

TRANSFORMATION OF TRADITIONAL HOUSING OF THE TAY PEOPLE IN DINH HOA DISTRICT, THAI NGUYEN PROVINCE, VIETNAM

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ABSTRACT

The traditional housing of the Tay people in Dinh Hoa district, Thai Nguyen province, Vietnam are commonly stilt houses. These houses are not only living spaces but also warm homes that connect many generations in the family. Currently, the Tay people's houses have changed in terms of construction materials, as well as living spaces... to adapt to modern society. Traditional houses are at risk of disappearing if not properly preserved. Research on the changes in the traditional houses of the Tay people is the basis for proposing a number of solutions to preserve the values of traditional houses, such as restoring, promoting propaganda, raising public awareness, strengthening the leadership and direction of local authorities to contribute to building and developing an advanced Vietnamese culture with strong national identity.

Keyword: changes, traditional houses, Tay people in Dinh Hoa district.

1. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Dinh Hoa is a mountainous district with many ethnic groups living together, the oldest of which is the Tay ethnic group, followed by the Kinh, San Chay, Nung, Dao, Hoa, San Diu and other ethnic groups. The Tay ethnic group is the largest ethnic group with 45,944 people, accounting for 53.4% of the total population in the district. The Tay people's residential area is widespread throughout the district [1].

The Tay people in Dinh Hoa district, Thai Nguyen province are one of the ethnic groups that still retain unique features in building houses. This is shown not only in the construction architecture but also in the sacred home, where the affection between family members of many generations is attached. The traditional houses of the Tay people in Dinh Hoa have 2 types: stilt houses and earthen houses. The stilt house is the most popular type of house, belonging to the 3-room, 2-wing style. Currently, only a few traditional houses of the Tay ethnic group in Dinh Hoa district remain, replaced by solid and modern reinforced concrete houses. Most of the newly renovated stilt houses are influenced by the culture of the Kinh ethnic group and Western architecture, traditional houses are at risk of gradually disappearing. Therefore, studying the transformation of traditional houses of the Tay people and proposing some solutions to

preserve the traditional values of the house is of great significance in contributing to preserving and conserving the fine traditional cultural identity of the Tay ethnic group in general and the Vietnamese ethnic groups in particular.

2. CHANGES IN TRADITIONAL TAY HOUSES IN DINH HOA DISTRICT

2.1. Changes in house construction materials

The main materials for building traditional stilt houses are wood, bamboo, reeds, palm leaves. These are materials available in the mountains and forests. Each traditional Tay stilt house is located in a large area, surrounded by vegetable gardens, fruit trees or fish ponds. They often make fences with bamboo and reed woven panels that are quite environmentally friendly.

Tay stilt houses are built entirely by traditional manual methods, with simple carpentry tools such as chisels, saws, and planes. The components are cut straight, chiseled, planed, mortised and joined together, not tied together in a continuous manner. In places such as stairs and floorboards, people can plane them flat for convenient use, while in other places, such as column bodies and beams, they only need to be squared or roughly carved. The house is built entirely of herbal materials without any nails, iron or steel pins [2]. Industrial materials are entering the lives of the

people and are accepted and used as a new culture, such as cement, iron, steel, corrugated iron, aluminum, glass... in house construction. The desire to build a modern stilt house is one of the popular trends of the Tay people. Raw materials have been replaced such as tile roofs, cement roofs instead of thatched roofs, leaf roofs, concrete floors instead of wooden floors, bamboo floors, concrete columns instead of wooden columns. This makes the house more durable and also suitable for the increasingly scarce forest resources [3].

2.2. Changes in the structure of the house

The Tay people's houses in Dinh Hoa are commonly stilt houses. There are two types of traditional stilt house plans: one with a kitchen inside the house and one with a separate kitchen, connected to the main house at the gable end (the main house still has a kitchen but is mainly used to warm up in the winter). The main house usually has a floor plan of 3 rooms with 2 wings, or 4 rooms. There are large houses that can have 6-8 rooms. Some houses have rafters with an odd number of columns, including 3, 5 or 7 columns with the main column supporting the roof. Some houses have rafters with an even number of columns, including 4 or 6 columns due to the influence of Kinh architecture. The house is surrounded, surrounded by bedrooms or divided into many compartments by pieces of wood joined together or bamboo panels. The stairs leading up to the house have 7 or 9 steps. Next to the foot of the stairs is a water trough for washing feet before going up to the house. The Tay people's stilt houses are roofed with palm leaves. "If the roof is thick and carefully roofed, not with one piece facing up, one side straight, one side diagonally, it may take 10-15 years before it needs to be re-roofed" [4].

Currently, newly built stilt houses have changed in materials and designs, but basically still retain the architecture of stilt houses: The house pillars are made of reinforced cement or semi-cement, reinforced steel (the lower half is reinforced cement, the upper half is wood). The house pillars can be round or sometimes square. The base of the pillars, which were previously buried in the ground, is now placed on a rock or a concrete mound to limit moisture, rot and termites. The floor is made of reinforced concrete, plywood, sometimes made of mai, split bamboo or wood. In addition to the four short pillars placed on the

longitudinal crossbars, people also make 4 more main pillars, so the house has 8 main pillars, which looks more solid and sturdy.

2.3. Living space

The Tay people's house is the daily living and resting space of family members and is also the place where the homeowner spends the most effort to build.

The inside of the main house is divided into 2 distinct parts. The part above the floor and the part below the floor. According to traditional customs, the above floor is where the family lives. The area below the floor is for livestock such as buffaloes, cows, pigs, chickens... and is also a place to store farming tools, store firewood, fan boxes, grind rice, pound rice... and also for children to play and adults to rest during hot summer afternoons. The Tay people's house has only 1 staircase. The floor adjacent to the staircase is the water floor. This is where the family stores jars and bamboo tubes containing drinking water. They wash rice, wash vegetables, prepare bran for pigs and bathe, clean up and also where men sharpen knives, weave, women embroider and sew. The water floor and stairs are also the place where the daughter of the host receives young men who come to learn about and make friends in the early days of confusion. Next to it is the drying floor.

The kitchen is near the entrance of the house, where food and supplies are stored, warmed up and guests are received. Opposite the kitchen is the area for storing household items. The Tay stilt house is surrounded by bamboo blinds and separated into rooms.

For the Tay in Dinh Hoa district, the family altar is usually placed in the innermost room in the middle, with the altar facing the roof beam and facing the door. The Tay live according to patriarchal customs and worship ancestors of three generations. The area on the right is where rice is stored. On the left are the bedrooms of family members.

Nowadays, the upper part of the Tay stilt house in Dinh Hoa has been changed, the floor has been replaced with wood or reinforced concrete, and the floor is paved with marble. Previously, most stilt houses were surrounded by bamboo fences, but today, some families with conditions have covered them with wooden boards. The walls are

built with cement bricks, wood panels, plastered like thatched houses or surrounded by corrugated iron; The roof is covered with corrugated iron or tiles, cement, and very few houses are covered with palm leaves; The stairs are made of wood or reinforced cement. There is no outside floor before entering the house, the stairs often lead straight to the porch into the house. The house does not have a lean-to for living. The space below the floor is often used as a living floor or for use.

The reason for the above change is due to changes in natural conditions. Previously, the construction of houses of the Tay in Dinh Hoa depended mainly on the available materials exploited in the mountains and forests. However, today, the primary forest is gone, the forest is mainly regenerated forest so there are no big trees long enough to make house pillars. The palm hills are gradually shrinking, the amount of money spent on buying palm leaves is larger and thatching takes more time and effort than other materials.

Hiện nay, giao lưu tiếp xúc văn hóa giữa các tộc người không ngừng được mở rộng, nhất là dưới tác động của nền kinh tế thị trường và điều kiện kinh tế ngày càng được nâng cao, người Tày ở Định Hoá có nhiều cơ hội tiếp xúc với những nền văn hóa mới, trong đó có văn hóa nhà ở. Đồng thời, quá trình chuyển dịch dân cư, cư trú đan xen phổ biến làm hình thành các cộng đồng dân cư hỗn hợp nhiều dân tộc. Do đó, nhà ở truyền thống của người Tày đã có sự thay đổi đáng kể.

Thêm vào nữa là do trong nhận thức của người Tày, nhất là lớp trẻ, giá trị của nhà sàn truyền thống đã suy giảm đi rất nhiều, thậm chí đôi khi còn bị coi là lỗi thời, lạc hậu. Nhiều người không thích sống trong nhà sàn và có xu hướng phá bỏ nó để làm nhà trệt, nhà nhiều tầng... Vì vậy, những ngôi nhà ở truyền thống của người Tày đang dần bị mai một.

Nowadays, cultural exchanges between ethnic groups are constantly expanding, especially under the impact of the market economy and increasingly improved economic conditions, the Tay people in Dinh Hoa have many opportunities to come into contact with new cultures, including housing culture. At the same time, the process of population migration and interwoven residence has commonly formed mixed ethnic communities. Therefore, the traditional housing of the Tay people has changed significantly.

In addition, in the perception of the Tay people, especially the young generation, the value of traditional stilt houses has declined significantly, sometimes even considered outdated and backward. Many people do not like to live in stilt houses and tend to demolish them to build ground-floor houses, multi-storey houses, etc. Therefore, the traditional houses of the Tay people are gradually disappearing.

3. SOME SOLUTIONS TO PRESERVE THE UNIQUE FEATURES OF TRADITIONAL HOUSES OF THE TAY PEOPLE IN DINH HOA DISTRICT, THAI NGUYEN PROVINCE

3.1. Strengthening the leadership and direction of Party committees and local authorities in the work of preserving and developing traditional houses of the Tay people

All levels and sectors in the district continue to effectively implement Resolution 5 of the Central Committee (VIII Session) on Building and developing an advanced Vietnamese culture with strong national identity, Resolution 9 of the Central Committee (XI Session) on building and developing Vietnamese culture and people to meet the requirements of sustainable national development.

In particular, the cultural management agencies of the district need to have a plan to inventory and collect the remaining stilt houses. As of 2015, Dinh Hoa district had a total of nearly 1,100 stilt houses, of which many traditional houses with cultural and architectural values were still preserved [5]. Selecting stilt houses with typical values, especially those that have been associated with historical and revolutionary events in the area to have a plan for ranking, restoration and preservation. It is necessary to select villages with many traditional stilt houses and beautiful landscapes to build a dossier for ranking architectural heritage...

2.2. Actively raising awareness and sense of responsibility of organizations, agencies and people towards traditional stilt houses

It is necessary to strengthen propaganda and mobilization work to all classes of people to participate in preserving and promoting the value of traditional stilt houses. Coordination with press and radio agencies must be proactively strengthened to promote and advertise the

potential for tourism development from the value of architectural and cultural heritages.

We must consider traditional stilt houses as architectural heritages that other generations have passed on to future generations; promote so that people understand the value of stilt houses so that they have the awareness to preserve and repair them. Stilt houses not only have ecological and environmentally friendly architectural values, but also contain many cultural and humanistic values. By the fire, everyone lives together and sympathizes. The elderly tell stories, pass on to the younger generation good things, right reasons, customs, and habits, and thus, the lifeblood continues. Understanding these values, people will be more aware and appreciate the traditions of their ancestors.

2.3. Promoting the role of the residential community in association with the development of community tourism

The residential community is the place to preserve and maintain traditional stilt houses, so it is necessary to let the people become the subject in the activities of preserving and promoting the unique values in their own houses.

The cultural sector needs to have a plan to develop a master plan to preserve and promote the heritage of traditional stilt house architecture, associated with the development of ecotourism and homestay. In 2008, the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism approved the investment project to build the "Ban Quyen Ethnic Cultural Village" in Diem Mac commune with an investment of more than 7.8 billion VND to invest in repairs such as replacing the number of pillars, rafters, and thatched roofs that have rotted and damaged. The items are reinforced for more certainty. After completion, the village can welcome tourists in the direction of "homestay". This is the first step in preserving the culture of the Tay people in the village community. To promote the role of community activities in Ban Quyen, Dinh Hoa district advocates organizing conferences associated with community tourism visits; organizing receptions for delegations of the district from various sectors; coordinating with the education sector and youth union to organize activities on traditional educational resources associated with experiential tourism - community tourism.

4. CONCLUSION

Currently, the changes in the traditional housing of the Tay people are mainly affected by factors such as: changes in the natural environment, economic and social policies of the Party and State, globalization, openness, international integration, industrialization, modernization of the country and market economy. Over time, the changes in the pace of modern life have changed the housing of the Tay people in Dinh Hoa district. But whether traditional or contemporary, the values of material, spiritual, lifestyle, and behavior in the family are always the standards of national culture that are always preserved and honored.

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