

THE CULT OF LADY THU BỒN AND LADY PHƯỜNG CHÀO IN THE CULTURAL LIFE OF THE QUẢNG REGION

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Abstract: Quảng Nam is a strategic place on the way the Việt people moved southward. Especially, thanks to the roads connecting the mountains and the sea through the Thu Bồn river, a diverse and rich treasure of village cultural heritage has been generated in the Quảng region. The cult of goddesses, typically Lady Thu Bồn, Lady Phường Chèo, and Lady Chợ Được, etc., reflect the process of cultural exposure and exchange between Việt and non-Việt people in this particularly important land.

The sacrificial ritual, the traditional buffalo-eating custom of the ethnic minority communities in the Central region and the use of calves as an animal sacrifice in the Lady Thu Bồn ritual express sacred symbolic meanings and reflect the long-time belief of worshipping Thiên Y A Na - The Mother of Land—who has various incarnations in different villages. In recognizing Thiên Y A Na as the supreme goddess, unifying the management of mountains and sea, especially the important waterway of Thu Bồn river, the Việt people quickly received, gradually transformed it, and created a Vietnamese version of this goddess who was humbly called "the youngest sister" through the image of Lady Phường Chèo and Lady Chợ Được. The sisterhood relation of these ladies has become a symbol of friendship, cultural exchange, and acculturation in the Central region, typically in Quảng Nam.

Keywords: Goddess, Thiên Y A Na - The Mother of the Land, Lady Chúa Ngọc, Lady Bô Bô, Lady Thu Bồn, Lady Phường Chèo, Lady Chợ Được, cultural contact, cultural exchange, non-Vietnamese, pre-Vietnamese.