



STUDYING THE VALUE OF CHINESE POETRY OF THE TAY PEOPLE

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Abstract:

Tay ethnic minority group has a long and rich treasure of literature in Chinese and Southern characters. Besides the literature written in Southern characters, their literature in Chinese characters is also highly appreciated. Many medieval and modern writers have left behind valuable poems in terms of content as well as art. Nature love, compatriotism, family love, couple love, friendship love, teacher-student love, ethical and humane lifestyle, pride in the nation's traditional culture... are prominent contents in the Tay ethnic minority group's poetry in Chinese characters. It has developed along with the general development of the national literature and contributed to increasing the value of Vietnamese literature.

Keywords: literature, poetry, content, Chinese character, Tay ethnic

1. Introduction

The Tay ethnic group, with the second largest population (after the Kinh ethnic group), is the subject of an extremely diverse and rich culture and literature. Besides the valuable folk literature, the Tay people also have many literary works written in Chinese characters with high content and artistic value. However, these works are still little known. Collecting texts and researching to identify works belonging to the Tay ethnic group's Chinese literature (authors are Tay people) are extremely difficult tasks. Therefore, up to now we only know 110 Chinese poems of the Tay ethnic group through the work of researcher Hoang Trieu An (Chinese-Nom literature of the Tay ethnic group, National Culture Publishing House, 2008). The Tay ethnic group's Chinese poetic works are introduced, ranging from the medieval period to the modern and modern periods. Among them, love for nature, love for the homeland, love for fellow countrymen, family love, couple love, love for friends, love for teachers and students, a lifestyle that respects

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morality, humanity, self-esteem and pride in traditional national culture... are prominent contents in the Tay ethnic group's Chinese poetry.

2. Research methods

We use the following research methods: interdisciplinary approach, theoretical research method, survey method, statistics, analysis, synthesis... The interdisciplinary approach is used to synthesize knowledge from many related fields such as cultural studies, literature, ethnology and sociology. The theoretical research method is used to synthesize theoretical issues as a basis for implementing the content sections. The survey method is used to survey relevant documents. Based on the exploitation and collection of documents, survey and statistical results, we conduct analysis, synthesis and evaluation of the content to make appropriate observations, comments and assessments.

3. Results and discussion

Love for the homeland, love for the village, love for the people is a throughout content, expressed quite clearly and deeply in the works of authors from the medieval to modern times such as Le The Khanh, Hoang Ich Thang, Luong Tuan Tu, Be Huynh, Nong Dinh Cap, Hoang Duc Trieu, Hoang Duc Thac, Hoang Duc Nghi, Than Van Lu, Trieu Van Phan, Duong Nhat Thanh, Be Nhat Van... Le The Khanh traveled all the way to the capital to study in more than ten years later, the image of my hometown with my parents, friends, juniors... still weighs heavily on his thoughts. Luong Tuan Tu was so patriotic and hated the enemy that "*Phiên phúc trường canh hận quý Phan*" (I often lay awake for long hours because I was angry at the French enemy) (*Ký Nghiêm tiên sinh*- To Mr. Nghiem Xuan Phuong). Le Vinh Nam felt sad and pitiful when he saw his compatriots, who were originally gentle villagers, had now become robbers. "*Thực sự hà nhân bất huyết bào/ Ấn tính thôn danh sinh giả bệnh*" (The truth is, everyone has the same blood, the same tribe (compatriots)/ Now born to loot, hide and hide, pretend to be sick) (*Phi sao* - Robbers' lair). Be Huynh is proud of the rich country his ancestors left behind for their descendants and the community with "*Cương lĩnh uy hùng như mãnh hổ/ Thôn trang hoành tráng tựa chân long*" (Majestic hills and mountains shaped like a ferocious tiger/ The village is as resplendent as a real dragon) (*Co huong* - Homeland). Having a deep patriotism and love for the people, the author always aches with a wish: "*Phong bão tảo thanh xâm lược bôn*" (Winds and storms will wipe out the invaders). Hoang Duc Nghi describes the scenery of his hometown "*Ngõa thôn*" with great affection. The scene of the homeland appears so pure and beautiful with "*duong xuân ánh mỹ thường*" (spring sunshine radiates unusually beautiful light), "*Hoa tòng cảnh phát tự phân phương*" (flowers bloom according to the scene, fragrance), "*ghiêu Sơn vạn lí hổ long phục*" (The Nghieu Son mountain range is thousands of miles long, with dragons and tigers flanking each other), "*Ngõa ốc trùng môn loan phụng tường*" (The multi-layered red-tiled house is like a phoenix spreading its wings)... The picture of the countryside is peaceful and poetic through the pen of a deeply devoted person. In the song "*Phục lao dịch*" (Going to work as laborers), Nong

Dinh Cap again expressed his deep sympathy for the plight of the people forced to work as laborers “*Thủy nê vĩnh nhật vô hư giải/ Nhiệt thử thiêu thân bất khả thiên*” (All day mixing cement without a break/ The hot sun burns your back, you can't avoid it). Working as a laborer is hard but still has to endure hunger and cold. “*Vô xan nhữ khổ hãm thiên địa/ Thiếu phục thân hàn cảm tứ chi*” (Without food, he suffers and can only cry to heaven and earth/ Without clothes, all four feet are cold and shivering. hand) (*Mệnh vận* – Fate). Hoang Duc Thac sympathized with the farmers who had their hands dirty in the mud, worked hard to produce rice, endured many hardships but did not receive any benefits, only to “*Dưỡng phi Nhật khấu thực dân Phiên*” (Reaping only fed the Japanese enemy and the French colonialists) (*Trĩ hoạch mạch điền* - Harvesting the field). Loving the country, loving the people, hating the enemy “*Triển chuyển trường canh tư Tổ quốc/ Phúc phiên vĩnh dạ hận lang sài*” (Long sleepless nights thinking about our country at this time/ Sleepless nights angry at the army and wolves) (*Dạ thuy bất trước* - Not sleeping well at night”), so even in the most tragic circumstances, Than Van Lu remained steadfast in his determination to fight the invaders. Each person has their own way of expressing themselves, but through the Chinese poetry of Tay ethnic authors, we can easily feel the pride in our homeland, the compassion and sympathy for the working people, the deep hatred for the enemy and the will to fight against the enemy.

Family love, couple love, friendship love, teacher-student love are also contents that attract the attention of Tay poets. While away from home, Hoang Thanh Chau couldn't sleep because he thought about his parents and grandparents and worried about their health. Thinking of his parents' great contributions, the author only hopes to “*Hoàn thủ Lai y bái vũ tiên*” (When he returns, he will wear Lao Lai's clothes and dance in front of his parents to make them happy) (*Khách địa thu cảm* - Enjoy the autumn scene far from home). Here the author uses a classic story (According to *Hiếu tử truyện*, Lao Lai was from the country of Chu during the Spring and Autumn period. Even though he was 70 years old, he still wore a five-colored shirt and danced to entertain his parents) to express his filial piety towards his parents. Not only the feelings of children and grandchildren towards their grandparents and parents, we can also feel the love and affection of the husband towards his wife through songs such as *Tư ái thê* - Missing Wife, *Sơn đò* - Mountain Road (Hoang Thanh Chau), *Tư gia* (Than Van Lu), ... The husband's instructions when captured by the enemy conveyed all his love and trust for his wife “*Thủ ngọc duy kim đương thận trọng/ Giáo nam huấn nữ thị kiên trì/ Công cô định tính chu toàn đạo/ Gia thất quan hoài quán xuyên nghi*” (You should keep yourself carefully/ Remember to teach our sons and daughters to persevere/ Take care of our grandparents to the fullest filial piety/ Taking care of the family properly) (*Tư gia* - Homesickness - Than Van Lu). Big family events such as getting married, choosing a son-in-law, etc. have been recorded in poetry with special respect. Hoang Ich Ngo happily described the scene of the girl returning to her husband's house, “*Đã trách nguyệt tiên ông tửu yển/ Lai lai khứ khứ bất phu quỳnh*” (Thanks to the old rickshaw moon, the couple had a cup of wine today/ Guests were excited. The rhythm of the wine cup is difficult to fill) (*Vu quy* - Girl going to her husband's house). With the concept that the relationship between husband and wife is not by chance, but because the fate of heaven arranged for a husband and wife to come

together, Hoang Ich Vieng expressed his extreme joy like "*Dũng khởi phong ba thượng cửu thiên*" (So happy like a wave floating up to the nine heavens) when "*Thừa long sinh tử xuân tiêu tức*" (Hearing the news of this spring welcoming the son-in-law) (*Xuân tiêu tức* - Spring news). Le Vinh Nhan not only congratulated the girl on returning to her husband's house to have a harmonious and peaceful family life, but also conveyed a very simple and sincere wish "*Trập trập chung tư cánh điệt qua*" (Giving birth is as smooth as a cricket, and like a squash vine, the longer it grows, the more branches it has) (*Hỷ nữ thi* - A Girl's Joy). Many Tay ethnic group's Chinese poetry authors are Confucian scholars, so they have poems that express their feelings for their students or want to send their confidence and messages to their students through poems. Be Huynh was a smart man, learned a lot, and had many students come to study. In "*Hạ sự sinh thi*" (Poetry to celebrate teachers and students), he could not hide his joy and pride in his students: "*Sư sĩ đồng đăng cư thọ vực/ Nho lâm chấn khởi bách niên đư*" (Up to now, teachers and students have all ascended to the throne of Tho. This group of Confucian scholars has been famous for hundreds of years). Ha Van Do, when writing a poem for his students "*Mãn khóa*" (The end of the course), did not forget to send a message of encouragement: "*Thiên quang luyện vũ tăng công dụng/ Nguyệt lãng ma đao phá bất bình/ Nam tử hán thì tu tráng chí*" (During the bright day, we need to practice martial arts that will be used one day / Under the bright moonlight we sharpen our swords and spears to destroy grievances / Talented men in their prime need to have a strong will). Those heartfelt instructions show the heart of a teacher, "*Tình trọng vị dân đa khổ sở*" (My love is heavy because my people are still hungry and suffering). Friendship in Tay ethnic Chinese poetry is mainly between like-minded friends with the same ideals for the people and the country. Hoang Duc Thac, when "*Tống hữu xuất dương*" (Farewell) encouraged his friend to try to overcome difficulties for a bright future "*Tạm biệt quang âm tinh nguyệt lượng/ Khải hoàn hữu nhật hội nghệ thường/ Đoàn viên tất đạt tương lai ngộ/ Hiễn hách tiêu cao nghĩa báii dương*" (We parted ways on a moonlit night/ There will come a day when we will meet each other with triumphant songs and dance and sing/ We will surely meet in the future when we meet in victory/ We will uphold the glory of honor and glory.) Friendship is associated with comradeship, friends sharing the same noble ideal goal, fighting and sacrificing for the people and the country. That's why the friendship in those poems is so simple but also so noble. Thus, besides love for the homeland, Tay ethnic Chinese poetry also writes a lot about the love of family, couples, teachers and students, and friends. These feelings are always present in each person, and are the source of creative inspiration for each poet.

According to the generalization of researcher Hoang Trieu An, "*Authors of Chinese literature of the Tay ethnic group in the medieval period can be divided into 3 groups: connoisseurs, mandarins, and educated commoners*" [1; 337]. They are all people who came from the Confucian school and are imbued with Confucian ethics. It is not difficult to find in their Chinese poetry sayings about morality and humanity. As a person of Confucian descent, having passed a bachelor's degree, Nong Quynh Van always thought "*Nhân dĩ đức long tích tụ văn*" (I have heard that people must worry about accumulating virtue and cultivating themselves), "*Thân thủ tiên tu quân tử đạo*" (The first thing to keep is the gentleman's way). If he can properly follow the principles of saints and sages, he will

always believe that "*Hoàng thiên bất phụ hảo tâm nhân*" (Heaven does not betray good-hearted people) (*Quân tử đạo* - The Way of the Gentleman). Discussing the way of a gentleman, Hoang Ich Uyen emphasized the aspect of respecting good people and staying away from flatterers: "*Thân hiền dĩ nhậm quần phương chúng/ Viễn nịnh nhi sơ tứ hải ninh*" (Be close to good people, then the people of all places will gather. If you stay away from flatterers, all places will be peaceful and happy. (*Quân tử đạo* - The Way of the Gentleman). Be Van Phung also spoke clearly about the personality of Confucian scholars: "*Bần nho tích nhật nguyên vô siểm*" (Even though Confucian scholars are poor in the past days, they do not flatter), "*Thân thị hiền nhân khang thứ sự*" (But we should be close to good people to keep everything in peace) (*Tâm tư* - Thoughts). Be Huu Cung is also a well-educated person, having passed the exam and became a mandarin. He always reminded himself, "*Quan đồng tam tải khắc tư trù/ Nhân đức tông tư ích dĩ tu*" (Being a mandarin for three generations following in the footsteps of the ancients/ Virtue from now on requires cultivating oneself and correcting oneself even more). Virtue according to him is "*Ngộ nghĩa xử nhân cần tư trị/ Đôn minh hình điển chính ưu phu/ Tha như quan quả thùy lân tất/ Bỉ nhược kiêm lê huệ thùy chu*" (Meeting meaningful people, how to behave, treat them properly to show love/ A kind heart and pure appearance need to be expressed clearly and thoughtfully/ When you meet a widow, you must have compassion/ When you see the poor, help thoughtfully) (*Nhân đức*). Having studied classical writing and having worked as a teacher, Duong Nhat Thanh always kept in mind the sage's teachings: "*Tôn hiền kính sĩ nhất tai tâm/ Tu tri thị thùy nhân vi yếu/ Cổ thức đương thời nghĩa tác châm*" (Worship the wise, respect the wise, remember wholeheartedly/ First of all, you should know that the word Humanity is important and necessary/ Now understand that you must use Nghĩa as a guideline) (*Nhất tâm thi* – A poem that engraves the heart). For ancient Confucian scholars, maintaining morality in any situation is always something that is engraved in their hearts. The emphasis on integrity, personality, and kindness has helped them become teachers and officials who are always loved and respected by the people.

In the work "Dictionary of traditional cultures of the Thai - Tay - Nung ethnic groups", researchers affirmed that for the Tay people, "*The community always requires high self-awareness in complying with long-standing customs and traditions that have become customary laws*". To have a suitable lifestyle, people also pass on beautiful words to each other about the customs that need to be followed..." [3; 32]. In Chinese poetry, we clearly see that Tay poets are very interested and proud of their people's traditional culture. They passionately write about customs such as building a new house, celebrating entering a new house, marrying their daughter to a husband, the girl going to her husband's house, choosing a groom, getting married, rites of passage, coming of age, celebrating longevity, writing at the beginning of spring, celebrating the new year... Nong Nguyen Thuan clearly stated about marriage according to ancient rituals "*Tông lai tỵ cổ dĩ tinh kỳ/ Giá thú lê dân chế lễ nghi*" (For a long time now (Since ancient times) the time for marriage has been set. The people have clearly set out rituals for wedlock (*Wedlock* - The act of marrying and giving in marriage). Celebrating longevity is also a beautiful custom that is highly emphasized. Being able to celebrate the longevity of grandparents and parents is a joy

and honor for children and grandchildren, so this event is often thoughtfully organized by families: “*Mĩ quân giai ngẫu phúc tề niên/ Trì nhật xuân phong hiến thọ diên*” (Congratulations to a beautiful couple with the same longevity / On a leisurely day, according to the spring tradition, a party is held to celebrate longevity) (*Thọ thi* - Poetry to celebrate longevity - Ha Vu Bang). Ha Vu Bang described the celebration of life very vividly with “*Loan điện ngưỡng khan song phụng cáo/ Chu lâu tịnh tọa lưỡng thần tiên*” (Looking up on the palace hall, I saw a pair of golden plaques / In the jade palace they sat still. Those are two fairies). The celebration of life was still jubilant and joyful with the young men and women invited by the family to join in the fun with songs, flute sounds, and dances “*Hồng Nha mạn phụng đồng sinh khúc/ Thanh Điểu phân hàm ngũ sắc tiên*” (Top Hong Nha together leisurely and leisurely blew and sang. Thanh Dieu and Thanh Dieu group joked and excitedly dressed in five colors. Children and grandchildren all hope that their grandparents will live to the age of “*Hoàn kỳ thượng uyển trước tiên tiên*” (When it is time to go to the royal garden, there will be someone holding a fairy whip to serve). According to the folk beliefs of the Tay people, a person who is 100 years old is like going to a palace where someone with a fairy whip is waiting. Thus, the poem is like a wish for grandparents to live a hundred years to have the opportunity to celebrate their longevity. Also writing about the celebration of longevity, Le Vinh Nam tells us more about things like giving gifts “*Hà bôi hiến thọ đông tây tiến/ Thái phúc thừa nhan tả hữu ngư*” (Jade bowl to celebrate longevity made by people of the East and West) offerings/Flower shirts to brighten the face given by relatives left and right) (*Đồng thọ* - Together with old age). The celebration of longevity is considered an important family event, so there are also many guests coming “*Hạ khách tam thiên vị túy cư*” (More than three thousand guests were sitting and drinking). The number three thousand here is an estimate to talk about plurality and crowding. Through poems celebrating longevity, weddings, new years... readers not only gain more knowledge about customs but also feel the dream of personal happiness, family happiness, and feelings for neighbors of the Tay people.

4. Conclusion

Researcher Phan Dang Nhat commented: “*The literature of our country’s ethnic groups is very rich and diverse. It closely links together to develop harmoniously, creating a unified but diverse multi-ethnic literature*” [2;4]. It can be said that, although the number of 110 Chinese poems collected and translated by Hoang Trieu An is not many, it still helps us see some of the appearance and value of this body of literature. From then on, along with folk literature, literature written in Chinese and Nom characters has contributed to the richness, diversity, and color of Vietnamese literature.

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Conflict of Interest Statement

The authors declare no conflicts of interest.

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