

THE WORSHIP OF MẪU LIỄU - SEEN FROM A CULTUROLOGICAL ANGLE

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The worship of Mẫu Liễu (Liễu Mother Goddess) is a special phenomenon of belief and culture. It was born around in the 15th and 16th century, but it had has an important role in religious practices and developed in all regions in Vietnam. Why did the worship of Liễu Hạnh come into the world? Why did it develop vigorously? How did its development reflect the development of spiritual thoughts of Vietnamese people? We should study these issues.

We easily agree with present writers' view that the worship of Mẫu Liễu was established on the worship of Goddesses. However, we should find that the worship of Mẫu Liễu has become a particular belief. It has its particular contents. It is different from the worship of ancient Goddesses. According to us, we should compare the worship of Mẫu Liễu with the worship of Goddesses to find the its distinctive features before answering above questions.

We would like to point out the difference between Mẫu Liễu image and the images of other Goddesses and the difference between the worship of Mẫu Liễu and the worship of Goddesses. We also compare the worship of Mẫu Liễu with other cultural - belief phenomena that were born in the same period to explain the above questions.

I

From culturological angle, we find that the researchers have arranged the worship of Mẫu Liễu in two different currents of culture: the worship of Goddesses and folk Taoism.

1. In the past, the researchers only paid attention to folk Taoist aspect of the worship of Mẫu Liễu. They considered the worship of Mẫu Liễu as a manifestation of Taoism. Nearly they did not relate the worship of Mẫu Liễu with the worship of Goddesses.

Formerly, Thanh Hòa Tử, the writer of *Hội Chân Biên* printed in the 7th year of Thiệu Trị era, recognized Mẫu Liễu as one of four immortals (together with Thánh Gióng, Thánh Tản Viên, Chử Đồng Tử). Many people including

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researchers consider Thanh Hòa Tử's recognition as nation's one, but I still have queries. It is not completely right if we think that only four deities are immortal because all deities are immortal. It is not right if we think that four deities are most noble. It does not make sense if heroes who had merit of creating and saving our nation are in below station. Is it true that the respect of four immortals is a special respect? According to me, these should be studied.

In *Việt Nam Văn hóa Sử cương* (*The Fundamental of Vietnamese History and Culture*) printed in 1938, Đào Duy Anh arranged the worship of Mẫu Liễu in the system of folk belief, concretely, in folk Taoism. The fourth section of this book dealt with *belief, sacrifices and prayers*. This section consists of four small parts: sacrifice and prayer in family; sacrifice and prayer in village; sacrifice and prayer in nation; sacrifice and prayer in people. Đào Duy Anh arranged the worship of Liễu Hạnh and *deities* in the fourth part together with the worship of professional patriarchs and the worship of natural deities. Đào Duy Anh wrote, "in common people there are many beliefs and complex sacrifices and prayers. They often use the word *Taoism* to cover all" ⁽²⁾. In coverable belief "there are some people who only worship Hưng Đạo (St. Trần) are called *thanh đồng* and some people who worships other deities are called female and male mediums" ⁽³⁾. Through Đào Duy Anh, we find that the worships of Mẫu Liễu, of deities and of Trần Hưng Đạo, of *phù tiên* are ranked among the folk Taoism.

Nguyễn Văn Huyền's conception was similar to Đào Duy Anh's one. In *Vietnam Văn Minh* (Vietnamese Civilization) (1944), Nguyễn Văn Huyền wrote "the most vivid and popular expression of Taoism is to worship genii. It means to worship Gods and Goddesses in three palaces, three worlds (palace can be understood as the world): Heaven, Hades and Palace of the River God. In only some temples, the roles of Goddesses and of Mother Goddess are more important than the role of Gods" ⁽⁴⁾ (it is noted that Nguyễn Văn Huyền considered three palaces as Heaven, Land and Water).

In *Nếp cũ tín ngưỡng Việt nam* (The Old Customs of Vietnamese Belief), Toan Ánh recognized medium as "people who have destinies to worship gods and

² Đào Duy Anh. *Việt Nam Văn hóa Sử cương* (The Fundamental of Vietnamese History and Culture), Culture and Information Publisher, 2000, p. 266.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Đào Duy Anh. *Văn Minh Việt Nam* (Vietnamese Civilization), 1944, Hội Nhà văn Publisher, 2005 p. 30.

goddesses such as Liễu Hạnh princess, Cửu thiên Huyền nữ, Thượng Ngàn công chúa....”⁽⁵⁾. He ranked medium *among the variants of Taoism*.

Some writers also arrange the worship of Mẫu Liễu in folk Taoism, especially in *Nội đạo tràng* (the Internal Magical Circle). Nguyễn Đăng Thục considered Trần Hưng Đạo and Mẫu Liễu to be members of the Internal Magical circle. Chủ Đổng Tử was patriarch of this religion. Nguyễn Đăng Thục gave the opinion of a foreign researcher to speak clearly about *Nội đạo tràng*: E. Nordemann recognized this religion as “Vietnamese religion. It is half Confucianism, half Taoism. It was born in 13th century after the struggle for national independence with the leader of Trần Hưng Đạo...”⁽⁶⁾.

Nội đạo tràng had close relation with Confucianism on the worldview, the way of reward and punishment as well as faith in the next world. *Nội đạo tràng* had a close relation with Taoism on Gods and Goddesses, the way of worship in temples and shrines. *Nội đạo tràng* also drove away spirits and subdued devils. However, it did not use amulet. It had six *văn châu*⁽⁷⁾.

On the concept of Three - Four Palaces, Nguyễn Đăng Thục thought that three palaces consisted of Mountain, Water and Land; four palaces consisted of Heaven, Earth, Water and Mountain. Mẫu Liễu was Vietnamese Mother of Land. On the top of her was Heaven. Underneath of her were Goddess of Water and Goddess of Mountain. “Jade Emperor, fair, Mother of Water, Mother of Mountain belonged to four palaces”⁽⁸⁾. According to Nguyễn Đăng Thục, three palaces were Land, Water and Mountain, but Nguyễn Văn Huyền thought that three palaces were Heaven, Land and Water.

The worship of Mẫu Liễu was ranked among folk Taoism, especially among the Internal Magical circle so that the worship of Mẫu Liễu associated with the worship of St. Trần and belief of medium.

2. After 1980s researchers (they are provisionally considered new generation) have still studied the Taoist aspect in the worship of Mẫu Liễu, but they would like to stress Goddesses’ aspect. Researchers have a high opinion of the worship of Mẫu Liễu. They consider the worship of Mẫu Liễu (some

⁵ Toàn Ánh. *Nếp cũ trong tín ngưỡng* (Old Customs in Vietnamese Belief), p. 220.

⁶ Ngô Đăng Thục. *Lịch sử tư tưởng Việt Nam* (Vietnamese Ideal History), Vol. 1.

⁷ <http://dunglac.net/bai/tutuongvn>

⁸ <http://dunglac.net/bai/tutuongvn-06.htm>: Nguyễn Đăng Thục, ibid.

researchers consider the worship of Mẫu Liễu as Goddess belief) as Mẫu religion or religion of Three palaces.

In 1984 Đỗ Thị Hảo and Mai Thị Ngọc Chúc published the book *Vietnamese Goddesses* (Women Publisher). This book tells stories of 75 goddesses in Vietnam. This book may be the beginning of trend of the stress on goddesses although two writers did not mention the concept of the worship of Mother Goddess.

Đinh Gia Khánh, Vũ Ngọc Khánh, Ngô Đức Thịnh, Đặng Văn Lung considered the worship of Mẫu Liễu as three palace religion.

Vũ Ngọc Khánh wrote on the relation between Mẫu Liễu and other goddesses “The mothers such as Mother of Land, Mother of Rice, Mother of Mountain, Mother of Forest, and Mother of Birds have existed in regions of ethnic minorities. In Vietnamese nation, all mother goddesses had been reassembled into great Mothers: Mother in Heaven; Mother of Forest; Mother of Water. These Mothers preside over Heaven, Water and Mountain. The Mother of living beings in the world is Mẫu Liễu”⁽⁹⁾; “the special feature of Mẫu Liễu is not Mother of Land, Mother of Homeland or Mother of Creation. The Mothers who gave birth and developed human beings were Âu Cơ in Kinh people, Ý Cặp Ý Kè in Thái people, Soa Cãi in Tày people; Inư Nugar in Chăm people. Mẫu Liễu was not one of these mothers. She was a woman, but she was respected to be goddess because she was symbol of liberty and humanity. These virtues made her to become “Mother of the World”. So there have been four necessary levels for belief needs of human beings”⁽¹⁰⁾. It is noted that the concept of three palaces is Heaven, Mountain and Water. The fourth palace is the World.

In Vietnamese Folklore in the Cultural Background of Southeast Asia (Social Science Publisher, Hanoi, 1993) Đinh Gia Khánh showed that there have been insufficient issues when we considered the belief of Three or Four Palaces as religion and he gave the developmental route of this belief: from the worship of goddesses to the worship of Mother Goddess: “although the belief of Three or Four Palaces was considered as a religion, it has not become the true religion because *it lacked dogmatic foundation relating to complete world view*. Religion of Three Palaces was founded on the base of the worship of goddesses,

⁹ Vũ Ngọc Khánh, Phạm Văn Ty (Chief Editor). *Vân Cát thần nữ* (Vân Cát goddess), National Culture Publisher, Hanoi, 1990, p. 7.

¹⁰ Ibid.

which was born in the past. It has continued to develop in people. From the worships of the Goddess of Mountain, of the Goddess of River, of the Goddess of Rain, of the Goddess of Thunder, of Goddess of Lightning, the enchanters generalized goddesses into three main goddesses: the Mother Goddess managers all affairs in Heaven (Mẫu Cửu Thiên), the Mother Goddess managers forest and mountain (Mẫu Thượng Ngàn) and the Mother Goddess managers river and sea (Mẫu Thoải). Three palaces consist of Heaven, Mountain and River. The worship of Liễu Hạnh Goddess was born in the 16th century. Liễu Hạnh was born in the world when she died she was respected as goddess then she became Mother Goddess of human beings so three palace religion became Four Palace religion⁽¹¹⁾ or "Three Palaces was considered as religion, but it was not true religion"⁽¹²⁾. Through Đinh Gia Khánh's writings we find that Three Palaces (Heaven, Forest, Sea and River) were born a long time ago. In the 16th century three palaces became four palaces because element of human beings was born. Therefore, we see that there are different opinions on the concept of Three - Four Palaces.

Đặng Văn Lung and Ngô Đức Thịnh who were the first writers used the concept of *thần chủ* (supreme divinity) to denote the role of Mẫu Liễu in the worship of Mother Goddess. The concept of *thần chủ* is not used in the people (people often call her as Holy Mother, Princess... These names do not show her role in the pantheon). In the pantheon of Three or Four Palaces Mẫu Liễu is not in the highest position. She is not supreme deity. If we consider Three or Four Palaces belief as worship of Mother Goddess, Mẫu Liễu should have the most important role. Đặng Văn Lung and Ngô Đức Thịnh may follow this tendency, so they gave the concept of *thần chủ*.

In *Three Palaces for worshipping Mother Goddess* (National Culture Publisher, H. 1991), *the Culture of Holy Mother* (Culture and Information Publisher, H, 2004) and some articles, Đặng Văn Lung considered Mẫu Liễu "had close relation with the growth of national thinking"⁽¹³⁾. He also considered Mẫu Liễu as Mother of Land and she also grew along with the stages of

¹¹ Đinh Gia Khánh. *Văn hóa Dân gian Việt nam trong bối cảnh văn hóa Đông Nam Á* (Vietnamese Folk Culture in Cultural Background of Southeast Asia), Social Science Publisher, H, 1993, p. 132.

¹² Đinh Gia Khánh, *ibid*, p. 286.

¹³ Đặng Văn Lung. *Văn hóa Thánh Mẫu* (Culture of Mother Goddess), Culture and Information publisher, H, 2004, p. 366.

national development: in the first stage “Mị Châu Mother Goddess symbolized Mother of Land from primitive period to first millennium BC”; in the second stage, Ý Lan Mother Goddess summarized the change from Mother of Land into Mother of Water (agriculture needs water) from the first millennium to the beginning of the second millennium when the Lý dynasty carried out Restoration of Culture”. In the third stage, “the development of Mother belief was from initiation to the birth of worship of Mother Goddess. In that time our country was enlarged and united. Local cultures had combined with culture of Mother Goddess to become the greatest symbol”⁽¹⁴⁾.

Ngô Đức Thịnh writes many works on the worship of Mẫu Liễu such as *Mother Goddesses in Vietnam* (Culture - Information Publisher, H, 1993), *Mother Goddesses and Some Shamanistic Forms of Ethnic Groups in Vietnam and Asia* (Social Sciences Publisher, H, 2004), *Belief and Belief Culture in Vietnam* (Social Sciences Publisher, H, 2001) and many articles. According to him, Mẫu religion is not only a single form of belief but also a system of beliefs. It consists of the worship of Goddesses, the worship of Mother Goddess and the worship of Three and Four Palaces. The establishment and development of the worship of Mother Goddess are plentiful. The worship of Goddesses was the basis of the worships of Mother Goddess, and of the Mother of Three or Four Palaces. The worship of Mother of Three or Four Palaces was established in the 16th and 17th century (the worship of native Goddesses was influenced by Chinese Taoism).

In short, according to Ngô Đức Thịnh, Mẫu religion or “Three or Four Palaces religion” includes the worship of Goddesses. It was established by the worship of native Goddesses under the influence of Chinese Taoism. (I myself think that Ngô Đức Thịnh’s distinction between the worship of Goddesses and the worship of Mother Goddesses is not convincing because almost Vietnamese goddesses are recognized Mother Goddesses).

From the angle of the worshipping Goddesses, the worship of Mẫu Liễu is contact of Vietnamese ancient belief. Mẫu Liễu was a goddess, but her name appeared late in the list of goddesses such as Âu Cơ, Mother of Rice, Man Nương - Four Dhamars, Hai Bà Trưng, Ý Lan,...

3. When stressing the aspect of goddesses in the worship of Mother Goddess, the researchers of new generation still study the aspect of “the change of folk

¹⁴ Đặng Văn Lung. *Văn hóa Thánh Mẫu...* ibid, p. 7.

Taoism”, but they do not explain the contact or interference of two currents of beliefs - the belief of Goddesses and the belief of folk Taoism, so the contents of the folk Taoism are often added into the worship of Mẫu Liễu. That is why people think that the Three or Four Palaces belief consists of Mẫu Liễu belief, the worship of St. Trần and medium. We may feel forced to see Mẫu Liễu as supreme divinity of three-four palace belief.

4. Thanks to two different research angles of two research generations, we find the integration of two belief cultures in the worship of Mẫu Liễu: the first is folk Taoism with medium that is easy to find; the second is the worship of Vietnamese ancient Goddesses. Among aspects which aspect should we emphasize to imagine the differences of beliefs?

II

1. Comparing with previous goddesses, Mẫu Liễu is an uncommon phenomenon

Almost Vietnamese goddesses had done great service to nation and people, for example, Âu Cơ was mother of nation; Hai Bà Trưng, and women general Ngọc Phương, Khẩu Ni, Ý Lan, Đô Hồ woman... had performed great services in the struggle for national independence. Mẫu Liễu was a normal woman. She had not service in production, in counter-natural calamity, anti-aggressions. She was not an enormous figure as Vú Thúng, Khổng Ôn madams. Why is she worshiped in many temples and respected to be the Mother of the world? This question should be explained.

Mẫu Liễu had not great cause and her life was at a disadvantage compared with others. In the first reincarnation she was a lonely woman and she died when she was 40 years old. In the second reincarnation she had husband and children but she died when she was 21 years old. In the third reincarnation, she only had short happy life with her husband and son because she was forced to return heaven. The author of *The picture of Taoism in North Vietnam* remarked that “according to legend, Liễu Hạnh was a fairy. She reincarnated three times. She was a beautiful and clever woman, but she died when she was young. Although she reincarnated three times, but she did not enjoy complete human existence. When living, she did not enjoy happy life with two husbands. When she died, she worried about her son. She was “a symbol of untimely death”. “She had sacred features of forsaken spirits in folk beliefs. She was crystallization

of thoughts and images of forsaken spirits. Forsaken spirits became servers of bà Chúa Cô hôn: Liễu Hạnh princess”⁽¹⁵⁾.

Almost goddesses were simple characters in people's memory because their personalities were often unclear and unidirectional. However, Mẫu Liễu was different from them. She was virtuous wife and good mother. She thirsted for happy life. However, she was also a sly and perverse woman. Sometimes she brought about great disasters to the people. Sometimes she proved to be feeble. Sometimes she was innocent. According to folk tale, Trạng Quỳnh cheated Liễu Hạnh out of money. At that time Liễu Hạnh was no longer deity to punish cheater. In people feeling, Mẫu Liễu was different from other goddesses because she had virtue of normal woman.

That is why Mẫu Liễu has become a Goddess having close relation with people.

The resistance of Mẫu Liễu was new personality. She did not accept her fate resignedly and she always resisted her fate. The time of living in the world ended, she tried her best to be reincarnated one more time to look care parents in law, husband and son. Her resistance to Confucianism was clear, for example, at first she did not want to get married, and then she got married without matchmaker. What she said to Mai Sinh reflected her resistance to Confucian culture, which appreciated vainglory and “sundry rites”. Sometimes she did not obey Confucian king-genie. Because of her struggle, court was forced to yield to her. *All things voiced the conflict between culture and politics, the conflict of Confucianism, the court of centralist monarchy and culture and folk belief. The worship of Mẫu Liễu not only reflected the result of her struggle but also affirmed the victory of folk belief and culture before cultural enslavement.*

2. The worship of Mẫu Liễu and worship of village tutelary god

After studying, researchers define that the first reincarnation of Mẫu Liễu was in 1434 and the second reincarnation was in 1557, so the worship of Mẫu Liễu was established in the late 15th and early 16th centuries. In this period, our nation had cultural change. In the Lý - Trần dynasty, feudal courts attached much importance to Three Religions. Confucian ideology did not become main ideology. Buddhist role was higher than Confucian role. Kings in the Lý - Trần dynasty were crazy about Buddhism. Confucian scholars did not yet criticize

¹⁵ Phan Ngọc Khuê. *Tranh Đạo giáo ở Bắc Việt Nam* (The Picture of Taoism in North Vietnam) Art Publisher, Hanoi, 2001, p. 14.

folk belief and culture. After driving off Ming enemy, the Lê dynasty had tendency to give prominence to Confucianism. This dynasty considered Confucian ideology as a unique ideology. Heroic king, Lê Thánh Tông (1460-1497) gave prominence to Confucianism to build the powerful regime of centralization. He lowered the Buddhist, Taoist roles and folk beliefs. In this period, another cultural phenomenon came into the world. That was worship of village tutelary god.

When arranging Mẫu Liễu in correlative relation with cultural phenomena, we find that worship of village tutelary god corresponds with the worship of Mẫu Liễu on both size and stature. Both worships were born in the same time. They inherited the traditional beliefs. They were widespread in the whole country. They have existed until today.

At first sight, the worship of Mẫu Liễu was different from the worship of village tutelary god. They even opposed each other.

The worship of village tutelary god had close relation with Confucianism. It was approved and supported by Confucian scholars. It had relation with paternal culture in the North, but the worship of Mẫu Liễu connected closely with medium. It was criticized by Confucian scholars. It was supported by women because it gave prominence to women. It continued to worship of ancient Goddesses. It was the coronae of matriarchy in Southeast Asia.

Why did two opposite phenomena come into the world and go together with each other? Why did Vietnamese peasants accept two different worships at the same time? Or in other words why could two different worships meet the religious needs of Vietnamese peasants? Two worships ought to have common features.

Actually, this is question on culture.

In article *Doubled faced character of the worship of village tutelary go*, we presented our thoughts on the establishment and development of the worship of village tutelary god. Before the post-Lê dynasty, Confucianism had not an important role yet. The control of native beliefs was not severe. The worship of village genie was not criticized by Confucianism. The Governments in the Lý-Trần dynasty were not able to control villages. From the post-Lê dynasty, Confucianism was adored. Governments began to control villages. The contradictions of Confucianism and native beliefs, of centralist state and self-

management of villages became seriously. The worship of village tutelary god came into the world to meet the demand at that time. Vietnamese feudal court took the initiative in receiving Confucianism because it wanted to build a powerful and united country that could confront Chinese struggles. Because of Confucian thoughts, the centralist court could not accept village customs. King could not accept that his people worshiped another man, so native beliefs and village's customs which were naturally village's culture became challenges to powers of king and court. When villages' genies were canonized, then they became government officials so that the worship of village tutelary god came into the world. This worship harmonized political, cultural and belief contradictions. Because the communal house in village and the worship of village tutelary god have contained political, cultural and belief functions. Not naturally, village festivals, customs and folk games have the stamps of fertile belief and agricultural belief. These beliefs that naturally connected with worship of ancient village's genie have sheltered under the worship of village tutelary god. They passed over Confucian criticism. Because of meeting current needs, the worship of village tutelary god became popular so that almost villages have had the communal house for worship of village tutelary god.

We should think that the birth of the worship of Mẫu Liễu was similar to the birth of the worship of village tutelary god.

The worship of Mẫu Liễu was the production of conflict and concession of folk belief with Buddhism, Taoism and Confucianism. Sùng Sơn war was the image of conflict and concession. At first, Confucianism (its representative was court) took the initiative of combining with Taoism to suppress folk beliefs but at last it had to make concession to Buddhist arrangement. After all, the worship of Mẫu Liễu was the affirmation that all beliefs could coexist. They could harmonize and accept each other. They are both independent and dependent on each other. The present of the worship of Mẫu Liễu in pagodas, in temples and pantheon is the clear proof. The ancient folk beliefs integrated into the worship of Mother Goddess to exist: the worships of untimely death, of Snake, of Tiger, of God, of River... Confucianism criticized medium severely. However, medium tried its best to preserve by its association with the worship of goddesses and ancient beliefs. It associated with the worship of national hero Trần Hưng Đạo to establish the worship of St. Trần.

The sorcerers, female and male mediums played important roles in this process of association. They carried out *lên đồng* (mediumship rituals) to invite genii to see and get into a trance. Basing on medium, the worship of Mother Goddess combined with other beliefs to establish a new system of belief. But for medium, Mother Goddesses were only single goddesses. For medium, the worship of Mẫu Liễu became open - belief so that all genii could join in it. The birth of the worship of Mẫu Liễu and its combination with ancient beliefs, that were influenced by Buddhism and Taoism, took shape Three or Four Palaces.

Thanks medium, the worship of goddesses could find simple communication between human beings and genii. Since then it combined easily with folk arts for its development.

It is said that in the worship of Mẫu Liễu there were selected Taoist, Buddhist and Confucian elements. These elements were Vietnamized and integrated into native elements to become Vietnamese cultural elements. They contribute to enrich Vietnamese culture. *The ancient national beliefs integrated with each other in the worship of Mẫu Liễu, so the worship of Mẫu Liễu meets consciousness of Vietnamese.*

From the angle of culturology, we find the unity of the worship of tutelary god and the worship of Mẫu Liễu. More deeply, both worships were production of cultural contact and the result of cultural reconciliation. They were also the self-defence and correspond of native beliefs with exotic culture. After all, the worship of Mẫu Liễu and the worship of village tutelary god have continued native beliefs and affirmed their immortal vitality in the context of cultural contact and renovation.

After all, the attraction of the worship of Mẫu Liễu has also originated from the original point of national culture. The worship of Mẫu Liễu has reflected the changes of era in many aspects. In the past, people only gave prominence to the greatness. Now they have treasured simpleness, simple happiness of human beings. Women are typical characters for simple thirsts. Mẫu Liễu was dignified as Mother of the world. Thus, national thought has been grown up than before.

From what we said, we think that there is not religion to be called Mẫu religion, but there is the worship of Mẫu Liễu. The folk character of this worship is clear. This worship has lack a consistent system (that is why researchers can explain Three or Four Palaces by different ways. Sometimes

Mẫu Liễu has been considered as genie. Sometimes she has been considered as fair in the world or in heaven).

The worship of Mẫu Liễu has been one of many folk beliefs. It has existed and integrated into different religious systems such as Buddhism and Taoism. The worship of Mẫu Liễu has also integrated into ancient folk beliefs. Among them there is much worship such as the worship of goddesses, medium, the worship of untimely death, the worships of tree and of snake... Together with the worships of Mẫu Liễu and of St. Trần, the ancient folk beliefs in Vietnam were influenced by Taoism and Buddhism, but they have escaped and overcome this influence to systematize their temples. Although there is Jade Emperor (of Taoism) and Great Buddha (of Buddhism), Vietnamese genii still have important roles. The combination of pagoda and pantheon of Mẫu is special character of Vietnamese culture: many Vietnamese cultural phenomena seem to be exotic, but their natures and contents are Vietnamese.

If ancient goddesses were symbols of race unity (Âu Cơ), of cultural amalgamation (Man Nương), of natural force, of the struggle for political independence of nation (Hai Bà Trưng, Ý Lan), Mẫu Liễu was the first goddess to symbol the struggle for cultural independence of nation. She was also the first symbol of simple happiness of human beings. Because of assimilative policy of governance of the Ming dynasty when it dominated over our nation, our national culture revolted against the Ming influence to affirm independence and immortality so that the worship of Mẫu Liễu was born and has traveled with nation up to now. /.