

The discourse of the two countries about Nung Tri Cao

—The “hero” of the ethnic minorities in the Sino-Vietnamese border region—

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I take up Nung Tri Cao, who established Tai peoples' original kingdom in the Sino-Vietnamese border region in the 11 century, and examine what kind of discourses two countries, China and Vietnam, now use in order to subsume the “Hero of the ethnic minorities” into each history of their own nations in order to integrate their multi-ethnic countries. Nung Tri Cao strongly opposed against the Ly Dynasty of Vietnam, and asked the Tong Dynasty to be subjected many times. But, the Tong Dynasty did not allow him for fear that the relationship with the Ly Dynasty would become worse. Therefore, Nung Tri Cao fought also with the Tong Dynasty, and in the end, was defeated and fled to the Yunnan.

When China and Vietnam claimed that they were brother countries of the Socialism, both evaluated Nung Tri Cao as “People” side and two dynasties as “Feudal”. However, through the time when the two countries' relationship turned worse, each evaluation about Nung Tri Cao changed. Now, the discourse of the Guang Xi Province, the home area of Nung Tri Cao in Chinese side, can become official narrative in China. Nung Tri Cao is one of the symbols for many intellectuals of the Guang Xi to assert their ethnic identity to the Chinese central government, and so Nung Tri Cao has been highly evaluated. Their discourse is now distinctive as emphasizing that

Nung Tri Cao was against the invasion of the Ly Dynasty and that he cooperated with the Nanhan's scholars who had beaten by Tong Dynasty. This episode was narrated as cooperation between different ethnic groups. On the other hand, in Vietnam, discourses between the central government and the Cao Bang Province, which want to develop tourism as home region of Nung Tri Cao, have not agreed each other. And in accordance with the line of the central government, Nung Tri Cao has not been referred recently as he asked Tong to obey many times. Nung Tri Cao's achievements cannot fulfill the conditions to become a "Hero" of Vietnam.

China has now succeeded to include Nung Tri Cao into their national history though he had been talked as a traitor against the Chinese dynasty in pre-modern times, but Vietnam now ignores Nung Tri Cao though some of the people in Cao Bang province still worship Nung Tri Cao. Vietnam failed to include him into their national history.
