



Panel's title : Asian modernity. The case of Vietnam in the French period
Titre du panel : Modernités asiatiques. Le cas du Vietnam à l'époque française

Coordinator (Affiliation, University) :

NGUYEN Phuong Ngoc (IRASIA, Aix Marseille University-CNRS)

Language : Français / English

Topics : History, Literature

Panel presentation :

From the middle nineteenth century, Vietnam as others asian countries experienced radical social changes: Western civilization pushed Asian countries to react and made some choice. We know the answer of Japan (Meiji era from 1868) and the answer of China forced to cede territories to Western countries. In Vietnam, the dynasty Nguyễn, in the power since 1802, showed themselves incapable to protect the sovereignty. In the first years of twentieth century, in alternative in the armed struggle, another way became possible, that of the modernization: it is necessary to learn the "new knowledge", the one who makes the strength of the West. This moment called "modernist", Duy Tân, is short-lived (1905-1908), but very rich in the abundance of initiatives including romanized writing quốc ngữ, education reform, press and economy. Despite the harsh repression of 1908 following the demands of the colonized, modernist actions contribute to profound and lasting changes in Vietnamese society.

It is a question of asking the question of modernity, both its understanding among the different groups in the colonized Vietnamese society, the channels and the modes of transfer in order to better study the ideas retained and assimilated, adapted according to needs And interest, etc.

"Modernity" will be approached from a wide range of fields: intellectual and literary, educational and technological, religious and intimate.

Keys words: modernity, modernism, Vietnam, colonisation, éducation, bouddhisme, littérature, biographie, art, transport, transfert, réception.

Résumé du panel :

À partir du milieu du XIXe siècle, le Vietnam comme l'ensemble des pays asiatiques se trouve face à un défi inédit : l'expansion des puissances occidentales. On connaît la réponse du Japon qui fait son Meiji à partir de 1868, alors que la Chine, incapable de réagir, subit de plein fouet les attaques successives qui aboutit au « dépècement » de son empire. Au Vietnam, les rois des Nguyen, au pouvoir depuis 1802, se montrèrent incapables de sauvegarder la souveraineté face à l'armée française. Au tout début du XXe siècle, en alternative à la lutte armée, une autre voie devint possible, celle de la modernisation : il faut apprendre le « nouveau savoir », celui qui fait la force de l'Occident. Ce moment, qu'on appelle « moderniste », Duy Tân, est de courte durée (1905-1908), mais très riche de foisonnement des initiatives dont usage de l'écriture romanisée quốc ngữ, réforme de l'éducation, développement de la presse et prise en compte de l'économie. Malgré la dure répression de 1908 suite aux revendications, les actions modernistes contribuent à changer en profondeur et durablement la société vietnamienne.

Il s'agit ici de poser la question sur la modernité, à la fois sa compréhension chez les différents groupes dans la société vietnamienne colonisée, les canaux et les modes de transfert afin de mieux étudier les idées retenues et assimilées, adaptées en fonction de besoins et d'intérêt, etc. La "modernité" sera abordée à partir de domaines très divers : intellectuel et littéraire, éducatif et technologique, celui du religieux et celui de l'intime.

Mots clés : modernité, modernisme, Vietnam, colonisation, éducation, bouddhisme, littérature, biographie, art, transport, transfert, réception.



Participants :

- 1) **CAM Anh Tuan (Vietnam National University Hanoi – University of Social sciences and Humanities)**

Communication's title : The railway and its representation among the Vietnamese in the 20th century

Titre de la communication : Le chemin de fer et sa représentation au Vietnam au Xxe siècle

Language : Français :

Presentation :

The construction and operation of the Haiphong-Yunnan railway took place as part of the French's conquest in Viet Nam, which began on 1 September 1858 with the attack on the port of Tourane (Đà Nẵng) - a city in the center of Vietnam, and finished in 1945, after a coup de force carried by the Japanese and the independence of Vietnam. In 1898, after France had firmly established itself throughout the territory of Indochina, the Governor General of Indochina, Paul Doumer, as soon as he took office, decided to carry out an ambitious plan to build a network of transport in Indochina, especially the railway. Among the 8 railroad tracks submitted to the Higher Council of Indochina, the road linking Tonkin to Yunnan (Hải Phòng - Lào Cai - Yunnan) was chosen to be installed in the first place. Its construction began in 1898 and was completed in 1910.

It is certain that the railway from Haiphong to Yunnan was responsible for the economic and political upheaval in Tonkin from its operation in 1910. The considerable influence of this railway on society and politics was probably not foreseen by the author of this gigantic project. The conversion of part of the peasants to the trade professions in the provinces crossed by the railway, the birth of political parties "pushing like mushrooms after the rain" in Tonkin in the period 1925-1930 are among the reasons. The most important and prerequisites of the defeat of the French, after 87 years of its domination in Indochina. Of course, the installation and operation of this railway was not the only cause of these changes. The historical context of Indochina, Asia, France and the world, the politics of metropolitan and colonial government, and so on emphasized and encouraged them. This railway only played the role of the instrument that helped to foster these historic changes.

Key words : railway, transport, Vietnam, colonialism, representation

- 2) **Amandine DABAT, PhD history of art**

Communication's title : Hàm Nghi (1871-1944), exiled vietnamese emperor : a modern artist?

Titre de la communication : Hàm Nghi (1871-1944), empereur vietnamien exilé : un artiste moderne ?

Language : Français :

Presentation :

The vietnamese emperor Hàm Nghi (1871-1944), who was deported to French Algeria at the age of eighteen, became a painter and a sculptor during his exile. This emperor was enthroned in 1884. The following year he was lead by his regent, Tôn Thất Thuyết, into the mountains of Annam to fight against the French before being captured, three years later, and sent into exile in Algiers. The French authorities, in the hopes of rendering the 'Prince of Annam' -as he was now known- pro-french in case he ever reigned again, offered to have Marius Reynaud (1860-1935), an orientalist painter, train him in the fine arts. The chaotic years spent in Indochina had not allowed Hàm Nghi to complete his sino-vietnamese literary education : his ability to write in chinese characters remained incomplete, as is shown by his correspondence. But in Algiers, the prince received a



French intellectual education, and he discovered western art. Can the Prince's approach of western art be called modern? This presentation intends to study how this artist combined French art with his sino-vietnamese culture, and where to place his work in art history.

Résumé :

Hàm Nghi (1871-1944), empereur vietnamien déporté en Algérie française à l'âge de dix-huit ans, est devenu artiste peintre et sculpteur durant son exil. Cet empereur fut intronisé en 1884, puis il fut emmené un an plus tard dans les montagnes de l'Annam par son régent, Tôn Thất Thuyết, pour lutter contre la présence française. Hàm Nghi est capturé trois ans après, puis exilé sous le nom de « prince d'Annam ». À Alger, les autorités françaises qui souhaitent le rendre pro-français dans le cas où il serait réinvesti sur le trône, lui proposent d'être formé aux Beaux-Arts par un artiste peintre orientaliste, Marius Reynaud (1860-1935). Les années chaotiques passées en Indochine n'ont pas permis à Hàm Nghi de terminer sa formation littéraire sino-vietnamienne : sa capacité à écrire en caractères chinois est restée incomplète, comme le montre sa correspondance. À Alger, le prince reçoit une éducation intellectuelle française et découvre l'art occidental. Peut-on parler de modernité dans la façon dont il a appréhendé l'art occidental ? Cette intervention propose d'analyser comment cet artiste s'est approprié la peinture française par rapport à sa culture sino-vietnamienne, et où son œuvre se situe dans l'histoire de l'art.

Key words : Hàm Nghi, Indochina, colonial history, exil, history of art, XIXth century, XXth century, modern painting.

3) NINH Thi Sinh (PhD history, Hanoi Pedagogical University n°2)

Communication's title : .Being a Buddhist in the first half of the 20th century
Titre de la communication : Etre bouddhiste dans la première moitié du XX^e siècle

Language : Français :

Presentation :

Buddhism has been introduced in Vietnam since the beginning of the Christian era and is a part of the *Tam giáo*, three religions with Confucianism and Taoism. However, at the beginning of the 20th century, the Vietnamese were led to realize that despite of the popularity of Buddhism, very few people were able to understand this doctrine because the Buddhist texts were written in Chinese characters.

The promoters of the Buddhist renovation in Tonkin gathering in the Buddhist Association, which were founded in November 1934 from mandarins, officials, scholars, intellectuals and religious people in Tonkin, studied and translated the Buddhist texts in Chinese characters into Vietnamese in order to encourage Buddhist values as the doctrine to be popular widely and adapt to the modern society at the same time. By publishing Buddhist books in *quốc ngữ*, publishing the Buddhist magazine and organizing conferences, they explained the ideas and the values of Buddhism in a wider way to the public so that the lay people are able to find a way to become a Buddhist in a modern society.

In this paper, I propose to study this question of how to become a Buddhist in the first half of the 20th century by analyzing the publications of the Buddhist Association like the magazine *Đuốc Tuệ*, Torch of Spirituality which published Buddhist novels as an example through daily situations to explain notions of Buddhist doctrine.

Résumé :

Le bouddhisme est introduit au Vietnam depuis le début de l'ère chrétienne et fait partie des *Tam giáo*, trois religions avec le confucianisme et le taoïsme. Cependant, au début du XX^e siècle, les Vietnamiens sont amenés à constater que malgré la popularité du bouddhisme, très peu de



personnes étaient capables de comprendre cette doctrine, car les textes bouddhiques étaient écrits en caractères chinois.

Les promoteurs de rénovation bouddhique au Tonkin, réunis dans l'Association bouddhique fondée en novembre 1934 et composée des mandarins, des fonctionnaires, des lettrés et des intellectuels ainsi que des religieux, se proposent d'étudier et traduire les textes bouddhiques des caractères chinois en vietnamien, afin de diffuser largement les valeurs bouddhiques conforme à la doctrine et adapté à la société moderne. En éditant des livres bouddhiques en *quốc ngữ*, publiant la revue bouddhique, *Đuốc Tuệ*, organisant des conférences, ils expliquent les idées et les valeurs du bouddhisme d'une façon plus large au public pour que les fidèles puissent y trouver la voie afin d'être un bouddhiste dans une société moderne.

Dans cette communication, je me propose d'étudier la question comment être bouddhiste dans la première moitié du XX^e siècle, en analysant les publications de l'Association bouddhique, surtout la revue *Đuốc Tuệ* qui publie par exemple des "romans bouddhiques" dans lesquels sont expliqués, à travers des situations quotidiennes, des notions de la doctrine bouddhique.

Key words : Buddhism ; Buddhist Association ; *Đuốc Tuệ* ; Buddhist literature

4) NONG Thi Quynh Tram (PhD candidate, IRASIA, Aix Marseille University)

Communication's title : Biographical modernity in Viet Nam in the first half of the 20th century

Language : Français

Presentation :

Biography is an old domain and there are many discussions on its theory throughout its history. From the end of the 20th century, the biography had developed energetically. It is becoming an increasingly object of research and also an important subject in specialist journals or symposia.

In recent years in Viet Nam, as in Western countries, there has been increased interest in the biographical genre. An extensive research on biography at the beginning of the 20th century would also allow us to have a global view off this genre in full development in contemporary times.

In 1862, during the final settlement of France in Cochin China French colonization in Viet Nam led to profound changes in all aspects of life, including culture and literature. While the various literary genres in Viet Nam developed in the first half of 20th century, the biography itself had a great success. In the legal deposit of the BNF and the National Library of Viet Nam, there are about 135 biographies, many of which are extensive.

Analyzing these biographies in detail, our work aims to show you a period of modernity of the contemporary vietnamese biography. Based on the comparison with biography before 1858, we can see the transformation in all aspects of biography from the colonial era that leads to the new conception of life as well as the new writing of the biographical genre. We will also try to explain the main reasons for this development, such as the social and cultural situation, the emergence of the individual, the contact with theoretical ideals from abroad, particularly the influence of French biographies.

Key words : *biography* ; Vietnamese literature ; colonialism ; modernity ; intellectual

5) NGUYEN Phuong Ngoc (IRASIA, Aix Marseille University-CNRS)

Communication's title : How to be Confucian scholar and modern writer ? The case of Tân Đà (1889-1939)

***Titre de la communication* : Tân Đà (1889-1939) ou comment être lettré et moderne ?**

Language : Français :



Presentation :

Tản Đà (penname of Nguyễn Khắc Hiếu) is a famous Vietnamese poet. He was born to a Confucian family with a tradition of taking the imperial exams. After his exam failures in 1912, the reading of some New Writings (Tân Thư) in Chinese characters presenting the Western civilization et philosophy, was a discovery. He decided "to give up the dream" of becoming court officials through the imperial exam. His models are the French philosopher Jean-Jacques Rousseau and the Chinese neo-Confucian Liang Qichao. He published in 1915 with a great succes some texts in quốc ngữ, the modern writing system of Vietnamese language. In 1916, he wrote a novel, *A Little Dream (Giấc mộng con)* which published in 1917 in Hanoi.

My purpose is study the idea of modernity expressed by Tản Đà in his writing, particularly in the novel *A Little Dream* about an Annam youth (Nguyễn Khắc Hiếu, the same name of the auteur) who dreams to travel around the world to learn new knowledge beneficial for his country. In this novel, two chapters titled "The New Life Area" (Cõi Đời Mới) telling a country where trees are green despite being encircled by the ice sea, where science and technology serve human beings, and where money does not exist because all property is collective ownership. What did the author, as a representative of Confucian scholars, understand about the West and think about the world and Vietnam of his time?

Résumé :

Tản Đà, un des plus grands poètes du Vietnam au XXe siècle, a été lettré avant d'être écrivain et journaliste. Candidat malheureux aux concours, il a renoncé à la carrière mandarinale après avoir découvert des penseurs occidentaux, notamment Jean-Jacques Rousseau, et des néo-confucéens chinois, surtout Liang Qichao, selon lui deux sommets de l'art d'écrire. Il commence à faire paraître en 1915 des textes en prose et en vietnamien dans *Dong Duong tap chi*, la revue pionnière au Tonkin, immédiatement salués par le public. En 1916, il écrit un roman intitulé *Le Petit rêve* qui relate un voyage imaginaire d'un jeune homme du même nom que lui autour du monde, roman publié en 1917 et qui peut être considéré comme parmi les premiers romans vietnamiens modernes.

Dans cette communication, nous nous proposons d'étudier l'idée de la modernité exprimée par Tản Đà dans son oeuvre littéraire. Une source importante est le roman *Le Petit rêve* dans lequel deux chapitres intitulés "Nouveau Monde" relatent la découverte et le séjour du héros dans un lieu inconnu, une sorte d'Utopie, où la modernité technique et technologique au service du bien-être de l'homme co-existe avec une morale digne de l'Antiquité. La vision de la modernité chez Tản Đà contribuerait ainsi à une meilleure connaissance de la réception des idées occidentales chez les lettrés de formation classique en caractères chinois au Vietnam colonial au début du XXe siècle.

Key words : Tản Đà ; quốc ngữ ; utopia ; colonialism ; Vietnamese literature

- 6) **TRAN Thi Phuong Hoa (Vietnam Institute of History, Vietnam Academy of Social Sciences, VASS)**

Communication's title : Promotion of the "self"- increasing the personal creativeness in the schools of applied arts in colonial Vietnam

Language : English :

Presentation :

At the intersection of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, the early elements of modernity appeared in Vietnam, in which education occupied a primary place. A pedagogical revolution gradually dominated the learning environment, replacing traditional learning and examinations of letters. Radical efforts were applied in vocational schools to train students-artisans with new subjects of general and special education.



I would like to direct the attention to the schools of indigenous arts. Starting from the belief that Vietnamese art had experienced a glorious past and the investigation of the existing art masterpieces, the French authorities wanted to restore the traditional artistic values of Vietnamese handicrafts and to employ European technology and perspectives to adapt Vietnamese art work to the Western taste so that the art products could reach the Western market.

In addition to general education (French, Maths), new subjects were taught: drawing, industrial design, graphic design, anatomy, outdoor practice, perspectives, atelier practice. Furthermore, the individuality was particularly promoted in schools of arts. Vietnamese artists, whose names had never appeared on art work of bronze, embroidery, wood carving, paintings now implemented the principle of signatures, through which the affirmation of the “self” was encouraged and the requirements for creativeness and originality were strengthened through independent exercises. Drawing on archival documents, reports of vocational schools and colonial government reports, I want to examine the school programmes, focusing on the shift from the artist’s anonymity to the confirmation of the “self” which opened the wider gate for the Vietnamese art products to access the West.

Key words : Vietnam, colonialism, self, indigenous arts, handicrafts, education

7) Yen Vu (Ph. D student, Cornell University)

Communication's title : Aesthetics of liberté between expatriatism and excommunication in Nguyễn Mạnh Tường francophone writings

Language : English

Presentation :

Nguyễn Mạnh Tường, French-educated and among one of the first waves of students in France, is generally known for his participation in the Nhân Văn Giai Phẩm affair and his defense of the freedom of creative expression. This freedom, traced as early as his first creative text in 1937, *Sourires et larmes d'une jeunesse*, is constant and recurring; we see his conviction of an “internal freedom” that spans the 50 years of his career, up to his last published work, *Un excommunié* (1992), where he recounts his exile and abandonment within his own country. This study speculates the different aspects of this freedom as intimated in his first and last texts, from its ‘serendipitous’ overlapping with the Nietzschean free spirit to its loyalty to Montaigne's rejection of a systemic philosophy. In this sense, it offers an alternative understanding of Vietnamese youth in France during the early 20th century. Rather than traveling to France to learn and participate in anticolonial activity like his peers, Nguyễn Mạnh Tường makes up a class of Vietnamese intellectuals who was well aware of the colonial situation but not weighed down by its binaries, and looked toward the worthwhile extension of political and social boundaries.

Key words : Nguyễn Mạnh Tường ; francophone literature; intellectual, Nhân Văn Giai Phẩm

8) William Pore (Pusan National University)

Communication's title : The Cosmopolitanism of Ethics and Place in East Asia in the Thought of Anti-Colonial Literati in Late Ecumene Korea and Vietnam

Language : English

Presentation :

The question of whether there is an ethics of place is fascinating and still holds some persuasive power when applied to East Asian civilizations. At present, the persistence of nationalism and totalizing ideologies and politics in this geographic region of Asia often seem to preclude thinking of “place” and “ethics” there in any other than narrow, conservative, or predetermined ways. Yet, in a



longer and deeper inquiry into the ethical and civilizational background of East Asia, it is possible to realize that this was once a region in which a more cosmopolitan sense of ethics and place existed. This paper, in positing such a more extended inquiry, has arrived at this position by examining the thought in the works of two late nineteenth and early twentieth century aspirant literati, one from Korea, Pak Ŭnsik (1859-1925), and one from Vietnam, Phan Bội Châu (1867-1940). It thereby provides a multidimensional means not only for questioning the centrality of the nation as the sole place or narrative focus of the history of this era, but also for grasping the dimensions of an ethics derived from a previously existing cosmopolitan sphere — the Chinese learning ecumene. I suggest, based on the sense of place and ethics conveyed in Pak and Phan's works, that the meaning of place particularly in East Asia, or perhaps anywhere, should include a sense of uncertain locatedness in the world.

Keywords : Korea Vietnam East Asia Southeast Asia history ethics place cosmopolitanism

9) VU Duc Liem (Ph. D. candidate, University of Hamburg– Vietnam National University)

Communication's title : Sweating buffaloes and chaotic archives: Nguyen Palace manuscripts and Vietnam's political culture, 1802-1841

Language : English

Presentation :

This is a study of the Nguyen palace manuscripts and their performance in shaping the dynasty's bureaucratic operation. It argues that chauban 硃本 (Vermilion records) and other bureaucratic documents play a crucial part in the Minh Menh's political project in defining early nineteenth century Vietnam's political identity. Not only are they recognized as a medium of communication, but more significantly, a political institution and symbol of authority. Their dramatic evolution between 1802 and 1841 lays the foundation for emerging new political landscape where manuscripts involves as part of the state-building, especially their association with political institutionalization and standardization. Such Institutional transformation is deeply imprinted in the formalization and standardization of the bureaucratic manuscripts, including their structural organization, paratexts, sealed marks, iconographic decoration, layouts, and emperor's vermilion notations. These designed structures and arranged textual organization create a distinctive visual representation under which state's textualization and manuscript's performance is closely connected, and signify a prominent character of the Nguyen bureaucracy.

Keywords: Vietnam; Nguyen dynasty; political history; manuscript culture; dynastic historiography