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HISTORY AND CULTURE OF THE ĐINH NHO LINEAGE IN HƯƠNG SƠN, HÀ TĨNH, FROM THE 16TH CENTURY TO 2007

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Translator's note

This is a complete English translation of the Vietnamese-language graduation thesis by Nguyễn Văn Sô, submitted to Vinh University in 2008. The following conventions have been applied:

- Vietnamese personal names, place names, temple names, dynastic reign titles, posthumous titles, and other proper nouns are kept in Vietnamese with their original diacritics, following standard scholarly practice. Where a title or term carries specific meaning, an English gloss is added in parentheses on first use.
- The author's source citations are preserved in their original bracket form [source number; page number], keyed to the numbered Reference list.
- Sino-Vietnamese couplets, poems, chime inscriptions and funeral orations are given first in the author's romanized Vietnamese, followed by an English rendering that conveys their sense; these are literary translations, not verbatim equivalents.
- The Appendix of the original consists chiefly of photographs (the ancestral house, Gôi Mỹ Temple, tomb complexes, the Mặc Trai Chime, decrees). Only the captions and the transcribed textual documents are translated here; the photographs themselves are not reproduced.

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Acknowledgments

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The author
Nguyễn Văn Sô

INTRODUCTION

1. Rationale for the topic

1.1. Vietnamese culture is the fruit of the nation's thousands of years of building and defending the country; it has forged the soul, mettle and character of the Vietnamese people. Thanks to it, our people have overcome countless difficulties and trials in order to survive and develop. The traditions of family lineages have built up the glorious traditions of the nation. Throughout history, lineages have naturally contributed, in varying degrees, to the cause of building and defending the fatherland; they have created priceless cultural heritage and have been the cradles that gave birth to the nation's talents. For this reason, studying the historical traditions of lineages carries great significance for preserving and promoting the cultural traditions of each family and lineage, for clarifying local cultural history, for enriching national history, and for helping us better understand the lives and careers of historical notables.

1.2. Since ancient times our people have had the sayings "birds have nests, people have ancestors," "when drinking water, remember its source," and "when eating fruit, remember who planted the tree" — these express the moral tradition of the Vietnamese. Today, as the economy develops and the country integrates into the world, cultural identity is valued and esteemed all the more, and the tendency to return to one's roots exerts an ever-stronger pull. Many lineages have begun to think about restoring the order of their clans and reviving the spirit of kinship in the hearts of their descendants. The positive side of this work is that many lineages have restored their temples, tombs and certain craft villages, recompiled their genealogies and clan chronicles, drawn up calendars of ancestral death anniversaries and other matters outside the genealogy proper; they have gathered materials about their forebears, sought to reconnect the ties among the various branches of old, and to communicate with distant relatives; they have revived lineage traditions and, through them, educated later generations in clan consciousness. Alongside this, however, limitations inevitably arise, such as disputes and conflicts between lineages over certain sensitive matters. For this reason, studying lineage culture in a serious and scholarly manner carries great significance: it promotes the positive aspects and eliminates the negative; it leads each person back toward their roots; it awakens reverence for one's ancestors and a sense of reunion; and it consolidates a broad spirit of solidarity throughout the whole community of the Vietnamese people.

1.3. Hương Sơn is a district with a long history of development. A land where the sacred earth gives birth to outstanding people, Hương Sơn became a stopping place, a settlement and a place of development for many famous lineages such as the Nguyễn Khắc, Đinh Nho, Tống Trần, Lê and Đặng. Together these lineages conquered nature, cleared land and founded hamlets, stabilized their livelihoods, and built the land of Hương Sơn into an ever more developed region.

The Đinh Nho lineage of Hương Sơn originated from the land of Ninh Bình. The ancestors of the Đinh Nho lineage settled in Hương Sơn around 1543–1546. Over more than 460 years and 20 generations, the descendants of the Đinh Nho lineage are today present in almost all the communes and townships of the district, most densely in the communes of Sơn Hoà, Sơn Tân, Sơn Châu and Sơn Ninh. In addition, descendants of the lineage live in other districts of Hà Tĩnh province and in other provinces throughout the country. The Đinh Nho lineage is regarded as one of the "great clans" (cự tộc) of the land of Hương Sơn, having contributed many talented people to the cause of building and developing their home region and the country.

Proceeding from the scholarly and practical significance set out above, we have taken the bold step of choosing the topic "History and Culture of the Đinh Nho Lineage in Hương Sơn, Hà Tĩnh, from the 16th Century to 2007" as the subject of our Master's thesis, in the hope of contributing to a general and comprehensive picture of the Đinh Nho clan for everyone: of its relationship with a number of other lineages across the two provinces of Nghệ An and Hà Tĩnh, and of its contributions to the home region and the country.

2. History of the question

Today, with the tendency to return to one's roots, the study of lineages is attracting the attention of many scholars and researchers, because the historical culture of lineages is one of the elements that make up the culture of the nation — there is no lineage that is not connected and closely bound up with the history of the nation. Accordingly, in recent times, in the trend toward preserving and promoting the cultural values of each locality in particular and of the nation as a whole, research works on lineage culture, or on the outstanding figures of lineages, have grown in both quantity and quality, thereby contributing to preserving and promoting fine traditions and serving the cause of building and defending an ever richer and more beautiful country.

The Đinh Nho lineage is one of the famous lineages of the land of Hương Sơn. From the very first days after settling in Hương Sơn — clearing land and founding hamlets — the generations of the Đinh Nho lineage have always been conscious of, and taken practical measures toward, strengthening pride in the clan and honoring the traditional cultural values of their lineage. To date, the historical culture of the Đinh Nho lineage in Hương Sơn has been studied through a number of the following materials:

- "Hương Yên phổ tự" — the first work to deal with the Đinh Nho lineage of Hương Sơn, compiled by Đinh Thái Lãng, an Academician-Reader of the Hàn Lâm Academy (of the twelfth generation of the Đinh Nho lineage). This work has been transcribed into the national script (quốc ngữ). It has the significance of being the first genealogy of the Đinh Nho lineage, recording the migration of the progenitor Đinh Phúc Diên and the development of the Đinh Nho lineage in Hương Sơn. It also has the significance of being a set of admonitions handed down from earlier generations to their descendants.
- "Đại Việt sử ký toàn thư" (Complete Annals of Đại Việt) by Ngô Sỹ Liên — this painstakingly compiled body of history mentions a number of figures of the Đinh Nho lineage; however, it merely records certain individuals of the lineage and the activities connected with them.
- "Danh nhân Văn hoá Việt Nam" (Cultural Notables of Vietnam) by Lê Minh Quốc — this also mentions one representative figure of the Đinh Nho lineage, namely Đinh Nho Hoàn, examined in terms of chronicle history and his principal contributions.
- The article "The Đinh Nho Lineage of Hương Sơn," published in Hà Tĩnh Newspaper (issue of 17 April 1999), which made an initial study of the examination tradition of the Đinh Nho lineage.
- The essay "Gôi Mỹ Village" in the book "Ancient Villages of Hà Tĩnh" by Thái Kim Đỉnh, which studies in general terms the historical culture and traditions of Gôi Mỹ village (Sơn Hoà commune), the place of settlement and development of the Đinh Nho lineage.
- The "Memoirs" of Professor Đặng Thai Mai, which include a section written about his paternal grandmother, Đinh Thị Chiên — a daughter of the Đinh Nho lineage.

In general, the materials above deal with the historical culture and traditions, as well as some of the contributions, of the descendants of the Đinh Nho lineage in Hương Sơn to the history of the home region. However, all of them are individual studies; none has probed deeply or systematized comprehensively the process of the lineage's development, its contributions to the home region in particular and the nation as a whole, or its traditional cultural heritage and present state. The task that arises, therefore, is to study more systematically and comprehensively the historical culture of the Đinh Nho lineage in Hương Sơn, Hà Tĩnh.

3. Scope of research and scholarly tasks of the topic

3.1. Scope of research

On the basis of the materials currently available, we set the scope of research as the history and culture of the Đinh Nho lineage in the land of Hương Sơn from the 16th century to 2007.

3.2. Tasks

In the course of researching this subject, we address the following tasks:

- To understand comprehensively and systematically the process of the formation and development of the Đinh Nho lineage in the land of Hương Sơn, and the principal contributions of the lineage to its home region and the nation.
- To study in depth a number of the famous figures of the Đinh Nho lineage — especially Đinh Nho Công, Đinh Nho Hoàn, Đinh Nho Côn, Đinh Nhật Thận and their descendants — in order to better understand their contributions to the lineage and the home region.
- To study the traditional culture and cultural heritage of the Đinh Nho lineage in Hương Sơn, and the place and contributions of the Đinh Nho lineage in the historical culture of the land of Hà Tĩnh.

4. Sources and research methods

4.1. Sources

4.1.1. Primary sources: We studied the official histories and the genealogies of the Đinh Nho lineage (the genealogy of the senior branch, the genealogies of the junior branches in Sơn Tân commune (Hương Sơn) and in Thanh Chương district), together with the stelae, parallel couplets and horizontal lacquered boards at Gôi Mỹ Temple, at the ancestral house of the Đinh Nho lineage in Sơn Hoà commune, and at the tomb complexes of the lineage, as well as the file archived at the Department of Culture, Sports and Tourism of Hà Tĩnh province concerning the Gôi Mỹ Temple cultural relic.

4.1.2. Research materials: The historical and cultural research materials we consulted include: Nghệ An ký by Bùi Dương Lịch, Hoan Châu ký by Nguyễn Cảnh Thị, and Công diệp tư chí by Vũ Phương Đề. We also drew on several works by Ninh Viết Giao, such as Văn bia Nghệ An (Stele Inscriptions of Nghệ An) and Nghệ An — Lịch sử và văn hóa (Nghệ An — History and Culture), as well as certain publications of the Clan Council and of the liaison committees of the various branches of the Đinh Nho lineage in different provinces.

4.1.3. Other materials: In addition to the above, we used reference tools such as "Khoa bảng Nghệ An (1075–1919)" by Đào Tam Tĩnh (2005), "Các nhà khoa bảng Nghệ An (1075–1919)" by Ngô Đức Thọ, and the "Dictionary of Historical Figures" by Nguyễn Quốc Thắng and Nguyễn Bá Thế. We also drew on the proceedings of several academic conferences, a number of handwritten documents, and articles and journals related to the research topic, such as the proceedings of the 1997 conference "Culture of the North Central Provinces" and the 1997 conference "Culture of the Lineages of Nghệ An," together with research works and undergraduate and Master's theses held in the Library of Vinh University relating to the land of Hương Sơn and the Đinh Nho lineage.

4.1.4. Fieldwork materials: To supplement the materials for this topic, we also conducted field study at the ancestral house of the Đinh Nho lineage in Sơn Hoà commune (Hương Sơn), at Gôi Mỹ Temple in Sơn Hoà commune, at Bạch Vân Temple in Sơn Thịnh commune (Thịnh Xá), and at the tomb complexes of the lineage (in the communes of Sơn Phúc, Sơn Tiến, Sơn Bằng and Sơn Hoà). At the same time we met and exchanged views with the village elders and the branch heads of the Đinh Nho lineage, such as Mr. Đinh Nho Quỳ, Mr. Đinh Nho Phi and Mr. Đinh Nho Đông.

4.2. Research methods

The research methods we employ in this thesis are:

- The historical method.
- The logical method.
- Interdisciplinary methods: statistics, collation and comparison.
- Combined with the methods of fieldwork and the collection of local historical materials.

5. Contributions of the topic

- The thesis introduces the process of the formation and development of the Đinh Nho lineage in the land of Hương Sơn, helping everyone to better understand the Đinh Nho lineage — a "great clan" of Hương Sơn and of the Nghệ region — with its precious traditional cultural features, thereby contributing to moral and intellectual education aimed at preserving the cultural identity of the nation.
- Through the study of the history and culture of the Đinh Nho lineage in Hương Sơn, we hope to help shed further light on the lives, careers and contributions of historical figures such as Đinh Nho Công, Đinh Nho Hoàn, Đinh Nho Côn, Đinh Nhật Thận, Đinh Xuân Lâm and Đinh Nho Liêm to local and national history.
- The thesis helps to enrich the cultural traditions of the locality and to become a source of material for research on the history, society and culture of the nation.
- By honoring the traditional cultural values of the lineage, the thesis contributes to preserving and promoting the cultural identity of the nation, and to building the "cultured family" and the "cultured village," advancing toward the construction of a Vietnamese culture that is "advanced and rich in national identity."

6. Structure of the thesis

Besides the introduction, conclusion, list of references and appendix, the main body of the thesis consists of three chapters:

- Chapter 1: The Process of Development of the Đinh Nho Lineage in the Land of Hương Sơn from the 16th Century to 2007.
- Chapter 2: The Traditional Culture of the Đinh Nho Lineage in Hương Sơn, Hà Tĩnh.
- Chapter 3: Representative Figures of the Đinh Nho Lineage in Hương Sơn, Hà Tĩnh.

CHAPTER 1: THE PROCESS OF DEVELOPMENT OF THE ĐINH NHO LINEAGE IN THE LAND OF HƯƠNG SƠN FROM THE 16TH CENTURY TO 2007

1.1. Hương Sơn — Land and People

1.1.1. Natural geography and economic development

Hương Sơn is a place with many historical relics, its rivers and mountains forming charming scenery, and each village and each mountain bearing its own legends.

Hương Sơn is a mountainous district of the North Central region, lying to the northwest of Hà Tĩnh, stretching along National Highway 8A. Its east–west extent runs from Linh Cảm Bridge over the La River to the Cầu Treo border gate — the frontier separating Vietnam and Laos — with geographic coordinates from 105°16′ to 105°34′ east longitude and from 18°17′ to 18°38′ north latitude. The district's boundaries are: to the north, Nam Đàn and Thanh Chương districts of Nghệ An province; to the east, Đức Thọ district; to the west, Bolikhamxai province of the Lao People's Democratic Republic; and to the south, Vũ Quang district. The political center of Hương Sơn district lies about 70 km northwest of the city of Hà Tĩnh.

Hương Sơn district dates from the Lê dynasty (15th–18th centuries) and has essentially retained its present boundaries, although there was a slight change in 1876, when the southern part was separated off into Hương Khê district. From 1945 to August 2000 nothing changed; then, in August 2000, Sơn Thọ commune was transferred to Vũ Quang district. Today Hương Sơn is one of the 11 districts and towns of Hà Tĩnh province, comprising two townships — Phố Châu and Tây Sơn — of which Phố Châu is the cultural and political center of the district, while Tây Sơn township is the district's commercial and service hub, a node for the circulation of goods from the Cầu Treo border gate to other regions of the country. Besides the two townships, Hương Sơn district has 30 communes: Sơn Bằng, Sơn Thịnh, Sơn Trung, Sơn An, Sơn Bình, Sơn Diệm, Sơn Giang, Sơn Hà, Sơn Hồng, Sơn Kim I, Sơn Kim II, Sơn Lâm, Sơn Lễ, Sơn Long, Sơn Lĩnh, Sơn Mỹ, Sơn Ninh, Sơn Phố, Sơn Phúc, Sơn Quang, Sơn Tân, Sơn Tây, Sơn Thuỷ, Sơn Tiến, Sơn Trà and Sơn Trường. The district's total natural area is 110,314.98 ha, accounting for 18.33% of the province's total natural area (Hương Sơn has the second largest natural area in the province after Hương Khê district) [1;7].

The terrain of Hương Sơn includes every kind of mountain and forest — bare hills, dense primeval forest and open woodland — with hills and mountains linked in an unbroken arc running northwest to southeast. Hương Sơn has 165 peaks, 160 streams, and 128 hills, knolls and mounds. The district's natural conditions are very favorable for a mixed economy of swidden agriculture and wet-rice cultivation in the basin-shaped valleys and along the streams around the drainage of the Ngàn Phố River. There are many hills here of gentle gradient, well suited to growing tea, fruit trees and upland rice, as well as other crops such as maize, cassava, beans and peanuts. Each year the garden economy of Hương Sơn ranks among the foremost in Hà Tĩnh province, with fruits such as oranges, mandarins, pomelos, jackfruit and pineapple. Of old, the people of Hương Sơn have handed down the saying "one acre of homestead is worth a hundred acres of field," affirming the importance of the garden economy in this land. Together with deer farming, the garden-and-hill economy brings the people of Hương Sơn a large annual income, contributing importantly to securing their livelihoods.

The natural resources of Hương Sơn district are quite rich, especially its land and forest resources. The soils of Hương Sơn district fall into 6 groups and 14 different types: alluvial soils, degraded grey soils, red-yellow soils, valley soils, eroded soils, and yellow-red humus soils.

The district's forest area currently stands at 83,852.57 ha, or 75.65% of its natural area. Its flora and fauna are diverse and abundant, including several rare timber species of high economic value such as pơmu (fokienia), green ironwood (lim xanh) and vàng tâm. According to studies, within Vũ Quang National Park (part of which lies within Hương Sơn district), 76% of the area is natural forest, divided into two main forest types: closed evergreen subtropical forest at altitudes above 1,000 m, covering about 20% of the area, with two dominant species, pơmu and Chinese juniper (hoàng đàn); and evergreen tropical forest below 1,000 m, with a large timber reserve. Some 465 species of higher plants have been recorded, including many rare species such as rosewood (cẩm lai), chukrasia (lát hoa), ironwood (lim), dổi, pơmu, hoàng đàn and agarwood (trầm hương), along with many precious medicinal plants. Among the fauna, 70 mammal species have been recorded, including many rare species such as the saola, the giant muntjac, the tiger and the elephant.

Hương Sơn is renowned not only for the abundance of its natural resources but also for its many scenic landscapes. Here lies a national nature reserve in the area of Sơn Kim commune, which still preserves the pristine character of primeval forest, with many plant and animal species listed in Vietnam's Red Book. Hương Sơn also has many relics and scenic sites, such as Tượng Sơn Pagoda in Yên Hạ village (now in Sơn Giang commune), founded and built by the mother of the great physician Lê Hữu Trác in the Later Lê period. The relic complex of Hải Thượng Lãn Ông Lê Hữu Trác — comprising the temple to Lê Hữu Trác in Bầu Thượng hamlet (now in Sơn Quang commune) and the tomb of Lê Hữu Trác on Minh Từ Mountain (Sơn Trung commune) — has been ranked by the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism as a national cultural relic. Gôi Mỹ Temple in Sơn Hoà commune enshrines four deities of the Đinh Nho lineage. There is also the temple to the general Nguyễn Thiện Thuật in Sơn Ninh commune.

As for famous mountains, there is Mount Đại Hàm, the guardian mountain of Hương Sơn district. The Đại Việt sử ký records: "When King Lê Thái Tổ besieged the citadel of Nghệ An, Lý An, an assistant general of the Ming invaders, came from Đông Quan. The king, foreseeing that Trấn Trí had long been beleaguered and that if reinforcements arrived they might break out to attack, moved his troops to Đỗ Gia (that is, ancient Hương Sơn district), dug a moat at the river mouth, and placed an ambush along the riverbank to intercept the enemy." The book "Nghệ An địa chí" has a verse: "Lê Hoàng bình Bắc khấu, tằng thử phấn minh tiên" ("King Lê subdued the northern brigands; from here he pressed heartened forward") — this refers to that event.

The citadel of Lục Niên on Mount Thiên Nhẫn lies half in Thanh Chương district and half in Hương Sơn district. Tradition holds that King Lê Thái Tổ, raising his army to hold out against the Ming, built the citadel and stationed his troops here for six years. An old verse runs: "Lục Niên cung kiếm anh hùng thủ, nhất chẩm yên hà ẩn dật tình" ("At Lục Niên the hero held bow and sword; on a single pillow, amid mist and cloud, dwelt the recluse's heart").

The natural scenery of Hương Sơn is truly beautiful and its natural resources abundant; but there is one thing that nature perhaps created to test the people here, and that is the climate. The tropical monsoon climate, further governed by the terrain of the eastern slope of the Trường Sơn range, produces a very harsh differentiation, characterized by a cold, damp, rainy winter and a hot, dry summer. Temperatures

here are relatively low, with an annual mean of about 23.4°C and an absolute minimum of around 4–5°C. The total annual rainfall of the district is fairly high (2,000–2,100 mm) but unevenly distributed across the months of the year. The annual mean is about 1,463 hours of sunshine; in summer the sun is often fierce, unfavorable to plant photosynthesis and harmful to agricultural production. The district is affected by two winds: the northeast monsoon in winter, which lowers temperatures and often harms agriculture; and the southwest wind (the Lào wind), which directly affects the production and daily life of the people. Each year the district is directly affected by one or two storms and tropical depressions. Storms usually appear in September to November, bringing heavy rain and strong winds that cause flooding and thus harm production and people's lives. Floods usually rise very quickly and to a great height, but a short time after the rain stops the river water again drains away completely. In particular, the flood that struck unexpectedly in 2002 caused serious material and psychological damage in the district.

In economic terms, before the Lê dynasty Hương Sơn district had abundant land and a sparse population; the people specialized in plowing fields, fishing or hunting. The terrain of encircling mountains was interspersed with small, narrow plains. From the late Lê dynasty, land reclamation was increasingly extended, livelihoods grew more prosperous, and the productive economy gradually flourished. From the year Ất Dậu of the Hàm Nghi reign (1885), and through the successive reigns of Đồng Khánh and Thành Thái, turmoil and disturbances brought suffering to the people's livelihoods: in the uplands the land was left fallow, while in the plains the population was crowded together, so that the path of economic development was not without many obstacles.

From the 10th year of the Thành Thái reign (1900) onward, thanks to attention to dykes, agriculture developed more than before. The socio-economic situation developed stably, the people's lives were improved, and so the people gave attention and care to education. In the first year of the Duy Tân reign (1907), the total poll-and-land tax of the whole prefecture was only 40,000 đồng, yet by the 4th year of the Bảo Đại reign (1929) the total poll-and-land tax had risen to 470,000 đồng. Such was the visible progress of the productive economy.

Out of the need for self-sufficiency, Hương Sơn has of old had a number of traditional handicrafts linked to the agricultural economy, with several famous handmade products sold to other localities: carpentry at Xa Lang (that is, Sơn Tân commune); bamboo goods, clogs and paper fans at Thịnh Xá (Sơn Thịnh commune); and, at Đỗ Xá and Yên Ấp, weavers and many other crafts such as smithing. Most of these crafts, however, were carried out on a small scale, sufficient for daily life; trade and barter remained limited.

To this day the agricultural economy still plays an important role, with an annual sown area of 1,598 ha; the products — paddy rice, beans, peanuts, cassava — are ordinary. In a good harvest year there is enough for daily consumption; in a bad year, rice must be bought in from elsewhere. In particular, every commune and hamlet in the district has betel, areca, tea, mulberry (for silkworms), jackfruit timber and bamboo; of these, the two communes of Hữu Bằng and Phúc Dương account for the greatest quantity of betel and areca. Each year the people earn a fair profit from selling betel and areca; however, these two products are unpredictable — good in one season and poor in another, dear one year and cheap the next. Only the orange is a high-value specialty, sold in many places within the province and across the country.

Hương Sơn is a mountainous district, so land is used chiefly for forestry, with two forest enterprises for planting and harvesting timber; the total value of industrial output reaches 1.6 billion đồng, the main

products being timber. In particular, the tea-planting enterprise earns a very large return. The tea of Hương Sơn has entered poetry and song, leaving an impression on visitors:

"Whoever goes to Hà Tĩnh, come home:
Wear Hạ silk, and drink the tea of Hương Sơn."

The astringent taste and the fresh green color of a bowl of green tea have become a thread binding people together in affection: "Good tea, astringent water — please come in; land and water, water and land, do not forget human kindness." This is the homeland of the pride of the Nghệ region — the famous cu-đơ candy. Savored together with a bowl of green tea, its aftertaste is unforgettable.

Rich natural conditions and stable economic development are the premise for the social development of Hương Sơn district.

1.1.2. Historical and cultural conditions

"Hương Sơn" is a name found in many places across Vietnam. But to name a district Hương Sơn is unique to Hà Tĩnh — a land steeped in legend. Hương Sơn district originally had various precious products with fragrant scents: fragrant wood and fragrant rice (that is, many products with a pleasant aroma), and its terrain is ringed by many mountains — hence the name Hương Sơn, "the fragrant mountains." One legend holds that this was the habitat of a special animal, the "musk civet" (chồn ngận), of ordinary size but giving off a characteristic scent; hence this land was called Hương Sơn ("the fragrance of the mountain forests").

In the course of its long development, Hương Sơn has borne many different names. According to "Đại Nam nhất thống chí" of the Nguyễn dynasty's National History Office: in ancient times, under the Đinh and Early Lê dynasties, the land of Hương Sơn district belonged to Phúc Lộc prefecture, in the region of Hoan Châu. Under the Lý dynasty it belonged to Nghệ An prefecture; under the Trần it was called the region of Đỗ Gia. During the Ming occupation (1407–1427) it was split into the two districts of Cổ Đỗ and Thổ Hoàng, belonging to Nghệ An prefecture. From the early Later Lê it was reunited under its old name, Đỗ Gia. Around the Quang Thuận era (1469) of the Later Lê it was renamed Hương Sơn district, comprising 10 cantons and 57 village-hamlets within Đức Quang prefecture, in the Nghệ An region. It is from here that the name Hương Sơn district originated. In the 21st year of the Tự Đức reign (1867), the Nguyễn dynasty separated the five southern cantons — Quy Hợp, Chu Lễ, Phương Điền, Phúc Lộc and Hương Khê — from Hương Sơn district to establish the additional district of Hương Khê. From 1867, the land of Hương Sơn district retained only the five northern cantons — Đỗ Xá, An Ấp, Hữu Bằng, Dị Ốc and Thổ Hoàng — belonging to Đức Thọ prefecture, Hà Tĩnh province. During the Democratic Republic of Vietnam period (1945–1975) it was Hương Sơn district, Hà Tĩnh province. From 1976 to 1991 it was Hương Sơn district, Nghệ Tĩnh province. From 1991 to the present it has again been Hương Sơn district, belonging to Hà Tĩnh province [29;127].

According to Professor Đinh Xuân Lâm, the southwest of the Ngàn Phố River basin, along the riverbanks, was formerly the dwelling area of several upland ethnic groups known as the Đào Lân, Kiêu Nang and Cá Lăng, extending up the Trường Sơn range as far as the Vietnam–Laos border. The local people usually called them the "Ri" people. These groups had lived here since before the 15th century (the 10th year of the Quang Thuận era of Lê Thánh Tông — 1469); but under the pressure of newcomers they had to abandon the land and move toward the frontier, founding hamlets at Chè stream, Gân rock and elsewhere. The great majority, however, became sinicized/Kinh-assimilated. The people of the district are

by nature simple and honest, patient and industrious; the scholars did not prize ostentation, content in poverty, while as common folk they were frugal without being petty — though among the scholar class there was no lack of the headstrong. In general they were rustic and plain, kind-hearted and thus unaffected. Those of the riverine areas near markets (such as Thịnh Xá, Hoài Mỹ, Đỗ Xá and Hữu Bằng) tended to love literature and worry little about earning a living, devoting themselves to crafts and trade rather than to plowing and planting; while the mountainous area of Tình Diệm cared less for learning. Yet the majority were fond of study — formerly they studied Chinese characters and French, and it is the same now [18;11].

A love of learning and respect for teachers and the Way have long been fine traditions of the people of Hương Sơn. It takes pride in being the birthplace of many famous notables, such as Nguyễn Tuấn Thiện; Văn Đình Dận; the doctoral laureate Đinh Nho Công, renowned for his incorruptibility; and the second-rank doctoral laureate Đinh Nho Hoàn, who rose to the office of Thượng Bảo Tự Khanh [3;21].

In the Lê Trung Hưng period there was a man of Tình Diệm commune, of the Lê Hải school, known as Hải Thượng Lãn Ông (originally from Hải Dương, he later returned to his mother's home village of Tình Diệm in Hương Sơn). Of profound learning, he did not enter officialdom but withdrew to devote himself to the study of medicine in order to save lives. The heritage he left includes three works of great value to today's medical world: "Hải Thượng cầu nguyện," "Y tông tâm lĩnh" and "Lĩnh Nam bản thảo." If in the 19th century there was a Hà Học Hải, of Bình Hoà village in An Yên canton, who stood as a banner of moral and literary example for later scholars of Hương Sơn, then in the 20th century there was the cultural figure Nguyễn Khắc Viện. In 1939 Nguyễn Khắc Viện graduated from the Faculty of Medicine in Paris (France). He translated and compiled many foreign books into Vietnamese and vice versa. A patriotic intellectual, he once served as Secretary-General of the Association of Patriotic Overseas Vietnamese. He was awarded the Independence Order, Third Class, by our Party and State (1984). He also devoted much time to the study of psychology. Although for a time he was confined to his bed, he endured and battled his illness. He was admired and respected by friends and colleagues both at home and abroad. Many called him a scholar, journalist, agent, writer, historian, filmmaker, cultural activist and playwright.

Hương Sơn is also known as a land rich in patriotic tradition; in every era it has had outstanding examples of an indomitable, heroic and steadfast will to fight foreign invaders and defend the homeland. Many of its figures were founding meritorious officials of the state. At Kim Quy Temple in Kẻ Sét (Sơn Ninh commune) there is still a couplet about the career of Nguyễn Tuấn Thiện, a man of Phúc Đậu village, Phúc Dương commune (now Sơn Phúc commune): "A founding meritorious official and Grand Guardian of old; of hereditary military rank, a distinguished scholar of the special examination advancing to grand minister, honored in the literary line" [2;65]. Around 1422–1423 he gathered the able-bodied young men of his village and the surrounding area to form the Cốc Sơn troop, rising up against the invading Ming. When the Lam Sơn insurgent army reached Đa Lôi (present-day Nam Kim commune, Nam Đàn), Nguyễn Tuấn Thiện led the Cốc Sơn troop out to pay homage to the Pacification Prince Lê Lợi and ask to fight in coordination with him.

Tradition holds that Lê Lợi and Nguyễn Tuấn Thiện slew a white horse and swore an oath beneath a diospyros tree in Nậy hamlet, becoming sworn brothers. From then on the Cốc Sơn troop became a part of the Lam Sơn insurgent army. Nguyễn Tuấn Thiện was a skilled general, as shown in the resounding victories at the mouth of the Khuất River (now in Sơn Bằng commune) and the mouth of the Phố River

(now in Sơn Tân commune). Riding this momentum, the Lam Sơn army advanced to liberate Nghệ An and then Thanh Hoá, completely liberating the country. When King Thái Tổ assessed merit and conferred rewards, Nguyễn Tuấn Thiện was ranked among the founding meritorious officials, was granted the royal surname of Lê Thiện, and was appointed Chief Commissioner and Deputy Marshal. Later he held the office of Grand General, serving as joint governor of the two prefectures of Hoan and Ái, and then administered a stretch of land from Châu Ô to Đồ Bàn (Quảng Trị – Quảng Bình).

Under the Lê dynasty, in the Cảnh Hưng reign (1740–1786), the Văn Đình family was famous for its talent. A prominent figure was Văn Đình Dận of Đông Tràng hamlet, in Đỗ Xá canton. When the Trịnh Lord led an army to fight the enemy at Ngân Già, the enemy took advantage of a gap to ferry troops across the Nhị Hà (Red) River and threaten the capital. At that time Văn Đình Dận was guarding Sơn Tây; learning the news early, he immediately led his own troops racing back to the capital, marching day and night without rest. The whole army did not stop to cook; his plan was to have two men carry a large cauldron already filled with water and rice, while one man held a great torch beneath the cauldron. In this way they cooked as they ran, and when the rice was done they ate as they ran, hurrying to the capital — where the enemy had already reached the north bank of the Nhị Hà. The enemy had 500 boats about to cross the river. He urgently assembled his own troops to take position and guard the ferry landing, and by night urged the townsfolk to line the bank in dense array, each holding a lit bundle of incense. Seeing from afar the swirling incense smoke and the flickering embers, the enemy took them for the guns and fires of the royal troops and supposed that a great army had arrived; terrified, they fled, and the capital was thereby spared. In his day it was said that the Duke of Điều (he was ennobled as Duke of Điều) had rendered the state unmatched service.

In the struggle against feudalism, peasant uprisings broke out everywhere. Hương Sơn was a notable site: under the command of Lê Hầu Tạo in the mountainous area of Hương Sơn district, the insurgents took the Truông Mây region as their base. Several times Minh Mạng sent court troops out to suppress them, and each time the insurgents scattered them. Realizing that force would not avail, the Left Marshal Lê Văn Duyệt used stratagem, at once besieging and enticing and bribing. In late 1821 Lê Văn Duyệt devised a scheme to seize Lê Hầu Tạo's aged mother and younger sister as hostages, forcing him to surrender, and then had him killed when he was only 30 years old. Although the uprising failed, it was a great source of encouragement, so that for several years afterward the people of Hương Sơn continued to rise up in struggle in many places.

In early 1823 the uprising commanded by Lê Quang Chấn spread across the two districts of Hương Sơn (Hà Tĩnh) and Nam Đàn (Nghệ An). Court troops sent out from Huế, combined with local forces to suppress it, still could not put it down. The uprisings — now fierce, now smoldering — continued to break out one after another.

Representative of the patriotic spirit and fighting will of the people of Hương Sơn was also the figure of Cao Thắng — grandson of the scholar Cao Quỳ, of native stock from Cửa Nương hamlet, Phúc Dương commune. At the age of ten he followed the Lựu troop as a liaison for the Yellow Flag insurgents. On joining the insurgent army he won the full trust of Phan Đình Phùng, who entrusted him with the post of company commander. In 1887, when Phan Đình Phùng went north to link up the anti-French forces, Cao Thắng was given command of the insurgent army. He built a system of forts and strongholds, forming an interlinked disposition backed against the Thiên Nhẫn and Giăng Màn ranges, highly advantageous —

"able to advance and attack, able to withdraw and hold" — not isolated but set amid the people; the French, advancing here, could come only by the single road of National Highway 8, which was to enter ground of death.

Besides having the keen eye of a resourceful military commander and a talented director of practical organization, Cao Thắng was also creative and dynamic, quick to grasp that weaponry played a very great role in war. He conscripted smiths from Trung Lương and Vân Chàng and carpenters from Xa Lang, opened forges, and cast rifles after the French 1874 model. Hundreds of rifles were manufactured and fired very effectively. Although they did not shoot as far as French rifles, this greatly astonished the French. Moreover, Cao Thắng was also a skilled politician. Resolute toward traitors, and toward those who erred and had not yet recognized the right, he admonished and warned them, while at the same time mobilizing the masses to contribute manpower and resources to the insurgent army. Thus the Hương Sơn base was always consolidated and strengthened, serving from there as a springboard to expand the area of operations and break the enemy's encircling grip.

At the very moment when his talent was reaching its ripeness, Cao Thắng fell in battle. His death was an immense loss to the Hương Sơn insurgents and to the anti-French movement in the Central Region. In anguish, his voice choked with sobs, Phan Đình Phùng struck Cao Thắng's coffin and cried out, "Heaven has ruined me! Heaven has ruined me!" In the funeral eulogy the commanders and insurgents wept: "On the waters of Tam Soa the moonlight flickers; remembering the loyal and faithful one, how sorrowful!" [2;48].

These individuals brought honor to the mettle of Hương Sơn, but above all it is the masses who make history. Almost all the people of Hương Sơn — including the Catholic community, and especially the people of the cantons of Hữu Bằng, Yên Ấp, Đậu Xá, Dị Ốc and Thượng Bồng — displayed heroic and steadfast fighting mettle, creating every condition for the insurgents. Thus Hương Sơn was once the Đỗ Gia landing, Mount Trạng Ẩn, a great headquarters in the Phan Đình Phùng uprising.

Through the two resistance wars against the French and the Americans, Hương Sơn was a locality that fulfilled its tasks well, at the forefront of the province's revolutionary movement — one of the districts that seized power earliest in the movement of 1930–1931. A frontline of fire in the resistance against the Americans, Hương Sơn remained firm and steadfast. Its history, past and present, is recorded in 8 national-level relics, some of them rich in symbolism, such as Gôi Mỹ Communal House, which at once symbolizes loyalty to sovereign and love of country, honors Vietnamese women, and stands as a witness to the high tide of the Xô Viết Nghệ Tĩnh movement. In particular, according to figures up to the year 2000, Hương Sơn had 2,826 martyrs, 39 Heroic Vietnamese Mothers, and 4 communes and 4 individuals awarded the title of Hero of the People's Armed Forces [2;62].

The Ngàn Phố River is like a young woman, demure and gentle; and because of this poetic, majestic scenery people stayed to build their homes, open the land and make their living — it was these very people who created the vitality, faith and pride of this land, long styled "boundlessly sacred and beautiful," a region with a rich historical culture reaching back to the age of the founding of the country.

"The land of Ngàn Phố resounds with rare talent;
the realm of the capital buzzes with its fame."

In the future, with its abundant human resources and rich natural resources, Hương Sơn will not only be a sacred land that gives birth to outstanding people but will also rise up in every respect, economic and cultural.

1.2. The formation and development of the Đinh Nho lineage in Hương Sơn from the 16th century to 2007

Sharing in the glorious cultural tradition of the land of Hương Sơn, the Đinh Nho lineage was a great, noble scholar-gentry clan in Hương Sơn and in the Nghệ region under the feudal regime of the Lê–Trịnh–Nguyễn. This lineage produced many famous figures in the fields of examinations, officialdom and the military.

The original progenitor of the Đinh Nho lineage in Hương Sơn (Hà Tĩnh) was Đinh Phúc Diên, a man of the Đinh family of Gia Viễn (Ninh Bình). He served as an official under the Lê dynasty, siding with Lê Tuấn Mậu against the Mạc. When the matter was exposed, Lê Tuấn Mậu was killed by Mạc Đăng Dung. Pursued, Đinh Phúc Diên fled with his two younger brothers, Đinh Phúc Tiên and Đinh Phúc An, into the Nghệ region. There the three brothers dispersed to live in three different places: Đinh Phúc Tiên in Nghi Lộc, Đinh Phúc An in Hưng Nguyên, and Đinh Phúc Diên in Hương Sơn.

In Hương Sơn, Đinh Phúc Diên still cherished the ambition to "support the Lê, destroy the Mạc," and so he cleared land and founded a hamlet at Bình Hoà village (now in Sơn Hoà commune) and allied himself with Phạm Phúc Kính — the founding ancestor of the Phạm lineage of Hữu Bằng (now in Sơn Bằng commune) — to gather soldiers, stockpile provisions, and raise the banner against the Mạc. Because of their merit in supporting the Lê, after the Lê restoration Phạm Phúc Kính was ennobled by the Lê as Marquis Phú Lân, and Đinh Phúc Diên was ennobled as Tả Hiệu Điểm Công Tây Hầu [3;6].

Đinh Phúc Diên lived at Bình Hoà until his death at the age of 93. His tomb was buried at Cống hamlet, Sơn Thịnh commune, and has now been moved to the tomb complex of the Đinh Nho lineage at Áng Phần Mountain in Sơn Hoà commune.

The progenitor Đinh Phúc Diên was a man of great ambition, honoring righteousness, and also very industrious in labor, living plainly and frugally. This was the very foundation for the development of the whole Đinh Nho lineage in Hương Sơn.

The descendants of Đinh Phúc Diên continued to live in the Bình Hoà area and gradually affirmed their standing. A remarkable fact is that from the first to the seventh generation the Đinh Nho lineage had but a single male heir in each generation.

Second generation: Mr. Đinh Phúc Trường, who in his youth studied under Master Trần in Châu Ái. At 24 he passed the four examination sessions (tứ trường), and at 27 he sat the metropolitan examination and again passed with high honors. However, he did not pursue an official career but opened a school in his home village; passionate about guiding the younger generation, he brought many of his students to success. Mr. Đinh Phúc Trường lived to 60; his tomb is at Lòi Chim Chim, Yên Nghĩa hamlet, Hữu Bằng commune (now Sơn Bằng commune) [3;17].

Third generation: Mr. Đinh Phúc Bảo, who at 19 passed the four sessions; after failing the metropolitan examination he turned to the practice of medicine. As a physician, Đinh Phúc Bảo put benevolence first — "regardless of the early morning or the late night, he did his utmost to cure the sick, and treated the poor

without charge, so that many were indebted to his virtue." Mr. Đinh Phúc Bảo lived to 73; his tomb has now been located [3;18].

Fourth generation: Đinh Chính Tính, who at 20 passed the four sessions; of a gentle disposition, he served only as a village functionary and did not pursue an official career. He lived to 71; his tomb was buried at Ngọc Sơn Mountain in Dị Ốc commune (now Sơn Long commune). His descendants have now moved it to the ancestral tomb complex at Áng Phần Mountain, Sơn Hoà commune [3;18].

Fifth generation: Đinh Phúc Khánh, who at 25 passed the four sessions. He did not sit the examinations for office but lived in his home village, delighting in his fields and garden. Later he himself took holy orders and asked to cultivate the doctrine at Thanh Uyên Pagoda in Mân Xá village (now Sơn Bình commune). His tomb was buried at Trai Sơn Mountain, Tri Lễ hamlet (now in Sơn Tiến commune). The grave site was chosen by Master Ngô (Ngô Tĩnh — a skilled geomancer from Guangdong) [3;18].

Sixth generation: Đinh Hữu Luân (1602–1676). Diligent in study and famed from an early age, he passed the four sessions at 16 (1617) and at 19 sat for the Năng Văn section (1620). When the south was troubled by rebels, he raised a militia to join the court's troops against them. Moved by his merit, King Lê Kính Tông appointed him district assistant (huyện tá) of Đông Ngạn (in Thanh Hoá province). On taking up the post, he did not neglect public affairs in the least, devoting himself wholeheartedly to the care of the people, and was famed as an incorrupt official.

During his time in office, on one occasion he came to the aid of a Chinese merchant vessel that had been driven adrift by a storm, providing clothing, money and rice so that the merchants could return home. Seven months later, that man and his family came to give thanks, bringing with them a famous geomancer, and said: "In gratitude for your having given us new life, we dare not repay your pure heart with gold and jade; so we bring this master from our country to bring blessings to many, precisely to requite your good virtue. Please accept." Overjoyed, he at once pleaded illness, resigned his office, and escorted Master Ngô back to his home village.

One day he said to Master Ngô: "This humble family has been in this land for a hundred years since coming from Ái Châu; generation after generation we have had but a single male heir, and sons and daughters have come late. Moreover, in every generation we have diligently pursued study, yet the first-rank and the golden-list honors have not repaid our toil at lamp and book. I should like to entrust it to you to reckon what might be done — how fortunate this humble family would then be." Master Ngô replied: "Your family has accumulated good deeds for several generations, so the ancestral tombs all lie at peace. I now, for the sake of these people, have braved deep rivers and vast seas to come here only to requite your family's virtue. Surveying the mountains and waters of this Hương Sơn district, I shall certainly begrudge nothing. Today, however far your family's blessings may reach, my eye can see that far: partial wealth and honor, and generations bringing forth famed Confucians, already lie displayed before my eyes; I dare to guarantee I can bring it about for you — pray have no worry" [3;180].

Master Ngô examined the geomancy and marked out a grave site with the configuration of "generation upon generation ascending the examination rolls" on Trai Sơn Mountain (now in Sơn Tiến commune). Đinh Hữu Luân had his two parents jointly buried there.

Master Ngô further advised establishing a dwelling site (dương cơ) in Gôi Mỹ hamlet (now hamlet 9, Sơn Hoà commune), teaching: "If the descendants only study diligently, they will prosper generation after

generation." This dwelling site had belonged to a Censorate official of the Nguyễn family, styled Văn Trọng, who passed the doctoral examination in the Nhâm Tuất year (1502) of the Cảnh Thống reign under King Hiến Tông and rose to the office of Censor-in-Chief (Đô Đài Ngự Sử). His two sons both passed the four sessions, but later the descendants disdained the land and let it fall to waste. Đinh Hữu Luân then petitioned the village head and moved his family from Bình Hoà hamlet to Gôi Mỹ.

Đinh Hữu Luân died in the Bính Thìn year (1676), the first year of the Vĩnh Trị reign under King Lê Hy Tông, at the age of 75.

Seventh generation: Mr. Đinh Nho Công, born in the Đinh Sửu year (1637), the 3rd year of the Dương Hoà reign under King Lê Thần Tông. He continued the family calling and applied himself to study, passing the four sessions at 14. Because of his family's difficult circumstances he had no means to sit the examinations. In 1669 he sat the regional examination and passed as Giải Nguyên (first laureate); entering the metropolitan examination, he passed as a third-class associate doctoral laureate (Tam giáp đồng Tiến sĩ xuất thân) in the Canh Tuất examination of the Cảnh Trị reign (1670).

Đinh Nho Công was appointed Assistant Censor-in-Chief of the Censorate and Supervising Secretary of the Board of Works. Of an incorruptible nature, given to censuring corrupt officials and to promoting the upright and loyal, he won the King's favor, who bestowed on him the four characters "Ngôn ngữ phong lăng" ("speech soaring and lofty") and promoted him to Assistant Censor-in-Chief (Thiêm Đô Ngự Sử) in 1692. He held the office of Assistant Censor-in-Chief for four years before he died, at the age of 59.

In the Cảnh Hưng era, Mr. Đinh Nho Công was ennobled as "Anh Nghị Đại Vương" ("Great King of Heroic Resolve") and "Đoan Túc Dực Bảo Trung Hưng Phúc Thần" (a tutelary deity of the Restoration) and enshrined at the temple of Gôi Mỹ village (in Sơn Hoà commune) [3;20].

A special event worth noting is the gratitude of the Tống Trần lineage of Sơn Hoà commune toward the Đinh Nho lineage: on one occasion, in the course of his official duties, Mr. Đinh Nho Công and his wife took in and raised the child of a general of the Tống family. The genealogy of the Tống Trần lineage of Sơn Hoà commune still records:

"Following the mother's homeland to the place of Gôi Mỹ,
he became the adopted son of the Đinh Great King."

Eighth generation: Mr. Đinh Nho Công had six sons: Đinh Nho Trạch, Đinh Nho Huân, Đinh Nho Hoàn, Đinh Nho Thận, Đinh Nho Thường and Đinh Nho Côn. The eighth generation is the generation whose marks left a lasting influence on the development of the Đinh Nho lineage.

Mr. Đinh Nho Trạch, styled Thuần, was born in the Bính Thân year (1656). He passed the Hương Cống (provincial licentiate) examination at 18. Of a mild and simple nature, he was revered by all the villagers for his virtue. He built a house to live on Tiêu Sơn Mountain, delighting in the mountains and waters and living like an immortal, and so was also called "the Aged Immortal" (Già Tiên Nhân) or "the Foremost Immortal" (Tiên Phong Tiên Nhân). He died in the Tân Mão year (1711); his tomb has been jointly buried at Áng Phần. The descendants of Đinh Nho Trạch developed into the senior branch (Chi Trưởng) of the Đinh Nho lineage in Hương Sơn.

Mr. Đinh Nho Huân died young; his years of birth and death are unknown.

Mr. Đinh Nho Hoàn was born in the Tân Hợi year (1671). Diligent in study from childhood, he passed the four sessions at 14, passed as Giải Nguyên at 23, and at 30 passed as a second-class doctoral laureate (Đệ nhị Tiến sĩ).

After passing, he was appointed by the court to many important offices, such as Administration Commissioner (Tham Chính) of Sơn Tây and Military Commissioner (Đốc Trấn) of Cao Bằng, rising to the office of Thượng Bảo Tự Khanh [3;21].

In 1715, Mr. Đinh Nho Hoàn was appointed deputy envoy to China to maintain friendly relations. The mission was a success; his intelligence and skill won the affection of the Qing court. However, on the return journey he fell gravely ill and died. The Kangxi Emperor composed a funeral oration and had troops escort his body back to the country. King Lê too was grieved, promoting him posthumously to Left Vice-Minister of the Board of Rites (Lễ Bộ Tả Thị Lang). In the Cảnh Hưng era he was ennobled as "Đắc Đạt Đại Vương" ("Great King of Attainment"), and the reigning dynasty conferred on him the title "Tuấn Lương Lượng Trực Đoan Túc Dực Bảo Trung Hưng Phúc Thần" [3;21].

Mr. Đinh Nho Thận (year of birth unknown) studied and passed the examinations, once holding the office of Quan Viên Tự. His descendants developed into the junior branch (Chi Thứ) of the Đinh Nho lineage in Hương Sơn.

Mr. Đinh Nho Thường was also a laureate, once holding the office of district magistrate (Tri Huyện). His descendants later settled in Thuần Châu (Can Lộc) and developed into a branch of the Đinh Nho lineage.

Mr. Đinh Nho Côn was a man accomplished in both letters and arms. He served as prefect (Tri Phủ) of La Sơn and as Military Commander (Tổng Binh Đốc Lĩnh) at Kỳ Hoa (in Kỳ Anh, Hà Tĩnh). For his merit the King granted him the title "Tổng Binh Hương Nghĩa Hầu." Later he moved to the land of Thanh Chương (Nghệ An) to live. His descendants continued the calling of letters and also produced many laureates, among them his great-grandson Đinh Nhật Thận. The doctoral laureate Đinh Nhật Thận befriended Cao Bá Quát and raised troops against the decaying court, so that when Cao Bá Quát was beheaded he too was cast into prison. Among the poetry and prose he left is the work "Thu dạ lữ hoài ngâm" ("Autumn Night Traveler's Lament"), regarded as one of the four finest laments of that age (the others being The Tale of Kiều, The Lament of the Soldier's Wife, and The Lament of the Royal Concubine).

Moved by his merit, after his death the King posthumously conferred on him the title "Đoan Túc Dực Bảo Trung Hưng Phúc Thần" and had him enshrined at Gôi Mỹ Temple (Sơn Hoà commune).

Ninth generation: By this generation the descendants of the Đinh Nho lineage in Hương Sơn had grown numerous, and so the lineage divided into a junior branch and a senior branch. The senior branch (Chi Trưởng) is the descendants of Mr. Đinh Nho Trạch; the junior branch (Chi Thứ) is the descendants of Mr. Đinh Nho Thận.

Mr. Đinh Nho Trạch had five children: Đinh Nho Thực, Đinh Nho Gia, Đinh Nho Liêu, Đinh Nho Lâm, Đinh Nho Thái and Đinh Nho Hoành. [The genealogy names six, though the text says five.] Đinh Nho Thực, born in the Kỷ Mùi year (1679), once held the office of "Huấn Đạo Quản Chiến." He died in the Đinh Sửu year (1757). His tomb was buried at the foot of Côn Ngọc Mountain. His principal wife was of the Nguyễn family of Khả Lưu village; his secondary wife was of the Bùi family of Tình Diệm commune.

Mr. Đinh Nho Thận had three sons: Đinh Nho Thành, Đinh Nho Ngụ and Đinh Nho Phiên.

Tenth generation: *Senior branch:* Mr. Đinh Nho Thực had seven sons. The eldest, Đinh Nho Tễ — Hoàng Tín Đại Phu, Thái Bộc Tự Khanh, Marquis of Văn Lĩnh, personal name Phi — was born in the Ất Dậu year (1705) and died in the Ất Dậu year (1765). His tomb is now in Thổ Vượng commune, Can Lộc. His wife was of the Phan family, of a distinguished household in Hàm Lại hamlet. The second son of Mr. Đinh Nho Thực was Đinh Nho Tuấn. Mr. Đinh Nho Liêu had four sons: Đinh Lương Huệ, Đinh Nho Minh, Đinh Nho Dần and Đinh Nho Trung. Mr. Đinh Nho Hoành had one son: Đinh Nho Thân.

Junior branch: Mr. Đinh Nho Thành had six sons: Đinh Nho Quýnh, Đinh Nho Dạng, Đinh Nho Trương, Đinh Nho Cung, Đinh Nho Quán and Đinh Nho Giai. Mr. Đinh Nho Ngụ had three sons: Đinh Nho Kiều, Đinh Nho Khung and Đinh Nho Thủ.

Eleventh generation: *Senior branch:* The eldest son of Mr. Đinh Nho Tễ was Mr. Đinh Nho Quý, personal name Phê, holding the office of Chỉ Huy Đồng Tri, Marquis Hoan Trung. He died in the Mậu Thân year at the age of 67; his tomb was buried at Ngọc Côn and has now been reinterred at Áng Phần (Sơn Hoà commune). Mr. Đinh Nho Quý married Nguyễn Thị Chu, daughter of Minister Nguyễn Trọng Thường of Trung Cần (Nam Đàn, Nghệ An); she lived to 83, her tomb at Tham Chàng (Bình Hoà commune). Mr. Đinh Nho Tễ also had four other children: Mr. Đinh Nho Khế (lived to 50, tomb at Tham Chàng, Bình Hoà commune; married Nguyễn Thị Thanh, daughter of the doctoral laureate and minister Nguyễn Trọng Thường of Trung Cần); Mr. Đinh Nho Hành (died young); Mr. Đinh Nho Đính, personal name Định (wife of the Trần family); and Mr. Đinh Nho Tân (wife of the Mai family). The son of Mr. Đinh Lương Huệ: Đinh Hữu Nho (wife of the Nguyễn family). The son of Mr. Đinh Nho Minh: Đinh Văn Phiệt. The sons of Mr. Đinh Nho Dần: Đinh Nho Thiện, Đinh Nho Thiều, Đinh Nho Viện and Đinh Nho Đoan. The son of Mr. Đinh Nho Trung: Đinh Nho Đại (wife of the Nguyễn family). The sons of Mr. Đinh Nho Thận: Đinh Nho Thế and Đinh Nho Cần [3;25].

Junior branch: The son of Mr. Đinh Nho Quýnh: Đinh Nho Toại, who lived to 100 and so was also called "the Centenarian Elder," being granted by the King the two characters "Thọ Dân" ("long-lived of the people"). The son of Mr. Đinh Nho Dạng: Đinh Nho Giai. The son of Mr. Đinh Nho Trương: Đinh Nho Thành. The sons of Mr. Đinh Nho Cung: Đinh Nho Huỳnh and Đinh Nho Tập. The sons of Mr. Đinh Nho Quán: Đinh Nho Tốn and Đinh Doãn Văn. The son of Mr. Đinh Nho Giai: Đinh Văn Tấn. The sons of Mr. Đinh Nho Kiều: Đinh Nho Hiển and Đinh Hữu Dũng. The sons of Mr. Đinh Nho Khung: Đinh Văn An and Đinh Duy Khiêm [13;21].

Twelfth generation: *Senior branch:* The eldest son of Mr. Đinh Nho Quý was Đinh Thái Lãng, personal name Vượng. From childhood Thái Lãng loved learning; he passed the Cử Nhân (licentiate) examination and was granted the office of Triều Liệt Đại Phu, Academician-Reader of the Hàn Lâm Academy (Hàn Lâm Viện Thị Giảng Học Sỹ). Very conscious of building up the good order of the family, he compiled the genealogy "Hương Yên phổ tự." He died on the 21st day of the 7th month of the Kỷ Tỵ year. His wife was Trần Thị Bảng of Sơn Thịnh commune. Their tombs are now jointly buried in the Cồn Trọt area (Sơn Hoà commune) and have since been interred together at the ancestral tombs at Áng Phần. From the 12th generation onward, since the number of male members of the lineage had grown large, we here note only those of the same generation. Mr. Đinh Nho Quý also had another son, Đinh Nho Thìn. The sons of Mr. Đinh Nho Khế: Đinh Nho Trực, Đinh Hữu Diệu and Đinh Nho Khánh. The son of Mr. Đinh Nho Đính: Đinh Văn Khanh. The son of Mr. Đinh Nho Tân: Đinh Thế Hào. The son of Mr. Đinh Hữu Nho: Đinh Bá Duy. The son of Mr. Đinh Văn Phiệt: Đinh Văn Hiếu. The son of Mr. Đinh Nho Thiện: Đinh Duy Ích. The son of Mr. Đinh Nho Thiều: Đinh Nho Sỹ. The sons of Mr. Đinh Nho Viện: Đinh Văn Sách and Đinh Văn Thế. The sons of Mr. Đinh Nho Đoan: Đinh Văn Gianh, Đinh Văn Thanh, Đinh Văn Giảng, Đinh Nho Hợp and Đinh Hữu Lực.

The son of Mr. Đinh Nho Trung: Đinh Nho Đại. The sons of Mr. Đinh Nho Thế: Đinh Nho Tú and Đinh Nho Hùng. The sons of Mr. Đinh Nho Cần: Đinh Văn Áng and Đinh Văn Mân [3;27].

Junior branch: The sons of Mr. Đinh Nho Toại: Đinh Văn Nhu and Đinh Khắc Khâm. The sons of Mr. Đinh Nho Tập: Đinh Nho Khiêm and Đinh Văn Giật. The sons of Mr. Đinh Nho Tốn: Đinh Văn Dinh and Đinh Văn Củ. The son of Mr. Đinh Nho Văn: Đinh Văn Hữu. The son of Mr. Đinh Nho Tấn: Đinh Văn Thuật. The sons of Mr. Đinh Nho Hiển: Đinh Văn Mậu and Đinh Nho Đờn. The sons of Mr. Đinh Hữu Dũng: Đinh Văn Hạp, Đinh Văn Toàn, Đinh Văn Trung and Đinh Văn Định. The son of Mr. Đinh Nho Khiêm: Đinh Văn Tình [13;22].

Thirteenth generation: *Senior branch:* The sons of Mr. Đinh Nho Vượng (Đinh Thái Lãng): Đinh Nho Tự, Đinh Nho Truyền, Đinh Nho Thịnh, Đinh Nho Bật and Đinh Nho Tặng. Mr. Đinh Nho Tặng had a daughter, Đinh Thị Chiên, who married Mr. Đặng Thai Giai (of Thanh Chương, Nghệ An) and gave birth to the associate doctoral laureate Đặng Nguyên Cẩn. Mr. Đặng Thai Giai was a patriotic scholar who took an active part in the Cần Vương (Aid the King) movement. The son of Mr. Đinh Nho Thìn: Đinh Nhất Chiến. The sons of Mr. Đinh Nho Trực: Đinh Văn Án and Đinh Văn Cử. The sons of Mr. Đinh Hữu Diệu (Đạo): Đinh Khắc Tuỵ, Đinh Văn Đạt and Đinh Nho Khởi. The son of Mr. Đinh Nho Khánh: Đinh Văn Vỵ. The son of Mr. Đinh Văn Khanh: Đinh Văn Bảy. The sons of Mr. Đinh Thế Hào: Đinh Văn Đoán and Đinh Văn Trinh. The sons of Mr. Đinh Bá Duy: Đinh Bá Ngoạn, Đinh Cư Kính, Đinh Văn Đội and Đinh Văn Tràng. The son of Mr. Đinh Văn Hiếu: Đinh Văn Giai. The sons of Mr. Đinh Duy Ích: Đinh Văn Điệu and Đinh Văn Bản. The son of Mr. Đinh Văn Giảng: Đinh Văn Lan. The sons of Mr. Đinh Nho Hợp: Đinh Văn Học and Đinh Văn Thao. The son of Mr. Đinh Nho Tú: Đinh Văn An. The son of Mr. Đinh Nho Hùng: Đinh Văn Quy. The sons of Mr. Đinh Văn Áng: Đinh Văn Uẩn, Đinh Văn Ưng, Đinh Văn Phán and Đinh Văn Nhạ. The son of Mr. Đinh Văn Mận: Đinh Văn Thanh [3;29].

Junior branch: The sons of Mr. Đinh Văn Nhu: Đinh Văn Hội and Đinh Văn Thức. The sons of Mr. Đinh Khắc Khâm: Đinh Văn Thiều, Đinh Văn Nhã and Đinh Văn Nhạc. The sons of Mr. Đinh Nho Kiêm: Đinh Nho Hoá, Đinh Nho Chân and Đinh Nho Kiểm. The son of Mr. Đinh Văn Dật: Đinh Văn Tồn. The son of Mr. Đinh Văn Dinh: Đinh Văn Năm. The son of Mr. Đinh Văn Củ: Đinh Văn Cử. The son of Mr. Đinh Văn Hữu: Đinh Văn Vân. The sons of Mr. Đinh Văn Thuật: Đinh Văn Song, Đinh Văn Long and Đinh Văn Lương. The son of Mr. Đinh Văn Mậu: Đinh Nho Ngân (Ngụ). The sons of Mr. Đinh Nho Đờn: Đinh Nho Tân, Đinh Văn Túc and Đinh Văn Phong. The son of Mr. Đinh Văn Hạp: Đinh Văn Giáo. The son of Mr. Đinh Văn Toàn: Đinh Văn Hoạch. The son of Mr. Đinh Văn Trung: Đinh Văn Trực. The sons of Mr. Đinh Văn Định: Đinh Văn Huy, Đinh Văn Đỉnh and Đinh Văn Chung. The sons of Mr. Đinh Văn Tình: Đinh Văn Phức and Đinh Văn Lãm.

From the 14th generation, the descendants of both branches of the Đinh Nho lineage in Hương Sơn developed and grew strong. Within the framework of this research work, we do not list all the descendants of the various generations of the lineage, but note only a number of representative individuals across the generations.

Fourteenth generation: The lineage continued to develop; the 14th generation alone had 69 male members, almost all of them residing in Sơn Hoà commune. Some representative figures of the 14th generation include:

Đinh Nho Quang: the eldest son of Mr. Đinh Nho Tặng. Nho Quang passed the Cử Nhân examination and was appointed Provincial Governor (Tuần Phủ) of Phú Yên. He had four wives and 15 children, both sons and daughters [3;31].

Đinh Nho Điển (1848–1884): diligent in study from childhood, he passed the Cử Nhân examination in the Mậu Thân examination of 1868 and passed the doctoral examination in 1875. He held high offices such as Assistant Judge of the Board of Punishments; Acting Transmission Commissioner (Tri Ấn); and Compiler of the National History Office, with the rank of Chánh Tứ Phẩm. According to the Memoirs of Đặng Thai Mai [27;153], in 1884, after the fall of the imperial capital of Huế, Mr. Đinh Nho Điển starved himself to death. In 1899 King Thành Thái conferred a decree deifying him and had the people build temples to him in Mân Xá village, Sơn Thịnh commune, and in Đồng Vực hamlet, Sơn Hoà commune. The conferring plaque bears four characters: "Sắc tứ lập từ" ("By decree, a temple established"). The plaque is still preserved at the temple in Mân Xá village, Sơn Thịnh commune, and at the small Đinh Nho sub-branch in Đồng Vực hamlet. He had two wives and four children [3;34].

Đinh Nho Điển had a younger sister who was given in marriage to Mr. Đặng Thai Giai (father of the associate doctoral laureate Đặng Nguyên Cẩn). She was the paternal grandmother of Professor Đặng Thai Mai. In his Memoirs, Professor Đặng Thai Mai devoted an entire chapter to his grandmother, praising her contribution to his education, which enabled him to achieve a successful career. She was also a person who helped the revolutionary movement of Phan Bội Châu.

Fifteenth generation: Đinh Nho Bằng passed the Cử Nhân examination and was appointed district magistrate of Nam Đàn, Nghi Lộc, Gio Linh, Cẩm Xuyên and Yên Định. After the Revolution he was elected Chairman of the Liên Việt Front of Sơn Hoà commune. He died in 1952 [3;41].

Đinh Nho Khôn (1887–1918) passed the Cử Nhân examination in Sinological studies. His wife was Tôn Thị Bảy of Thanh Chương (Nghệ An), elder sister of Tôn Quang Phiệt and Tôn Thị Quế. Đinh Nho Khôn was a patriotic Confucian scholar who had contact with patriotic organizations through Tôn Quang Phiệt and Tôn Thị Quế.

Đinh Nho Kham (Tú Chinh) (1889–1936) passed the Tú Tài examination in Sinological studies.

Đinh Nho Cẩn passed the Tú Tài examination in Sinological studies. His wife was of Nam Trung (Nam Đàn, Nghệ An).

Đinh Nho Chấn ("the Sinological Licentiate"), a Tú Tài in Sinological studies. He followed the medical profession and was a renowned physician, praised by the people. All his research on medicine was gathered in the book "Trung Việt dược tính hợp biên" ("Combined Compendium of Sino-Vietnamese Medicinal Properties"). He had two wives and six children, both sons and daughters [3;43].

Đinh Nho Đường (1890–1960), a ninth-rank petty official (Cửu Phẩm Bá Hộ).

Đinh Nho Thục, alias Doãn Tế, was a patriotic scholar active in the same period as Phan Bội Châu. According to the book "Việt Nam nghĩa Liệt sỹ" ("Righteous Martyrs of Vietnam"), he fell gravely ill and died in 1910 while on his way from Siam back to Vietnam together with Phan Bá Ngọc. When he died, Phan Bội Châu composed the following elegy:

"Illness came, deep and dim, yet the hot blood remained;
in life and in death, a friendship truly seen.
The tide's voice calls strong upon the Khoóng River;
each dreamlike scene returns, unquiet still." [3;10]

(Rendered from a translation of the original Chinese)

Đinh Nho Bộc took part in the Đông Kinh Nghĩa Thục (Tonkin Free School) movement. He was arrested by the enemy on 31 August 1921 at Vinh and exiled to the prison of Côn Đảo.

Đinh Nho Vỵ took part in the revolution and was admitted to the Communist Party of Vietnam while still very young. He once held the office of Vice-Chairman of the People's Committee of Kon Tum province.

Sixteenth generation: Đinh Nho Hưởng, a Party member holding the 40-year Party badge, formerly an official of the People's Committee of Nghệ An province.

Đinh Nho Dật, formerly an official of the Western Region Working Committee of the Office of the Party Central Committee.

Đinh Nho Bát (1918–1995) passed the Tú Tài examination in Western studies; he was a pre-uprising cadre and a member of the Communist Party of Vietnam. He was formerly head of the political department of the Political Academy.

Đinh Nho Đang (1911–1972): in 1927 he joined the Revolutionary Youth League, then took part in the Xô Viết Nghệ Tĩnh movement and was admitted to the Indochinese Communist Party, holding the post of Secretary of the Hương Sơn District Party Committee. He was entrusted with many important posts, such as Political Commissar of the 103rd Regiment, Director of the Cadet School of Inter-Zone IV, Political Commissar of the Hải Phòng City Command, and Chief of the Military Procuracy of Zone III. His wife was Nguyễn Thị Tuyết, who joined the revolution very early; in 1930 she was admitted to the Indochinese Communist Party. They had five children, both sons and daughters, one of whom was Dr. Đinh Thị Kim Oanh (Doctor of Science).

Đinh Nho Hàm (1906–1955) graduated with the Thành Chung diploma in 1930. Before 1945 he served as a clerk (thừa phái) in Hà Tĩnh, Thanh Hoá and Quảng Đà. He was formerly a judge of the People's Court of Quảng Ngãi.

Đinh Nho Đảng (1913–1983) graduated with the Thành Chung diploma. Before 1945 he was a judge in Quy Nhơn and a judge of the People's Court of Bình Định province, after which he returned home to teach. He had two wives: his principal wife, Lê Thị Liên, of Nam Trung commune (Nam Đàn, Nghệ An), a granddaughter of the doctoral laureate Lê Nguyên Trung of the Tự Đức reign; and his secondary wife, Nguyễn Thị Xuyến, of Sơn Tiến commune.

Đinh Xuân Lâm was born in Sơn Tân commune, of the junior branch of the Đinh Nho lineage in Hương Sơn. From childhood he followed his parents to live and grow up in Thanh Hoá (his father was district magistrate of Yên Định). After passing the Thành Chung, he studied at the Quốc Học school in Huế and graduated with the full baccalaureate in philosophy and letters. After the August Revolution of 1945 he was among the first secondary-school teachers of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam. In 1954 he was admitted directly to the second year of the College of Letters, University of Pedagogy, a classmate of Phan Huy Lê and Trần Quốc Vượng. Graduating as an outstanding valedictorian, he was retained as a teaching staff member of the Faculty of History at the University of Hanoi.

Đinh Nho Liêm (1924–2008): diligent in study from childhood and active in the revolution from very early on. He was formerly a member of the Party Central Committee (Vth and VIth congresses) and First Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs. He served as Vietnam's ambassador to Egypt, Laos and the former Soviet

Union. For his great contributions, Mr. Đinh Nho Liêm was awarded the 50-year Party badge, the Independence Order Second Class, and the Resistance Order First Class [13;34].

Đinh Nho Khoách, a pre-uprising cadre, holder of the Independence Order.

Đinh Xuân Vịnh, who before the Revolution served as an interpreter-clerk at the Vinh Residency; after the Revolution he devoted himself to research and critical study of history, geography and folk culture. For his research works he was awarded the Labor Order, Second Class, by the Party and State.

Seventeenth generation: Đinh Nho Thìn, a Party member, holder of the Resistance Against America Order Third Class, formerly Vice-Chairman of the People's Committee of Vinh City. His wife, Mrs. Phạm Thị Thất, was of Đức Thọ.

Đinh Nho Chương, Doctor of Mathematics, formerly head of the Faculty of Mathematics at the University of Pedagogy, Hanoi. Titles: Distinguished Teacher; Resistance Against America for National Salvation Order, Second Class; and the Medal for the Cause of Education. His wife, Đỗ Thị Nguyệt Ánh, was formerly principal of the Meteorology and Hydrology School of Hồ Chí Minh City, holder of the Resistance Against America Medal First Class and the Medal for the Cause of Training.

Đinh Nho Hồng, Doctor of Science and army colonel. He once served as military attaché at the Embassy of Vietnam in Russia.

Đinh Nho Dũng, Professor, Doctor of Science, Director of the Institute of Information Technology at Vietnam National University, Hanoi.

Đinh Phạm Thái, Professor, Doctor of Science, lecturer at the Hanoi University of Technology.

Đinh Xuân Việt, Standing Deputy Secretary of the Hà Tĩnh Provincial Party Committee.

Đinh Mạnh Đôn, formerly principal of the Party School of Hà Tĩnh; titles: Distinguished Teacher and holder of the Independence Order.

In the subsequent generations, the descendants of the Đinh Nho lineage have continued to develop and to achieve much success in various positions of work.

By 2007 the Đinh Nho lineage in Hương Sơn had passed through 20 successive generations of vigorous development. The descendants of the Đinh Nho lineage continue to promote the fine traditions of the lineage, and many individuals have achieved success in study and work, contributing to the general development of the country. In order to record the development of the lineage as an example for later generations, the work of gathering materials to continue compiling the lineage's genealogy is being carried out regularly and actively by the Clan Council, headed by the lineage head Mr. Đinh Nho Quỳ.

Through nearly 500 years of history since the day Đinh Phúc Diên came to settle in Hương Sơn, the Đinh Nho lineage has matured and become a great lineage; its generations have spread out to settle in many places throughout the country. The Đinh Nho lineage is a lineage with a rich tradition of loving learning, valuing study and examination success — in Hà Tĩnh in particular and the country as a whole. The successive generations of the Đinh Nho lineage have always known how to inherit and promote to the utmost the cultural traditions of the lineage and the patriotic traditions of their forebears, ever adding beauty to the cultural values of the lineage on the land of Hồng Lam and in the new home regions to which they have gone to make their living.

CHAPTER 2: THE TRADITIONAL CULTURE OF THE ĐINH NHO LINEAGE IN HƯƠNG SƠN, HÀ TĨNH

2.1. The family ethos (gia phong) of the Đinh Nho lineage

A lineage is the gathering of many families of the same bloodline, and a family is the gathering of individual, concrete human beings. When each of us is born we do not become a full human being at once, but only through a process of socialization within the environment of family, school and society. In that process of socialization, the role of the family in educating and shaping human character, from childhood to adulthood, is very important.

Good order (nề nếp) is one of the fundamental elements of the organization of a family and of a whole lineage. A family or clan with good order commonly furnishes society and country with good citizens of talent and virtue. Accordingly, when we speak of families of good order — whose children are well educated, who understand propriety, who respect elders and yield to juniors, who live in harmony, achieve success and are recognized and taken as models by society — people usually call them families of good breeding (gia giáo) or good family ethos (gia phong).

Gia phong, understood simply, means the norms of conduct of each person within the family and in society at large; it is the attitude of cultivating and refining one's character, inherited across many generations, in which each member of the family is educated from birth and as they grow up. These are the traditional spiritual values of each family and lineage. Today we understand gia phong as those cultural beauties that have become established order, handed down and inherited from generation to generation, adapted to suit their space and time.

In the present period, the powerful momentum of the country's industrialization and modernization has no small impact on every aspect of the life of all social strata. The positive impact is very great, but the rapid development of the socio-economic sphere also entails harmful effects. One such harmful effect is moral degradation and the alteration of standard traditional cultural values; within the sphere of the family and lineage, this is the erosion of good order and family ethos.

The family is the cell of society; the cultural values of society are also built from the very first cradle of each human being. The negative impact of economic development on the moral values of society also affects the family element most powerfully. It may be said that nowhere can we see more clearly both the cultural beauties and the cultural decline than in the cultural space of the family, and more broadly the culture of the lineage. Not a few pages of books, articles and television programs have addressed the current state of family culture. The requirement to develop the economy rapidly while still preserving traditional social and cultural values is a great challenge, not only for the country's leaders but for each individual Vietnamese.

People grow up from the family and live bound to the family; hence there is no better school for educating human character than the school of the family. Building the good order of the family, or more broadly building the family ethos of the whole lineage, is precisely a matter of creating cradles to nurture the character of each person.

In the course of studying the Đinh Nho lineage in Hương Sơn (Hà Tĩnh), we had the occasion to encounter a lineage with a fine cultural tradition handed down through many generations. Through nearly 500 years

since the lineage's ancestor came to settle in Hương Sơn district, the generations of the Đinh Nho lineage have always been conscious of building up and nurturing the cultural traditions of the lineage. The family ethos of the lineage has soaked deep, become flesh and blood, and become the foundation of the character of each member of the Đinh Nho lineage.

The family ethos of a lineage is the accumulation of many generations. In each historical period it changes to suit the age, on the principle of preserving the cultural features of the lineage while always taking in new cultural values to enrich its cultural beauty.

Mr. Đinh Nho Công — of the 7th generation — was the first laureate of the lineage. He passed the doctoral examination in the Canh Tuất year (1670). In his life and in his position as a mandarin of the court, he always set an example for his descendants to follow. The genealogy of the Đinh Nho lineage still records stories that speak of the model of his noble character and virtue.

The story goes that, when he went up to the capital to pursue his studies, Đinh Nho Công formed a close friendship with a student of the Imperial Academy of the Trần family from Ái Châu, and morning and night they ground away at the classics together.

In the 3rd month of the Kỷ Dậu year (1669), Đinh Nho Công took leave of Mr. Trần to return home to sit the examination. On the day of the test, as he crossed Mount Eo Trèo (in the area of Văn Giang village, now Sơn Thịnh commune), he suddenly saw Mr. Trần come and take his hand, saying: "I rejoice that next year you will pass the doctoral examination. Do not forget your old friend; build for me a small shrine of eternal incense, and I will help you in the examination hall." Đinh Nho Công confided: "How could I dare forget the kindness of my old friend? But once I succeed, how shall I meet you again to talk and receive your counsel?" Mr. Trần said: "My lot is a thin destiny, no more than white clouds drifting a thousand leagues. If you build me a shrine where these white clouds settle, I shall be fully content," and with that he vanished. Later it was learned that Mr. Trần had fallen gravely ill and died on his way home to sit the examination.

When he returned from the test, following those words, Đinh Nho Công burned incense and prayed to Mr. Trần; and suddenly a white cloud drifted into the sky and stood still in one place. He at once built there a shrine to worship Mr. Trần. This is the temple of Thịnh Xá (now in Sơn Thịnh commune).

Tradition holds that the temple of Thịnh Xá is very efficacious; it was said in the region that whoever passed the temple gate without removing their hat would fall ill on returning home and would have to go up to the temple to make amends before recovering. Each year, as the examinations approached, the descendants of the village would come to the temple to pray, and their prayers were often answered.

In the Cảnh Hưng reign of the Lê dynasty, Mr. Trần was ennobled as Great King (Đại Vương), and the people built a large temple to worship him year-round. The temple still preserves a poem composed and inscribed by Mr. Đinh Nho Hoàn in gratitude for Mr. Trần's kindness:

"In what year did the divine brush aid the golden roll of honor?
The sacred shrine, from times of old, keeps the white clouds abiding.
The examination fame of Thanh Hoá marks the divine reckoning;
the white clouds still are born within the dream."

The temple of Thịnh Xá, also called Bạch Vân (White Cloud) Temple (now in Sơn Thịnh commune), is an architectural work of great cultural value. In 2008 Bạch Vân Temple was recognized as a historical-cultural relic.

Today the descendants of the Đinh Nho lineage still come to burn incense and make offerings at Bạch Vân Temple, expressing their reverence and continuing to preserve and nurture the deep, close friendship between Mr. Đinh Nho Công and Mr. Trần.

Another story tells that, once he had become a mandarin at court, on an official mission to his native prefecture in Châu Hoan, Mr. Đinh Nho Công reviewed the prison cases and cleared the wrongful conviction of a warden of the Phan family. To repay the debt of his life, the warden brought money to give thanks, but Mr. Đinh Nho Công would not accept it. Later, when he held the office of Assistant Censor-in-Chief, he took the warden into his service. Moved by the kind heart and noble character of Mr. Đinh Nho Công, the warden, before he died, took his daughter's hand and said: "I am indebted to the Assistant Censor of the Đinh family for reviewing the case and clearing my wrong, as though I were brought back to life; that kindness is as broad as the sea and as high as the sky, and I know not when it can be repaid. Considering that you are but a daughter, help me to accomplish some worthy thing." Later, that daughter became the secondary wife of the Left Vice-Minister Đinh Nho Hoàn — son of the doctoral laureate Đinh Nho Công [3;20].

The genealogy of the Tống Trần lineage (Sơn Hoà commune) also records a moving story: that during his time in office in Hoan Châu, Mr. Đinh Nho Công came to the aid of the wife and child of a general of the Tống family. The son of the Tống general was brought to Hương Sơn and became the founding ancestor of the surviving line of the Tống Trần lineage in Sơn Hoà commune. The genealogy of the Tống Trần lineage in Sơn Hoà commune records:

"Following the mother's homeland to the place of Gôi Mỹ,
he became the adopted son of the Đinh Great King." [3;7]

These stories, though different in content, all express recognition of the virtue and character of Mr. Đinh Nho Công, a man who became a shining example of benevolence and of steadfast, faithful friendship. An individual alone cannot make a family ethos, but the character of the one who stands at the head of a lineage has great influence and is a model for generation upon generation of descendants to follow.

It may be said that the finest cultural feature the generations of the Đinh Nho lineage have built up is the tradition of benevolence — of living with regard for feeling and consideration for others. This cultural feature has become the glue that binds everyone in the lineage together, and binds the lineage to its home region.

The whole lineage still remembers the story of the wedding of Mr. Đinh Nho Quỳ — of the 18th generation and the present head of the senior line of the Đinh Nho lineage. In 1971 Mr. Đinh Nho Quỳ was preparing his wedding under very difficult family circumstances. One day before the wedding, the whole house was robbed, and everything prepared for the ceremony was stolen. Immediately the Family Council of the Đinh Nho lineage met to decide how to respond. Everyone contributed material goods and joined hands to prepare the wedding for Mr. Quỳ. In just one day, all the preparations were completed. The story is a beautiful memory of the sharing of sweet and bitter and of the solidarity of the Đinh Nho lineage.

To this day, the tradition of living with regard for feeling is still taught to descendants by the fathers, mothers and grandparents of the lineage. And each member of the Đinh Nho lineage still always loves and protects the others and turns single-heartedly toward the home region and toward their roots.

Mr. Đinh Nho Hoàn — son of Mr. Đinh Nho Công — passed the second-class doctoral examination in 1700. He was an incorrupt and upright official. During his time as Military Commissioner of Cao Bằng, he attended to promoting benefit and removing harm, reducing taxes for the Qing merchant-guests from the provinces of Jiangxi, Jiangnan, Guangdong, Guangxi, Fujian, Huguang and Chaozhou, so that trade between the peoples of the two countries flourished. The Chinese merchants inscribed his merit and had a "Stele of Virtuous Governance" (Đức Chính bia) erected in front of the guild hall.

In 1715, Đinh Nho Hoàn was appointed deputy envoy to the Qing dynasty. The mission comprised: the Left Vice-Minister of the Board of Revenue, Nguyễn Công Cơ; the Thái Bộc Tự Khanh, Lê Anh Tuấn; the Thượng Bảo Tự Khanh, Đinh Nho Hoàn; and the Supervising Secretary of the Lại section, Nguyễn Mậu Ánh. Before setting out on the mission to China, he asked leave to return home to attend to the management of his estate and to instruct his descendants [3;22].

He donated to the village 15 mẫu of land and 100 strings of cash and established a shrine to the deity to bless the villagers with plenty. He also set up a stele inscription to admonish his descendants, the content of which the translator Ngô Đức Thọ — a specialist of the Institute of Hán-Nôm Studies — rendered as follows:

"Whoever is a descendant of Mặc Ông must be
loyal and filial, honest, pure, thrifty;
advancing, become a person of righteousness; withdrawing, become a good farmer.
Be not arrogant or licentious, offend not superiors, engage not in litigation, gamble not.
Only thus may you be near my shrine." [3;7]

These brief, pithy admonitions express the concern of the earlier generation for establishing good order and family ethos for the family and lineage. To this day the elders still take his admonitions as a measure by which to teach their descendants. The spirit of "advancing, become a person of righteousness; withdrawing, become a good farmer" is still engraved in the hearts of the descendants of the Đinh Nho lineage. The genealogy of the Đinh Nho lineage records those descendants who studied and passed the examinations — who "advanced as persons of righteousness" — in different ages and circumstances; alongside them it also records ordinary people who devoted themselves to labor and production. They did not succeed on the path of learning, but they did not for that reason fail to become good people. Whatever their social position, they always preserved good order and family ethos and took pride in the traditions of their lineage.

The descendants of the Đinh Nho lineage live with feeling — within the village and without, on the paternal side and the maternal, near and far. Feeling in each person is always warm, respectful and loving. Whoever is of the Đinh Nho lineage, near or far, in times of joy and of sorrow shares them together; when they meet they greet one another warmly, exchange conversation, and address one another with courtesy. It may be said that the good order of the family has become the enduring spiritual thread that binds each individual of the lineage together.

One of the distinctive features in the good order and family ethos of the Đinh Nho lineage is the tradition of valuing study and of studying through hardship. This is precisely what created the examination tradition and achievements of the lineage.

2.2. The examination tradition

According to a study of Confucian examinations in Hương Sơn district, the examination system for recruiting talent in Nghệ Tĩnh existed as early as the Trần dynasty; however, it was not until the late Trần that Đoàn Xuân Lôi, of Yên Hồ commune (Đức Thọ district), passed as a Thái Học Sinh in the Giáp Tý examination (1348) under Trần Phế Đế [19;21].

Into the 15th century the number of laureates increased greatly, appearing in almost all the districts and developing further in the following centuries. Among those districts, Hương Sơn developed steadily in Confucian education and examinations, so that by the 19th and 20th centuries it had developed strongly, rising to second place after Đức Thọ district. With its large number of illustrious high laureates, Hương Sơn became a district famous for its examination tradition, in Hà Tĩnh province in particular and the country as a whole [19;21].

Sharing in the development of examination education in Hương Sơn district, Gôi Mỹ village was in turn famous for its tradition of valuing study and studying through hardship. Gôi Mỹ village, formerly named Gôi Vỹ, belonged to Yên Ấp canton and is now Sơn Hoà commune, Hương Sơn district, lying on the left bank of the Ngàn Phố River.

To speak of Gôi Mỹ village — above all of its tradition of study and examination success — one cannot fail to speak of the Đinh Nho lineage. This is a lineage with a tradition of valuing study and studying through hardship, in which every generation has had its laureates [16;110].

The first laureate of the lineage was Mr. Đinh Nho Công — of the 7th generation — who from childhood was very intelligent and fond of study. At 14 he passed the four sessions, but because of his family's difficult circumstances he had to leave off study to farm for a living. Despite the hardships of earning a livelihood, he always kept study close to his heart, and so when conditions allowed he resumed his studies. He sat the regional examination and passed as Giải Nguyên, and at 34 he passed as a third-class associate doctoral laureate in the Canh Tuất examination of the Cảnh Trị reign (1670). He held such offices as Supervising Censor of the Rites section, Supervising Secretary of the Works section, Regional Inspector, and Assistant Censor-in-Chief.

Mr. Đinh Nho Hoàn (1671–1715), style name Mặc Trai, was the son of the doctoral laureate Đinh Nho Công. At 30 he passed as a second-class doctoral laureate in the Canh Thìn examination (1700) and rose to the office of Left Vice-Minister (Tả Thị Lang). An incorrupt, plain-living and modest man, he was trusted and employed by the King, who once appointed him deputy envoy for the tribute mission to the Qing. Đinh Nho Hoàn was also a man ever anxious to instruct his descendants in study and self-cultivation. He is regarded as the one who set the direction for the striving of later generations, with the idea of "advancing, become a person of righteousness; withdrawing, become a good farmer."

Mr. Đinh Nho Côn was the younger brother of Mr. Đinh Nho Hoàn. He passed as Giải Nguyên, though it is not clear in which examination; he once served as Military Commander of Nghệ An, later promoted to Tổng Binh Đồng Tri, with the title Marquis Hương Nghĩa.

Mr. Đinh Nho Điển (1848–?), of the junior branch of the Đinh Nho lineage, passed the Cử Nhân examination in the Mậu Thìn year (1868) and at 28 passed as a third-class associate doctoral laureate (1875). He was appointed prefect (Tri Phủ) of Nghĩa Hưng, then asked to return to his native place. With his learning, he was entrusted to take part in the review of the Khâm Định Việt Sử (Imperially Ordered History of Việt). His younger brother, Mr. Đinh Nho Quang, also passed the Cử Nhân examination and was appointed Provincial Governor of Hà Tĩnh, later Left Vice-Minister of the Board of Punishments (Nguyễn dynasty).

Đinh Nhật Thận (1815–1866) — of the 11th generation — was the great-grandson of the provincial licentiate Đinh Nho Côn. Đinh Nhật Thận passed as a third-class doctoral laureate in the Mậu Tuất examination of the Minh Mệnh reign (1838). Later he was implicated with Cao Bá Quát and so was also dismissed and imprisoned. He was at once a general and a famous poet.

Within the framework of a general research work on the Đinh Nho lineage, it is difficult to make a specific study of each of the lineage's high laureates. We offer only a few statistics, through which one may see the number, as well as the continuous development, of the examination tradition of the Đinh Nho lineage in Hương Sơn.

Before 1945:

- Doctoral laureates (Tiến sĩ): Đinh Nho Công, Đinh Nho Hoàn, Đinh Nho Điển, Đinh Nhật Thận.
- First laureate (Giải Nguyên): Đinh Nho Côn.
- Licentiates (Cử Nhân): Đinh Thái Lãng, Đinh Duy Hàn, Đinh Nho Châu, Đinh Nho Kiểm, Đinh Nho Quang, Đinh Nho Khôn.
- Bachelors (Tú Tài): Đinh Nho Chấn, Đinh Nho Hoán, Đinh Nho Xanh, Đinh Nho Đoan, Đinh Nho Bát, Đinh Nho Hàng, Đinh Nho Kham [3;172].

After 1945 (per the lineage's own statistics in the Đinh Nho genealogy, up to 2002):

- Professors: Đinh Xuân Lâm, Đinh Quang Báo.
- Doctors of Science: Đinh Nho Hào, Đinh Phạm Thái, Đinh Nho Dũng.
- Doctors (PhD): Đinh Nho Chương, Đinh Thị Khương, Đinh Thị Oanh, Đinh Nho Hồng, Đinh Nho Thanh, Đinh Như Hà Bình, Đinh Thị Ngọc Bích, Đinh Thị Phương Hoà, Đinh Quốc Việt, Đinh Nho Hải, Đinh Thị Xuyến, Đinh Bích Thu, Đinh Chiến Quốc.
- Master's degree holders: Đinh Nho Bảng, Đinh Nho Duyệt, Đinh Thị Phương Hoa, Đinh Nho Hùng, Đinh Nho Sinh, Đinh Nho Thái, Đinh Chí Tài, Đinh Nho Hoan, Đinh Thị Tâm [3;172].

In addition, the lineage has more than 90 people holding the bachelor's degree, and many who are respected engineers, doctors and pharmacists in their fields of work.

Inheriting the tradition of their ancestors — above all the admonition of Mr. Đinh Nho Hoàn, "advancing, become a person of righteousness; withdrawing, become a good farmer" — the descendants of the Đinh Nho lineage have always been conscious of studying and self-cultivation, nurturing the examination tradition of the lineage. It may be said that from the 6th generation onward, the Đinh Nho lineage has in every generation had its laureates and its accomplished people. In whatever circumstances, they have always displayed the will to value study and to study through hardship.

Hương Sơn is a midland-mountainous district of Hà Tĩnh province; because of natural obstacles, examination education in this land developed later than in other localities. Nevertheless, the history of Vietnamese examinations records the achievements of Hương Sơn district in examination education, among which are the contributions of the members of the Đinh Nho lineage.

Recognizing the importance of learning and contributing to preserving and promoting the examination tradition of the lineage, the Clan Council of the Đinh Nho lineage took the initiative of setting up a lineage fund to reward and honor descendants who study and pass their examinations. The care of the earlier generations has created an atmosphere of study for the descendants of the lineage, and study has become bound up, flesh and blood, with the development of the Đinh Nho lineage.

2.3. The ancestral house, tombs, temple, stele inscriptions and traditional festivals of the Đinh Nho lineage

Historical relics are exceedingly precious tangible cultural heritage — of lineages in particular and of the nation as a whole. They are the most truthful and living museums of events, figures, customs, rites and architecture. The historical relics of a lineage are the witnesses preserved through time and the priceless assets handed down by earlier generations to those who come after.

2.3.1. The ancestral house

In the beginning, the original progenitor of the Đinh Nho lineage, Mr. Đinh Phúc Diên, settled in Bình Hoà village (now hamlet 3, Sơn Hoà commune); from the time of the Assistant Censor-in-Chief Đinh Nho Công onward, the descendants moved down to make their living in Gôi Mỹ village, Đồng Vực hamlet (now hamlet 9, Sơn Hoà commune), and established there an ancestral house to worship their forebears. No historical source has yet been found to determine exactly the year in which the ancestral house was established. However, on the basis of the material concerning Mr. Đinh Nho Hoàn's establishment of the Mặc Trai shrine beside the ancestral house, one may determine, relatively, that the ancestral house was established in the time of Mr. Đinh Nho Công.

After Mr. Đinh Nho Hoàn died on his mission to China, his secondary wife, Phan Thị Viên, took her own life to follow her husband. King Lê Dụ Tông granted the golden plaque "Tiết phụ môn" ("Gate of the Chaste Wife"), bestowed land, and had a temple built to her — Gôi Mỹ Temple — in 1717. The ancestral house of the Đinh Nho lineage was also restored for the first time in this period.

According to the materials still preserved by the lineage, the ancestral house was restored by craftsmen from Trung Cần (now Nam Trung commune, Nam Đàn district) and carried out at the same time as the building of Gôi Mỹ Temple. In their decorative motifs and patterns, the ancestral house of the Đinh Nho lineage and Gôi Mỹ Temple have many points in common. The ancestral house is built with three shrine halls.

The Upper Hall (Thượng điện) is a three-bay building of ironwood and jackfruit timber, roofed with yin-yang scale tiles. This is the main shrine hall of the house, decorated with fine, intricate motifs.

The Middle Hall (Trung điện) is built in the single-roof style. The front of the Middle Hall bears two parallel couplets:

"A filial son at home, a loyal subject to the country — his career of merit shines bright over three hundred years of the realm;
In life, an illustrious name; in death, a manifest presence — his spirit's lineage runs on, unbroken, through myriad generations."

The Lower Hall (Hạ điện), also called the Ceremonial Hall (Bái đường), is likewise built of jackfruit timber with a yin-yang roof. This is the hall in which the descendants gather before performing the rites.

To the left of the ancestral house is the shrine of the Great King's son, Đinh Nho Hoàn (commonly called the "left attendant shrine"), which also has an upper hall and a ceremonial hall.

The whole ancestral house sits on a compound of about 1,200 m². In front of the house is a large gate.

The dwelling site (dương cơ) of the Đinh Nho lineage had originally belonged to the Censor-in-Chief Nguyễn Văn Trọng — a doctoral laureate of the Nhâm Tuất examination (1502). The Censor-in-Chief's descendants disdained the land and let it fall to waste. On the advice of Master Ngô, Mr. Đinh Hữu Luân — of the sixth generation — brought his family to establish the dwelling site there.

Concerning this location of the Đinh Nho dwelling site, the scholar Vương Dư Dụ (of Nam Kim commune, Nam Đàn district) wrote in the book "Geomancy" (Địa lý): "The dwelling site of the Đinh Nho lineage in Gôi Vỹ hamlet, An Ấp commune (that is, Sơn Hoà commune), Hương Sơn district — from the Lê-dynasty doctoral laureates such as Đinh Nho Công and Đinh Nho Hoàn to the Nguyễn-dynasty laureates such as Đinh Nho Điển and Đinh Nho Quang — belongs to the configuration of the coiled dragon of the left arrangement."

Over time, the ancestral house of the Đinh Nho lineage has been restored and renovated many times, yet has retained its old architectural features. In 1970 the Family Council met to consolidate the lineage's affairs and decided to give the Lower Hall to Mr. Đinh Nho Quỳ — of the 18th generation (the lineage head) — to use as a dwelling. At present the ancestral house retains only the Upper Hall and the Middle Hall. The Đinh Nho lineage extended the Upper Hall by 3 meters, renovated the Middle Hall, and added an intermediate area between the Upper and Middle Halls to create a spacious altar platform, ensuring the harmony of the architecture. In the Upper Hall, the ritual objects had been much lost and damaged and so have been replaced; only the horizontal board "Thế đức từ" ("Shrine of Inherited Virtue"), the shrine-cabinet of the "Great King the Father," and a number of tablets and spirit tablets of the tutelary deities (moved here from Gôi Mỹ Temple) remain.

Today the compound of the ancestral house is smaller than before, yet it still retains its elegant, solemn architectural character. The main gate is built wide and high, and the courtyard is paved with red brick. In the middle of the courtyard is an elaborately designed miniature rockery, forming a focal point of the ancestral house's architecture.

Before 1947 the Đinh Nho lineage had two ancestral houses, of the senior branch and the junior branch. However, in 1947, by the agreement of the Family Council and the general policy of the locality, the two houses were merged into the senior-line ancestral house in what is now Sơn Hoà commune. Accordingly, the arrangement within the ancestral house today also follows its own rule. In the Upper Hall, the central altar is where the original ancestors from the first to the seventh generation are worshiped, while the altars to the left and right of the Upper Hall are where the senior and junior branches of the lineage are worshiped.

The ancestral house of the Đinh Nho lineage is not overly large, and since the family of the lineage head Đinh Nho Quỳ lies within its compound, it is always warm and intimate, unlike the stillness and gloom often found in places of worship.

2.3.2. The tombs

The tombs of the ancestors are among the priceless tangible cultural heritage of a lineage. There is no lineage that does not attend to the matter of choosing sites and of building and repairing tombs. Ancestral tombs are also places that express customs and the art of architecture.

The story of finding a place for the tombs of the Đinh Nho lineage is a marvelous one, steeped in spiritual color and recorded in the genealogy. When Mr. Đinh Hữu Luân was serving as district assistant of Đông Ngạn (in Thanh Hoá province), he came to the aid of a Chinese merchant vessel driven ashore by a storm. After he had helped them with money to return home, the merchants came back to repay his kindness by bringing over a master to bring blessings to the lineage. With the help of Master Ngô, Mr. Đinh Hữu Luân had his two parents jointly buried in a grave site on Trai Sơn Mountain (now in Sơn Tiến commune). This grave site is regarded as an auspicious one: "generation upon generation ascending the examination rolls, unbroken through the ages."

During his stay, Master Ngô handed down the arts of geomancy to Mr. Đinh Hữu Luân. The graves at Ngọc Sơn (Sơn Long commune) and Phúc Đậu (Sơn Phúc commune) were all chosen by Mr. Hữu Luân.

Besides the ancestral tomb on Trai Sơn Mountain, Master Ngô also chose for the lineage a grave site in Sơn Bằng commune, which the local people call Lòi Chim Chim. The descendants of the Đinh Nho lineage brought the tomb of the second-generation ancestor, Mr. Đinh Phúc Trường, to bury here. A remarkable thing is that the Nguyễn lineage of Sơn Bằng commune also buried its second-generation ancestor in this area. Over time the two tombs merged into one large mound, indistinguishable as to which lineage's ancestor it held. Today the descendants of both the Đinh Nho and the Nguyễn lineages of Sơn Bằng together worship and protect this tomb site. In 1994 the descendants of the two lineages jointly built a shared mausoleum for worship. On the outside of the mausoleum is inscribed a couplet:

"Auspicious birds gather in this sacred ground;
silver waters — the creating work of Heaven."

Indeed, spiritual culture holds many things that science has not fully explained. The process of finding and setting the grave sites of the ancestors of the Đinh Nho lineage holds many things hard to account for; yet for each member of the lineage the ancestral tombs are always the place toward which their souls turn, in longing, reverence and devotion.

The sacredness of the ancestral tomb site created a spiritual strength for the descendants of the Đinh Nho lineage to continue to develop. From the time Master Ngô helped find the grave site on Trai Sơn Mountain, the Đinh Nho lineage underwent astonishing changes. From the first to the seventh generation — that of Mr. Đinh Nho Công — each had but a single male heir and no examination laureates. Mr. Đinh Nho Công passed the doctoral examination in the Canh Tuất year (1670) and was the first laureate of the lineage. From the eighth generation the Đinh Nho lineage was no longer limited to a single male heir, and every generation had its laureates.

To speak of the tombs of the Đinh Nho lineage, one cannot fail to mention the event of the lineage's defense of the ancestral tomb site in 1947. At that time, a person of another clan had been advised by a geomancer that, if his lineage was to prosper in wealth and honor and its descendants to pass the examinations, he must rebury his parents together with the ancestral tomb of the Đinh Nho lineage on Trai Sơn Mountain (in Sơn Tiến commune). Upon receiving this news, the Family Council of the Đinh Nho lineage met urgently to decide how to respond. On the one hand, the Family Council submitted a petition to the Administrative Resistance Committee of Sơn Tiến commune requesting its intervention; on the other, they assembled a team of young people to go up the mountain to protect the graves. Thanks to the intervention of the local authorities and the determination of the descendants, the ancestral tombs were preserved intact [3;14].

At present the Đinh Nho lineage has gathered its ancestral tombs into four sites: Áng Phần (Sơn Hoà commune), Lòi Chim Chim (Sơn Bằng commune), Rú Trai (Sơn Tiến commune) and Phúc Đậu (Sơn Phúc commune). In 1993 the Clan Council encouraged the descendants to contribute toward building the compounds of these four tomb sites.

1993: Construction of the ancestral tomb at Áng Phần (Sơn Hoà commune). The couplet at the gate reads:

"Advancing, become a person of righteousness;
withdrawing, become a good farmer."

This is the resting place of the founding ancestors: the tomb of the Great King's son Đinh Nho Hoàn; the tomb of the Military Commander Marquis Hương Nghĩa, Đinh Nho Côn; the Aged Immortal Đinh Nho Trạch; Mr. Đinh Thái Lãng; Mr. Đinh Nho Thận; and the wives of these gentlemen.

1994: Together with the Nguyễn lineage of Sơn Bằng commune, construction of the ancestral tomb at Lòi Chim Chim — the tomb of the second-generation ancestor Đinh Phúc Trường. Also in 1994 the lineage built the ancestral tomb at Rú Trai (Sơn Tiến commune) — the tomb of Mr. Đinh Phúc Khánh (fifth generation). This is the auspicious ground whose grave was marked out by Master Ngô; the couplet at the gate reads:

"From the beginning, by virtue of the sacred ground;
opening the source, generations succeed in the examinations."

1996: Construction of the ancestral tomb at Phúc Đậu (Sơn Phúc commune) — the tomb of the Great King the Father, Đinh Nho Công, and of his parents, Mr. Đinh Hữu Luân and Mrs. Lê Thị Độ. The couplet at the mausoleum gate reads:

"Through ten thousand ages the bright star shines;
for a thousand autumns the sacred vein endures."

While we were carrying out this research work, the tomb complexes of the Đinh Nho lineage had just been repaired in preparation to receive the descendants coming to tend the graves on the occasion of the Lunar New Year of the Kỷ Sửu year. Studying the process of finding sites and building the ancestral tombs of the Đinh Nho lineage, we can see the reverence of the successive generations of descendants toward their ancestors.

2.3.3. The temple, stele inscriptions and festivals of the Đinh Nho lineage

An ancestral house (nhà thờ) is a place for worshiping the ancestors of a lineage, usually built through the contributions of the descendants. The scale may be large or small, and the architecture may differ from region to region, but every lineage has an ancestral house. Unlike an ancestral house, a temple (đền) is a place established by the local people to worship national heroes, the founding masters of craft villages, and those who have been deified; for this reason not every locality has a temple.

Gôi Mỹ Temple, in Gôi Mỹ village (Sơn Hoà commune), is a temple built in 1717, in the reign of King Lê Dụ Tông. Gôi Temple is also called the "Temple of the Chaste Lady," enshrining Mrs. Phan Thị Viên — secondary wife of the Great King's son, Đinh Nho Hoàn.

Mrs. Phan Thị Viên was originally the daughter of a warden native to Do Lễ commune, Hưng Nguyên district. On one occasion, reviewing prison cases, Mr. Đinh Nho Công cleared the warden's wrongful conviction and released him. Moved by the kind heart and virtue of Mr. Đinh Nho Công, the warden's family gave their daughter as a secondary wife to Mr. Đinh Nho Hoàn — son of Mr. Đinh Nho Công. She was skilled in poetry and prose, not only a virtuous wife but also a soulmate of Mr. Đinh Nho Hoàn.

In the Ất Mùi year (1715), Mr. Đinh Nho Hoàn was appointed deputy envoy to the Qing dynasty. On the return journey from the mission, Mr. Đinh Nho Hoàn fell gravely ill and died. On receiving the tragic news, Mrs. Phan Thị Viên yet kept a calm demeanor, attending anxiously to the ordering of all the family's affairs; many found this strange and gossiped about it. However, when Mr. Đinh Nho Hoàn was brought back for burial in his home village, Mrs. Phan Thị Viên hanged herself, taking her own life to follow her husband. King Lê, moved by her devotion to her husband, praised her, had the golden plaque "Tiết phụ môn" carved and hung before the house, and had the people build a temple to her (1717). In the Cảnh Hưng era she was ennobled as "Trinh Nhất Á Thận Phu Nhân," and given the title "Lương Tĩnh Thục Diệu Nhã Uyển Dực Bảo Trung Hưng Phúc Thần" [26;103].

Also in the Cảnh Hưng era: Mr. Đinh Nho Công was ennobled as "Anh Nghị Đại Vương" and given the title "Đoan Túc Dực Bảo Trung Hưng Phúc Thần"; Mr. Đinh Nho Hoàn was ennobled as "Đắc Đạt Đại Vương" and given the title "Tuấn Lương Lượng Trực Đoan Túc Dực Bảo Trung Hưng Phúc Thần." Both father and son, Mr. Đinh Nho Công and Mr. Đinh Nho Hoàn, were ennobled as Great Kings and enshrined at Gôi Mỹ Temple; the descendants commonly call them the "Great King the Father" and the "Great King the Son." Later, Mr. Đinh Nho Hoàn's younger brother Đinh Nho Côn was also given the title "Đoan Túc Dực Bảo Trung Hưng Phúc Thần" and enshrined at Gôi Mỹ Temple.

Thus Gôi Mỹ village temple is a temple enshrining four deities of the Đinh Nho lineage, and of one and the same family. This is a rare thing and a source of pride for the whole Đinh Nho lineage.

In the feudal period, Gôi Mỹ village temple also had temple land, entrusted to the villagers to cultivate; the produce was used for the sacrificial rites. After the Revolution, the temple was still preserved and cared for by a board of management.

Over time, through the vicissitudes of the age and many restorations and renovations, Gôi Mỹ Temple still retains the beauty of an ancient architectural work. Sitting on a compound of nearly 700 m², the temple has a large main gate with three passageways; the gate roof is solidly and elaborately built. The temple courtyard is spacious, paved with red brick.

Entering from the outside, we come upon the Lower Hall, built of jackfruit and ironwood timber with fine, intricate architecture and motifs. Although time has passed, the carved lines are still fresh and lively. The Lower Hall is where people prepare their offerings before entering the Upper Hall to perform the rites.

Behind the Lower Hall are the Left and Right Wings (Tả vu and Hữu vu). These wings are where the musical instruments are kept and where those who contributed offerings to the temple but had no descendant to continue their line are worshiped.

The Upper Hall is the main shrine, built of red brick, roofed with yin-yang tiles, and containing three shrine bays. At the very entrance to the Upper Hall stand two prominent stone elephants.

Before 1947 there were four temples in Sơn Hoà commune: Gôi Mỹ Temple, Bình Hoà Temple, Chợ Gôi Temple and Đông Mỹ Temple. These four temples stood in different locations and had their own sacrificial rites. However, after 1947, because of the war, some temples were destroyed and there were not yet the means to restore them, so the local authorities adopted the policy of merging the temples into Gôi Mỹ Temple. For this reason, the Upper Hall of Gôi Mỹ Temple today has shrine bays for all four of the above temples, though only the tablets of the deities of Gôi Mỹ Temple remain. The Upper Hall also preserves the "Tiết phụ môn" plaque, a valuable object of the temple and of the Đinh Nho lineage.

Outside, to the right of the Upper Hall, is the place where the "Mặc Trai Chime" (Khánh Mặc Trai) of Mr. Đinh Nho Hoàn is set. The chime is a single large stone slab, 1.6 m long, 1.2 m wide and 0.13 m thick, suspended by iron chains between two square stone columns 1.5 m high. On the face of the chime are carved words by Mr. Đinh Nho Hoàn and information about the time of its making. The Mặc Trai Chime is indeed a treasure of the Đinh Nho lineage. Although it is a single large stone slab, when struck the chime gives off a resonant, unusually clear sound.

Besides the Mặc Trai Chime, Gôi Mỹ Temple also has a stone stele recording the life and virtue of Mrs. Phan Thị Viên. Behind the Upper Hall is a small shrine built of brick, which tradition holds to be the very place where Mrs. Phan Thị Viên took her own life. Today a large banyan tree grows over the shrine, its whole trunk and roots having grown to embrace it tightly.

Recognizing the great cultural value of Gôi Mỹ Temple, in 2006 the Department of Culture and Information of Hà Tĩnh province drew up a file and recognized Gôi Mỹ Temple as a historical-cultural relic.

Before 1947 the people of Gôi Mỹ village performed the deity-worship rite and the deity procession every year. The procession was held on the 15th day of the first lunar month. The deity procession set out from Gôi Mỹ Temple, led by the "Chaste Wife" banner, borne by a daughter of the Đinh Nho lineage. This young woman had to be beautiful, capable and unmarried.

The Gôi Mỹ Temple procession went along the earthen road around the village; at Gôi market it merged with the processions of Bình Hoà Temple and Đông Mỹ Temple and entered Gôi market temple to perform the rite. Afterward, the processions of Bình Hoà and Đông Mỹ turned back, while the Gôi Mỹ procession alone continued around the village before returning to the temple. The route of the Gôi Mỹ Temple procession today encircles hamlets 5, 7, 9 and 10 of Sơn Hoà commune.

The rite at Gôi Mỹ Temple is a great one, with the participation of the people of the whole commune. The chief celebrant is not a person of official rank in the village but one who has attained high examination success and whose character is pure, honored by the whole village. Before the Revolution, Gôi Mỹ Temple

also had temple land distributed to the people to cultivate; most of the produce was used to serve the deity-worship rite.

Besides the "rite" part, the Gôi Mỹ Temple deity procession also had a "festival" part, with rich communal activities: swinging, tổ tôm điếm (a card game), human chess, and phường vải folk singing.

The Gôi Mỹ Temple deity procession was an activity that drew the participation of a great many people; alongside its spiritual and cultural life it was also an occasion for exchange and cultural activity for the people of the region. The Gôi Mỹ Temple festival was not only a cultural beauty of Gôi Mỹ village but also a source of pride for the descendants of the Đinh Nho lineage. After 1947 this activity was no longer held. In recent years there have been many proposals to revive the Gôi Mỹ Temple deity procession, but these have not yet been given concrete form.

Besides the Gôi Mỹ Temple festival, the descendants of the Đinh Nho lineage also have another festival of an intra-clan character: the ancestor-worship rite held on the 9th day of the first lunar month each year. Before 1947 the Đinh Nho lineage performed worship rites according to local custom — on the full-moon days, the seasonal-festival days, and so on. After 1947, in keeping with the general local policy, the worship rites were simplified. However, from 1990, by the agreement of the Family Council, the descendants of the Đinh Nho lineage took the 9th day of the first lunar month — the death anniversary of the original ancestor Đinh Phúc Diên — as the day of the ancestor-worship rite. Each year, on this day, the descendants of the Đinh Nho lineage from every region gather at the senior-line ancestral house. Together they offer incense and flowers at the ancestral altar, share and reflect on the work done in the past year, and plan the work of the new year.

At first the ancestor-worship rite was very simple, because of the general difficult circumstances of society. In recent years, however, along with the upward development of the country, the descendants of the Đinh Nho lineage have also developed in many respects and are in better economic circumstances. Each year, on the ancestral death anniversary, the descendants from all regions of the country gather together at the senior-line ancestral house to perform the ancestral rite. On this occasion a marquee is erected covering the whole courtyard before the ancestral house, and yet there is still not enough room for the descendants to gather.

The ancestral rite is conducted with solemnity and warmth. After the rite, the generations of descendants eat, converse and discuss the affairs of the lineage. There are two activities the descendants most look forward to: hearing the elders of the lineage tell stories and legends of the founding ancestors, and the ceremony of awarding prizes to those descendants with good academic achievements.

Under the direction of the Clan Council, the ancestor-worship rite has been conducted regularly and solemnly. It has also been agreed upon as the combined death-anniversary day of the whole lineage. In former days the produce of the lineage land was used for the rites and grave-tending. Today the descendants of the Đinh Nho lineage contribute according to the number of male members and on a voluntary basis to set up a lineage fund. That fund is used for the rites, grave-tending, the internal and external affairs of the lineage, and for annual prizes to those descendants with outstanding academic achievements.

CHAPTER 3: REPRESENTATIVE FIGURES OF THE ĐINH NHO LINEAGE (HƯƠNG SƠN, HÀ TĨNH)

The history of the Đinh Nho lineage in Hương Sơn district, from the 16th century to the present, has passed through more than 460 years and 20 generations. Beginning with the original progenitor Đinh Phúc Diên, who came from the land of Ninh Bình into the land of Hương Sơn to make his living, the Đinh Nho lineage has developed to become a great lineage that, through the ages, has made great contributions to national history. Many figures of the Đinh Nho lineage have been recorded by history; within the framework of this thesis we introduce only a number of representative figures, to help make more concrete the beauty of the cultural traditions of the Đinh Nho lineage.

3.1. Đinh Nho Công

Mr. Đinh Nho Công was the son of Mr. Đinh Hữu Luân. He was of the seventh generation of the Đinh Nho lineage in Hương Sơn. Đinh Nho Công was born on the 9th day of the first lunar month of the Đinh Sửu year (1637), the 3rd year of the Dương Hoà reign under King Lê Thần Tông; his personal name was Trung, and his style name Nho Công.

Educated and guided by his father, the district assistant of Đông Ngạn Đinh Hữu Luân, Đinh Nho Công applied himself to study from childhood. Famed for his intelligence and diligence, he became a shining example for his peers. At 14 he passed the four sessions; but afterward, because of his family's difficult circumstances, he had to leave off study and stay home to plow. He was skilled at every task of plowing, harrowing, transplanting and harvesting, yet he always thirsted to study and pursue the calling of letters. One day, while plowing in the Thác Lác area, he suddenly saw an old woman bow to him in greeting and say: "Sir, why do you do this work? Hurry back to your studies — it will be worth a hundred, a thousand times this plowing and planting," and with that the old woman vanished. Finding this strange, he returned and reported it to his father, asking to go back to follow his teacher to study in the capital [3;182].

In 1669 Đinh Nho Công sat the regional examination and passed as Giải Nguyên; entering the metropolitan examination, he passed as a third-class associate doctoral laureate in the Canh Tuất examination (1670), the 8th year of the Cảnh Trị reign under King Lê Huyền Tông.

After passing the doctoral examination, he held in turn many important posts in the court: Supervising Censor of the Rites section, Supervising Secretary of the Works section, and Regional Inspector. He was an incorrupt official of upright disposition, given to censuring the corrupt and to promoting the loyal and upright, and so was praised by the King, who bestowed on him the four characters "Ngôn ngữ phong lăng," after which he was promoted to Assistant Censor-in-Chief (1692). Đinh Nho Công held the office of Assistant Censor-in-Chief for four years before he died, at the age of 59.

In the Cảnh Hưng era, Đinh Nho Công was ennobled as "Anh Nghị Đại Vương," and the reigning dynasty gave him the title "Đoan Túc Dực Bảo Trung Hưng Phúc Thần," enshrined at the temple of Gôi Mỹ village (Sơn Hoà commune). Mr. Đinh Nho Công was the first laureate, laying the foundation for the study and examination tradition of the lineage.

3.2. Đinh Nho Hoàn

The Great King's son Đinh Nho Hoàn was the third son of the Great King the Father, Đinh Nho Công. His personal name was Toản and his style name Mặc Trai; he was born on the 5th day of the 10th lunar month of the Tân Hợi year (1671), the 9th year of the Cảnh Trị reign under King Lê Huyền Tông.

A man of natural endowment, famed for his intelligence from childhood, he passed the four sessions at 14, passed as Giải Nguyên at 23, and at 30 passed as a second-class doctoral laureate in the Canh Thìn examination (1700).

In the 8th month of the Nhâm Ngọ year (1702) he was appointed Administration Commissioner of Sơn Tây. In the 7th month of the Giáp Thân year (1704) he was appointed Military Commissioner of Cao Bằng. In this post he attended to promoting benefit, removing harm, and reducing taxes for the Chinese merchants from the provinces of Jiangxi, Jiangnan, Guangdong, Guangxi, Fujian, Huguang and Chaozhou who came to trade with us. His reforms helped to expand trade and exchange between the two countries.

The Chinese merchants trading in this area made a stele to record the merit and virtue of Đinh Nho Hoàn and set it before the guild hall, calling it the "Stele of Virtuous Governance" (Đức Chính bia). The Stele of Virtuous Governance set out his three great achievements:

- Repairing the roads and clearing the rocky rapids on the river so that boats could pass easily.
- Reducing the trouble of inspecting goods passing through the border gate.
- Reducing taxes.

Afterward, Mr. Đinh Nho Hoàn was promoted to Thượng Bảo Tự Khanh.

A refined and incorrupt man, to express his ideals he had a stone chime made, called the "Mặc Trai Chime," and hung it in his study to admonish himself and to set an example for his descendants. The Mặc Trai Chime is now preserved at Gôi Mỹ Temple; its inscription was rendered by Ngô Đức Thọ, a specialist of the Institute of Hán-Nôm Studies, as follows:

> *"All still things, when at rest, are silent; when struck, they sound. But the sound each gives off differs. The sound of the chime is clear and has rhythm; light yet lofty and resonant, like the loftiness of a person. I therefore love the sound of the chime, and so paid to have one carved and hung to the left of my shrine, naming it the Mặc Trai Chime, to strengthen my resolve."*

In the 10th year of the Vĩnh Thịnh reign (1715), Mr. Đinh Nho Hoàn received the post of deputy envoy to the Qing dynasty to maintain friendly relations. After receiving the decree, he asked leave to return home to settle his family affairs before returning to the capital. Back in his home village, Đinh Nho Hoàn made the youngest son of his eldest brother, Đinh Nho Hoành, his heir, built a shrine, and donated to the village 15 mẫu of land and 100 strings of cash to provide for the four-season commemorative rites. He set up a stele inscription to admonish his descendants:

Mặc tử tôn — Tu trung hiếu, phác hậu,
Thanh kiệm lạc bần,
Tiến vi nghĩa sỹ, Thoái vi lương nông,
Vật kiêu dâm, vật phạm thượng, vật tranh tụng, vật đổ bác;
Phượng khả cận tư am.

English rendering:

"Whoever is a descendant of Mặc Ông must be
loyal and filial, honest, pure, thrifty, content in poverty;
advancing, become a person of righteousness; withdrawing, become a good farmer.
Be not arrogant or licentious, offend not superiors, engage not in litigation, gamble not.
Only thus may you be near my shrine."

(Translation by Ngô Đức Thọ, Institute of Hán-Nôm Studies) [3;184]

On his mission he composed poems, gathering more than 130 pieces. Later, all these poems were collected by his son-in-law, Nguyễn Trọng Thường, in the volume "Mặc Ông sứ tập" ("The Envoy Anthology of Mặc Ông"). The original of the book is now preserved at the Institute of Hán-Nôm Studies. The main content of the poems is the celebration of scenery, the expression of longing for his home region and country, verses of response and reply, poems of parting and gift, and admonitions to his descendants.

Recently, the Literature Publishing House issued the volume "Anthology of Vietnamese Laments" (Hợp tuyển ngâm khúc Việt Nam), collected and edited by Trần Lê Sáng and Phạm Kỳ Nam. The volume includes an introduction and analysis of the lament "Hoán tỉnh châu dân từ" by Mr. Đinh Nho Hoàn.

The talent and character of Mr. Đinh Nho Hoàn were also displayed when he served as deputy envoy to the Qing dynasty. He was highly praised by the Qing emperor. The mission was a success, but on the return journey he fell gravely ill and died. On learning of his death, both the Qing emperor and King Lê grieved deeply and composed funeral orations of farewell.

In the Cảnh Hưng era the court ennobled him as "Đắc Đạt Đại Vương" and gave him the title "Tuấn Lương Lượng Trực Đoan Túc Dực Bảo Trung Hưng Phúc Thần."

He had two wives. His principal wife was of the Lê family, personal name Vệ, of Hữu Bằng commune (now Sơn Bằng commune). His secondary wife was Phan Thị Viên, of Hưng Nguyên district. She was renowned not only for the righteous act of keeping her chastity to follow her husband — for which the King granted her the golden plaque "Tiết phụ môn" — but also as a talented woman of letters. In the Cảnh Hưng era she was given the title "Trinh Nhất Á Thận Phu Nhân," and under the Nguyễn dynasty the title "Lương Tĩnh Thục Diệu Nhã Uyển Dực Bảo Trung Hưng Phúc Thần."

3.3. Đinh Nhật Thận

Đinh Nhật Thận was the great-grandson of the Military Commander Marquis Hương Nghĩa, Đinh Nho Côn (of the eighth generation). Mr. Đinh Nho Côn had served as district magistrate of La Sơn and Military Commander at Kỳ Hoa (in Kỳ Anh, Hà Tĩnh), but later his descendants moved to make their living in the land of Thanh Chương (Nghệ An).

Mr. Đinh Nhật Thận, style name Tử Uý, sobriquet Bạch Mao Am, was of Thanh Liêu commune (Thanh Chương, Nghệ An). In the Mậu Tuất year (1838) he passed the doctoral examination and was appointed prefect under the reign of King Minh Mệnh. Because of his upright disposition and his dislike of flattery, he was slandered by ill-wishers and dismissed. In the Quý Sửu year (1853) he was reinstated, but he pleaded illness and no longer took office. He himself urged the people to clear land and found hamlets at Thanh Liêm village and Tiên Hội village, called Gia Hội hamlet, then opened a school and practiced medicine in his home village. He associated with Cao Bá Quát and Nguyễn Hàm Ninh; after Cao Bá Quát raised troops

against the Nguyễn dynasty and was destroyed, he too was suspected, arrested and taken to the capital, and sentenced to death — but was later pardoned, being kept in Huế to teach members of the royal family. Not long after, he fell ill and died at the age of 51 [3;23].

During his confinement in Huế he composed the lament "Thu dạ lữ hoài" ("Autumn Night Traveler's Lament"), notable for being in the original Chinese, yet in the Vietnamese song-thất-lục-bát verse form. Later, the prodigy Nguyễn Văn Cẩm also composed a "Thu dạ hoài ngâm" in Chinese, likewise in the song-thất-lục-bát form.

The opening of the lament "Thu dạ lữ hoài" is beautiful in both word and sense:

"Thu dạ tĩnh thiên quang ẩn ước,
Cách sơ liêm đạm chước kim bôi,
Thiên thời nhân sự tương thôi,
Phù sinh nhược mộng kỉ hồi vi loan?
Nhân đối cảnh hoa gian nguyệt chiếu,
Cảnh liêu nhân thọ điếu phong xuy,
Giá ban liệu thiểu nhân tri,
Nhàn lai phong nguyệt dữ thùy vi thu?..."

The author's own rendering into the vernacular (as tradition holds):

"An autumn night, still; the light of heaven faintly glimmers,
Beyond the thin blind I pour a golden cup;
Pondering the affairs of the age, I sigh with sorrow —
In this floating life, like a dream, how many turns bring joy?
One faces the scene: the moon shines, the flowers bloom;
The scene teases the man; the wind's tip shakes the trees.
This feeling, this confided heart — who can tell it?
With whom shall I savor the autumn, night and day, amid wind and moon?..."

Đinh Nhật Thận was an eminent scholar accomplished in both letters and arms; although his time in office was not long, he displayed the talent and character of a true man of worth.

3.4. Đinh Xuân Lâm

Mr. Đinh Xuân Lâm was born in Sơn Tân commune, of the junior branch of the Đinh Nho lineage in Hương Sơn. From childhood he followed his parents to live and grow up in Thanh Hoá (his father was district magistrate of Yên Định), becoming attached to this land as a second home. After passing the Thành Chung, he studied at the Quốc Học school in Huế and graduated with the full baccalaureate in philosophy and letters. After the August Revolution of 1945 he was among the first secondary-school teachers of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam.

In 1954 he was admitted directly to the second year of the College of Letters, University of Pedagogy, a classmate of Phan Huy Lê and Trần Quốc Vượng. Graduating as an outstanding valedictorian, he was retained as a teaching staff member of the Faculty of History at the University of Hanoi.

Under the guidance of his teacher Trần Văn Giàu, he made a leading contribution to building the Department of Modern and Contemporary Vietnamese History. There he researched and compiled such textbooks as History of Vietnam 1897–1914 (1957), Hoàng Hoa Thám and the Yên Thế Peasant Movement (1958), and Modern History of Vietnam (1959–1961).

He is regarded as one of the "four pillars" (namely Đinh Xuân Lâm, Phan Huy Lê, Hà Văn Tấn and Trần Quốc Vượng) of contemporary Vietnamese historiography. According to Professor Trần Quốc Vượng's explanation, this is a legendary designation, probably formed in the late 1960s, when all four were famous for their scholarly excellence.

He was conferred the academic rank of Associate Professor in 1980 and Professor in 1984, in the field of History. Together with Professor Nguyễn Lân, he was one of the first two historians honored by the Vietnamese State with the title of People's Teacher and awarded the Labor Order, First Class.

Prof. Đinh Xuân Lâm is a famous historian of the generation that matured after the August Revolution. Over more than half a century, teaching and researching at once, he helped train thousands of students, supervised more than thirty doctoral dissertations at home and abroad, and authored more than two hundred works of historical research. To this day, although retired, at the age of 79 the Professor still works without rest. As Chairman of the Scientific Council of the UNESCO Center for Vietnamese Historical and Cultural Documentation, he directs the building of many research works and the editing for re-publication of many valuable older works on history and culture. He also chairs many councils for the evaluation of major scholarly works.

In his historical research serving higher education, he chiefly pursued three main areas: the patriotic anti-colonial struggle of the late 19th century, with representative figures such as Trương Định, Phan Đình Phùng, Nguyễn Xuân Ôn, Nguyễn Quang Bích and Hoàng Hoa Thám; the patriotic revolutionary movement of the early 20th century, with the two representative figures Phan Bội Châu and Phan Chu Trinh; and the life and revolutionary career of President Hồ Chí Minh.

In the field of scholarly research, he took part in programs of research on Hồ Chí Minh Thought and on questions of Vietnamese political, economic, social and cultural history from the late 19th to the early 20th century, and on the characteristics of French imperialism. Though very busy, he did not neglect the topics dear to him. In recent times he has produced many works on the traditions of patriotic and revolutionary struggle and on Hồ Chí Minh Thought, including: "Hồ Chí Minh's Thought on National Great Unity and the Victory of the August Revolution" (Communist Review); "Hồ Chí Minh Thought and the Cultural Identity of the Nation" (Journal of Cultural and Artistic Studies); and "Western Culture — One of the Sources Shaping Hồ Chí Minh's Thought on the World" (European Studies Journal), along with many articles on modern historical figures and the patriotic movements of the modern period.

Professor Đinh Xuân Lâm has written and put his name to more than 370 articles, 7 research projects and 90 books. Some of his representative works are:

- The multi-volume Outline History of Vietnam (Prof. Đinh Xuân Lâm, editor-in-chief).
- The monograph The Characteristics of French Colonialism in Indochina.
- History of Vietnam 1897–1914.
- Hoàng Hoa Thám and the Yên Thế Peasant Movement.

- Modern History of Vietnam.
- Literature and Poetry of the Đông Kinh Free School.
- Hồ Chí Minh, Cultural Notable.
- Lê Hồng Phong — A Steadfast Communist.
- Nguyễn Văn Cừ — An Outstanding Leader of the Party and the Vietnamese Revolution.
- The Communist Party of Vietnam — Glorious Pages of History.
- Hồ Chí Minh's Thought on National Independence and Socialism.
- Phan Bội Châu (1867–1940): The Man and His Career (with Nguyễn Văn Khánh and Trần Ngọc Vương).

3.5. Đinh Nho Liêm

Mr. Đinh Nho Liêm (1924–2008), a former member of the Party Central Committee at the Vth and VIth congresses, was of the 16th generation and of the junior branch of the Đinh Nho lineage. In childhood his family was very poor, but he was truly a model for the generations of descendants in his will to rise and his love of learning. Following the path of study and awakening, Mr. Đinh Nho Liêm took part in the revolution from very early on. He belonged to the veteran cadre generation of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. During the years of the resistance against the Americans, he took part in the "Vietnam Sub-committee," a special unit within the Ministry of Foreign Affairs charged with the strategy of struggle against the United States in the "fighting and negotiating" situation aimed at ending the war in Vietnam — later renamed Department II, whose director was comrade Phan Hiền and whose supervising deputy minister was comrade Nguyễn Cơ Thạch.

After the war ended, Mr. Đinh Nho Liêm was appointed Consul-General in Egypt and India, Ambassador to Laos and to the Soviet Union, and head of the government negotiating delegation on the normalization of relations with China.

In his work at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs he always affirmed his position and was recognized by the Party and State. He held the office of Deputy Minister and then First Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs. For his great contributions, Mr. Đinh Nho Liêm was awarded the Independence Order Second Class, the 50-year Party badge, and the Resistance Against America Order First Class.

Mr. Đinh Nho Liêm had three children, all of whom studied and succeeded: Đinh Nho Dũng, Đinh Nho Hùng and Đinh Thị Hoa. His eldest son, Mr. Đinh Nho Dũng, successfully defended his doctoral dissertation and is now Director of the Center for Information Technology at Vietnam National University, Hanoi.

Every lineage usually has its outstanding individuals who make many contributions to the home region and country. The Đinh Nho lineage in Hương Sơn also falls within that general pattern; but what is special is that the Đinh Nho lineage is one of "generation upon generation ascending the examination rolls" — in every age it has had individuals of both talent and virtue. This is precisely the beautiful tradition that has created a good name for the Đinh Nho clan.

Within the framework of a general research work on the lineage, it is truly difficult to select and introduce all the representative figures of the Đinh Nho lineage. Through only a few of the most representative individuals, we can perceive the continuity of the examination tradition and the breadth of its

development. Not only the senior branch but also the junior branch has had many laureates; not only in the feudal period but also under the new regime, the Đinh Nho lineage has contributed outstanding individuals to the nation. And there are still many other members of the Đinh Nho lineage who, day by day and hour by hour, labor in production and strive in their positions of work to contribute to society and bring honor to the clan.

CONCLUSION

From our study of the Đinh Nho lineage in Hương Sơn (Hà Tĩnh), we draw the following conclusions:

1. The Đinh Nho lineage is a lineage that appeared quite early in the land of Hương Sơn, in the 16th century. From the ancestor Đinh Phúc Diên, who came from Ninh Bình to make his living, more than 460 years have passed; today the descendants have multiplied and grown numerous, spreading across the communes, districts and provinces both at home and abroad, becoming one of the great and long-established lineages of Hương Sơn in particular and Hà Tĩnh as a whole. The Đinh Nho lineage has made great contributions to the nation's cause of building and defending the country; in every period, its descendants have been ready to take part in defending the independence, freedom and unity of the fatherland. The Đinh Nho lineage is a lineage of examination tradition, with many high laureates such as Đinh Nho Công, Đinh Nho Hoàn, Đinh Nho Côn, Đinh Thái Lãng and Đinh Nhật Thận.

2. Through more than 460 years, the Đinh Nho lineage in Hương Sơn has made many contributions to the work of founding villages, reclaiming knolls and floodplains into fields, and establishing prosperous hamlets, existing and developing sustainably together with national history. Through five centuries of formation and development, the generations of descendants of the Đinh Nho lineage in Hương Sơn have distilled precious cultural traditions, chief among them the tradition of loving learning and studying through hardship, and the tradition of patriotism.

Loving learning and studying through hardship is a common feature of the people of Hà Tĩnh; but in the Đinh Nho lineage, this common feature was cultivated by the generations into good order and family ethos. From the very beginning of its formation, the earlier generations recognized study as an urgent need — study not to become mandarins, but first of all to gain understanding, to become a full human being, to live with moral principle. Therefore, though they had to pass through many difficulties to survive and develop, the descendants of the Đinh Nho lineage always devoted time and heart to study and to broadening their knowledge.

The first laureate of the Đinh Nho lineage was the doctoral laureate Đinh Nho Công. From the eighth generation, the lineage always had its laureates: the second-class doctoral laureate Đinh Nho Hoàn, the doctoral laureate Đinh Nho Điển, the doctoral laureate Đinh Nhật Thận, the first laureate Đinh Nho Côn, and dozens of licentiates and bachelors. In the modern age, the Đinh Nho lineage has continued to contribute to the nation many doctors, master's-degree holders and bachelors, among them such representative figures as Đinh Xuân Lâm, Đinh Nho Liêm and Đinh Quang Báo.

The Đinh Nho lineage has always valued good breeding, lived with moral principle, been complete in feeling and righteousness, and been steadfast and faithful. This tradition created solidarity within the clan community, as well as the lineage's attachment to its home region.

3. In our country there are hundreds of lineages, each making its own definite contribution to the cause of building and developing the country. Through nearly 500 years of formation and development, the Đinh Nho lineage has created a precious tradition, contributing to the luster of the cultural tradition of Hương Sơn and Hà Tĩnh in particular and of Vietnam as a whole.

The cultural identity of a lineage is handed down and promoted only when its descendants know how to honor their ancestors and always strive to be worthy of their home region, family and lineage. However,

one thing worth reflecting on, in the course of studying the historical culture of the Đinh Nho lineage in Hương Sơn, is that the great majority of the lineage's descendants are successful and have settled far away, with few individuals developing on the very soil of their home region. Most of the families of the Đinh Nho lineage in Sơn Hoà commune are left with only the elderly and the grandchildren's generation.

To promote the traditions of the lineage and of the nation, and to contribute to carrying out the strategy for human development, the Đinh Nho lineage has taken a number of measures:

- Educating its descendants always to love and respect their grandparents and parents, regarding each family as a person's first school.
- Collecting the genealogies of the various branches to write a common genealogy of the lineage, in order to educate its descendants about the traditions of their ancestors and the origin and development of the lineage.
- Establishing a Family Council and a Clan Council, and restoring the ancestral house, the tombs, and the deity-worship festival at the village temple.
- Establishing liaison committees of the branches in other provinces for exchange, thereby preserving cultural traditions and helping one another in life.
- Attending to the education of its descendants, inheriting the tradition of study left by their forebears, contributing to building the country.

From the results of our research on the history and culture of the Đinh Nho lineage in Hương Sơn, Hà Tĩnh, we offer a number of proposals:

- To collect materials and study comprehensively the contributions of the descendants of the Đinh Nho lineage across Hà Tĩnh and the country, in order to help clarify many questions of interest to researchers.
- The secondary and upper-secondary schools of Hương Sơn district may use our research material for reference and for compiling teaching materials on local history. Lessons might be held at the historical sites themselves — at the senior-line ancestral house of the Đinh Nho lineage, at Gôi Mỹ Temple, and so on.
- Hương Sơn district in particular, and Hà Tĩnh province as a whole, should coordinate with the descendants of the Đinh Nho lineage to restore and preserve Gôi Mỹ Temple in Sơn Hoà commune. This is not only an ancient architectural work but also a cultural site preserving many other historical objects. In addition, the Gôi Mỹ Temple festival very much needs to be revived, to serve the spiritual and cultural needs of the local people and to preserve intangible cultural heritage.

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41. Website: http://www.vietnamgiapha.com

42. Website: http://www.hatinhonline.com

APPENDIX

The original appendix consists mainly of photographs, whose captions are translated below, followed by the transcribed textual documents. The photographs themselves are not reproduced in this translation.

A. Photograph captions

- Gate of the ancestral house of the Đinh Nho lineage.
- The senior-line ancestral house of the Đinh Nho lineage.
- Gate of Gôi Mỹ Temple.
- The Lower Hall of Gôi Mỹ Temple.
- The Left and Right Wings of Gôi Mỹ Temple.
- Decorative motifs of the Lower Hall of Gôi Mỹ Temple.
- The golden plaque "Tiết phụ môn."
- The shrine of Mrs. Phan Thị Viên at Gôi Mỹ Temple.
- The two stone elephants before the entrance to the Upper Hall of Gôi Mỹ Temple.
- The Mặc Trai Chime of the doctoral laureate Đinh Nho Hoàn.
- The inscription on the Mặc Trai Chime and on the stone columns.
- Tomb complex at Phúc Đậu (Sơn Phúc commune).
- Tomb complex at Lòi Chim Chim (Sơn Bằng commune).
- Tomb complex at Rú Trai (Sơn Tiến commune).
- Tomb complex at Áng Phần (Sơn Hoà commune).
- Front face of the Mặc Trai Chime; rear face of the Mặc Trai Chime.

B. Inscription on the Mặc Trai Chime

Front face

Romanized transcription:

Mặc Trai Khánh
Bồi tụng Hoằng Tín đại phu Thượng bảo tự khanh tạo
Lạc thôn vĩnh chú

English rendering:

> *The Mặc Trai Chime. Made by the Assistant Grand Councillor, Hoằng Tín Đại Phu, Thượng Bảo Tự Khanh. Cast by Lạc, of Vĩnh hamlet.*

Rear face

Romanized transcription:

> *Phàm tĩnh vật giả tịch, khấu giả thanh. Đản thanh chi phát các dị. Khánh chi thanh, thanh nhi tiết, đạm nhi tuấn, hữu tự phù ngô nhân chi cao thượng giả. Dư cố ái chi, hoá nhất phiến, huyền vu am tả, mệnh chi viết: "Mặc Trai Khánh", dĩ trường du chí. — Thời: Hoàng triều Vĩnh Thịnh vạn vạn niên chi bát, Nhâm Thìn trọng thu cốc nhật. Từ Canh Thìn khoa Đệ nhị giáp Tiến sĩ xuất thân,*

Hoằng tín đại phu Thượng bảo tự khanh, Hoan Hương Mặc Trai Đinh Nho Hoàn, tự Tồn Phác, cẩn tu.

English rendering:

All still things, when at rest, are silent; when struck, they sound. But the sound each gives off differs. The sound of the chime is clear and has rhythm, light yet lofty and resonant, like the loftiness of a person. I therefore love the sound of the chime, and so paid to have one made, hung to the left of my shrine, and named it the "Mặc Trai Chime," to strengthen my resolve. — Written on an auspicious day of mid-autumn, the Nhâm Thìn year, the eighth year of the Vĩnh Thịnh reign of the reigning dynasty (1712). Respectfully composed by Đinh Nho Hoàn, style name Tồn Phác, of Hoan Hương, styled Mặc Trai — second-class doctoral laureate of the Canh Thìn examination (1700), Hoằng Tín Đại Phu and Thượng Bảo Tự Khanh.

C. List of examination laureates

Before 1945

- Doctoral laureates (Tiến sĩ): Đinh Nho Công, Đinh Nho Hoàn, Đinh Nho Điển, Đinh Nhật Thận.
- First laureate (Giải Nguyên): Đinh Nho Côn.
- Licentiates (Cử Nhân): Đinh Thái Lãng, Đinh Duy Hàn, Đinh Nho Châu, Đinh Nho Kiểm, Đinh Nho Quang, Đinh Nho Khôn.
- Bachelors (Tú Tài): Đinh Nho Chấn, Đinh Nho Hoán, Đinh Nho Xanh, Đinh Nho Đoan, Đinh Nho Bát, Đinh Nho Hàng, Đinh Nho Kham.

After 1945 (statistics up to 2002)

- Professors: Đinh Xuân Lâm, Đinh Quang Báo.
- Doctors of Science: Đinh Nho Hào, Đinh Phạm Thái, Đinh Nho Dũng.
- Doctors (PhD): Đinh Nho Chương, Đinh Thị Khương, Đinh Thị Oanh, Đinh Nho Hồng, Đinh Nho Thanh, Đinh Như Hà Bình, Đinh Thị Ngọc Bích, Đinh Thị Phương Hoà, Đinh Quốc Việt, Đinh Nho Hải, Đinh Thị Xuyến, Đinh Bích Thu, Đinh Chiến Quốc.
- Master's degree holders: Đinh Nho Bảng, Đinh Nho Duyệt, Đinh Thị Phương Hoa, Đinh Nho Hùng, Đinh Nho Sinh, Đinh Nho Thái, Đinh Chí Tài, Đinh Nho Hoan, Đinh Thị Tâm.

D. Recipients of the Independence Order

- 1. Mr. Đinh Nho Liêm.
- 2. Mr. Đinh Nho Khoách.
- 3. Mr. Đinh Mạnh Đôn.

E. Recipients of the Party badge

30-year Party badge:

- Đinh Nho Liêm; Đinh Nho Khoách; Đinh Nho Cơ; Đinh Nho Cự; Đinh Thị Liên.

40-year Party badge:

- Đinh Nho Đang; Đinh Nho Hưởng; Đinh Nho Trương; Đinh Nho Cừ.

F. Funeral oration for Mr. Đinh Nho Hoàn by the court of the Qing dynasty

(English rendering of the translated text)

> *You came as envoy to our court to make manifest the great righteousness of loyalty, sincerity and friendship. That the Emperor grieves for the departed is the benevolence that reaches to distant places. You bore the mandate of the King of Nam Việt, from a far region crossing seas and climbing mountains. At Lake Dongting you bowed in thanks and gazed upon the sky. The task was but newly accomplished — how could you bear so soon to leave the mortal world? We now grieve without end. We bestow upon you these funeral offerings, to comfort your heart in the shadowy realm. Alas! Mountains and rivers lie far apart; you journeyed on through desolate relay stations. Faithful to the utmost, you gave up your life; your soul returns to the old land. Your sacred spirit still lingers near — reverently accept this offering.*

G. Funeral oration for Mr. Đinh Nho Hoàn by the court of the Lê dynasty

(English rendering of the translated text)

> *On the 10th day of the 10th month of the 12th year of the Vĩnh Thịnh reign, the Emperor specially sent the Kim Tử Vinh Lộc Đại Phu and Thượng Bảo Tự Khanh, Tạ Đăng Huân, to make offerings reverently before the coffin of the Thượng Bảo Tự Khanh, Đinh Nho Hoàn, saying: A subject who does not presume upon himself; a loyal servant who devotes his whole heart to the country. Considering the rites that express our sorrow, the court has requited kindness and repaid righteousness. Remembering you! Of a family of hereditary standing, high in examination fame. In the hall of Ngu you reverently helped to open great counsels for the King; along the road of Zhou you hastened, mindful that you must strive to care for the affairs of state. You went far to make plain your merit — how could you have thought of a homeward journey at the end of your days? Watching the road of your urgent progress, the banners and carriages of the envoy came thronging back; yet, unlooked for, at the palace gate, the snow-white banners of the envoy shone down, solitary. Only now do we hear the announcement of your death — how could our love of you be so easily borne? Now we set out this offering to comfort your departed soul. Come, and partake.*

— End of translation —