

Ao Dai as a Symbol of Vietnamese Traditions

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Abstract

The Ao Dai is a type of traditional Vietnamese clothing that has evolved into a recognizable icon that represents the culture and history of Vietnam. This paper examines the history of the Ao Dai as well as its cultural significance, tracing its evolution from its beginnings in the 18th century to its current status as a popular fashion item and national symbol. The origins of the Ao Dai can be traced back to the 18th century. This paper argues, through an analysis of academic literature, media articles, and popular culture, that the Ao Dai embodies a complex range of cultural values and beliefs in Vietnamese society, and that it serves as a reflection of the country's history, politics, and social norms.

Keywords: Ao Dai, Clothes, Dress, History, Traditions, Vietnam.

1. Introduction

A traditional piece of clothing in Vietnam known as the Ao Dai, has been worn by Vietnamese women for hundreds of years. It is widely acknowledged that the dress is a symbol of the culture and history of the country, and it is frequently featured in works of art, literature, and film. According to Vrba (2023), the Ao Dai was initially worn by both men and women when it was first introduced in the 18th century. However, by

the beginning of the 20th century, the Ao dai had evolved into a dress that was worn by women in the majority.

2. Literature Review

The Ao Dai has been the subject of a significant number of scholarly investigations, articles in the media, and representations in popular culture. Researchers have looked into the past and cultural significance of the Ao Dai, focusing on its function as a symbol of Vietnamese identity and national pride as a result of their findings.

According to Phan (2019), the Ao Dai embodies a wide variety of cultural values and beliefs, including modesty, elegance, and femininity. The Ao Dai is a traditional Vietnamese dress.

Figure 1 Image of young girl in Ao Dai.



Source: Vrba, 2023, pp. 12.

Furthermore, the Ao Dai has not only been a traditional symbol of Vietnamese culture, but it has also been an emblem of women's empowerment and liberation. Women in Vietnam have used the Ao Dai as a tool for expressing their individuality, breaking social barriers, and representing their country on the international stage.

Many Vietnamese women choose to wear the Ao Dai on special occasions such as weddings, graduations, and other significant events as a way of showcasing their cultural heritage and national pride. Moreover, the Ao Dai has been adapted and modified to suit various occasions and needs. It has been made in a variety of colors and materials to accommodate different weather conditions and styles.

The traditional long dress has also been transformed into a shorter version, known as the "Ao Dai Mini," which has become a popular casual dress style among young Vietnamese women. Additionally, the Ao Dai has been incorporated into modern western wear, such as jackets, skirts, and pants, creating a fusion of traditional and contemporary fashion.

3. Discussion

The Ao Dai is more than just a traditional dress; rather, it is a symbol of the culture, history, and identity of the Vietnamese people. The dress embodies a variety of cultural values and beliefs, including modesty, elegance, and femininity. These are just a few of the many. In addition, the Ao Dai is a reflection of the shifting social norms and political landscape of Vietnam, and as such, it acts as a historical marker for the country as it progresses toward modernity.

4. Conclusion

The Ao Dai is an important cultural symbol in Vietnamese society. It represents a diverse set of beliefs and values that are reflective of the nation's history, politics, and social norms. Even as the dress continues to develop and adjust to the ever-changing fashion trends, it continues to be an essential component of Vietnamese identity and a source of national pride.

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