

Costume culture in Vietnamese lyrical folk songs

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ABSTRACT : Lyrical folk songs are a type of traditional folk song in which the lyrics reflect reality by expressing people's own thoughts, feelings, and moods. Lyrical folk songs specifically express the cultural values of the Vietnamese people, in which costume culture is one of the intangible cultural forms with typical meanings. The article explores a number of costumes of Vietnamese women in ancient society expressed in lyrical folk songs thereby affirming the cultural values of traditional folk songs.

Keywords - culture, costumes, lyrical folk songs, bibs, conical hats, Vietnam

I. INTRODUCTION

Folk songs are simple words spoken by the masses that express the spiritual life, thoughts, and feelings of people in relationships such as couples, families, homelands, and countries. Vietnamese folk knowledge, which carries the feelings and thoughts of the Vietnamese people, is passed down from generation to generation.

Lyrical folk songs are a type of folk song in which the lyrics reflect reality by expressing people's own thoughts, feelings, and moods. Lyrical folk songs express the Vietnamese people's cultural values specifically, with costume culture being one of the forms of intangible culture that is very clearly expressed.

II. CONTENTS

Traditional costumes of the ancient Vietnamese people always show adaptation and response to hot, humid, tropical, and monsoonal natural conditions in this land. Our people have a pretty practical conception of what to wear “Ăn lấy chắc, mặc lấy bền”, “Cơm ba bát, áo ba manh, đôi không xanh, rét không chết”. But wearing is not only to respond to the environment but also has a very important social meaning: wear for makeup, beauty “Cau già khéo bô thì non, Nạ dòng trang điểm lại giòn hơn xưa”; dressing shows the difference in social status, the difference in society «Cha đòi cái áo rách này/ Mất chúng mất bạn vì mày áo ơi»; “Hon nhau cái áo manh quần //Thả ra ai cũng bóc trần như ai”.

Vietnamese people wore very rich costumes in the old society; men wore blouses, loincloths, cropped pants, dark shirts... women wore bibs, skirts, four-body shirts, five-body sentences, and scarves. However, within the scope of this article, we will discuss some traditional costumes worn by Vietnamese women in ancient society, as expressed in lyrical folk songs.

1. Brassiere

Women in the past used the brassiere as a common garment for themselves. The shape of the brassiere has changed over time, but based on statues and reliefs that can be found in the 18th-19th centuries, “the brassiere is square in shape across the chest, the upper corner is cut out for the neck, The two ends have a piece of string attached to the back of the neck. If the neck is rounded, it is called a construction neck brassiere, a V-shaped head is called a chariot brassiere, and a V-shaped bottom that goes down is called a swallow's neck brassiere. The two corners on both sides have strings to tie behind the back” [31, p.169].

It is no coincidence that since ancient times, the image of a woman's brassiere has been shown in Vietnamese folk songs. The brassiere is a symbol of aspiration for love, a dream of happiness. It appears in boys' confessions in meetings.

*“Hỡi cô mặc áo yếm hồng
Đi trong đám hội có chồng hay chưa?...
Cô kia yếm trắng lò lò
Lại đây đập đất trồng cà với anh.*

*Bao giờ cà chín cà xanh
Anh cho một quả để dành móm con”.*

Or in the nostalgia, the expectation of those far from home, the desire to return

*“Mình về mình có nhớ chăng
Ta về như lạt buộc khăn nhớ mình.
Ta về ta cũng nhớ mình
Nhớ yếm mình mặc, nhớ tình mình trao”*

The brassiere also became a symbol of trust and affection for girls. If you love you, then give you brassiere:

*“Thuyền anh ngược thác lên đây
Mượn đôi dải yếm làm dây kéo thuyền.
Ở gần mà chẳng sang chơi
Để em ngắt ngọn mồng toi bắc cầu.
Mồng toi chẳng bắc được đâu
Em coi dải yếm bắc cầu anh sang”*

The way to say borrowing a brassiere strip "make a towline" to make a fishing line is just a stylized way of saying it. What the guy wants here are the girl's sincere feelings. Therefore, the brassiere is a symbol of love between the couple.

*“Trời mưa trời gió kìn kìn
Đắp đôi dải yếm hơn nghìn chăn bông”*

The way to say "a pair of brassiere is more than a thousand blankets" is an exaggeration of folk, but here it is exaggerated to affirm: that love between men and women is the medicine to warm people's hearts in the cold weather.

As a symbol of the couple's love, the brassiere is the desire for happiness. However, sometimes when the couple fails, the brassiere also shows up pitifully and regretfully.

*“Kiếp sau đừng hóa ra người
Hóa ra dải yếm buộc người tình nhân”*

2.2. Palm-leaf conical hat

Palm-leaf conical hat is a familiar "accessory" of Vietnamese women, especially women in the countryside of Kinh Bac. The old folk has many sayings about the palm-leaf conical hat. The palm-leaf conical hat appears in Vietnamese wedding ceremonies:

*“Cưới em trăm tấm lụa đào
Một trăm viên ngọc hai mươi tám ông sao trên trời
Tráp tròn sấm đủ trăm đôi
Ổng thuốc bằng bạc ống vôi bằng vàng
Sấm xe tử mã mang sang
Trình quan viên họ nhà nàng rước dâu
Ba trăm nón Nghệ đội đầu
Mỗi người một chiếc quạt Tàu thật xinh”*

The solemn ceremony includes a hundred peach silk sheets, a hundred pearls, a hundred pairs of caskets, a horse-drawn carriage, a silver medicine pipe, a yellow lime tube, and so on, but the image of a palm-leaf conical hat (three hundred conical hats worn by Turmeric. head) remains indispensable. The palm-leaf conical hat is associated with the hat-giving ceremony, a Vietnamese ritual in which a daughter-in-law is given a hat by her mother-in-law when she returns to her husband's house. The palm-leaf conical hat is regarded as a bridge connecting and harmonizing husband and wife, with the goal of keeping the fire of happiness burning for the family. When a bride-to-be wears a palm-leaf conical hat to her husband's house, it indicates that her biological parents have completed their duties. At the moment, that palm-leaf conical hat is a small reminder of the Vietnamese woman's religion of being a good wife and a good daughter-in-law.

In ancient folk songs, the palm-leaf conical hat also expresses the feelings and thoughts of people. It is a reminder of the love between people who love each other:

*“Nón em đang đội trên đầu
Anh mà giật mắt dạ sầu em thay
Lấy gì mà đội hôm nay
Anh mua nón khác nón này em xin
Nón em chớ đáng đồng tiền
Chưa kết được bạn chưa yên cửa nhà
Nón em mua ở tỉnh xa
Mua ở Hà Nội quan ba mươi đồng
Trở về gặp khách má hồng
Sao anh ăn ở ra lòng thờ ơ”*

*Mua nón em phải mua tua
Nón này thầy mẹ em mua rành rành
Nhẽ đầu em để cho anh
Về nhà mẹ mắng em đành báo sao?"*

In the preceding song, the girl skillfully and delicately reminded her friend of their relationship. The daughter borrowed the palm-leaf conical hat to discuss how to create a happy marriage and family. She gave him the address where he could buy the gifts he had requested. However, when the girl reminded him, the boy's reaction was indifferent and cold. As a result, when he wanted to take her familiar as a hostage, the girl cleverly used an excuse:

*Mua nón em phải mua tua
nón này thầy mẹ em mua rành rành
Nhẽ đầu em để cho anh
Về nhà mẹ mắng em đành báo sao?*

It can be seen that the hat is the object for people to convey their thoughts and feelings. Life in the feudal society has many ways and rules, so sometimes, women also borrow the image of a hat to express their messages. "The palm-leaf conical hat with rattan" in the following folk songs clearly shows this:

*Tiếc vì nón lá quai mây
Nên em chẳng dám trao tay chàng cầm*

The image of a "palm-leaf conical hat with rattan" has shown the meaning of the girl's peaceful family life. The girl boldly expressed her thoughts and feelings, but all could not overcome the limit, so the result was still "didn't dare to give him his hand". Thus, although reflecting feelings and thoughts beyond the framework of the ritual, the folk song still properly expresses the charm and moral standards of Vietnamese women.

The hat is also a place to send sympathy, share, and experience life

*Nón mới gột nước trời mua
Anh ham vợ đẹp thì thua việc làm*

The palm-leaf conical hat in this context is a reproach and ridicule of a guy who loves beauty but forgets the true nature of man. The hat needs to be preserved if it rains, it will easily be damaged, just like a man who loves a beautiful wife will not care much about housework.

Thus, the image of a palm-leaf conical hat in folk songs is a symbol of socio-cultural values associated with Vietnamese women. Although life has changed, the image of the hat still retains its values.

III. CONCLUSION

The treasure of Vietnamese folk songs is a valuable source of material for studying and learning about the cultural life of the common people. This is very clearly shown in the costume culture of Vietnamese people in general and Vietnamese women in particular. Costumes have shown the historical context; attitudes, perceptions, and cultures of the society at that time. Therefore, studying the cultural factors in folk songs will help readers enter one of the roots of the national culture because folk songs in particular and folklore, in general, are a true reflection of life, the material and spiritual life of the nation.

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