

A proposed new reading of the Linh Nam Chich Quai

Thomas Engelbert

University of Hamburg

Germany

The book *Linh Nam Chich Quai* is regarded as the earliest known collection of Folklore in Vietnam. However, origin, authorship and character of this work raise many questions, which need further study.

One example is the Legend of the Golden Turtle. In the presentation, two versions of a similar myth of the Muong and the Viêt are compared in their similarities and differences. The close relationship will be shown that exists between the so-called folk literature and the so-called “high” literature, between oral tradition and written circulation, between traits of Southeast Asia’s tribal society which can be found in these tales at the one hand, and which are also to be found until today among some peoples living in remote highland areas, and China’s long-standing and deep cultural and historical influences on the Vietnamese civilisation on the other. Second will be explained, how Vietnamese Confucian literati, who collected or (re)wrote these tales, used them for their self-assumed civilising and national mission.