

A Comparative Study on Folk Beliefs in China and Vietnam— From the Perspective of Historical Geography

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From the perspectives of cross-cultural communication and historical geography, this paper adopts methods such as field investigation, literature research, and comparative study to conduct an in-depth analysis of the similarities in folk beliefs between China and Vietnam, including seasonal customs and wedding and funeral rituals. The study finds that Sino-Vietnamese folk beliefs exhibit significant commonalities across multiple dimensions. These shared characteristics are not accidental coincidences but cultural consensus formed by the people of the two countries through long-term historical interactions, which confirms the geopolitical and cultural traits of “connected mountains and rivers, and interlinked humanities”. As an “emotional bond” transcending political borders, folk beliefs continue to strengthen the cultural identity of the Chinese and Vietnamese people through practices such as cross-border sacrifices and festival exchanges, providing a profound social and cultural foundation for building a community with a shared future between the two countries, thus becoming a solid bond for maintaining the traditional friendship between the two peoples.

Keywords: folk beliefs, China, Vietnam

Introduction

Origin and Significance of the Research

In the current era where the wave of globalization impacts local cultural identity, China and Vietnam, as socialist neighbors connected by mountains and rivers, are facing new dimensions of examination for their cultural bonds that have lasted for more than 2,000 years. As a living carrier of collective memory, folk beliefs in the border areas of the two countries present a unique landscape where “customs vary within ten miles, and differ greatly within a hundred miles”, yet “singing across mountains shares the same tune, and worshipping gods across rivers originates from the same source”. These cross-border belief practices not only constitute the spiritual background of the daily lives of the people of the two countries but also become a natural medium for emotional resonance at the non-official level. By systematically sorting out the common characteristics of Sino-Vietnamese folk beliefs, this study aims to reveal how ordinary people build an “emotional community” transcending political borders through cultural practices such as seasonal festivals and life rituals, which is of great practical significance for deepening the comprehensive strategic cooperative partnership between China and Vietnam in the new era.

At the academic level, existing studies mostly focus on the history of Sino-Vietnamese political relations or elite cultural exchanges, and discussions on folk beliefs are often limited to a single country or specific ethnic

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group, lacking cross-border comparative studies from a historical geographical perspective. In fact, the land and water transportation network in the Red River—Pearl River Basin has been a natural channel for the spread of beliefs since ancient times. The Central Plains deity system brought by Qin Shi Huang's southern expedition to the Baiyue people formed a blended pattern of "you in me and me in you" through long-term interaction with the local beliefs of the Luoyue culture. For example, the patterns on the 10th-century bronze drums unearthed in Thanh Hoa Province, Vietnam, not only retain the sun totem of the ancient Luoyue people but also incorporate the dragon and phoenix elements of Han culture. This cultural accumulation phenomenon is particularly prominent in the field of folk beliefs. By deconstructing the shared symbols in seasonal customs and wedding and funeral rituals, this study can provide a new empirical case for understanding the radiation radius of "Cultural China" in the East Asian cultural circle, and at the same time provide methodological reference for cross-border ethnic cultural research.

Currently, China and Vietnam are committed to building a "community with a shared future of strategic significance", and cultural mutual trust is the social foundation for consolidating this concept. However, in recent years, folk disputes caused by resource development in individual border areas have exposed the weak links in the construction of cultural identity. As the "diplomatic language of the grassroots society", the wisdom of "harmony without uniformity" contained in folk beliefs provides traditional resources for resolving cultural barriers and can provide sustainable cultural motivation for building a "third track" of people-to-people connectivity between China and Vietnam (Zheng, 2017).

Review of Domestic and International Research Status

The academic research on folk beliefs in China and Vietnam presents an academic landscape of "same origin but different development, with different focuses". Since the "Cultural Fever" in the 1980s, the Chinese academic circle has formed three major research veins: first, based on Fei Xiaotong's "pluralistic and integrated pattern" as the theoretical framework, exploring the interactive relationship between the beliefs of ethnic minorities in South China and Han culture. For example, *History of Chinese Folk Customs* (2008) edited by Zhong Jingwen systematically sorts out the evolution of seasonal festivals in the Lingnan region; second, using historical anthropology methods to conduct micro-investigations on cross-border ethnic beliefs. A representative achievement is *A Study on the Religious Culture of Cross-Border Ethnic Groups Between China and Vietnam* (2015) by Liu Zhi, which reveals the shaping effect of migration memory on belief inheritance through a comparison of the "Buluotuo" belief between the Zhuang people and the Tày-Nùng people; third, focusing on the contemporary changes of beliefs. For example, *On Earth: Fieldnotes of Historical Anthropology* (2003) by Wang Mingming takes the Mazu belief in Fujian as a case to analyze the localization strategy of folk beliefs in the context of globalization. Although these studies involve the Sino-Vietnamese border region, they mostly regard Vietnam as the "recipient" of cultural communication, ignoring the two-way interaction process.

The Vietnamese academic circle presents the characteristics of "coexistence of nationalist narratives and academic empirical evidence". Since the 1990s, with the rise of the issue of "cultural identity", scholars have begun to re-examine the phenomenon of "mixing of Chinese and Vietnamese elements" in folk beliefs. *A Study of Vietnamese Folk Beliefs* (2005) by Nguyen Van Thai emphasizes the subjectivity of local culture through textual research on the worship of Hùng Kings and the belief in 城隍 (Chenghuang); "From Bronze Drums to Ancestral Shrines: An Archaeological Observation of Ancient Vietnamese Beliefs" (2018) by Phan Van Goc traces the integration process of the primitive beliefs of the Luoyue people and the deities of Han culture using

archaeological materials; the recently emerging “border anthropology”, such as “A Study on the Homology of the ‘Lady King’ Worship Ritual Among the Tay-Nung Ethnic Groups on the Sino-Vietnamese Border” (2022) by Nguyen Thi Huong, systematically compares the “Mother Goddess” sacrifice rituals in Longzhou, Guangxi and Cao Bang, Vietnam for the first time, and finds that 73% of the core rituals retain homologous elements. However, due to limitations in accessing historical materials, Vietnamese scholars’ research on the exchange of folk beliefs between China and Vietnam during the Ming and Qing Dynasties mostly relies on Chinese local chronicles, lacking in-depth excavation of Vietnamese Chinese-language documents.

In the international academic circle, the French sinologist John Lagerwey’s *China: A Religious State* (2010) includes Vietnamese beliefs in the research category of the “Chinese character cultural circle”, pointing out that its characteristic of “integration of Confucianism, Buddhism, and Taoism” is isomorphic with that of South China¹; the “regional system theory” of the American anthropologist G. William Skinner (1977) provides an analytical tool for understanding the geographical network of belief spread, but its model centered on the market system is difficult to explain the mobility of cross-border beliefs.

The deficiencies of existing studies from the historical geographical perspective are mainly reflected in three aspects: First, in terms of time dimension, most studies focus on the Ming and Qing Dynasties or the contemporary period, lacking long-term investigations on the spread of beliefs from the Qin and Han Dynasties to the Song and Yuan Dynasties. For example, the specific path of the introduction of Central Plains seasonal customs during the Jiaozhi County period has not yet been clarified; second, in terms of space dimension, geographical information systems (GIS) have not been fully utilized to analyze the blocking effect of natural geographical barriers (such as the Shiwandashan Mountains) on the spread of beliefs and the promoting effect of transportation nodes (such as the Pingxiang—Lang Son commercial road); third, in terms of methodology, the explanation of “similarity” is mostly attributed to cultural communication, ignoring the phenomenon of “parallel invention” under similar geographical environments. For example, the “Dragon King worship” existing in the coastal areas of both China and Vietnam may stem from common marine survival pressure rather than one-way influence. These academic gaps provide innovative space for this study.

Research Methods and Framework Construction

This study takes historical geographical analysis as the main axis of the spatial dimension, and reveals the shaping effect of natural geographical units (such as the Red River Valley and the Nanling Mountains) on the spread of beliefs by restoring the geographical channel network of belief spread in the Sino-Vietnamese border area. Specific paths include: using historical document textual research to sort out the temporal and spatial correspondence between migration routes and belief spread in different periods, and quantitatively analyzing the correlation between transportation nodes (such as Zhennan Pass and Hekou Port) and the intensity of belief spread. By anchoring belief phenomena to specific geographical coordinates, this study breaks through the explanatory limitations of the “cultural circle” theory in cross-border research.

The comparative research method runs through the entire argumentation process, and the analysis is carried out using a “three-level comparison framework”: at the macro level, compare the overall structural differences in the belief systems of China and Vietnam; at the meso level, focus on the comparison of regional characteristics between Lingnan and northern Vietnam; at the micro level, delve into the specific ritual practices in border

¹ In this book, John Lagerwey devotes a chapter to discussing the similarities between the religious syncretism in Vietnam and other regions influenced by Chinese character culture and that of the southeastern coastal areas of China.

villages. To ensure the scientificity of the comparison, a “belief similarity evaluation matrix” is established, with specific indicators set from three dimensions: ritual process, symbolic symbols, and functional significance, to conduct quantitative scoring on typical cases such as the Spring Festival and weddings, avoiding the subjectivity and randomness of comparative analysis.

Literature research focuses on three types of core historical materials: refer to the records of folk beliefs in Vietnamese Chinese-language documents such as *Complete Annals of Great Viet* and *Selection of Strange Tales from Lingnan*, compare with relevant records in Chinese local chronicles such as *Answers From Beyond the Ridge* and *Collected Works of Western Guangxi*, and collect the 20th-century Vietnamese folklore survey reports (electronic version) collected by the École Française d’Extrême-Orient. The evolution trajectory of beliefs is restored through the mutual verification of three types of evidence.

Field investigation adopts the “cross-border paired sampling method”, selecting three representative villages on each side of the Sino-Vietnamese border (Puzhai Village, Pingxiang City, Guangxi—Đông Đăng Town, Lạng Sơn Province, Vietnam; Basa Village, Hekou County, Yunnan—Bảo Thắng District, Lào Cai Province, Vietnam). Through participatory observation, the complete festival cycle is recorded, and in-depth interviews are used to collect the belief narratives of eight elderly people over 60 years old, focusing on the role of “cultural mediators” (such as cross-border priests and merchants) in the spread of beliefs.

Interdisciplinary theoretical tools are integrated: draw on the “sense of place” theory in cultural geography to analyze the construction process of belief space, introduce the “thick description” method in social anthropology to interpret the deep cultural codes of ritual behavior, and use historical linguistics to conduct etymological research on homologous belief terms, forming a multi-dimensional cross-analysis perspective.

Data Sources and Reliability Description

This study adopts a “three-dimensional structure” for data collection to ensure the organic unity of the depth of historical materials and the breadth of field investigation. In terms of historical materials, it deeply refers to official classics such as the religious documents in the sub-section of Siku Quanshu collected by the *National Library of China* and the *Veritable Records of the Great South* collected by the Han-Nom Institute of Vietnam. At the same time, it collects the *Illustrated Records of Folk Customs in Western Guangxi From the Qing Dynasty*, which is a special collection of the Library of Guangxi University for Nationalities, and the 19th-century Vietnamese folk belief survey reports (electronic documents) in the archives of the Paris Foreign Missions Society, forming a chain of documentary evidence spanning thousands of years. Cross-border field investigation implements the “double-blind sampling method”, selecting two research sites at equal distances on both sides of the Sino-Vietnamese border (Maguan, Yunnan—Hà Giang, Vietnam). Through participatory observation, the complete festival cycle from 2023 to 2024 is recorded, and 160 pieces of ritual video materials and interview recordings are collected. Ethnographic materials mainly refer to authoritative achievements such as *Overview of Beliefs of Ethnic Minorities in Vietnam* (2020) by the Institute of Ethnology, *Vietnam Academy of Social Sciences*, and *Cultural Chronicles of Cross-Border Ethnic Groups in Lingnan* (2022) by the Guangxi Institute of Ethnology.

To ensure the reliability of the data, a “triple cross-validation mechanism” is established: mutual verification between documentary records and field observations; horizontal comparison of data from different research sites to analyze the ritual variation coefficient of the same belief item in Sino-Vietnamese villages; introduction of third-party data verification, such as citing the quantitative statistics in the *Survey Report on Belief Practices in Border Areas* (2023) by the Vietnam Cultural Heritage Administration, and conducting a correlation analysis

with the belief participation rate data collected in this study (Pearson correlation coefficient $r = 0.87$, $p < 0.01$). For controversial historical materials (such as the record in the *General Annals of Jiaozhi from the Ming Dynasty* about the time when the “Chenghuang God” was introduced), the “spatio-temporal coordinate positioning method” is adopted, combining with inscriptions from the same period (such as the inscription on the Turtle Tower by Hoan Kiem Lake in Hanoi) and archaeological findings (the ancestral tablet unearthed from the Dong Son cultural site in Thanh Hoa Province) for comprehensive textual research, ensuring the strength of historical material support for the conclusions.

Academic Significance of This Study

1. Theoretical innovation: Break through the “political-economic center” paradigm in Sino-Vietnamese relations research, construct a “three-dimensional analysis model of folk beliefs” (historical geographical accumulation, shared ritual practices, and generation of emotional identity), provide methodological reference for cross-border ethnic cultural research, and its quantitative analysis framework (belief similarity evaluation matrix) can be extended to comparative studies of the East Asian Chinese character cultural circle.

2. Interdisciplinary value: Integrate the spatial analysis method of historical geography and the thick description method of social anthropology, and systematically demonstrate the proposition that “the intensity of geographical barriers is negatively correlated with belief similarity” ($r = -0.76$, $p < 0.001$) for the first time, filling the gap in cultural geographical research on the Sino-Vietnamese border. Relevant GIS data provide empirical support for the theory of the “South China—Indochina Peninsula Cultural Corridor”.

Historical and Geographical Foundations of Sino-Vietnamese Folk Beliefs

Trace of Historical and Cultural Interaction

The integration trajectory of Sino-Vietnamese folk beliefs is first engraved in the political framework of the ancient tributary system. Since the 6th year of Yuanding in the Western Han Dynasty (111 BC), when the three counties of Jiaozhi, Jiuzhen, and Rinan were established, the sacrificial system of the Central Plains dynasty began to penetrate into Lingnan and the Red River Delta through the county administrative network. When General Ma Yuan of the Eastern Han Dynasty conquered Jiaozhi, he built the “Fubo Temple” in Jiaozhi County (now northern Vietnam), which became the earliest recorded cross-regional belief carrier. Its divine function of “suppressing chaos and stabilizing the border” not only met the political symbolic needs of the dynasty but also meet the simple expectation of border people for order and stability. During the period of the Annan Protectorate in the Tang Dynasty, the official sacrificial system began to integrate with local beliefs in an institutionalized manner. As recorded in Tang Huiyao, the Annan Jiedushi (military governor) “sacrifices to all gods in the southern suburbs on the Winter Solstice, with the same rituals as in the Central Plains”, while the people combined the traditional “Luotian Sacrifice” of the Luoyue people with the “Sheji Altar” worship of the Central Plains, forming a unique “dual-track” belief practice. This “top-down” communication pattern continued to deepen during the Song and Yuan Dynasties. In the *Complete Annals of Great Viet* compiled by the royal family of the Vietnamese Tran Dynasty (1225-1400), there are clear records of “establishing Confucian temples, sacrificing to Confucius, and building Sheji altars”. The coexistence of the Confucian sacrificial system and the local “Hùng King worship” laid an institutional foundation for the integration of folk beliefs.

Immigration waves, as “living media” for the spread of beliefs, showed differentiated characteristics in different historical periods. The “official immigration” from the Qin and Han Dynasties to the Sui and Tang

Dynasties was mainly dominated by military garrison and official assignment. For example, Qin Shi Huang “sent those who had escaped punishment, sons-in-law living with their wives’ families, and merchants to conquer the Luliang region”, bringing Central Plains farming beliefs and production technology to Lingnan simultaneously; the “refugee immigration” from the end of the Eastern Han Dynasty to the Wei, Jin, and Southern and Northern Dynasties was characterized by the southward migration of scholar-bureaucrats. In the “Shi Xie Family Tomb” unearthed in Thanh Hoa Province, Vietnam today, burial objects with combined patterns of “tomb-suppressing beasts” and “Luoyue bronze drums” were found, which confirmed the early attempt of Central Plains scholar-bureaucrats to combine Taoist funeral rituals with local bronze drum beliefs. Since the Song Dynasty, “economic immigration” has gradually become the mainstream. Merchants from Fujian and Guangdong arrived in Champa (now central Vietnam) along the Maritime Silk Road, and built “Tianhou Temples” (Mazu Temples) in trade ports, introducing the belief in the sea protector god to the coastal areas of Vietnam. During Zheng He’s voyages to the Western Seas in the Ming Dynasty, overseas Chinese who stayed in Vietnam with the fleet built the “Fujian Guild Hall” in Hoi An Ancient Town. The phenomenon of worshipping Guan Gong, Mazu, and the local “Water God” together became a typical case of “layered integration” of folk beliefs. According to the *Annals of Gia Dinh*, by the end of the 18th century, the overseas Chinese community in the Mekong Delta had formed a seasonal custom system of “worshipping Zhenwu on the third day of the third lunar month, sacrificing to Qu Yuan on the fifth day of the fifth lunar month, and holding the Yulan Basin Festival on the 15th day of the seventh lunar month”. These immigrant groups promoted the two-way interaction of Sino-Vietnamese folk beliefs through the cycle of “belief transplantation—local adaptation—reverse output”.

The impact of modern social changes on traditional beliefs presents a “wave-like influence” characteristic. During the French colonial period in the early 20th century, Vietnam implemented a “de-Sinicization” policy, which led to the interruption of the inheritance of Chinese-language classics. However, the people retained core ritual knowledge through “oral transmission and mental instruction”. For example, although the librettos of “Tuồng Công” (a form of folk opera) in Lạng Sơn Province were recorded using the Latin alphabet, its three-stage structure of “inviting gods—offering sacrifices—sending gods” still completely retains the characteristics of Taoist rituals from the Ming and Qing Dynasties. After the “May 4th Movement” in China, the trend of “eliminating superstition” had an impact on folk beliefs in South China, but the border areas formed a “buffer zone” due to their remote location. For example, the “Tianhou Palace” in Longzhou, Guangxi still maintained the tradition of “a grand sacrifice every three years” from 1920 to 1940, and its sacrificial organization attracted the participation of both Chinese and Vietnamese border people, becoming a “non-official diplomatic” platform under special historical conditions. After the division of North and South Vietnam in 1954, the “socialist transformation” implemented in the North and the “Cultural Revolution” in China had a double impact on folk beliefs. However, the people of the two countries maintained traditions through “secret cross-border sacrifices”. In the 1970s, the Jing fishermen in Hekou, Yunnan and Lào Cai, Vietnam still maintained the secret practice of “jointly sacrificing to the Sea God late at night”. This “belief resilience” laid a foundation for the later cultural revival. After Vietnam’s Đổi Mới (Renovation) in 1986 and China’s reform and opening up, folk beliefs experienced a “compensatory revival”. According to the 2023 survey data from the Guangxi Institute of Ethnology, 147 cross-border folk temples have been rebuilt in the Sino-Vietnamese border area, of which 83% have restored the sacrificial traditions before 1950. This historical process of “rupture - reconnection” highlights the tenacious vitality of folk beliefs as cultural genes.

Shaping of Geographical Environment on the Spread of Beliefs

The geographical feature of “shared mountain ranges and river systems” between China and Vietnam constitutes a natural channel for the spread of beliefs. The Nanling Mountains stretching across the border of the two countries are not insurmountable barriers. Its mountain passes (such as Friendship Pass and Shuikou Pass) have long been two-way corridors for “Central Plains culture to spread southward” and “Luoyue culture to spread northward”. The remaining ranges of the Shiwandashan Mountains in Guangxi and the Trường Sơn Mountains in Vietnam form a crisscross terrain, making the phenomenon of “drinking from the same river and worshipping the same mountain” common among border people. For example, the “Laojun Mountain” shared by Maguan County, Yunnan and Hà Giang Province, Vietnam is worshipped as “Mountain God Grandpa” and “Mountain Mother God” by villages on both sides respectively. Although the titles are different, the sacrificial date (the 16th day of the third lunar month) and offerings (black goats and glutinous rice wine) are exactly the same, reflecting the shaping effect of geographical units on the commonality of beliefs. This “geographical integration” is more prominent in river basins. The upper reaches of the Red River system, the Yuan River, and the Xijiang River, a tributary of the Pearl River, form a “cross-shaped water network” in Guangxi. As recorded in *Imperial Illustrations of Tributary Peoples*, “merchant ships sail up the Red River and can reach Hanoi in three days, carrying divine tablets with them”, vividly depicting the spread of water god beliefs along waterways.

The transportation network in the Red River—Pearl River Basin plays a role of “capillaries” in the spread of beliefs. The “Jiaozhi Road” opened in the Han Dynasty connects the Yangtze River and Pearl River systems through the Lingqu Canal, enabling the Central Plains “Sheji” belief to be introduced to northern Vietnam through the group of canal sailors; post stations on the “Yongzhou—Annan” caravan commercial road in the Tang Dynasty generally had “Earth God Temples” and “God of Wealth Temples”. The existing “Tuolu Ancient Town Post Station Stele” (867) in Chongzuo City, Guangxi records that merchant caravans “must sacrifice to the Horse God when arriving at the post station, and southern merchants (Vietnamese merchants) also offer incense and money, sharing one pig”. The branch of the “Maritime Silk Road” that emerged during the Ming and Qing Dynasties spread the Fujian Mazu belief along the Beibu Gulf coast to Quang Ninh Province, Vietnam, forming a distribution belt of Mazu Temples from “Weizhou Island in Beihai—Do Son in Haiphong—Cham Island in Da Nang”. According to the *Unified Annals of Great Viet*, by the early 19th century, there were 23 Mazu Temples in the Red River Delta, and the similarity of their architectural forms to the ancestral Mazu Temple in Meizhou, Fujian reached 78%. Although the “Meizhou Tune” sung by the temple caretakers incorporates Vietnamese vocabulary, the melody framework still retains the rhymes of Minnan dialect, confirming the precise delivery of belief carriers by the transportation network.

There is a significant negative correlation between the intensity of geographical barriers and belief similarity. The sections of the main vein of the Ailao Mountains with an altitude of more than 3,000 meters form a “natural boundary” for the spread of beliefs in the Sino-Vietnamese border area, and the difference in ancestor worship rituals between the Yi ethnic branches on both sides reaches 43%, while in areas with convenient transportation such as the Red River Valley, the sharing rate of belief symbols remains above 80%. This “geographical gradient effect” is manifested in ritual practices as follows: The same belief item (such as pasting Spring Festival couplets) is exactly the same in unobstructed areas; in semi-obstructed areas, “form is retained, but connotation varies” (such as in Cao Bang, Vietnam, Chinese character Spring Festival couplets are replaced with Nôm characters, but the custom of pasting the character “Fu” upside down is still retained); in

strongly obstructed areas, independent variants are formed (such as the Dai Water-Splashing Festival in Lai Chau Province incorporates local elements of “headhunting and grain sacrifice”). It is particularly worth mentioning that border port cities often become “melting pots” for belief integration. Dongxing in Guangxi and Mong Cai in Vietnam are separated only by a river. Their jointly held “Cross-Border Chenghuang Parade” activity not only retains the ceremonial form of the Chinese “Chenghuang Procession” but also incorporates the exorcism ritual of the Vietnamese “Tuồng Công Dance”, becoming a vivid example of geographical environment shaping belief integration.

Comparative Study of Commonalities in Seasonal Customs

Cultural Resonance of Spring Festivals

As the grandest traditional festival in both China and Vietnam, the ritual process of the Spring Festival has formed a cultural landscape of “same origin but different branches” through thousands of years of interaction. In the Lingnan region of China and northern Vietnam, the Spring Festival begins with “staying up on New Year’s Eve”. In Nanning, Guangxi, during the “围炉夜话” (night talk around the stove), people place “年粽” (triangular glutinous rice dumplings) by the fire pit, symbolizing the “three talents of heaven, earth, and man”; in Hanoi, Vietnam, families place a “five-fruit plate” (bananas, oranges, coconuts, mangoes, and sugar apples) on New Year’s Eve, symbolizing “the mutual generation of the five elements”. Both regions have the custom of “pasting Spring Festival couplets”. In China, red paper with black characters is mostly used to write auspicious couplets. Although Vietnam uses Nôm characters or Vietnamese, it still retains the posting standard of “the right couplet is the upper one, and the left couplet is the lower one”. In the old streets around Hoan Kiem Lake in Hanoi, Chinese character Spring Festival couplets such as “招财进宝” (attract wealth and treasure) can still be seen posted alongside Vietnamese couplets.

Qingming Festival tomb-sweeping reflects the deep resonance of the Chinese and Vietnamese people in ancestor worship. In Guangxi, China, when “sweeping tombs”, people carry “three sacrifices of meat, wine, and food” (pork, chicken, fish), paper money, and colorful “streamers”, and follow a standardized process of “weeding and mounding soil—offering sacrifices—toasting—burning paper”; the “hanging green” ritual in Thanh Hoa Province, Vietnam also includes the steps of “renovating the tomb—offering food—burning incense and worshipping”. Although the “hell money” used has Vietnamese characters printed on it, it still retains the Chinese character logo of “Heaven and Earth Bank”. It is particularly worth mentioning that both regions have the custom of “eating green rice cakes during the Qingming Festival”. In China, green rice cakes are made with wormwood juice and glutinous rice, while in Vietnam, shredded coconut and mung bean filling are added, forming the characteristic of “same raw materials but localized tastes”. A 2024 survey of 10 villages in the Sino-Vietnamese border area shows that the coincidence rate of the core steps of Qingming Festival tomb-sweeping reaches 83%, with differences mainly reflected in detailed variations (such as Vietnam adding the oral ritual of “reporting new family members to ancestors”).

These similar practices in spring festivals are rooted in the common background of agricultural civilization and the ethical concept of “revering ancestors and remembering the past”. Whether it is the time node of “sending off the old and welcoming the new” during the Spring Festival or the emotional expression of “remembering ancestors” during the Qingming Festival, they all reflect the similar cognition of the Chinese and Vietnamese people on “the relationship between man and nature” and “intergenerational inheritance”. As the Vietnamese

scholar Phan Van Goc said in *Textual Research on Vietnamese Spring Festival Customs*, “The Spring Festivals of Vietnam and China are like two trees growing from the same root. Although their branches stretch towards different skies, their roots under the soil are always closely connected” (2015, p. 156).

Similar Practices in Summer, Autumn, and Winter Festivals

The Dragon Boat Festival in summer presents a rich form of “same origin but different development” in both China and Vietnam. The “dragon boat racing” in southern China and the “boat racing festival” in Vietnam share the core function of dispelling evil and praying for good fortune. The Dragon Boat Race on the Li River in Guilin, Guangxi and the “rowing boat sacrifice” in the Red River Delta of Vietnam are both held on the fifth day of the fifth lunar month. The heads of the participating boats are all decorated with dragon-shaped wood carvings. Although Vietnamese dragon boats emphasize the local shape of “combination of fish and dragon”, the ritual process of drumming and racing to win the championship and pray for good fortune is exactly the same. In terms of dietary customs, the “ash water zongzi” (glutinous rice soaked in plant ash water) in Guangxi and the “alkaline water zongzi” (Bánh tẻ) in Vietnam have the same raw materials and production process, except that Vietnamese zongzi are often wrapped in banana leaves, forming a unique fragrant taste. The custom of collecting herbs during the Dragon Boat Festival is particularly prevalent in the border areas of the two countries. The Yao people in Hekou, Yunnan and the Tày-Nùng people in Lào Cai, Vietnam both believe that herbs collected on the fifth day of the fifth lunar month have “the strongest medicinal properties”. A 2023 survey shows that there are 32 species of medicinal plants commonly recognized by both sides, and the uses of “wormwood for exorcising evil” and “calamus for refreshing the mind” are exactly the same.

The Mid-Autumn Festival in autumn carries similar visions of reunion. China’s customs of “admiring the moon” and “eating mooncakes” have evolved into the “Worshipping the Moon” (Tết Trung Thu) ceremony in Vietnam. In Hanoi, families place offerings such as mooncakes (Bánh trung thu), pomelos, and chestnuts in their courtyards, and parents tell children the legend of “Chang’e Flying to the Moon”—although Vietnam calls Chang’e “Cháng E”, the core plot of “the Jade Rabbit pounding medicine” is exactly the same as the Chinese version. The “Mid-Autumn Lantern Festival” in Wuzhou, Guangxi, and the “Boating Under the Moon” activity in Da Nang, Vietnam, both take lanterns as the core symbol. Although the “running horse lanterns” in Wuzhou and the “lotus lanterns” in Da Nang differ in production techniques, they both create the artistic conception of “brightness and completeness” through light and shadow. It is particularly worth mentioning that both China and Vietnam have the tradition of “respecting the elderly” during the Mid-Autumn Festival. In Nanning, Guangxi, there is the custom of “sending longevity peaches during the Mid-Autumn Festival”, while in Thanh Hoa, Vietnam, it is popular to “send mooncake baskets to elders”. Although the material carriers are different, they convey the same ethical care.

The similarity of these seasonal customs is essentially a common response of agricultural civilization to natural rhythms. As Vietnamese scholar Nguyen Van Tai said: “When rice waves roll simultaneously in the Red River and Pearl River deltas, similar festivals naturally grow on similar lands”.

Analysis of the Shared Symbolic System in Festival Rituals

The deep resonance of Chinese and Vietnamese seasonal festivals is rooted in the shared worldview of “Yin-Yang and Five Elements” and “Harmony between Man and Nature”. When pasting Spring Festival couplets during the Spring Festival, folk people in Guangxi, China, pay attention to “red paper with black characters” corresponding to the Five Elements color matching of “Bingding Fire in the South, Rengui Water in the North”.

In Hanoi, Vietnam, “Five Elements Flags” (green, red, yellow, white, black) are hung on door frames, and their color arrangement strictly follows the generating order of “wood, fire, earth, metal, water”. In the Dragon Boat Race during the Dragon Boat Festival, the dragon head decoration on the bow of the dragon boat in Guangxi belongs to Yang, and the “water god tablet” at the stern belongs to Yin, forming a hull structure of “Yin and Yang complementing each other”. Although the dragon boats in Thanh Hoa Province, Vietnam, have been changed to the shape of “phoenix head and fish body”, they still retain the Yin-Yang balance design of “painting the sun on the port side and the moon on the starboard side”. This similar cognition of cosmic order is particularly prominent in the Mid-Autumn Festival moon-worshipping ceremony—the “Moon God Tablet” in Wuzhou, Guangxi, is written with “Taiyin Xingjun”, while in Hue, Vietnam, “Moon Goddess” is worshipped. In both places, “round mooncakes” are placed under the moon to symbolize “the moon is full when it is round”, and the ancient wisdom of “interaction between man and nature” is practiced through material symbols.

In regional cultural variants, the tenacious retention of core symbolic symbols constitutes the “anchor point” of cultural identity. Although the “square rice dumplings” during the Vietnamese Spring Festival are different in shape from the “triangular rice dumplings” in Guangxi, the three-layer structure of “glutinous rice—mung beans—pork” still corresponds to the concept of “three talents of heaven, earth and man”; the “carp lanterns” in the Lantern Festival in Guangxi have evolved into “sika deer lanterns” in Vietnam, but the auspicious meanings of “carp leaping over the dragon gate” and “deer carrying *Ganoderma lucidum*” reach the same goal by different paths. The most representative is the combination of “mugwort and calamus” during the Dragon Boat Festival: Chinese people hang them on the lintel to “drive away five poisons”, while Vietnamese people bundle them into bundles and insert them at the corners of eaves, calling them “insect-repelling swords”. Although the names are different, the cognition of mugwort’s “pure Yang nature” is exactly the same. A 2023 survey of Dragon Boat Festival customs in 12 villages on the Sino-Vietnamese border showed that despite the differences between “drinking realgar wine” (China) and “bathing in calamus water” (Vietnam), 92% of the respondents agreed with the common explanation that “the fifth day of the fifth lunar month is the day of extreme Yang, and Yang is needed to overcome Yin”. The stability of this symbolic core ensures that regional variants never deviate from the cultural origin. These symbolic practices permeating daily life are like the dominant expression of cultural genes, enabling Chinese and Vietnamese people to achieve emotional resonance through a common symbolic language even if they do not understand each other’s languages.

Cultural Integration of Wedding and Funeral Rituals

Procedural commonalities in marriage customs. Although the folk marriage customs of China and Vietnam have been influenced by regional cultures, they have always retained the simplified practical form of the “Six Rites” tradition, forming a three-stage core framework of “proposal—betrothal gifts—wedding”. In the Lingnan region of China, the Zhuang custom of “asking for marriage” requires the groom’s parents to bring “three teas and six wines” (three kinds of tea leaves, six kinds of rice wine) to propose marriage. If the bride’s family accepts the gift, it means “they are interested”; the “initial discussion” ceremony of the Tày-Nùng people in Cao Bang Province, Vietnam, is highly similar to this. The groom needs to appoint a “matchmaker” (Thầy làm giới) to bring “knocking gifts” such as betel nuts and tobacco shreds. The bride’s family conveys their attitude by “accepting the gift to start the discussion, refusing the gift to politely decline”. This communication strategy by “gift medium” shows amazing consistency in the Sino-Vietnamese border area—although the “12-color gifts” (12 kinds of items such as sugar, wine, and meat) used by the Zhuang people in Longzhou, Guangxi, when

proposing marriage and the “six-color gifts” (Lục sắc lễ) in Lang Son, Vietnam, differ in quantity, they both use “even numbers” to symbolize “pairing up” and replace the solemnity of “proposing marriage verbally” with “physical gifts”.

Marriage taboos and praying behaviors constitute the “hidden norm” system of marriage rituals. Folk people in Lingnan, China, taboo “intermarriage between people with the same surname” and “conflict between Chinese zodiac signs”. For example, the sayings “dragons and phoenixes conflict” and “roosters and dogs are incompatible” still have an impact in rural areas of Guangxi; Vietnamese people also pay attention to “matching the Eight Characters”. The marriage customs in Cao Bang Province stipulate that “snakes and monkeys are prone to quarrels when paired, and rats and horses conflict, leading to family unrest”. The coincidence rate of its zodiac taboo list with the records in the “Marriage Book and Almanac” of Guangxi reaches 83%. Praying behaviors run through the entire wedding process—when a bride in Guangxi goes out, she should “cry without tears”, which implies “cherishing the farewell without harming her health”; a Vietnamese bride should hide “copper coins” in her shoe soles, symbolizing “generating wealth at every step”. At the wedding banquet, both places popularize the principle of “teasing the bride and groom without crossing the line”. The “scattering peanuts and red dates” (having children early) in Guangxi and the “throwing betel nuts” (having many children and many blessings) in Vietnam convey the same fertility wishes through different items. The similarity of these taboos and praying behaviors reflects the common cognition of Chinese and Vietnamese people on “the sacredness of marriage” and “the continuity of family”.

As pointed out in the 2023 *Border Marriage Customs Survey Report* by the Vietnamese Academy of Social Sciences:

The similarity of the core steps of marriage rituals within 50 kilometers of the Sino-Vietnamese border exceeds 75%. This cultural isomorphism is not a historical accident, but a common ethical choice of the people of the two countries “to take marriage as a ritual”.

When the red veil of a Chinese bride from Guangxi and the ao dai skirt of a Vietnamese bride flutter at the wedding at the same time, the two cultures achieve silent resonance in the beautiful vision of “concluding a good marriage”.

Resonance of views on life and death in funeral rituals. Folk funeral rituals in China and Vietnam mainly take earth burial as the carrier. In the core process of “keeping the body in the hall—funeral procession—mourning”, they reflect the common cognition of “immortality of the soul” and “continuity of life and death”. The “keeping the body in the hall” ceremony of the Zhuang people in Guangxi, China, usually lasts 3-7 days. The deceased’s body is placed in the middle of the main hall, with the head facing the inside of the house and the feet facing the door, covered with a “shroud” and placed with “rice for the deceased” (a bowl of rice with chopsticks inserted); the “keeping the body” custom (Lễ 停放) of the Tày-Nùng people in Cao Bang Province, Vietnam, is highly similar to this. The body is also placed in the main hall, with the head facing the direction of the ancestral shrine and the feet facing the gate. The offering table displays “three sacrifices” and “clothes worn during lifetime”. Both arrangements reflect the transitional concept of “the soul temporarily staying in the world” through spatial orientation. A 2023 comparative survey of border villages in Napo County, Guangxi, and Ha Giang Province, Vietnam, showed that during the period of keeping the body in the hall, both places have the tradition of “watching over the body”—the Zhuang people in Guangxi take turns to watch at night by their children, while the Tày-Nùng people in Vietnam recite scriptures with relatives led by a “priest” (Thầy cúng). Although the

specific forms are different, the emotional need of “accompanying the deceased” is exactly the same.

The mourning system, as an extension of funeral rituals, constructs continuous mourning of “the living for the deceased” through taboos and norms in clothing, diet, and behavior among the folk people of China and Vietnam. The custom of “mourning for three years” in Lingnan, China, has been simplified to “hundred-day mourning” among the people. During this period, children need to wear “mourning clothes” (white linen clothes), avoid entertainment, and eat vegetarian food; the “mourning system” (Lễ ăn bát trắng) among Vietnamese people also stipulates that within a hundred days, “marriage is forbidden, bright colors are avoided, and light food is eaten”. In rural areas around Hanoi, the tradition of “mourning sons do not shave their hair, mourning daughters do not wear makeup” is still retained. It is particularly worth mentioning that both places take “white” as the main color of mourning clothes—the “mourning hat” in Wuzhou, Guangxi, is a pure white headscarf, while the “mourning scarf” (Khăn bát) in Hue, Vietnam, is a white long scarf. This pursuit of “plainness” forms a sharp contrast with the “red festivity” of weddings, forming a color symbolic system of “the two poles of life and death”.

A 2023 interview with priests from both places by a research institution showed that although their languages belong to the Sino-Tibetan language family and the Austroasiatic language family respectively, the narrative structure of “the deceased returning home” and key place names (such as “the Ancient Road of Jiaozhi” and “Zhennanguan”) are exactly the same, which confirms the inheritance stability of funeral rituals as “cultural genes”. When the bronze drum sounds of the Zhuang people in Guangxi and the gong sounds of the Tày-Nùng people in Vietnam alternate at border funerals, the two cultures achieve resonance beyond language in the common emotion of “honoring the deceased and remembering the past”.

Core Carriers and Practices of Folk Beliefs in China and Vietnam

Sharing and variation of the deity system. The deity system of folk beliefs in China and Vietnam is like a “sacred hall” crossing national borders. It not only enshrines shared deities such as Guan Gong, Guanyin, and Chenghuang, but also accommodates their respective local guardian deities, forming a diversified pattern of “sharing as the main part, variation as the supplement”. As a symbol of loyalty culture, the belief in Guan Gong is regarded as the “God of Wealth” and “Protector God” in the Lingnan region of China. The couplets in Guan Gong temples in various parts of Guangxi mostly write “The palaces of the Han Dynasty come from heavenly horses, the winds and clouds of Jingchu rise from the crouching dragon”, emphasizing his historical achievements; the Guan Sheng Temple (Đền Quan Thánh) in Hanoi, Vietnam, calls Guan Gong “Guan Sheng Emperor”. His statue is accompanied by Zhou Cang and Guan Ping on both sides, and the inscription in the temple is engraved with Chinese characters “Loyalty reaches to the sky”, sharing the same deity functions as the Guan Gong side hall in the Dragon Mother Temple in Wuzhou, Guangxi—merchants pray for abundant financial resources, and people pray for peace and prosperity. According to 2023 statistics from the Vietnam Cultural Heritage Administration, there are 187 existing Guan Gong temples in Vietnam, of which 63% are in northern border provinces, confirming the positive correlation between belief dissemination and geographical distance.

The belief in Guanyin shows the functional commonality of “saving the suffering” and the characteristic difference of “localization of image” among the folk people of China and Vietnam. Most Guanyin statues in Guangxi, China, are “White-robed Guanyin”, holding a clean bottle and willow branch, symbolizing “sweet dew sprinkling all over the world”; the Guanyin Temple (Chùa Quan Âm) in Hue, Vietnam, is popular with the statue of “Child-sending Guanyin”, and the image of holding a baby is highly consistent with the belief in “Child-sending Goddess” in Wuzhou, Guangxi. It is particularly worth mentioning that Vietnamese people integrate the

belief in Guanyin with the local belief in “Princess Liễu Hạnh” (Công chúa Liễu Hạnh), forming a co-worship phenomenon of “Guanyin as the main part, Liễu Hạnh as the supplement”. In the “Double Goddess” shrine in the Ngoc Son Temple by Hoan Kiem Lake in Hanoi, Guanyin on the left holds a clean bottle, and Liễu Hạnh on the right holds rice ears, representing the dual demands of “spiritual salvation” and “material abundance” respectively. This adaptation strategy of “localization of foreign deities” has given the belief in Guanyin unique cultural vitality in Vietnam.

As a “local protector god”, the distribution of the belief in Chenghuang is highly consistent with ancient administrative divisions, forming a shared pattern of “one city, one Chenghuang” in the Sino-Vietnamese border area. The Chenghuang Temple in Pingxiang City, Guangxi, China, was built in the Ming Dynasty, enshrining “Pingxiang Chenghuang”, whose duty is to “guard the city, supervise good and evil”; the Chenghuang Temple in Đồng Đăng Town, Lang Son Province, Vietnam, is only five kilometers away from the Pingxiang Chenghuang Temple in a straight line. The “Đồng Đăng Chenghuang” it enshrines not only has the same functions, but also has exactly the same birthday (the 11th day of the fifth lunar month). Every year on Chenghuang’s birthday, people from both sides of the border participate in the “Chenghuang Parade” activity. The “eight-palanquin sedan chair” in Pingxiang and the “elephant sedan chair” (wooden carved elephant-shaped sedan chair) in Đồng Đăng meet at the border, forming a unique landscape of “one deity, two sacrifices”. A 2023 field survey showed that 78% of the Chenghuang temples in the Sino-Vietnamese border area still retain “Chinese character deity tablets”. Although the sacrificial languages are different, the core ritual of “Chenghuang parading to exorcise evil spirits” has never been interrupted.

The interactive influence of local deities has formed “two-way infiltration” in the folk belief systems of China and Vietnam. The interactive symbiosis of shared deities and local deities has kept the folk belief systems of China and Vietnam in an open and inclusive development trend. As pointed out in the *2023 Folk Belief Survey Report* by Hanoi University: “In northern Vietnam, three out of every 10 temples enshrine at least one ‘cross-border deity’. These wandering deities have become eternal messengers of spiritual exchanges between the people of the two countries”.

Technical interoperability in ritual practices. Divination, as the core technology of communicating between man and god, shows the practical characteristics of “different methods, similar principles” in the folk beliefs of China and Vietnam. The “chicken divination” popular in the Lingnan region of China (judging good or bad luck by the cracks in chicken bones) and the “bird divination” in Cao Bang Province, Vietnam (observing the flight trajectory of birds), although different in carriers, both follow the cognitive logic of “omen interpretation”—the Zhuang priests in Napo, Guangxi, judge good or bad luck by the “vertical lines indicate good luck, horizontal lines indicate bad luck” on the chicken humerus, while the “fortune-tellers” of the Tày-Nùng people in Vietnam interpret the will of the gods based on “crows flying to the left indicate good luck, flying to the right indicate bad luck”. Both regard natural phenomena as the medium of “omens from the gods”. More common is the “copper coin divination” technology. The “six-line hexagram” of Taoism in Wuzhou, Guangxi, and the “coin hexagram” (Bói tiền) in Hanoi, Vietnam, both use three copper coins, and predict good or bad luck through the standardized process of “throwing coins—recording lines—interpreting hexagrams”. Their hexagram names (such as “Qian Hexagram” and “Kun Hexagram”) and interpretation terms (“moving line” and “changing hexagram”) are exactly the same. A 2023 test of fortune-tellers in the border area showed that the coincidence rate of their judgments on the good or bad luck of the same hexagram reached 83%.

As a public space for belief practices, temple fairs have developed a composite functional structure of “sacrifice—commerce—entertainment” among the folk people of China and Vietnam. The “Guan Gong Temple Fair” in Pingxiang, Guangxi, China, is held every year on the 13th day of the fifth lunar month. The activities include three sections: “carrying the god in a parade, setting up a stage for opera performances, and commodity trading”. Among them, the “Guan Gong Sharpening the Sword” ritual (pouring clear water on the blade, implying “slaying demons and eliminating evil”) attracts tens of thousands of border people to participate; the “Chenghuang Temple Fair” (Lễ hội thành hoàng) in Đồng Đăng, Vietnam, is highly similar to this. In addition to the core ritual of “Chenghuang Parade”, it also has supporting activities such as “food street, folk games, and antiphonal singing competitions”. During the 2024 temple fair, the mutual trade volume between Chinese and Vietnamese border people reached 12 million yuan, confirming the dual value of temple fairs “making friends through gods, promoting commerce through sacrifices”. It is particularly worth mentioning that both temple fairs retain the tradition of “collective sacrifice”—the “hundred pigs sacrificed to the gods” in Guangxi and the “thousand chickens sacrificed together” in Vietnam, although different in scale, have exactly the same function of strengthening community cohesion through “sharing sacrifices”.

When the cinnabar talisman pen of a Chinese Taoist priest and the *Nôm* character incantation of a Vietnamese priest appear in the same ritual space, the two cultures achieve sacred communication beyond language through a shared “ritual grammar”. As Vietnamese folklorist Nguyen Van Tai said: “When we compare Chinese and Vietnamese folk stories, we will find that the names of ghosts and gods will change, but their teachings to human beings have never changed”.

Contemporary Value of Folk Beliefs as a Bridge of Friendship

Emotional bond for maintaining traditional friendship. The similarity of folk beliefs between China and Vietnam is like an invisible emotional bond, which continuously strengthens the cultural identity of the people of the two countries through shared ritual practices and spiritual symbols. This belief-based cultural identity is not an abstract conceptual construction, but rooted in the practical wisdom of hundreds of years of daily life. A 2023 joint survey on border culture between China and Vietnam showed that among the eight counties (cities) in Guangxi bordering Vietnam, 76% of the surveyed border people said “they feel close to the belief customs of the same ethnic group in neighboring countries”, and 68% of families “retain the habit of celebrating traditional festivals with relatives and friends in neighboring countries”. This emotional connection provides the most solid social foundation for traditional friendship.

Cross-border families, as “living media” for belief dissemination, maintain a transnational family network through intergenerational inheritance and transnational ritual practices. The 2023 *Border Family Survey Report* by the Vietnamese Academy of Social Sciences showed that cross-border families between China and Vietnam visit each other an average of 4.2 times a year due to belief activities, which is significantly higher than the frequency of visits related to non-belief economic activities (2.8 times), confirming the core role of belief in maintaining transnational family ties.

Non-official practical path for folk diplomacy. With its natural attribute of “non-politicization”, folk belief activities between China and Vietnam have become an important supplement to official diplomacy. Through flexible methods such as joint sacrifice to gods and festival visits, cultural identity is transformed into a social foundation for political mutual trust. In 2018, Dongxing, Guangxi, and Mong Cai, Vietnam, jointly held the “Cross-Border Chenghuang Co-Sacrifice” activity, creating a new model of “one deity, two sacrifices, co-

hosted across borders”—the Chinese side invited the deity statue from the Dongxing Chenghuang Temple, and the Vietnamese side welcomed the deity statue from the Mong Cai Chenghuang Temple. The “deity statue alliance” ceremony was held at the Sino-Vietnamese boundary monument. People from both sides of the border presented flower baskets together, read sacrificial texts, and finally reached the consensus of “sharing the protection of Chenghuang, jointly safeguarding border peace and stability”. After this activity, the number of cross-border dispute complaints in the two places decreased by 37% year-on-year, confirming the “lubricating effect” of belief rituals on political relations.

This “two-way” local cooperation has made folk beliefs a “ballast stone” for Sino-Vietnamese relations—when the bronze drum sounds of Guangxi and the gong sounds of Vietnam ring simultaneously on both sides of the boundary monument, and when people from both sides of the border hold incense sticks together to pray to the same deity, the power of belief is consolidating the social foundation of the China-Vietnam Community with a Shared Future in the softest way.

Conclusion

Through an interdisciplinary investigation from the perspectives of cross-cultural communication and historical geography, this study reveals that folk beliefs between China and Vietnam show significant commonalities in four dimensions: From the historical and geographical dimension, since the Qin and Han Dynasties, the tributary relationship, immigration waves, and war interactions have made the Central Plains belief system spread southward along the transportation network of the Red River—Pearl River basin, and integrate with the local culture of the Lạc Việt, forming a layered pattern of “you in me, me in you”. The belief symbiosis phenomenon of cross-border ethnic groups (Zhuang—Tày-Nùng, Gin—Kinh) is particularly prominent; from the seasonal custom dimension, core festivals such as the Spring Festival, Qingming Festival, and Dragon Boat Festival share 83% of core elements in terms of diet (mainly glutinous rice products), clothing (mainly red), and rituals (ancestor worship and pray). The worldview of “Yin-Yang and Five Elements” constitutes the deep logic of festival practices; from the wedding and funeral ritual dimension, the marriage process of “proposal—betrothal gifts—wedding” and the funeral framework of “keeping the body in the hall—funeral procession—mourning” are highly consistent; from the belief carrier dimension, the functions and sacrificial methods of shared deities such as Guan Gong and Guanyin have a similarity of more than 75%, and ritual technologies such as divination follow the same principle of “communication between man and god”. These common characteristics are not accidental coincidences, but cultural consensus formed by the people of the two countries in long-term historical interactions, confirming the geo-cultural characteristics of “connected mountains and rivers, similar cultures”. As an “emotional bond” beyond political borders, folk beliefs continuously strengthen the cultural identity of the people of China and Vietnam through practices such as cross-border sacrifices and festival visits, providing a profound social and cultural foundation for building a community with a shared future between the two countries. Its contemporary value as a “bridge of friendship” has become increasingly prominent with the deepening of border cultural exchanges.

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