

RESEARCH ARTICLE

Annals of the Hồng Bàng Clan: From Ancient Legend to Modern Molecular Biology Evidence

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Abstract: The biography of the Hồng Bàng Clan is considered as a legend, a semi-historical document and an important part of the Viet’s cultural heritage. According to this work, the Viet people are the descendants of Shen Nong (an ancestor of the Han Chinese), migrating from China to the Red River Delta. A large number of scholars have built a Hundred Viet/百越 hypothesis, also known as “migration-from-the-north hypothesis” from this document. Throughout the long history, Hồng Bàng legend has created popular misunderstandings of the Viet about their origin and misconceptions for later researchers of various subjects, such as literature, linguistics, history, and ethnology. By using the interdisciplinary and ethnographic methodology, this research provides an overview of the Hồng Bàng legend, points out illogical statements, and gives a plausible hypothesis for it. In addition, by analyzing ancient historical documents and examining modern molecular biology, this paper supplies the supportive arguments for “migration-from-the-south hypothesis” which plays a crucial role in determining Vietnamese ancient history.

Keywords: Hồng Bàng, Viet, legend, ethnic origin, molecular biology evidence.

An Overview of Hồng Bàng Legend and Hundred Viet Hypothesis

In an official historical document named Đại Việt Sử Kí toàn thư (大越史記全書 - Complete Annals of Dai Viet) from Ngo et al. (2012, pp. 1–3), Hồng Bàng legend consists of three parts, including:

Part 1 is about Lord Kinh Dương (Jing Yang / 涇陽). In 2879 BC, Đế Minh (Di Ming/ 帝明), a third-generation descendant of the Fiery Emperor

Thần Nông (Shen Nong/ 神農) sired Đế Nghi (Di Yi/ 帝儀). He then toured the south and obtained the Vụ Tiên/ Wu Xian maiden, who gave birth to Kinh Dương. Đế Minh thereupon appointed Đế Nghi as heir apparent to rule over the north, and invested as king Kinh Dương to rule over the south, where it was called the Xích Quỷ (Chi Gui/ 赤鬼) Kingdom. (Ngo et al., 2012, p. 1)

In Part 2, King Lạc Long (Hao Long/ 貉龍): The king (Kinh Dương) married [...] the daughter of Lord Động Đình (Dongting/ 洞庭), who gave birth to Lạc Long. [...] Lord [Lạc Long] married [...] Âu Cơ



Figure 1. The Redrawn Map of Xích Quỷ Kingdom (Ha, 2016).

(Yu Ji/ 嫫嫫) (some folklore researchers said that she was the embodiment of a god bird), who gave birth to one hundred sons. These were the ancestors of the Hundred Viet. One day Lạc Long Quân said to Âu Cơ “I am of dragon stock and you are of immortal stock. Just as water and fire annul each other, so would it be truly difficult for us to be together.” He thereupon parted with her. Fifty sons were divided off to follow their mother and return to the mountains, while the other fifty followed their father to [...] the Southern Sea. He invested his eldest son as King Hùng (Xiong/ 雄) and passed the sovereign throne on to him.

Part 3 states that King Hùng: The ruler of each generation was called the Hùng king. The capital was at Phong Region. [...] The princess was called My Nương (Mei Niang/ 媚娘). [...] Hồng Bàng clan period was about 2,622 years [2879-258 BC]. (Ngo et al., 2012, pp. 2–3)

This legend was also written in official historical books of Vietnamese people since the 15th century, such as *Khâm định Việt sử Thông giám cương mục* (欽定越史通鑑綱目 - Imperially Commissioned Itemized Summaries of the Comprehensive Mirror of Viet History) written by Dai Viet national institute of history in 1881; *Việt Nam sử lược* (越南史略 - Outline History of Vietnam) written by Trần Trọng Kim in 1919; and *Lịch sử cổ đại Việt Nam* (Ancient Vietnamese History) written by Đào Duy Anh in 1956.

Being influenced by the Hồng Bàng legend and Sinocentrism, some outstanding scholars such as Đào Duy Anh (2012, p. 84), Meacham (1996, p. 97), Qin Shengmin (Yu et al., 1988, p. 181), Barlow (1997, p. 12) and Trần Ngọc Thêm (2004, p. 87) have supported Hundred Viet/ 百越 hypothesis, also known as “migration from the north hypothesis.” This states that ancient Viet people originated in the southern coastal areas of Yangtze/ 长江 River, then the Han Chinese invasion resulted in a mass migration of the Viet people to northern Vietnam. They cited the scientific model of the multilateral evolutionary hypothesis constructed in 1984 by Alan Thorne, Milford H. Wolpoff, and Wu Xinzhi. They have believed that the first modern human appeared in three major regions, including China (Wolpoff et al, 1991; Frayer et al, 1993). Wu, a Chinese paleoanthropologist, even built a China-specific Multiregional model called “Continuity with [Incidental] Hybridization”. He claimed that “while there were migrations outside of Africa within the last 100,000 years, these did not replace the human population already settled in China.” (Wu, 2006)

Historians, culturalists, ethnographers, and others who supported the Hundred Viet theory believe that the Viet people originated from Chinese. This belief colored their judgment and led them to fail to explain historical events or cultural context. For example, they could not explain why the original Vietnamese language is similar to other Austroasiatic languages and not similar to Chinese. They could not understand why artifacts created by ancient Southeast Asian people were found in Vietnam, such as bronze drums and wet rice farming tools.

These scholars believe that this legend was certainly created by Vietnamese ancestors. “If Hồng Bàng legend was a foreign legend, it would be rejected. However, the fact is that it has been in existence over hundreds of years” (Tran, 2004). In this paper, I will provide scientific evidence against this. When the illogical statements of Hồng Bàng legend are pointed out and explained, the paper will raise the level of awareness on the main studies carried out in the field of Vietnamese ancient history and ethnography, and their corresponding findings. As a result, the article will help researchers and scholars in the fields of history and ethnography to have a clearer view of this concept that, in turn, will contribute to the related accumulated knowledge in these two important fields.

This paper is discussed with respect to three strengths of ethnographic methodology: (1) gathering valid data, (2) understanding data within social-historical contexts, and (3) building theory productively.

The Illogical Points of the *Hồng Bàng* Legend

First, regarding history, contradictory events were recorded in both Vietnamese and Chinese documents.

Chinese History/Legends Did Not Mention the Key Points in the *Hồng Bàng* Legend

In Chinese history, the fourth descendant of Thần Nông (Shen Nong/ 神農) is Emperor Di Zi / 帝 釐, not Di Yi / 帝 儀 as in Vietnamese history (Szu-ma, 2018, p. 18; Ngo et al., 2012, pp. 2–3). In addition, no documents concerning the brotherhood between King Kinh Dương and Di Zi/Di Yi were found in Chinese history. Lastly, Xích Quỷ (Chi Gui/ 赤鬼) was not mentioned in any Chinese historical records, although it occupied more than half of mainland China (according to Vietnam legend).

History/Legend Books of Vietnam are Inconsistent

According to the *Hồng Bàng* legend, King Kinh Dương (half-brother of Di Yi / 帝 儀, an ancient Chinese emperor) was crowned in 2879 BC, becoming the first emperor of the Vietnamese. However, as reported by other Vietnamese history books, two ethnic groups sharing a common ancestor did not recognize each other. *An Nam Chí Lược* (安南志略 - Abbreviated Records of An Nam) wrote: “in the reign of Zhou Cheng Wang/ 周 成 王 (? - 1020 BC), when Viet clan paid tribute to him it took nine times to translate to understand the Chinese language” (Le, 2001, p. 50). *Lĩnh Nam chích quái* (嶺南摭怪 - The Arrayed Tales of Selected Oddities from South of the Passes) had noted that “[...] Huang Di/ 黃帝 (? - 2599 BC, a Shen Nong’s successor emperor) said that Jiao Zhi/交趾 (the name that Chinese called Vietnam region in ancient times) is far away, outside the national boundary, we should not invade” (Tran, 2019, p. 57).

The *Hồng Bàng* Legend was Only Recorded After the XV Century in *Đại Việt Sử Ký Toàn Thư* (大越史記全書 - Complete Annals of Đại Việt)

Since that time, *Hồng Bàng* has abundantly appeared in Vietnam’s history books. However,

nothing about this legend was mentioned in previous history books, like *Đại Việt Sử Ký* (大越史記 - Annals of Đại Việt) published in 1272 and *An Nam Chí Lược* (安南志略 - Abbreviated Records of An Nam) published in 1335. Examining other traditional genres (folk poetry, folk music, and proverbs), I could not find the information related to the Kinh Dương period.

Second, regarding linguistics, names that appeared in this legend were completely written in Chinese characters, not Vietnamese. However, Chinese belongs to the Sino-Tibetan languages, whereas Vietnamese belongs to the Austroasiatic languages (Gordon, 2005, p. 12). *Hồng Bàng* is an indigenous legend of the Viet people, but the names and grammatical structures in this legend are in Chinese. Some typical examples are listed in Table 1.

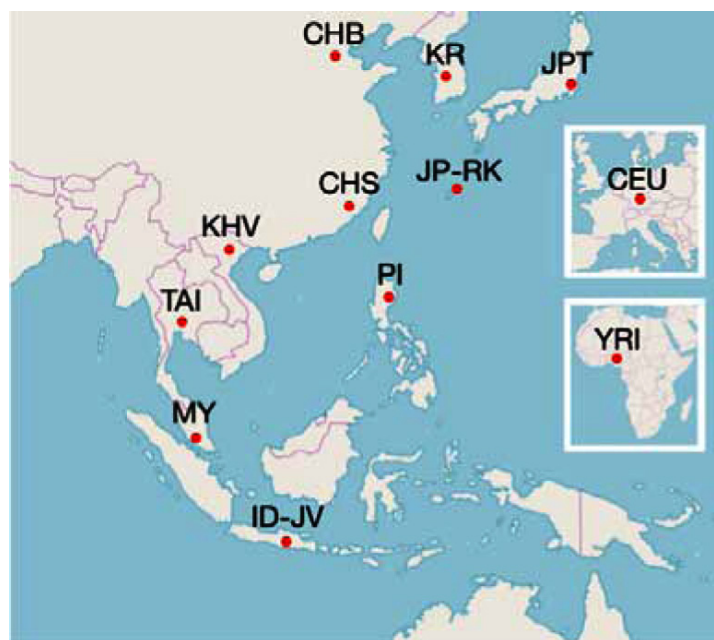
Third, regarding culture, according to the Wu Xing (五行 - five elements) theory, fire and water are interactive elements that destroy each other. It is worth noting that the Fiery Emperor Shen Nong (炎帝神農) belongs to the fire element, whereas *Lạc Long Quân*, a grandchild of Shen Nong and the Lord of the Southern Sea, belongs to the water element. Therefore, this is unreasonable and contrary to the Sinosphere philosophy that ancient legends dutifully followed.

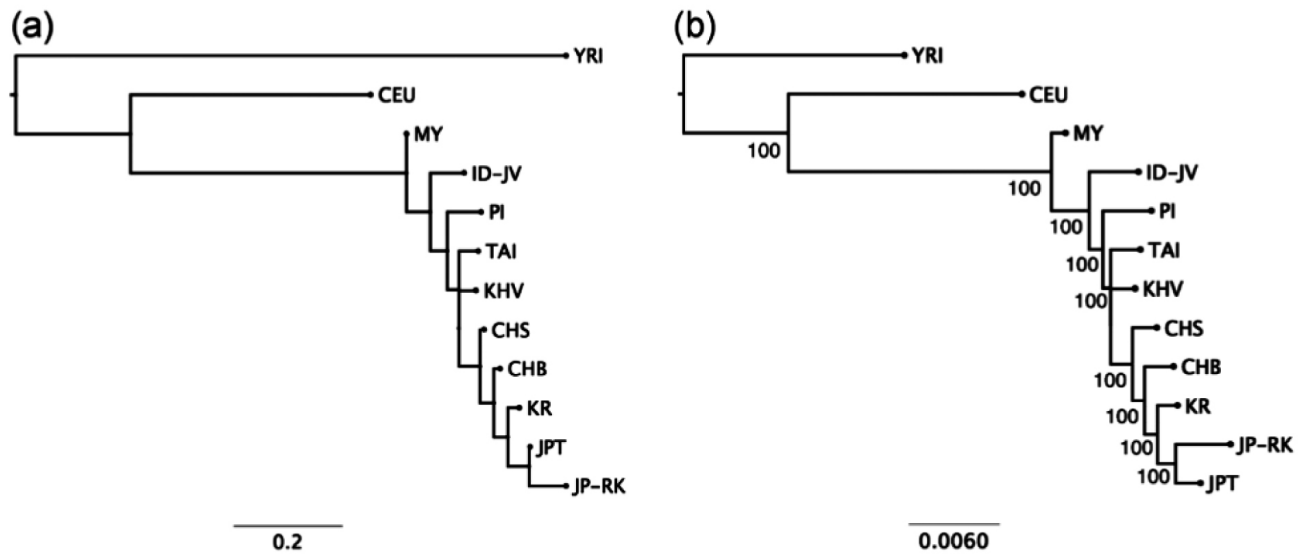
Finally, regarding biology, modern genetic evidence is completely against the ancient legend. In 1998, Chu and his research team collected Y-chromosomes specimens from over 12,000 males around China. The analytical results show that: “Nevertheless, genetic evidence does not support an independent origin of *Homo sapiens* in China. The phylogeny also suggested that it is more likely that ancestors of the populations currently residing in East Asia entered from Southeast Asia.” (Chu et al., 1998, p. 11766).

According to new research named “Vietnamese human genetic variation database” in the Human Mutation journal (Le et al., 2019, p. 1670), authors affirmed: “Our fine-scale genomic analyses of KHV (Kinh Vietnamese) together with other Asian populations elucidated that KHV and other SEA (South- East Asia) populations mainly derived from the same SEA ancestry. The results from different genomic analyses are generally consistent and support the hypothesis of population migration from Africa to Asia following the South-to-North route”.

Table 1*Names and Their Meanings as They Appeared in Hồng Bàng Legend*

Names	Meaning (in Chinese)															
<i>Hồng Bàng</i> 鴻龐	<i>Hồng</i> (hong/ 鴻): great, large <i>Bàng</i> (pang/ 龐): huge, enormous															
<i>Kinh Dương</i> 泾陽	<i>Kinh</i> (jing/ 涇): the name of a river flowing into Shaanxi/陝西 province, China <i>Dương</i> (yang/ 陽): the sun <i>Kinh Dương</i> (jing yang/ 泾陽) first appeared in The Classic of Poetry (Shi Jing/ 诗经). It is an ancient poem called Xiaoya - June (诗·小雅·六月), depicted the north tour of Yin Jizhen/尹吉甫 (852BC–775BC), and <i>Kinh Dương</i> is the name of a place in Shaanxi/ 陕西.															
	<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Chinese</th> <th>Meaning</th> <th>Note</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>獯狁匪茹 ·</td> <td>The Xian Yun* army is not weak.</td> <td><i>Xian Yun/ 獯狁: the name of a tribe in Shaanxi/ 陕西.</i></td> </tr> <tr> <td>整居焦获 ·</td> <td>They are stationed in Jiao Huo*.</td> <td><i>Jiao Huo/ 焦获: the name of an area, north of Shaanxi/ 陕西.</i></td> </tr> <tr> <td>侵镐及方 ·</td> <td>Invaders have arrived</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>至于泾陽 ·</td> <td>The area of Jing Yang (<i>Kinh Dương</i>).</td> <td></td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Chinese	Meaning	Note	獯狁匪茹 ·	The Xian Yun* army is not weak.	<i>Xian Yun/ 獯狁: the name of a tribe in Shaanxi/ 陕西.</i>	整居焦获 ·	They are stationed in Jiao Huo*.	<i>Jiao Huo/ 焦获: the name of an area, north of Shaanxi/ 陕西.</i>	侵镐及方 ·	Invaders have arrived		至于泾陽 ·	The area of Jing Yang (<i>Kinh Dương</i>).	
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	<p>Now, <i>Kinh Dương</i> (泾陽/ Jing Yang) is an area name in Xianyang/咸陽 city, Shaanxi province. This is an ancient name, appearing in legal documents of Han Hui De/ 漢惠帝 dynasty in 191 BC. (Jingyang Government, 2013)</p>															
<i>Hùng Vương</i> 雄王	<i>Hùng</i> (Xiong/ 雄): person or state having great power and influence <i>Vương</i> (Wang/ 王): king or monarch Before 40, the Viet people did not have a surname (Nguyen, 2005, p. 82). However, according to this legend, in the second millennium BC, <i>Hùng</i> (雄/ Xiong) was the surname of Vietnamese kings. Importantly, they are all Chinese characters with their meaning, not Vietnamese.															

**Figure 2.** The Geographical Locations of 12 Populations Under the Study (Le et al., 2019, p. 1670).



Note: African (YRI), European (CEU), Malay Malaysia (MY), Filipino Philippine (PI), Javanese Indonesia (ID-JV), Tai Thailand (TAI), Kinh Vietnamese (KHV), Southern Han Chinese (CHS), Northern Han Chinese (CHB), Korean (KR), Japanese (JPT), and Ryukyuan Japanese (JP-RK).

(a) The neighbor-joining tree based on F_{ST} distances between populations. (b) The TreeMix tree where numbers on branches are bootstrap support values indicating the reliability of clades. The scale bar reflects the amount of genetic drift between populations. (Le et al., 2019, p. 1670).

Figure 3. The Phylogenetic Trees of 12 Populations Where YRI is Considered as the Outgroup

This valuable evidence supports the migration-from-the-south hypothesis demonstrated that after the emigration from Africa, around 30-40 ka BP, a primeval branch of proto-Austro-Asiatic human, settled in Southeast Asia. This group absolutely did not originate from the north (south-central China).

When the latest genetic evidence confirmed that migration-from-the-south hypothesis is acceptable, some interesting questions arise out of this problem. Why was Hồng Bàng legend (crucial evidence of migration-from-the-north hypothesis) created? Who created it? What was their purpose? Why has it existed in Vietnam's recorded history?

Finding a Plausible Hypothesis: King Kinh Dương - An Additional Part

According to the *Complete Annals of Đại Việt* and history books later, the Hồng Bàng legend is separated into three parts (as mentioned above). When we surveyed these in folklore, we realized that part 2 (Lord Lạc Long) and part 3 (Hùng Vương) were

popular, especially in oral traditions, whereas part 1 (King Kinh Dương) was only considered in written texts. From that clue, I continued to research the link between part 1 and other parts, and I realized that they were loosely coupled. I subsequently investigated the origin of all three parts in the folklore of the Kinh and Vietnamese ethnic minorities. I found an ancient story of the Muong people (a minority in Vietnam) named *Ngu Kho* and *Luong Wong*, which was recorded by Jeanne Cuisinier, a French ethnologist.

Once upon a time, there was a princess of the Muong people named Ngu Kơ, who was a spotted- stars deer (cerf étoilé) in the premortal existence. She married a prince named Luong Wong, who originated from a carp. Then, Ngu Kơ gave birth to 50 daughters and 50 sons [...]. Shortly afterward, Ngu Kơ and Luong Wong had to break up. Ngu Kơ led 50 children to the mountains, and Luong Wong led the other 50 children to the sea. The Muong people worshiped Ngu Kơ as a mother goddess and

often made flags with a spotted- stars deer, like their totem to remember her. (Jeanne, 1946, p. 135)

According to linguists and ethnographic studies, the Muong and the Viet shared a common origin, the Viet–Muong. Because of the Chinese invasion, the Viet–Muong was divided. The separation process (7th–12th centuries AD) depended on their location of residence. The Viet lived in the deltas and low-lying areas, so they were considerably influenced by Chinese culture. Meanwhile, the Muong lived in remote alpine areas. Their original culture was preserved because they were not assimilated. (Pham, n.d.)

Comparing the legend of ethnic origin between the Viet and the Muong, Table 2 lists the similarities.

Two ethnics have the same storylines. Character names are phonetic variations of each other, and totems of two ethnic groups share the same residence. I infer that both stories certainly had the same origin.

The Viet and the Muong people share the same ancestral origins. However, the story of the Muong mentioned totemism (one of the oldest religious forms) in a direct way, whereas the Viet’s legend (Hồng Bàng) mentioned totems indirectly. Besides, Hồng Bàng legend has King Kinh Dương part. This part is about the Viet people who claimed to be the descendants of Shen Nong god (a type of religion developed later). I infer that King Kinh Dương part was definitely created after the “Lương Vương and Ngu Cơ” story.

Muong’s story did not have any evidence of China’s interference. It retained almost all of the indigenous culture and original religion. Meanwhile, the Viet’s

story was powerfully influenced by Han culture, and it is difficult to find their cultural identity in this legend. In addition, the whole story of Muong people had the same storyline as that of part 2 and part 3 of the Hồng Bàng legend. The part related to Han ancestors was not mentioned in the Muong’s story. I infer that due to the separation of two ethnic groups, the story of the Viet was changed to adapt to the cultural environment.

This leads me to conclude that the most convincing explanation is that part 2 (Lạc Long Quân) and part 3 (Hùng Vương) are original Vietnamese stories (although it was altered by the Han Chinese culture later), and part 1 (King Kinh Dương) was external sources and was added later. This part was loosely linked and was created to prove that the Viet people originated from the Han Chinese.

After analyzing King Kinh Dương part, I believe that this legend originated from the immigrants of Chu/ 楚 country (1030 BCE – 223 BCE), due to the following reasons:

1. According to both legends of Viet and Chu, both ancestors of their kings were one of the Five Emperors/ Wudi (五帝) (a group of legendary rulers in ancient China). The king of Chu claimed to be descendants of Zhuan Xu (顓頊) (Szu-ma, 2018, p. 72), and Viet’s king also believed they are progenies of Shennong (神農).
2. The names of legendary places, like Wuling/ 五岭 Passes, Dongting/洞庭 Lake, and Kinh Dương (Jing Yang/ 涇陽) are names of Chu territories.

Table 2

The Comparison of Some Similarities in the Legend of the Viet and the Muong

Ancestor	Ethnic	Name of ancestors	Symbolic totem	Typical residence
Paternal	The Viet	<i>Long Quân</i> /Long jun/	Crocodile (Hoang, 2016)	low-lying areas
	The Muong	<i>Lương Vương</i> /Liang wong/	Carp	
Maternal	The Viet	<i>Âu Cơ</i> /Ou ji/	Pheasant (Hoang, 2016)	alpine areas
	The Muong	<i>Ngu Cơ</i> /Yu ji/	Deer	

The latest research shows that the Chu dialect recorded in Fangyan / 方言 had a strong influence on Austroasiatic words of foreign origin, including Vietnamese (Chamberlain, 2016, p. 54). From that suggestion, I find that almost all significant names mentioned in *Hồng Bàng* legend were related to Chu country (see Table 3).

The words listed in Table 3 have the same pronunciation but different representing characters. Take Jing: 荆/ 京, Xiong: 熊/ 雄, Mi: 芊 / 媚 for example. To explain this, in my opinion, the introduced words primarily originated from Chu country, and Chinese immigrants brought them to Vietnam. Then, these words entered the Vietnamese vocabulary, which means that they had the same pronunciation. However, it should be noted that before the 10th century, the Viet people did not have their writing system; they borrowed Chinese words to write. However, there are many homophones in Chinese, and some characters may symbolize the same syllable. Therefore, when Vietnamese historians rewrote ancient stories, they could not find out the original characters used over 2000 years ago. As a result, the representing characters are different.

In my viewpoint, the main reason for the existence of King Kinh Dương part in *Hồng Bàng* legend is the influence of both culture and politics. This part received the support of both Chinese and Vietnamese authorities in two ways:

Forced assimilation: China has been regarded as a cultural and political center. Since antiquity, the Han Chinese forced vassal-countries to follow Han culture (also known as Sinocentrism/ 中國中心主義). When the Viet people were assimilated, the Han Chinese would make them think the Viet and the Han shared a common ancestor. This would be an enormous benefit to Han Chinese authorities. They would prevent the rise of nationalism in Vietnam, even in the thought of the Vietnamese. It leads to a possibility: King Kinh Dương part was added to serve Chinese rulers' political purpose, and it crept into the Vietnamese legend system by means of cultural coercion.

Acculturation: In wartime, Vietnamese people resist Chinese culture, but in peacetime, they want to acculturate and make use of it. That is a national character pointed out by many researchers. Applying this in analyzing the *Hồng Bàng* legend, I found that this legend was originally considered as a tool

Table 3

Significant Names in Hồng Bàng Legend and Fangyan

Pronunciation	Lexicon	Representation	Meaning
/Jing/	Chinese Words	荆 /Jing	Surname Jing
		荆楚 / Jing Chu	An alternative name for the Chu dynasty state
	Sino-Vietnamese words	京/Jing	Surname Jing
		京族 / Jing Zu	Other names of the Viet ethnic group
/Xiong/	Chinese Words	熊/ Xiong	Middle name Xiong (of Chu rulers)
		楚熊麗/ Chu Xiong Li	An early ruler of the state of Chu
	Sino-Vietnamese words	雄/ Xiong	Surname Xiong (of Viet rulers)
		雄曄王/ Xiong Ye Wang	An early ruler of the Viet people
/Mi/	Chinese Words	芊 / Mi	Surname Mi (of Chu rulers)
		芊艾/ Mi Ai	An early ruler of the state of Chu (also known as Chu Xiong Ai)
	Sino-Vietnamese words	媚 / Mi	Charm
		媚娘/ Mi niang	Vocative words for Xiong's princesses

for assimilation (in wartime) and, subsequently, a diplomatic weapon (in peacetime), which the Vietnamese used to respond to Chinese.

It is necessary to provide more historical circumstances. In 1406, Chinese king Ming Cheng Zu/ 明成祖 ordered invaders to destroy Viet's culture (Phan, 1998, p. 352), where he decreed: "when the soldiers came over Vietnam..., all over the country, the stone steles erected by Chinese must be preserved carefully. However, Vietnamese books and all Vietnamese stone steles must be destroyed. One piece or one word was not allowed to exist" (Chi, 2013, p. 153). This is generally regarded as the worst destruction of cultural heritage throughout Vietnam's history. In 1428, the Viet people regained their independence and founded the Hau Li dynasty. In 1460, Vietnamese King Li Nhan Tong ordered the people to collect historical documents and ancient stories from private places and then to submit to the government (Le, 1978, p. 108). In 1479, resting on a variety of sources, including history, ancient stories, manuscripts, and folklore songs, *Đại Việt Sử Ký Toàn Thư* [Complete Annals of Dai Viet] was completed. This is the first historical book referring to Hồng Bàng as the first era in Vietnamese history.

Based on this historical feature, the central mystery can be explained: why did Hồng Bàng legend appeared only after the 15th century and was not mentioned in previous history books? There are two possibilities:

Case 1: The Ming military destroyed forms of documentation in which Vietnamese historians before the 15th century mentioned the Hồng Bàng legend, preventing later historians from finding its traces. However, this is a very low likelihood case as Hồng Bàng was not even mentioned in *Đại Việt Sử Ký* (大越史記 - Annals of Dai Viet) written in 1272 and *An Nam Chí Lược* (安南志略 - Abbreviated Records of An Nam) written in the early XIV century.

Case 2: The Hau li dynasty created King Kinh Duong's part to raise the status of Vietnamese people.

In feudal times, Vietnam was perceived as an inferior country to China. To be more specific, the Han people considered the Vietnamese as Nan Man/ 南蠻 or Man Yi/ 蠻夷, which means a barbarian ethnic. Chinese authorities also called leaders of Vietnam "Wang"/ 王,

a title of vassal princes or kings, and never admitted that Vietnamese rulers were equal to Chinese leaders called Huang Di/ 皇帝 (the leader of vassal kings). Meanwhile, the Vietnamese had to regard the Chinese as their superiors. This encouraged the Vietnamese to have a burning desire for a higher status.

By creating King Kinh Duong's part, the Vietnamese would like to imply that they had a brotherhood relationship with the Han Chinese (even only in the legend), helping to raise the status of Vietnamese rulers and even make them the equals of Chinese emperors. On the other hand, this part was still considered a legend. In other words, its reliability could not be assured. This meant that King Kinh Duong's part still showed respect for Chinese emperors, which ensured the peace between the two nations. This part also did not contradict the Rectification of Names (正名/ Zheng Ming) doctrine of Confucianism. Confucius said, "Let the ruler be a ruler, the subject a subject, the father a father, the son a son" (Staal, 1979, p. 13). Therefore, to the Vietnamese, King Kinh Duong's part was deemed a cultural weapon.

For these reasons, the Kinh Duong part was encouraged to become a Vietnamese official history with the support of both authorities and scholars.

There are some minority groups holding the view that they are the descendants of the Han ancestors. Take the Buyei people/ 布依族 living in Guizhou/ 贵州, China, for example. They also created a legend to show that they had a blood relation with the Chinese. The legend states that after Pangu/ 盤古 (a creator deity of the Han Chinese) created the universe, he married the daughter of Long Wang (龍王 - Dragon God) and they gave birth to the ancestors of Buyei people. This implies that the Buyei and Zhuang were one ethnic group and belonged to Austronesian descent (not related to Han people). From 900, this ethnic group was split into two groups due to the domination of the Chinese. One group went into remote alpine areas and created the Buyei people, whereas the rest continued to stay in the plain and then became the Zhuang people (Xianfan, 1994). However, the original myth of the Zhuang people did not recognize Pangu as their ancestor. They believed that they were descendants of a god named Bu Luo Tuo/ 布洛陀. Therefore, I can affirm that after breaking away from the Zhuang, the Buyei

established their myth. In other words, the Buyei created a new legend that was conducive to forming an alliance with the Han people.

Conclusion

Based on the above evidence, I would like to make conclusions about the origin of Hồng Bàng legend. Around 30–40 ka BP, proto-Austro-Asiatic people, including ancient Viet ethnic group (Do, 2014), migrated from Africa to Southeast Asia and settled there. Other migrant groups left Africa and settled in north-central China. Cross-cultural exchanges occurred in both areas but were not significant. When Chu people suffered famine and war, some of them migrated to Southern regions and mixed with locals, including the ancient Viet. From 179 BC to 938, Vietnam was colonized by China. It was China ruler's policy of expansion that prompted the mass migrations of Chinese to Vietnam. Emigrants carried the stories of their ancestors, and then, their stories were mixed with local legends. Therefore, Chinese culture crept into native Viet culture via both acculturation and forced assimilation. King Kinh Dương part was no exception. Over thousands of years, the King Kinh Dương story mixed with indigenous legends, which led to the birth of the Hồng Bàng legend. This legend is not only a cultural policy of Chinese but also a diplomatic weapon of the Vietnamese, which explains why it received the support of both the two governments and peoples. Therefore, King Kinh Dương's part still exists today.

By researching Hồng Bàng legend, new opportunities opened up to employ different research directions in the future. The legend of Tai speakers is a representative example. Tai speakers believe their ancestor is Khun Borom (Chinese: 皮罗阁 / Thai: ขุน บรม / Lao: ຂຸນ ບຣມ), who also migrated from China to Southeast Asia. However, according to molecular biology evidence, it was completely opposite: "We found that the KHV (Kinh Vietnamese) and TAI (Tai Thailand) populations had similar ancestral population structures (Le et al., 2019, p. 1670). This means that the Tai ancestors were not Chinese, and Khun Borom was also a legend that was created for special purposes. Given the similarities between these two cases, we can take

advantage of the Hồng Bàng legend to study the legend of Tai speakers.

Declaration of ownership:

This report is my original work.

Conflict of interest:

None.

Ethical clearance:

This study was approved by the institution.

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