



THE PLACE FAIRY TALES OF TAY PEOPLE IN TUYEN QUANG IN THE CONTEXT OF ETHNIC CULTURE

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<https://doi.org/10.51453/2354-1431/2023/1099>

Article info

Received: 16/8/2023

Revised: 17/11/2023

Accepted: 25/12/2023

Keywords

Fairy tales, place, ethnic

Tay, culture

Abstract

The place fairy tales of the Tay people in Tuyen Quang are stories that are directly related to the lives of the people here. Through surveying and analyzing this genre of stories, we find it has many profound values. First of all, it reflects the human aspirations of the compatriots. The symbols used a lot such as water, mountains, and mountain passes reflect living space and contribute to creating its own cultural identity.



TRUYỆN CỔ TÍCH ĐỊA DANH CỦA NGƯỜI TÀY Ở TUYỀN QUANG DƯỚI GÓC NHÌN VĂN HÓA TỘC NGƯỜI

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Thông tin bài viết

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Từ khóa

Truyện cổ tích, địa danh, dân tộc
Tày, văn hóa

Tóm tắt

Truyện cổ tích địa danh của người Tày ở Tuyên Quang là những câu chuyện gắn bó trực tiếp với đời sống đồng bào nơi đây. Thông qua khảo sát, phân tích thể loại truyện này, chúng tôi thấy nó mang nhiều giá trị sâu sắc. Trước hết, nó phản ánh những khát vọng nhân sinh của đồng bào. Những biểu tượng được sử dụng nhiều như nước, núi, đèo không chỉ phản ánh không gian sống mà còn góp phần tạo nên bản sắc văn hóa riêng.

1. Introduction

As a lexical unit, proper nouns do not appear randomly in literary works. Because each noun contains layers of culture, history, language, human concepts and characteristics of the land and place. It entered folk tales as people's creations passed down from generation to generation. The meaning of place names in folk tales in general and fairy tales in particular is not only a sign of a land, a village or a river or stream, but also the reason for its birth. Those are experiences attached to the cultural and linguistic community that has coexisted with it. Place fairy tales therefore need to be studied from an interdisciplinary perspective to decipher the layers hidden behind each story, thereby gaining new insights into history, culture, traditions and characteristics. The characteristics of the land as well as the people have produced stories.

The Tay people are one of the ethnic minorities with the largest population in Vietnam in general and Tuyen

Quang province in particular. The role of Tay culture in the colorful cultural picture of the Vietnamese people is probably no longer controversial. However, each element in that culture shines from a different angle, making its own contributions to the formation and development of the ethnic group. The fairy tales of places of the Tay people in Tuyen Quang are stories directly related to the lives of the people living here. It is a place containing many precious ethnic cultural values that need to be discovered.

2. Research methods

- Linguistic analysis method: This is a frequently conducted method and is also the main method used to analyze the characteristics of folk works in general and fairy tales of places of the Tay people. in particular.

- Comparison and contrast method: Researching folk literature requires comparing literary materials in a broad context. From there, the researcher gets closer

to complete perceptions. Therefore, during the research process we always try to compare from many levels to get a reliable conclusion.

- Interdisciplinary research method: This is a method used throughout to ensure that the processing of data on fairy tales and place names is considered in the overall nature of the problem. The main arguments are built on the basis of close links with results drawn from other sciences such as linguistics, history, geography and ethnology.

3. Research history

Place names is a branch of Linguistics, specializing in studying the meaning, origin, structure, naming methods and changes of place names. It is related to many other scientific disciplines such as Geography, History, Ethnology, Archeology, Cultural Studies... In our country, Geographic Names is a young research field but is increasingly gaining popularity. of social concern, the need to learn about place names is increasing, and it is increasingly meaningful in serving socio-economic development such as naming administrative units, naming roads, naming bridges, map making, traditional education, tourism...

There are only a few compiled books about foreign place names that have been compiled/translated in Vietnam such as: Foreign place names (Nguyen Van Khang, Nguyen Trung Thuan, Culture-Information Publishing House, 1995), Encyclopedia in the name of English-Vietnamese place names (translated by Bui Phung, Culture-Information Publishing House, 2000), World Dictionary of Proper Names (Paul Robert, Editor-in-Chief Nguyen Trong Dinh, Culture-Information Publishing House, 2000, 1,734 pages) , Handbook for looking up foreign place names (editor Tran Nam Tien, Education Publishing House, 2007).

In addition, theoretical books about place names are published in Vietnam such as: Vietnamese place names (Nguyen Van Au, Education Publishing House, 1993), Brief reference to the origin of Southern place names (Bui Duc Tinh, Ho Chi Minh City Arts Publishing House, 1999), Some issues about Vietnamese place names (Nguyen Van Au, Hanoi National University Publishing House, 2000), Understanding the origin of Southern place names and the language Vietnamese literature (Le Trung Hoa, Social Sciences Publishing House, 2002, 2005; Youth Publishing House, 2011), Principles and methods of studying place names (Le

Trung Hoa, Social Sciences Publishing House, 2003), Place names Vietnamese Studies (Le Trung Hoa, Social Sciences Publishing House, 2011; Culture and Information Publishing House, 2013), Vietnamese Places (Le Trung Hoa, Dan Tri Publishing House, 2010)...

However, research on fairy tales of places in Tuyen Quang province through the cultural perspective of ethnic minorities has so far been very little. Therefore, in this article, the authors hope to provide readers with a new perspective on the meaning of place names in Tuyen Quang province through the place name fairy tales of the Tay people.

4. Research results

4.1. Concept of fairy tales and places

Up to now, fairy tales of places have been the subject of investigation in many works and articles, but the identification of this group of stories is still somewhat different. Therefore, here, we analyze, select, and unify to form a concept as the basis for future work.

In the work Through studying proper nouns in some fairy tales [3] by Dinh Gia Khanh, the author is interested in the reasons for the appearance of proper names of places in some fairy tales (historical fairy tales). history and fairy tales). He believes that “there are cases where fairy tales are built on pre-existing proper nouns, in order to explain those proper nouns” [3, p.37]. Thus, in time relations, these stories appeared after the proper nouns naming places were born. And accordingly, the explanation of place names is not the first feature of the story, but the main purpose of the appearance of these place names is to increase the authenticity of the story. In the work Through the study of proper nouns in some fairy tales [3], Dinh Gia Khanh conceives that fairy tales of places are stories that contain “proper names” and those proper names can be the names of mountains, rivers, lagoons, lakes or of different lands in folk tales.

The group of authors Bui Thi Mai Anh, Tran Thi Lam Huyen, Bui Anh Tuyet in Poetry of Tuyen Quang fairy tales believes that “Fairy tales of Tuyen Quang places are analytical stories or have elements that explain names and origins.” or describe the formation process of mountains, rivers, waterfalls, rocks... (natural terrain) of villages, regions, districts, communes... (administrative units), of communal houses, temples,

pagodas, shrines, temples, ... (construction works, cultural and religious relics of the people)[1. p.24].

In short, we believe that fairy tales of places are fairy tales that have elements that explain the names of natural objects (such as hills, mountains, rivers, lakes, mounds, lagoons, etc.) and residential areas. (such as villages, hamlets, hamlets, etc.) or works directly related to people's lives and production (such as ditches, ditches, canals, fields...) whose names have been specifically determined.

4.2. Fairy tales of places of the Tay people in Tuyen Quang

The Tay people have the second largest population in Tuyen Quang, after the Kinh people. This is also one of the ethnic groups with the longest history of residence in the province. Therefore, the people have contributed to building a prosperous village, enriching and beautifying their hometown of Tuyen Quang. During their living, the Tay people have created unique cultural features for themselves. Fairy tales are an indispensable part of the cultural capital created, preserved and passed on from generation to generation by the descendants of the people here.

The treasure of fairy tales of the Tay people in Tuyen Quang is divided into many sub-genres. In which, fairy tales of places are an indispensable part. These stories have been collected and researched by many authors. In terms of collections, we can mention some typical works such as: Na Hang fairy tale by author Phu Ninh; Anthology of Tuyen Quang fairy tales by the group of authors Bui Thi Mai Anh, Tran Thi Lam Huyen, Dang Tran Quan, Bui Anh Tuyet, ... In terms of research, we can mention the Poetry of Tuyen Quang fairy tales by the author group. impersonators Bui Thi Mai Anh, Tran Thi Lam Huyen, Dang Tran Quan, Bui Anh Tuyet. Master's thesis: Fairy tales of places in Tuyen Quang by author Nong Thi Hong. In general, the works mainly reuse at the level of gathering stories and initially analyze some aspects of Tuyen Quang fairy tales with a general view. Fairy tales of places are only mentioned in depth.

Compiling the collection of fairy tales and place names of the Tay ethnic group in Tuyen Quang in published documents, we have collected only 17 stories. Compared to the tales of places of other ethnic groups in Tuyen Quang, the tales of places of the Tay ethnic group are the most numerous.

4.3. Content aspects in fairy tales of places of the Tay people in Tuyen Quang

4.3.1. Tales of Tay people's places and human aspirations

In the collection of fairy tales of places of the Tay people in Tuyen Quang, there are 17 stories with rich content and are places where people send their human aspirations around. These stories focus on topics such as fighting to improve nature, protect and build villages; theme of love and marriage; The theme reflects social conflicts. The above content is interwoven in the stories. It shows us part of the social face of the Tay people in Tuyen Quang, their thoughts, feelings, opinions, and even their customs, customary laws, etc.

a. The theme of fighting to improve nature, protect and build villages

The theme of fighting to improve nature, protect and build villages is a major content expressed in many stories.

First of all, the fairy tales of places of the Tay people in Tuyen Quang reflect the process of renovating and exploiting nature to serve production such as: The Legend of Phoong Ma Waterfall, The Legend of Heavenly Pond, The Legend of Ban Co Tien Mountain. The Tay people are agricultural residents, so the fear of drought and floods is always constant. Therefore, fairy tales reflecting the process of people conquering nature to overcome droughts and floods are reflected quite vividly. In the story The Legend of Heavenly Pond, the Tay ethnic people tell about the formation of the place Phai Hin. That is the desire to have a solution so that people can stop suffering due to drought and lack of water; The formation of the place name Thom Pha (Heavenly Pond) was the wish to have a lake to collect fresh water and stock fish.

Fairy tales of places of the Tay people in Tuyen Quang are associated with the theme of fighting to improve nature, protect and build villages, contributing to honoring the beauty of ethnic minorities. They are smart, upright people, know how to love each other and are rich in dreams and aspirations.

b. Theme of love and marriage

In the fairy tales of the Tay people in Tuyen Quang, the theme of love and marriage accounts for the largest number. In this aspect, Tay folk authors were conscious in conveying concepts and dreams about couple's love.

Place names become a means of conveying concepts. Among the 17 fairy tales of places in Tuyen Quang, up to half of the stories mention issues of love and marriage, typically: The Legend of Falling Rain Waterfall, The Legend of Co Yeng Pass, The Legend of Ai Au Pass, The Legend of Ai Au Pass, The Legend of Legend of Nang Pass, Legend of Ai Cao Mountain, Legend of Pu Loong Nao, Legend of Phac Phien Flower, Legend of Nang Tien Mountain, Uncle Guest...

Through the content of fairy tales of places, Tay folk authors in Tuyen Quang praise faithful love. This is expressed through the desire to eliminate all barriers and social prejudices, towards freedom in love and marriage. The gap between rich and poor and heavy customs are the reasons that separate love relationships. To protect their love, the characters of the Tay ethnic group in Tuyen Quang portray the process of fighting against social prejudice. But those prejudices are deeply ingrained and subconscious. Therefore, all efforts are unsuccessful because of the loneliness of the characters. To protect their love, the people chose to end the story with death. Because death can help the characters be together forever. In the story The Legend of Ai Au Pass, the two main characters make readers feel sad with their tearful ending. They love each other but cannot be together. The two of them could only call out to each other in the deep forest amid the failure of their escape plan. The story of Nang Pass is a story of love hindered by the gap between rich and poor. She is the daughter of a wealthy and beautiful Tho family. Therefore, many boys in the area approached her but she all refused. Because she was deeply in love with a boy from the same village but poor. One day, the son of the Lang family - a family with hundreds of buffaloes and horses and half of the village's fields - came to ask her. Her father accepted immediately. She tries everything to protect her love. But in the face of fierce opposition from her parents, she chose to plunge into the abyss on the day of the wedding procession.

Besides the theme of love, there are stories that address marriage and family issues. The story of Co Yeg Pass is a story that depicts the faithfulness of husband and wife and the close friendship between husband and wife. In the story of Nam, after many years of working far away, his wife at home did not

know that her husband was still alive and had married her husband's old classmate. He didn't want to make things difficult for his wife and friend, so he decided to leave. Mr. Nam is a loyal person. So before leaving, he wanted to leave gold money to his wife and children. So Nam made up a story about his wife suffering from muteness and running everywhere to cure her. Recently met a skilled physician. The teacher said: we must find a tongue that can speak, bring it back to make a ladder, then we can cure it. Based on that excuse, Nam bought Yeng at a high price so he could leave gold money for his wife and children.

Love and marriage are big themes in the fairy tales of the Tay people in Tuyen Quang. This demonstrates the important role and influence of these issues in the economic and social life of the people.

c. The theme reflects social conflicts

Along with the historical development of the ethnic group, class division and conflicts of interests between people of different classes appeared in society. In the fairy tales of places of the Tay ethnic group in Tuyen Quang, the theme of social conflicts is reflected quite vividly.

First of all, this contradiction is concretized through the motif of low-born characters with high frequency: Tai Ngao in the story of Tai Ngao; The boy I in the Legend of Ngam Dang Vai, the girl in the Legend of Phac Phien Flower, the girls and boys in the Legend of Ai Au Pass; The Legend of Falling Rain Waterfall,... In addition to the motif of lowly characters, the motif of forbidden love in the Legend of Pu Loong Nao, the Legend of Ai Au Pass, etc. is vivid evidence of conflicts due to geographical differences. positions, rich and poor in society. These contradictions are difficult to reconcile, which is reflected in the tragic endings of love stories. This reflects the social reality of the Tay people in ancient Tuyen Quang. From there, we see the symbolic value of fairy tales of places of the Tay ethnic group in Tuyen Quang.

Social conflicts and how to resolve them are reflected in the fairy tales of places of the Tay people in Tuyen Quang, revealing the people's views on defending the weak and dreaming of restoring social justice. This viewpoint is also expressed in the naming

of geographical locations and objects in the story. Most of the names of places that were born are associated with the merits or actions of characters that people love.

4.3.2. Symbol in fairy tales of the Tay people in Tuyen Quang

Research on symbols in the culture of ethnic minorities in Vietnam in general and the Tay people in particular has long been familiar, and some symbols have even become the object of elaborate research. However, in this study, we still want to find new layers of meaning, connections between the spiritual symbols of the ethnic group and the elements that make up the characteristics of the group of geographical fairy tales. Specifically, during the survey, based on the definition and classification of symbols, we have compiled a list of place names of the Tay people in Tuyen Quang with the appearance of the following symbols:

a. Water icon

The Tay people in general and the Tay people in Tuyen Quang in particular are originally agricultural residents. Therefore, they are all very aware of the extremely important position of water in life as well as production. In fairy tales, place names of the Tay ethnic group in Tuyen Quang are images used with quite high frequency.

Water symbolizes talented and virtuous mountain people. In *The Legend of Phoong Ma Waterfall*, the main character Khan Ma helped the country fight the enemy but only wanted to live and die with his homeland. The story of *Tai Ngao and Water* symbolizes *Tai Ngao's* good heart to the village. To help the people in the drought-stricken highlands, he built a dam to prevent the water from rising. *The Legend of Heavenly Pond* is a story about Mrs. Then's heart for the villagers. Mrs. Then's merits to the Water King were rewarded, but she did not selfishly think for herself to ask for a reward for herself, but she chose to ask for a lake to have water to water the people. Water also symbolizes the power of truth. In the story of the *Ninety-nine Thuong Lam mountain*, there was a heavy rain, water poured down like a waterfall on the mountain by the evil official as a warning of the fate of those who are greedy and harmful to the people.

Another symbol of water in fairy tales and places of the Tay ethnic group in Tuyen Quang is the waterfall. A waterfall is a place where a stream or river has water

flowing from high to low, with a large tilt angle and fast water flow, which can create waves and whirlpools. Using the image of waterfalls in folk literature in general and fairy tales of places in particular, the Tay ethnic people want to exploit continuity and intensity. First of all, the waterfall is a symbol of faithful love. In the story of the waterfall, the falling rain and waterfall are the tears of the husband mourning because his wife was swept away by the river and disappeared.

Water is a universal image often used in folk literature. However, with its own cultural and residential characteristics, the water in the fairy tales of the Tay people in Tuyen Quang has its own characteristics.

b. Mountain icon

Tay people often reside in highland districts of Tuyen Quang province such as Chiem Hoa, Na Hang, and Lam Binh. The terrain of Chiem Hoa, Na Hang, and Lam Binh is quite rugged, with many limestone mountains, with irregular alternations between limestone mountains and dirt mountains, between high mountain ranges and dirt hills of medium or high altitude. Therefore, mountains are a significant factor influencing the lives and activities of the people.

The Tay people in Tuyen Quang live surrounded by mountains. Therefore, the mountains surrounding the valley occupy an important position in the material and spiritual life of the people. Therefore, the explanation of the names of mountains is often of interest to many people. In many stories, sometimes at first the mountain does not appear at all but follows the flow of events and only participates naturally. Mountains are places where men and women fall in love, date, and where painful love relationships are sheltered. In the story of *Pu Loong Nao*, the mountain becomes a witness to the love between a boy and a girl. In *The Legend of the Chessboard*, the Mountain Fairy is a witness to human intelligence. In *The Legend of Mount Ai Cao*, the mountain symbol represents a righteous person.

The mountain symbol in the fairy tale of the Tay people in Tuyen Quang not only truly reflects the living space of the people but also contains many profound symbolic values.

c. Pass icon

The pass is a connection between high canyons. That is the obstacle that the Tay people have to

overcome when moving between villages. In the minds of the Tay people, the pass often evokes loneliness, difficulty, and danger. Right in the names of the stories, Tay folk authors have shown their interest in the pass: The Legend of Ai Au Pass, The Legend of Co Yeg Pass, The Legend of Nang Pass...

The hardships of crossing the pass are skillfully evoked by Tay folk authors to evoke the hardships and difficulties in life. The image of the pass in the Legend of the Pass is a witness to the faithful love of a young couple. Faced with her family's objections, she chose to protect her love by throwing herself into the abyss. Mourning her unjust love, the villagers call the pass where she committed suicide Nang Pass. In the story of Ai Au Pass, the name of the pass is the place where the young couple made their promise. That's where they met to run away from their family's obstacles to their love. It is also the place where young couples who love each other cannot be together. The Legend of Co Yeng Pass symbolizes the obstacles in family life. Mr. Nam did not want his wife and friend to feel awkward and silently gave up his personal happiness.

The symbol of the pass in the fairy tales of the Tay people in Tuyen Quang has contributed to creating a unique cultural identity for Tay folk literature. At the same time, it contributes to portraying the cultural space of an ethnic minority community in Vietnam.

Although the symbols of water, mountains, and passes are not all the typical symbols appearing in the fairy tales of places of the Tay people in Tuyen Quang, they partly show the richness of the ethnic culture. The layers of meaning of symbols are not static and closed elements. They are formed and transferred in the process of Tay people maintaining social relationships inside and outside the community. People use different ways to project the meaning of symbols onto entities to assert themselves and show influence to other communities.

5. Conclusion

Place-name fairy tales are fairy tales that have elements that explain the names of natural objects (such as hills, mountains, rivers, lakes, mounds, lagoons...) and residential areas (such as villages, hamlets, hamlets), hamlet...) or works directly related to people's lives and production (such as ditches,

ditches, canals, fields...) whose names have been specifically determined. In those stories, the place is not simply a name but contains a story, thoughts, feelings, wishes and teachings. Each of these stories is told synonymously with a slice of history or life presented. Fairy tales of the Tay people in Tuyen Quang are an indispensable part of the rich cultural capital created, preserved and passed on by generations of descendants of the people here. With 17 fairy tales associated with the formation of the place, the Tay people in Tuyen Quang not only illustrate the place but are themselves vivid events associated with the thinking and life of the people. These stories not only contain human meanings but are also symbols of ethnic culture. The decoding of typical symbols in fairy tales of places of the Tay ethnic group in Tuyen Quang shows the richness of the layers of meaning, in addition to revealing their potential for development. The places formed in the story are all associated with symbols and form part of the symbol's meaning. They also show the ethnic group's high self-awareness in creating its own cultural values. The Tay people in Tuyen Quang in particular, as well as many other ethnic groups in Vietnam, are facing the challenge of urbanization and globalization, which will cause them to lose their identity. Therefore, the issue of conservation is an urgent requirement. Researching and introducing fairy tales of places in particular and fairy tales in general is a useful task.

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