

## Poem in Ca Trù: Type, Structure, Content

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Poem plays an important role in *Ca trù*. Many music researchers say that singing *Ca trù* is singing poem. Of 46 tunes of *Ca trù*, there are more than 10 tunes expressed in available poems or styles of poetry; for example: in the tune *Tỳ bà*, the performer could sing *Tỳ bà hành* by Bạch Cư Dị being converted into seven-seven-six-eight-word-meter; in the reciting poem tunes, just reciting 5 *Thien thai* poems by Tào Đường or 3 *Thanh Bình* tune poems by Lý Bạch; in the reciting *poetic essay (phú)*, reciting *Tien Xich Bich* and *Hau Xich Bich* by Tô Đông Pha. Others like *bắc phân*, *cung bắc* sometimes used six-eight word meters. Structurally, those are available for familiar types and beyond the scope of particular creativity because they do not originate from *Ca trù*'s activity environment like recitative. Recitative is the main tune of *Ca trù* and has become an independent poem type. In terms of literature, recitative has a particular form structure and special type content. Unlike other tunes of *Ca trù* that only stop at some fixed works, recitative has increased to thousands of works in quantity and has been composed for many centuries. For those reasons, we confined ourselves the research to the creation which is the most typical of *Ca tru*: The recitative.

## I. Structure

Recitative has a specially complete and stable structure. Such elements as framework, conclusion sentence, way of organizing rhyme, etc together with redundancy or deficiency of stanza which only happens in middle stanza,...have *localized* recitative form with other types of poem. A complete stanza recitative (11 sentences), redundancy of stanza (more than 11 sentences), deficiency of stanza (less than 11 sentences), always have 6 word conclusion sentence, rhythm accord including *cước vận* (terminal rhyme) and *yêu vận* (medial rhyme), both uneven and even tone, number of words moving freely and often ranging from 4 to 20. Normally, there are two verses in Han language standing in the fifth and sixth line of the work of the middle stanza which is called *dụng* poem. The way of calling this *dụng* verse has connection with that of singing these two verses. Above the recitative is two or four six-word verses called *muõu*. Two verses are called single *muõu* and four verses, double *muõu*. *Muõu* above the recitative is called *muõu đầu* or *muõu tiền* (pre *muõu*) and at the end of the recitative is called *muõu hậu* (post *muõu*). However, it is not absolutely necessary to have *muõu* in a recitative. The last word of the first sentence of the recitative is always used with uneven tone. After *cước vận trắc* (uneven tone) is two *cước vận bằng* (even tones) and then two *cước vận trắc* (uneven tones).

Recitative finds terminal rhyme closely and does not have sentence gap as in four-line and eight-line meter poem. Except the first verse existing independently in terminal rhyme system, from the second verse forward the terminal rhyme is always structured as even, even; uneven, uneven; even, even. (*Bằng bằng – trắc trắc – bằng bằng* in Vietnamese). Number of verses and words and seven-seven-six-eight has not been specific but in a recitative, the presence of six-word verse, two poem verses or sometimes even contrary verses, etc and six-word

conclusion is special trait of recitative. Six-word verse is uneven of any recitative, i.e. full, redundant, deficient recitatives. Some people explain that rhythm only comes to an end if coin clappers's beat is at uneven sentence. If stopping at the even sentence, singing sentence finishes but there is still the rhythm of coin clappers. Let's take some full, redundant, deficient stanza recitatives and their rules as examples for further understanding. For example, a full stanza recitative is: Meeting female singer Hồng and Tuyết (including two *murôu*)

*Ngày xưa Tuyết muốn lấy ông  
Ông chê Tuyết bé, Tuyết không biết gì  
Bây giờ Tuyết đã đến thì  
Ông muốn lấy Tuyết, Tuyết chê ông già*

In the old day, Tuyết wanted to get married to him  
He despised that she was too young  
Now she has grown up  
He wants to get married with her, but she despises his old age.

*Pre- Murôu 2  
Nước nước biếc, non non xanh  
Sớm tình tình sớm, trưa tình tình trưa  
Nhớ ai tháng đợi năm chờ  
Nhớ người độ ấy, bây giờ là đây*

Mountains and water are all blue and fresh All day long  
Longing for somebody for years  
Now that person is standing in front of me

*First Canto*

1. Hồng Hồng, Tuyết Tuyết  
2. Mới ngày nào chưa biết cái chi chi<sup>1)</sup>  
YVT CVB

1) YVT: uneven medial rhyme-medial rhyme is uneven. CVB: terminal rhyme is even.

3. Mười lăm năm thắm thoát có xa gì

4. Nghoánh mặt lại đã tới kì to liêu<sup>2)</sup>  
YVB CVT

- 1. Hồng Hồng, Tuyết Tuyết
- 2. That day still little, knowing nothing
- 3. Fifteen years passing by
- 4. Maiden time has come

*Middle Canto*

5. Ngã lãng du thời quân thương thiếu  
CVT

6. Quân kim hứa giá ngã thành ông<sup>3)</sup>  
CVB

7. Cười cười nói thẹn thùng  
CVB

8. Mà bạch phát với hồng nhanchùng gái  
YVB CVT

- 5. When I was strong to travel everywhere, she was just a little girl
- 6. Now she gets married, I become an old man.
- 7. Smiling and saying in shy
- 8. White hair with beautiful girl (rosy-checked) seems to feel compassion.

*Xếp Canto*

9. Riêng một thú thanh sơn đi lại  
CVT

10. Khéo ngây ngây dại dại với tình  
CVB YVT

11. Đàn ai một tiếng Dương tranh  
CVB

- 9. Just taking pleasure in virgin forest
- 10. But being stupid for love

2) YVB: even medial rhyme-medial rhyme is even. CVT: terminal is uneven. Td lilu: maiden girl.

3) When I traveled everywhere, you were still little. Now, you get married, I become an old man.

11. By whom the instrument is played

Lack of canto song (This song does not have a title):

1. *Đồng thị thiên nhai luân lạc khách<sup>4)</sup>*

2. *Gặp nhau đây với trách nhau chi*

3. *Mặt tài tình là mấy nam nhi*

4. *Đã dan díu lại, thôi đi thì cũng đại*

1. We all roam the world

2. Meeting here, don't blame each other

3. Men should be talented and generous

4. Meeting each other here, why don't be close to each other, not leave  
to feel regret

(Lack of middle canto)

9. *Sách có chữ: thanh xuân nan tái<sup>5)</sup>*

10. *Buồn cho ai mà ái ngại cho ai*

11. *Núi cao sông hãy còn dài*

9. Youth is hard to return

10. Sad and sorry for whom

11. Mountain is high, river is long.

Below is the example of a song having a redundant canto:

**Cuốn chiếu hết nhân tình.**

1. *Sách có chữ: lâm hành tiễn biệt<sup>6)</sup>*

2. *Khách với tình xưa quen biết chi nhau*

3. *Họ tên chi? Nhà cửa ở đâu*

4. *Ngán ngẩm vì nổi nước lã ao bèo thêm đĩnh đoàng*

<sup>4)</sup> All travelers around the world.

<sup>5)</sup> Youth is hard to return.

<sup>6)</sup> Seeing off when setting off.

1. Seeing off when setting off
2. You and I do not know each other
3. About name and residence
4. Bored of no relation

5a. *Dưới nguyệt chén quỳnh khi thắg thưởng*

6a. *Tôi hát chơi mà khách cũng nghe chơi*

7a. *Thảm thiết chi mà giọt ngọc tuôn rơi*

8a. *Mai mốt đã ngược xuôi người mỗi xứ*

- 5a. In the moon, we toast to each other to celebrate
- 6a. Singing for fun and hope so does my guest
- 7a. Why tears run down
- 8a. We will be separated in different places in one of these day

5. *Cô nhận nam phi hồng bắc khứ*

6. *Nhàn vân tây vãng thủy đông lưu<sup>7)</sup>*

7. *Khách về nhà đã có bạn khâm trừ<sup>8)</sup>*

8. *Vui về đêm thanh vậy tiệc ngọc*

9. *Đã trót ôm cầm chơi liễu mạch<sup>9)</sup>*

10. *Thú cầm ca c òn l ắm l úc chơi vui*

11. *Kìa kìa cá nước chim giờ*

5. Swallow lost its group flying to the South, wild goose to the North
6. Cloud to the West and water to the East
7. Having friend to share blanket and pillow, having wife at ho me
8. Happy at night together with wife
9. Coming to the house of songstress by mistake
10. To be delighted with music and song
11. Remember that is just fish in the water and birds in the sky

7) Swallow lost its group flying to the South, wild goose to the North, cloud to the and water to the East.

8) Having friend to share blanket and pillow, having wife at home.

9) Taking singing as career for a long time.

Example of a recitative having pre-mưỡu and post-mưỡu: *Lộ diệc vũ trùng*:

*Cái cò lặn lội bờ sông  
Gánh gạo đưa chồng tiếng khóc nỉ non*

The egrer is taking pains along the riverside  
To carry rice in supporting husband, bittering crying

*Lộ diệc vũ trùng trung chi nhất<sup>10)</sup>  
Thương cái cò lặn lội bờ sông  
Tiếng nỉ non gánh gạo đưa chồng  
Ngoài nghìn dặm một trời một nước  
Trông bóng nhạn băng khuâng từng bước  
Nghe tiếng quyên khắc khoải năm canh  
Phận tếp tôm ai nữ dứt tình  
Ơn thủy thố<sup>11)</sup> phải đền cho vẹn xóng  
Trường tên, đạn, xin chàng bảo trọng  
Thiếp lui về nuôi cái cùng con  
Cao Bằng cách trở nước non  
Minh trong trắng có quý than a hộ<sup>12)</sup>  
Sức bay nhảy một phen năng nổ  
Đá Yên Nhiên<sup>13)</sup> còn đó chẳng mòn*

Swallow is a bird having feather  
Sympathy for its hard-working  
To support its husband, bittering crying  
Alone and alone  
Looking shadow of swallow, stepping hesitately  
During five watches listening cuckoo  
Small fate, hard to forget feelings  
Owing the country, have to show gratitude  
In battlefield, take care of yourself

<sup>10)</sup> Swallow is a bird having feather.

<sup>11)</sup> Some books say that is country land We still suspect his explanation.

<sup>12)</sup> Genie helps.

<sup>13)</sup> Name of a mountain in Han period. Merits will be carved there.

I stay at home with our children  
 Cao Bằng separated by mountains and torrents  
 Genie will help  
 Try your best  
 Yên Nhiên rock is still eternally.

*Đông huu<sup>14)</sup> rạng chép thể son*  
*Chàng nên danh giá, thiếp còn trẻ trung*  
*Yêu nhau kháng khí dài đông<sup>15)</sup>*

When the country is peaceful, share happiness together  
 Achieve your honor, I am still young  
 Love forever

A recitative is independent from a fixed piece of music. Performer of recitative is completely under the control of verses. When starting the recitative, the performer has to focus on short lyrics, which are easy or difficult to deal with appropriately. Recitative is divided into cantos. There are two ways to divide. One is based on music and the other on literature. The former linked closely to terminology, expressing music tempo such as *xuyên thưa*, *xuyên mau*, etc. *Xuyên thưa* is three drum beats on the fourth lyric, which is adagio. *Xuyên mau* is three drum beats on the eighth lyric, which is quicker. Some people divide the song into seven canto. They are *lá đầu*, *xuyên thưa*, *thơ*, *xuyên mau*, *dồn*, *xếp*, *keo*. Others divide it into six cantos with different ways of calling such as *khổ nhập đề*, *khổ xuyên tâm*, *khổ thơ*, *khổ xếp*, *khổ rải*, *khổ kết* and called *khổ đầu*, *khổ xuyên*, *khổ thơ*, *khổ giữa*, *khổ dồn* hay *xếp*, *khổ dãi*. In terms of the later, a recitative is divided into three cantos namely first, middle and last. Each song has three stanzas, the first two of which has four lyrics for each and the last of which has three lyrics.

14) Happy with the nation when the enemy goes away.

15) Love forever.



Another specific point is the choice to put two Han verses in the middle. That position brings the feeling of the symmetry and creates proportion in the whole song because before and after Han verses are *Nôm* verses. Characteristics of the subject show the stability of type art structure and also point out that parts of type have fixed art function. In units of recitative verse, it is the first time in Vietnamese verses, empty words has been mostly used and verse of prose having rhythm has created one more specific characteristic for recitative.

## II. Rhyme and rhythm

A common characteristic is that recitative is in tune with a number of three words. This characteristic is along with the length of recitative history. There is no separation in terminal rhyme with unchanged time length. However, medial one is different. It has been reinforced since late XIXth century afterward. All of recitatives in Tấn Đà, who was a recitative composer in early XXth century, use medial rhymes. Medial rhyme in six-eight word distiches meter and double-seven perhaps plays a positive role in connecting verses and lines with each other and creating continuity. However, in recitative, that role is for terminal rhyme and medial one only creates accord consonance and more lissome for the verse. The role of medial rhyme in recitative maybe dominates that of terminal one but number of medial rhyme founded in a recitative appears three or four times. Pieces of medial rhyme that do not play an overwhelming role in recitative are those by Nguyễn Công Trứ and Phan Bội Châu, making us think of its humble role in recitative law of prosody. However, in recitative, if we put characteristic and position of medial rhyme in interrelation of other characteristics with recitative structure such as terminal rhyme; the presence of two verses now opposite now not opposite, now at the

beginning now at the end; six-word or scarcely seven- word conclusion sentence, etc, we will see the loosing, lack of serious principles of law of prosody and the role of elements.

Rhyme and rhythm in recitative as analyzed and compared above are also formed as poetry prosody but flexible. Prosody is not as strict bidding and it helps express fantasy content. Typical rhyme and rhythm of 3/2/2; 3/2/3; 3/3 and terminal and medial rhymes that do not separate the rhyme are sufficient to show it belongs to national style of poetry (this is different from eight- sentence poem originating from China, hold on 4 March and having broken medial rhyme structure). A strange thing is that conclusion sentence of a recitative is almost 2/2/2 and the last word of the conclusion sentence is always even tone.

### III. Verses and words

Eleven sentence unit is taken to distinguished a recitative of full, redundant, or deficient stanza. A redundant stanza recitative can be prolonged to seventy six sentences such as *Huong Son phong cảnh*. That is the freedom in number of sentence in a recitative. However, despite its freedom in number of sentence, recitative can not prolong itself as reciting of a Vietnamese-transcribed story does. In the interrelation between elegy and Vietnamese-transcribed story, characteristic, capacity and type of poetry that it uses are as convention of the length of such type. Elegy does not prolong as Vietnamese-transcribed story does. Number of sentences in a recitative is not limited as strictly as that in eight- sentence poem, four-line poem and unable to prolong as elegy and Vietnamese- transcribed story do. That external characteristic allows us to consider recitative middle addition, ties between words, sentences of eight -sentence poem, four-line poem in terms of number and the prolongation of elegy and Vietnamese- transcribed story. Also,

it can be seen zoning assignment of types of recitative since a characteristic of the singing type is music and the time duration.

The specific characteristics of recitative is not limited or restricted in words and sentence because it does not only happen to recitative but also in the prose characteristic of the sentence. The prose characteristic does not depend on the length but the organizing of word type together with rhythm and sound in a sentence unit, creating the sentence closely to common one. In a verse full of prose characteristic, mere words, connectives are often used but their presence is not enough to take shape of prose characteristic of the verse. Rhyme can make a verse having mere words and connectives to be flexible and harmony. Therefore, the prose characteristic decreases too dramatically to recognize. In recitative, because the need of direct speech of viewpoint ideas, thoughts to show one's talent, the type of recitative is mainly on tone of voice. Structure of recitative is reasoning. Its sentences are expression and argument. Never than ever before that in Vietnamese Literature there are so many reasoning sentences as those in recitative. Lets's pay attention to words like "*khi... đã nên*" in sentence below:

*Ông Hy Văn tài bộ đã vào lòng  
 Khi Thủ khoa, khi Tham tán, khi Tổng đốc Đông  
 Gồm thao lược đã nên tay ngất ngưỡng.*

Hy Văn achieved his career  
 Ever the first in examination, another time the counselor and then province chief  
 Strategies are very high and perfect to become excellent.

Or words forming sentence models in such recitative of Nguyễn Công Trứ "*cái...là...ở đâu...cứ...sao không...cũng...*" Below is one of the examples:

*Cái khóa giàm<sup>16)</sup> là giống ở đâu*

*Cứ lẽo đẽo cặp kẻ hiền cái<sup>17)</sup>*

*Đôi kẻ biết sao không tỉnh lại*

*Dẫu thiên hô vạn hoán cũng u o<sup>18)</sup>*

Fame and fortune make freedom get lost Mandarins' freedom also gets lost somebody can not be awake. So many times of calling, no sign of awaking.

Furthermore, there is a passage like syllogism "from ... to ... result". Grammatically, it is close to prose. Functionally, it is of reasoning sentence, especially if it is put in the whole passage: *thử ngẫm, có sao, thì, từ, đẽm, lại*. Not only reasoning, arguing structure appear with high frequency but also comparative method is used by Nguyễn Công Trứ in the whole recitative to highline and express the matter for conclusion and confirmation.

If putting rhyme of 6 word conclusion sentence in that of the whole recitative, we will find that as for non-post *muõu* recitative, only this conclusion sentence has even rhyme 2/2/2, and sentences above it (except for two dung ones) are uneven 3/2/2 3/2/3, 3/3/3. Hence, in a classical recitative, there are four points to broke rhythm: before two contrary lines of verses, at two contrary lines of verse, after the two contrary lines of verses and conclusion sentence, i.e, uneven tempo moving to tempo 4/3 of *dụng* line of verse, repeating uneven tempo and then even tempo 2/2/2 of conclusion sentence. In some sentences before the Conclusion sentences which are free in length and tempo, they change in terms of rhythms and syllables (number of words) are stopped with tempo 2/2/2 at the conclusion sentence. This sudden stop

16) Fame and wealth make freedom get lost.

17) Currently, the Parasol—tool for mandarin, i.e. fame and wealth following the mandarin making his freedom get lost.

18) Many times of recalling but no seeing reason

creates considerable gathering of accord consonance. Maybe due to the rhythm of 2/2/2, the prose characteristics of the conclusion sentence is less than others in a recitative (except for two verses).

If two Han verses and 6 word conclusion sentence make the recitative have four places for breaking, a recitative also has three types of sentence:

Firstly free sentence with many long or short words depending on the author. Secondly, two *dùng* verses of 7 words are usually taken from poem rules and 6 word sentence to conclude the recitative. (Here, we only take classical- structured recitatives into consideration and excluded 7, 8 word conclusion sentences for their rareness). Three types of sentence and synthesis of the recitative from traditional poetry type.

Of words mostly used and leaving impressions are personal pronouns because they reflect individuality. It seems that in Vietnamese history, only recitatives have phenomenon that poets talk about themselves, show their talent, love and entertainment so much, uncontrolled and greedy like that. The first personal pronouns such as **ngô, ngã, ta** appear mostly in Han, and *Nôm* poems with modest and humble sense. In recitative, that sense is completely absent.

#### IV. Content

Recitative after a period of establishment and development has been used to express many different contents, in which there are satirical, patriotic and revolutionary propaganda content bringing high art efficiency. Although it is used to express many contents, it cannot be completely successful in all contents. Of recitatives that are considered wonderful, the unique and identical contents are mainly about heroic will and strong spirit whose manifestations are free, and about handsome

men and beautiful women. In Oriental environment of traditional society, *ca quán* (cabaret) of *Ca trù* is a free environment nourishing individually free speech.

Many rather good recitatives having other contents such as *Xuân cảm* (*Feeling of the Spring*), *Bài ca chúc Tết thanh niên* (*Welcome the Tet for the youth*), *Chơi xuân* (*Enjoying the spring*) by Phan Bội Châu, *Bài hát lưu biệt* (*The song of separation*) by Huỳnh Thúc Kháng. Those songs are good for its heroic spirit and vitality. Such recitatives have heroic sense. However, with responsibilities, self-confidence originating from solidarity over individuality, despite spirit (Thanks to group, I myself can exist. Group is respected but I am inferior) " *U bách niên trung tu hữu ngã*," " *đáng trọng phu tùy ngộ nhi an* " as in *Bài hát lưu biệt* by Huynh Thuc Khang or decisive and strong, grandiose as in *The song to welcome the Tet for the Youth* by Phan Bội Châu:

*Ghé vai vào xóc vác cựa giang san*  
*Đi cho êm, đứng cho vững cho vững, trụ cho gan*  
*Dây thành bại quyết ghe phen liên hiệp lại*

Shoulder my share of responsibilities for the country to walk smoothly,  
 stand stably and bravely Success or failure, try to be hand in hand

it is strange and different from extraordinarily proud, unsteadiness (*nhân sinh quý thích chí*) that we often meet in recitative. The spirit of deep patriotism in recitatives of soldiers who are heroic and full of responsibilities bring them new attraction leading to different direction but rather strange with attraction of generous or loveable spirit on the basis of tom-tom music in cabaret. That heroic sonority of propagandizing literature also brings with it the uncontrolled style, also strongly propagandizing but different from that conceited by talented

Confucian scholar in recitative. Such recitatives are certainly not allowed to introduce in cabaret and in *Ca trù* collection before the 80s of the XXth century. They also cannot participate in performing as well as “sexual intercourse” (*hành lạc*) environment.

In Vietnamese folklore melodies, only *Ca trù* establishes a type of poem called recitative, which means no other ones can do like that such as *Quan họ*, *Chèo*, *Ca Lý*, *Dặm* singing. It is also hard to find such a short poetry having a stable-structured type, a typical form and a special content in Vietnam. Recitative is a unique type of poetry not only for its content and form but also for its either tune of *Ca trù* or kind of literature.

Key Words : Ca Trù, Singing Poem, Vietnamese Folklore Melodies

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<국문초록>

## 베트남의 음악시, 까쭈: 형식, 구조, 내용

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까쭈(Ca trù)란 베트남에 뿌리를 둔 민속음악의 한 종류이다. 까쭈에는 시가 아주 중요한 위치를 차지한다. 그렇기 때문에 많은 음악 연구자들은 까쭈는 '음악시'라고 말한다. 이러한 특징은 노랫말에서 분명하게 볼 수 있는데, 까쭈의 주된 가락이면서 독립된 시의 장르이기도 한 것이다. 베트남 민속음악 가락 중에서 까쭈는 유일하게 생겨난 것이어서 시라는 것이 '말하는 노래'인 것이다. 이러한 것은 베트남의 민속음악(극)이라고 할 수 있는 께오, 판호, 핫잠 등과 같은 곳에서는 유사한 현상을 찾아볼 수 없다. 또한 까쭈의 가락이 특정한 일부 가락에서 멈추지 않고, '말하는 노래'의 수량이 추천 개이며, 수 세기를 통해서 창작되어 왔다.

이 글은 까쭈 장르의 구조, 운과 가락, 내용 등에 대해서 연구하여 이 '말하는 노래'가 완전한 시라는 것을 증명하고자 하였다. 이를 통해 '말하는 노래'는 베트남 만의 고유한 것이며, 차후 신시운동에서 8행시를 만들어 내는 기반이 되었다고 볼 수 있다.

주제어 : 까쭈, 음악시, 베트남 민속음악