



**WORD OF THE TAY PEOPLE'S FESTIVAL IN VIETNAM
THAT REFLECTING THE BEAUTY OF AGRICULTURAL BELIEFS AND
THE CULTURE TOWARDS ORIGIN**

Le Thi Huong Giang, Luong Thi Ngoc Anh

Thai Nguyen University of Education - Thai Nguyen University, Viet Nam

Email address: gianglth@tnue.edu.vn

<https://doi.org/10.51453/2354-1431/2021/690>

Article info

Received: 12/10/2021

Accepted: 1/12/2021

Keywords:

*festival, traditional
culture, Tay people.*

Abstract:

In recent years, in the context of industrialization, modernization and international integration of our country; traditional culture in general including traditional festivals of ethnic minorities has been restored and developed, which enrich the cultural life of Vietnam. Studying about the words of the Tay's festival in Vietnam, we found out that the beauty of the agricultural beliefs and the culture towards origin of this ethnic are reflected evidently and highly inspirational.



TỪ NGỮ VỀ LỄ HỘI CỦA NGƯỜI TÀY Ở VIỆT NAM TRONG VIỆC PHẢN ẢNH NÉT ĐẸP CỦA VĂN HÓA TÍN NGƯỠNG NÔNG NGHIỆP VÀ VĂN HÓA HƯỚNG VỀ CỘI NGUỒN

Lê Thị Hương Giang, Lương Thị Ngọc Anh

Trường Đại học Sư phạm - Đại học Thái Nguyên, Việt Nam

Địa chỉ email: gianglth@tnue.edu.vn

<https://doi.org/10.51453/2354-1431/2021/690>

Thông tin bài viết	Tóm tắt
<p>Ngày nhận bài: 12/10/2021</p> <p>Ngày duyệt đăng: 1/12/2012</p> <p>Từ khóa: lễ hội, văn hóa truyền thống, người Tày</p>	<p>Những năm gần đây, trong bối cảnh công nghiệp hoá, hiện đại hoá, hội nhập quốc tế của nước ta, văn hóa truyền thống nói chung, trong đó có lễ hội truyền thống của các dân tộc thiểu số đã được phục hồi và phát huy, làm phong phú hơn đời sống văn hóa của Việt Nam. Nghiên cứu các từ ngữ về lễ hội của người Tày ở Việt Nam chúng tôi nhận thấy những nét đẹp của văn hóa tín ngưỡng nông nghiệp, của văn hóa hướng về cội nguồn,...của đồng bào Tày được phản ánh rất rõ ràng và có sức truyền cảm hứng cao.</p>

1. Introduce

In Vietnam, the Tay ethnic group ranks second among the ethnic groups of the country in terms of quantity and distribution in all three regions of the North, Central, and South. The localities where many Tay people live are the provinces of Lang Son, Cao Bang, Tuyen Quang, Ha Giang, Bac Kan, and Thai Nguyen. They also live in Bac Giang, Quang Ninh, Hoa Binh, Hai Duong, and Thai Binh. In addition, there are a number of northwestern provinces such as Yen Bai and Lao Cai that have recently migrated to some central Highlands provinces such as Dak Lak and Lam Dong. The Tay people have a diverse culture and developed quite early. Both material and spiritual culture have their own unique features.

The festival is considered a religious activity associated with the agriculture of the Tay people, which is passed on from generation to generation. Through festivals, the Tay ethnic people also instill

in their children the pride and sense of preserving the traditional cultural values imbued with their national identity.

Studying the word class about the festivals of the Tay people to contribute to preserving and affirming the traditional values of the Tay people is a necessary job. This is both the great policy of the Party and the State and the aspiration of the Tay people to preserve and develop their culture.

We believe that words related to all aspects of the festival, such as words related to the Tay ceremony, words related to the Tay festival, are within the scope of the article's survey.

2. Content

Conducting a survey of the words related to the Tay festival in Vietnam, we obtained 305 words. Considering the scope of use, the word for the festival of the Tay has the following results:

Classes word	Quantily	Ratio (%)	Example
Within the scope of use by the entire population	280	91,8	Opening the festival, praying for happiness, U-shaped worshipping rig, presenting the sacrifice, the terrace, pig's head, spirit, worshipping...
In the narrow range of use	25	8,2	tuấy hang vải, thầy cá, giường Hai Há, bà Then, chiêng cái, mừng trời, lồng tồng, múa châu, dâng Then,...
Amount	305	100%	

Through the classification table, we see that the Vietnamese and Tay languages penetrated each other at different periods in history. In the process of development, the Tay people have an intersectional relationship in many aspects, such as in the field of culture and language. The Tay ethnic culture still has its own color, but that does not make it any less unique, rich, and diverse. In harmony with the flow of culture, the Tay language also receives the profound influence of the Kinh language and other ethnic groups.

In recent years, in the context of the industrialization, modernization, and international integration of our country, traditional culture in general, including traditional festivals of ethnic minorities, has been restored and developed to enrich the cultural life of Vietnam.

Researching the words about festivals of the Tay people in Vietnam, we find that: Festivals are a favorable environment in which traditional cultural elements are preserved and developed. Those traditional cultural elements are constantly supplemented, perfected and operated along with the historical development process of each locality in the general history of the country. It is the result of the whole history of not just one human community. This is the quintessence drawn, verified and perfected in the long history of any community.

Through the words about the festival of the Tay people in Vietnam that the article has surveyed, we see the beauty of the agricultural culture and beliefs, and the spirit towards the origin, etc., of the Tay people, which are so clearly reflected and inspiring.

2.1. Words about festivals in reflecting the beauty of agricultural culture and beliefs

The environment of Vietnamese traditional festivals is basically the Vietnamese countryside and villages. The special festivals of the Tay community in Vietnam have contributed to embellishing a lot of the cultural beauty and beliefs of the long-standing wet rice farming of the Vietnamese nation.

Every spring, in the cold weather of heaven and earth, is also the time of the Lồng Tồng festival of the Tay people. On the day of the Lồng Tồng festival, when it is dawn and the sun begins to rise, it is also the

time when the procession of people carries the “tồng” tray to the ceremony place. This is a unique cultural activity of the Tay ethnic group that is associated with agricultural production. The Lồng Tồng Festival (the festival of the fields) of the Tay people is a typical harvest festival with the nature of ancient agricultural rituals, opening a new production season. Both the ceremony and the festival reflect the wishes of the people, which are for a good season, for the rain to be favorable and for the wind, for the rice plants to always be full of flowers, for good crops to be brought, and for people to be healthy. It can be seen that it is a belief that surrounds factors affecting agriculture, such as reproduction, water, the sun, rice...

On the festival day, everyone in the mountain village participates in the ceremony to give thanks to the Tutelary god and Emperor Shen Nong. Every home has an offering tray, boiled chicken, Chung cake, pork, boiled eggs dyed with dyes, red steamed glutinous rice, and yellow steamed glutinous rice, symbolizing the sun and moon, for yin and yang. On each plate of steamed glutinous rice, there is a red swallow made of paper. All their dreams and aspirations for a prosperous, prolific, and peaceful life are put into it.

Regarding sacrifices, the Tay people prepare very carefully. All participants as well as utensils must be clean; the dishes must be delicious, quintessential, sophisticated, and beautiful, such as: sweet short cake (sla cao), which is made from roasted and ground glutinous rice, peanuts, sesame seeds, and sugar; Ball-shaped cake (pêng khô) is also made from glutinous rice with the sap of the sweet potato tree, which is made into steamed glutinous rice and then put into a mortar and pounded by hand; In addition, there are two types of ball-shaped cakes (thóc théc, khâu sli) which are also made from glutinous rice but with different processing methods; “Chè lam” cake (pêng khinh); and Chung Tay cake (pêng tòm, khâu tòm).

All kinds of agricultural products offered are those that are cultivated and cared for by the villagers. According to the traditional rite, a three-tiered bamboo shelf is built in the middle of a large field. This is the place where the trays containing the offerings are placed to worship the gods, the Emperor

Shen Nong and the God of the soil. The trays are placed in order on the shelves. The top floor is called the upper table, where the main ceremony is held. The second floor is the middle table. The third floor is the lower table. When the ceremony is finished, the priest or main worshiper recommended by the villagers will begin the ceremony with the rituals of the Tay ethnic group, asking the village's tutelary god to open the festival, give thanks to the Heaven and Earth, pray to the Emperor Shen Nong, the Mountain God, the Stream God, who bestow favorable rain and wind, lush crops, warmth and happiness.

The Long Tong festival is a form of folklore activity with profound humanistic meanings. It expresses the people's aspirations in the harmony of heaven and earth, the bridge to a healthy and prosperous life. The games in the festival show the rich beauty of the soul, associated with nature and the long-standing cultural practices of the wet rice residents.

In this soil and grain ceremony, the ritual of taking to the field plays an important role; a strong, virtuous, good plowman, doing the best business in the village and the best buffalo is chosen to make the first plow lines of the new crop, which opens a bumper crops.

Although the tillage and harrowing work of farmers is now done by mechanization, the plowing and harrowing competitions with buffaloes and cows, and the hand-planting contests are held at the festival to the joy and enthusiastic cheers of thousands of people. This shows that the long-standing traditional cultural values of the Tay people, in particular, and of farmers in general, have always been preserved and handed down.



After the ceremony is the festival. To begin with, the tossing «còn». This is the funniest activity that attracts the most participants. To prepare for the festival, in the middle of a large field chosen as a festival site, a plum tree 20–30 cm high is used as a pillar. On the top of the column, there is a circle with a diameter of 50–60 cm, pasted on both sides, with the words «Sun-moon,» symbolizing the moon and the sun. This is a game but also a ritual that is

never lacking in the Long Tong festival. On the tree, there are also three rings of the sun and the moon, symbolizing heaven, earth, and human beings, which means heaven, earth, and man. Tung also requires both health and dexterity. If at any festival, no one tosses the circle and still hits the circle, the villagers are not happy, because, in their opinion, someone must toss and hit the circle and tear the paper, then that year will be favorable for business.

Even the games in the festival have a ceremonial character with a strong agricultural imprint. The game of tug of war is usually divided into two factions: the East side and the West side. As a rule, the representative of the East always wins three consecutive times. The Tay people believe that the East side is where the sun rises. Winning the East side also means having the sun, having sunshine so that the crops are good and the villagers have a good crop and a comfortable life. After this obligatory ceremony, comes the game of tug of war between the teams in the village. The wizard turns towards the setting sun, knocks three times on the gong, and recites the vows: “Pull for rice, pull for health.”

There are a number of regions where the Lồng Tồng festival is held near streams, with some pulling between the people upstream and downstream of the stream. The representative of the upstream side (with mine water) wins; that year will have timely rains, favourable weather, and a good crop: “pull up the upstream—the upstream wins—the water overflows the banks, fills the brooks.”

Water is the decisive factor in irrigated agriculture, so the traces of rain are reflected quite strongly in the field. The water for offerings during the festival must be pure source water that flows endlessly. The water is brought back by the people beating gongs and placed on the shrine of “Ông Mo” (more sacred). Among the gods who attended the festival, besides the mountain gods (male gods), there was also the mine water god (goddess)-the expression of yin and yang in harmony. Especially, right after the worshipping ceremony, the “Ông Mo” said some magic words and then sprayed water in four directions. It is an act of simulating praying for rain, expecting rain all over the world. All of the above beliefs are aimed at hoping for rice plants to flourish. The festival's central images are rice and grain. The sacred seed will then be distributed to all members through a seeding ritual.

It can be said that the Lồng Tồng festival of the Tay people is a typical ritual of the region's culture, with the characteristics of lingaism, the religion of praying for rain and worshipping the sun, which is a form of folklore activity with profound humanistic meaning. The Lồng Tồng Festival is held annually

and is handed down from generation to generation, associated with the great merits of the human god who had the merits to build the homeland, the generals who fought the enemy to keep the village, and the gods who blessed agriculture to develop. The games in the festival show the rich beauty of the soul, associated with nature and the long-standing cultural practices of the wet rice residents. Through rituals, performances, and traditional games, it is possible to see the development history of a village from ancient times to modern times, thereby educating people about patriotic traditions, responsibility, and a strong sense of community cohesion.

2.2. Words about festivals reflect the beauty of culture towards its origin.

Another value of the traditional festival of the Tay people that cannot be ignored is the spirit towards the origin. Today, when society has undergone many changes, this value is even more meaningful. Through festival activities, the Tay people always tend to go to the place where the umbilical cord is buried with the attitude of “when drinking water, remember its source,” “When eating fruit, remember who planted the tree”... People attending the festival also mean return to their native homeland or associated with pilgrimages - tourism. Returning to the roots through the festival is also a way for people to return to the great Mother Nature, to partially integrate with the natural environment and the ancient historical traditions of the nation. Looking at the roots contributes to the humanity of traditional festivals.

From its original roots as an agricultural festival, the festival gradually carries with it the flow of historical events. Festivals in general and Tay folk festivals in particular originate from the beliefs of a community (a religion, a human god or a natural god), so the spiritual element in the community's festival is quite bold. Festivals, whatever the type, are always to honor the person being worshipped. This worshiped character can be a natural god, a human god, or simply a god in the concept.



The Earth and Water procession festival is a festival to pray to Mother Earth and Mother Water

to bless the land with always fertile soil, to pray for the water source to never run out, and to help the villagers have a full life all year round.

Early in the morning, the villagers sent a group of people, including a wizard, a drum, gong, Khen team, and women (who are hardworking people and have a peaceful and healthy family life) to go to the top of the mountain. The mountain-where the water is the clearest in the village-brings the soul of the Earth and the soul of the Water to the festival.

At the head of the procession is the wizard. He is the one who acts as a messenger to communicate with the gods. In the wizard's hand, he holds a bamboo tree - a symbol of fertility and growth - and carries it to the festival site. Next is the Water procession and the ceremony palanquins. Water is stored in two large pipes, representing the father and mother pipes. Next is the procession of the Earth - the soul of the Earth mother is taken from the top of the sacred mountain. Then came the ritual trays to offer to the gods. The offering includes a tray of “còn”. Inside them are seeds; five-colored steamed glutinous rice, boiled chicken, fruits, etc. are the quintessential products of the crop - the production results of the villagers in the year. five. The team of gongs and drums walks on either side of the sorcerer to float the gongs and drums so that he can communicate with the gods.

In the concept of the Tay people, “So lộc” means asking for luck, asking ancestors to bless them for doing business smoothly, trees are lush, there is a good crop to make life less difficult... The tray of the Tay people worshipping their ancestors on this day is mainly duck and vermicelli. Let the month be the best time for meat and it is called “*pét so lộc*” which means duck on the sixth day. The Tay believe that ducks are adapted to water sources and that favorable water sources will help crops grow well. According to custom, ducks must be placed on a tray. When offering to the ancestors, they have to let the incense burn for 2/3 of the time before they can clear the tray, and then go to worship in the village. The So Lộc festival of the Tay ethnic group in Cao Bang, Bac Kan and Lang Son provinces comes from two reasons: First, it is thanks to Tiên Nông for blessing farmers with a favorable rainy season.

The second is to make offerings to the spirit of buffaloes and cows to keep them healthy and to continue serving the next crop. This also comes from the notion that, in the process of working in the field, buffaloes and cows are often whipped, so the spirit sometimes panics and leaves the body, so they have to make offerings to call it back.

The Nang Hai festival, also known as Mother

Moon, of the Tay people, is one of the traditional folk festivals, imbued with the lingaism of the ancient Vietnamese people. The festival started in January and lasted until mid-March. According to folk beliefs of the Tay ethnic group, on the moon are Mother Moon and twelve fairies, the mother's daughter. The Nang Hai Festival is preserved with the meaning of a custom of praying for the crop, organized by the Tay people through many nights of singing with the purpose of both remembering the princess Tien Dao of the Mac Dynasty and inviting the Nang Hais, the daughters of Mother Moon in heaven, to come down to earth and help people in business. The festival is held from January 30 to March 22 of the lunar calendar. The Nang Hai festival is similar to the Long Tong festival, but it is in the form of a saman. The form of saman is to get into a trance. The Nang Hais get into a trance inside 12 girls, and these girls sing songs, then go to Muong Heaven to meet the Moon Mothers to ask for seeds, ask for trees, pray for happiness, pray for longevity, pray for good chances in love, etc., which are shown in the song. The whole village participated.

After the ritual of inviting Nang Hai to earth took place indoors, the shaman took her and the 12 children of Mother Moon to the village's God of the Soil shrine to report to the village's Tutelary god, praying to welcome Mother Moon down to earth. When finished, the woman guide and the girls go to the outdoor sacrificial shack, where she and the "Put" perform offerings to Mother Moon. The "Put" prays first, the woman guide sings the song after, then the 12 children of Mother Moon sing along with her.

Inviting Mother Moon to Earth is an arduous and difficult journey. They have to sing the invitation for the third time before Mother Moon agrees to accept the invitation to come down to earth to help people pray for crops and blessings.

When the harvest and blessing ceremony ended, it was also the time when the 12 daughters of Mother Moon unloaded their tents and bid farewell to the villagers. The lyrics are entwined with the songs that instruct and promise the next year. Finally, the "Put", the woman guide, Mother Moon, and the villagers sang and walked, went to the riverbank, and released boats, symbolizing the strength of Mother Moon to cross the sea.

3. Conclusion

It can be said that the Tay people expressed their lingaism and good fortune through festival activities. The festival has become an indispensable part of the spiritual life of the Tay people. Through festival activities, the cultural beauty of the Tay people should be preserved, handed down, and developed so as not to be lost over time.

REFERENCES

- [1] Ben, L. - editor (2011), *Tay - Vietnamese dictionary*, Thai Nguyen University Publishing House, Thai Nguyen
- [2] Chau, D.H. (1999), *Vietnamese semantic vocabulary*, Vietnam Education Publishing House, Hanoi.
- [3] Giap, N.T. (1985), *Vietnamese Vocabulary*, Education and Training Publishing House, Hanoi.
- [4] Duong, N.H. (1970), "Social functions of Tay - Nung language", *Language journal*, No. 1.
- [5] Vietnam Folklore Association (2012), "Lượn" Tay, *Ethnic Culture Publishing House*, Hanoi.
- [6] Hong, V. (2001), *Whispering ritual folk songs*, National Culture Publishing House, Hanoi
- [7] Lien, D.T. (2012), *Some linguistic features in Then Tay*, Master's Thesis, Thai Nguyen University of Education - Thai Nguyen University
- [8] Lo, T.V., Van, D.V. (1968), *Brief introduction of Tay, Nung and Thai ethnic groups in Vietnam*, Social Science Publishing House, Hanoi.
- [9] Many authors (1978), *Some issues about then Viet Bac*, National Culture Publishing House, Hanoi.
- [10] Many authors (2012), *Traditional customs of Thai, Tay, Nung ethnic groups*, National Culture Publishing House, HaNoi
- [11] Ninh, N.T. (2000), *Folk music of the Tay, Nung and Dao ethnic groups in Lang Son Province*, National Culture Publishing House, Hanoi.
- [12] Phe, H. (editor) (2009), *Vietnamese Dictionary*, Language Dictionary Center, Hanoi.
- [13] Them, T.N. (2001), *Finding the cultural identity of Vietnam*, Ho Chi Minh City Publishing House, HCM.
- [14] Y, L.C. (2010), *Coming to Tay people and Tay culture*, Social Science Publishing House, Hanoi