

## The Legend of Region Nearby “Cau River” and the Relationship with Local Festivals in Thai Nguyen – Vietnam

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### ABSTRACT

Legends and folk festivals are unique traditional cultural products of the Vietnamese nation, accompanying people's lives through many ups and downs of history. The series of legends and folk festivals along the Cau River in Thai Nguyen city are products of both cultural and historical significance, as well as unique literary and folk art values. The purpose of the study is to identify the legends and folk festivals along the Cau River, on that basis, to examine the dialectical relationship between them, to contribute to understanding, restoring and preserving the values of the people. spiritual culture in this historical land imbued with ancient imprints.

Methodologically, the article defines: studying the relationship between legends and folk festivals is an interdisciplinary study. The article also uses some specific methods such as; systematic approach, statistics, analysis, comparison, ... to obtain research results that are both general, qualitative, and have specific and quantitative values.

Through research, we found that the series of legends along the Cau River are closely linked with temples and communal houses and their appearance and values are hidden in rituals, items as well as names of important occasions in the year. of the festival. On the contrary, thanks to the festival, the legend here seems not only not to be forgotten, but also manifests truthfully and vividly on the occasion of the ceremony and remains quite deeply in the people's mind.

### Keyword

Relationships, Legends, Folk Festivals, Cau River, Thai Nguyen.

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### Introduction

Thai Nguyen is a province in the Northern Midlands and Mountains of Vietnam. This is a land that is both diverse in natural landscapes and rich in historical and cultural traditions. Cau River flowing through Thai Nguyen city is both poetic, lyrical, fierce and powerful, has witnessed many ups and downs of history and is closely linked with people's lives. The population in the Thai Nguyen cultural sub-region is diverse, with many ethnic groups, but always united and attached throughout history... The above factors have contributed to creating unique cultural values here. There is a rich and unique system of legends and folk festivals along the Cau River.

Over time, some works have studied literature and folklore (including legends and festivals). Some typical studies can be listed.

In 1986, the project People and legends of Bac Thai gathered stories about characters, events, and legends of places...[4]. In 2008, the book Thai Nguyen Literature briefly explored Thai Nguyen folklore, including some folk legends. [5] The

Thai Nguyen Geography (2009) listed the names and basic content of some legends in Thai Nguyen. [9] Recently, the book Hang Pagoda (Kim Son Tu) - Thai Nguyen has learned about the history of Hang Pagoda and the legends surrounding the birth of this strange temple. [7] In addition, a number of theses and topics have also studied the content, art of legends and folk festivals in Thai Nguyen.

However, the above studies are mostly concerned with legends and festivals on a large scale, have not delved into the chain of legends along the Cau River in Thai Nguyen city area and especially have not questioned whether systematically consider folk festivals associated with a series of legends in specific cultural areas.

The purpose of the article is to identify the legends and folk festivals along the Cau River, Thai Nguyen city, on that basis to examine the dialectical relationship between them, to contribute to understanding, restoring, preserve the cultural and spiritual values in this historical land imbued with ancient imprints. The method of conducting research is to go on a field trip to

collect and collect legends' texts in both complete and "raw" forms; records of festivals; contact with some artisans and custodians of temples, communal houses, pagodas... in order to find additional information about legends and festivals. The research team has collected and gathered 20 stories, including 15 relatively complete legends (not counting variations) [8], [9], [6], [1],[2] ,[3] and 6 folk festivals in 6 temples and communal houses along Cau river in Thai Nguyen city. The above documents are the basis for us to develop the research problem.

Last but not least, Huy, D.T.N, Huyen, D.T., Thuy, N.T., & Hang, N.T (2021) also stated that we can combine folk festivals into cultural tourism, for example, Ha Giang and Thai Nguyen are located in the Northern region of Vietnam, where have lots of potential historical and architecture sites for exploring and discover to boost community and cultural tourism [10]. Also, Vu Quynh Nam, Dinh Tran Ngoc Huy, Nguyen Quang Hop (2021) also mentioned covid 19 pandemic has affected tourism and cultural tourism in Vietnam and proposed solutions [12]. Whereas Huy, D.T.N (2015) proposed good management standards that can be applied for local tourism and festivals management[11].

We organized our paper with introduction, methodology, main results, discussion and conclusion.

### Methodology

In terms of methodology, the article identifies the study of the relationship between legends and folk festivals as an interdisciplinary study. Therefore, using a combination of methods of related sciences such as history, culture... is necessary to identify and solve research problems.

On a specific level, the article uses a combination of methods: systematic approach, statistics, analysis, comparison... to have research results that are both general, qualitative and valuable and specific, quantitative.

### Main Results and Discussion

It can be said that Thai Nguyen folklore in general, legends and Thai Nguyen folk festivals in particular are quite dense. In addition to the

legends and festivals of great size and scale, there are many stories and memories of festivals in each region in folklore. Legends and folk festivals along the Cau River are one of those typical cultural slices.

### Legend of Cau Riverside in Relation to the Festival Honoring Heroes in History

#### 1. Legend of Chau Bay Kim Giao and Duong Tu Minh with Mo Bach Temple festival

According to legend, Mrs. Chau Bay Kim Giao was born into a Moi family in Thanh Lien, Mo Bach, Thai Nguyen. She is the one who teaches people how to do farming (there is a version that says she is the one who teaches people to grow Tuyet tea). She helped the people fight foreign invaders on Thai Nguyen land (female general under Hai Ba Trung). After returning to heaven, she was given the right to govern the mountains and forests of Mo Bach, Thai Nguyen. Mo Bach Temple was built to worship her from that time. Legend has it that in the quiet of the night, Chau Bay appeared to walk, with fairies, stuck in a hammock in the middle of the mountains of Kim Giao, Mo Bach, Thai Nguyen. [8]

According to legend, Mo Bach temple also worships the famous general Duong Tu Minh who had the merit of defeating foreign invaders to help the Ly court keep the northern border of the country. [6]

Mo Bach Temple organizes festivals on 17 occasions a year (according to the lunar calendar): Starting on January 10 (the Spring Opening Ceremony) and ending on December 15 (New Year Celebration). In addition, during the year, there are 15 occasions to celebrate the Mother's Day, the Great Quan's Week, the Father's Day, etc. However, the two main holidays not to be missed here are the Spring Opening Ceremony on January 10 and the Buddha's Birthday on January 15. 4 lunar calendar.

In the past, the festival often had rituals of incense offering, palanquin procession, lion dance, etc., but in recent years, feasts are held mainly in the form of ceremony, burning incense to give thanks. At present, there are no processions or ceremonies, but instead incense offerings, remembrances, and gratitude to the ancestors. The

big ceremony about General Duong Tu Minh is also not usually held here, but is held at Duom temple, in Phu Luong district.

## **2. Legend of Duong Tu Minh and Princess Thieu Dung with Tuc Duyen Temple Festival**

According to legend, since becoming the wife of leader Duong Tu Minh, Princess Thieu Dung set up a farm in present-day Gia Sang ward. She has contributed to helping people here grow mulberries, raise silkworms, nurse silk, weave cloth and develop agriculture. When she died, in May 1155, she was canonized as a Holy Mother and built a temple. That is Tuc Duyen temple today. [8] Tuc Duyen Temple is located in Gia Sang ward, Thai Nguyen city. The temple dates back to ancient times, when the Le Dynasty had an ordination.

The main festival of the temple is on the 18th day of the 8th lunar month every year: that festival is called Holy Mother Festival. But the present festival is mainly the traditional incense offering ceremony. People from all over the world flock to worship and pay their respects,

Legend also has it that, beside the temple worshipping Princess Thieu Dung, there is also a communal house worshipping Cao Son Quy Minh. Later, cultural and historical documents confirmed that Tuc Duyen temple worshiped Princess Thieu Dung, and Tuc Duyen communal house worshiped general Duong Tu Minh. [8] There is one more thing that should be noted about the state of "assimilating" the gods of the same name as in the case of the god Cao Son Quy Minh. According to folk legend, Cao Son and Quy Minh are two gods who fought foreign invaders from the time of Hung Vuong. There is another legend that Cao Son Quy Minh was the son of Duong Tu Minh - a talented general in the Ly Dynasty that many temples and communal houses in Thai Nguyen and neighboring provinces worshiped or worshiped. And when the festival is held, the life, career ... of the gods will be taken as the standard to reproduce the rituals of the festival. The phenomenon of different narratives creating variations of legends is one of the characteristics and aesthetic nature of folk works. And the "assimilation" of worshipping in temples and shrines... like in Tuc Duyen temple is not an

isolated phenomenon, it makes the cultural layers in folk festivals become thicker and richer meet the spiritual needs of people from generation to generation.

According to the story of Mr. Bui Van Khang (80 years old, who has lived next to the temple since 1950, now also directly takes care of and governs this place) recounts that in the old days, the temple often held a large festival, with a procession around. local and solemn ceremony. He also said that Tuc Duyen Temple and Cactus Temple are closely related and are called "Temple of Sister - Temple of Em". [8] However, there are currently no documents confirming this information. According to Mr. Khang, in the past, there was usually a palanquin procession to the area of Cactus or Xuong Rong temple and then back to Tuc Duyen temple, but now there is no such procession anymore. Certainly, the story "Temple of Sister", "Temple of Em" has a reason for it, but over time, that interesting detail has not been recorded and realized in the festival.

## **3. Legend of Ba Chua Ban Tinh and Hung Dao Vuong Tran Quoc Tuan with the Temple Flag Festival**

According to historical traces, from the 16th century, after the loss of Thang Long citadel, remnants of the Mac dynasty fled to the northern provinces to gather and train troops against the Le - Trinh feudal group. At this time, a female general of the Mac dynasty planted a flag and set up a barracks here to train troops. When her army withdrew, the people here built a small temple to worship this female general. According to folklore, there are many thrilling stories revolving around the character of Lady Chua Ban Tinh and the temple has since been named Temple of the Flag. [3]

Every year, the Temple Flag Festival is still solemnly held. The ceremony included incense offering to express deep gratitude to the ancestors. Some rituals are maintained, such as: Making offerings to Buddha Dai Khoa; worship Thanh Khao Son Trang; offering incense sacrifices; The festival features lion dance, art and performance of the people in the area. According to folk legend, at Cot Co temple, people worship Ba Chua Ban Tinh and Hung Dao Dai Vuong Tran

Quoc Tuan. The temple also worships Mother Tam Phu according to folk beliefs and conceptions. Thus, Cot Co temple also has the phenomenon of worshipping, that is, the temple not only worships historical heroes but also worships gods who are considered as Mother of all peoples: Mother Thien (Mother of Heaven), Mother Earth (Mother of all peoples): Earth), Mother Comfort (Mother of Water)...

The system of rituals and festivals in Mother Goddess worship is very rich and diverse, with many unique nuances, the most typical is the Hau Dong ritual and the system of festivals for the death anniversary of Father and Mother. The Co Temple in Thai Nguyen belongs to the belief system of Mother Goddess worship, so the Hau Dong ritual and the system of parents' anniversaries are very important. The offerings offered in the homage sessions depend on the conditions of the copper temples, but it is important that the color of the offerings match the copper prices.

Cot Co Temple is located in Trung Vuong ward, Thai Nguyen city. Temple of Mother Tam Phu, Four Palaces, Lady Chua Ban Tinh and Hung Dao Vuong Tran Quoc Tuan The temple organizes many cultural and spiritual festivals rich in identity, attracting a large number of people and tourists from all over the world to attend such as the Spring Opening Ceremony on January 6, the death anniversary of the Holy Father on August 20., Ba Chua Ban Provincial Party on the 24th of the 8th lunar month every year...

### **Legend of the Cau Riverside with the Festival Attributing the Gods to Protect and Protect the People**

#### **1. Legend of Ben Than Temple with Mother Comfort Festival**

Legend has it that: Since ancient times, when the Cau River was first formed, it was a fierce river, with rushing waters, often rising water, sweeping away people, houses, livestock, poultry, and submerged them. farms. Many people have gone missing or died from rafting in this area. Until one day, someone near the curvature of the river half-awake, half-dreamed of a girl dressed in white, with a beautiful and kind face, and said, "Build a

temple for me, everything will be fine." That story spread and everyone contributed, contributed, and established a temple to worship Mother Mother (Mother of Water) in that place. According to folklore, a while later, the Cau River only rose water in the summer and was calm in the winter. There was no flood or inundation like before.[8]

The Mau Thoai temple festival is held on many occasions throughout the year similar to some other temples. The 9th of January is the opening day of the Mother Temple and the 9th of December is the Year-End Ceremony. There are 14 more occasions when people organize parties such as: Mother's Party, Quan Tuan's Party, King Father's Party, and Observation's Party...

However, like many temples in the area, the festival at the present temple is not held on a large scale, but mainly focuses on offering incense according to traditional rituals. Located in the center of Thai Nguyen city, Ben Than Temple is a cultural address that people care about, express gratitude and spiritual beliefs.

#### **2. Legend of Kim Son Temple (Goc Sau) with Kim Son Temple Festival**

According to legends and recorded historical events, Kim Son Temple was built to worship Lord Ba Chua De Nhi from Dong Hy district, Bac Thai province (now Thai Nguyen province). She had great merit in calling the people of Dong Hy and Thai Nguyen to fight the Black Flag invaders from the North to invade our country. In a fierce battle with the enemy along the Cau River, she died heroically. In memory of the heroine who has made great contributions to the country, the people have built her temple with the name: Lord Ba Chua II and smoke incense to this day. [2] The gate of Kim Son temple has an ancient crocodile tree, so people often call it Goc Sau Temple. The temple was built in the late 19th century, on the banks of the Cau River, in Thai Nguyen city.

Kim Son Temple today not only worships God Ba Chua II, but also worships Mother Bach Thien, Mother Cuu Trung Thien, Mr. Hoang Bo, Mr. Hoang Bay, Saint Tran Hung Dao, Chu Dong Tu, and Mother Lieu Hanh. The harem worships the thousand-eyed, thousand-armed Guanyin Buddha, the Holy Mother Goddess, Nam Tao, Bac Dau, and the Five Tigers.



The temple often organizes festivals on the following occasions: Spring Opening, Ha Dien (Down in the field), Thuong Dien (Going to the field), New Rice New Year, Great Banquet, New Year's Eve. Unlike some other cultural sites, the festivals at Kim Son Temple are related to the agricultural season, although according to legend, the temple mainly worships the Mother and many other Saints. Is the difference from the above legend to the concept and way of organizing festivals in each temple.

On holidays, people in the region and visitors from all over the world often come to offer incense to commemorate the gods, pray for favorable weather, prosperous business, peaceful life, happy family. The boys and girls sing the love songs, organize games such as shuttlecock, cock fighting, tug of war...

### **3. Legend of the Cactus Temple with the Cactus Temple Festival**

An old legend tells of a poor, barren couple who made a living by making herbal medicine. Thanks to one time going to the forest to pick medicine and meet the fairy who gave him a treasure, the wife was 12 months pregnant and gave birth to a beautiful daughter. The 9-year-old girl, smart and talented, went with her parents to the mountains to collect medicine and cure many strange diseases. But her parents suddenly passed away, the little girl had to live alone. Smart, smart, good at medicine, she is respected by the people in the area as the Goddess of Medicine. In a stormy night, the house she was staying with disappeared, leaving only a strange tree growing on the old ground. On the tree is recorded a will that says: "I am the Son of the Holy Mother Thuong Ngan reincarnated to help heal the people, now I give the people this precious medicinal plant".[8]

According to folklore, the soldiers commanded by General Duong Tu Minh suffered from a strange disease that all medical gods could not treat. In a dream, Duong Tu Minh saw someone telling him that when he picked a precious medicinal plant and cooked it into water for the soldiers to drink, the disease would dissipate. Sure enough, after taking herbal medicine, the soldier recovered from his illness. After defeating the enemy, he returned to him to set up a sacrifice altar. From then on, the

place to worship her was called Xuong Long Linh Tu. [8]

Xuong Rong Temple is located in Phan Dinh Phung ward, Thai Nguyen city. The temple is the main place of worship of the Cactus Girl. Therefore, the temple is also known as the Cactus Girl Temple. Cactus Temple is also a place to worship Duong Tu Minh, a talented and virtuous general in the Ly Dynasty. The temple also worships Saint Mother Lieu Hanh and Hung Dao Dai Vuong Tran Quoc Tuan.

Cactus Temple is one of the famous sacred temples in the area along Cau River, Thai Nguyen city. This is the place where many people in the region and tourists from all over the world come to celebrate and attend festivals. There are 13 festivals in the year at Cactus Temple. But there are 2 notable days: June 12: The Little Girl Party of the Temple and August 20: The Festival of Saint Tran.

In the past, the temple held a solemn procession festival around the area, but in recent years the procession of Communion has ceased. This is the temple where, according to folk tales, there is a detailed procession of a palanquin from Tuc Duyen Temple (worshiping Princess Thieu Dung) around the Cactus Temple, and then back to Tuc Duyen Temple... The two temples mentioned above are considered "Temple of the Temple of Heaven". sister, Temple of me". This detail (now in danger of being lost) partly shows the close and dialectical relationship between legends and festivals, folk works and people's living environment.

### **Conclusion**

- Thai Nguyen is the land of "Phen Dau" in the North of Vietnam, is a cultural sub-region, located in the Viet Bac cultural region. Therefore, this place is not only rich in historical traditions, but also diverse in cultural identity. Thai Nguyen people are gentle, kind, loyal but also very brave and resilient. That is the first and important basis contributing to the creation of a rich and unique treasure of legends and folk festivals, including a series of legends and festivals along the Cau River.

The legend along the Cau River is a product of both historical and cultural significance and unique folk art value. The series of legends honoring national heroes are handed down and preserved by the people, besides stories about natural gods, and many other guardian deities who have expressed the people's sacred feelings and beliefs. people here.

- The folk festivals, whether large or small, are held in temples, communal houses, pagodas, shrines... are vivid proofs of patriotism, gratitude, compatriots... Even though it may be for different reasons that festivals are not regularly held in all temples, communal houses, pagodas and shrines; whether it is organized simply or loudly... it is still a good sign because we still have them. The problem is how to make legends and festivals both retain their old values and supplement this element to suit contemporary life.
- The relationship between legends and folk festivals is explained and justified by what is studied in legends and experienced through festivals. Legend is the basis for arising and organizing festivals; The festival is the place to preserve and promote the value and vividly show the appearance and meaning of the legend. Hypothesis: if there are no ancient stories, whether complete or in the "raw" form of the people, how can we launch a folk festival during the "spring and autumn two periods" and Can organize many festivals on other occasions in temples, pagodas, communal houses, shrines?

And vice versa, if there were no folk festivals, would we be able to preserve the attachment of national pride, community solidarity, admiration and gratitude for the ancients as told in the tradition? theory?

From ancient times to the present, the land along the poetic Cau River flowing for many generations through the territory of Thai Nguyen city has preserved many valuable things for us, in which the close relationship between legend and ceremony has been preserved. Folk associations are the basis to help preserve and preserve this typical, vivid and rich cultural and spiritual treasure.

### Limitation of Research

We can expand our research for other provinces and areas of Vietnam.

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