



The Bravery of Vietnamese Intellectuals before and after Ad through Historical Documents

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Abstract

Vietnam was colonized (dominated) by feudal China for more than a thousand years. Despite their status as colonized people in a dependent country, there were many intellectuals who passed the exam and served as mandarins for Chinese dynasties. These elite intellectuals had a very high national consciousness and great courage. When given the opportunity, they were willing to fight with the Chinese emperors to demand the right to be treated equally. This is a completely new problem, no researchers at home or abroad have yet studied it. Based on the documents recorded in ancient histories and ancient books of China and Vietnam, this article will go deeper to confirm the bravery and mettle of Vietnam's elite intellectuals before the royal court China in the centuries before and after Christ.

INTRODUCTIONS

In 111 BC, Emperor Wu of Han (141 BC - 87 BC) of the Western Han dynasty annexed the Nam Viet state of the Trieu dynasty, including Lac Viet and Au Viet, from here the Viet people were dominated by the Han dynasty. This colonization by Chinese dynasties lasted more than a thousand years. During that long period of time, many elite Vietnamese intellectuals passed the exam and became mandarins under feudal dynasties in China. Although they are officials, Vietnamese notables were originally from ruled people and were looked down upon by the Han people as "Southern barbarians", so they always fought for equal rights and requested the Chinese feudal court to treat them well. Equal to those of Han Chinese mandarins, with an unyielding spirit and bravery, his fighting words were clear and reasonable, and his requests were accepted by the Chinese dynasties. This was recorded by Chinese historians in ancient histories such as

Sima Qian's *Histories*, Ban Gu's *Pre-Han History*, and in Vietnamese histories such as *Complete Annals of Dai Viet* by Ngo Si Lien and others. historian of the National History Office of the Le dynasty.

Based on documents in ancient histories and ancient books, this article will discuss in more depth the bravery and mettle of elite Vietnamese intellectuals in the fight against sinicization and for equal rights. at the Chinese feudal court.

2. The first example of elite intellectuals introduced in this article is Lu Gia (191 BC-110 BC). His hometown is in Loi Duong district, Cuu Chan district (now Tho Xuan district, Thanh Hoa). He was an old man who held the position of Prime Minister under three kings of the Zhao Dynasty: King Minh Trieu Anh Te (124-113 BC), King Ai Trieu Hung (112 BC), King Thuat Duong Trieu Kien Duc (112-111 BC).), and was a highly prestigious person in South Vietnam at that time, trusted by the people. Sima Qian's

Chronicles and Ban Gu's *Pre-Han History* gave information about him with the following mighty virtues:

相呂嘉年長矣，相三王，宗族官貴為長吏七十餘人，男盡尚王女，女盡嫁王子弟宗室，及蒼梧秦王有連。其居國中甚重，粵人信之，多為耳目者，得眾心愈於王。[史記·

南越列傳；前漢書·西南夷兩粵朝鮮傳]

(Translation: Prime Minister Lu Gia is old, has served as Prime Minister through three dynasties, in the clan there are more than seventy people who are officials, the sons all marry the king's daughters, the daughters all marry sons. and brothers in the royal family, who are related to the King of Qin in Thuong Ngo, are important figures in the country, are highly trusted by the Vietnamese, many people act as eyes and ears for them, and are more popular than the king.) [Sima Qian. *Chronicles. Nam Viet lists stories. Ban Co. Pre-Han books. Southwest migration, Two ethnic Vietnamese, Korean stories*]

Minh Vuong Trieu Anh Te already had an older child with his Vietnamese wife, giving birth to Trieu Kien Duc, but after he went to Handan, China, he met Cu Thi and fell in love with her, giving birth to Trieu Hung. When he ascended the throne, he appointed Cu Hau was the queen. In 113 BC, Minh Vuong died and Trieu Hung succeeded him. Before Cu Hau married Anh Te, she had committed adultery with An Quoc Thieu Quy. King Wu De of the Han Dynasty saw that Trieu Ai Vuong was still young and had a Han mother, so he sent An Quoc Thieu Quy to lure Trieu Ai Vuong and Queen Mother Cu to visit as Han vassals. Chung Quan announced the edict, with the brave soldier Wei Than assisting him, and Guard Lo Bac Duc stationed his troops in Que Duong to wait for the messenger. This time Thieu Quy came, Cu Queen Mother was corrupt, the people in the country were dissatisfied, Cu Queen Mother was afraid so she wanted to rely on the power of the Han Dynasty, asked an envoy to send a letter asking for her

allegiance and followed the custom of every three years to visit. King Han agreed. But Prime Minister Lu Gia did not accept it. Although he repeatedly sent letters to advise Cu Queen Mother and Trieu Ai Vuong, they did not listen to him. To maintain independence and autonomy, Lu Gia organized a mutiny in 112 BC. Before organizing the mutiny, Lu Gia made a proclamation so that the court and the people could see clearly. The lyrics were recorded by Sima Qian and Ban Gu as follows:

「王年少。太後，中國人也，又與使者亂，專欲內屬，盡持先王寶器入獻天子以自媚，多從人，行至長安，虜賣以為僮仆。取自脫一時之利，無顧趙氏社稷，為萬世慮計之意。」[史記·南越列傳·前漢書·西南夷兩粵朝鮮傳]

(Translation: “The king is still young. The Queen Mother was Chinese, had an affair with the envoy, focused on her wife, and offered all the precious things of the previous king to the Prince of Heaven to flatter her. Many followers went to Truong An and were captured and sold to become servants. Only looking for their own temporary benefits, without looking at the Trieu family's social rules, worrying about eternal schemes.” [Sima Qian. *Chronicles. Nam Viet lists stories. Ban Co. Pre-Han History. Southwest migration, Two ethnic Vietnamese, Korean stories*]

After that, the Prime Minister and his brother led troops to kill Ai Vuong, Queen Cu and the envoy, then installed Trieu Kien Duc Thuat Duong Vuong on the throne. Han Dynasty's reinforcements brought by Han Thien Thu were destroyed by Vietnamese troops, then he sent troops to guard critical places:

乃與其弟將卒攻殺太后、王，盡殺漢使者。遣人告蒼梧秦王及其諸郡縣，立明王長男粵妻子術陽侯建德為王。而韓千秋兵之入也，破數小邑。其後粵直開道給食，未至番禺四十里，粵以兵擊千秋等，滅之。使人函封漢

使節置塞上，好為謾辭謝罪，發兵守要害處。[史記·南越列傳·前漢書·西南夷兩粵朝鮮傳]

(Translation: Then my brother and I led troops to kill the king, the queen mother and the envoy of the Han dynasty. Send someone to report to the Qin king in Thuong Ngo and other districts. The eldest son of Minh king, the son of the Vietnamese wife, was Thuat Duong marquis Kien Duc became king. Han Thien Thu's army entered and destroyed several small hamlets. After that, the Vietnamese army opened the way to get food and grass, and only forty miles from Phien Ngung, the Vietnamese army sent troops to attack the Thien group. Thu, destroy the Thien Thu group) sent someone to pack the envoys of the Han Dynasty and take them to the border, choose clever words to apologize, and at the same time sent troops to guard the dangerous places. [Sima Qian. *Chronicles. Nam Viet lists stories. Ban Co. Pre-Han History. Southwest migration, Two ethnic Vietnamese, Korean stories*]

Hearing that Han Thien Thu was killed, King Han ordered Lo Bac Duc, Duong Boc and other generals to pull tens of thousands of troops to invade Nam Viet. Although our army fought back fiercely, our strength was weak. Finally, in 111 BC, the Trieu Dynasty King and his Prime Minister were captured by the enemy and killed. Countries in South Vietnam asked for surrender.

The Han Dynasty, under the 54-year reign of Emperor Han Wu, was a powerful country, developing in all aspects and reaching its peak. Stemming from the spirit of national independence, Prime Minister Lu Gia led the militia against the emperor's intention to colonize a great country, which was a courage, showing a bravery and tenacity.

That's why historians like Le Van Huu and Ngo Si Lien praised him. To commemorate the Prime Minister's merits, our people built a mausoleum and temple to worship him in Dang

Le commune, An Thi district, Hung Yen, where his family once lived after leaving Thanh Hoa; People also set up temples in Quang Yen commune, Lap Thach district, Vinh Phuc and some other temples in Vu Ban, Nam Dinh. His name is also used to name streets in Hanoi, Ho Chi Minh City, Nha Trang, and Da Lat.

3. The second intellectual example is famous scholar Truong Trong. He was the first Vietnamese scholar to courageously argue with King Han Minh De (57-75). In the book *Bach Viet Tien Hien Chi*, volume 2, Au Dai Nham gave brief information about Truong Trong and his rebuttal when answering questions from King Han Minh De 漢明帝 (also known as Han Hien Zong 漢顯宗), the second emperor of the Eastern Han Dynasty. At that time, Truong Trong held the position of *Kế lại*, a small official in Nhat Nam district, and was sent by the Governor of Nhat Nam district to the capital Luo Duong to meet the king. King Han saw that he was short and small, so he asked, "Which district is this small official from?". He replied calmly, "I am Ke Ke Nhat Nam, not a small official. Emperor, do you want to use talented people or do you want to measure flesh and bone?"

Another time, at a party celebrating the Lunar New Year, the king asked, "In Nhat Nam district, you only see the sun when you look towards the north, right?". He frankly replied, "There are Van Trung and Kim Thanh districts, but it is not true that they are all "in the clouds" and "golden cities". The sun in Nhat Nam district also rises from the east. As for the climate, it is warm, the sun shines high above, and the residents choose the direction east, west, south, north, and behind, depending on their mood and preferences. As for the name Nhat Nam, it's because this area leans south." His response made King Han Minh De praise him and give him a lot of silk, gold and silver. From then on, every time he was summoned, he offered plans and was rewarded by the king.

What we want to note here, according to historical books, is that Han Minh De was a talented king with many merits, but implemented a harsh domination policy, yet Truong Trong's answers did not help. The king was displeased, but on the contrary, he was

pleased, praised and rewarded. In the book *Bach Viet Tien Hien Chi*, volume 2, Minh Thuan Duc Au Dai Nham Trinh Ba (Au Dai Nham, self-styled Trinh Ba, who lived in Thuan Duc, during the Ming dynasty) wrote:

張重，字仲篤，合浦人。篤學善言，為嶺表望士。刺史推擇，為日南都從事。上計入洛，明帝訝其麼麼，問之曰：「何郡小吏？」重抗聲對曰：「臣、日南計吏，非小吏也！陛下欲得其才邪？抑將稱骨度肉也。」帝善其對。

正旦大會，帝問曰：「日南郡北向視日耶？」重對曰：「郡有雲中，金城，不必皆有其實。日南日亦俱出於東爾。至於風氣暄暖，日影仰當，官民居止，隨情面向，東西南北，回背無定，所謂日域在南者也。」帝益善之，賜以金帛。

自此，上計召對，皆有賞焉。[歐大任

《百越先賢志》卷二]

(Translation: Truong Trong, surnamed Trong Doc, from Hop Pho, was a famous scholar of Linh Nam land. The deputy historian nominated him to serve as a servant of Nhat Nam land. When he went to Luo Duong to meet the Han king, Han Minh De saw that he was short. asked him: "What district is this small official?" Truong Trong protested and replied: "I am Ke Nhat Nam, not a small official who wants to use talented people or want to measure bones meat?" The king liked that answer.

During the Lunar New Year party, the king asked: "If Nhat Nam district only looks to the north, you can see the sun, isn't that right?" Trong replied: "There are Van Trung and Kim Thanh districts, but it is not true that they are all "in the clouds" and "golden cities". The sun in Nhat Nam district also rises from the east.

As for the climate, it is warm, the sun shines high above, and the residents choose the direction east, west, south, north, and behind, depending on their mood and preferences. As for the name Nhat Nam, it's because this area leans south." The king praised him even more, giving him silk, gold and silver.

From then on, he offered plans every time he was summoned, and each time he was rewarded.) [Au Dai Nham. *Bach Viet tien hien chi*, volume 2]

4. The third quintessential intellectual example is Governor Ly Tien with his petition to King Hien De of Han and the small protest of Boc Long and Ly Cam at the courtyard of the Han court.

Emperor Han Hien De, who reigned for 31 years (189-220), was the 14th emperor of the Eastern Han dynasty and also the last emperor of the Han dynasty, because he was later forced by Cao Pi to cede the throne to found the Cao Wei dynasty Three Kingdoms period.

At that time, Ly Tien was holding the position of Governor. In the year 200, he presented a petition to the king with the content: "The whole world is the king's servant, the court officials are all from Trung Quốc, the court has not used to encourage people far away. The Han Dynasty king approved people who were filial, honest, and talented in trade in Giao Chau to be leaders in the continent, but did not accept people in Trung Quốc.

Another time, Ly Tien continued to offer his prayers, "The person appointed to be filial and honest, please be like doctors in twelve continents, treated based on talent." But this time, the Royal Court's Right Committee intervened, so the king did not accept his words.

At that time, on the occasion of the festival of all nations coming to pay their respects at the Han court, a number of Vietnamese mandarins, Boc Long and Ly Cam, along with 5 or 6 other guards, knelt in front of the palace courtyard and shouted loudly: "The king's grace is not given equally." The friend asked the reason, Ly

Cam replied: "South Viet is far away and is not covered by heaven or earth, so the sweet rain does not come down, the cool breeze does not come." Emperor Hien De immediately issued a consolation edict, choosing a talented person to be the Ha Duong order, and a filial person to be the Luc Hop order.

So the struggle for equal rights of the Southern mandarins before the Han court in China was initially successful, and the Han king accepted the proposal. This struggle demonstrated the great courage and bravery of the South's intellectuals. *The Complete Annals of Dai Viet* in the Ngoai Ky (Records outside dynasties) section, the section *Si Vuong Ky* wrote as follows:

庚辰十四年 (漢獻帝協建安五年)。刺史李進上言於漢帝曰：「率土之濱，莫非王臣。今建安五年登仕朝廷，皆中州之士，未嘗獎勸遠人。」辭意感切，多所援引。漢帝詔我州之有孝廉、茂才，許除補屬州長吏，不得任中州。

進覆上疏曰：「所舉孝廉，請與十二州博士以人才專對。」而有司恐遠人虛誕，毀折中朝，不許。時我越人李琴 (琴交州人) 宿衛在台，遂邀鄉人卜龍等五六人，當正元萬國朝會之日，俯伏殿庭曰：「皇恩不均。」有司問其故。琴曰：「南越遷遠，不為皇天所覆，後土所載。故甘雨不降，涼風不飛。」辭意懇苦。詔慰勞之，以我茂才一人為夏陽令，孝廉一人為六合令。後李琴仕至司隸校尉，張重為金城太守。則我越人才得與漢人同選者，李琴、李進有以開之也。 [大越史記全書·士王紀]

(Translation: In the 14th year of Canh Thin (200), the historian Ly Tien presented a report to Emperor Han Hien: "All over the world are servants of the king. Now Kien An is in his 5th year as an official at the court. Even scholars in Central Chau have never encouraged people from

far away." His pitiful words, citing many evidences, did not accept those who were nominated for filial piety and trade from Giao Chau people in Central Asia.

Ly Tien offered his petition again and said: "The person appointed to be filial and honest, please be like doctors in twelve continents, treated based on talent." However, this time, the Court's Right Party used the excuse that people from far away were not honest, often criticized and criticized the court, so they did not approve.

At that time, in the reign of Chinh Nguyen, on the occasion of the festival of all countries coming to the court, a Vietnamese named Ly Cam (Ly Cam from Giao Chau) and his compatriot Boc Long, about 5 or 6 people who were guards, came to kneel at the court. the palace courtyard, shouting: "The king's grace is not given equally." When asked the reason, Ly Cam replied: "Nam Viet is far away and is not covered by heaven or earth, so the sweet rain does not come down, the cool breeze does not come." The words were urgent and painful. Emperor Hien immediately issued a consolation edict, choosing a talented person to be the Ha Duong order, and a filial person to be the Luc Hop order. After Ly Cam became an official to Tu Le lieutenant, Truong Trong became an official to Kim Thanh lieutenant. Talents from Vietnam and Han people were recruited together, Ly Cam and Ly Tien had the credit of starting it.) [*The Complete Annals of Dai Viet*, Section *Si Vuong Ky*]

5. Next in the 5th century there was an intellectual example named Tinh Thieu. During the time when our country was dominated by the Liang Dynasty, Emperor Wu of the Liang Dynasty (born 464, died 549), reigned for 48 years (502-549), Tinh Thieu, a famous scholar

from Giao Chi, went to the Liang dynasty to seek an official position. The Minister of Lai of the Luong Dynasty, Sai Ton, saw that the Tinh family was not a big family and had no one who was successful, so he only gave him a small official position, the position of Quang Duong mon lang (soldier guarding the gate of Quang Duong citadel). He felt humiliated, refused to accept it, returned to his hometown, and followed Ly Bi's uprising to regain independence and autonomy. When Emperor Ly Nam established the Van Xuan state (in 544), Tinh Thieu was appointed to head the Literature department, and General Pham Tu headed the Martial department. Currently, there are no documents clearly recorded about Tinh Thieu. In *The Complete History of Dai Viet*, the reign of Ly Nam De mentioned "Tinh Thieu was good at literature". In *Dung Trai's essay*, author Hong Mai in China gave brief information about Tinh Thieu as follows:

并韶

梁武帝時，有交趾人并韶者，富於詞藻，
詣選求官，而吏部尚書蔡搏以并姓無前
賢，除廣陽門郎。韶恥之，遂還鄉里謀作
亂。夫用門地族望為選舉低昂，乃晉、宋
以來弊法，蔡搏賢者也，不能免俗，何
哉？

[洪邁《容齋隨筆》]

(Translation: Tinh Thieu

During the Southern Dynasty of Luong Vo Emperor, there was a Giao Chi man named Tinh Thieu, good at literature, with extraordinary talent. He came to the Ministry of Lai to ask for an official position. The Minister of Lai Ministry, Sai Ton, saw that no one had achieved the Tinh family name before. , only for the position of Quang Duong mon lang (soldier guarding the gate of Quang Duong citadel). Feeling humiliated, Thieu returned to his hometown and plotted a rebellion. Relying on high or low family reputation to decide election levels has been a bad

practice since the Eastern Jin, Liu Song, and Sai Ton dynasties. Choosing good people like that, cannot abandon old habits, why? [Excerpt from "*Dung Trai essay*" by Hong Mai]

Tinh Thieu's courageous act of refusing the official position and criticizing the small and low official position showed the temperament of Vietnamese intellectuals at that time, and was truly admirable and set an example.

6. Regarding the literary talent of the Vietnamese people during the time our country was colonized by the North, there were a few famous people who earned the respect of the Northerners. According to information in history books, some names can be mentioned such as Phung Dai Tri, Dr. Khuong Cong Phu.

King Tang Thai Tong (Ly The Dan, reigned 626-649) praised Phung Dai Tri's poetry as "not losing to China".

Khuong Cong Phuc's poem "White Clouds Illuminate the Spring Sea" with its elegant and free words made the people of the Tang Dynasty admire and praise it.

CONCLUSION

In summary, above is some information about Vietnamese intellectuals recorded in ancient histories and books in China and Vietnam. That information clearly demonstrated the bravery and mettle of the elite - excellent examples, typical of Vietnamese intellectuals, even though at that time our country was being colonized by Chinese feudal dynasties. , then that bravery becomes even brighter and more wonderful. It is true that "there is always talent" as the ancients taught, it is not wrong. The bravery, mettle and indomitable spirit of the intellectual elite as mentioned above are the identity of the Vietnamese people. So even though they were slaves, these intellectuals, when given the opportunity, rose up to fight, including fighting to regain independence and autonomy for the country.

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