

Good essay about what is the xuan festival

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Xuan Festival: Knowing the Importance of Spring in Vietnam

Introduction

Vietnam has since fostered a special occasion for its people inside and outside its borders: the Xuan (“spring” in Vietnamese) Festival. Alternatively called the Tet (“festival” in Vietnamese), the Xuan Festival marks both the start of the lunar year in Vietnam and the beginning of spring based on the Vietnamese lunisolar calendar, usually between January and February in the Gregorian calendar. As an occasion with a distinct Vietnamese identity, the Xuan Festival provides a yearly opportunity for Vietnamese people around the world to gather and engage in festivities. Given the prominence of the Xuan Festival among Vietnamese people, this study provides compelling reasons behind its significance. The strength of Vietnamese cultural and national identity greatly derives from celebrations associated with the Xuan Festival, which gives Vietnamese people the chance to strengthen their connections with one another wherever in the world they may be (Nguyen; Rough Guides).

Highly regarded among Vietnamese people as a grand observance of their culture, the Xuan Festival celebrates the entry of spring through a festive commemoration of nature, life and death alike. The agricultural background of Vietnam provides a mystical characterization of Vietnamese culture in the celebration of the Xuan Festival, which holistically incorporates several values of humanity and spirituality predominated by respect, gratitude and tidings of good fortune. Celebrations involving the Xuan Festival usually involve a plethora of food preparations aiming to unite Vietnamese families

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together, who in turn bestow offerings of gifts and plants to their departed ancestors (Kalman 24-27; Lewis 9-24).

Preparations

Vietnamese people believe that one week before the celebration of the Xuan Festival, the Kitchen God defines the fortune of every household and reports them to the Jade Emperor in heaven. With the belief of acquiring good fortune, families prepare offerings on their altars to appease the Kitchen God as it departs for heaven. In the subsequent days leading to the celebration of the Xuan Festival called the Tet Nien (“removing the old year” in Vietnamese), Vietnamese people commemorate their departed ancestors by cleaning their graves and offering flowers and fruits. It is important for the Vietnamese people to choose the freshest and most vibrant flowers and fruits in order for them to manifest their greatest respect to their departed ancestors throughout the weeklong Tet Nien (Kalman 24-27; Lewis 9-24). Vietnamese families prepare for the Xuan Festival at home during the Tet Nien through preparing decorations and cooked dishes for their guests and relatives. Plants prepared for the Xuan Festival hold many symbolic meanings, among the most significant being bamboos (to symbolize the new lunar year), peach blossoms (to remove evil spirits) and kumquats (to represent different generations in families). The Banh Chung or Banh Tet – bamboo leaf-wrapped rice cakes with bean paste and pork meat inside, is the signature dish prepared by Vietnamese families for the Xuan Festival, alongside other meaty and vegetarian dishes. Since Vietnamese people avoid decorating and cooking during the first three days of the Xuan Festival, they choose to undergo their preparations during the Tet Nien instead. Such

allows Vietnamese people to enjoy lengthy celebrations for the Xuan Festival. On the eve of the new lunar year, excitement fills the aura of Vietnamese people as they participated in prayers hosted by Buddhist temples and congratulatory exchanges among and between families amidst cheerful celebrations held in the streets (Kalman 24-27; Lewis 9-24). Weeklong celebrations follow the start of the Xuan Festival to observe the importance of removing misfortunes from the past and optimistic hopes for the future. Every Vietnamese household becomes a host for visiting guests and relatives, with their presence believed to enhance good fortune. Moreover, every Vietnamese household conducts rituals enabling them to usher the return of their departed ancestors to heaven following their believed visit during every start of the Xuan Festival (Kalman 24-27; Lewis 9-24).

Why Is The Xuan Festival Important?

The holistic nature of the Xuan Festival imparts strong significance to the lives of Vietnamese people. From paying respects to departed ancestors to engaging in family gatherings, the Xuan Festival is one that focuses on the value of kinship (Nguyen; Rough Guides). The importance of the Xuan Festival also extends beyond the family, given that the filial values it endows encourage Vietnamese people all around the world to celebrate their cultural and national identity.

Good fortune, as the Xuan Festival imparts, starts from the family household. Filial solidarity incorporates several aspects that involve relatives that are both living and dead (Lewis 9-24). Respect for departed ancestors stands out as perhaps a strong indication of the family spirit promoted during the Xuan

Festival, manifested by lavish preparations done with the belief that their spirits would accompany living relatives to good fortune in life and ensure them of heaven in death. Moreover, the Xuan Festival provides Vietnamese people with the opportunity to spend time with their departed ancestors despite the reality that they could not do so physically. Love for the family is central to the Xuan Festival and it nobly extends to include departed ancestors.

Family gatherings stand out as a notable feature of the Xuan Festival, as Vietnamese people celebrate altogether with their families the start of the new lunar year with high hopes of good fortune. Such celebrations have not remained exclusive to families living in Vietnam, given that the Vietnamese diaspora has allowed many Vietnamese people to carry their cultural and national identity with them in other nations. Therefore, one may encounter celebrations of the Xuan Festival in different parts of the world where Vietnamese people thrive, which in turn gives them the golden chance to be with their families even if they are far away from their homeland. In turn, the foregoing makes the Xuan Festival an important vestige of Vietnamese cultural and national identity (Pham 135-152), which highlights Vietnam as a nation with vibrant ways of living. The Xuan Festival therefore has the potential to represent Vietnam positively to the rest of the world, henceforth allowing the cultivation of national and cultural pride.

As a celebration of Vietnamese identity harking back to the agricultural origins of Vietnam, the Xuan Festival enables Vietnamese people to recognize their importance in society, from strong family ties at home to meaningful observances of national and cultural pride in Vietnamese

communities around the world. Moreover, the lively celebrations associated with the Xuan Festival truly provide a positive image of Vietnam to the rest of the world. The richness of festivities characterized by splendid decorations and delectable food all have meaningful connections to the Xuan Festival, thus making it an occasion all Vietnamese people ought to observe and prepare for. The Xuan Festival has a sacred place within and among Vietnamese people – it is not a mere obligation for them to commemorate as its celebrations provide them with positive hope.

Conclusion

The Xuan Festival is a celebration of filial relationships among Vietnamese people, which in turn gives them valuable opportunities to enhance the image of Vietnam as a nation with a distinctively beautiful set of customs. With the belief of gaining good fortune, Vietnamese people celebrate their connections with their departed ancestors and living relatives through lavish and praiseworthy preparations that appeal to all senses, ranging from magnificent decorations to enchantingly delicious food. Moreover, the celebrations of the Xuan Festival give Vietnamese people reasons to celebrate their gratitude for life – a virtue particularly ingrained in Vietnamese culture given the agricultural background of Vietnam. Yet, more than abundant festivities, the Xuan Festival unites Vietnamese people around the world as they seek to glorify their national and cultural identity. Despite differences in predominant cultures, Vietnamese people in foreign nations still make it a point to prepare for the Xuan Festival, as it strengthens their sense of national and cultural pride even if they are far away from their homeland. Community building among Vietnamese people

outside of Vietnam becomes stronger through celebrating the Xuan Festival – a notable fact attested by several Vietnamese communities around the world. Therefore, the importance of the Xuan Festival accounts from its positive impact on the Vietnamese family, national pride and cultural strength – a fact that retains the distinctiveness of Vietnamese identity amidst a globalizing world that is increasingly becoming more multicultural. Understanding what the Xuan Festival commemorates provides an interesting viewpoint of the Vietnamese way of life – one that is set to prevail throughout time.

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