

# THE ROLE OF THAI ETHNIC GROUP IN VIETNAM – LAO FRIENDSHIP RELATION

Pham Van Loi

Institute of Vietnamese Studies and  
Development  
Email: [ploivme@gmail.com](mailto:ploivme@gmail.com)

Received: 9/3/2020  
Reviewed: 13/3/2020  
Revised: 17/3/2020  
Accepted: 25/3/2020  
Released: 31/3/2020

DOI:  
<https://doi.org/10.25073/0866-773X/393>

*Vietnam-Laos has more than 2,000 km of common national borders. The coherent relationship between the two nations and the inhabitants of the two countries has been formed and fostered in history and especially developed over the past 7 decades. The Thai ethnic group in Vietnam has over one million people, residing permanently, concentrated in the Northwest region, the region consists of 8 provinces, of which 4 provinces have the Vietnam-Laos border crossing.*

*This paper focuses on clarifying the practical basis for the Thai ethnic people to play a role in the Vietnam-Laos traditional friendship relation and propose some solutions to promote the role of Thai in maintaining, developing the traditional friendship relation between Vietnam and Laos, now and in the future.*

**Keywords:** Role; Promote the role; Thai ethnic people; Tradition; Vietnam-Laos traditional friendship relation.

## 1. Introduction

Vietnam - Laos are two neighboring countries with a common national border of 2,067 km. The coherent relationship between the two nations and the people of the two countries has been formed and fostered, developed over the history of over a thousand years of building and defending the country of both nations. Especially, over the past 7 decades, the traditional friendship, the faithful attachment between the people of Vietnam and Laos have been set by President Ho Chi Minh and President Kaysone Phomvihane, its foundations are nurtured and cultivated by successive generations of the 2 Party, 2 States and people of both countries, becoming extremely valuable assets of both peoples, 2 nations, on the way of sustainable development and regional, national and international integration today.

The Thai people in Vietnam is one of the few ethnic groups with a population of over 1 million people, residing permanently, concentrated in the Northwest, The Northwest, according to the zoning pattern of geographers, including the provinces of Lai Chau, Dien Bien, Son La, Hoa Binh and the western part of 4 provinces of Yen Bai, Lao Cai, Thanh Hoa and Nghe An, of which 4 Dien Bien, Son La, Thanh Hoa and Nghe An provinces have

Vietnam-Laos border running through.

This paper focuses on clarifying the practical foundations that have formed the important role of the Thai ethnic people in the traditional Vietnam-Laos friendship and proposed some solutions to promote the role of the Thai ethnic people, in maintaining and developing the traditional friendship between the two nations and the people of the two countries.

## 2. Research overview

There have been many studies on the traditional friendship of Vietnam and Laos, especially on the perspective of history and revolution. The most typical is the book series History of Vietnam - Laos, Laos - Vietnam special relations 1930 – 2007, 5 volumes (Vietnam Communist Party, 2012). Earlier, the work History of Vietnam - Laos, Laos - Vietnam special relation 1930-2007 was published in 2011 (Lao People's Revolutionary Party & Vietnam Communist Party, 2011). In 2017, the work Vietnam - Laos special relations (1930-12017) was published (Central Propaganda Department, 2017).

From the perspective of economy, culture, society, national security,...some works can be mentioned, such as: "Looking back on Vietnam-Laos cooperation in political, security and economic

fields in the 1991 – 2001 period” (Giap, 2001, 13-14); “Vietnam’s goods exchange with Lao People’s Democratic Republic through border gates and borders situation” and “Vietnam - Laos cooperation in goods importing and exporting” (Thuy, 1998),... There are authors interested in the cooperation between Son La province and the provinces of Northeastern Laos (Executive Committee of Son La Provincial Party Committee, 2011). The author of this article has participated in research on residents along Road 9, in Central Vietnam, Laos (Vietnam Museum of Ethnology, 2009).

The relationship between Thai people in Vietnam and some ethnicities of Lao origin has been studied by some authors. Some works directly address this issue, such as: “The origin relationship between Thanh-Nghe Thai people and Thai groups in Laos” (An, 2012, 30-36), “Summary of the natural relics of the Thai tribes in Northwest Vietnam” (Van, 1965, 40-48), “An outline about the process of natural migration, building the muong of Thai Mai Chau and Hoa Binh”(Toan, 2012, 137-146),...; Some other works also show the relationship between the above mentioned ethnic groups, such as: “Thai people in Northwest Vietnam” (Trong, 1978), “Thai people in western Nghe An” (An, 2017), “Thai people of Thanh Hoa in the general picture of Thai people in Vietnam” (Giao, 2012, 21-29), etc. However, in these studies, the relationship between these ethnic groups is almost not placed in the friendly relationship between 2 countries Vietnam - Laos.

### 3. Research methods

To complete this paper, the author has mainly collected, analyzed, synthesized and used the resources from the previous research projects of other scientists, at the same time processing and using a number of data is collected from reports and statistics of localities in the region, from the provincial to the village level and by the ethnographic fieldwork methodology with basic techniques such as observation, interview, photography, video recording, group discussion,...

### 4. Research results

#### 4.1. About ethnic origin and locality of residence

Currently, most scientists agree that Thai people have migrated to Vietnam since the end of the first millennium and the beginning of the second millennium AD. It was the migration of the White Thai group to the northern region of Lai

Chau province (Van, 1965, 46) and the migration of the Black Tai to Muong Lo (Van Chan district and Nghia Lo town, Yen Bai province nowadays) (Van, 1965, 43). During that time, they gradually migrated from the North to the South and moved back and forth between the Vietnam-Laos border, from east to west and from west to east.

The first is the migration of Thai people from Muong Lo to Muong Thanh (Dien Bien). For about 20 years, this Thai group owned  $\frac{3}{4}$  wide valley of the Northwest (Muong Thanh, Muong Lo, Muong Than) and many other small valleys, such as Muong Muoi, Muong La, Muong Quai,...they continue to conquer Xa groups (the Mon-Khmer ethnic groups in Northwest Vietnam today) in Muong Mua (Mai Son) and Song Ma and Son La today (Van, 1965, 44). Next, the migration of the White Thai group from Lai Chau to the south. By the thirteenth century, the White Thai group owned the Muong Lay area and developed its power to surrounding areas such as Quynh Nhai (Son La), Muong So, Muong Te (Lai Chau); sometimes they even came down to Muong Tac (Phu Yen, Son La),... (Van, 1965, 46).

The Thai in Muong Mun (Mai Chau, Hoa Binh today), originating in Guangxi, China (now) “migrated to Bac Ha, Lao Cai province (Muong Khuoc Ha). Afterwards, they followed the Red River and went up to the Da River and settled there to form a village in Muong Mun to this day” (Toan, 2012, 137). The author affirmed “According to historical records, Thai people in Mai Chau district belong to the White Thai lineage,...; is a bridge between the majority of Thai people in the Northwest, ..., and the Thai people in the western province of Thanh Hoa and Nghe An” (Toan, 2012, 137).

In the traditional Northwest region (the provinces of Lai Chau, Dien Bien, Son La, Hoa Binh and the western two provinces of Lao Cai and Yen Bai, taking the Red River as a boundary), the situation of Thai people moving back and forth of the borders are common in history. The ethnologist Cam Trong divided the traditional Northwest into three areas, of which the northern part, the White Thai ethnic group developed from Muong Te to the top of the Nam U and Thuong Lao rivers (Trong, 1978, 64). Regarding the southern region, centered on Moc Chau and Son La, the author acknowledges that the Thai immigrated from Laos in the fourteenth century (Van, 1965, 47) with the imprints of the Sa lineage and vestige of a few ancient temples. However, the author thinks that the power of the Thai Moc Chau

aristocracy then dominated a large area. In the west and southwest, they affect the areas of Muong Et, Chieng Co (Sam Nua, Thuong Lao) (Trong, 1978, 64). The center of the Northwest is traditionally the residence of the Black Tai group, from Muong Lo up, with virtually no influence/relations with Thai groups across the Vietnam-Laos border.

In the western region of Nghe An province, Thai people come at different times, from different places. Specifically, “From the thirteenth century to the nineteenth century, the region of Phu Quy continuously received the relics of Thai people from the Northwest, Thanh Hoa and Laos”; “From the fourteenth century onwards,..., the area of road 7A has been supplemented by continuous migration groups from Phu Quy, Thanh Hoa,...;from the Northwest through Laos then from Laos to flood down along the Nam Mo River,...”; “The genealogy of the Nine-compartment temple, (...) in Muong Nooc is associated with the Lo Cam family (Lo Vang) who originated from Laos into Thanh Hoa and then moved to Phu Quy area” (An, 2017, 30-32). The author leads the research of Prof. Dang Nghiem Van said that “the Thay Thanh group not only came from Thanh Hoa but also included a part of the Thai people from Muong Thanh who moved to Laos and then came to Nghe An about 200-300 years ago” (An, 2017, 32-33).

Concerning this issue, Dr. Vi Van An affirmed: “In terms of origin, Lao people in general, ethnic groups belonging to Phu Thay community in Laos now have two starting points: one is,..., a part of the Thai first migrated from southwest, Yunnan (China) down (...), then merged with the parts of the Mon-Khmer group and became Lao ...; secondly, possibly starting from the 11th-12th century onwards, the emigration of parts of Tay Men, Tay Moi, Tay Pao, Tay Dam, Tay Khao, Tay Deng, etc. from Vietnam to Laos”(An, 2012, 32).

Currently, Thai people are present in most of the provinces and cities across the country, but they are still concentrated in the Northwest. In 2009, 7 provinces in the Northwest (Yen Bai, Lai Chau, Dien Bien, Son La, Hoa Binh, Thanh Hoa, Nghe An) had 1,483,474 Thais residing out of 1,550,423 Thais in Vietnam, accounting for 95.68% (Central Steering Committee for the Population and Housing Census, 2010, 134). In 4 provinces with the Vietnam-Laos border, in the Northwest region (Dien Bien, Son La, Thanh Hoa, Nghe An), Thai people have 1,279,179 people, accounting for more than 2/3 of the population of ethnic minorities in

the nation, of which Son La province has 572,441 people, accounting for 1/3 of the population of the Thai people in Vietnam.

In 1985, 10 years after its establishment, the Lao government developed a list of 47 ethnic groups (Thieu, 1996, 29); In 1990, a new list of ethnic groups in Laos with 38 ethnic groups was established (Thieu, 1996, 30-31); In 2005, the list of ethnic components in Laos including 49 ethnic groups was adopted and put into use by the state.<sup>1</sup> In all three categories, there are the Phu Thay ethnic group (Phu = people; Thay = Thai = Tay) with many local groups with similar names to the local Thai groups in Vietnam, such as Black Thai, White Thai, Tay Muong, Tay Thanh, ...; The two ethnic groups of Lao and Phu Thay are classified as Thai (Thieu, 1996, 43). Being the majority ethnic group of the nation, Lao people reside in all 17 provinces and capital of Vientiane; Phu Thay and the Lao-Thay ethnic groups are present in 15/17 provinces and capital of Vientiane, including 5 provinces in the northeastern region, bordering the northwestern region of Vietnam, including: Phuong Xaly, Luong Pra Bang, Hua Phan, Xieng Khoang, Bolikhamxay.

This shows that the Thai people in Vietnam have a strong attachment to the Northwest and the Vietnam-Laos border, in their organic relations with the ethnic communities across the border, the Lao people and the Phu Thay people in particular, Lao-Thay or Lao-Tai ethnic groups in Laos in general. The Thai in general and the Thai in the Northwest in particular, play an important role in economic, cultural, social, environmental relations, etc. with the Lao, Phu Thay and the Lao-Thay ethnic groups in particular; in the traditional friendship between the two nations, the two nations of Vietnam and Laos in general.

#### ***4.2. Relations of the Thai ethnic people in history and present***

*Economically*, Thai people depend on wet rice, do not value trade, but due to the needs of life, the trade and exchange of goods of the Thai ethnic people is not only done with the ethnic groups in the area, in the country, but also expanded to ethnic groups outside the country, including ethnic groups in Laos. “In the past, in many places such as Muong Tac, Muong Bun (Phu Yen), Muong Vat (Yen Chau), Mai Son, etc. there were large groups of cattle traders traveling quite far. Some went to

<sup>1</sup> Introduction of Lao PDR, chinhphu.vn (updated December 2009; accessed August 30, 2019)

Xip Xoong Pan Na and other areas of the Lu people bordering Burma in exchange for the Lu sword, implements and silver and gold”(Trong, 1978, 146). Of course, when it came to Burma (modern Myanmar), the Thai people in the Northwest could not ignore trading relations with the Lao, Phu Thay and ethnic groups in northeastern Laos. The love song “*Xong chu xon sao*” (See off lover) is about a Thai boy (Vietnam) who came to Laos to buy buffaloes, cows, horses, etc., and sold them to people in Muong Xo (Lai Chau) and Muong La (Yunnan, China). In addition to livestock products, pottery of Thai people in Muong Chanh has also become a common product for Northwest ethnic groups.

Due to its residence in the foot of the mountain valley, the Thai residence is a link between the residence of the ethnic minorities and the Kinh in the delta. Residents in these two areas have many products that are necessary for each other’s lives, such as products of the sea (salt, fish sauce, dried fish, etc.) and industrial products (for lowland residents), but necessary for the lives of the Thai and upland residents, including the peoples across the border); Forest products of upland people are always preferred by Kinh people. Therefore, the Thai residence has many old markets, such as Muong Sa market (before - Thuan Chau, now - Quynh Nhai), Ta Hoc (Mai Son), Song Khua (Moc Chau), where goods are exchanging “between lowland and reverse areas, and expanding trade to all localities” (Minh, 2017, 598).

Today, trade and exchange of goods between ethnic groups in Vietnam (Viet, Thai, Mong,...) with ethnic groups across the Vietnam-Laos border (Phu Thay and other ethnic groups) is more developed. National border gates; markets and towns on the two sides of the border have really become goods transshipment points between Vietnamese and Thais: Vietnamese products are sold to serve the life and activities of the Lao ethnic groups, including Phu Thay and Lao-Thay ethnic groups; products and goods brought from Thailand to serve the needs of Thai and Vietnamese consumers in Vietnam. This trading activity takes place strongly at Cau Treo and Ha Noi border gates (Ha Tinh), Thanh Thuy and Nam Can (Nghe An); Ten Tan and Na Meo (Thanh Hoa); Sap Sap (Son La); Tay Trang (Dien Bien),...

*Culturally*, due to its close origins, from past to recent border crossings maintained between the Thai people in Northwest Vietnam and the Phu Thay people in Northeast Laos; Having the same

origin from southwestern China who migrated down, between the Thai (Vietnam) and the Lao (Laos), these three ethnic groups have many cultural similarities, especially the proximity to the language. They easily connect with each other in the present life. In addition, Thai people in Vietnam have always been a major and important resident of the Northwest; The Phu Thay and Lao people, expanding into the Lao-Thay ethnic groups, are the majority inhabitants of Laos, so their cultural features have been affecting the culture and life of many people. Ethnic group in the area. These are the ethnic groups of Mon-Khmer, Thai-Kadai, Viet-Muong,...in the Northwest in particular, in Vietnam in general; Mon-Khmer, Mong-Dao ethnic groups in Northeast Laos in particular and in Laos in general. This is an opportunity and a premise for creating an important role of Thai ethnic people in Vietnam in preserving, promoting and developing solidarity relations between them and the ethnic groups in Northeastern Laos in particular, ethnicity in Laos in general, contributing to maintaining and developing the traditional friendship between Vietnam and Laos.

Some cultural factors of Thai people in Vietnam, Lao people, Phu Thay in Laos, have made great and typical contributions to creating an important role for these ethnic groups in the friendship relation between Vietnam and Laos. The ritual of indigenous peasantry and muong of Thai ethnic people not only dominates the spiritual and religious life of Thai people themselves; not only plays a connecting role within the Thai people but also dominates the spiritual life and belief; It plays a connecting role with many ethnic groups in the region, especially the Mon-Khmer, Thai-Kadai and Mong-Dao ethnic groups. Because of being adjacent to each other on the two sides of the border, the rituals of the Thai people in Laos and the Phu Thay people in Laos also attract and connect people of these ethnic groups together; between the Thai and Phu Thay ethnic groups and other ethnic groups in the region; The connection between Vietnamese residents and Lao residents in general.

The ceremony for tying the wrist is originated from Lao people, Laos, or popular among Lao people and Phu Thay ethnic groups in Laos. In Vietnam, with the Thai in particular, the Tay-Thai ethnic group, the Thai-Kadai language family in general, this ritual is not very common. Currently, this ritual is only performed regularly, common in a few Thai groups in western Nghe An and western Thanh Hoa. This ritual is a manifestation of the

custom of worshipping and praying for the health of individuals and families of Thai people (An, 2017, 294). Recently this ritual has been common practice in the tourist villages of the Thai in the region. When visitors come to their homes and villages, families conduct a worshipping ceremony, tying only their wrists and best wishes to guests. This has contributed to improving the connectivity between Thais and other ethnic groups, enhancing the role of Thais in their relations with Lao ethnic groups and in the friendship between Vietnam and Laos in general.

Regarding *xòe* dance, it is necessary to pay attention to the origin relationship between the *xòe* of Thai Vietnamese people with the *xòe* of Lao people, Phu Thay people in Laos. In particular, with the *xòe* of the Phu Thay people, not only concerned about the origin relations but also about the exchange and mutual relations between them and the Thai in Vietnam because about 1000 years ago, Thai people in Vietnam and the Phu Thay people in Laos have always had relations in migration, settling in to economic, cultural, social and environmental relations, including exchange and acculturation relations. It can be seen that at present, the *xòe* of Thai people in Nghe An and Thai villages next to the Vietnam-Laos border, belonging to Vietnam, have many interactions with the *xòe* of Phu Thay. This process led to the presence of a waltz (Lao origin) in the *xòe* of Thai Vietnamese (relatively dense in Nghe An and Thai villages bordering on the border). Dr. Vi Van An said that “this is the third most famous dance” of Thai people in Nghe An and compares it with the *xòe* of Thai people in the traditional Northwest (An, 2017, 315). More importantly, spinning *xòe* around the traditional northwestern Thai and *lăm vòng* in the western Thai people of Thanh-Nghe, always performed to serve tourists. Therefore, this is also the basis for connecting Thai people in Vietnam with Lao people, Phu Thay people in Laos and connecting them with other ethnic groups.

*From a social perspective*, due to the many similarities, the ability to connect between the Thai in Northwest Vietnam and the Lao, the Phu Thay and the ethnic groups in Northeast Laos is quite high. This is a factor and a basis to affirm the important role of the Thai people in Northwest Vietnam in preserving and developing the traditional friendship between Vietnam and Laos. However, the issue/social relationship between the Thai people in Northwest Vietnam and the Lao people,

the Phu Thay people and some ethnic groups in Northeastern Laos that needs attention now is inter-border and cross-border marriage.

In recent years, there have been more and more cases of Thai young men and women getting married to Lao men and women, Phu Thay and some Lao-Thai language-speaking ethnic groups in Laos, because they have the same origin with many similarities in language, culture, customs, customs, especially customs and practices in marriage and marriage. The trend of inter-border and cross-marriage marriage inevitably causes difficulties in the management of local and central governments, but also creates opportunities to enhance and promote the role of Thai people in the sustainable development of the Northwest region. In particular, this increasing trend of marriage also contributes to enhancing the role and position of Thai people in Northwestern Vietnam in maintaining and developing the traditional friendship between Vietnam and Laos.

Regarding *the environment*, Thai people is a resident of the valley at the foot of the mountain, but for a long time residing in the area, especially with the socio-economic foundation developing earlier and stronger, therefore the regulations and laws of the Thai people related to the protection of natural resources have affected the ethnic groups in the area. Specifically, Thai people forbid to cut down trees and cultivate in upstream forests, ghost forests; Communities always maintain and protect forests for hunting, breeding,...; protecting some sections of rivers, streams, lakes,... for fishing, catching shrimp,...; not grazing cattle and poultry, catching shrimps or fishes in a certain river or stream section to serve meals, bathing or washing, family activities; Do not build houses near rivers or streams; near the junction of rivers and streams; do not dig or cut too deep into the foot of mountains, hillsides, or ground in the valley to minimize the impact causing landslides and rocks; landslides of hills and mountains, endangering the life and properties of Thai people and other ethnic groups. All of these rules, practices and laws of the Thai people have contributed to the protection of the natural environment, the living environment for them and other ethnic groups in the region, even contributing to the protection of the living environment for both ethnic groups across the border. This contributes to the creation and enhancement of the role of Thai people in relations with the ethnic groups in the region, on both sides of the border, contributing to

preserving and developing the traditional friendship relations between the two countries' residents. Vietnam and Laos.

### 5. Discussion

It can be seen that the Thai group migrated from southwestern China to northwestern Vietnam, through northeastern Laos, back and forth between the two sides of the Vietnam-Laos border, in Vietnam being Thai, and in Lao, Phu Thay. They have the same origin, the same process of migration and settlement and have many common characteristics, from economic activities to material, spiritual and social culture. These cultural features are the basis and premise for the connection, exchange and cooperation relations between the two communities to the exchange and cooperation relations between the two countries Vietnam - Laos. However, the process of exchanges and cooperation between these two ethnic groups is more or less restricted by the differences in ethnic names in the two countries, whether Thay or Thai are just two ways of recording the names of two communities, two co-residents of the same origin, residing in 2 countries. Even, "Thai" is not only similar with "Thay" but also similar with "Tay" (the name of the largest ethnic minority group in Vietnam, after Vietnamese (Tay), in the same language group with Thai people). Therefore, in order to promote the role of Thai people in preserving and developing the traditional friendship between Vietnam and Laos, it is necessary to discuss and discuss to come to a unified name between Thai people in Vietnam and the Phu people in Laos. This not only helps preserve and develop the traditional friendship between Vietnam and Laos, but also helps Phu Thay people in Laos to integrate with the general development trend of the Thai people in the region and the world.

Economically, especially the trade and exchange of goods between the Thais in northwestern Vietnam and the Lao, Phu Thay and many other ethnic groups in northeastern Laos, to promote the role of Thais in the economic development of ethnic groups here, the State of Vietnam and Laos should continue to implement the policy of openness and deep integration in the economy, the development of commodity economy and the market economy, creating conditions for Thai people in northwestern Vietnam and Phu Thay people in northeastern Laos have conditions to develop trading and exchanging goods among ethnic groups, inside and outside the region. The central governments of the two

countries and local governments in the region need to have preferential policies on finance, taxes, etc... to create conditions for Thai people in northwestern Vietnam, Phu Thay in northeastern Laos and other ethnic groups in the region have good conditions for developing and exchanging goods, contributing to the creation and promotion of the region into a center for goods circulation between Vietnamese (Vietnam) and Thai (Thailand), contributing economic development of ethnic groups in the area, improving the lives of people. The central government of 2 countries; authorities of localities in the region, especially Son La (Vietnam) and Hua Phan (Laos), should pay attention to prevent drug trafficking and transportation activities across the border, causing serious consequences for the residents of the region, both economically, culturally and socially.

Culturally, the central governments of the two countries and local governments in the region should facilitate cultural and arts exchange activities among ethnic groups, especially cultural and arts exchanges between Thai people (Vietnamese) and Phu Thay (Lao). Here, we need to pay special attention to cultural and artistic items, which are able to connect between individuals and communities together, especially *xòe* dance, including the spinning *xòe* of Thai people in the Northwest (Vietnam) and the *lăm vông* of the Phu Thay people (Laos), have been learned and practiced by the Thai group in the western region of Nghe An. Creating favorable conditions and increasing opportunities for Thai people in Vietnam and Phu Thay people in Lao to perform traditional *xòe* dances is one of the important measures to promote the role of Thais in preserving and developing the Vietnam - Laos traditional friendship.

Socially, the law requires young men and women to get married to register with marriage in accordance with the development trend of the times and convenient for population management. It is still difficult for the Vietnamese and foreigners to work with ethnic minorities in the border areas, so it is quite common for young men and women to not register when getting married. When the children of these couples are born, they usually do not have a birth certificate with both parents. This is one of the problems causing many difficulties, limiting the situation of marriage between young men and women of ethnic groups in Vietnam and Laos. The State of Vietnam and Laos should have more favorable regulations in marriage registration

for couples in border areas, in order to promote (without restriction) the trend of inter-border, cross-border marriage part of strengthening the friendship between Vietnam and Laos.

Regarding the environment, in order to promote the roles of the Thai in Vietnam and the Phu Thay people in Laos, the central governments of the two countries and local governments in the region need to adopt regulations that allow the maintenance of customs. their practices, regulations, and laws relate to the protection of natural resources, such as protection of watershed forests, ghost forests, forests for hunting, cattle grazing, protection of rivers, stream for collecting shrimp and fish fishing; protect water sources for daily life; do not build villages or houses near rivers and streams; next to the junction of rivers and streams; restricting digging and cutting deep into the foothills, mountain foothills and valleys in the valley to minimize landslides and rocky landslides, thus harming Thais, Phu Thay and ethnic minorities themselves in the middle and upland in the region.

## 6. Conclusion

6.1. The Thais in northwestern Vietnam and the Phu Thay people in northeastern Laos both from the southwestern region of China now migrated around the end of the first millennium and the beginning of the second millennium. During about 1,000 years of migration and settling back and forth between the Vietnam-Laos border area, the people of these two ethnic groups still maintained many common and similar cultural characteristics, from economic activities to cultural activities. physical, mental, and social culture. The cultural similarities left by history are the basis and premise to establish the role of Thai people in Vietnam, Phu Thay people in Laos and the ability to promote the role of these ethnic groups in preserving and developing developing the

traditional friendship between Vietnam and Laos.

6.2. General characteristics in the economic, material, spiritual and social activities of the northwestern Thai people of Vietnam, the Phu Thay people of northeastern Laos are the basis and premise to create an important role in the relationship between these two ethnic groups and the other ethnic groups in the region, are trading and exchanging goods; is the ritual of *xén bản*, *xén mừng*, a ritual of worshipping, making a wrist tie, *xòe* dance; is the similarity in rituals, customs and practices of marriage, and the increasing trend of marriages between Thai, Phu Thay and many other ethnic groups on both sides of the border; are the provisions in the protection of natural resources, from forest resources, forest land to water resources,... to serve the life, activities and labor of the communities and people in the region.

6.3. In order to promote the role of Thai people in Vietnam, Phu Thay people in Laos, in preserving and developing the traditional friendship between Vietnam and Laos, the state of Vietnam, Laos and local governments in the region have to exchanging and unifying the names of these two ethnic groups, both in Vietnam and in Laos; continue developing market economy, producing and exchanging goods, creating conditions for Thai people in Vietnam and Phu Thay people in Laos to develop trade and exchange goods; create conditions for cultural and arts activities of these two peoples to exchange and develop, especially the *xòe* art, the spinning *xòe*; create favorable conditions for young men and women of all ethnic groups in the region to get married and register marriages, especially inter-border and cross-border marriages; create conditions for the protection of natural resources of the Thai and the Phu Thay people have conditions to enforce and promote the impact in today's life.

## References

- An, V. V. (2012). The origin relationship between Thanh-Nghe Thai people and Thai groups in Laos. In *Thai-Kadai Linguistics Ethnic Group in Vietnam - Tradition, integration and development* (pp. 30–36). Hanoi: The Gioi Publishing House.
- An, V. V. (2017). *Thai people in western Nghe An*. Hanoi: The Gioi Publishing House.
- Central Propaganda Department. (2017). *Vietnam - Laos Special Relations (1930-2017)*. Hanoi: Chinh tri quoc Gia Su that Publishing House.
- Central Steering Committee for the Population and Housing Census. (2010). *Vietnam Population and Housing Census In 2009*.
- Communist Party of Vietnam. (2012). *History of special relations between Vietnam - Laos, Laos - Vietnam 1930 - 2007*. Hanoi: Chinh tri Quoc gia Publishing House.
- Executive Committee of Son La Provincial Party Committee. (2011). *60-year history of friendship and cooperation with Son La and Hua Phan, Luong Pra Bang (1948 - 2008)*.

- Giao, L. S. (2012). Thai people of Thanh Hoa in the general picture of Thai people in Vietnam. In *Thai-Kadai Linguistics Ethnic Group in Vietnam - Tradition, integration and development* (pp. 21–29). Hanoi: The Gioi Publishing House, Hanoi.
- Giap, N. H. (2001). Looking back on Vietnam-Laos cooperation in political, security and economic fields in the 1991 – 2001 period. *International Studies, Vol. 41*, 13–14.
- Lao People's Democratic Party, & Vietnam Communist Party. (2011). *History of Special Relations of Vietnam - Laos, Laos - Vietnam 1930 - 2007*. Hanoi: Chinh tri Quoc gia Publishing House.
- Minh, L. Van. (2017). Thai Muong Chanh and Son La pottery with conservation and development. In *Thai-Kadai Linguistics Ethnic Group in Vietnam - Tradition, integration and development* (pp. 597–605). Hanoi: The Gioi Publishing House.
- Thieu, N. D. (1996). *Ethnic structure in Laos*. Hanoi: Khoa hoc Xa hoi Publishing House.
- Thuy, T. T. (1998). Vietnam's goods exchange with Lao People's Democratic Republic through border gates and borders situation. *World Economic Problems, No. 10*.
- Thuy, T. T. (2002). Vietnam - Laos cooperation in goods importing and exporting. *Southeast Asia Studies, No. 4*.
- Toan, L. S. (2012). An outline about the process of natural migration, building the muong of Thai Mai Chau and Hoa Binh. In *Thai-Kadai Linguistics Ethnic Group in Vietnam - Tradition, integration and development* (pp. 137–146). Hanoi: The Gioi Publishing House.
- Trong, C. (1978). *Thai people in Northwest Vietnam*. Hanoi: Khoa hoc Xa hoi Publishing House.
- Van, D. N. (1965). Summary of the migration of Thai tribes into Northwestern Vietnam. *Historical Research, No. 78*, 40–48.
- Vietnam Museum of Ethnology. (2009). *Road 9: Opportunities and challenges*. Hanoi.
- Y, L. C. (2002). Thai pottery making in Muong Chanh. *Ethnography, No. 6*, 18–24.

## VAI TRÒ CỦA DÂN TỘC THÁI TRONG QUAN HỆ HỮU NGHỊ VIỆT - LÀO

**Phạm Văn Lợi**

Viện Việt Nam học và Khoa học phát triển  
Email: [ploivme@gmail.com](mailto:ploivme@gmail.com)

Ngày nhận bài: 9/3/2020  
Ngày phản biện: 13/3/2020  
Ngày tác giả sửa: 17/3/2020  
Ngày duyệt đăng: 25/3/2020  
Ngày phát hành: 31/3/2020

DOI:  
<https://doi.org/10.25073/0866-773X/393>

### Tóm tắt

Việt Nam - Lào có hơn 2.000 km đường biên giới quốc gia chung. Quan hệ gắn kết giữa hai quốc gia và người dân hai nước đã được hình thành và bồi đắp trong lịch sử và đặc biệt phát triển trong hơn 7 thập kỷ qua.

Dân tộc Thái ở Việt Nam có trên một triệu người, cư trú lâu dài, tập trung ở vùng Tây Bắc, khu vực bao gồm 8 tỉnh, trong đó 4 tỉnh có đường biên giới Việt - Lào chạy qua.

Bài viết này tập trung làm rõ các cơ sở thực tế tạo lập vai trò của người Thái trong quan hệ hữu nghị truyền thống Việt Nam - Lào và đề xuất một số giải pháp nhằm phát huy vai trò của người Thái trong việc duy trì, phát triển quan hệ hữu nghị truyền thống giữa hai nước Việt Nam và Lào, trong hiện tại và tương lai.

### Từ khóa

Vai trò; Phát huy vai trò; Dân tộc Thái; Truyền thống; Quan hệ hữu nghị truyền thống Việt - Lào