**Chapter 2**

**FORMATION BASES OF VIETNAMESE WATER PUPPETRY**

**2.1. Natural basis**

**2.1.1. Water to Vietnamese people in the Red River delta**

Due to the natural conditions of the region and the dominant characteristics of the ecological environment, behavior to the water in the Red River Delta show 4 ways, namely: taking advantage of water, facing with water, worship and nostalgically with water. In the
Vietnamese minds, water brings in its psychic powers that become a force to be worshiped.

Living traditions in village with the agricultural life around the village pond is the creative inspiration of the residents in the Red river delta with Water Puppetry.

Thus, it can be clear a relation between water and life and production of the farmers and their creative activities in the nature surmounting. Without water and people’s behavior with water (water culture) as well as without agricultural production and wet rice agricultural civilization, Water Puppetry does not exist. For saying, formation bases of Water Puppetry are water and people’s behavior with water (water culture) of the Red River delta.

2.1.2. Land and wet rice agriculture

Red River delta was accreted by the Red and Thai Binh Rivers, in which the Red River played the main role. The delta structure was not flat with the surface divided into different cells, sloping toward the East see. Featuring by a unique climate of the tropical monsoon, much sunny and seasonal rainfall, it created a rich moist heat source.

Natural characteristics and climate had decided the wet rice agricultural method of Vietnamese people in the Red River delta. Wet rice cultivation was premise for formation of colony practice in units of communes and villages. Natural land and residents here were in interaction and became harmonized and appropriate relations, creating behavior manner of the Vietnamese to the land: love land, trust land and worship land… So behavior manner was cultural basis of thinking, affection and aspiration of Water Puppetry. Without such cultural basis, Water Puppetry did not exist.

2.2. Social basis

2.2.1. Village culture of the Red River delta
To face and conquer the natural ecological environment and meet the wet rice agricultural life, the Vietnamese had to gather to village with village principles that created internal relationship and associated farmers with the village.

_Village culture_ of the Red River delta is the overall culture of traditional and sustainable communities in the Vietnamese life. Folk cultural activities, through "strong milestone" of _festivals_ where showing highest strength, creative talent and desire of individuals and communities, were the basis and premise for the formation of different types of folk culture including Water Puppetry. Along with the existence of _traditional festivals_, Water Puppetry was sustainably vital of cultural and spiritual life of the people, nourished by both the Vietnamese spirit and manners. Thus, _village culture_ and Water Puppet were in dialectical unity that unable to be inseparable, _village culture_ gave formed Water Puppetry and Water Puppetry was a product of the _village cultural_ of the Red River Delta. _Village culture_ was the formation bases of Vietnamese Water Puppetry.

### 2.2.2. People – _Men in the Red River delta_

The birth of Water Puppetry associated with visual and sculpture art by hand, by creative thinking and minds of the men who were forged over the years with agriculture and crafts and in cultural space of the Red River Delta villages. The carvings and decoration in communal house with water puppet shape were based on principle of unique painting and the men’s aesthetic feeling, so it looked generous, strong, rustic but incredibly vivid and subtle.

Which characterized the Water Puppetry art was in its action. The most important issues in the puppet visual arts and its performances thanked to the actions of men.
Male character sharply shown in the water puppetry art, i.e. "keeping professional secret" and esoteric nature is one of the features in the Water Puppetry art.

The role of men in the Vietnamese Water Puppetry was not just because they have the right - "male rights" but as they are manly, masculinity, and aestheticism was indispensable in Vietnamese Water Puppet. Therefore, the central controlling actor and commanding the Water Puppetry show, also representing for puppet artists was uncle Teu, not ant Teu, sister Teu or younger sister Teu. Hence, human beings basis - men of the Red River delta was the basis forming Vietnamese Water Puppetry.

**Summary**

The natural ecological environment characteristics and rice was chosen as the main food and wet rice agriculture presented for the economy led to high appreciation of water and land in Vietnamese material and spiritual life in the Red River delta. Such acknowledgement directed to spiritual attitude of water and land into worship power.

Water, land and rice decided the agricultural economy which is premise for Vietnamese people gathering in community and village. Water Puppetry is community cultural activities, unique creation of *male* farmers “Toiling and moiling in the field”. Having quintessence of *man* in the Red River delta, love and fate combination of festival culture of village where nourished, preserved and developed the Water Puppetry and made it more unique than other arts. Accordingly, it showed that formation of Vietnamese Water Puppetry from the natural basis of the Red River delta, i.e. water, land, village, people – men – also the culture of God – Land – People of Vietnamese culture. Without such basis means Vietnamese Water Puppetry did not exist.
Chapter 3
CULTURAL VALUES OF VIETNAMESE WATER PUPPETRY

3.1. Perception value

Water puppetry is the picture honesty reflecting the daily lives of
the farmers, so that we are aware of the relationship between people,
people and the nature, understanding of labor, living, aspirations and
dreams for a prosperous life and happiness of farmers in the Red River
delta in the evolution of history.

Water Puppetry of the Red River delta has values of love and fate
combination of community culture where nourished, preserved and
developed, Water puppetry festival also aimed to reflect the content,
meaning, help realize the cultural value deeply hidden in the spiritual
life of each farmer associated with the wet rice agriculture.

Although Water Puppetry is creative craftsmen making pagoda
and statuary, however, Water Puppetry shows are not directly affected
by religion or political ideology. The life reflected in the Water
Puppetry not by realistic thinking but by romantic - folk thinking. We
can see a world in which the farmer is a creator creating his own
world, making the puppets – immovable becomes a lively actor in a
world of peace, freedom, creation and dependence, no power of King
or religion teaching, and Teu is typical image.

3.2. Educational value

Water Puppetry educates for people about the love to labor, love
to the nature, country and patriotism and national pride as well as
community cohesion in the course against natural disaster and foreign
aggression, also towards the beauty of "village relationships" in the
village culture of the Red River delta.

Similar to Cheo, Water Puppetry is a part of Vietnamese ethical
culture. However, ethical mirror – principles mentioned in Cheo are
relatively affected by Confucius, consider “Three Moral Bonds” and
“Five Constant Virtues” as inviolable principle, forcing people to quit private desire.

In contrast, the moral teaching encouragement of Water Puppetry is very simple, innocent, clear and human, instills the love to man and evokes dreams and aspirations, cossets the soul and spiritual value of human, toward to democratic rights and be master of life and nature.

Perhaps such messages of mortal values make Water Puppetry human nature. Mortal value in Water Puppetry is ideal value that all people follow and build.

3.3. Recreational value

Originally, Vietnamese Water Puppetry was born purely for the sake of recreation with ardent love for life and optimistic sprit of farmers in the Red River delta which have significantly contributed to the healthy cultural life everywhere.

Recreational value of Vietnamese Water Puppetry also reflects in the creative sublimation of the village craftsmen for new and unique show games for their communities.

Recreational value of Water Puppetry is not limited to satisfying purely personal interests, but through entertainment, man is encouraged for development of the hidden creative abilities and for the comprehensive development by such entertainment activities.

3.4. Aesthetic value

Other art types attract audiences by script, language and actor’s performance. For Water Puppetry, attraction lies in puppet action.

Vietnamese Water Puppetry is a visual text written by the sensitive perception which characterizes Water Puppetry differs from other arts. Water Puppetry may come to communities around the world from different cultures and languages.

Water puppetry shows fun, mischief and laugh – joy. This is the highest expression of the Water Puppetry beauty, expressed in degree
of difficulty, complexity and reflection of fun – laugh in the shows and puppet control techniques.

_Aesthetic value_ of Water Puppetry is evident in the local imprint, from puppets, control technique, or the same show is performed differently between localities… which made different sub-regions in the Red River Delta culture.

Water Puppetry of the Red River delta reflects the high syncretism since it inherited values of culture and wet rice civilization of the Red River delta. Boat pushing and pulling actions of the old Vietnamese in the boat race festivals are like pole pushing and wire pulling in Water Puppetry. This makes the _aesthetic value_ of Water Puppetry and of the Vietnamese folk arts.

Teu and water stage has contributed to the uniqueness for the _aesthetic value_ of Water Puppetry, forming beautiful symbol of Vietnamese Water Puppetry.

**Summary**

Water Puppetry is unique folk art associated with wet rice civilization of the inhabitants of the Red River Delta which contains the highest cultural and artistic values of the civilization.

Water Puppetry is a creative product of the community so it is a sociable individual in the collective community for creation and enjoyment which made up the elements of Water Puppetry.

Reality in Water Puppetry means subjective ideal beauty of people towards prosperous life with happiness, peace and democracy.

Enjoying Water Puppetry show, we are likely live in the real world with joys and relaxation by fun - laugh, surprise and no constraints according to any rules of any religion. Therefore, it carries a message about the _values of education_ and profound humanity. It is thus said that Water Puppetry contains humanity, making itself beyond the territory to reach the world.
Along with these special features like *fun - laugh, strange* and *paradoxical* in the shows, the *aesthetic values* of architecture, shaping, painting and music... are tactfully maneuvered by the talent artists using the water surface for Water Puppetry. The water puppet house or water stage is fixedly built to make more perfect for the Water Puppetry. Cultural values of Water Puppetry are really rich, diverse and invaluable, whereby Water Puppetry has been in longevity with Vietnamese culture.

Chapter 4

CONSERVATION AND DEVELOPMENT OF VIETNAMESE WATER PUPPETRY

4.1. The current status of Vietnamese Water Puppetry

4.1.1. Achievements

4.1.1.1. On organization and operational mechanism

Operation of Water Puppetry is maintained and grown up in both forms of folk group professional water theater, confirming the sustainable mechanism to organize and operate in various provinces and cities of Vietnam and serving for different kinds of local audiences and foreigners.

4.1.1.2. About art

Preserving traditional values of folk Water Puppetry has always been in the concern of the agencies. They have also focused on development of new games basing on ancient puppet quintessence and make new games with modern themes.

The professional art organizations have tended to study and refresh by testing in conjunction with other arts to have the new play with backbone, characters have personalities and clear ideological themes...

The artists have created and shaped puppet in other kinds of material like foam, plastic ... instead of sycamore wood (milk timber).
4.1.2. Limitations

4.1.2.1. On organization and operational mechanism

Movement of Water Puppetry is strongly in professional art units, while the non-specialist groups mainly serve for carnivals and is in the form of amateur, fragmentation and lack of investment orientation for development. Many ancient puppet games have disappeared.

4.1.2.2. On performance organization

The professional Water Puppetry artists are in dynamic activities with tight performance schedule, while the unprofessional groups do not have regular plan that lead to less income and more difficulties in keeping their operation under the type of self-management and development.

4.1.2.3. On art

From 1984 to present, Water Puppetry is mostly staged in 17 ancient games. About shaping, puppets are made by the shaping center belonged to Vietnamese Water Puppetry. Therefore, 17 games and puppets are in no difference. Performance technique and contents of unprofessional groups are basically the same as professional organizations; the folk feature of the Water Puppetry might gradually fall into oblivion.

Innovative trends without thorough study have made Water Puppetry lost its distinct of the true art compared to tradition and stood in the risk of the art “distortion”.

4.1.2.4. On enjoyment of arts of audiences

Audiences of Water Puppetry are mostly tourists, foreigners accounting for 80% share of the audiences watching the show.

Audiences come to the Water Puppetry show is for curiosity and exploration of new things. In many places in Vietnam, children are still unheard of water puppetry, even those living in cities, not to mention the remote areas...
4.1.3. Reasons

4.1.3.1. Reasons for achievements

The concern of the Party and State for traditional theatrical arts; international exchange and integration are now more extensive and comprehensive, so Water Puppetry is a product of wet rice agriculture, the unique Vietnamese culture. The development of tourism has created development opportunities for Water Puppetry.

Awareness of artists and performance organizations passionate with their profession as well as responsibility for preservation of the thousands year heritage.

4.1.3.2. Reasons for limitations

The transition to the market mechanism toward the economy socialist-oriented and the globalized context has majorly impacted on the field of ideas and culture. It is not very concerned about Water Puppetry.

Water Puppet coming from the community’s games with non-profit nature has now become the cultural product and entertainment values are replaced by economic value for the purpose of profit.

The relationship between audiences, artists, artisans and managers are separated from the water puppets, not associated to the cultural mechanisms and values of the water puppet and also not consistent with the current market mechanism.

4.2. Perspective, orientation for conservation and promotion of water puppetry

4.2.1. Selection of perspective

Perspective for conservation and promotion shall be in accordance with the current actual conditions, and enable the development of water puppetry.

4.2.1. Orientation

It is most appropriate that conservation and promotion of water puppetry exist in the community, villages, rural areas, under the current
context when structure of traditional village culture of the Red River Delta has changed.

Fully aware of cultural values of water puppetry during receipt, selection of exogenous factors to create new values, avoid the risk of miscellaneous arts, loss of inherent identity in the arts.

4.3. Solutions to conservation and promotion of Vietnamese water puppetry

4.3.1. Awareness

4.3.1.1. Awareness of innovation in the relationship between culture and development: conservation, development of Vietnamese water puppetry must be placed in the driving force of socio-economic development.

4.3.1.2. Awareness of arts and culture in the direction of the Party: innovation is the objective rule.

4.3.1.3. Cultural awareness is the spiritual foundation of society: conservation, development of Vietnamese water puppetry must be always attached with the cultural values of Vietnamese water puppetry itself.

4.3.1.4. Awareness of advanced culture that is imbued with national identity: conservation and promotion of water puppetry culture must be in accordance with the rule: of movement and development, with attention to inheritance, forming “tradition”.

4.3.1.5. Awareness of and development

The creativity of artists is inseparable from the original cultural, aesthetic values of traditional water puppetry.

4.3.2. Organization

Activities of water puppetry are divided into three models:

4.3.2.1. Museum theatre

Location for conservation, exhibition of water puppetry, original version is artist performance in front of audiences, restoration of the
ancient games. It demonstrates all the inherent values of traditional water puppetry.

4.3.2.2. Innovation theatre

With this model, water puppetry has creation of new performances, containing current affairs and age, consistent with the aesthetic needs of contemporary audiences.

4.3.2.3. Experiment theatre

Location for the artists to experiment their works

Three models of theater have different artists with separate programs and audiences, may be an independent organization, or may exist in a new organization: Vietnamese Water Puppetry Federation.

4.3.3. Training

4.3.3.1. Training managers

It is required that managers of water puppetry to be trained shall have skill and spirit of culture, deep understanding of culture.

4.3.3.2. Training artists

Have a strong attachment to human resource training systematically, in accordance with professional training model from the university, together with career transmission method from the ward artisans and artists of professional theaters.

4.3.3.3. Training audience

- Increase the number of water puppetry audiences through further exchanges, clubs …
- Organize contests on Water Puppet, acts, exchanges with artisans … with more performance show for agencies, schools, touring in remote, rural areas for effective art education.

4.3.4. Propaganda of water puppetry

Develop strategy for international cooperation, detailed plan for each year with the regional countries and the world in order to receive, actively introduce, promote water puppetry and acquire quintessence of
the world’s arts and culture, together with development of tourism; Strengthen exchanges and cultural integration through puppet shows held overseas.

**4.3.5. Recommendations**

4.3.5.1. The Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism should consider, select the unit, in combination with preparation of scientific documents to submit to UNESCO for recognition of Water puppetry as intangible cultural heritage representing for humanity.

4.3.5.2. The Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism should consider, build model of organization and activities of Vietnamese water puppetry into *Vietnamese Water Puppetry Federation*.

4.3.5.3. The Ministry of Education and Training should consider, incorporate knowledge, content of the art of water puppetry into education program for schools.

4.3.5.4. The press agencies, radio and television station should have long-term plans, investment in developing programs for extensive education, propaganda, introduction of Water Puppetry Arts.

**Summary**

Comprehensive changes in economic, political and social aspects in recent time have profound impact on the existence and development of water puppetry. Traditional arts are at risk of being lost, distorted, and buried in oblivion for profits. The market mechanism is making water puppet separated from cultural space of villages and managers do not have policies, strategies for orienting, managing the arts activities so that it survives and develops in the right direction. Therefore, it is essential to choose perspective, solutions to conservation - development of Vietnamese water puppetry, on the scientific basis, in accordance with actual conditions of the Red River Delta and of the country today, enabling water puppetry to mix with life rhythm of the country and the ages.
CONCLUSION

1. Water puppetry is one genre of Vietnamese theatrical forms. Being originated from the wet rice agriculture in the Red River Delta, it is imbued with the Eastern and Southeast Asian culture. The water puppetry development is a continuous process without any disruption. It is a kind of theatrical movement in the form of folk with full features of folklore in the crop, festival, cult in the rural area of the Red River Delta that was developed to serve the Court and then completed as professional stage arts in 1956 and stabilized until now.

2. The image of water stage allows us to confirm that water puppetry was originated from the folklore, and scholar culture has contributed to further improve Vietnamese water puppet. The two symbols “Teu” and “water stage” are vivid manifestation of the organic bond between folklore and scholar culture, creating cultural values of Vietnamese water puppetry.

3. Originated from a folk game of the community, water puppetry has become a kind of Vietnamese traditional stage arts, containing cultural values of Vietnam. It is possible to generalize natural – social factors of the Red River Delta: from living places – the village community; the Vietnamese – farmer – men; the Vietnamese cultivation – wet rice agriculture; the Vietnamese’s spirit – festival; puppet shaping - village culture; water puppet – spirit – agriculture – activities; management of water puppet – farmer – esoteric activities. These factors make close, organic, interactive relationship, forming complete cultural elements: water, land, village, men, with folk performance and syncretism have created Vietnamese water puppetry.

Performing functions to social life, the cultural values in terms of awareness ideal, education, entertainment, aesthetics of Water Puppet strongly express the community cohesion, direct human activities to good aims, humanism in the life. So, culture is the foundation and
environment for the birth of water puppetry. Cultural values foster the water puppet for its durable life in people’s heart. *Natural – social bases and cultural values* in water puppetry are connected to each other dialectically, helping water puppetry grow to perfection.

4. Water Puppet was created by male workman – farmers who built temples, sculpted statues. It exists in thinking, feeling, aspiration of people and was developed in the special social reality of consciousness, ideology, morality and consciousness of typical feudal consciousness system in Ly-Tran dynasty period, with “three religions co-existence”, water puppet content does not show any influence from religious consciousness – politics, but peaceful life, freedom, equality, innocence … There exists only artist – the almighty who create in passion to change the “unmovable, inanimate things” into living, playful organisms. Such organisms have the desire to bring good weather, good harvest, prosperous life … of Dai Viet (Great Viet) people and help the “Realm of water puppetry” become the “country soul” which bears the feature of Vietnamese village culture with humanism, democracy. So Uncle Ho wanted the Realm of water puppetry to belong to the world of children, the world of childhood with humanity, kindness and democracy.

5. Derived from that unique cultural values, Vietnamese water puppetry does not show stories but acts, has no storyline as Cheo, Tuong, Cai Luong with “knotting, unbuttoning” technique; no narratives following the main character through the events of life and without any topic on educating ethics, politics, religion … All are parodies that puppet imitates the daily lives of Vietnamese farmers, created on the basis of simple, innocent trend with strange, funny features. These cultural and aesthetic values have made Vietnamese water puppetry like Circus, with human nature, and bring Vietnamese water puppetry to international friends.
6. Reality of life, creative thinking of the artists, and audiences’ aesthetic trends of water puppetry in the Dai Viet period are no longer consistent with reality of life, creative thinking of the artists, and aesthetic trends of the audiences nowadays: the Socialist-oriented market mechanism, globalization and international integration. Therefore, water puppet needs to add new measures, new criterions to be suitable with the laws of its inheritance and variation.

In fact, recent operation of water puppet shows that inheritance and variation path for development of water puppetry today is still confused. But, no matter how the innovation is, such objective rules of water puppet as performance without speaking, parody - strange - fun, surprising - improvising ... cannot be changed. In other words, the creativity of artists is inseparable from the original cultural and aesthetic values of Vietnamese traditional water puppetry.

7. Traditional Water Puppetry is confirmed over time as the “static” one, but reality is always dynamic and evolving. How to find the right way to go for Vietnamese Water Puppet today and tomorrow, in order to both preserve and develop the art? It should be answered by the artists, managers, audiences, and above all, it is required that managers and artists to realize more deeply, understand more exactly about the water puppetry and cultural basis for its birth and the cultural values crystallized in, place water puppet in relation with the culture, in the socio-economic development of the country, and its role in the cultural life of the country in the context of market mechanism, international integration.

8. In order to conserve and develop water puppetry in the current conditions of market mechanisms and international integration, we should focus on conservation to improve the quality of human resources (managers - artists - audiences), innovation of management mechanism, autonomy without subsidy from the State to promote its independence
as a form of art, operating under the model of both conservation and innovation, on the basis of focused investment in research and practical test, with reviews and adjustments.

9. Puppetry is popular in many different ethnic groups in the world and in the region. However, water puppetry currently exists in Vietnam only. It is natural environmental conditions in specific geographic areas that make difference to this cultural phenomenon. Therefore, by using geological - cultural method and theory of cultural region as the main method for the research of Vietnamese water puppetry, the dissertation clarifies that this cultural phenomenon is a product of the natural and human ecological environment of the Vietnamese living in the Red River Delta, which manifests their behavior before actual nature, history or society. In other words, the dissertation explains the formation, existing, development of water puppetry in the course of history originating from the culture of Vietnam. Concurrently, through its existence and development in space and time, the dissertation provides a system of Vietnam's cultural values of water puppetry to affirm its role and place in the cultural life of the people living in the Red River Delta and in Vietnam culture. It also proposes perspectives, solutions and recommendations for the conservation and development of water puppetry in accordance with the actual situation. Under the current circumstances, as the natural - ecological - historical - social conditions for the introduction of water puppetry by the Vietnamese in the Red River delta has changed, there have been many things new in the cultural activities of the country in term of market mechanism, Socialist orientation, extensive and comprehensive international integration. I hereby think that further attention should be paid to this cultural phenomenon to affirm the role of water puppetry in the cultural life, adapt to modern life with this dissertation as the first step./.
REFERENCES


