

Nguồn Gốc Dân Tộc Việt



Vietnamese American 2001 Rose Parade float in Pasadena, California, figuring a boat with the Lạc Bird in the front and motifs of a bronze drum in the back. Courtesy of David Moore from MIT

Based on Chinese texts, the ancestors of the Vietnamese were the Lạc Việt /Luo Yue who grew wet rice in *Lạc điền* (water fields). In a strict sense, the Lạc Việt were one or several related tribes of the Bách Việt (Baiyue, Hundred Yue) of South China. According to studies of the Human Genome Organization (HUGO) Pan-Asian SNP Consortium,^{1,2} the first natives of Văn Lang (ancient Vietnam) had migrated from the south. Some of the Australomelanesians or Austronesians (similar to indigenous Filipinos, Malays and Indonesians) colonized the Red River Basin,^{3,4} others went on further north about 80,000 years ago to what is now China.⁵ There, over scores of millennia, they developed a lighter skin (for more efficient Vitamin D3 production) and Mongoloid features. During and after the last glaciation (20,000-9000 BCE), many moved back south in search of a warmer climate, and mixed with the “locals.”⁶

It is natural to wonder if there is ethnic and cultural continuity between the ancient settlers of the Red River Basin, cradle of Vietnam heritage, and the modern Vietnamese who won their independence after more than a thousand years of Chinese colonization. Specifically,

¹ <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/8406506.stm> accessed Oct 2, 2011.

² <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3121791/pdf/pone.0021451.pdf> Accessed 10-17-2015.

³ http://www.tuvy.com/Countries/Vietnamese/origins_of_the_vietnamese_people.htm accessed Dec 2, 2007.

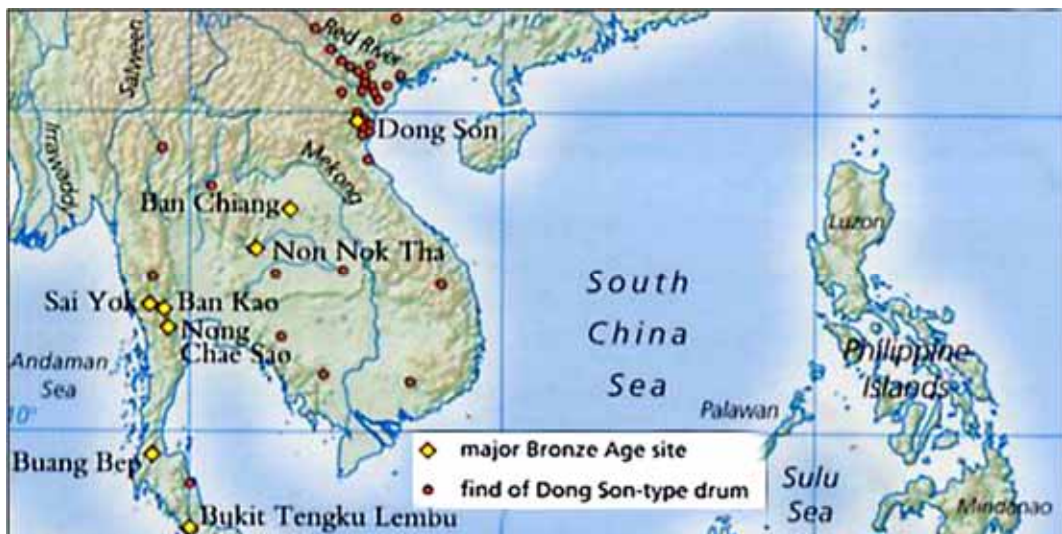
⁴ Sources of Vietnamese Tradition. Werner JS, Whitmore K, Dutton G. Columbia University Press. op. cit.

⁵ “Molecular anthropological studies [by Shanghai geneticists] of the populations in and around East Asia have resulted in the discovery that most of the Y-chromosome lineages of East Asians came from Southeast Asia.”

<http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/21904623> accessed June 25, 2016.

⁶ Bellwood P. Vietnam and the Prehistory of Eastern Asia. Perspectives on the Archaeology of Vietnam. 2012;p.55.

between 600-200 BCE, did the Red River Basin inhabitants fit exactly into the Baiyue or are we *extrapolating* Chinese records about the Baiyue to them? If the latter theory turns out correct, *the original Red River dwellers were not truly the Lạc Việt / Luo Yue*. The unfortunate confusion stems from *first*, the fact that these boat-riding and bronze drum casting Việt ancestors did not leave any written record of how or what they were calling themselves as they did not have any writing system, and secondly but most *significantly*, the desire of Đại Việt historians of the 13th and 15th centuries to promote the lofty origins of the Vietnamese (as descendants of Shennong, Thần Nông)⁷ at a time that they were battling formidable northern invaders. This scenario, perhaps controversial, is quite plausible considering that the Red River Basin autochthones were characterized by the Đông Sơn culture. The geography of recovered Đông Sơn bronze drums covers ancient North Vietnam, Western Guangxi, Yunnan, and Sichuan / Tứ Xuyên or Southwest China, while the Baiyue primarily lived in coastal Southeast China, from Zhejiang to Guangdong Provinces. Tokyo University Professor Keiji Imamura noted that although Nanyue (Nam Việt) ruled over Guangxi and Northern Vietnam [Âu Lạc], no bronze drum belonging to any type has ever been found in Guangdong where the Nanyue capital was located.⁸ The bronze drums are mentioned in the *Book of the Later Han* (Hậu Hán Thư, Hou Hanshu, 5th century) in relation with Ma Yuan and in Lê Tắc's *An Nam Chí Lược* (1335). However, the modern Vietnamese were oblivious to their existence and to the people who casted them until the second half of the 20th century, decades after the unearthing of bronze artifacts in Đông Sơn Village, Thanh Hóa Province in 1924 [and subsequent archeological discoveries and studies defining the Đông Sơn culture]. This does not weaken the Vietnamese's claim to their ancestral Đông Sơn culture since Qin Shi Huang's funeral terracotta army of late 3rd century BCE was not discovered until 1974.



Sites of Đông Sơn bronze drum finds. Source Wikipedia

⁷ Thần Nông or God of Agriculture was among the first Three August Rulers and Five Emperors (*Tam Hoàng Ngũ Đế*) of mythical China.

⁸ Imamura K. The distribution of bronze drums. Indo-Pacific Prehistory Association (IPPA) 2006 conference.



Taiwan and contemporary provinces of coastal Southeast China

Artistic differences can also be recognized although their creation might vary in time. The human motifs of the Luoyue rock murals on Huashan Mountain in Guangxi contrast with the ones with feather headdress on the Đông Sơn bronze drums.



**1800 to 2500 years old red rock paintings by the Luoyue on Huashan Mountain in Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region. The site was submitted to UNESCO for recognition as a World Heritage.
(Courtesy of Dr Nguyễn Xuân Quang – www.bacsinguyenxuanquang.wordpress.com)**



Đông Sơn bronze drum motif



**Đông Sơn people in ceremonial feather headdress on a long boat
Painting by Hồ Đắc Ngọc, after a Ngọc Lũ bronze drum motif. Courtesy Dr. Hien V. Ho.**

Modern archeology and linguistics authorities believe that the Baiyue (and Luoyue) conversed in proto-Austronesian dialects (*thổ ngữ tiền Nam Đảo*) similar to the ones still used by the aborigines of Taiwan, across the sea strait.^{9,10,11} Instead (despite overlaps), the peoples in Southwest China and the drainage areas of the Mekong and Red rivers spoke proto-Austroasiatic dialects (*thổ ngữ tiền Nam Á*) from the Mon-Khmer languages family. At the start of the Han conquest in 2nd century BCE, the Red River residents spoke in proto-Việt-Mường—an Austroasiatic language—which morphed into the present Vietnamese vernacular after a millennium of Sinitic influence.¹²

In *Imperial China and its Southern Neighbours*, Dr. Nam C. Kim wrote: “To be sure, we have no solid evidence that the societies extant in the Red River plain during the Đông Sơn Culture period were ethnically similar to later Vietnamese-speaking populations in the region during the first and second millennia.”¹³ Although Cổ Loa

⁹ Blust R. *The Austronesian Languages*. Research School of Pacific and Asian Studies. 2009, 2013.

¹⁰ Brindley EF. *Ancient China and the Yue*. 2015. op. cit. p. 47.

¹¹ Bellwood P. A hypothesis for Austronesian origins. *Asian Perspectives*, xxv(1), 1984-1985, pp. 107-117.

¹² For details, refer to John D. Phan’s *Re-Imagining “Annam”: A new analysis of Sino-Viet-Muong linguistic contact*. *Chinese Southern Diaspora Studies*, Volume 4, 2010. pp. 3-24.

¹³ Kim NC. *Ancient State Formation at the Southern Edge of Sinitic Civilization*. ISEAS; Singapore. 2015; p.52.

Dongsonian society was very advanced, mainstream history narrates the semi-mythical defeat of Cổ Loa Citadel's An Dương Vương (from the former State of Shu /Thục, now Sichuan in Southwest China), by Triệu Đà /Zhao Tuo, historic emperor of Nanyue in coastal Southeast China. Thus, by the caprices of History, the Red River natives pictured on their long boats on the bronze drums intermarried with their Baiyue /Luoyue neighbors (proto-Austronesians /Southern Mongoloids?) migrating south under Qin/Han (Northern Mongoloids) military pressure to become the Vietnamese.

Linguistics seems to suggest that as Ma Yuan and subsequent Chinese governors imposed Han Culture on the Đông Sơn Việt-Mường natives, they would split into 2 groups. Those who adapted to the rules and customs of the northern invaders mixed with them, living in or around urban citadels. They evolved into the *Kinh* majority (metropolitans) by the end of the Tang Dynasty although in Giao Chi's remote south (now Thanh Hóa Province), the Mường were still preponderant. The *Kinh* elites pursued an agenda that "neither wholly accepted nor resisted the Han, but which attempted to create original, mixed identities and responses to Han influence and pressures for their own benefits."¹⁴ The indigenes who retreated to the jungles and mountains retained most of their original language and culture. They became the highland minorities (*người Thượng*)... Pointing to a major influence from imperial China conquests, Dr. Erica Fox Brindley remarked "Cantonese, the language spoken in modern Hong Kong and Guangdong Province, as well as other neighboring areas, is referred to as the "Yue language," even though it is primarily a Sinitic language, and not what the natives of the region would have spoken in early times."¹⁵ Despite Sinicization and substantial Luoyue inbreeding, the Vietnamese neither speak a Sinitic nor Austronesian language, but have retained and enriched their original Austroasiatic dialect. Started in 2005 by Dr. Spencer Wells, the National Geographic's Genographic Project shows that the majority of Vietnamese (*người Kinh*) has 57% Northeast Asian and 43% Southeast Asian DNA.¹⁶ There is no evidence of genocide, mass starvation, vital migration (to Indonesia islands) or epidemics (from new infections like smallpox or bird flu) in Giao Chi to wipe out its indigenous population. Thus, it is prudent to conclude that from the Red River "Dongsonian Lạc Việt" to the modern *Kinh* Vietnamese, over 2500 years, there are genetic continuity¹⁷ though diluted, linguistic evolution, and proud cultural inheritance.

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¹⁴ Brindley E. Yue identity along the southern frontier of the Han, ca 200-111 BCE. Early China, 33-34 (2010-2011)

¹⁵ Brindley EF. Ancient China and the Yue. Cambridge University Press. 2015; op.cit.

¹⁶ <https://genographic.nationalgeographic.com/reference-populations/> accessed January 8, 2016.

¹⁷ Tài Q. Nguyễn. <https://drive.google.com/file/d/0B5HQ4J7Ib2ufa3pwUTRmRzU0VUE/view> pp.42-58. 3/3/2016.