

## **COMPOSITION OF THE PANEL:**

(Alphabetical order)

1. Pascal Bourdeaux, Maître de conférences, EPHE-GSRL, Paris, France - History
2. Olga Dror, Associate Professor, Texas A&M University, USA - History
3. Barbora Jirková, Ph.D. student, Charles University, Prague, Czech Republic – History
4. Céline Marangé, Chercheur, Institut de Recherche stratégique de l'École militaire, Paris, France – History
5. Phan Phuong Anh, Faculté des Sciences Sociales et Humaines, Université Nationale de Hanoi
6. Lauren Meeker, State University of New York at New Paltz

## **PANEL PROPOSAL**

### **Deify to Edify: Figures-on-High and Their Role in Political and Communal Formations in Vietnam**

Beginning with the Hùng Kings, the mythic founding fathers of Vietnam in antiquity, numerous personalities ascended or were installed on the highest pedestals of popular deification during various periods of Vietnamese history. Each of them has (or had) his or her own personal appeal that was mobilized by various groups to serve different purposes. Once mobilized, each of them has been tolling the bell he or she is assigned to toll, each “Jette fidèlement son cri religieux, Ainsi qu'un vieux soldat qui veille sous la tente” (Charles Baudelaire).

This panel focuses on the processes of elevating different personalities to the “on-high” positions and establishing different cults in Vietnam from the nineteenth century to the present time, their role in the construction of different Vietnamese polities and states, and on the relationship of these cults with those polities and states.

Barbora Jirková considers the cult of two brothers-generals, Trương Hồng and Trương Hát, in northern Vietnam in the nineteenth century. Céline Marangé discusses the process of elevating images of revolutionary figures among North Vietnamese partisans in the 1940s to mobilize their efforts to fight the French. Pascal Bourdeaux examines from a regional perspective how from the mid-1950s to the present have developed the cults of Trần Hưng Đạo and Nguyễn Trung Trực, famous for fighting against Mongols and French, respectively. Olga Dror analyzes the differences and similarities of the cult of the Hùng Kings in three Vietnamese states: the Republic of Vietnam, the Democratic Republic of Vietnam, and the Socialist Republic of Vietnam.

Mots clés: Religion, cultes, Etat, politique, identité, propagande, Vietnam

## **PRESENTATION DU PANEL**

### **Déifier pour édifier: place et fonction de figures éminentes dans la formation politique et communautaire au Vietnam**

Tout au long de l'histoire vietnamienne a-t-on vu de nombreuses figures historiques être objet de vénération populaire ou élevées sur le piédestal de la déification, à commencer par les fondateurs mythiques du Vietnam ancien, les rois Hùng. Toutes ont été ou sont toujours sollicitées

en diverses occasions par divers pans de la société. Une fois évoquée, on attend que chacune de ces divinités sonne le tocsin et, au cas par cas, “ jette fidèlement son cri religieux, ainsi qu'un vieux soldat qui veille sous la tente ” (Charles Baudelaire).

Le panel analyse les procédés de déification d'éminentes personnalités historiques vietnamiennes au cours des XIX<sup>ème</sup> et XX<sup>ème</sup> siècles, leur fonction politique dans l'édification de l'Etat-Nation, enfin les relations entre ces cultes, la vie politique et le fonctionnement de l'Etat.

Barbora Jirková s'intéresse à deux frères généraux, **Trương Hồng** et **Trương Hát**, ayant vécu au Nord du Vietnam au XIX<sup>ème</sup> siècle. Céline Marangé analyse comment la glorification de figures révolutionnaires a favorisé, au nord du pays, la mobilisation anti-française au cours des années 1940. Pascal Bourdeaux examine dans une toute autre perspective régionale l'amplification, au cours des années 1950, de la vénération portée à **Trần Hưng Đạo** et à **Nguyễn Trung Trực**, l'un résistant aux invasions mongoles, l'autre à la conquête française de la Cochinchine. Olga Dror mène une étude comparée du culte au roi Hùng célébré par trois Etats distincts: la République Démocratique du Vietnam, la République du Vietnam et la République Socialiste du Vietnam.

### Individual Proposals:

#### **1. Barbora Jirková - Water Deities - Confucian Exemplars: The Cult of Tam Giang Đại Vương in Nguyễn Vietnam**

Tam Giang Đại Vương - or Trương Hồng and Trương Hát brothers - seem to have been well known deities in the Nguyen dynasty Vietnam, their cult spread mostly in the Bắc Ninh province in the heartland of North Vietnam. The cult of these probably originally water deities has a long tradition, as it is attested in one of the earliest written sources of Vietnamese tradition, the 14th century *Việt Điện U Linh Tập*. I will first analyse the narratives about these deities in 19th century texts of different focus - the imperially commissioned chronicle and gazetteer, the list of deities' biographies compiled by the Ministry of Rites, several provincial gazetteers of Bắc Ninh province, where the main temples of the deities were located, and the legends as they were recorded in the very villages worshipping them. Then I will compare these narratives with early 20th century ethnographic records. My aim is to show what traits of Tam Giang Đại Vương do these various types of text emphasize, which will help us understand the relationship between local popular religious beliefs and the state promoted ideology.

Key words: Water Deities, Confucianism, Nguyen dynasty

#### **2. Céline Marangé – Towards a New Pantheon: Revolutionary figures among North Vietnamese partisans during WWII.**

This paper discusses the process of elevating images of revolutionary and tutelary figures among North Vietnamese partisans in the early 1940s. Vietnamese communists opposed Japanese domination because of their struggle against French colonial rule and their quest for national unity and independence. Their resistance against Japanese occupation was consistent throughout the war for tactical and ideological reasons, although it was limited in scope and intensity. Their modus operandi became increasingly violent after the liberation of continental France and the Japanese

coup of March 1945, as their long-planned insurrection was getting under way. While their military strategy and political decisions are relatively well established, it is still to be studied how their representations had evolved during the war. This paper examines the role the elevation of some communist figures and historical figures played in it. Based on propaganda leaflets, booklet, posters found by the police and kept in the archives, as well as on other materials printed at the time, the paper analyses how two narratives – communist and patriotic – coexisted and coalesced through these figures during this dramatic period of time.

Key words: Communist pantheon, partisans, resistance against Japanese

### **3. Pascal Bourdeaux, Ecole Pratique des Hautes Etudes - Migrations, Deities, and Nation building during the second half of the 20th Century**

This communication aims to consider the reconfiguration of popular religions in Vietnam, more precisely patriotic cults seen from the southern part of the country. By focusing on the specific region of the Mekong delta, we would like to enlighten how the current State tries to promote, on one hand, a united national pantheon by ranking national heroes and local ones and to assure, on the other hand, the coexistence of spirit cults and secular rituals. To illustrate current negotiations between local people and the State representatives on regional culture and national history, we will consider how people from the Kiên Giang province, descendants of southern pioneers settled from the 18th century and northerner migrants more recently settled during the 20th century, worship two historical heroes, Trần Hưng Đạo and Nguyễn Trung Trực from the middle of the 20th century until nowadays. The first one is the famous Supreme Commander who repelled Mongol invasion in the Red river delta during the 13th century, the second is one of the most venerated local leaders who fought against the French invasion in the mid-19th century. Observations of festivals in different temples and oral history have allowed us to recount migration process, spiritual traditions and finally nation building.

**Keywords:** Trần Hưng Đạo cult, Nguyễn Trung Trực cult, Mekong delta, Migration, Nation building

#### **Quand Trần Hưng Đạo en vint à rencontrer Nguyễn Trung Trực dans le delta du Mékong : Migrations, divinités et édification nationale dans la seconde moitié du 20ème siècle**

La communication vise à décrire certains aspects de la reconfiguration contemporaine des religions populaires au Vietnam, en particulier ceux concernant les cultes patriotiques tels que perçus dans la partie méridionale du pays (delta du Mékong). Nous souhaitons montrer comment l'Etat cherche à promouvoir l'unification d'un panthéon patriotique en hiérarchisant, d'un côté, les héros locaux et nationaux, de l'autre, des cultes de nature spirituelle et des rituels strictement séculiers. Afin d'illustrer les négociations qu'ont engagé les populations locales et les représentants de l'Etat en matière de culture régionale et d'histoire nationale, nous analysons comment les habitants de la province de Kiên Giang, descendants de pionniers installés à la fin du XVIIIème siècle ou bien de migrants tonkinois venus plus récemment, vouent localement un culte à deux figures historiques depuis le milieu du XXème siècle, Trần Hưng Đạo et Nguyễn Trung Trực. Le premier héros est le fameux général ayant repoussé l'invasion mongole dans le delta du fleuve Rouge au cours du

XIIIème siècle, le second un valeureux paysan insurgé ayant combattu la conquête française de la Cochinchine au milieu du XIXème siècle. La description de festivités organisées dans plusieurs temples de la province et l'histoire orale nous permettent de rappeler les processus migratoires des hommes mais aussi de leurs divinités pour, finalement, illustrer les modes d'édification de la nation vietnamienne moderne.

**Keywords:** culte Trần Hưng Đạo, culte Nguyễn Trung Trực, delta du Mékong, Migration, édification nationale.

#### **4. Olga Dror - Sacred vs Historical: Hùng Kings in Three Vietnams**

The mythical Hùng kings, whose festival has recently become a national holiday in the Socialist Republic of Vietnam (SRV), have been hailed as progenitors of the Vietnamese nation at least from the fifteenth century. This presentation considers their positions and the narratives about them in South Vietnam (RVN) and North Vietnam (DRV) between 1965 and 1975 and in the SRV after 1975. In the RVN, the Hùng kings' mythological origins were recognized. The RVN government elevated their cult to the state level. Moreover, the Hùng kings were summoned by many intellectuals to maintain the uniqueness of Vietnamese culture and polity. In the DRV, the original birthplace of the Hùng kings narrative, cult, and their initial center of worship, the Hùng kings lost their cultic splendor with the advent and strengthening of the communist regime, which sought to eliminate religious beliefs and rituals. Instead, the government and intellectuals in the DRV sought to prove the historical roots of the Hùng kings to give a firm and scientific foundation for the Vietnamese nation. The SRV, at the present time, in many ways replicates their former foe's, RVN's, approach to the Hùng kings, summoning them as keepers and signifiers of Vietnamese-ness.

Key words: Hùng kings, RVN, DRV, SRV.

#### **5. Phan Phuong Anh, Faculty of Social Sciences and Humanities, Vietnam National University, Hanoi and Lauren Meeker, State University of New York at New Paltz - National heroes, Đứ́c CỨu Tẩ́ng thiến (Local Daoism) and lineage ancestors: politics and religion in contemporary rural Vietnam**

Politics and religion have long been seen as conflicting domains in the Socialist Republic of Vietnam. Yet, attention to local religious practice reveals that historical traditions of negotiation between local religious institutions and the State continue in contemporary practice. Based on data collected over the last five years, this paper explores the dialectical relationship between religious and state power in a rural village in Nam Dinh Province. Interviews with village elders and two ritual masters (shamans), and observation of communal rituals to propitiate the village tutelary god and lineage ancestors demonstrates that local religious institutions have long sought recognition from the State and the inscription of local history into national history through valorization of expanded lineage relationships. At the same time, figures associated with the revolutionary State, such as Hồ Chí Minh, national martyrs and military personalities, are legitimized and integrated into the local communal order through their integration into local rituals and daoist magic.

**Héros nationaux, Đứ́c CỨu Tẩ́ng Thiến (Taoïsme local) et les ancêtres: politique et religion dans le Vietnam contemporain**

La politique et la religion ont été longtemps considérées comme des domaines conflictuels dans la République Socialiste du Vietnam. L'observation des pratiques religieuses au niveau local montre cependant que la négociation entre les institutions religieuses et l'État a toujours eu lieu et continue encore aujourd'hui. Analysant les données collectées ces cinq dernières années, cette communication explore la relation dialectique entre le pouvoir religieux et le pouvoir politique dans un village de la province de Nam Định. Les interviews des anciens et de deux maîtres de rituel, l'observation des cultes dédiés au génie tutélaire et à des ancêtres de lignées démontrent que les institutions religieuses ont longtemps cherché la reconnaissance de l'État et l'inscription de l'histoire locale dans l'histoire nationale à travers la volonté de remonter des lignées au-delà de l'espace villageois. En même temps, les figures révolutionnaires telles que Hồ Chí Minh, les martyrs nationaux et les personnalités militaires, sont légitimées dans l'ordre villageois par leur intégration dans le rituel local et la mystique taoïste.

**Mots clés:** Religion, Politique, Taoïsme, Cult des ancêtres, Révolution, Vietnam