

TRADITIONAL CULTURE OF THAI PEOPLE WITH TOURISM ACTIVITIES IN MUONG LO, NGHIA LO TOWN, YEN BAI PROVINCE

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The article describes and analyzes cultural values of Thai people in Muong Lo, Nghia Lo town, Yen Bai province for tourism and the impact of tourism activities on those cultural values. Thereby identifying Thai cultural values in the current tourism development in Muong Lo.

Keywords: Traditional culture; Tourism activities; Muong Lo; Nghia Lo town, Yen Bai province; Thai people.

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1. Introduction

Vietnam's tourism has an encouraging development in recent years and play an increasingly important role in the economy. In the field of tourism, there are many different forms such as ecotourism, cultural tourism, adventure tourism, sightseeing tourism, resort tourism, mountain tourism... in which, ethnic cultural tourism is one of the essential needs for the life of people today. This is a form of tourism that brings both elements of cultural tourism, ecotourism and adventure tourism.

For ethnic groups, especially ethnic minorities, there are extremely rich folklore spaces in everywhere. Yen Bai is a typical mountainous province. This local tourism activity has just kicked off in recent years, but has revealed quite a lot of potential. In addition to spiritual tourism, ecotourism, cultural tourism is a relatively new and promising field, in which the ethnic culture of the Thai people in Muong Lo is an extremely interesting spot that needs further attention, investment, research and application in the future.

2. Research overview

Regarding the Thai people in Vietnam, many works have been collected and researched. Typically, some works of researchers: Cam Trong, Phan Huu Dat, Ngo Duc Thinh... In which, Cam Trong is the author of many studies on the Thai ethnic group

in Vietnam. After the book "Vietnamese Thai culture" (Cam Trong, Phan Huu Dat, 1995), He and Ngo Duc Thinh wrote the work "Thai customary law in Vietnam" published in 2003. In 2005, his book "Understanding of Thai people in Vietnam" was reprinted with the content introducing Thai culture in Vietnamese history, the division into cultural regions, local groups, residence, economic activities, cuisine, accommodation, costume, travel, family relationships, society.

In addition, there are also researchers such as: Le Ngoc Thang (1990) with "Thai costume art"; Cam Cuong (1993) with "Understanding Thai literature in Vietnam" discussed about the origin and achievements of Thai literature and its role in Thai social life; Pham Ngoc Khue (2004) with "The Fine Arts of Thai people in Vietnam" introduced architectural arts, decorated on fabrics, jewelry, and pottery; Vi Van Bien (2006) with "Material culture of the Thai people in Thanh Hoa and Nghe An", analyzed the similarities and differences in material culture of the Thai people in the North Central and the Thai people in the Northwest. Most recently, the book "Thai Stilt House" (Nam & Thang, 1984)... Besides, there are many articles about the Thai ethnic group published in newspapers and magazines exploiting aspects of culture, economy and society.

Particularly in Muong Lo, there are works of

the Vietnam Folk Arts Association such as: “Learn some Black Thai worshipping customs in Muong Lo” (Hanh, Bien, & Hung, 2005); The two epics of the Thai people, “Quả tổ mường” (telling the story of Muong village) and “Tây pú xác” (following the steps of ancestors in battle), which re-enact the migration - settlement and living process of Black Thai people. In which, Muong Lo is mentioned as the place where Lo Lang Chuong - the ancestor of the Black Thai people in the Northwest began his career. These events are told quite vividly in the published epics “Mo khoun” (Mo soul) and “The funeral word for Thai people”. It can be said that the research results confirm the role, position and significance of Muong Lo with the history and culture of the Black Thai people.

3. Research methods

The paper uses ethnographic and cultural studies in fieldwork. Fieldwork method is mainly based on field research, observations, interviews... to learn and collect documents about the cultural life of the Thai people, to clarify cultural characteristics and characteristics of the Thai people in Muong Lo, Nghia Lo town, Yen Bai province.

4. Research results

Culture in particular and ethnic culture in general are not only the objects of research of scholars, but also a potential “treasure” for tourists to exploit. In which, Thai culture in Muong Lo is a typical example.

For a long time, Muong Lo has been known by domestic and foreign researchers for its pristine Thai cultural values. Recently, travel businesses have started to exploit these factors to serve the needs of food, accommodation, and rest. The work of tourism development and traditional cultural preservation here has initially obtained remarkable results.

4.1. Material cultural factors with tourism activities

According to the results of the ethnographic fieldwork, most of the material cultural values of the Thai community in Muong Lo are always shown in the daily life of the ethnic group, visitors can enjoy whenever they set foot to Muong Lo. The material culture of Thai people here is very diversified and has many forms that have been exploited for tourism activities.

In terms of housing architecture, these are four-roofed houses, tall, wide, cambered, turtle-shaped, two gables with the symbol “khau cút”, thatched

roof or pine, floors made of chopped bamboo. This stilt house has two stairs, two fireplaces, elaborately decorated with plants, flowers, birds, each pair is symmetrical.

In terms of traditional crafts, those are the products of the weaving profession. The Thai people still maintain traditional clothes in everyday life with long black robes, headscarves, belts and laces. In recent years, tourism promoting brocade weaving in Muong Lo has been expanded, many production groups have been formed. Products attracting the attention of visitors include: cotton mop mattresses, blankets, brocade sheets, sitting cushions, brocade clothing, brocade dresses, brocade paintings, backpacks, bags... with many patterns tradition and stylization. Along with that are also wicker products. In the past, the products of this profession only served the self-sufficient needs of people with household items such as pots, baskets, cradles, cribs, sticky rice serving containers, boxes, containers... Many knitting clubs have been established, producing a wide range of products for the tourist market, including handicrafts and shopping baskets of various designs and sizes.

In terms of cuisine, they are dishes made from rice (sticky rice and non-glutinous rice) such as: lam rice (cooked sticky rice, non-glutinous rice), sticky rice (white sticky rice, five colors sticky rice), and glutinous cakes. Food processed from the meat of animals include: stream fish, chickens, buffaloes, cows, goats, deer, porcupines, squirrels, weasels, snakes... Food processed from insects, amphibians: stink bugs, grasshoppers, crickets, bees and bee larvae, ants and ant eggs, shrimp, crabs, snails, frogs, eels, loaches... Dishes processed from vegetables include: bamboo shoots, mushrooms, vegetables...

It can be said that the material cultural value of the Thai ethnic group in Muong Lo is quite intact compared to many other regions in the country. Muong Lo people have a good sense of preserving the traditional cultural values of the ethnic group. In recent years, Yen Bai province has initially exploited for the development of ethnic cultural tourism. The exploitation is based on the basic elements of traditional culture, with changes in accordance with the tourist environment, but still retains its pristine appearance.

4.2. Spiritual cultural elements with tourism activities

If the material cultural values of the Thai people in Muong Lo bring attention to visitors right from

the moment they arrive in this land, the cultural and spiritual values are always hidden behind, exist in consciousness, in the spirit of the ethnic group that not everyone who comes will know.

Regarding the speech and script, the research results show that the speech of the ethnic group is still maintained in daily life, even affecting other ethnic groups living in the area such as the Kho Mu, Muong, Kinh ... Before 2006, there were only 5 people in the area who could read and write fluently in ancient Thai. Recently, due to the need of preserving ethnic cultural heritages, the locality has continuously opened Thai language classes. Thanks to that, the Thai script has been revived in Muong Lo up to now.

In addition to the voice and writing, the typical festivals that are included in the list of activities for tourism and are interested by tourists include: Lunar New Year, the festival “Xen Muong” (worshiping Muong), “Xen Bang” festival (worshiping village), “Han Khuong” runway, “Long Tong” festival (to the field), orchid festival, the ceremony of “Xen Dong” (worshiping the forest), “Xip Xi” new year and traditional buffalo worship.

The religious - belief elements of the Thai people in Muong Lo are currently exploited for tourism activities, including: praying for rain (rain praying ceremony, water monster worshiping ceremony and catching thunder at the beginning of the season), cremation customs of Black Thai, the ritual of worshiping the earth deity and worshiping the parents of Thai women. Each custom is researched in order from time, place, way of proceeding to its role and meaning in the life of the community as well as for tourism activities.

The Thai folk music system is extremely rich with many different melodies, different genres, each with a different theme and different musical properties. Typical include: “khap xu” (singing words), “khap mo” (singing rituals), “khap chuong” (singing the epic story), “khap xe “ (singing and dancing), “khap mot” (healing disease), “khap long tong” (singing in the field), “khap bao sao” (singing the charm), “khap chieu” (singing for joy), “khap xuong” (singing love)... These genres are still being collected, preserved and promoted in order to preserve the traditional cultural capital of the Thai people, and at the same time promote tourism development.

Two types of folk dance in the community are currently being actively exploited for tourism

programs, which are the art of xoe and bamboo dancing. “Xoe” is considered an indispensable spiritual dish of Thai community here. Muong Lo has 6 newly restored neck moves including: “kham then” (holding hands), “nhom khan” (throwing handkerchief), “don hon” (moving back and forth), “om lop top mu” (circle clapping hands), “pha xi” (dividing into four), “kham khan mo lau” (raise handkerchief to invite wine). Each tone has its own expression and meaning. In addition, people also popularize xoe dancing with ring, fan, hat, bottle, dress-spreading, music, light, male and female... “Xoe Thai” not only serves tourists in Muong Lo, but is also presented. performed in many places, serving major local holidays. The bamboo dancing is also a popular dance of the Thai ethnic group. More specifically, this bamboo dance was composed by artist Mai Sao right on Muong Lo land during the war against the French. This is an indispensable activity in every fun occasion of the community, as well as visitors to Muong Lo.

Traditional musical instruments of the Thai people include 3 types: percussion including drums, gongs, cymbals, music balls; Steam sets include syrinx and all kinds of pí (flute); the string has gourd lute.

Folk games not only attract the participation of visitors but also a way for visitors to quickly integrate into the community’s life. In particular, throwing is also a very popular game in the Tay and Thai people. Muong Lo is a place that still retains three traditional forms of throwing: con sai, con xom and con vong. The game “To mac le” (throwing le fruit) is only for married women with one to two children. The swing game is performed by the Thai people with two forms: swinging the rope (chong cha) and the swing (chong pin).

If the material values of the ethnic group are considered quite intact, the cultural and spiritual values have been partially restored but always bring special attention to tourists.

Due to the characteristic of this cultural form, visitors can not always fully enjoy it. Activities take place in the beginning of spring, in tourism programs about the origin, ethnic cultural festivals, culture week of Muong Lo ... These occasions attract a lot of attention of visitors, especially are a traveler from afar. The cultural and spiritual values here have always been appreciated and are gradually bringing into play a clear effect in promoting the cultural, economic and social development of the ethnic group.

4.3. The impact of tourism activities on cultural values of Thai people in Muong Lo

4.3.1. Positive effects

Tourism development contributes to promoting Thai cultural values to tourists from near and far, creating a premise for the, preservation and restoration of traditional Thai cultural heritages, and the quality of products. Tourism has always been enhanced and diversified, creating income, creating jobs, improving the lives of the residents, further helping to pay more attention to the inspection of cultural activities, improve the sense of community in preserving traditional cultural heritages of Thai people, enhancing exchanges and solidarity in the region as well as commercial business, other social services...

4.3.2. Negative effects

The restoration of traditional cultural values is not consistent with reality, causing erosion of cultural identity and negative reactions from the community; During the exchange process, many traditional cultural factors affect sustainable tourism; the trend of marketization also distorts cultural values; The development of tourism is more or less causing economic and employment disturbances in the region.

4.3.3. Solutions

To overcome the above situation, contribute to promoting tourism in the future. First of all, tourism development must be associated with conservation, enrichment and promotion of traditional cultural values of the Thai people; attention must be paid to the role of cultural subjects, especially artisans; consolidate and replicate existing cultural institution models in the locality; improve tourism service capabilities of the team of guides and indigenous residents; strengthening facilities; comprehensive investment in the development of the region; enhance security and the State's regulatory role in tourism activities.

5. Discussion

The culture of the Thai Muong Lo, Yen Bai province is currently strongly and directly influenced by three new factors appearing in the recent renovation: industrialization and modernization rural urbanization trend and market economy.

Although tourism activities in Muong Lo in recent years have not been much, it has positively contributed to the socio-economic development of the locality in particular as well as of the country in general. In addition to the positive impacts on

the environment such as: contributing to increasing biodiversity, adding landscapes for tourism development areas such as planting trees at tourist sites, preserving natural landscapes of course, improving infrastructure, promoting activities to protect historical sites, cultural heritages, activities of traditional craft villages... Besides, there are also impacts of limitation need to be addressed and overcome such as: increasing pressure on domestic waste, increasing the risk of environmental pollution of land and water ... During festivals the demand goes beyond the capacity of local public services and infrastructure such as: bedrooms, food services, hot spring baths, wastewater and garbage treatment, ecosystems and the environment are degraded and public health is affected, wild and rare species are hunted for culinary needs, souvenirs, trade...-

6. Conclusion

Thai cultural tourism activities in Muong Lo are essential aspects of the local socio-economic development. With the results achieved, the development of tourism and preservation of traditional culture here has initially obtained remarkable results.

The promotion of Muong Lo tourism has shown positive factors, bringing about clear results. Typically, the organization and support for localities to survey, develop products, at the same time propagate and promote tourism, since then tourism activities have contributed to solving jobs, poverty reduction, life improvement for a part of the population, raising the awareness of preserving and protecting traditional cultural values of the ethnicity... These effects not only bring benefits to the people, the tourism business, cultural management, but also for many tourists who want to explore and learn.

However, in addition to the positive side, the massively developed tourism is also making the Thai culture here inevitable negative aspects such as: some restored cultural values are not really close to the tradition, causing erosion of cultural identity, pollution of the natural environment, increasing social evils... These factors need to be identified and preventive measures should be taken.

Culture is created by the people, people are the subject. Therefore, tourism activities must take people as the object and center to ensure the sustainable development of Thai cultural tourism in particular as well as ethnic cultural tourism in Muong Lo region in general in the future.

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VĂN HÓA TRUYỀN THỐNG CỦA NGƯỜI THÁI VỚI HOẠT ĐỘNG DU LỊCH Ở MƯỜNG LÒ, THỊ XÃ NGHĨA LỘ, TỈNH YÊN BÁI

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Tóm tắt

Bài viết mô tả, phân tích những giá trị văn hóa của người Thái ở Mường Lò, thị xã Nghĩa Lộ, tỉnh Yên Bái phục vụ du lịch và tác động của hoạt động du lịch tới các giá trị văn hóa đó. Qua đó nhận diện các giá trị văn hóa Thái trong phát triển du lịch hiện nay ở Mường Lò.

Từ khóa

Văn hóa truyền thống; Hoạt động du lịch; Mường Lò; Thị xã Nghĩa Lộ, tỉnh Yên Bái; Người Thái.