

THE TRADING ROAD BETWEEN THE KATU AND THE KINH (CASE STUDY IN THUONG LONG COMMUNE, NAM DONG DISTRICT, THUA THIEN HUE)

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1. Introduction

The Katu has been known in many written texts since the French Domination, by virtue of customs such as hunting the enemy's skull. They are members of the Katuic Branch of the Mon-Khmer Linguistic Group in the Truong Son Range. In the field of architecture and art, Guol houses and Yo Ya Dancing are also the best of all possible subjects. However, there exist many interesting reflections on their trading with the Kinh, from the Lowlands.

In this article, I will mention the exchange of commodities of the Katu in the period 1940 - 1970 when they lived in Thuong Long, Quang Nam Province in the Nam Dong Mountainous Area (Thua Thien Hue Province).

According to Marcel Mauss in the book "The Gift, Form and Reason for Exchange in Archaic Societies". The reason for commodities exchange among such ethnic peoples is not only for economic purpose but also for social stability. (Marcel Mauss, 1990).

In this case study, the main theme is that of the goods exchanges between the Katu and the Kinh, which has created a series of necessary changes in their society and culture. These have created lots of interesting and vivid reflections on the ethnic relations, and have provided important information about cultural features of Central Vietnam.

2. Characteristics of Thuong Long's Topography

Nam Dong Mountainous Area is the residence of the Katu in Thua Thien Hue, 65 km away from Hue City in the Southwest. Thuong Long Commune - one of the six mountainous communes in the Nam Dong District a kilometer to the west of

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Khe Tre; in the North, and adjacent to Huong Nguyen. Commune (A Luoi District), in the South, and contiguous to A Vuong Commune (Tay Giang District, Quang Nam Province); and bordering with Thuong Quang Commune in the West and with Thuong Nhat Commune in the East.

It is located high in a mountain range on 500m average slope of from 15° to 20°. Thuong Long Commune has 5,155 km² of natural land which has a 38.8 ha water field. Among the 2,142 people in 384 households, the Katu occupy more than 90% (2,058 people in 366 households), located in 8 communes and there is only one commune where the Kinh live (84 people in 18 households).

According to some writings and witnesses, the Katu in Thuong Long originated in Vuong (Tay Giang District, Quang Nam Province.) In the 1970s they evacuated that area for many reasons. From A Vuong they moved to Thuong Long - a boundary land between Quang Nam Province and Thua Thien Hue Province: that's where the Tau Oat Mountain stretches from Lao to Thua Thien Hue.

A minority of the Kinh in this area mainly trades in commodities from the lowlands, such as salt, dried fish, cookies, candy, clothes, blankets, mosquito nets, shoes, wines, and beer. The lowlanders buy farm and forest products from the Katu, such as banana, cassava, corypha saribus rattan in order to sell in the lowlands. Economic activities of the Katu in this area are mainly based on the cultivation with of upland rice, cassava, corn, bananas, beans, and pineapples. The mountain people raise buffalo, cattle, and pigs. Their handicrafts are rattan and bamboo woven products used in indaily life. The Katu have no textiles or blacksmithing, so they have to buy and exchange these products from the Kinh, Ca Oi and even other Katus in Quang Nam Province. Their commerce is mainly to trade and exchange goods with the Kinh in some particular places such as Hiến Berthage (Quang Nam) or markets where the Kinh live, such as Nam Dong, Khe Tre, Loc Son, An Nong, and Truôi. Besides, some of the Katus go to markets in Hue City to buy necessary products. Hence, their dependence on goods exchange with the Kinh in the Lowland are still high.

“The Katu seem to have little technology. The necessary tools for ceramics, steel spearheads, jewelry, blankets, mosquito nets are all provided by the Annam” (Le Pichon, 1938:364).

Therefore, the Katu have moved to the places where they could exchange their products and get their needed products such as the all-important salt.

3. The Background of the Relationship between the Highlanders and the Lowlanders in Central Vietnam

With habitats different from the Eastern side of the Truong Son Range, the Western side is a large and sloping plain which is very convenient for trading among the Laotians, and even from the early days there has been international commercial routes connecting Laos, Thailand, Myanmar and Central Vietnam.

This route is the N^o 9 Road (in Quang Tri). Since the 18th Century, trading along this road has been very active.

“... Cam Lo Commune, Dang Xuong Province, in the upstream of the Dieu Giang River (of Hieu Giang?), from this place the path leads to the Viet Front and is adjacent with the Sai Headwater in Ai Lao. It's also the main road of the Man people and Lao tribes in Lac Hoan Country, Van Tuong country the Tran Ninh District, and the Quy Hop administrative unit (Le Quy Don, 1977, 206)”.

Or we learn that:

“From the Cam Lo Commune, one has to spend a day to go to Khang Yen District, where there are guard posts called, Ba Trang Post or Hieu Giang Post. According to the rule, merchants or people had to go to the Post to ask for a passport to go up Thuong Nguyen to trade necessary goods and tools. Every year, each person has to pay 110 quan (currency unit).

From the Ba Trang post, one spends 2 and a half days to arrive the frontier of Ai Lao Country. On the one side of the Dai Giang River, the Nguyen Dynasty established a military camp and 6 military boats were deployed here. This military camp is called Ailao.

On the right shore, in the Cam Lo Commune, there is Cay Lua Guard Post. The rules of this guard post are similar to the rules of Hieu Giang Guard Post. Annual taxes are paid by merchants. From this place, one can go to Man Vang and Van Tuong” (Le Quy Don, 1973:14).

Based on historical proof, a study suggests that it's possibly a road which was used by Viet Tian to pay tribute to Hue (Li Tana, 1999: 175).

But in Thua Thien:

“Thuan Hoa has shipping connections with Quang Nam, which is adjacent with the Phien Country and there are sea routes to Furian and Guangdong Province 3 or 4 daysdistant” (Le Quy Don, 1977: 231).

In the period of Champa State (Mandala), residences in the lowlands there were commercial relationships with some tribes in the Truong Son - Tay Nguyen Areas, such as Katu, Van Kieu, and Ta Oi. There were sea routes and land routes which were convenient for exchange of products coming from the lowlands, such as salt, steel and bronze products, and various kinds of jewelry. At the same time, the Katu also have close relationships with other ethnic minority, such as Gie Trieng, Co, and Xo Dang.

In the process of trade in the Katu living area, shipping plays an extremely important role based on the flow of the Thu Bon River originating in the Phuoc Son Tra My mountainous areas and flows to Dai Chiem Sea Gate in Hoi An. In the past, the Cham used this route to transport goods from the mountainous areas. Many proofs of this fact have been found.

In the archeological site in Paxua Commune (Tabing, Nam Giang District, Quang Nam Province), there were found a lot of agates originating in India. Even now, the Katu's costumes still use the ancient agates which their values in the beginning of the 20th century similar to that of a buffalo. (Tran Ky Phuong, 2004; Vu Quoc Hien, 1986: 123-124).

Among the famous commercial routes, if the Silk Route was an axis connecting the East and West coming from China, it's necessary to stress the "salt route" connecting the highlands and the lowlands.

"The roads on which the Ma used elephants for transporting goods, the wadis of the Sre to Blao or Dalat, the roads of the Raglay to the Noang living area, and the roads of the Bana to the Xodang living area are mostly parallel with the mountainous ranges. They are the "Salt Roads" of the Highland people from the Southeast to the Central coast, of the Bana down to Quy Nhon, of the Noang down to Phan Rang, of the Ma, the Sre, the Raglay to Phan Rang and Phan Thiet (Dam Bo, 1950: 69).

In history, before forming relationships with the Kinh, the Katu had a close exchange with the Cham:

"Barbarians (referred to the Katu) trade with the lowland residents, firstly with the Cham and then with the Annam. Because through the middleman role of the lowland people, the Katu have just had enough salt for their food" (Le Pichon, 1938: 364).

This situation of the Katu was similar to other mountainous residents such as the Ma, So Day, Stieng who had trading relations and salt exchange, along with other products with the Cham. A report states that: "The Champa people must to protect the Tô O so they can go freely to the Champa country so as to trade, especially for salt" (Jean Boulbet, 1967: 136).

However, most of the commodity exchanges were carried out by the Katu, they went down to the lowlands to exchange necessary things, but the most important things were, salt and fish. In the early days, the process of exchange always were under the close management of the feudal empire, as well as the French Occupiers, through control and taxes:

"According to an ancient legend in Gia Long, the trading and exchanges occurred in the Ha Tan Area which was 20 km away from the Con River" and "Under the ancient regime, an officer called a "Thu Ngu" was middleman between the barbarians and the Cá Lái. He controlled the two areas of the Cai River and the Bung River in Na Nha. Cá Lái often paid taxes on goods contributed by barbarians" (Le Pichon, 1938: 364, 367).

According to a memoirs of a person who had lived for more than ten of years with the Katu, the exchanges of the Katu in Quang Nam took place in a small valley situated in a position bordering with the Hien, Giăng and Đại Lộc District (Đại Lãnh, Đại Đông and Đại Sơn Communes) through a system of domestic shipping roads.

Right in this place, in the past, there existed a very famous and brisk market called Hoi Khách, meaning a gathering place of merchants (the Kinh and the Katu). Each month, the market opened two times, the Katu carried their agricultural and forest products on their back to this place so as to exchange salt and tools of production with the Kinh Cá Lái. In 1904, the French built 5 military camps in the areas of the Katu and one military camp in An Diem Commune in order to control the people here as well as collecting taxes from Cá Lai (Quách Xân, 2000).

Even now, in Thuong Long (Thừa Thiên Huế), there is a number of people who have gone to exchange salt and other products. In the field trip survey, we have met Pbing Noọc, Ra pát Nươi, Tà rương Del, Ra pát Torí and many others. Their recollections permit me to systemize and outline an exchange network in some particular places.

The Hien Berthage (now in Ca Dang Commune) is a big center of community exchange and is a very important place between the Kinh and the Katu. It's a confluence of the Arâng River and Bhua River (or called, alternatively, Con River and Kon River), the Katu people call them "Pic Arâng" (Pic means landing place). In primitive times, a peasant from the Lowland went to this place to build a house and to open up of wilderness. Based in a convenient position, this place became a landing place of merchant's boats coming from the lowland and it was also a place for storing products of the Katu, and after that, it became the Hien Berthage (Quách Xân, 2000: 77). From Thuong Long to the Hien Berthage, to travel on foot took 6 days because of the difficult topographic conditions.

The commodities exchange between the Katu in Thuong Long and the Kinh also took place in some other places in the East and took 2 days on foot in Pơ gô, Píc Ria. Pơ gô means "wooden tub," a famous trading place. Before that, the Kinh went to there to purchase wood products, Many others brought along salt and steel tools to exchange for honey, rattan, betel nut, and *chay* (bark). The role of trading place has developed until now, it has become Nam Đông Market in Huong Giang Commune. Píc Ria is the stopping place of the Katu, in Quang Nam Province. It means a "resting place" of the Katu, who have lived long in Nam Đông (in Thượng Quảng and Thương Lộ Communes).

Going far to the east, the Katu followed the only land road (now highway N°14B) linking the Lowland with the Mountainous Area, in order to go to the La Son cross-roads, where Loc Son Market is located (in Loc Son Commune, in the edge of highway N°1A) with about 3-4 days going on foot.

From here, along with the highway, owing to its convenient position, there have been formed many other trading centers such as Truoi Market, An Nông Market. However the point is that all of the markets in this place, the Katu people often called "Lang" (Village) which referred to the residing places of the Kinh and at the same time, it was also a trading center.

Toward the north of Thuong Long, along with the Huong River, there was a familiar trading place of the Katu located on the right bank of the Huong River -

it's Tuan Market - which originally was a guard post, in the Nguyen Dynasty, to control the mountainous area.

“In *Sách A Ra* up to the higher places, most of the Mancao People lived there, merchants couldn't reach this area, so they often sold in Bãi Fính and Cay Bong Areas. The Man People also came there to exchange goods...” (Le Quy Don, 1977: 115).

A market is often located in the central position of a particular area, near a cross-roads or a confluence. Located on the flat terrain, these convenient trading places originated from the role of gathering goods of “cá lái”, a system of markets has been formed so as to meet the demands of commodities exchanges between the Lowland and the Highland. Moreover, the market is also an entrepôt place to deliver goods to other places based on the role of “cá lái”.

4. The Katu-Kinh Relationship

4.1 The structure of Goods Sources

4.1.1 The sources of goods coming from the lowlands

The goods in this area, originated from many different sources, include domestic goods, such as salt, metal, musical instruments, buffalo, cattle, and other goods, such as pottery and ceramics which have been transported from other places.

In life, salt is the most important spice which has both goods values (eating and storage) and medicine. Especially salt has participated in religious activities of the Katu.

In history, salt was a strategic product in the Central Coastal Areas and became an important revenue of the State budget.

The sea shore in the Thuan Hoa Frontier, provided salt-marshes. Depending on the size of the kiln, according to the practical rule, 1 kiln in 1 *sào* of salt-marsh (360 square meters) represents a *mùng* (small bamboo basketful), or nearly ½ *sào* of salt marsh present a half of small bamboo basketful or 1 kiln in 2 *sào* presents more than one bamboo basketful. It's called *diêm điền* tax (salt marsh tax). Every year, Xuan My Commune, Minh Linh District present 168 basketfuls. Each basket has 1 *thuoc 7 tac* high and 1 *thuoc* wide (Le Quy Don, 1997; 228).

Different from the Gie Trieng, Xơ Dang and Stieng who could make metal tools and farming utensils for themselves, the Katu had to exchange products to get them, mainly from the Kinh. These exchanges were possible through the trading road Thuong Long. There have originated quite a few famous blacksmithing villages, such as Gia Cat Village (Que Phong Commune, Que Son District, Quang Nam Province), Hien Luong Village (now Phong Hien Commune, Phong Dien District, Thua Thien Hue Province). They specialized in musical instruments (cong, chieng) of the Phuoc Kiem bronze casting village (Dien Phuong Commune, Dien Ban District, Quang Nam Province) or Phường Đức in

Hue province. Popular in many cases, musical instruments became the measure of the most valuable property of a family or even of the whole community.

According to the Katu tradition, one valuable property which is not less than cong, is chieng pottery goods with different patterns and styles. Most of them were from Bat Trang Ceramic Village (Gia Lam Distric, Hanoi) and some chinaware. Although the Katu have some handicrafts like weaving, these only meet minimum demands. They still need other goods, especially blankets, mats, mosquito nets and clothes. According to their customs these are important assets in a marriage; the girl's family returns the betrothal gifts presented by the boy's family: such as buffalo, pigs and wild animals).

Le Pichon says, before that the Katu also fed buffalo but on a small scale because buffalo mainly served for spiritual life, specifically in an immolation rite (Le Pichon 1938). Therefore, most of the special demands had been met through exchange. The Katu often talk about buffalo exchanges. Sometimes, village elders had to mobilize a large number of laborers in the village to create their traditional goods in order to get a buffalo from *cá lái*.

Table 1: Some Popular Goods Exchanged from the Plains Existing in the Katu-living Area.

	Name	Function
1	Axe	Cutting tree, making furniture
2	Large kitchen-knife	Cutting some small tree, whittling rattan
3	Chieng, cong	Serving for spiritual life
4	Ornament	Holding wine, betrothal gifts in the marriage.
5	Mat	Lying, funeral, gifts in the marriage
6	Salt	Season, food
7	White cloth	Making hem
8	Buffalo	Offering sacrifices, paying a fine, marriage
9	Earring	Jewelry
10	Earthen cooker	Cooking, holding foods
11	Scimitar, javelin	Thrusting the buffalo, hunting
12	Glass beads	Jewelry

Source: Collected from field trip surveys March 2004

4.1.2. The sources of goods coming from the highlands

In contrast with the goods from the Lowlands, the sources of goods coming from the high country are farming, and forest products which were, originally Highland treasures, such as ivory, tiger bone, rhino horn, aloe-wood, bastard-cardamon, and honey. However, after that, the valuable products became rare. Due to the over exploitation, the natural resources became exhausted. Now, the goods

mainly are rattan, betel, honey, beeswax, corypha saribus and other pharmaceutical and incense products. The forest products have high value for the Kinh merchants. In the past, residents of the Champa Kingdom also got high, stable incomes when trading with foreign merchants.

Due to the low level of culture, and living under difficult terrain conditions, had created scarcities in the Katu's lives and the commodity exchange emerged from their hard lives. "In the forest, they found betel, medicinal herbs, fruits in order to sell to the Anamneses" (Le Pichon, 1938:367).

Betel was a popular exchanged goods, which among the Kinh was used in everyday life and ritual and religious activities. According to Đại Nam Nhất Thống Trí, "betel can render harmless and wipe out foul air in the belly. Areca nut and betel leaf can erase one's sorrow. Skin burn can be treated by applying poultices of chewed betel (Quốc Sử quán triều Nguyễn, 1997: 319). Betel leaves grow in the forest and the Katu women pick the leaves, and the Katu had their own specific unit: 20 betel leaves was called a "xau" and 5 "xau" were called a "thin" and 10 "thin" were called a "muon".

"Chay" is one kind of wooden tree which has a thick skin and harsh taste but when eaten with areca nut and betel leaves will make up a specific fragrant. The Katu men use knives to peel the skin and then tie it in bundles.

Rattan is a popular and characteristic product of the Truong Son Range. It grows in most of rivulet and it has high value in the Lowland and foreign countries. Rattan is used to make handicrafts and household items. Rattan's fruit can be eaten instead of areca nut, water in the rattan hollow can used to drink and wash one's hair. Rattan's leaves can be used to cover roofs. The Katu often collect rattan when they have spare time while clearing trees for cultivation. Rattan has the best quality in the end days of month. The Katu use the moon to count days in month. "Ta coi" is the 27th, 28th, 29th, "pơ nặt" is the 30th day. According to their conception, in these days, insects can't destroy rattan. In order to reduce weight and make it easy to transport, rattan was split and tied in bundles, 100 rattan strings was called a "gut".

Honey is also a product in this area. While cultivating, or gathering forest products, people often pay attention to the kinds of tree in which bees often build their hives, to bees flying a certain direction or to follow the trail of bee-hive in order to mark it. At the beginning of the fifth lunar month, the Katu man will go to the marked place to get honey. They also get beeswax by burning the hives.

While cultivating or in their spare time, the Katu women collect various kinds of mushrooms and bamboo sprouts growing in the forest. Mushrooms and bamboo sprout not only serve their tables, but are exchanged for other commodities.

Through our survey, we can realize that there appears a labor distribution depending on age and sex. There also exist the influence of their traditions and customs with lots of taboos in exploiting process. In the Katu's conception, the cry

of woodpecker is bad omen, every business will be cancelled because they think that at this time the divinity are angry and readily threaten their lives.

Table 2: Some Popular Exchanged Goods of the Katu.

Number	Name of Goods	Working Person	Place	Time
1	Honey	Man	Forest	May and June
2	Bee wax	Man	Home	Nearly the whole year
3	Chay	Man	Forest	Nearly the whole year
4	Rattan	Man	Forest	Nearly the whole year
5		Man	Forest	Nearly the whole year
6	Betel Leaves	Woman	Forest, home	Nearly the whole year
7	Textiles	Woman	Home	Nearly the whole year
8	Fruits	Man, Woman	Forest	Nearly the whole year

4.2 The Exchanges Process

4.2.1 Trading with the lowlands

In the past, the exchanges between the Katu and the Kinh became convenient because of the middle role of “lướt bảo” who could be the Kinh or native people. The Katu who were good at the Kinh language or good at contacting with other people and knew tribes traditions and customs of many regions would play the role of informing the goods sources of both sides. In exchange, they would get benefits but by products for cá lái (salt, ax, chieng) and even from the Katu (honey, rattan, betel leaves). I met in Thuong Long Commune some village elders who once were merchants, their business partly contributed to create a trading system in this area linking to other lowlands and some communities in the higher lands such as Mr Pria Hua, Quanh Nooc, Quanh Met.

Although he is nearly 80 years old, Mr Pria Hua still remembers clearly about a time doing business since he was 16-17 years old going along with other relatives bringing goods to “lang” (Loc Son) to exchange salt and axes. In Loc Son, he has done business with many famous “ca lai” such as Ms Cai, Ms Chuoi. Following his memory, he helped me to outline his trips beginning from the land road.

In the early days of his business, in order to have enough “capital” to exchange, he had to go into the forest to exploit rattan, chay, betel leaves and honey. His trip started from A Vuong (Quang Nam), he went along the La Van canyon in order to reach to Chabhung area (Thuong Quang, Nam Dong, Thua Thien Hue) in one day. In Chabhung, a lướt bảo named Quanh Lui guided him to go Huong Giang. In the morning of the 3rd day, all went to a large area called Va Dhang a cong and stayed a night there and then continued to go to “lang” (Loc Son). Lui took him to the

Kinh's ca lai and translated for the exchanges. After the agreement, they came back to "lang" with necessary goods which just exchanged.

Moreover, he also went to many other trading places such as Piarang (Hien berthage, Quang Nam) to exchange scarce goods such as buffalo, gong, precious jar. But the exchanges in the Hien berthage was harder than in Thua Thien Hue, due to the long way and difficult terrain. In exchange, the goods in the Hien berthage were more plentiful and they came from many regions and the prices were lower. If in Thua Thien Hue, a chieng exchanged by 40 honey bottles (in 1945) but in Quang Nam, it was exchanged by 30 honey bottles. Moreover, in Thua Thien Hue, there were many good salt and iron-made tools. If one who went to "lang" in Thua Thien Hue spent 5-6 days but to the Hien berthage, he had to spent 7-8 days.

The exchanges mainly based on the agreements. However, the Kinh's skillfulness always brought about benefits the Katu even knew but they still kept good relations for future exchanges. It's similar to a remark of a foreigner who had lived with the Katu in the early years of the 20th century, ca lai had more power than the French in the Katu area. However, ca lai who had more power were persons who leaned on the French power to do business in particular areas near the French guard posts in An Diem, Dai Loc, Quang Nam.

In our field trip survey, we realized that few Katu people in Thua Thien Hue mentioned about the cheatings of ca lai.

4.2.2 Trading in the region

In order to get more goods for his living conditions and for his business, after coming back from the lowland market days, Mr Hua continued his trip up to the highland areas near Viet-Lao frontier. He brought axes, jewelry (glass beads, silver earring, salt) in order to exchange highland products.

From A Dai, he took a long trip to A rec hamlet (now A Vuong commune, to A Tp (An Nong commune) and other hamlets in higher places. The form of exchange was goods exchange but goods at that time had exaggerated its original value. It means that the value of goods gradually increased to the distance of his trip. In La Son, a pack of salt could exchange 1/2 honey bottle but in Atep, it was 1 honey bottle and in A xan (Tay Giang) it was up to 6-7 honey bottles. In the lowland, with one honey bottle he could get an ax but when he came to A tep, A rec, this ax was exchanged by 5 honey bottles and in Ating, Nal, Poning, To Za (Quang Nam, it was equal to 7 honey bottles.

Honey was a standard unit to evaluate goods and instead of honey, they used rattan, bee wax. The Katu merchants were really flexible in doing their business. If one family did not have anything to exchange, they were willing to "borrow" axes, salt to use in advance and the next season or next trip, he went to get products.

In the past, they often went on foots, a group of people mainly relatives carried goods on their backs about 50 kg. When coming back, they had to hire somebody to bring goods for them. In common, the Katu's family was independent in their

trading, however, in a big exchange, the leader of the village would be the middleman. Especially, in the big events of the communities, the exchange was distributed clearly: a group to find forest goods, a group to exchange buffalo and other necessary goods.

Friendship was very necessary, important to establish a good and long term relation, especially with the village's leader, the merchants were willing to change their names into the name of the village's leader. According to the story of Mr Ta ruong Met, his grandfather pretended to change his name into the A lang family name in order to set up friendship with Mr Alang Do in Poning.

The Katu people living in the highland, the exchanged goods mainly were necessary tools because of the high price, some home-made blanket, bee-wax, honey, rattan to change salt, iron tools, bow, jar. In this area, the Katu could not afford to exchange chieng, jar, buffalo - the precious property in their conditions and their conception. Moreover, in the area near the Viet - Lao frontier, there existed salt and tools which were produced by Lao communities, however, the salt quality was not as good as salt in the lowland.

The domestic exchanges among the Katu communities in the earlier days had described clearly:

“The Katu exchanges took place basing on the A sap valley in A tep A Vuong or the Dak, Rgneis, Su mo, Le tia river roads or the Put valley (Le Pichon, 1938: 364).

Goods after the exchanges were transported back to the merchants' houses. The trip for exchanges in the higher land took nearly 10 days. Having enough goods, the Katu brought to other trading places to get buffalo, chieng, precious jar or something which was considered to be precious.

The goods sources of the Katu once were very plentiful and various, however, it turned to fade, especially in the beginning years of the 20th century. At the end of the 18th century, Phu bien tap luc listed many precious forest and native goods originated from the west mountainous areas. The famous rite known as “repaying the enemy's skull” in the Katu communities was also a form of self-defense, against every intrusion from outside which might effect to the security and the natural sources (Tran Ky Phuong, 2004)

4.2.3 Exchange forms

Similar to many ethnic minorities in the Truong Son- Highland range, the Katu's trade haven't reached to high level, haven't formed currency and they have no habit to use money:

“The Highland people have first known silver, money in recent time. Even taxes were also paid by goods (by pig, cattle...). Up until now every business is carried out through exchanges” (Dam Bo, 2003: 69).

In the past, the Katu's exchanges in Thuong Long rarely used currency, due to its terrain and economic activities of the kinh people couldn't take place there.

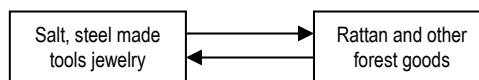
Moreover, few Katu people at that time could know literacy, therefore the traditional exchange form mainly based on agreement and commodities exchanges.

The levels of commodities exchange of the Katu people

Level I: in La Son

+ Cá lái

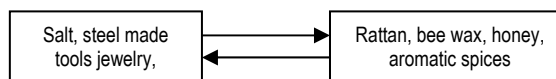
+ Katu merchant



Level II: in Thượng Long.

+ Katu marchants

+ Katu people

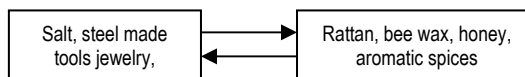


Level III: In mountainous area

+ Katu merchants

+ The Katu in mountainous area.

+ Lao merchant



This exchange form reflects the relation among communities through the mode of business of the middleman. Primary accumulation of capital at that time was mainly through property such as gong, chieng, precious jar and other commodities. According to the Katu's conception, the wealth probably was measured by gong, chieng, precious jar, buffalo, cow, agate and beautiful clothes.

The Katu merchants played the role of middlemen who often produced forest goods for merchandized boats in berthages such as Hien, Giang and many other trading places along the Thu Bon River valley.

The traditinal measurement system of the Katu hardly brought into play, measurements in exchanges mainly leaned on the middle measurement of the Kinh people.

The biggest unit of measurement of the Katu people is zong (back basket) nearly 25 kg rice. In other cases, there are other smaller units of measurements. The Kinh measured out salt by *lon* (milk can) but the Katu used *A Chui* (a tool holding seed) or *A ray* (a box holding rice approximately 10 kg).

The Katu often used bamboo pipe holding honey and they counted basing on the length, the perimeter of the bamboo pipe which was measured by span size. The values of cattle like buffalo, pig was also counted by measuring the wide of chest size, span size.

4.3. Some Impacts of the Trading Process

Nowadays, traditional exchange activities did not popularize as usual because of many impacts such as commodity economy market and goods can easily transport to every terrain due to traffic openness and development. Going on foot

in trail becomes rare. However, through the process of goods exchange has existed long in history, so that up to now, the social relationship among the Katu and the Kinh, among the Katu in the highland and the Katu in the lowland has been in being.

First, it's the mutual influence in languages. In the Katu's life the Kinh have caused many influences on communicative language because both of them have time live together. In commercial activities when the Katu went down to the lowland to exchange commodities, they had leaned on their kinship and friendship with the Katu in the lowland who could know the Kinh's language, so that the Katu in the low area would become the middleman. From these relations they started to learn the Kinh's language from *ca lai*. Some of the Kinh words were used popularly in the Katu's life in Thuong Long. Salt (*muoi*) an important season in everyday life became a familiar word. They often said "Voi trop play *muoi*" (it means exchanging salt).

Up to now, the Katu people in Thuong Long still use these familiar words which carve in their mind. For instance, one wants to go to Hue for visiting or for working, (Hue is called *Dhinh*), *Voi Dhinh cha o* (means going to Hue for visiting) or go to Loc Son and Truoi markets, they say *Voi lang*.

In the past, the Katu went down to exchange white cloths from which making their traditional shirt's edge. After that, the Kinh's costume have entered to the Katu's community and these costume's usefulness were used and loved.

In the field of social relation, up to now, the Katu people in Thuong Long such as Mr Pria Hua (in A Dai hamlet), Pbling Nooc (Aprung hamlet) who often tell about Sung, Lac, Tuong, Nga who once time merchandized salt in the Hien berthage, the Kinh and the Katu in the Hien berthage got on well one another, in trading they rarely hamper and bargain, sometimes, the Kinh *ca lai* sent present for the Katu's relatives. In festival, the Katu people in the Hien berthage went to the Kinh merchants for eating and playing in some days.

Some place names which followed the name of the Kinh was named for some places in the Katu areas, especially the Hien berthage in Quang Nam:

"The A Rang River flows into the Bhua River (also called Con River) where people call Pic A rang. In the olden times, there was a farmer named Hien who went to this area to clear the trees for cultivation. He built a small tent near the river. Most of the boats which went there to exchange goods with other ethnic minorities often landed in this port and they stayed in his house and vice versa. This berthage was named Hien and after that a French guard post which located near also named Hien guard post, and at the end of the year 1950, a mountainous province war also called Hien province (Quach Xan, 2000: 77).

At present, in Thuong Long commune, there are 17 Kinh households which trade necessary goods from the lowland such as salt, fish sauce, dried fish, clothes, shoes, and some forest and native goods of the Katu such as banana, pineapple, rattan, honey. The emigration process has taken place in a long time, they and their

parents mainly are ca lai. In this area, I paid special attention to the two households in the hamlet N^o 9, they are blood sisters: Ms Nguyen Thi To and Ms Nguyen Thi Hoa. In the beginning of the 20th century, their grandmother Ms Cai a famous ca lai, had done her business with a large amount of goods to exchange with the Katu people in Loc Son, Loc An. Her daughter Ms Dung had inherited her business successfully and also developed her trading with the Katu. And Ms To and Ms Hoa learnt how to do business from their grandmother and their mother and now their offspring all know the Katu language and have thorough knowledge of the tradition and custom of the region.

Moreover, the Kinh households want to develop their business, the most important condition is to speak and hear the Katu language, this will help them establish good relationship with the Katu.

The relationship among them turns for the better. They regularly take care of one another when any household meets misfortune.

Not only did ca lai go to this area, many famous blacksmith of the Hien Luong (Phong Dien, Thua Thien Hue) also went there to make their fortune since 1954.

The trading process and the residence among the Kinh and the Katu have also created proper influences on changing traditional values. First, it has made up various supports in life, in business, goods exchanges between the two areas, created motto to develop our economy. At the same time, the mutual understanding has been improved and the new cultural values in communities have contributed to the cultural diversity.

However, there appears bad phenomena, especially young generation feel inferior about the traditional cultural values of the Katu. The phenomena of the Katu using the Kinh language, costume as standard of living is the danger in preservation and development of the Katu's cultural values in the modern time

5. Conclusion

From the beginning of the 20th century, the salt commerce has entered songs and folksongs of the Katu and vice versa:

“He is the master of salt
 We are always friends of him
 Because he provides us buffalo to eat
 And making the trading convenient
 We share to drink a cup of wine
 My guol house is his house
 Because he is strong and wealthy
 We want to make friend with him” (Le Pichon, 1938: 404)

The bustle of the trading road between the Katu in the highland and the Kinh in the lowland in the Central of Vietnam has been reflected in our folksong:

“Ai về nhà với nậu nguồn

Mãng le chở xuống mắm chuồn gửi lên”

(One who goes home send a message

Send bamboo sprout down to lowland and send fish sauce up to highland)

The small and popular goods in everyday meal have also contributed to cultural features which are typical and intermingle in normal life. The bamboo sprout and fish sauce dishes have created specific traits of the highland and the lowland, and they are also typical for the goods sources in the trading process.

The most special point in trading following the east-west axis is the salt road which has partly contributed the importance of creating equality in society through trading relations becoming social relations (kinship, friendship, neighbor ship) and even in religious relations.

In fact, the structure of goods sources is the most logical combination and supplement of the advantage of each region in meeting the demand of society. The highland people need salt and fish sauce, gong, chieng, precious jar, jewelry but the lowland people need wood, rattan, honey, and herb. The forest and native products of the highland and the various goods of the lowland are important conditions for widening the trading and social relations among these regions.

In the west of mountainous area in Thua Thien Hue, the land route N^o 14B at the moment is the reappearance and reconfirmation of the role of the Kinh and the Katu trading way which once was really bustling. It also went along with the famous trading centers in the old days.

The Kinh - Katu trading way itself has played an extremely important role in speeding up the economic development for both the highland and the lowland and it has also set up the close relations in ethnic unification and other cultural, social activities. It is so clear that the process of commodities exchanges among ethnic groups not only supports for economic purposes but also supports for social, cultural relations.

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