

WOOD BLOCKS OF PHUC GIANG SCHOOL (XVIII-XXTH CENTURIES)

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Foreword. This report concerns three followings:

1. Introduction to the wood block treasure of Nguyen Huy Family in Truong Luu Village, Truong Loc Commune, Can Loc District, Ha Tinh Province, Vietnam, which is a Documentary Heritage under UNESCO's Memory of the World Programme in Asia Pacific in 2016;
2. Nguyen Huy Oanh's 1766 pieces of writing about Yangzhou, which were wood-block engraved into the *Fengshi yàn tai zong ge* (*General Songs of An Envoy to Yenching*).
3. A number of concerns about the preservation and promotion of Phuc Giang School's wood blocks' value.

I. WOOD BLOCKS OF PHUC GIANG SCHOOL:

Truong Luu Village, nowadays under Truong Loc Commune, Can Loc District, Ha Tinh Province, Vietnam, traces its history back to 15th century when the father of Nguyen Huy Family – Nguyen Uyen Hau – and native people co-founded it. Hau once time worked as a teacher of the Five Classics in the Imperial Academy (國子監). His son Nguyen Ham Hang (1454-?) and his grandchild Nguyen Thua Nghiep both passed Three Examination Compounds of the National Exam (the “Hoi”) as Imperial Academy's students. As Confucian scholars, they had profound knowledge of contemporary scholastic classic books. Early 18th century, Nguyen Huy Tuu (1690-1750), working as a teacher, epitomized the *Xing li Zuan yao Daquan* (*Essential Ideas of Nature and Principle*) into a textbook and taught his children and students. Nguyen Huy Oanh (1713-1789), upon his coming first in the regional exam (the “Huong”) in 1732, built a schoolhouse, which was located south to the village and attract hundreds of learners. After gaining the title Ting Yuan Tanhua (the Third Place in the Royal Court Exam) in 1748, he pursued teaching career. The name of Truong Luu Academy and its renowned teachers drew countless of learners, hence an ever greater demand for learning materials, exchange and development of culture. This elicited Nguyen Huy Oanh's engraving and printing books. So far known engraved and printed materials are:

1. Sishu daquan 四書大全 "Panoramic Précis of Complete Meaning of the Four Books *Xingli Zuan yao Daquan* 性理纂要大全 (*Epitomized Essential Ideas of Nature and Principle*), comprising the *First* and *Second* volume, was engraved in 1758. It had been compiled by Nguyen Huy Tuu as before 1718, edited and hand-written by Nguyen Huy Oanh. Then the *Second* volume was examined by Nguyen Huy Tu (1743-1790) who supervised the engraving and print process together with Nguyen Huy Vuong.

2. *Wujing Zuan yao Daquan* 五經纂要大全 (*Epitomized Complete Meaning of the Five Classics*) including 9 volumes, engraved in 1758;

- *Shi Jing Zuan yao Daquan* 詩經纂要大全 (*Epitomized Complete Meaning of the Classic of Poetry*), 2 volumes, compiled by Nguyen Huy Oanh, hand-written by Nguyen Huy Cu (1717-1775);

- *Shu jing Zuan yao Daquan* 書經纂要大全 (*Epitomized Complete Meaning of the Book of Documents*), 2 volumes, the first volume compiled and hand-written by Nguyen Huy Oanh, the second volume hand-written by Nguyen Huy Quynh (1734-1785);

- *Liji Zuan yao Daquan* 禮記纂要大全 (*Epitomized Complete Meaning of the Book of Rites*), 2 volume;

- *Yi jing Zuan yao Daquan* 易經纂要大全 (*Epitomized Complete Meaning of the Book of Changes*), 1 volume compiled by Nguyen Huy Oanh;

- *Chunqiu Zuan yao Daquan* 春秋纂要大全 (*Epitomized Complete Meaning of the Spring and Autumn Period*), 2 volumes, hand-written by Nguyen Huy Quynh.

The above 9 volumes were engraved under the supervision of Nguyen Huy Tu and Nguyen Huy Vuong. The foreword of *Wujing Zuan yao Daquan* was penned by Phan Huy Can.

Among the above said books, 2 volumes of *Xingli Zuan yao Daquan* and 9 volumes of *Wujing Zuan yao Daquan* were realized by Nguyen Huy Tuu and Nguyen Huy Oanh basing on *Xingli Daquan* (性理大全 - *Essential Ideas of Nature and Principle*) and *Wujing Daquan* (五經大全 - *Complete Meaning of the Five Classics*) of Huguang and his company under Ming Dynasty.

3. *Tong zong Zhiyou* 統宗只有 was “re-written from old books” by Nguyen Huy Oanh.

4. *Xiaoxiang bai shi* 瀟湘百詩 (*Hundred verses of Xiaoxiang*) is a poetry collection enclosing Nguyen Huy Oanh’s “sentimental inspiration” on his 1766 journey to China as an envoy.

5. *Huanghua Completed Collection* is a piece of work that Nguyen Huy Oanh summarized and re-organized from the *Da-Qing yitong zhi* 大清一統志 (*Records of the Unity of the Great Qing*) « of the forbearers », during his envoy journey in 1766.

6. *Guoshi zuan yao* 國史纂要 (*Epitomized National History*) printouts Mark. A.1923 Han Nom Library was composed by the History Mandarin Ngo Si Lien, revamped and supplemented by Nguyen Huy Oanh. It was translated and published in 2004, Thuan Hoa Publishing House, Center for East-West Cultures, 330 pages.

7. *Si shu Zuan yao* 四書纂要 (*Epitomized Four Books*) was wood-block printed in 1773, when Nguyen Huy Oanh was entitled the Rector of the Imperial Academy. According to the Forewords of this book, he had had it engraved and printed earlier.

8. *Chuxue zhinan* 初學指南 (*Elementary Learning Guides*) (Library of Han Nom Institute, Mark. A. 1634), compiled by Nguyen Huy Oanh, is an introduction lectures guiding a freshman to necessary rules of school.

* *Du The tap bien giai am* is a book where Nguyen Huy Oanh « gathered aphorisms of those first elites successive to the teachings of Four Books and Five Classics, then translated them into our national language », as said in the forewords in 1778.

* The *Bibliotheca* (Tung Thu) was re-written by Nguyen Huy Oanh from a variety of old divination books such as Liu Ren 六壬, Taiyi 太乙, Dun Jia 遁甲, Astrology 术数, fore-worded in 1788.

* In his postscript of *Huanghua Envoy's Writings*, Nguyen Huy Trien (1852-1909), five-generation grandson of Nguyen Huy Oanh said « the *General Songs* was wood-block engraved as an heirloom », this is *Fengshi Yan tai zong ge* 奉使燕臺總歌 (*General Songs of An Envoy to Yenching*), (Library of Han Nom Institute, Mark. A. 373 and also Mark. R. 1375 in the National Library of Vietnam).

* 10 volumes of *Truong Luu Nguyen Thi*, whose quantity and year of wood-block engraving remain unknown.

* *Thu vien quy le* (*The Library Rules*) comprises 7 sheets, 14 pages, compiled by Nguyen Huy Oanh in Beijing in 1766 and engraved under the supervision of Nguyen Huy Vuong.

The number of book generated from Truong Luu wood blocks should be much greater, since Truong Luu Nguyen Huy Family treasured hundreds of books.

Wood blocks of Phuc Giang School, since their initiation, had been reserved in three pavilions of the Library Temple, where Nguyen Huy Oanh was worshipped. They all were sanitized carefully before and after being used for printing. In later half of 1950, due to the damage of the Library Temple, the family handled them for preservation on the upper floor of Nguyen Huy Tuu Shrine, and has enclosed them in cabinets for storage till nowadays.

II. YANGCHOU IN WOOD BLOCKS:

In 1764, Le King delegated Nguyen Huy Oanh as an envoy to China. For careful preparation of the journey, he collected documents of preceding envoys in their trip in 1724 and 1748, and in combination with his own experiences from his 1764-1765 trip, composed *Huanghua Envoy's Writings* [4]. The work described his envoy journey and diplomatic rituals, reproduced the paths with clear exegesis of rivers, mountains, citadels and ramparts, etc., thus well served the subsequent trips of descended envoys. This piece of work has not been engraved for print (the Appendix introduces map sheets relating to Yangchou).

At the same time of his diplomatic journey, Nguyen Huy Oanh composed *Fengshi Yan tai zong ge* [5], a poetry diary reflecting his trip during 1766-1767. The general songs were hand-written in Chinese by his son Nguyen Huy Tu and engraved by watch of his student Nguyen Huy Vuong.

The work consisted of 470 Alexandrines (six-eight verses) hand-written in Chinese and collectively called “general songs” of the entire diplomatic journey. Such writings were alternated with 120 Chinese poets and abstracts. Each piece was addressed to a particular place and landmark, and conveyed the firsthand experiences of the writer. About Yangchou, he wrote: (translated into Vietnamese by Lai Van Hung, Tran Hai Yen):

楊柳欲垂煙風幡蔽若侍僧偈香火三生征客綠可是幽奇
能索句山有樓外雨晴天

題曉子疏一律

文之帆影自西東水白山蒼禹未工村塢參差青柳外梵家隱
約翠屏松中和霜苦帶三分雪隄岸尾侍半里煙鷓看紛々
鷗作隊隨波共笑信天翁

二十五日出小河越楊子大江入一錢港汙刊都會橋此是侵徵
縣城西門過頭閘二閘三閘與東開河兩閘各有報春樓
自此河道淺狹官置石閘障水通舟製如吳安三陟
自此沿途創無贊見

揚州素號繁華

江心頗窄舟槎塞流

地鄰隋苑迷樓

花鬚繫月柳球拋雲

自侵徵到揚州六十五里路揚州古廣陵城街市稠廣亞於
南京穿城出拱辰門柳木參天可以千計有隋苑迷樓及三

四橋遺跡今往：非得室叙古鏡其天寧寺右行宮皇天儒坊
中有童子祠扁萬明光大廟有考彙三十二種惟金帶圓球者
不易得賊南江并有福緣寺高哄不得他僧衆二百餘十月二十八日
駐此有楊州漫吳作

四顧乾坤一軸圖
盤弄千古說揚州
江橫橋影虹吞霧
櫺閣燈光浪撥珠
雪點步陰涼
覺院風敲紅葉
瘦迷樓環街
考彙天邊月
相訂
回來竟出鏡

邵司祠有露筋

名高海岳清方社湖

行七里到五臺山江上有香阜寺扁名香清梵六十里至邵伯
鎮昔榭安鎮此築土限成田萬頃人依其德地友召公故名對
山岸是邵伯湖妓船可百餘隻十里至驛南江至四怪三堡三
堡對左甌社湖畔有露筋娘：祠門牌題流芳今古賦內占廟
節媛芳躅對聯之德行不悞湖邊影芳躅猶傳海岳文俗親是
古貞女暮倭不肯投人家野宿而蚊咬死祠松吳恣

高郵寶應沿途

縣差撥取民夫拽船

十月初日到高郵縣城縣署丁夫三船共二十四人往永天寺寺制極

高大扁年尼室殿行一百二十里判宜應縣城縣古名安宜有中佑

廟扁佑我羨民是祠祀信俗傳最賦詠重子者臨江有碧霞

天蹟八二重門左祀岳支穆像殿內扁聖岳明祀後樓扁圖通自在

查碧霞娘娘是泰岳神勅封天妃元君自此在多有行宮登臨祀因題

蓬萊仙島落安宜一以旌眉目榜仿尹李徵冬雪方隆堤柳瘦春机

暗動園梅肥碧苔幸前刀銀河鍊淡雷交縫王文衣最是清

奇堪老客橫翎遠鳥篆斜暉

淮陰今號淮安

雙槐藥室家傳神醫

江干是漂母祠

釣臺有碣御詩有亭

初五日到淮安府古名淮陰有山陽縣同治有沒淮陰祠扁國士無双二有双槐李家桑室家右槐樹大可二圍扁樹北甘棠

“October 25, left Xiaojiang, overcame the great river of Yangtze, and then arrived the port at Zhu Hui (Do Hoi) bridge, the West gate of Nghi Trung citadel. Passing the first, the second, the third and Dongguan Ha dams, meet Bao Chun Chamber, where the river turns into a narrow and shallow stream. The local authority has to build rocky dams to fortify water force to drive waterway vehicles, like how we have embanked the dams in Hung Yen. Access to waterways from there on requires no offering.

*Yangchou a born splendor,
Where jostle of boats cover strait flows.
Nearby the Surreal Maze Chamber⁽³⁰⁵⁾ of the Sui,
Blossoms of flower spout from the moon, lissome willows float their cloudy leaves*

It is sixty miles far from Nghi Trung to Yangchou. The olden Yangchou encompassed Guang Lang Citadel with spacious roads and busy markets inferior to Nanjing only. Passing the citadel, encounter Cung Than gate, where thousands of willows sky-high proliferate. Here remains the vestige of the Sui's Surreal Maze Chamber and twenty four bridges, where even today someone who ploughs through may fortunately find some precious brooches and antique mirrors. The right side of Thien Ninh pagoda consists a landmark honoring great Confucians, together with a shine of Dong Tu, entitled: “CAO MING GUANG DA”. There are thirty two types of Dahlia flower found in the street, while the one yellow global-like shaped is rare. Located at the Southern river bank of citadel, Phuc Duyen pagoda nurtures more than two hundreds of Buddhist clergy. Its doorplate says: “HONG BAT DAC THA⁽³⁰⁶⁾”. Upon my staying over there on October 28, I improvised *YangchouImpromptu* (under-translated into English as below):

*[The surroundings on all sides look like a picture
Yangchou has long gained fame from its splendor
Rainbow shade on the river, red glittering embraced in cloud and smoke
Boat lights mirrored the water, twinkling in serial of pearl-like waves
Snow adorning tree leaves, chilling the Monastery
Wind brandishing red leaves, bared the Surreal Maze Chamber
Dahlia steeping the paths, moon sparkling the sky
Overwhelming the eyes of the seer*

*Thieu Ba stands shrine of Miss Lo Can⁽³⁰⁷⁾
Whose virtue is as lofty as Hai Nhap, whose heart is as pure as Xa Ho water⁽³⁰⁸⁾]*

Undergoing 7 miles to reach Mount Wutai, Huong Phu pagoda is located on the dam bank, doorplated: “DANH HUONG THANH PHAN”⁽³⁰⁹⁾. Passing 60 miles to get Thieu Ba Town; where Ta An occupied long ago, built the dyke and widespread dozen thousands plots of rice-field. The people compared his merit to Trieu Cong, hence came that name. The opposite is

Thieu Ba Lake, where more than hundred boats are resting. Further 10 miles should be Yeu dam (?) Street; through Tu Bao, Tam Bao, and Nhi Bao. Opposite of the left bank is Xa Ho bank with the shrine of Miss Lo Can, doorplated: “LUU PHUONG KIM CO⁽³¹⁰⁾”; a board inside it was marked: “TIET PHU PHUONG TRUC⁽³¹¹⁾”; with a parallel sentence:

*On one’s own path, thy should not be abashed of the reflection on the lake;
Thy good fame – a legend to sustain with the country.*

It is popularly rumored that a virgin, who persisted to stay overnight outdoor rather than lodging in someone’s house, was bitten by a serpent and died. The shrine of her is very miraculous.

NOVEMBER (1766)

Along the path of Cao Buu, Bao Ung⁽³¹²⁾,

District authorities making their people push the boats

November 01, arrived Cao Buu District. The district provides 24 working people 3 boats. Pass a grand pagoda called Thua Thien Pagoda, which is doorplated: “MAU NI BAO DIEN⁽³¹³⁾”.

Notes:

(305) *Surreal Maze Chamber*: Yang Di of the Sui dynasty built a tremendously large chamber with thousand windows, one hundred doors magnificently carved and lacquered. One old man dotingly entered it and could not find the exit. Yang Di saw and thought he was a fairy, dull-witted. The Chamber thence was named Surreal Maze.

(306) Screaming cannot help obtain it.

(307), (308), (312) Cao Buu, Bao Ung: names of districts in Northern of Yangchou city, Jiangsu Province. *Xa Ho* is a lake near Cao Buu, its left bank addresses the shrine of Miss Lo Can.

(309) Good fame in Buddha’s embrace.

(310) Immortal good fame .

(311) Reputation of a virgin.

(313) Lofty temple of Buddha”

Legacies of Nguyen Huy Oanh give us a foreign insight into Yangchou 250 years ago, as well a panoramic view of China [6].

III.A NUMBER OF CONCERNS ABOUT THE PRESERVATION AND PROMOTION OF PHUC GIANG SCHOOL’S WOOD BLOCKS’ VALUE:

In the past, wood blocks were air-exposed stored in the temple. Today, they are cased in good cabinets, which are made of mahogany wood – free of termites and warping. Currently, Ha Tinh Museum and the Family are jointly researching on methods and materials for sustainable storage of wood blocks and conducting detailed plan to cooperate with a variety of authorities such as Han Nom Institute, Vietnam Institute of Literature, National Library of Vietnam, Ha Tinh Television, etc., to organize exhibitions and introduce the wood blocks through translations, books, gallery, documentation, etc.

All of Phuc Giang School’s wood blocks are digitalized, printed and such reproduced versions are also copied, then submitted to such bodies as: National Library of Vietnam, National Archives Centre No I, Han Nom Institute, Ha Tinh Museum, Nghe An Library, Ho Chi

Minh City Library, and archived at the Nguyen Huy Family Library. Documents are on process of summary translation and establishment of a conventional database lookup system as well as an information network, so as to serve the demand of readers.

Phuc Giang School's wood blocks are introduced and popularized via many means of communication, namely: newspapers, television, publications, etc., especially via three conferences on Nguyen Huy Family's Cultural Celebrities in 1993, 2007 and 2013.

March 2015 marked a conference on Truong Luu Wood Blocks in Ha Tinh.

Phuc Giang School's wood blocks are also mentioned widely in 9 films about Nguyen Huy Family's cultural celebrities, in Viet Celebrities Program, and get repeated citation in VTV1, VTV4, etc., as well as many reports of Ha Tinh Television.

At present, Ha Tinh Province Department of Culture, Sports and Tourism, Ha Tinh Museum and the Family are cooperatively working with the National Archives Centre No IV in Da, Vinh Nghiem Pagoda, National Archives Centre No II, Hue Relics Preservation Centre, where Documentary Heritages are preserved, in attempt to learn the way to conserve and promote the value of Phuc Giang School's wood blocks.

CONCLUSION: We would like to deliver our sincere gratefulness to Mr. Tan Changfeng, and China Block Printing Museum in Yangzhou, who facilitated our participation in *2016 International Conference on Wood Blocks and Printing Blocks in Ancient East Asia*, who gave us chances to learn about issues of concerns in the conference: *The inheritance and development of East Asia's Broadcast Printing Culture*, so as to preserve and promote the value of our wood blocks./.

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 5. Nguyen Huy Oanh, *Fengshi yàn tai zong ge* 奉使燕臺總歌, translated Lai Van Hung, Social Sciences Publishing House, Hanoi, 2014, 316 pages.
 6. Nguyen Huy Oanh, *Thac Dinh Legacies*, translated Lai Van Hung, Social Sciences Publishing House, Hanoi, 2014, 620 pages.

APPENDIX:

Pages 64b and 65a of *Huanghua Envoy's Writings* displayed a painting of Yangzhou citadel, Yangzhou Tower and the scenery city landscape. Business boats of various size gathered in heaps.

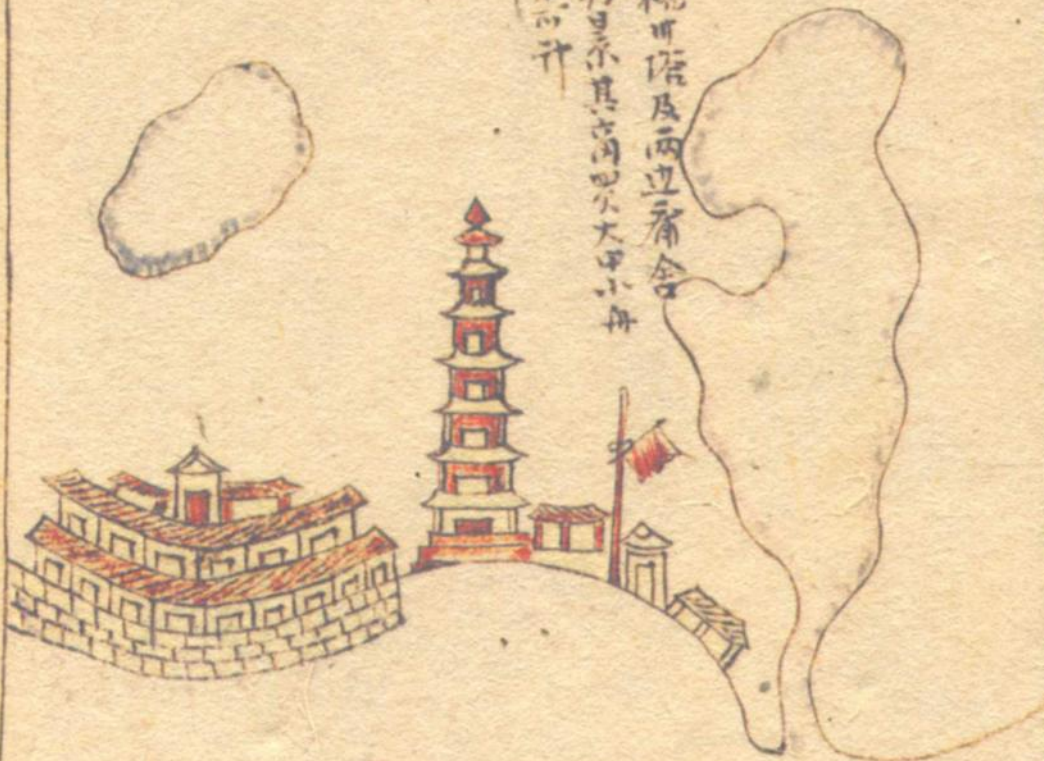
The two sides of the painting described people's lives with their rice fields, dykes and luxuriant plants.

Yangzhou District. The citadel is occupied jointly by Ye zhen, mandarins, Xun fu and Jiang du District mandarins.

Conventionally, envoys meet no other than Xun fu and are provided with food.

Yangzhou citadel and district is around one to two miles in length. The Sui dynasty built the citadel landscape with scenery streets.

楊可傑及兩迎齋舍
好且亦其高四丈大甲小舟
不可計



兩迎常村民備者及同田促路与者
左右種



陽州府內城十原在府署東
 江都縣同在側亦見有康
 口類見據見遠處而已



陽州府城做
 長二里餘
 亦見此城兩
 也齊好景