

# The Battle Hero Figure Determining the Type Features of M'nong Epics

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**Abstract** The heroic character in the epic M'nong (Ot Ndong) has a common denominator with the hero of the world epic in physical beauty; in will, energy, courage; in victory and victory over the opposing enemy. However, if compared with the heroic character of the classical epic, the hero in the M'nong epic is more modest and less prominent. The Hectors, Ulysses, Asin, Rama... are "pure" heroes, always placed in the space of epic wars. The battle hero in the M'nong epic mainly works in the space of everyday life; In terms of stature, he was short, his actions were simple, and his weapons were rudimentary. In Ot Ndong, many times the hero is not able to decide on his own whether he wins or loses, but has to rely on supernatural forces such as gods, ghosts, and charms. Through the heroic character of war, we can see the primitive nature of the M'nong epic, it reflects the low level of production and natural conquest of the M'nong people - in the early stages of the development of social history.

**Keywords:** battle hero, M'nong epic, Ot Ndong, mythological epic, classical epic

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## 1. Introduction

The M'nong ethnic group is considered one of the indigenous peoples with a long history of residence and close attachment to the Central Highlands of Vietnam. The M'nong people have a treasure trove of unique, rich and diverse folklore, most notably epic works (Ot Ndong).

The main content of Ot Ndong is about the battles of the leaders in the community fighting against the enemies of the clan. The war between the opposing factions in the M'nong Epic is basically to maintain customary law, regain treasures, regain the appropriated woman or redistribute the residence. War in Ot Ndong has been refracted through the subjective lens of mythological thoughts, the wars have been more or less painted by artists compared to the wars in historical reality. It can be said that the ancient life of the M'nong people has been fully systematized and has been "uprooted" naturally into the works of Ot Ndong.

## 2. Research Contents and Methodology

### 2.1. Research Contents

- Survey and analyze in a general way about the heroic character of the battle in the M'nong Epic.
- Understand the position, function, and role of the battle hero in Ot Ndong.

- The results of research and analysis are a convincing basis to once again affirm that the M'nong Epic has the properties of the mythological epics (the ancient epic, the creation epic).

### 2.2. Methodology

During the research process, we use the following methods:

*Systematic approach:* Approaching a number of published M'nong epics to learn about battle hero characters.

*Analytical method:* Analyze to see the outstanding features of the battle hero character in the M'nong Epic.

*Method of comparison and contrast:* Compare and contrast to find out the similarities and differences between the battle hero character in the M'nong Epic and the battle hero character in the epics of other peoples.

## 3. Findings and Discussion

First of all, the battle hero character in the M'nong Epic has a common denominator with the battle hero of the world epic in the beauty of appearance, physicality, intelligence, feats and victory. Those qualities of the hero on the one hand are explained by the divine origin, on the other hand, it also shows the undeniable internal force of the mundane human will combined with the effective support of the whole community. In Ot Ndong, the hero of the battle, in addition to the mission of protecting the community, must also wage wars of robbery, regain

treasures, conquer smaller communities, explore to expand the area of residence, organize hunting activities and exchange products. The battle heroic characters in the M'ngong Epic are Leng, Mbong, Yang, Yang, etc. They are symbols of strength and aspiration to conquer the ideal peak of the M'ngong people in ancient times.

Just like the heroic characters in the epics in general, Leng, Mbong, Yang, etc. in Ot Ndrong, he was born as a talented, courageous and courageous person. Their strength and talent is something inherent, innate, not necessarily arduous training. Leng is the most typical hero representing the strength and will of the community, always at the forefront of all activities. Leng is a typical character for the elite and heroic qualities of the collective. Like heroic characters in epics in general, Leng never sat idly or passively under the influence of circumstances. Leng is the one who organizes, directs and takes the lead in all actions aimed at changing or developing the life of the community. Hero characters always act, if they do not act, it also means that the content of the work does not move. The family of Rong's mother thanks to Leng - "the most talented hero in the M'ngong region" that became powerful and famous throughout the country. Leng is always present at any time, anywhere to help the village, bring a peaceful and prosperous life to the community.

Leng is not only a man with extraordinary strength in battle, talented in labor, but he is also a man with great talent in singing: The sound of the mbuat trumpet Leng blows is melodious and soothing, which makes drunken people wake up to listen and makes Mrs. Put and Mrs. Pu from far away also come to listen. Herd of buffaloes are lying in the puddles, the rgtut birds are looking for food in the farm fields; monkeys and peacocks which are engrossed in playing in the forest also pull together to hear Leng's sound of the trumpet. Leng not only knows how to play the mbuat trumpet, but also knows how to use the horn and is very talented. The sound of horns Leng blows after winning the battle, resounding to the blue sky. The echoes of the horns Leng blow are no less than the echoes of the gong set by Goddess Let, Goddess Mai rules.

Ot Ndrong not only talks about the origin of the birth of mankind, praises heroes with illustrious feats, but also tells about daily working life, wealth and peace of the M'ngong people. Ot Ndrong also reflects the great changes in M'ngong society, that is, the transition from the era of ignorance to the age of barbarism to reach the threshold of the civilized age.

If Bong, Rong and Tieng are symbols of the founder of the world, the cultural hero of the M'ngong people, then Leng is a symbol of strength, talent, courage and the hero's extraordinary courage and fighting will. Among the battle heroes of the M'ngong Epic, Leng is the most mentioned. Leng has the position, the most important role among the heroes of the battle. Whenever the village faces difficulties, dangers or faces evil enemies, Lang always appears at the right time to help and protect the peaceful life of the community.

Leng was originally "demigod, half human", formerly Leng was originally the child of Fire's mother, after many reincarnations, he was the son of Rong's mother. That's why "Long's face looks like a god's face, and Lang's eyes look like fire". Leng's ability, Leng's strength is drawn on par with the ability of the universe.

*Leng's eyes are as bright as fire*

*Leng has a fire in his body*

*Leng has a source of water in his body*

*The sun and the moon are in the body of the Leng*

Right from the time he was born, Leng had strange expressions compared to other children. Although he was still a child, he had the appearance of a hero, just born nine and ten sunny, he was naughty and incomparable. When he grew up, Leng became a brave and aggressive person, always a pioneer in all works and always acting for the honor, interests and aspirations of the community. Leng is also a person with more endurance than humans, he has overcome overcome the clutches of the wild beasts, died and revived many times to go down to Phan to save Tiang's soul and bring his soul back. Leng saved the villagers from hunger when natural disasters of famine happened to Tiang Village, Leng is the one who built a lunar New Year pole to pray to the gods, etc. Leng's actions and footsteps are like the actions and footsteps of the gods, the stormy winds and the burning fire:

*Peter goes to create the wind*

*Peter goes to create a storm*

*Peter goes to create a stream of fire*

([1], p. 647)

Leng is the person who can do extraordinary things that are difficult for ordinary people to do. At the same time, Leng can wear all six gongs, beat softly and gracefully. The same set of gongs, others like Ndu, Mbon, Yang, Kong, Tiang, etc. just hanged but can't play, just hanged but can't move.

Leng made a lunar New Year pole with very vivid patterns that made the whole community admire:

*There's nothing wrong with Leng's carving the pattern*

*Draw beautiful patterns like rlet music*

*Carve a picture of a shrimp, then the shrimp will know how to crawl*

*Carve a picture of a crab, the crab will know how to walk*

*Carve a cuckoo, the cuckoo can sing*

([2], p.62)

The strength of Leng not only amazes people, but also respects the gods because "Long's strength is stronger than a hundred people". The power of Leng is a combination of the power of water and fire to create the power of nature, the power of the gods. Leng is the leader of the community, a pioneer in all work as well as in battle.

As we mentioned above, in the M'ngong Epic, the artisans have built a series of heroic characters in which they bring the best qualities of the whole community. Artists have used formulas and "prefabricated components" to build beautiful battle hero characters that shine in both appearance, quality and intelligence:

*They have ivory in their ears*

*They look like rich people*

*The left hand has a copper ring*

*The right hand has a silver ring*

*They always put a mass of fire in them*

*When needing fire, it's available in them*

*When needing water, it's available in the body*

([3], p.73)

And when the hero has done something, they are determined to do it, even though they know it is difficult and dangerous in the immediate future, when they are determined to leave, they never give up:

*A herd of tigers standing on both sides of the road  
 A herd of leopards standing on both sides of the road  
 A herd of bears standing on both sides of the road  
 A herd of goats standing on both sides of the road  
 A snake den raised their heads to threaten Leng  
 A python den raised their heads to threaten Leng  
 The three-year-old boy raised his head to threaten Leng  
 Leng is still going  
 Even if you die and leave your body,  
 Even being carried away by the wind*

([1], p.669)

Leng is the most talented and brave person in the community. The talent and strength of Leng made the opposition wary and respectful. The most important and essential task of the hero in Ot Ndrong is to be ready to fight with all forces in any situation to protect the peace and development of the community. In battle, the hero character does not always win, but in certain stages they can also fail. However, they never quit, give up or give in forever. The battle hero characters in the M'ngong Epic are people with extraordinary strength and energy. In general, the hero in the M'ngong epic always carries in him a desire to discover and conquer. In addition to fighting the enemy, the heroic character also organizes hunting, exchange, production, manufacturing tools and means of production to serve the process of territorial expansion, appropriating more natural resources.

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The hero of the battle in Ot Ndrong is a character who does not succumb to any difficulty or danger. It seems that the more arduous, the more dangerous they are more interested in conquering. They always act to achieve the goal, not waiting for the gift, the luck will randomly come to them so we see the hero in the M'ngong Epic is always in the initiative. When the hero leaves to take back the magic lute, white elephant jar, bamboo bush; sometimes go and rob the gongs and gongs; sometimes they take silver pipes of human statues, get lung jars, silver flowers, bronze flowers, etc. In addition to strength and courage, they also know how to create very effective combat "weapons" such as fire-breathers, boats. can fly, magical kite, fish stone, shoot field, etc. Besides, they have the talent to talk, convince the community and other villages to link together into a stronger fighting force. At the same time, they are people with an unusual ability to defeat the most powerful enemies.

Ot Ndrong portrays a class of heroic characters with magical stature, so the feats and achievements they have made are all great feats and achievements. Their

opponents can be people, maybe monsters, but the more powerful and weirder the enemy, the more passionate they are to fight and win. With the shield "ten people can't lift, a hundred people can't pick up" in hand, when fighting, the hero turns them into legendary weapons capable of transforming nature.

However, through the survey, we found that, if we put the battle hero of the M'ngong epic next to the battle hero of the classic epic, the battle hero in the M'ngong epic is usually smaller in stature; The action is simple, the weapons are rudimentary, the battle space is still close to everyday life, etc. The battle hero characters in classic epics such as Hecto, Uylis, Asin, Rama, etc. are "pure" heroes, true to the full meaning of the word because they are always placed in the space of epic wars. The confrontation between Asin and Hecto on the battlefield of Troa created the scene of the city on fire, tilting; In the Ramayana, the image of Prince Rama in a fierce battlefield with bows and arrows, flying rocks and stones, etc. The battle hero characters in the M'ngong Epic operate mainly in the space of everyday life, they have little appearance of the "pure" hero. Their stature is often short on the battlefield, their actions are somewhat simple, rudimentary and sometimes they are not able to decide on their own victory - defeat but must rely on the power of gods, Lai ghost, Dark Magic. The battle hero in the M'ngong Epic, built by artisans, has many "defects", for example, when describing Mbong's appearance:

*Mbong with messy hair  
 Not washing her head, potatoes will also grow  
 Dirty teeth can also grow rice  
 Mbong's sword has no sheath  
 .....  
 Mbong's head is dirty, growing ginger also grows  
 Mbon's head clings to the soil and grows potatoes  
 Mbong's teeth are dirty, dyed and not attached*

In battle, the heroic character in the M'ngong Epic is described as less flying and grandiose than the heroic character in the classical epic. This was mentioned by Tran Thi An when writing an introduction to the Roch Epic, Rong caught Leng's soul. According to Tran Thi An, "The rudimentary nature of this epic work is shown indiscriminately. First of all, it can be seen that in the battle between Yang and Yui, representing bon Tiang and Tong, Siang, Roch, Rong and many others of Briang Village, the movements where the heroic characters show off their strength as "thing", "press", "hug", "push hand", "pull leg", "pull", "hug tight", "hug stick", etc. This description shows that the imagination of the M'ngong folk artist has not yet taken off. It is hard to imagine that this is a display of heroes representing two powerful villages. Weapons they use from beginning to end, in addition to spears, knives and swords (in fact, they rarely use them). There are also casting-nets, trap fish, all kinds of ropes (very commonly used and very effective). These weapons seem to be quite rudimentary, and "trap fish" a hero like Yang is no different from catching a fish. The singer/narrator still brings his understanding in everyday life and honestly tells it in the song/narrator without much artistic processing" ([4], p.63).

While epics of other peoples such as Greece, India, Ede, etc. the heroic character is described with more splendid, perfect and perfect beauty than the battle hero in the

M'ngong Epic. When describing Dam San, the Ede people have built a character with a shining and shimmering beauty: Dam San "A war blanket is wrapped across my chest, wearing a battle shirt, his ears are wearing a piece of jewelry, standing next to him with all kinds of spears and swords, his eyes glittering like a magpie eating bamboo flowers, the young Dam San appeared as a new chieftain who was getting rich, full of strength and famous. His calves were as big as a crossbar, and his thighs were as big as blowers. His strength was equal to that of a male elephant, his breath rumbling like thunder. When he was lying on his stomach, the floor beam was broken, when he was lying on his back, the beam was broken." Dam San has the figure "walking calmly, two hands hitting far is beautiful. On the main road, he glided like a cloud snake. In the forest, when he jumped high, sometimes he jumped long, it looked like a whip snake was coming" ([5], p.169).

Through the survey, we found that in the M'ngong Epic, there are many heroic characters or groups of heroic characters. The hero in the M'ngong Epic rarely acts alone like some world epics (understood in the epic sense, only focuses on highlighting the individual hero as in the case of Asin in the Iliad). They are depicted as a collective hero:

*They gathered all the heroes*

*They are full of courageous people*

*They are full of brave people*

*A man with a good hand throws a javelin to stab a tiger*

*A man who is good at slashing people with a sword.*

The heroic characters in the M'ngong Epic eat together, live together, work together, fight together, and even die together. In the M'ngong Epic, there have not been any outstanding heroes such as Asin, Rama, Dam San, etc. Explaining this, in the introduction to the work 'The leech swallows Tiang Village, Bui Thien Thai wrote: "... the contemporary Mo Nong society has not yet developed to the chiefdom like the Ede people, but has only stopped in the socio-political space, which is mainly bon (village) under the rule of three or four men called in Mo Nong language as croo weer toom brii toom bbon, Condominas translated as "those who are enthroned in the forest and in the village" ([6], p.38; [7], p.38; [8], p.33).

The M'ngong Epic often describes the hero in activities such as production labor, marriage, reception, fighting the enemy, etc. which is quite narrow. Therefore, in terms of personality, the hero in the M'ngong Epic is somewhat simpler than the hero in the Indian and Greek epics, etc. In general, the heroes in the classical epics are placed in battle space battle; the hero of the Greek epic is conceived of as the pure hero, so he is placed in the space of pure battle; The hero in the Indian epic both fights and thinks in the same space of pure battle. As for the heroic character in the M'ngong Epic, he operates in an ordinary space, with little appearance of a pure hero. The hero of the M'ngong Epic is often depicted as shorter in stature than the hero of the classical epic, their actions are often crude and simple. Even on the battlefield, they are almost unable to decide on their own success - failure but have to rely too much on gods, Lai ghosts, charms and so on ([9], p.44; [10], p.32; [11], p.54; [12], p.56).

The battle hero of the Greek epic appears and shows his war talent brilliantly and the role of the god seems to fade. As for the battle hero in the M'ngong Epic, sometimes it is

only expressed through will and determination, but when acting, they are so limited that without the intervention of gods and charms, the victory may not belong to them. The action of the heroic character in the M'ngong Epic depends almost entirely on the gods, which speaks to the primitive nature of the M'ngong Epic, reflecting the level of production and natural conquest. of the M'ngong is still low. The cult and dependence too much on nature of the battle hero in the M'ngong Epic has shown that the M'ngong Epic is still in the early stages of human social history.

## 4. Conclusion

It can be said that although the inspiration to praise the hero prevails, besides that, the interpretation of the hero's feat and victory in Ot Ndrong also shows a childish conception in the childhood of mankind in the M'ngong ethnic group. Also because it mainly depicts the character in external actions, the M'ngong Epic rarely explores the inside of the hero's soul. If the classical epic reflects a later stage in human evolution in which human actions have been explained by the domination of subjective psychological states, or the preponderance of the art of world epic is concerned with the inner life of people, the M'ngong epic has hardly mentioned the manifestations of the spiritual life. The central character in the M'ngong Epic represents an era in which people are on the way to discover and conquer nature, expand their place of residence, and improve community life.

In the classic epic, the character is always built to the level of "perfection" and "perfection". The M'ngong Epic is also built in the same way, but when we examine each character in detail (especially the hero of the war), we find that this type of character has many "defects", Incomplete. This gives us more basis to affirm the primitive nature (mythical epic) of the M'ngong Epic.

## 5. Summary

Heroes in the M'ngong Epics (Ot Ndrong) have a common denominator with the heroes in the epic world of physical appearance; will, energy, courage; in feats and victories. However, compared to the heroes of the classic epics, the heroes in the M'ngong Epics are less imposing. Hecto, Ulysses, Asin, Rama, Dam San, etc. are the "pure" heroes, always placed in the space of the great wars. Battle heroes in the M'ngong Epics mainly act in the space of daily life. Size is small, action is simple, weapons are rudimentary. Sometimes they do not have the ability to decide on their own victory - failure, but rely on supernatural forces such as gods, spirits, and charms. Thence, it shows us the primitive nature of the M'ngong Epics, which reflects the level of production and natural conquest of the M'ngong people is still low, but in the early stage in the history of human society.

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